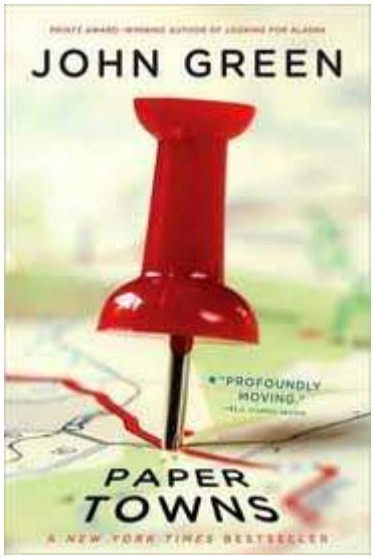
The Difficulty of Translating John Green's *Paper Towns* and Other Young Adult Literature



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Introduction

Crossover literature, which usually refers to literature being read by adults as well as children, has existed for quite a long time. The notion of 'crossover literature' can be explained in several ways. As Falconer points out, "crossover is the critical term for texts that cross cultures or (like Rushdie's *The Ground beneath Her Feet*) represent such cultural shifts in the narrative" (557). Secondly, the term can be used "to signify shifts in gender perspective" (ibid.). However, in children's literature criticism, the term is more often used to refer to "a crossing between age boundaries", that is, to texts that cross from, for example, children to adults or vice versa (ibid.). A famous example is the Harry Potter series, which has been read by millions of children as well as adults. Falconer argues that "more has been written about cross-*writing* and dual *address* than about crossover *reading*" (558). The former focuses more on authors writing for both children and adults, while the latter should give us a clearer view of what the crossover phenomenon includes. According to Falconer, cross-reading is "the better indicator of a significant shift in cultural attitudes and, arguably, the more interesting for specialists in narrative theory" (559). After all, a narrative is not just a text written by an author, but it is the interaction between the reader and the narrative that is most important when discussing the crossover phenomenon (ibid.).

So what is the main reason that books initially meant for children cross over to adults as well? To put it simply, "adults are rediscovering the addictive pleasure of a good story, told directly and without any (post)modernist angst about the problems of representation" (Falconer 559). In literature and film, 'crossover' mainly occurs in the genres of magic fantasy, epic fantasy, science fiction, gothic, history and historical legend. Dystopias also used to cross over in the past, especially from adults to children. Twentieth-century dystopias like Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *1984* have become very popular among children as well (Falconer 560-61). But without a doubt, crossover

most often occurs in the fantasy genre, especially from child to adult audiences. Falconer draws the distinction between magic fantasy (for example, the Harry Potter books and Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*) and epic fantasy (Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*). Epic fantasy focuses more on the past and is often concerned with questions of species origin, while magic fantasy, including Harry Potter books, have been criticised as lightweight (562). Epic fantasy has not only been praised highly by critics, it is also the most popular crossover genre among readers: "[c]ontemporary epic fantasies such as Philip Pullman's trilogy, *His Dark Materials* (1995, 1997, 2000) and Terry Pratchett's Discworld series have had little difficulty in crossing between child and adult readerships" (564).

Another explanation for the rise of crossover fiction is the fact that the classic boundary between children's literature and adult literature has diffused considerably. More and more books are aimed at both children and adults (Bouman, par. 5). J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books as well as the aforementioned *His Dark Materials* trilogy have been published in both children's and adults' editions. Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* also shows that Rowling's books have changed the literary landscape. Gaiman told in an interview he already started to write *Coraline* in 1990, but his publisher soon told him there was no market for books meant for children and adults at the same time and could therefore not be published. In 2002, when the Harry Potter success had started, Gaiman's fantasy novel was finally published (ibid., par. 11).

The popularity of crossover fiction in the Netherlands has also expanded the variety of genres in children's literature. As Bouman points out, there used to be an unwritten rule in the 1990s saying that Dutch children's books should be educational in particular, while at the same time many English fantasy books were not translated as there seemed to be no interest in it (par. 22).

However, especially over the last decade, a fairly new phenomenon has derived from crossover literature: the genre of young adult literature (often abbreviated as YA

literature) aimed at teenagers who find themselves too old to read children's books and too young to read adult fiction. It has become very popular in the United States, and meanwhile it has also transferred to the Netherlands.
A typical young adult novel is *Paper Towns* (2008) by the American author John Green. The Dutch translation, published in 2009 by Lemniscaat, was one of the books in a series called "Made in the USA".

In this study I will concentrate on the translation problems often found in young adult novels, and in particular those occurring in *Paper Towns*: what are the translation problems a translator stumbles across in *Paper Towns*, what are the available translation options and which options are most advisable, taking into account his translation assignment and the translation strategy he has chosen?

I will try to answer this thesis question on the basis of four chapters. First, I will discuss the development and position of young adult literature in the literary landscape. Chapter 2 will deal with the translation problems that we often find in YA novels, including those present in *Paper Towns*. In chapter 3, I will discuss the theory and practice of translating intertextuality, which is an important feature in Green's novel. Chapter 4 contains my own translations of four passages from the book, including explanatory footnotes.

1. Young adult literature

A fourth definition of crossover literature is concerned with "texts that are aimed at teenagers crossing over into adulthood" (Falconer 566). Young adult literature, you might say, has evolved out of crossover literature. Although these two types of crossover often overlap, there is a significant difference between crossover literature and young adult literature. In contrast to fantasy stories, the most popular crossover genre (that is, books crossing between children and adults), young adult literature "represents the actual, material world and focuses on social relations rather than individual, heroic quests or journeys (for example, the desire to be identified through a social group or conversely the need to express a distinct selfhood within a community)" (ibid.).

1.1. Definitions

Before discussing young adult literature in greater detail, we should realise that there is no universal definition of a young adult or young adult literature. Nilsen and Donelson, in their textbook *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, define 'young adults' as "those who think they're too old to be children but who others think are too young to be adults" (1). They regard young adult literature as "anything that readers between the approximate ages of twelve and eighteen choose to read either for leisure or to fill school assignments" (3). However, other educators adhere to different age boundaries: "[t]he Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) defines young adults as those between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, whereas the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (...) refers to 'young adults, ages 21 through 25'" (ibid.). Along with 'young adult literature', the terms 'teenage books', 'teen fiction' and 'adolescent literature' are used interchangeably. In addition, books aimed at students in junior high school (thirteen and fourteen year-olds) are often called *tweeners*. This subcategory of young adult

literature has been developed by publishers. They sell better than 'true' young adult literature, because thirteen and fourteen-year-olds are still influenced by their parents and teachers in what they read. These tweeners are usually shorter and easier, the protagonists are younger and the language is more innocent (Nilsen/Donelson 4). Moreover, the narrative itself also differs from other young adult books; at the end of the book, everything is back to normal, while in 'true' YA books, the characters undergo a development. In fact, the essence of the book is all about development: "the central theme of most YA fiction is becoming an adult, finding the answer to the question 'Who am I and what am I going to do about it?' No matter what events are going on in the book, accomplishing that task is really what the book is about" (Campbell qtd. in Nilsen/Donelson 4).

1.2. History of YA literature in the United States

Nilsen and Donelson give a detailed account of the relatively brief history of young adult literature in the United States. They describe the 19th century as a century of purity: especially before 1800, books read by children and young adults were mostly religious books (41). However, in the 1800s, the attitude towards literature gradually changed as the US became an urban society: "[t]he literature that emerged for young adults remained pious and sober, but it hinted at the possibility of humanity's experiencing a satisfying life here on earth" (ibid.). At that time, books by Louisa May Alcott about family life and Horatio Alger's romantic fantasies were popular among young adults. Alcott's novels are still read nowadays (Nilsen/Donelson 42-43). The domestic novel and the dime novel were most popular in the 19th century. Domestic novels were mostly read by women, as the protagonist was often a young girl who meets a handsome but untrustworthy young man. They are highly moralistic and religious. At the same time, dime novels, cheap books initially aimed at adults, became popular among boys. These short and adventurous stories were often set in the West (ibid. 47-48).

Public libraries were established only in the 1820s, but its introduction was not applauded by everyone. Many people argued that public libraries should exist only for educational purposes instead of entertainment. Fiction was rejected by many librarians, for "[t]he voracious devouring of fiction commonly indulged in by patrons of the public library, especially the young, is extremely pernicious and mentally unwholesome" (50).

1.2.1. 1900-1940

At the beginning of the 20th century, high school students were told by their teachers and parents what to read rather than deciding for themselves. Teachers needed to prepare students for advanced study in college, therefore recreational reading was seen as useless (Nilsen/Donelson 50). For instance, students needed to pass an entrance examination on either Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar, The Tempest* and *The Merchant of Venice,* Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*, or Scott's *Ivanhoe* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* in order to be allowed at Harvard (ibid. 52).

College entrance examinations were introduced throughout the United States. However, there was quite some opposition by high school teachers. They accused colleges of controlling the "secondary English curriculum through the guise of entrance examinations" (ibid. 53). As this would not be the last problem to face English teachers, they established the National Council of Teachers of English in 1911. Despite their good intentions, hardly anything changed in most schools. The detailed reading and analysis caused many students to pull out. In 1927, Nancy Coryell argued that this 'intensive' method was no better than the 'extensive' method in which students read faster (54-55). Once again, however, little changed. Two studies by Dora V. Smith and Lou LaBrant *did* have impact on English teachers and reading. Smith, professor at the University of Minnesota, established the first course in adolescent literature, while LaBrant suggested that free reading should be promoted. If children had access to different kinds of books, they would read more

(55).

Edward Stratemeyer

Edward Stratemeyer (1862-1930) is regarded as the founder of the adolescent book industry; he was "the king of series books" (Nilsen/Donelson 56). Through his Literary Syndicate he could publish books even faster than he could write them, using other writers to write books for him. Of course, the structure had to match with his other series books; those writers only needed to fill in the outlines for him (57). Although the series books from Stratemeyer's Literary Syndicate, especially Tom Swift and Ruth Fielding, were considered "trashy and unsuitable for children" (51), they were widely read by young adults, along with the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. These books were not included in the *Winnetka Graded Book List* (1926). On the contrary, they appeared on the supplementary list telling teachers and parents what young children should *not* read. Opposed to this idea was English professor William Lyon Phelps. He emphasised the importance of "the delight of reading": "Once a taste for reading is formed, it can be improved. But it is improbable that boys and girls who have never cared to read a good story will later enjoy stories by good artists" (51).

One might wonder why so many teachers, librarians and adults objected Stratemeyer's books. They might be simplistic and unrealistic, but they were also moralistic and educational (58).

One of the first books to which the term 'junior' or 'juvenile novel' was actually applied, was *Let the Hurricane Roar* by Rose Wilder Lane. It tells the story of a young couple living a tough life in a hostile environment, on the Dakota plains. While the book was at first marketed for an adult audience, the publisher - Longmans, Green and Company - made it the first of their Junior Books series in 1933. With twenty-six printings between 1933 and 1958 and a reissue under the title *Young Pioneers*, the

book is still popular today. The story very much resembles the *Little House on the Prairie* books, written by Lane's mother, Laura Ingalls Wilder (58).

1.2.2. 1940-1960

George W. Norvell believed that much literature used in schools was not suitable for children: "much literary material being used in our schools is too mature, too subtle, too erudite to permit its enjoyment by the majority of secondary-school pupils" (Nilsen/Donelson 59). Too many books were uninteresting. Instead, teachers should let students select the reading material they liked, for "to increase reading skill, promote the reading habit, and produce a generation of book-lovers, there is no factor so powerful as interest" (ibid.).

As a result, reading interest studies were published, although they often consisted solely of questions as to what students liked to read. From these studies, G. Robert Carlsen concluded that as children grow up, they start to develop "an integrated picture of themselves as human beings. They want to test this picture of themselves in the many kinds of roles that it is possible for a human being to play and through testing to see what roles they may fit into and what roles are uncongenial" (qtd. in Nilsen/Donelson 60). By the 1950s, books were used to help readers with their psychological problems in what was called 'bibliotherapy'. This development followed from the idea that, as Lou LaBrant pointed out, "young and old tend to choose literature, whether they seek solutions or escape, which offers characters or situations with which they can find a degree of identification" (ibid.).

Paperbacks as we know them nowadays were only introduced in 1938 by Pocket Books, but at first they were considered trash, especially by school teachers. Only by the 1960s paperbacks had reached the masses of young adults. The most popular books at that time were about high school. Because issues like obscenity, suicide, sexuality and social or racial injustice were still taboo; young adult books were fairly innocent.

The adventures of Ian Fleming's James Bond were very popular by both adults and teenagers in the 1950s and 1960s, possibly because of the war. Furthermore, books gave them the possibility of learning what was going wrong with society. Young adults read about the Great Depression and the resulting unemployment in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). Many were touched by *Cry the Beloved Country* (1948, by Alan Paton) and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), which both dealt with racism (ibid. 62). Arising from this development was the appearance of the *bildungsroman,* "a novel about the initiation, maturation, and education of a young adult" (63). Despite the intended adult audience, most bildungsroman were very soon read by teenagers as well. Probably the most controversial one is J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), because of its - at least to many readers - pernicious protagonist Holden Caulfield.

1.2.3. 1960-1980

The 1960s were the years of the Vietnam war, the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. Some of the events affected education and literature. When Russia launched the *Sputnik* satellite in 1957, the American government mainly focused on education in high tech fields, otherwise the Americans thought they would not be able to compete against the Soviet Union (Nilsen/Donelson 65). Money was invested in science and math, but when people realised students could not learn science and math without knowing how to read, "the educational focus was broadened to include the language arts and to advance the education of all young people" (ibid.).

In 1962, the Modern Language Association argued that students are often not well-prepared for college. Together with high school teachers, they participated in conferences focusing on what should be included in the high school English curriculum (68). Two years later, the *Journal of Reading* is established by the International Reading Association. It was renamed in 1985 to the *Journal of Adolescent*

and Adult Literacy (JAAL) and is intended for reading teachers at secondary schools. Nowadays, JAAL often publishes articles and reviews of new YA novels and gives awards to both authors and scholars working with young adult literature (68-69). In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is accepted, providing money for the purchase of library materials. In order to qualify for these funds, schools had to establish a library. New ideas were invented for teaching English (69).

A person who contributed a lot to the promotion of young adult novels, was Margaret A. Edwards. In 1975, she received the second ALAN Award for this. ALAN is the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English), which promotes the teaching and reading of young adult literature. After her death in 1988, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) honoured her by establishing the Margaret A. Edwards Award for authors who made a lasting contribution to young adult literature. Several authors who published young adult novels in the 1960s and 1970s won the Edwards Award, including Robert Cormier and Judy Blume (ibid., 70-71). However, books like *The Chocolate War* by Cormier were at first not received positively, to great displeasure of Elaine Simpson. While people first criticised young adult novels because they were written to a formula, the same people "who had been asking for an honest story about teenage problems began protesting" when books like *The Chocolate War*, *Go Ask Alice* and *Run Softly, Go Fast* were published (qtd. in Nilsen/Donelson 73). They questioned the appropriateness of topics like rape, abortion, homosexuality, suicide and drugs that appeared in these books (ibid.).

1.2.4. 21st century

Over the last decade, young adult literature has grown immensely thanks to book retailer Barnes & Noble, along with publishers and authors. Barnes & Noble was probably the first book store separating young adult literature from children's

literature. Book shelves containing young adult fiction have been separated from the vividly coloured and screaming children's books (Staps, par. 11).

1.3. History of YA literature in the Netherlands

The history of young adult literature is not as rich as it is in the USA. The term has blown over to the Netherlands only a few years ago. Heated discussions have been pursued about the decline in reading; especially young people between the age of fifteen and twenty seem to lose their interest in reading. Teenagers consider the transition from children's literature to adults' literature as too big (Maliepaard, par. 2). However, the decline in reading is not caused by the supply of books for teenagers, but the way they are presented to them. Young adult books are certainly there - Maliepaard, however, rejects 'young adult novel' or 'crossover' as a term - but they are usually found among children's books (par. 7). Of course teenagers do not want to be seen on the library's children's section. As British author Jenny Valentine puts it, "as a fifteen-year-old you feel insulted if you have to work your way through the Miffy's ('Nijntjes') in order to find the right book" (qtd. in Akveld, par. 7). Because teachers in the 'bovenbouw' (comparable with the American high school) only provide adults' literature, their students lose their pleasure of reading (Maliepaard, par. 8). Dik Zweekhorst, editor of Querido's publishing house, also says that "many teachers have a narrow view" (qtd. in Akveld, par. 12). They are too much focused on 'real' literature and do not know which books are published between the two genres of children's literature and adults' literature (ibid.). Therefore Maliepaard pleaded for a separate bookcase for young adult novels, just as Barnes & Noble introduced in America. By now, several book stores and libraries have copied this idea and Dutch research has shown that libraries noticed a significant increase in the amount of books lent out. This may not only bring back the pleasure of reading to teenagers, but it could be a stimulus to Dutch authors as well, as most of the books available to young adults are translations from the Scandinavian

and English-speaking countries (ibid., pars. 14-16).

The reason why Maliepaard labels the genres of 'crossover' and 'young adult' literature as nonsense, is that these novels do not differ that much from books aimed at adults (par. 4). Hoekman calls young adult literature a "marketing trick" and questions the value of it, as "an adolescent novel that might as well be published as an adult novel does not bridge the gap between children's literature and literature for adults" (pars. 10-11). The fact is, however, that young adult literature has become successful in the Netherlands as well.

1.4. What is "good young adult literature"?

So what makes a young adult book good or bad? Answering this question might be a subjective issue, but a University of Exeter study[1] contributes to a general understanding of the qualities and characteristics of young adult literature (Nilsen/Donelson 17). Twenty-five teachers and librarians were asked to define YA literature and specify what criteria are typical of good YA literature. The Exeter University researchers suspected that educators did not make full use of the available literature. They found the following eight consistent qualities in these interviews - although these are not absolute criteria:

1. Imaginative and well-structured plots going beyond simple chronologies to include time shifts and differing perspectives.
2. Exciting plots that include secrecy, surprise, and tension brought about through narrative hooks and a fast pace.
3. Characters who reflect experiences of teen readers, something that is not found in much of the literary canon, especially when it comes to strong female protagonists.

[1] Hopper, Rosemary. "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Teachers' Perception of Quality in Fiction for Adolescent Readers". *English in Education*, 2006.

> 4. Characters who go beyond typical experiences so that readers can use the fictional experiences to learn and develop in their own lives.
> 5. Lively, varied, and imaginative language that is grammatically correct while being neither patronizing and simplistic nor unnecessarily confusing through lexical density or complexity.
> 6. Themes that inform truthfully about the wider world so as to allow readers to engage with difficult and challenging issues relating to immediate interests and global concerns.
> 7. Themes that allow the possibility of emotional and intellectual growth through engagement with personal issues.
> 8. Varied levels of sophistication that will lead to the continual development of reading skills. (qtd. in Nilsen/Donelson 18)

Nilsen and Donelson then tried to find out how these eight qualities were related to their own 'characteristics' of YA literature (see paragraph 2.1). They have also selected the best young adult books on their Honor List, and illustrate the characteristics and qualities in view of some examples of books on that list.

1.5. Criticism

Despite its success, young adult literature is also often criticised due to the presence of adult themes in teenage novels, for instance racism, class warfare, drug abuse, sexual practices, violence and crime (Falconer 566). Parents, teachers and journalists claim that these topics damage the perspective of the young reader and stimulate the 'tweenager' phenomenon, which means that children develop too quickly into adults. This is the counterpart of 'kiddultery': adults acting as children (ibid.). Examples of tweenager authors are Judy Blume, whose 1975 novel *Forever* deals with teenage sex, and Jacqueline Wilson, who writes explicitly about divorce,

abandonment and mental disorders (567).

A good example of an extraordinary adolescent novel dealing with young adult themes is *When Jeff Comes Home* (1999) by Catherine Atkins. As Amy Pattee describes in her article discussing the book, it caused a lot of controversy in her young adult literature class. The novel is about a 16-year-old boy, Jeff, who was kidnapped by a sexual sadist when he was thirteen. After being sexually abused for nearly three years, Jeff is released and tells the story of his captivity in a number of flashbacks. One of Atkins' students, the mother of a 9-year-old boy, wished she had never read the book, claiming that "the novel had made her 'paranoid' and concerned for the safety of her son" (Pattee 242). Another girl said: "I'm mad at the author for writing it, I'm mad at the publisher for publishing it" (241).

Much of this criticism is due to the atypical characterization of the victim of sexual abuse. According to Haaken, "our cultural biases have made 'victim' a feminine concept" (qtd. in Pattee 249). However, in *When Jeff Comes Home*, the rape victim is a boy instead of a girl. Moreover, he is not just an ordinary boy; before being kidnapped, Jeff is a strong and talented baseball player and in fact an athletic young *man*, which could make it a disturbing read for young people (249).

This criticism has led Pattee to wonder what young adult literature does, and what it is supposed to do. To find the answers, she discusses the definitions of adolescence that influence the creation of young adult novels and determine the function of adolescent literature according to parents and teachers. In developmental terms, adolescence can be defined as "a period of abstract reasoning about the self and the issues surrounding the development of this self, triggered by the sometimes dramatic corporeal changes associated with puberty" (243).

Adolescent literature is usually ideological and idealistic: "[it] reflects idealistic adult authored conceptions of youth, [and] becomes part of a dream of social wish-fulfillment" (244). However, Michael Cart argues that the history of YA literature is "a series of inspired exercises in iconoclasm - of taboo busting, of shibboleth

shattering" (qtd. in Pattee 245). But is adolescent literature really as revolutionary as Cart claims? According to other critics, adolescent literature is rather conventional: "to parents, a YA book is a manual for living, a kind of mini-Bible that serves as a babysitter for older children" (Aaronson qtd. in Pattee 245). Thus, teenage novels that are published are influenced by both the interest of teens and the opinion of adults on adolescence. Its main function is to educate the young, to create and maintain a positive image of society (245).

Atkins' novel *When Jeff Comes Home* is a clear example of what Cart calls 'shibboleth shattering', as it deals with a rather new theme that has not been used in YA novels very often. Pattee rightly wonders why her students were so hostile to Atkins' novel if adolescent literature is really intended, as Cart argues, to 'shatter shibboleths' and bring something new. Atkins' novel is very realistic, but not in the sense that it depicts "social and cultural reality as closely as possible, [but] … this type of writing is (…) closer to our beliefs about the world and not necessarily reflective of the world itself" (252). As Long described this view, "novels imply a community of shared meaning" (qtd. in Pattee 252). The students' vehement aversion towards *When Jeff Comes Home*, and at the same time the revolutionary aspect, is in the fact that Atkins objects to this 'community of shared meaning' by choosing a male victim instead of the more 'traditional' female victim. Pattee sees Atkins' text as "a political statement that questions the conceptions of adolescence and gender that colour our assessment of young adult literature" (253).

Crossover fiction is not a phenomenon that stands alone. As Falconer points out, it is "the *visual* media [who] first created, and still sustain, the largest crossover audiences" (567). Cartoons such as *Bugs Bunny* were also watched by adults already in the 1930s, while American newspapers still publish child and adult comics together. Other cartoon animations like *South Park* and *The Simpsons* are extremely popular among adults as well as children (ibid. 568).

Falconer then answers the question why and how crossover activity has expanded at

such a high rate. She mentions an issue of *The Economist* dealing with youth cultures in the USA, Europe and Japan. According to this study, there is a "growing influence of young adults in 'the working world'" (Anderson qtd. in Falconer 569). An important factor of this growing influence is the invention of the Internet. Nowadays, every child grows up with technological skills, while older employees have to learn these skills at a later age and in a slower tempo. Also, since the corporate restructurings of the 1980s and 1990s, young employees are more wanted than older employees (569). These changes have influenced the cultural habits of employees such as their consumption of books or films, but also the way they dress or socialise: "adults regressed to 'kiddults', 'chadults' and 'middlescents', children aged to 'tweenagers'" (570).

Criticism on 'kiddult' and 'tweenager' cultures has been different in Britain and continental Europe. The phenomenon is viewed as an export from the USA. In Britain, reactions have been mixed as well, with the biggest complaint, as mentioned before, the fact that "children are being made to grow up too fast, [while] others accuse adults of refusing to grow up" (Falconer 570). Due to this development, some critics do not understand why adults read new children's books. For example, David Aaronovitch wrote: "I don't like to see adults reading Harry Potter when they haven't read Nabokov", while Philip Hensher thinks that adult nostalgia for the past is normal, but adults buying new children's books is strange as there is "no weight of nostalgia for them" (ibid.).

Another ambition of literature (and translation) is to exchange linguistic and cultural aspects between languages and countries. In 2001, however, Gillian Lathey concluded that "the potential of children's literature in the UK as a site for international cultural exchange is limited by a lack of translations and a historical resistance in Britain toward the languages of the European continent" (295). The lack of translations, she argued, is attributed to the British schools' lack of motivation to learn languages from "the Continent". In the light of this development, we should

acknowledge not only the importance of translations, but also the necessity of them, as “the desire to tame the unknown can so easily become a classification into reliable and one-dimensional types in language as in other respects” (Lathey 301).

2. Translation problems in young adult literature

2.1. Characteristics

Nilsen and Donelson distinguish the following seven characteristics of young adult literature:

Characteristic 1: The story is told from the viewpoint of a young adult

Reading through the eyes of a young person helps readers to get carried away in the story and continue reading. A common method used by authors is to write in first person. This is often argued to be a prerequisite for YA fiction, but the omniscient narrator is also used (Nilsen/Donelson 20-21).

Characteristic 2: Young adults have to deal with their problems themselves

It can be considered obvious that parents are less important than adolescents: "one of the first things an author does is to figure out how to get rid of the parents so that the young person is free to take credit for his or her own accomplishments" (28). This characteristic fits with the Exeter qualities number 3 and 4 mentioned earlier. The protagonist often needs to deal with his problems without help from his parents (29).

Characteristic 3: YA literature is fast paced

Time reporter David Spritz once compared teen fiction with the Internet and MTV, because of the powerful images and the fast-paced narratives (29). Modern mass-media and YA literature make use of the same emotions that occupy the young person's mind. Young adult books are usually shorter than adult books and have a limited number of characters. The underlying idea is that "teenagers have shorter attention spans than adults and less ability to hold one strand of a plot in mind while reading about another strand" (30). However, Nilsen and Donelson correctly point out that an 18-year-old has a better reading ability than a 12-year-old child: "[a]s

students mature and become better readers, they are able to stick with longer, more complex books, and as proven by the Harry Potter books, even young readers can stick with long books if they are interested" (30).

Characteristic 4: YA literature includes a variety of genres and subjects

Most YA fiction is about "a troubled teenager in some kind of rebellion" (31). Authors have elaborated this theme in an enormous amount of genres and subjects, such as historical fiction (Gary Paulsen's *Soldier's Heart*), drama, mystery, fantasy and science fiction (Gale Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted*) (ibid.).

Characteristic 5: Attention for characters from other ethnic groups

Until recently, books aimed at teenagers usually featured middle-class, white children. Only by the mid-1960s taboos such as profanity, sexuality, racism and abortion disappeared (32). As a result, books became more realistic instead of romantic. From that moment on, writers also started to focus on minorities, such as Patricia McCormick recently in her novel *Sold* (2006), about a Nepalese girl. Other Honor List books set all over the world are Joan Abelove's *Go and Come Back* (Peru) and Nancy Farmer's *A Girl Named Disaster* (Mozambique and Zimbabwe).
Although this has been a good development, there is a downside to it. No matter how hard schools and libraries try to offer teenagers books from and about different cultures, publishers "may be less likely to publish 'serious' stories about protagonists from minority groups because less-affluent kids, many of whom are from minorities, are not as likely to spend money on books as are white, middle-class teenagers" (33). Furthermore, and again for marketing reasons, publishers tend to romanticise in order to attract readers, which was typical of the old adolescent literature (ibid.).

Characteristic 6: YA books are optimistic, with characters making worthy accomplishments

This characteristic is closely related to the Exeter quality number 6, which mentions

the difficult and challenging issues that the young protagonists often have to deal with. In this way, authors try to make their characters respected by the audience. There have been complaints, especially in the 1970s, that books became too realistic and therefore too pessimistic. However, even in these books, "authors created characters that readers could admire for the way they faced up to their challenges" (34).

Change and growth, "the gaining of maturity", is a very important theme in YA literature. Children slowly develop themselves. A popular way for the author to include these elements is through a quest story (34). As we will see in the discussion of John Green's *Paper Towns* in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5, this book can also be described as a certain quest.

Characteristic 7: YA novels deal with important emotions

This dealing with emotions overlaps and fits in with characteristic 6 and the Exeter quality number 7 about emotional and intellectual growth. Young adult novels deal with the developmental tasks that were listed by physicist Robert J. Havighurst in 1972:

1. Acquiring more mature social skills
2. Achieving a masculine or feminine sex role
3. Accepting the changes in one's body, using the body effectively, and accepting one's physique
4. Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults
5. Preparing for sex, marriage, and parenthood
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation
7. Developing a personal ideology and ethical standards

8. Assuming membership in the larger community (qtd. in Nilsen/Donelson 36)

Other psychologists have simply summarized these developmental tasks into one task of adolescence: "achieving an identity" (ibid.).

2.2. Culture-specific items

In order to create a good literary translation, a translator needs to take into account several aspects such as target audience and readability. The biggest translation problems, perhaps, are embedded in the culture of the source text that needs to be translated. As a literary translation always involves two languages and two literary traditions, it has to satisfy two conditions described by Gideon Toury: (1) it has to be a literary work in itself in the target language, occupying the appropriate position in the target literary polysystem, and (2) it has to be a translation, representing the source text which belongs to another literary polysystem (qtd. in Aixelá 52-53). A large scale of strategies can be used when translating cultural signs, "ranging from conservation (acceptance of difference by means of reproduction of the cultural signs in the source text), to naturalization (transformation of the other into a cultural replica)" (54).

These cultural signs, that Aixelá calls "culture-specific items" (CSI's), contain multiple cultural levels: the linguistic, pragmatic and socio-cultural level (56-57). This distinction is important because, according to Aixelá, authors wrongfully define 'cultural references' or 'socio-cultural terms' as collective terms. He agrees with the paradox that James S. Holmes also described as "a marked tendency towards modernization and naturalization of the linguistic context (…), but an opposing tendency towards exoticizing and historicizing in the socio-cultural situation" (qtd. in Aixelá 56).

In other words, on the stylistic level, translations are nowadays read as *an* original - as a text on its own - while they are read as *the* original on the socio-cultural level, exoticizing the culture-related terms (56). Another reason why "culture-specific item" needs to be divided into levels is the fact that, as Aixelá points out, everything in a language is culturally produced (57).

A CSI is not just a problem to the source text alone, it arises from the interaction between the CSI and target text culture in which that particular CSI may not exist or have a different meaning or value (ibid.). An example Aixelá gives is the translation of 'lamb', a word that we find in the Bible. When translating from Hebrew to, let us say, the language of Eskimos, this word can be regarded as a CSI and will be a translation problem. However, when translating into Spanish or English, it will not be a problem as in all three languages, 'lamb' has a similar connotation of a pure and sacrificial animal (57-58). Aixelá defines a culture-specific item, in terms of the above mentioned example, as "those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text" (58).

Roughly speaking, CSI's can be divided into two categories: proper nouns and common expressions (any culture-specific object, institution or habit that is not a proper noun). In the field of proper nouns, we can distinguish conventional and loaded proper nouns. Conventional names are 'meaningless' and usually should not be a translation problem, while loaded proper names are chosen by the author with a specific purpose; they are expressive names or nicknames with possible historical or cultural associations (59).

Depending on the source language culture and target language culture, a translator can choose from several translation strategies when dealing with a problematic CSI.

These strategies consist within two major groups: conservation and substitution.

Conservation

The most important 'conservative strategies' are: repetition, orthographic adaptation, linguistic (non-cultural) translation, extratextual gloss and intratextual gloss (Aixelá 61-62).

Repetition is simply the transference of the CSI from source text to target text, for example toponyms such as Colorado or New York, where *Paper Towns* is set. Although this is a popular strategy, it may obstruct the translator's goal of reaching 'equivalence' and 'loyalty' to some extent, as a repetition may increase the exotic character of the CSI and alienate the target readers due to the cultural distance (61). This explains the paradoxical, and in fact, incorrect, definition of the notion of 'equivalence'. Although an exoticizing strategy such as repetition may contribute to the aim of equivalence (in the sense that the translation is loyal to the source text), this equivalence might not be achieved when a certain proper name or toponym maintained in the translation has a different connotation in the target culture compared to the source culture (61).

An orthographic adaptation includes transcription or transliteration, mainly used when the original term is given in a different alphabet from the alphabet used in the target culture, for instance the Russian language (ibid.).

In a linguistic (non-cultural) translation, the translator chooses a reference that comes close to the original denotatively. Frequent examples are units of measure and currencies, for instance the transference of American 'mile' to Dutch 'kilometer', which is often necessary as Dutch readers might not recognize a distance given in miles due to the Dutch habit of using kilometres instead (61-62).

The extratextual and intratextual gloss are strategies used to clarify the meaning of a CSI in order to avoid ambiguities or confusion. As an extratextual gloss (footnote or endnote) might disturb the reading flow, an explicatory addition can be included

intratextually (62).

Substitution

The strategy of substitution can be subdivided in five frequent forms: synonymy, limited and absolute universalization, naturalization and deletion.

Synonymy is a stylistic strategy used to avoid the constant mentioning of the CSI in the source text. Limited universalization refers to replacing a CSI by another CSI that is also present in the source language culture, but is even closer to the target audience. The new CSI, however, is often less specific than the original: 'five grand' is American slang, while 'five thousand dollars' is rather neutral and less culture-specific (Aixelá 63).

Absolute universalization is similar to limited universalization, except that there is no better known CSI available or the translator prefers a more neutralized term (ibid.). He might, for example, simply replace 'Miller Lite', an American beer brand mentioned in *Paper Towns*, with 'a beer'.

Naturalization is a more radical method. In order to be consistent and to avoid confusion, often the whole narrative is transferred to the target culture. It is a strategy hardly advised in literature, but it is still used in children's literature, though here it has started to decline as well.

As many translators reject the use of footnotes or endnotes, they can decide to delete the CSI that actually needed an explanation. Another reason for omission could be that the CSI is "unacceptable on ideological or stylistic grounds, or (…) it is not relevant enough for the effort of comprehension required of their readers" (64).

Aixelá describes several parameters that may influence the reason why a translator prefers one translation strategy above another. It should be noted, however, that translators do not stand alone in the translation process: their choices always depend on the assignment they are given by publishers, editors or other initiators (65).

The target audience (in this case: young adults) should be kept in mind when choosing either a conservative strategy or a more source-oriented strategy like substitution. A translator should also be aware of any previous translations of the same work, author or genre. If these exist, they might constrain him as "they have become a recognized part of the target language culture" (67).
The treatment of CSI's also depends on their 'nature': "the type and breadth of the intercultural gap" (68). Translators should know whether a term or abbreviation is universal ("pre-established"), like UNICEF, or whether it is not. NATO, for instance, is abbreviated as NAVO in Dutch and as OTAN in French (ibid.).
Transparency of the CSI may also influence the chosen translation strategy. Vague and difficult CSI's could cause the translator to delete or repeat them in the target text.

2.3. Cultural codes

Roland Barthes used the term "code" to explain the structure of a text. Texts do not just consist of words and expressions, but they are a network of codes; signs that substitute for other signs. Therefore, translating a text is not simply the transposition of words into another language, but the translator "has to try to recognize a number of complicated codes in the text and rebuild them using the sign systems of her/his own culture" (Netley 195).
The five codes that Barthes identified are:

1. the *proairetic* code, which provides the basis of events and sequences, proliferating linearly and irreversibly;
2. the *semic* code, which provides the basis of character traits;
3. the *hermeneutic* code, which provides the basis of a macrostructure linearly and irreversibly directed towards closure;

> 4. the *symbolic* code, which provides the basis of representation through reversible binary oppositions;
> 5. the *reference* code, which provides the basis of seemingly extra-textual referentiality. (qtd. in Cohan/Shires 119-20)

Netley discusses a Japanese translation of Roald Dahl's *Matilda* and shows that this translation is not truthful to the original on two levels: the semic code and the reference code.

The semic code involves the several features or traits that make characters different from each other. In the English version of *Matilda*, a lot of names are important semic codes that evoke vivid images, for example the sweet and kind Miss Honey (Netley 199). However, in the Japanese translation, names like these are phonetically translated and so the funny images disappear completely (ibid.).

Also part of the semic code are the things characters say, for instance insulting words. There are considerable differences in the English and Japanese version of *Matilda* concerning insulting words. This is partly due to the smaller Japanese vocabulary of such words compared to English (ibid.). In English, a combination of ordinary words can become gross insults ("this poisonous pustule"), but the strength of the insult decreases when these words are translated literally into Japanese. Another problem, however, is that insults sometimes *do* sound too strong in Japanese because they are used less often by Japanese people (ibid.).

As Cohan and Shires explain, the reference code is "a general category" that includes topics like popular culture, religion, class, ethnicity, gender, family, love, and so on (128). The function of this code is "to provide a text with cultural frames of reference: a heterogeneous mix of intertextual citations to the already said, the maxims of truth circulating through a culture and accepted as the given knowledge of common sense" (ibid.).

A translator needs to be aware of cultural situations and differences in order to

decode these cultural signs properly. According to Netley, the problem of decoding and translating cultural signs is "how to communicate such information to the reader without lengthy, tedious explanation" (200).

As for the reference code, the different school situations of Great-Britain and Japan has influenced Mineo Miyashita, translator of the Japanese version of *Matilda*. While the three 8-year-old children consulted by Netley found the character of Miss Trunchbull, the tyrannical headmistress, "particularly funny, rather than frightening", Miyashita seems to have taken her horrid regime very seriously (195-96, 200). This is probably because Matilda's school situation is more realistic than funny to Japanese readers. In Japan, education is very coercive; corporal punishment is still practiced by teachers, and as a result more and more children refuse to attend classes and become aggressive towards their parents and teachers (200). Therefore, Roald Dahl is praised in Japan especially for his morality. In Britain, on the other hand, where his books are considered to be "popular" fiction, there is a lot more hostile criticism. As John Rowe Townsend explained, Dahl has been charged with "sadism, misogyny, the identification of women with villainous magic, obsession with the excremental, and the encouragement of children's vengeful and aggressive impulses" (ibid., 201).

While the English version of Matilda is written in a colloquial style and therefore easy to understand, the Japanese translation is quite different: "the tone of the storytelling is rather formal and serious" (Netley 195-96). This is due to the fact that this translation is in a more "written style", containing "expressions very unlikely to be used in ordinary conversation" (196).

This difference in tone is also shown in the subjectivity of narration: the person who tells the story. Within the text (narration), there is the "narrating subject" - the narrator, who is either anonymous or one of the book's characters - and the "subject of narration", which is often a character of the book (ibid.). In Japanese, the language that is used depends on who speaks to whom. Factors that determine the mode of

speaking are: age, gender, social and psychological status, and so on (197). Strangely enough, the narrating subjects "we" and "one" that are present in the English version, have entirely disappeared in the Japanese version. The result is that the Japanese reader is distanced from and less involved in the story, while the English reader participates in the narration (ibid.).

In the next paragraphs, I will elaborate on the specific translation difficulties, including CSI's, that I found in *Paper Towns*, and discuss how the cultural codes are important in my translation.

2.4. *Paper Towns*: an analysis

Paper Towns was published in the United States in October 2008 and it became instantly popular. It won the Edgar Award for best young adult novel in 2009 and the Corine Literature Prize in 2010. Green's earlier two novels, *Looking for Alaska* (2005) and *An Abundance of Katherines* (2006), also won several awards.

2.4.1. Plot

Paper Towns is about Quentin Jacobsen, who is often simply called Q by his friends. He lives in Orlando, Florida. Q is desperately in love with his classmate and girl next door, Margo Roth Spiegelman. The problem is that their love is not mutual; Margo is an eccentric and unreachable girl. She is different than other girls. She has already run away from home several times, and although she always came back, one day she seems to have left for good. This happens after the night in which Q and Margo get into mischief to some hated classmates (see paragraph 4.1 and 4.2). While nobody knows where Margo is, Quentin discovers she left clues for him on where to find her. One of these clues is *Leaves of Grass*, a 19th century poetry collection by Walt Whitman. He does not know for sure, but Q assumes quotes from this poem may lead him to Margo. It is their senior year of high school, and although their

graduation is only a few days away, Q and his friends Radar, Ben and Lacey decide not to attend but instead go search for Margo. Their bizarre and funny road trip (see also paragraph 4.7 and 4.8) takes them all the way to Agloe in New York, a so-called "paper town". During his quest for Margo, and especially with help from Whitman's poem "Song of Myself", Quentin does not only discover Margo's identity, but also his own identity.

2.4.2. Characteristics and themes

Many of Nilsen and Donelson's characteristics discussed in paragraph 2.1 are also present in *Paper Towns*. First of all, the story is told from the viewpoint of Quentin; he is the narrator. As a result of this, readers get to know him best, and they can identify with his thoughts. We do not learn that much from the other characters, apart from their dialogues.

The second characteristic, which is that young adults have to deal with their problems themselves, also applies to Green's novel. Quentin feels that he should be the one to find Margo; neither his, nor her parents can do anything about her departure. Margo's parents call on detective Otis Warren for help, but he only plays a minor role. Margo also feels lonely in dealing with her problems: she cannot talk to her parents. In fact, she hates them. After all, she has not run away for nothing.

Another characteristic of *Paper Towns* is Green's fast-paced telling of the story. The plot is fairly easy to follow, and there are not too many plot strands or characters that may confuse the reader.

The novel surely includes multiple subjects and genres, for example love, drama and mystery. It really is a coming-of-age novel.

Nilsen and Donelson's fifth characteristic, saying that many YA books include characters from other ethnic and cultural groups, can only to some extent be found. Radar, one of Quentin's friends, is a black guy, but apart from this we do not learn much of his person. However, at some point there is a remarkable situation. During

their road trip to Agloe, Ben accidentally buys Radar a racist shirt at a petrol station (Green 256). It has a huge Confederate flag and the words "Heritage not Hate" on it, referring to the years around the American Civil War (1861-1865) in which many black Union soldiers were enslaved and killed by the Confederates. In 1961, the Confederate States of America had seceded themselves from the rest of the United States. They consisted of twelve southern states where slavery was legal. Despite this background, Radar can see the joke of it, and this causes the white man behind the counter to stare at him in surprise.

One might argue whether *Paper Towns* should be described as an optimistic or pessimistic book in general. It is pessimistic in the sense that Margo decides not to return home, but despite this, Quentin understands Margo's thoughts and accepts her decision.

As mentioned earlier, a quest story like this is a popular way for authors to let their characters develop themselves and enter challenges. Their nineteen-hour road trip surely was a big, but also a risky challenge as they did not tell their parents anything, let alone the fact that they would miss graduation.

To conclude, the most important developmental tasks by Havighurst (see paragraph 2.1) that are present in *Paper Towns* are: achieving a masculine or feminine sex role, achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults, and developing a personal ideology and ethical standards.

2.5. Translating *Paper Towns*

In this paragraph, as well as in chapter 3 and the footnotes in my own translation, I will discuss the most important translation problems in *Paper Towns*. In addition, I will compare certain difficulties with the actual translation by Aleid van Eekelen-Benders, published in 2009 by Lemniscaat. I translated the passages in chapter 4 according to the literary translation contract, formulated as "a translation that is equivalent to style and content, written in impeccable Dutch directly from the source

text".[2]

The Dutch version of *Paper Towns* is part of a series of young adult translations from the United States, called "Made in the USA". Other books in the series, among others, are from Jordan Sonnenblick (*Drums, Girls & Dangerous Pie* and *Notes from the Midnight Driver*), Steve Kluger (*My Most Excellent Year*), E.L. Konigsburg (*Silent to the Bone*) and Gail Giles (*Right Behind You*). Lemniscaat's "Made in the USA" is not a revolutionary idea; already in the 1970s and 1980s, they published teenage novels, most of which were translations (Postema 48). From 2005 until 2007, Lemniscaat published the "In Between" series, of which Green's *19 keer Katherine* (*An Abundance of Katherines*) and Brett Easton Ellis' *Minder dan niks* (*Less than Zero*) were part. "In Between" was not quite successful, though, partly because the novels were issued in a youth and adult edition (48-49).

In contrast to the previous young adult series, the Dutch translations of "Made in the USA" have kept their American title. Each translation got a Dutch subtitle in addition. In full, *Paper Towns* is called *Paper towns - waar is Margo Roth Spiegelman?* ("where is Margo Roth Spiegelman?"), whereas *My Most Excellent Year* got the subtitle "Honkbal, musicals en politiek - een verhaal over liefde" ("Baseball, musicals and politics - a story about love").

The choice of an American title for a fully translated novel seems remarkable as the original titles might not be that easy to Dutch readers. The reason for this could be Stephenie Meyer's successful *Twilight* fantasy series, of which the first book was translated into Dutch under the title *Twilight*. For marketing ends, the preservation of American titles could be a strategic choice, but they may also confuse readers (Postema 49). Carlijn van Ravenstein, employed at Lemniscaat, admits that people assume the books are in English instead of Dutch translations. However, she says young adults react positively to the English titles ("Post" 49). Unfortunately, she does

[2] Source: www.vvl.nu/php/download.php?txt_id=338&suffix=1

not explain why Lemniscaat decided to retain the original titles.

2.5.1. Culture-specific items

As we have read in paragraph 2.2, Aixelá divides culture-specific items (CSI's) into two groups: proper nouns and common expressions (59). In the following two subparagraphs, I will discuss the biggest translation barriers on the basis of this distinction and comment on the actual Dutch translation of *Paper Towns*.

2.5.1.1. Common expressions

Common expressions include "objects, institutions, habits and opinions restricted to each culture and that cannot be included in the field of proper names" (Aixelá 59). The most eye-catching CSI's in the book are those referring to the American school system, such as the letter grades (see paragraph 4.2) and "high school". As the Dutch school system differs from the American school system, the latter CSI should be preserved in the translation as it reminds the reader that the story is set in the United States.

However, words that describe a certain stage of high school ("fifth grade" or "tenth grade") form a bigger challenge to the translator. As Aixelá pointed out, an exoticizing strategy such as repetition could distance the reader from the novel due to the cultural gap. A literal translation of "tenth grade" ("de tiende klas") may confuse the Dutch reader because there is no "tiende klas" in the Dutch school system. Secondary school has only six forms or grades at the most, of which the fourth form is comparable to tenth grade. Thus, will teenage readers be able to make out that students in "de tiende klas" must be around 16 years old? Van Eekelen-Benders used a conservative translation strategy: "tenth grade" has become "de tiende klas", "fifth grade" is "de vijfde klas", and so on. When reading "de tiende klas", a Dutch reader will probably have a different connotation, and perhaps no connotation at all, than an American reader. To avoid this confusion, a substitution

would be clearer to the target audience. For instance, a limited universalization like "de vierde klas" (in the Netherlands, the fourth year of secondary school) or a more neutral phrase like "twee jaar geleden" ("two years ago") will not distract the reader. In line with the CSI's "high school" and "tenth grade", "freshmen" (first-year students) and "sophomores" (second-year students) require a deliberate translation choice. In *Paper Towns*, Quentin asks Margo how she knows Gus, the security guard at the SunTrust Building. She replies: "He was a senior when we were freshmen" (Green 55). So, Gus was in his final year of high school, while Q and Margo were only in their first year. Van Eekelen-Benders, however, has inserted, as explained above, an American CSI in her Dutch translation: "Hij zat in de twaalfde klas toen wij in de negende zaten" ("He was in twelfth grade when we were in ninth grade") (PT 58[3]). This translation is not incorrect in itself, but the strategy is questionable. Again, Dutch readers might have doubts about "de twaalfde klas", while they probably will not realise that twelfth graders are in fact in their final year.

A direct translation of "freshman" is not too hard to find. In Dutch, "brugpieper" is used a lot, but that might be 'too Dutch' and it sounds derogatory as well, while "freshman" does not. "Eerstejaars" ("first-years" or "first-year students"), however, covers the meaning of "fresh, new students" and is recognizable to the target audience. Therefore, a rather neutral sentence like "Hij zat in het examenjaar toen wij eerstejaars waren" ("He was in his final year when we were first-years") reads more naturally in Dutch than a sentence containing a typical American expression like "twelfth grade". The same goes for "eerste- en tweedejaars" ("freshmen and sophomores" in the original) instead of "negende- en tiendeklassers" in the existing translation (PT 88).

After the funny moment with Radar's racist T-shirt (see paragraph 2.4.2.), Q buys Radar a new (pink) T-shirt that reads "World's Best Grandma" (Green 264). Like the

[3] Since the Dutch translation by Aleid van Eekelen-Benders has the same title as the original (leaving the Dutch subtitle aside), I will refer to this translation with "PT".

group of proper nouns, you could also make the distinction of loaded and conventional expressions. The "Heritage not Hate" example is a "loaded expression", referring to a historical fact in American history, while "World's Best Grandma" has no particular reference and could therefore be called "conventional". Conventional proper nouns, which are seen as "unmotivated" and "meaningless", are more and more repeated, transcribed or transliterated nowadays (Aixelá 59-60).

If we look at some buildings mentioned in the story, we can conclude that the context may not always allow the translator to repeat the original name in the target text. When Q and Margo head for the SunTrust Building, they go past the Tower of Light, a glassy sculpture that is also nicknamed Asparagus. Quentin observes the Asparagus and thinks: "At any rate, it certainly does *not* look like a Tower of Light, which is the actual name of the sculpture" (Green 54). The culture-specific item (Tower of Light) is embedded in the sentence in such a way that it sounds awkward when repeated in the Dutch translation. Therefore, it is explicable that Van Eekelen-Benders has translated the CSI as "Toren van Licht" (PT 57). However, translating "SunTrust Building" as "SunTrust gebouw" is not as obvious as it seems. Indeed, "Empire State Building" is used in Dutch; no one would ever say "Empire State gebouw". While Van Eekelen-Benders translated "Tower of Light", she preserved "het SunTrust Building", which nevertheless sounds awkward (PT 150). A translator has to make an assessment in what sounds more natural or more obvious in his target text.

However, in some cases, the translator seems to have no choice other than repeating the original CSI in the translation if there is no Dutch equivalent available. The term "urban exploring" also belongs to this category. When Q and his friends are looking for Margo in a deserted building in a so-called pseudovision, they bump into some "urban explorers". The explorers tell them they observe and photograph abandoned buildings in their spare time. The terms "urban exploring", "urban exploration" and "urbex" are used interchangeably, but there is no Dutch translation. Although the

frequent use of English might put off the target audience, in this case there are not that many possibilities other than the retention of "urban exploring" in the Dutch translation. Fortunately, this does not affect the understanding of the story as it is explained to the reader what it means. Therefore, there is no additional explanation (an intra- or extratextual gloss) necessary.

2.5.1.2. Proper nouns

Proper nouns can be divided into two groups: conventional and loaded proper nouns (Aixelá 59). As explained in the previous paragraph, conventional proper names (in *Paper Towns*: Quentin and Margo for example) are nearly always repeated in the translation, while loaded names have a specific meaning or function related to the story and are therefore often necessary to translate.

Ben was nicknamed "Bloody Ben" after having a kidney infection. Apart from the reference to blood, "bloody" can also mean "damned" or "cursed". Regarding the fact that Ben's friends sometimes cannot stand him (Quentin at some point calls him "an asshole"), Green might well have chosen "bloody" for this specific purpose as well. With a Dutch translation of "bloody", it is hard to retain this latter connotation. The adjective "bloederig" is the most direct translation of "bloody", but it misses the personal connotation and also sounds less fluent in the target text. The best option, therefore, is to repeat the nickname "Bloody Ben" in the translation.

Apart from the above mentioned nickname, some proper names are also chosen for a particular reason. Quentin does not want to go to prom with Cassie Hiney because of her surname, which means "buttocks". Quentin tells the reader: "[I] *could* have asked Cassie Hiney, who was actually perfectly nice and pleasant and cute, despite having a fantastically unfortunate last name" (Green 11-12). However, if readers do not know the word "hiney", they will wonder why it is such a "fantastically unfortunate last name". This is an excellent example of how the translator has to ask himself whether the target audience will understand the joke or not. Translating her last

name would not correspond with the other characters in the book, who all have American names. Thus, to avoid the loss of meaning in the translation, an explanation seems necessary. Van Eekelen-Benders added the intratextual gloss "Want zeg nou zelf: je zal toch maar 'kont' heten", which more or less means "Imagine you would be called 'ass'" (PT 16).

There are several other nicknames in the book that require a similar strategy, or at least a translation instead of repetition. The following examples, however, are concerned with nicknames of objects. Quentin and his friends call Ben's old Buick "RHAPAW", which stands for "Rode Hard And Put Away Wet" (Green 90). This acronym will not appeal to Dutch readers, so the translator has to invent a new acronym that also includes the bad condition of the car. Van Eekelen-Benders translated the acronym as "Vat Roest Onder Een Modderlaag" ("piece of scrap iron covered with a layer of mud"). It adds a second connotation to the translation, as not only the separate words, but also the acronym VROEM: "vroem" (in English, "vroom") is an onomatopoeia used to describe the sound of an accelerating car.

2.5.2. Style

Apart from the culture-specific items that provide a typical American setting, the novel's style also plays a crucial role. For example, the various characters can be distinguished by their use of language; it determines their personality. The semic code (see paragraph 2.3) is really important in *Paper Towns*.

To the field of common expressions, discussed in the previous paragraph, we can also reckon exclamations of amazement or youth slang, like "what the hell", "chill the hell out", "holy shitstickers", "crap", or "I'm freaked out". With every single expression, the translator should be careful not to weaken his translation, but instead find a Dutch equivalent that is as strong as the original. These expressions are extremely important, because they are typical of today's youth slang and distinguish the different characters in the book. Some words could also be regarded as CSI's.

Especially Ben has a big mouth and makes sexist remarks. To a lesser extent, minor characters like Chuck Parson also swear a lot, while Radar is much calmer. This difference in use of language should also be clear in the translation.

Despite the infrequent appearance of adults in the book, their language use clearly shows the huge difference with teenagers in that respect. This is especially visible in chapter 15, during Quentin's conversation with his parents (see paragraph 4.5 and 4.6). When the name Chuck Parson is mentioned, Q says he is an asshole, while his father says he is just a bully whose behaviour is "deplorable" (Green 198). His use of the word "deplorable" reveals the difference in register between Q's parents and the teenage characters of the book. Their rather formal tone contrasts sharply with the use of slang and the often blunt remarks made by young adult characters like Ben, Chuck and Quentin. Although we are told that Q's parents are fiercely discussing politics in the Middle East, the image that is being created in this particular passage is that of two wise people who think properly before saying something, while the younger characters are less subtle in their expressions.

Abusive words in particular show the lack of subtlety. Although the book is not very abusive in general, we can find several swear words in some passages. When someone calls Ben a "shitface", Quentin remarks that Ben probably had not "the faintest idea he'd just been insulted" (187). While Van Dale dictionary translates "shithead" as "klootzak" or "schoft", Van Eekelen-Benders used "zeikerd", a much weaker translation (PT 187). As a result, the joke disappears (which is that Ben did not even realise he had been insulted) because the insult has become less strong in the translation.

3. Intertextuality

This chapter will be on Barthes' reference code: the presence of extra-textual referentiality in *Paper Towns* (see paragraph 2.3). After explaining some academic sources on this subject, I will discuss how these intertextual elements can possibly be translated on the basis of these sources.

3.1. Terminology

The sources mentioned in this chapter are borrowed from Inge Boesewinkel's master thesis on intertextuality in David Lodge's novel *Nice Work.*

First of all, we should distinguish two text types when talking about intertextuality: the *architext* - the original source that is referred to - and the *fenotext*, which is the new text containing references to this architext. On the one hand, intertextuality helps us to distinguish different genres: "the intertextuality theory is based on the fact that texts relate to each other because there are common grounds. These grounds may be graphic, phonic, syntactic or semantic and result in classes of texts" (Claes qtd. in Boesewinkel 8). This is called *generic* intertextuality. This study, however, will mainly discuss *specific* intertextuality: parts of the fenotext that refer to parts of one specific architext.

These intertextual parts can roughly be divided into *quotations* and *allusions*. Quotations - repetitions from poems, novels or songs - are usually easy to recognise by the italic print or the addition of quotation marks. The allusion has a much broader meaning in that it is part of "a large spectrum of phenomena, all having in common the notion of reference to some extra-textual source" (Weizman qtd. in Boesewinkel 9). As opposed to the explicit (covert) allusion, indirect (covert) allusions are more difficult to discover for readers as well as translators. The words or word combinations showing the presence of an allusion are called the *marker*:

"such indicators of intertextuality are a call for the reader to start making associations with other sources and might be graphical (e.g. italics, quotation marks), the use of another language, old or different spelling, the use of indirect speech, a different style or the mentioning of an author or title" (Boesewinkel 9). The latter example is called a *titular allusion*. According to Koster, allusions can either affect minor parts of the fenotext (*local* allusions), or affect the fenotext as a whole (*structural* allusions) when the relationship between elements of the fenotext is the same as the relationship between elements in the architext (ibid.). In addition, Paul Claes uses terms including *lexical* allusion - paraphrastic or synonymous expressions - and *textual* allusions referring to architexts as a whole.

Another useful distinction is the *passive* (weak) allusion or quotation as opposed to *active* (strong) forms of intertextuality. As Elda Weizman describes in her article "Allusions and quotations as a translation problem", "it is strong when knowledge and belief systems beyond the text itself are activated, to enrich the interpretation; it is weak, when internal ties within the text itself are exploited to establish coherence and continuity" (qtd. in Boesewinkel 10).

As Boesewinkel correctly argues, recognition of intertextual elements is only the first step in the translation process. The crucial part is, initially, the translator's interpretation and later on the reader's interpretation of the extra-textual references. Claes sums up Ben-Porat's four stages in the identification of quotes and allusions: "(a) recognition of the marker, (b) identification of the quoted text, (c) adaptation of the original interpretation of the text as a result of the interaction between both texts and (d) forming intertextual patterns between both texts as a whole (ibid., 11). However, Ben-Porat does not seem to bear in mind the importance of the reader in this process. After all, when the reader does not recognise the marker, he might not notice the presence of intertextuality. Leppihalme adds that "the words of the allusion function as a clue to the meaning, but the meaning can usually be understood only if the receiver can connect the clue with an earlier use of the same or

similar words in another source" (ibid.).

3.2. Translating allusions and quotations

3.2.1. Theory

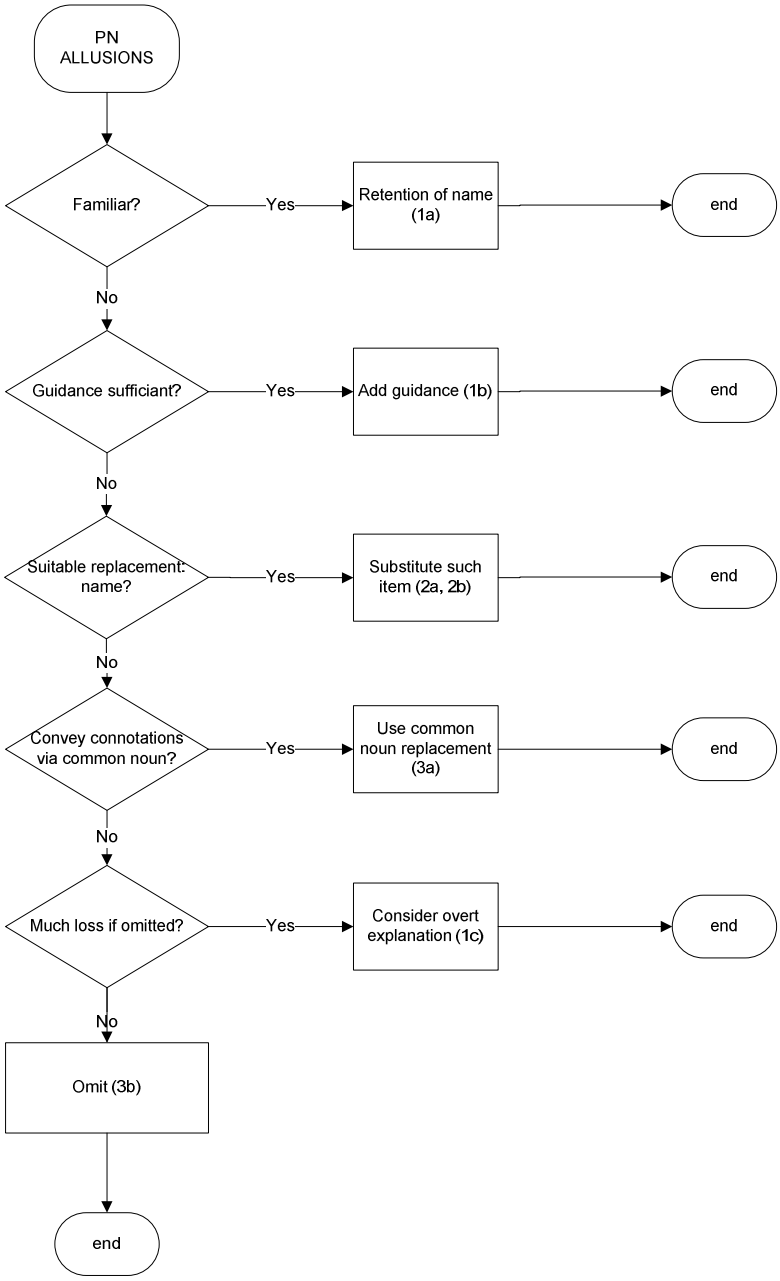
Perhaps the most extensive study on the translation of allusions is Ritva Leppihalme's *Culture Bumps* (1997). These 'culture bumps' (i.e. "a situation where the reader of a target text has a problem understanding a source-cultural allusion") should be avoided by the translator (qtd. in Boesewinkel 41).

According to Leppihalme, any translation process, whether there is intertextuality or not, consists of three stages: (1) an analysis of the source text (ST) and of the translation task in question; (2) problem-solving; and (3) reverbalisation. The difficulty of dealing with allusions lies in the fact that "TT readers have a different cognitive environment from ST readers" (ibid.). The translator has to decide which allusions should be dealt with differently, e.g. which allusions should be explicated in the translation.

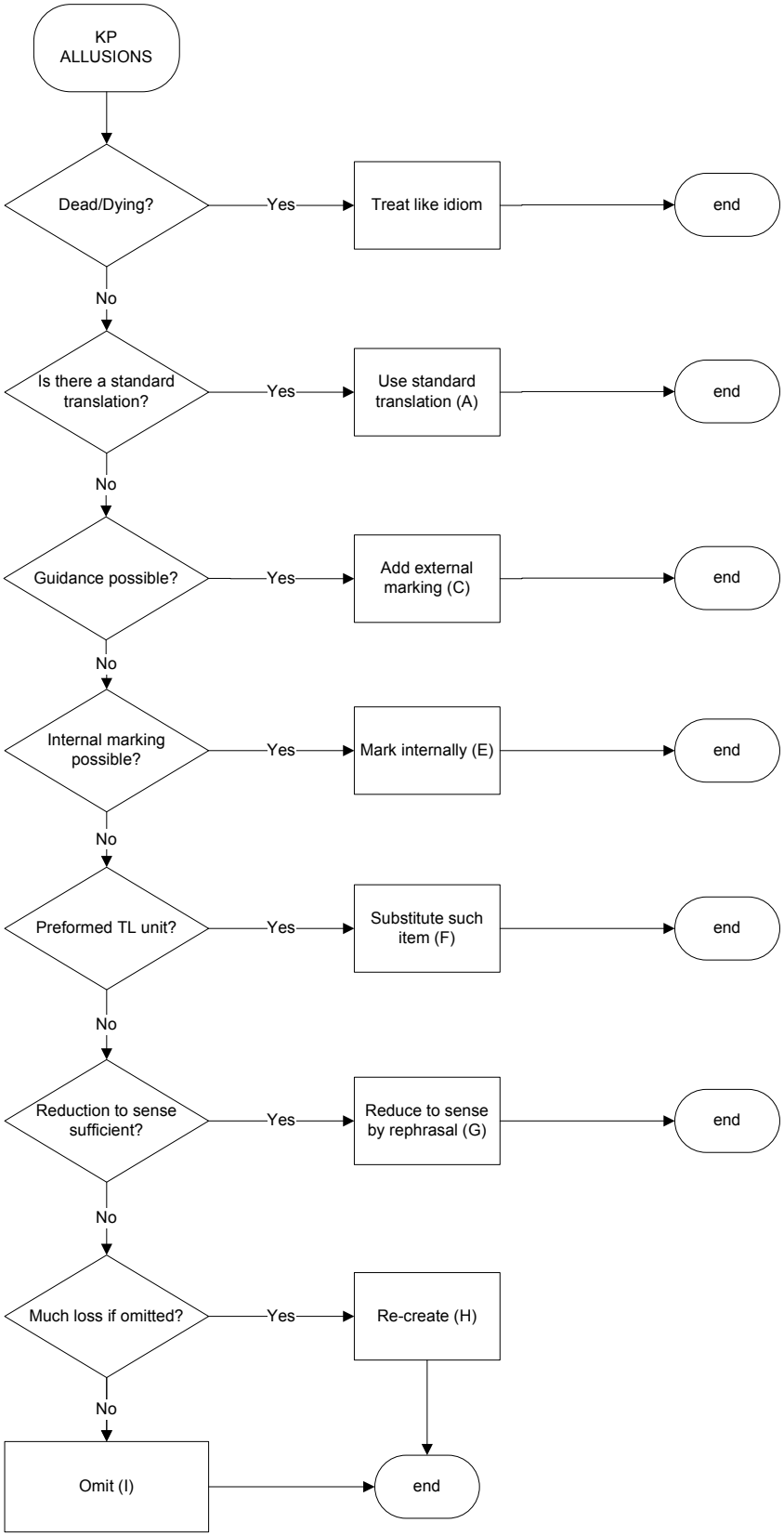
Rather than distinguishing between quotations and allusions, Leppihalme speaks of *proper-name allusions* and *key-phrase allusions*, i.e. any allusions without proper names in it. For both groups, she presents a scheme showing a potential translation strategy (see the next two pages).

As the second scheme shows, when translating a key-phrase allusion, the first thing the translator has to ask himself is whether he is dealing with a *dead* allusion or not. These are allusions of which the meaning is clear, but the actual reference is not. Leppihalme argues that if the source is not relevant for the story itself, dead allusions should be treated as idioms (Boesewinkel 42). If the allusion in question is not dead, the preferred option is to use a standard translation that already exists. However, if such a standard translation is not present, it becomes more complicated. The next options the translator has to consider are options C and E in the scheme: the addition

of either an external or internal marking. These strategies are similar to Aixelá's extratextual and intratextual gloss (see paragraph 2.2). The other options, including the replacement of an SL allusion with a TL-specific allusion (F), seem less recommended as it distracts the reader from the other culture he learns about. It is a naturalizing strategy which makes the presence of a TL-specific item very awkward (ibid., 44). In such cases, omission would be a better option as the alternative, e.g. a TL-specific allusion, could be a 'culture bump': "an element in the text that is so strange and unexpected for the reader that on the one hand it gets more attention than it deserves and on the other that it gets the wrong attention because the reader does not understand the function or meaning of this text element" (Boesewinkel 44).



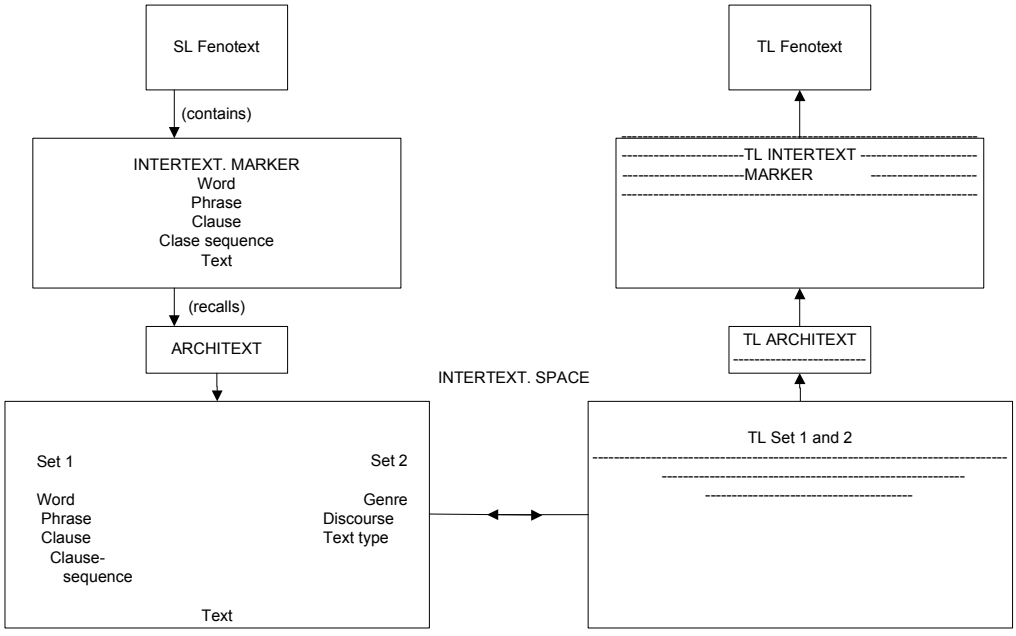
Model for the translation of proper name allusions



Model for the translation of key-phrase allusions

Two other translation theorists who wrote about intertextuality, though less thoroughly than Leppihalme, are Basil Hatim and Ian Mason. In *Discourse and the Translator* (1990), they describe the allusion as a "dynamic process" in which "we relate textual occurrences to each other and recognize them as signs which evoke whole areas of our previous textual experience" (qtd. in Boesewinkel 45). Like Leppihalme, they also discuss active and passive intertextuality, as well as the important term *mediation*, which is formulated by Hatim and Mason as "the extent to which one feeds one's current beliefs and goals into the model of the communicative situation" (ibid.). In other words, the translator is a mediator who should find out to what extent mediation is necessary in the translation process. When the distance between architext and fenotext is big, the degree of mediation is high, whereas it is lower if this distance is rather small.

Hatim and Mason created the following scheme (slightly adapted by Boesewinkel), showing the translation process.



Translation process according to Hatim and Mason

They added the term "intertextual space", which is "the area being traversed by a sign from the architext to the fenotext" (ibid., 46). Furthermore, they do not only distinguish between the SL fenotext (the original text that is being translated) and TL fenotext (the translation itself), but they also included the architext in both the source language and the target language, i.e. the target audience.
In addition to this scheme, Hatim and Mason suggest to strive for the following goals (in hierarchical order) in an inter-semiotic translation of intertextual references.

> 1. Retain semiotic status (the relation between the sign and other signs in the text)
> 2. Retain intentionality - the function of the marker
> 3. Retain linguistic devices which uphold coherence
> 4. Preserve, if possible, the informational (denotative) status
> 5. Preserve, if possible, the extra-linguistic status - e.g. the genre
> (qtd. in Boesewinkel 47)

Another translation theorist who devoted himself to translation studies, including the topic of intertextuality, is Lawrence Venuti. Despite the fact that a translator tries to maintain the intertextual elements, Venuti describes intertextuality as "an interpretation that plays havoc with equivalence and leaves unaltered neither the foreign text nor the translating culture" (ibid.). He argues that any translation process is a "decontextualizing process": intertextuality in the source text can never be entirely recreated in the translation "because the translator dismantles, rearranges and finally displaces the chain of foreign signifiers" (ibid.). Moreover, the intratextual context, the intertextual and interdiscursive context and the context of reception are lost in the translation. Therefore, complete equivalence to the source text cannot be achieved as it would deny the losses (48). Like many others, Venuti

condemns the idea of using paratextual devices (e.g. footnotes) to compensate for these losses, because "the translator's work ceases to be translating and becomes commentary" (ibid.).

Opposed to this decontextualization, there is also *re*contextualization since the translation is situated in a different language and culture, having different values, literary traditions and social institutions. A translation is not just a translation of an earlier text, it is a new text existing on its own. According to Venuti, existing elements in the source text are replaced by "textual effects that exceed a lexicographical equivalence and work only in the translating language and culture" (qtd. in Boesewinkel 48). The translator recontextualizes the source text by applying *formal* and *thematic interpretants,* the former referring to concepts of equivalence or stylistic adaptations, the latter meaning specific ideas and beliefs or particular interpretations that fit into the translation. As a result of recontextualization, the allusions in the target text may differ from those in the source text in that they evoke different architexts (51).

Intertextual aspects in a translation are not only a matter of interpretation, but also of *interrogation*: "they inscribe meanings and values that invite a critical understanding of the quoted or imitated texts, even the cultural traditions and social institutions in which those texts are positioned, while simultaneously inviting the reader to understand the foreign text on the basis of texts, traditions, and institutions specific to the target culture" (49).

Other views on the translation of intertextuality are more or less similar to those discussed above. Sandor Hervey and Ian Higgins also mention the frequent use of compensating translations in case there is no suitable equivalent. Eleonora Federici suggests the addition of a glossary or footnotes for culture-specific items or idiomatic expressions, but one might question the value and necessity of them (50).

3.2.2. Practice

3.2.2.1. Paper towns

The most visible allusion in John Green's novel is the title itself: paper towns. At first, you might not expect this to be an allusion, as the two separate words are rather straightforward. The term "paper towns" seems to be invented by Margo. During their night-time pranks, Margo and Quentin enter the SunTrust Building to overlook the city, and, as Margo explains, to "check on our progress" (Green 54). Once they are at the top of the building, Quentin says he likes the view from up there. Margo, however, disapproves the city of Orlando:

> You see how fake it all is. It's not even hard enough to be made out of plastic. It's a paper town. (…) All those paper people living in their paper houses, burning the future to stay warm. (…) All the things paper-thin and paper-frail. And all the people, too. I've lived here for eighteen years and I have never once in my life come across anyone who cares about anything that matters (Green 57-58).

Later on, Quentin tells his friends what she had said to him: "She kind of hates Orlando; she called it a paper town. Like, you know, everything so fake and flimsy. I think she just wanted a vacation from that" (108). Margo's ideas quoted above fit together with what she says earlier in the story, when she also talks about the casualness of life (see paragraph 4.2).

The second meaning, turning "paper town" into an allusion, is revealed when Quentin discovers that Margo is probably hiding in Agloe. As he browses the Internet, he learns that Agloe is in fact a fictitious village functioning as a copyright trap: "Cartographers create fictional landmarks, streets, and municipalities and place

them obscurely into their maps. If the fictional entry is found on another cartographer's map, it becomes clear a map has been plagiarized" (235-36).

Curiously, the Dutch translation has retained its English title, as well as the other books in the "Made in the USA" series. Moreover, a Dutch subtitle was added to the original American title. As explained earlier, such a choice is never made by the translator (in this case Aleid van Eekelen-Benders), but it is the publisher who chooses the title, usually for marketing reasons.
Lemniscaat possibly wanted to emphasize the fact that these books are translations from the USA, while books from the earlier "In Between" series may not seem to be translations at first sight as these titles *were* translated into Dutch. Another explanation could have been the difficulty of the titles: could Dutch translations harm the original titles? The answer seems to be no, as most of the book titles in the "Made in the USA" series (e.g. *My Most Excellent Year*, *Right Behind You*) should not be too difficult to translate. Looking at Leppihalme's scheme used for key-phrase allusions (page 46), the second question (i.e. "Is there a standard translation?") can already be answered affirmatively. As we have seen, "paper towns" is simply translated as "papieren steden" in the book itself, so a Dutch title would seem more logical. In Dutch, the term does not need any further explanation, as both meanings (the flimsiness of life and the reference to copyright traps) are explained and revealed by the characters.

3.2.2.2. Mountweazel

Myrna Mountweazel is Margo's dog, whose name perhaps does not seem to have any special meaning to readers. However, the underlying thought is similar to the "paper towns" allusion.
Like "paper towns", "Mountweazels" is another term for fictitious entries in reference works such as encyclopaedia's and maps, in order to reveal copyright

infringement. The name "Mountweazel" first appeared in the 1975 edition of the *New Columbia Encyclopedia*. It claimed Lillian Virginia Mountweazel was an American photographer who lived from 1942 to 1973 (Wilton, par. 4-5). However, she never existed.

In contrast to "paper towns", "Mountweazel" is used as a proper name in the book. If we look at Leppihalme's scheme on how to treat proper name allusions, the second question in particular seems difficult to answer if we want to translate "Mountweazel" (see page 45). The first question ("Is it a familiar name?") can be answered with a *no*, looking from the target reader's perspective. This is where the translator also becomes a mediator who should project himself into the target audience: how much prior knowledge do they have and when is an explanation needed? I suppose Dutch readers will not recognise the underlying meaning of "Mountweazel", so the first option (retention of the proper name) should for now be excluded.

The second question in the scheme is: "Will guidance be sufficient"? You could also add the question whether it is possible to add an explanation. The most obvious option would be to add a footnote, but this is often not recommended in a literary translation. An explanation in the text itself, on the other hand, would be rather awkward and irrelevant in the beginning of the story. So, although guidance would be sufficient to explain the meaning, it seems to be impossible to implement without distracting the reader.

The next two questions in the scheme can also be answered in the negative. There is neither another name, nor a common noun that could function as a suitable replacement as "Mountweazel" is such a language-specific term. A neutralising common noun like "dog" does not convey the same connotation as the original.

The last question is whether there is much loss if the name is omitted in the translation. I think this question can be answered from two perspectives. On the one hand, you might claim there is no loss if you think the source readers will not be

aware of the allusion to copyright traps. After all, if source readers do not recognise the allusion, it is most likely that the same applies to target readers.
On the other hand, you could argue that there *is* loss if it is omitted. Linking this allusion to the "paper town" allusion, you could say they are both too important for the story to be removed. If target readers know from early on in the story that "Mountweazel" is actually not a name Margo invented for her dog, but a reference to copyright traps, they might be more able to read Margo's mind. In that case, they could also predict what "paper town" means and where she is hiding. Readers could get more carried away and it adds a new dimension to the story if they are one step ahead of the characters in their quest for Margo.
Instead of an internal explanation, the translator might consider an explanatory note prior to the story. Those opposed to this choice could argue that you should not lead someone by the hand, but instead should leave space for the reader's imagination.

Van Eekelen-Benders retained the name Myrna Mountweazel in the translation, but that does not automatically mean she thought the term would sound familiar to the target audience (regarding the first question in Leppihalme's model). She might not have been aware of the specific reference, leaving her no other choice but to retain the name.

3.2.2.3. "Heritage not Hate"

Many of the previously discussed culture-specific items (names of institutions, buildings etc.) can also be viewed as allusions. One of them is the slogan "Heritage not Hate" on Radar's shirt (Green 256). As explained in chapter 2, the weird but funny thing is that Radar, a black guy, accepts to wear this racist shirt Ben bought at the petrol station. However, it is highly doubtful whether Dutch readers understand the irony as this part of American history will not be familiar to many of them. Therefore, an explanation seems necessary. The relationship between "Heritage not

Hate" and the fact that it is a racist shirt should be clarified in the target text, as this connection is also partly revealed in the source text. Van Eekelen-Benders added an "intratextual gloss", described by Aixelá as "the strategy of explicitness" (62). She added the explanatory phrase "de leus van de voorstanders van slavernij" ("the slogan of the advocates of slavery") to the sentence "Printed over the flag are the words Heritage not Hate" (PT 252). This works really well.
A literal translation of "Heritage not Hate" into Dutch would not make sense at all, because it would give the false impression that the historical fact took place in the Netherlands. Furthermore, it is not a universal historical fact (like the Second World War), but a typical American event.

Taking into account the retention of this slogan in the translation, it is useful to look at other (conventional) textual expressions as well. Opposed to the loaded expression "Heritage not Hate" is the conventional, rather meaningless expression "World's Best Grandma". You could argue that in order to be consistent, any other slogans or phrases should be borrowed from the source text. In that case, "World's Best Grandma", the text on another shirt, can simply be retained in the translation. A standard translation is really easy to find, but in combination with the racist shirt it may look awkward to stumble across two different shirts containing slogans in two different languages. However, remarkably enough, Van Eekelen-Benders translated these words ("Liefste Oma van de Wereld"), implying that there really is a Dutch text printed on the shirt. There is no loss if the original text is repeated, because the target audience will understand it and see the joke of it.

A textual expression that is comparable to the first slogan can be found when Quentin, Radar and Ben are looking for clues to find Margo. While they are playing *Resurrection* in Quentin's bedroom, Quentin stares out of the window and finds that there is a poster taped to the back of the shades of Margo's bedroom. It is the black-

and-white picture of Woody Guthrie holding his guitar with the words "This machine kills fascists" on it (Green 108). They decide to enter Margo's bedroom to see if the poster is meant as a clue. They are surprised to find an impressive collection of vinyl records. One of those records is Billy Bragg's *Mermaid Avenue*, containing songs by Woody Guthrie. The famous picture is on the back of the cover. One of the song titles on the list has been circled by Margo: "Walt Whitman's Niece". This clue leads them to Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, of which they find a copy a few minutes later.

Translating the phrase "This machine kills fascists" is impossible because it is a culture-specific item. An explanation is not relevant to the story as it functions not as a clue, but only as a means to find the next clue.

Regarding the three textual allusions discussed in this paragraph, we can conclude that loaded expressions ("Heritage not Hate", "This machine kills fascists") are often more problematic for translators than conventional expressions.

3.2.2.4. *Leaves of Grass*

Walt Whitman's collection of poems *Leaves of Grass* (first published in 1855) plays an important role in *Paper Towns.* One of the poems, "Song of Myself", serves as Quentin's guideline during his quest for Margo. It is a clear example of active (strong) intertextuality, as it influences the story. Apart from the titular allusions to *Leaves of Grass* and "Song of Myself" in particular, there are also several direct quotations to be found in the novel.

When Quentin, Radar and Ben find a copy of Whitman's collection in Margo's room, Quentin discovers that several lines from "Song of Myself" are highlighted. These are the lines quoted in the book:

Unscrew the locks from the doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

You shall no longer take things at second or third hand…
nor look through the eyes of the dead… nor feed on
the spectres in books.

I tramp a perpetual journey

All goes onward and outward… and nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and
luckier.

If no other in the world be aware I sit content,
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your bootsoles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you. (Green 116-17)

The first two lines are highlighted in green, while the others are in blue, so Quentin and his friends think the clue must be hidden in the first two lines. They discover these lines are not really poetry, but instructions. Quentin literally unscrews his bedroom's door and there he eventually finds the next clue (134).
The final three stanzas quoted above are also the final three stanzas of the poem itself. These are the most important lines since Quentin keeps thinking about what they mean. On the one hand, he thinks Margo is travelling around the world and wants to be found in the end ("I tramp a perpetual journey… I stop somewhere waiting for you"), but on the other hand he is afraid she committed suicide ("If you want me again look for me under your bootsoles").

The best option is to pick an existing Dutch translation of "Song of Myself" and copy the lines concerned. I will compare and analyse the following four translations:

1. "Het lied van mijn eigen ik" (1917) by Maurits Wagenvoort;
2. "Lied over mezelf" (2005) by 12 poets;
3. "Het lied van mijzelve" (2005) by Joris Lenstra;
4. "Zang van mezelf" (2007) by Jabik Veenbaas.

Wagenvoort and Veenbaas translated *Leaves of Grass,* the title of the entire collection, as *Grashalmen*, while the second version on the list above is called *Grasbladen*. This version is a translation by 22 Dutch poets[4] in total, twelve of whom worked on "Song of Myself" (Schoor 5). Joris Lenstra did not translate all poems, but only "Song of Myself". For her translation of *Paper Towns*, Van Eekelen-Benders used the second

[4] These poets are: Huub Beurskens, Anneke Brassinga, Tsead Bruinja, Geert Buelens, Maria van Daalen, Arjen Duinker, Jacob Groot, Kees 't Hart, Judith Herzberg, Gerrit Komrij, Rutger Kopland, Jan Kuijper, Astrid Lampe, Hagar Peeters, Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer, Toon Tellegen, Anne Vegter, Hans Verhagen, Peter Verhelst, Simon Vinkenoog, Elly de Waard and Menno Wigman.

translation listed above, which was published by Querido in 2005.

As the list shows, each title is already different from the others. A quick glance at the translations also shows the big differences. I will discuss the last three stanzas (see page 56) in each translation to see how they differ and which version would fit best in a Dutch translation of *Paper Towns*.
Wagenvoort's translation, dating back to 1917, is by far the oldest. He translated the final three stanzas as follows:

> Ik vermaak mij-zelf aan het slijk om er het gras uit te laten
> groeien dat ik liefheb,
> Indien gij mij opnieuw mocht wenschen te zien, zie dan naar
> mij uit onder uwe voeten.
>
> Gij zult nauwelijks kunnen weten wie ik ben of wat ik bedoel,
> Maar niettemin zal ik U welzijn schenken,
> En uw bloed zuiveren en krachtig maken.
>
> En indien gij mij aanvankelijk niet mocht kunnen vinden,
> verlies den moed niet,
> Onderzoek dan, na de eene, de andere plaats,
> Ergens toef ik en ergens wacht ik op U. (Wagenvoort 28)

The most important difference with the other translations is the formal tone: "gij" and "U" is used instead of "je" or "jou". Wagenvoort's version is also written in old spelling, e.g. the verb "wenschen" instead of "wensen" in the second line and "den moed" instead of "de moed". In an interview with literary magazine Meander, Jabik

Veenbaas, who also translated Whitman, describes Wagenvoort's translation as "highly outdated" (Vaan, par. 8).
The other three translations differ from each other in a more subtle way. The Querido edition, used by Van Eekelen-Benders, is more contemporary and easier to understand (see below).

> Ik vermaak mezelf aan de modder om eruit te ontkiemen als het
> gras dat ik liefheb,
> Als je me terug wil moet je me onder je schoenzolen zoeken.
>
> Je zult amper weten wie ik ben of wat ik bedoel,
> Niettemin zal ik je goed bekomen
> En je bloed zuiveren en sterken.
>
> Houd moed als je me niet meteen te pakken krijgt,
> Zoek elders als je me op de ene plek niet vindt,
> Ergens blijf ik op jou wachten. (qtd. in PT 117-18)

Lenstra's translation is a bit more wordy, especially in the last stanza. While the other two versions are more concise here, he uses the construction "mocht je" twice ("in case you…"):

> Ik laat mezelf na aan de aarde om te groeien van het gras waar ik om geef,
> Als je me weer nodig hebt, zoek naar me onder de zolen van je laarzen.
>
> Je zult nauwelijks weten wie ik ben of wat ik bedoel,
> Maar ik zal desondanks goed voor je zijn,

En je bloed zuiveren en aansterken.

Mocht het je niet lukken mij meteen te begrijpen, houd moed,
Mocht je me misgelopen zijn op een plek, zoek op een andere,
Ik sta ergens stil wachtend op jou.[5]

When Veenbaas was asked why he provided a new translation of Whitman's poems, he explained that the edition published by Querido is not uniform and at some points not always faithful to the original. According to Veenbaas, its weakness is in the fact that it was translated by different poets, who sometimes translated literally, but have also adapted some parts (Vaan, par. 8).
In the last three stanzas of the poem, these changes are mainly stylistic. It seems that those who worked on the Querido translation intended to make it more readable in Dutch. This is especially visible in the first two lines of the last stanza ("Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged / Missing me one place search another"). The last two words of each line ("keep encouraged" and "search another") have been moved to the front. So, instead of sticking to the original sequence of words, the first line was not translated as "Als je me niet meteen te pakken krijgt, houd moed", but as "Houd moed als je me niet meteen te pakken krijgt". Lenstra retained the sequence of words, but also used the "mocht je" construction in the last stanza. Veenbaas also stuck to the original as much as possible:

[5] Quoted on http://www.stichting-nadorst.nl/Lenstra/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50:whitman-walt-song-of-myself&catid=57:vertaalde-gedichten&Itemid=75

Ik laat mezelf na aan de aarde om te groeien uit het gras dat ik liefheb,
Wil je me weerzien, kijk dan onder je laarszolen.

Je zult amper weten wie ik ben of wat ik beteken,
Maar niettemin zal ik heilzaam voor je zijn,
En je bloed filteren en sterken.

Heb je me niet meteen in het vizier, houd moed,
Vind je me op één plek niet, zoek dan op een andere,
Ergens blijf ik op je staan wachten.[6]

In the interview with Sander de Vaan, Veenbaas illustrates some translation choices and explains why Whitman was such a special poet. Curiously, some of Whitman's character traits that Veenbaas describes also apply to Margo. As Veenbaas explains, "in the mid-nineteenth century, Whitman began to write parlando verses while most poets at the time held on to the straitjacket of rhyme and metrical regularity" (Vaan, par. 2). Whitman was a self-willed man; a libertine who could not fit into a steady job. He was narcissistic, even a megalomaniac: he anonymously wrote jubilant reviews of his own *Leaves of Grass* and put up a mausoleum for himself already before his death. However, Whitman also cared for other people (ibid., par. 3). Whitman and Margo seem to have a lot in common. Margo can also be called a libertine as she has a mind of her own and does not want to live the life that everyone leads. She is also narcissistic, though perhaps to a lesser extent. She dominates Quentin and does not show any consideration for her parents. Margo seems to be self-confident, but the truth is, as Quentin finds out, that she is actually very insecure.

[6] Quoted on http://eerder.meandermagazine.net/wereldpoezie/gedichten.php?txt=3522.

There are two important semantic differences between the three modern translations. The first is in the line "You will hardly know who I am or what I mean" in the second to last stanza of the poem. The verb "to mean" can be explained in two ways, shown in the following two sentences:

(1) I do not see what you mean
(2) She means everything to me

The first sentence means "I do not see what you want to say". In this case, "mean" can be translated by the Dutch verb "bedoelen". The translations by Querido and Lenstra both contain this verb, while Veenbaas opted for the meaning in the second sentence. He translated "to mean" as "betekenen", as if Whitman (and more specifically, Margo) wants to say that the reader (and in this context, Quentin) will hardly know what he/she means to *other people* and what life is. This is an important distinction, as the first meaning seems to refer to the previous line in the poem ("If you want me again look for me under your bootsoles"), while the second meaning ("betekenen" in Veenbaas' version) is more existential. I think it is this existential meaning that Whitman wanted to convey. It also matches better with Margo, who thinks a lot about the meaning of life.

The second semantic difference is in the line "Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged" in the last stanza. The Querido edition especially contains the physical translation of "to fetch", with the phrase "te pakken krijgen" ("to get hold of someone"). Lenstra's version does not contain this physical meaning at all. His translation "Mocht het je niet lukken mij meteen te begrijpen, houd moed" in fact means "Failing to *understand* me at first keep encouraged".
Veenbaas very cleverly managed to include both the physical meaning of actively

finding someone and the comprehensive meaning of being able to read someone's mind. In the line "Heb je me niet meteen in het vizier, houd moed", "in het vizier hebben" ("to have in sight") can refer to the literal meaning of seeing someone, but it can also refer to focussing on someone's thoughts.

Thus, although the translations published by Querido and Lenstra certainly have their advantages, I think the 2007 version by Jabik Veenbaas fits best into a new Dutch translation of *Paper Towns*, because it matches with Margo's way of thinking. You can say that Walt Whitman and Margo Roth Spiegelman share the same traits and are both very eccentric persons.

3.2.2.5. Other titular allusions

As Van Eekelen-Benders used the quotations from the Querido translation, she also copied the titles from this translation (*Grasbladen* and "Lied over mezelf").
Other titular allusions in *Paper Towns* are *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.
In her article on young adult novels from America, Maria Postema wonders why *Paper Towns* has not simply become *Papieren steden* in Dutch, while Van Eekelen-Benders *did* translate the first two book titles mentioned above into *De glazen stolp* and *Slachthuis vijf* (50).
In her reaction to Postema's article, Van Eekelen-Benders explains that translators usually have no involvement in what the title should be; that is up to the publisher. Moreover, the Dutch title is often already set even before the book is being translated. Also, in the case of *De glazen stolp* and *Slachthuis vijf*, she points out that whenever a book mentioned in the original has been translated into Dutch, she uses the Dutch title ("Post" 48). The only exception in *Paper Towns* was *The Great Gatsby*: Van Eekelen-Benders took over the original title because Quentin had to read the book for English class.

The latter choice is acceptable, but the decision to use the two aforementioned Dutch titles is not consistent in combination with *The Great Gatsby*. When the Dutch translation tells us that Margo owns a copy of *De glazen stolp*, it gives the false impression that she read a Dutch book. This might surprise and disturb the attentive reader. In contrast to *Leaves of Grass*, the other books are, concerning their content, not relevant to the story line. There are no quotations from these books, so the retention of the original title in a Dutch translation would not result in loss of meaning.

Similar inconsistencies can be found in the translation of Steve Kluger's *My Most Excellent Year*, another novel in the "Made in the USA" series. The translator, Ineke Lenting, retained all English quotations from songs, even if they occurred in dialogues. However, nearly all film quotations were translated (Postema 51).

4. Annotated translations

4.1. At the supermarket

One night, Margo secretly visits Quentin to take him with her during the revenge pranks she has planned. What Quentin does not know is that before Margo disappears once and for all, she needs to avenge some of her friends. One of them is Becca, who is now dating Margo's ex-boyfriend Jason.
Quentin, always right-minded and cautious, does not want to get in trouble, but Margo convinces him to join her. However, they need to do some shopping at Publix and Wal-Mart before they can start their nocturnal adventure.
This passage clearly shows the relationship between Quentin and Margo. While Margo always makes the first move, Quentin looks up to her and follows her slavishly. When Quentin expresses his fear of getting arrested during their pranks, Margo responds by saying that everything people do is boring; life is too obvious. Her view of life shows how different she is compared to other teenagers.

4.2. Translation

Chapter 3, page 31

Het punt[7] met Margo Roth Spiegelman is dat haar te laten praten echt het enige is dat ik ooit kan doen, en als ze daarmee stopte haar te stimuleren[8] door te praten,

[7] "the thing is" is difficult to translate, as "thing" can mean lots of things in Dutch. "Het probleem is" ("the problem is") could be an option, but I think "het punt is" ("the point is") would be more appropriate here. Because Margo does all the talking and never asks Quentin any questions, she will remain a mystery to him. However, at first Quentin does not see it as a problem.

[8] "aanmoedigen" ("to encourage") in Dutch is when you are cheering for someone, during a sports game for example. In this context "stimuleren" fits better.

vanwege de redenen dat 1. ik smoorverliefd op haar was[9], 2. ze werkelijk in alles onnavolgbaar was, en 3. ze mij nooit echt wat vroeg, dus de enige manier om stilte te voorkomen was haar aan het praten te houden.

En dus zei ze, op de parkeerplaats van de Publix[10]: 'Oké. Ik heb een lijstje voor je gemaakt. Als je vragen hebt, bel me dan op mijn mobieltje. Trouwens, nu ik er aan denk, ik heb de vrijheid genomen eerder al wat spullen in de achterbak van het busje te doen.'

'Wat, bedoel je voordat ik hiermee instemde?'

'Eigenlijk wel, ja. Technisch gezien wel. Hoe dan ook[11], bel me maar als je vragen hebt, en wat de vaseline betreft: je moet de pot hebben die groter is dan je vuist. Er is zeg maar een baby vaseline, een mama vaseline en een dikke vette papa vaseline, en die moet je hebben. Als die er niet meer zijn, neem dan drie mama's.' Ze gaf me het lijstje en een briefje van honderd dollar en zei: 'Dat moet genoeg zijn.'

Margo's lijstje:

3 hele Meervallen, Apart verpakt

Veet (Voor het Scheren van je benen, Alleen heb je geen scheermesje Nodig. Het staat bij de cosmetische dingen voor Meisjes)

Vaseline

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[9] In the source text, the three 'problems' that Q sums up are all full sentences, but in Dutch it reads more fluently when these three points are connected to the beginning of the sentence. For that reason I chose "ik stapelverliefd op haar was" instead of the full sentence "ik was stapelverliefd op haar", and the same goes for the other two points.

[10] Publix, an American supermarket chain, is a culture-specific item, but there is no need to clarify the fact that it is a supermarket as the reader can make that up from the context.

[11] "anyway" is an expression often used by Dutch people as well. It could be maintained in the translation, but on the other hand it might annoy readers too. If present, a Dutch equivalent should be chosen. After all, the goal is to write "a translation that is equivalent to style and content, written in impeccable Dutch directly from the source text".

sixpack Mountain Dew[12]

Een bos Tulpen

een Flesje water

Zakdoekjes

een Verf Spuitbus blauw

'Interessante hoofdletters[13]', zei ik.
'Ja, ik geloof heel erg in willekeurige hoofdletters. De regels voor het gebruik van hoofdletters zijn zo oneerlijk voor woorden in het midden.'

Nu weet ik niet zeker wat je om half een 's nachts tegen de caissière zou moeten zeggen als je bijna 6 kilo meerval, Veet, de megadikke pot vaseline, een sixpack Mountain Dew, een spuitbus blauwe verf en een bos tulpen op de lopende band legt. Maar dit zei ik: 'Dit is niet zo raar als het lijkt.'
De vrouw schraapte haar keel, maar keek niet op. 'Toch wel', mompelde ze.

'Ik wil echt niet in de problemen komen', vertelde ik Margo toen we weer in het busje zaten en ze het flesje water en de zakdoekjes gebruikte om de zwarte verf van haar gezicht te vegen. Ze had de make-up blijkbaar alleen nodig gehad om het huis uit te komen. 'In mijn toelatingsbrief van Duke staat uitdrukkelijk vermeld dat ze me niet toelaten als ik wordt gearresteerd.'
'Je bent een heel angstig persoon, Q.'
'Laten we nou alsjeblieft niet in de problemen komen', zei ik. 'Ik bedoel, ik wil best

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[12] "six-pack" has been adopted by the Dutch language and can be found in a Dutch dictionary.

[13] In this context, "capitalization" means "het gebruik van hoofdletters" ("the use of capitals"). However, Quentin is a guy of few words, so this would be a bit wordy. It is more colloquial to say "interessante hoofdletters" ("interesting capitals").

plezier hebben en zo, maar niet ten koste van, eh, mijn toekomst.'
Ze keek naar me op, haar gezicht nu bijna helemaal zichtbaar, en glimlachte flauwtjes[14]. 'Het verbaast me dat je al die onzin ook maar een beetje belangrijk vindt.'
'Huh?'
'Universiteit: toegelaten worden of niet toegelaten worden. Problemen: erin komen of niet. School: tienen halen of onvoldoendes halen[15]. Carrière: wel of niet hebben. Huis: groot of klein, bezitten of huren. Geld: wel of niet hebben. Het is allemaal zo saai.'
Ik wilde net gaan zeggen dat ze daar natuurlijk wel een beetje om gaf omdat zij goede cijfers haalde en volgend jaar het honours programma[16] van de universiteit van Florida zou gaan volgen, maar ze zei alleen: 'Wal-Mart.'

We gingen samen naar binnen en pakten dat ding uit die thuiswinkelprogramma's genaamd The Club[17], waarmee je het stuur van je auto kunt vergrendelen. Terwijl we over de jongerenafdeling liepen, vroeg ik Margo: 'Waar hebben we dat stuurslot voor

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[14] The fact that Margo smiles "just the littlest bit" emphasizes her disbelief; she cannot believe that Quentin finds his future important. "Flauwtjes" ("faintly") covers that disbelief.

[15] The US have grades (A, B, C, D and E/F), while the Netherlands has marks from 1 to 10. What Margo wants to say is: getting good grades or really bad grades, what does it matter? Although a D is officially not a failing grade, I used "tienen halen of onvoldoendes halen" ("getting a '10' or failing") to emphasize the contrast that also exists in the other comparisons and that is typical of Margo's view on life.

[16] An "honors program" is an additional programme only accessible for the most talented students. Dutch universities use a calque ("honours programma" or "honours college") instead of a Dutch equivalent, so this causes a translation problem. The appearance of this calque in the Dutch translation might raise questions to the youngest reader, but young adults (students) will be more familiar with it. You can make up from the context that Margo must be an excellent student.

[17] "The Club" is an existing steering wheel lock. I decided to leave it out the second time, when Q asks Margo why they need it.

nodig?'

Margo presteerde het weer in haar gebruikelijke manische monoloog te praten zonder mijn vraag te beantwoorden. 'Wist je dat voor zo'n beetje de hele geschiedenis van de mensheid de gemiddelde levensduur minder dan dertig jaar was? Dan was je misschien tien jaar echt volwassen, toch? Er was geen pensioensplanning. Er was geen carrièreplanning. Er *was* geen planning. Geen tijd voor planning. Geen tijd voor een toekomst. Maar toen werden mensen steeds ouder en kregen ze meer en meer toekomst, en dus namen ze ook meer tijd erover na te denken. Over de toekomst. En nu is het leven de toekomst *geworden*. Elk moment in je leven wordt geleefd voor de toekomst: je gaat naar school zodat je naar de universiteit kunt zodat je een goede baan kunt krijgen zodat je een mooi huis kunt kopen zodat je het kunt veroorloven je kinderen naar de universiteit te sturen zodat zij een goede baan kunnen krijgen zodat zij een mooi huis kunnen kopen zodat zij hun kinderen naar de universiteit kunnen sturen.'[18]

Het leek alsof Margo gewoon raaskalde om mijn vraag te ontwijken, dus herhaalde ik hem. 'Waar hebben we dat stuurslot voor nodig?'

Margo klopte me zachtjes op mijn rug. 'Dat zal je natuurlijk allemaal duidelijk worden voordat de nacht voorbij is.' En toen, bij de scheepvaartartikelen, vond Margo een scheepstoeter. Ze haalde hem uit de doos en stak hem in de lucht, en ik zei: 'Nee', en zij zei: 'Wat nee?' En ik zei: 'Nee, niet toeteren', behalve dat toen ik bij de *t* van *toeteren* was, ze keihard kneep en er een verschrikkelijk hard kabaal uit kwam dat in mijn hoofd voelde als het auditieve equivalent van hartkloppingen[19], en

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[18] I decided to maintain this long sentence and not cut it into short sentences, as it fits with Q saying that Margo "was just rambling" and always speaks in her "manic soliloquy". Margo probably speaks very fast at times, which in this case also meets her idea of how predetermined life is.

[19] As "aneurysm" (in Dutch: "aneurysma") is a medical term, I doubt whether young adults know what it is. An aneurysm can cause a throbbing feeling, that is why Q describes the blowing of the horn as the auditory equivalent of an aneurysm. The more colloquial term for

toen zei ze: 'Sorry, ik kon je niet verstaan. Wat zei je?' En ik zei: 'Niet t-' en toen deed ze het weer.

Een Wal-Martmedewerker amper ouder dan wij kwam daarop naar ons toe en zei: 'Hé, je mag dat ding hier niet gebruiken', en Margo zei met klaarblijkelijke oprechtheid: 'Sorry, dat wist ik niet', waarop de jongen zei: 'O, het geeft niet. Het maakt mij eigenlijk niet uit.' Toen leek het gesprek voorbij, maar de jongen kon zijn ogen niet van Margo afhouden[20], en eerlijk gezegd neem ik hem dat niet kwalijk, want het is moeilijk je ogen van haar af te houden, en uiteindelijk zei hij: 'Hebben jullie al plannen voor vanavond?'

'Niet echt. Jij?' zei Margo.

En hij zei: 'Ik ben om één uur klaar en dan ga ik naar zo'n bar in Orange, als je mee wilt. Maar dan moet je wel eerst je broer afzetten, want ze zijn daar nogal streng met leeftijdscontrole.'

Haar wat?! 'Ik ben haar broer niet', zei ik, terwijl ik naar zijn sneakers[21] keek.

En toen begon Margo te liegen. 'Hij is namelijk mijn *neef*[22]', zei ze. Toen kwam ze naast me staan, sloeg haar arm om mijn middel zodat ik al haar vingers strak tegen mijn heupbeen voelde, en ze voegde er aan toe: '*En* mijn liefje.'

De jongen rolde wat met zijn ogen en liep weg, en omdat Margo haar arm nog om mij heen had nam ik de gelegenheid mijn arm om haar heen te slaan. 'Jij bent echt mijn favoriete nichtje', vertelde ik haar. Ze glimlachte, stootte me zachtjes aan met

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aneurysma is "slagadergezwel", but I doubt whether you would use that word in such a context. Therefore, I replaced it by "hartkloppingen" ("palpitations").

[20] In Dutch, the sentence runs more smoothly with "de jongen kon zijn ogen niet van Margo afhouden" ("the guy could not keep his eyes of Margo") instead of something like "de jongen kon niet stoppen met naar haar te kijken".

[21] "sneakers" has also been accepted by the Dutch, it is especially used by young people.

[22] It seems really weird that Margo says Q is her cousin and at the same time her lover. I guess it is just her weird sense of humour. If "cousin" had meant "buddy" or "friend", it would not make sense that Margo later on emphasizes that Q is her lover too.

haar heup en draaide uit mijn omhelzing.
'Weet ik toch[23]', zei ze.

4.3. Where is Margo?

After Margo's disappearance, Quentin and his friends find several clues that might help them discover her location. One of the clues Margo left behind in her bedroom is Whitman's *Leaves of Grass.* Several quotes from one particular poem, "Song of Myself", are highlighted in blue and green. Quentin is convinced that the answer to why she has vanished lies in this poem. One line ("If you want me again look for me under your bootsoles") makes him believe she might have killed herself, so he decides to ring detective Otis Warren.
The importance of teenagers and the minor role of adults, which is typical of young adult novels, emerges in this passage. Neither Q nor his friends tell anybody about the hints Margo left behind. Quentin feels she picked him to find her, so he does not tell the detective about Whitman's poems.

4.4. Translation

Chapter 10, page 150

Ben en Radar zetten me thuis af. Hoewel ze school hadden overgeslagen, konden ze zich niet veroorloven de bandrepetitie over te slaan. Ik zat een hele poos alleen met 'Song of Myself'[24], en voor zo'n beetje de tiende keer probeerde ik het gedicht vanaf

[23] "Don't I know it" is a slang expression, meaning "I agree". In this context, it could be possible that Margo knows about Q being in love with her. "Weet ik toch" does not simply mean "I know", but "toch" adds the idea that Margo finds it obvious that she is Q's "favourite cousin".

[24] While Van Eekelen-Benders used the Dutch translation 'Lied over mezelf' here (PT 150), I retained the original title in order to be consistent with the other titular allusions like *The Bell Jar* and *The Great Gatsby*.

het begin te lezen. Het probleem was echter[25] dat het tachtig pagina's lang was, raar was en zichzelf telkens herhaalt[26], en hoewel ik elk woord begreep kon ik niets van het geheel begrijpen. Ook al wist ik dat de gemarkeerde delen waarschijnlijk de enige belangrijke delen waren, toch wilde ik weten of het een soort zelfmoordgedicht[27] was. Maar ik kon er geen touw aan vastknopen.

Ik was tien verwarrende pagina's op weg toen ik zo begon te flippen[28] dat ik besloot de detective te bellen. Ik grabbelde zijn kaartje uit een korte broek in de wasmand. Na twee keer overgaan nam hij op.

'Warren.'

'Hallo, eh… met Quentin Jacobsen. Ik ben een vriend van Margo Roth Spiegelman?'

'Tuurlijk, knul, ik ken je nog wel. Waar zit je mee[29]?'

Ik vertelde hem over de aanwijzingen, de avondwinkel en over papieren steden, over

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[25] I split one long sentences into two sentences to make it more readable. The book contains many lengthy sentences which seem to be more suitable in the original than in a Dutch translation. I added "echter" ("however") to preserve the connection between them.

[26] "repetitive" is a word that can hardly be translated into one Dutch word. A direct translation, "herhalend", is not very common, especially in a novel, so a paraphrase like "dat zichzelf herhaalt" ("that repeats itself") is desirable. Due to these lengthy constructions it could be better to split sentences, as I mentioned in the previous footnote.

[27] Like "repetitive", "a suicide-note kind of poem" is difficult to translate 'literally'. "A kind of" can be translated as the suffix "-achtig", but "een zelfmoordachtig gedicht" sounds weird. Instead, I chose "een soort zelfmoordgedicht" ("a kind of suicide poem"), which also implicates that the poem has some lines where Whitman seems to speak about suicide.

[28] Green's use of verbs like "to freak out" is typical for his style of writing. Words like these really fit teen language and they appear several times in *Paper Towns*. "I got so freaked out" is a stronger expression than "it drives me crazy" which is what Quentin means. "Ik begon te flippen" captures the same feeling as the original.

[29] "What's up?" is not always meant as a question, but often just as a way of greeting each other. In this sentence, however, the detective in fact means "what's on your mind?" ("waar zit je mee?"). He knows Quentin would not call him because of anything else but Margo's disappearance, so he is curious what Q wants to tell or ask him.

hoe ze Orlando een papieren stad had genoemd vanaf de top van het SunTrust gebouw, maar ze het niet als meervoud had gebruikt, over dat ze me had verteld dat ze niet gevonden wilde worden, over het vinden van haar onder onze schoenzolen. Hij zei niet eens dat ik niet in verlaten gebouwen mag inbreken en vroeg ook niet wat ik op een schooldag om tien uur 's ochtends in een verlaten gebouw deed. Hij wachtte gewoon tot ik uitgepraat was en zei: 'Jezus, knul, je lijkt wel een detective. Je hebt alleen nog een wapen, een dikke pens en drie ex-vrouwen nodig. Maar wat is je theorie?'

'Ik vrees dat ze, eh… nou ja, zelfmoord heeft gepleegd.'

'Het is nooit in me opgekomen dat ze iets anders zou doen behalve weglopen, knul. Ik begrijp je gedachte, maar vergeet niet dat ze dit eerder heeft gedaan. De aanwijzingen, bedoel ik. Voegt drama toe aan de hele zaak. Echt waar, knul, als ze wilde dat jij haar zou vinden - dood of levend - dan had je haar al wel gevonden.'

'Maar denkt u niet dat…'

'Knul, helaas is het zo dat ze volgens de wet[30] een volwassene is met een vrije wil, snap je? Laat ik je dit adviseren: laat haar thuiskomen. Ik bedoel, op een gegeven moment moet je ophouden naar de lucht te kijken, want als je op een dag weer omlaag kijkt zul je zien dat jij ook weg bent gedreven.'

Ik hing op met een nare smaak in mijn mond: ik realiseerde me dat het niet Warrens poëzie was die me naar Margo zou leiden. Ik bleef denken aan de laatste zinnen die Margo had onderstreept: 'Ik laat mezelf na aan de aarde om te groeien uit het gras dat ik liefheb, / Wil je me weerzien, kijk dan onder je laarszolen.'[31] Dat gras is, zo

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[30] A "legal adult" is a person aged 18 or older. In Dutch, there is no adjective that indicates directly the fact that one is an adult according to the law. Therefore, a paraphrase including "according to the law" ("volgens de wet") is a better option in the translation.

[31] I decided to use Veenbaas' translation of "Song of Myself" instead of the Querido edition (see paragraph 3.2.2.4).

schrijft Whitman op de eerste pagina's, 'het mooie, ongeknipte haar van graven.' Maar waar lagen die graven? Waar lagen de papieren steden?
Ik logde in op Omnictionary om te zien of hier meer te vinden was over de term 'papieren steden' dan ik zelf wist. Ik vond er een zeer diepzinnig en bruikbaar artikel, geschreven door een gebruiker genaamd *skunkbutt*[32]: 'Een papieren stad is een stad waar een papierfabriek staat.' Dat was de tekortkoming van Omnictionary: de dingen die Radar schreef waren grondig en zeer nuttig, maar het ongeredigeerde werk van *skunkbutt* liet nogal wat te wensen over. Maar toen ik het hele web doorzocht, vond ik diep verstopt in een forum iets interessants over vastgoed in Kansas.

Het ziet ernaar uit dat Madison Estates niet gebouwd gaat worden: mijn man en ik hebben daar grond gekocht, maar er belde deze week iemand om te zeggen dat ze onze aanbetaling terugstorten omdat ze niet genoeg huizen hebben verkocht om het project te financieren. Nog een papieren stad voor Kansas! - Marge uit Cawker, Kansas

Een pseudowijk[33]! Je zult naar de pseudowijken gaan en je zult nooit terugkomen. Ik

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[32] Like personal names, I maintained user names such as "skunkbutt" as well as Quentin and Radar's usernames "OMNICTIONARIAN96" and "QTHERESURRECTION" as it would be weird to read a Dutch name in an American setting.

[33] "pseudovision" is a word made up by Quentin, derived from "subdivision". It consists of two words: "pseudo", which means something that is not there, but only *seems* to be there, and "vision", which refers to something you see. Q seems to be talking about an "illusion", but that does not fit in the next sentence ("You will go to the illusions and you will never come back"?) as well as the entry about Madison Estates. This is about a town that is not there (any more). At first I thought "spookstad" ("ghost town") came close to the meaning of "pseudovision", as it is a deserted and dilapidated town. This corresponds with Quentin thinking that Margo does not want to be found by random kids, but by Q. Later on in the narrative, Q searches the Internet for a list of pseudovisions and actually visits these deserted towns. However, a ghost town is a town that *used to be* inhabited, instead of a town or

slaakte een diepe zucht en staarde een tijdje naar het scherm.
De conclusie leek onvermijdelijk. Zelfs met alles in haar gebroken en vastbesloten kon ze zichzelf niet toestaan voor altijd te verdwijnen. En ze had besloten haar lichaam achter te laten - voor *mij* achter te laten - in een schaduwversie van onze wijk, waar haar eerste touwtjes waren gebroken. Ze had gezegd dat ze niet wilde dat willekeurige kinderen haar lichaam zouden vinden, en het klonk logisch dat ze van iedereen die ze kende, mij had uitgekozen om haar te vinden. Ze zou me niet op een nieuwe manier pijn doen. Ik had dit eerder gedaan. Ik had ervaring op dit gebied.
Ik zag dat Radar online was, klikte op zijn naam om met hem te chatten toen er een berichtje[34] van hem op mijn scherm verscheen.

OMNICTIONARIAN96: Hey.
QTHERESURRECTION: Papieren steden = pseudowijken. Ik denk dat ze wil dat ik haar lichaam vind. Omdat ze denkt dat ik dat aankan. Omdat we die dooie vent vonden toen we kinderen waren.

Ik stuurde hem de link.

OMNICTIONARIAN96: Rustig aan. Even die link bekijken.
QTHERESURRECTION : Ok[35].
OMNICTIONARIAN96: Oké, doe niet zo somber. Je weet niets zeker. Ik denk dat ze

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subdivision that has never been inhabited. “Pseudowijk” is more appropriate, indicating that it should have been a normal subdivision, but is in fact a deserted place.

[34] IM stands for “instant messaging”, a general name that includes all kinds of chat programmes. I neutralised the term by inserting “berichtje” (“message”) as the name (MSN Messenger or Windows Live Messenger are other possibilities that are also familiar to Dutch readers) is not really important.

[35] Q says “K” (“okay”) which is typical chatspeak. In Dutch, “ok” is ofted used instead of “oké”.

best in orde is.

QTHERESURRECTION : Nee, dat denk je niet.

OMNICTIONARIAN96: Oké, ik denk het niet. Maar als er iemand leeft gezien dit bewijs…

QTHERESURRECTION : Je hebt gelijk. Ik ga liggen. Mijn ouders komen zo thuis.

Maar ik bleef onrustig, dus belde ik Ben vanuit bed en vertelde hem mijn theorie.

'Klinkt vet heftig[36], man[37]. Maar ze is oké. Het is allemaal onderdeel van een spel dat ze speelt.'

'Je doet er nogal achteloos over.'

Hij zuchtte. 'Hoe dan ook, het is een beetje slap van haar om zo'n beetje de laatste drie weken van high school in beslag te nemen, weet je? Ze heeft jou ongerust gemaakt, ze heeft Lacey ongerust gemaakt, en het gala is al over zeg maar drie dagen, weet je? Kunnen we niet gewoon een fijn gala hebben?'

'Meen je dat nou? Misschien is ze wel *dood*, Ben.'

'Ze is niet dood. Ze is een aansteller. Wil aandacht. Ik bedoel, ik weet dat haar ouders eikels zijn, maar zij kennen haar beter dan wij, toch? En zij denken er ook zo over.'

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[36] In my translation, this is an important point to distinguish Radar's language use from Ben's language use. They both use the word "morbid": Radar during his online chat with Q ("don't be so morbid") and Ben on the phone ("pretty morbid shit, bro"). Radar tells Q he should not be so morose ("somber") and pessimistic, while Ben actually thinks Margo's disappearance is really exciting. With "morbid", Ben means "gruesome". His use of the word "shit" even intensifies his expression. A good option would be "gruwelijk", but strangely enough this word is also often used in Dutch to indicate something really cool, which is not what Ben thinks of course. Instead, I chose "heftig" and added "vet" ("really") to keep the connotation of "shit".

[37] Ben always calls Quentin "bro". This is characteristic of his person and the way he wants to be seen by other people, namely as the cool guy, a womanizer. "Gast" or "jongen" is possible in some situations (for instance, at the start of a sentence), but in this case I opted for "man" as it stands at the end of a sentence.

'Jij kunt soms zo'n lul[38] zijn', zei ik.

'Wat jij wil, man. We hebben beiden een lange dag gehad. Te veel drama. Ik spreek je ASAP[39].'

Ik wilde hem belachelijk maken omdat hij chattaal gebruikte IRL, maar ik had er de energie niet voor.

Toen ik had opgehangen ging ik weer online, op zoek naar een lijst met pseudowijken in Florida. Ik kon nergens een lijst vinden, maar nadat ik een tijdje op 'verlaten wijken' en 'Grovepoint Acres' had gezocht, slaagde ik erin een lijst samen te stellen van vijf plaatsen binnen drie uur rijden van Jefferson Park. Ik printte een kaart van Centraal Florida uit, prikte die aan de muur boven mijn computer en markeerde de vijf locaties met een punaise. Ik keek naar de kaart, maar kon er geen patroon in ontdekken. De plaatsen waren willekeurig verspreid over de wijdverbreide buitenwijken, en het zou me minstens een week kosten om ze allemaal te bezoeken. Waarom had ze geen specifieke plaats voor me achtergelaten? Al die doodenge[40] aanwijzingen. Al die aanduidingen van tragedie. Maar geen *plaats*. Niets om je aan vast te houden. Alsof je een berg met grind probeert te beklimmen.

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[38] According to Van Dale's dictionary, "tool" is also a slang word that means "lul" ("prick"). Although it is a rude thing to say, Q seems to be serious. He is annoyed that Ben does not seem to care about Margo and only thinks about prom.

[39] "TTYS" ("talk to you soon") is another example of chatspeak. The English abbreviation "ASAP" ("as soon as possible") is also often used by Dutch teenagers and is even implemented in the Dutch Van Dale. Young adults will be familiar with the term ASAP, so I translated this sentence into "ik spreek je ASAP" ("I'll talk to you ASAP") in order to maintain the chatspeak used by Ben. The same goes for "IRL" ("in real life") in the next sentence.

[40] "scary-as-hell clues" is a very strong expression, but a Dutch expression including "hell" is hard to find. I have considered "angstaanjagend" ("terrifying"), but I think "doodenge" ("dead scary") is stronger; it expresses Quentin's fear that Margo could be dead.

4.5. A dinner conversation

At dinner, Quentin tells his parents he is getting prepared for his final exams, but they do not know he is actually spending more time thinking about Margo. His Mom and Dad, both of whom are child psychologists, are discussing the human mind and they use metaphorical language in doing so. It makes Quentin understand how Margo must be feeling. These metaphors as well as the difference in register between Q and his parents are the biggest translation problems in this passage.

4.6. Translation

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Tijdens het eten praatten pa en ma[41] over politiek in het Midden-Oosten. Ook al waren ze het volledig met elkaar eens, toch slaagden ze erin om erover te schreeuwen; die en die was een leugenaar, die en die was een leugenaar *en* een dief, en het hele zootje zou ontslag moeten nemen. Ik richtte me op mijn heerlijke broodje kalkoenburger, die rijkelijk was belegd met gegrilde uien en waar de ketchup uit droop.
'Oké, genoeg', zei mijn moeder na een tijdje. 'Quentin, hoe was jouw dag?'
'Goed', zei ik. 'Voorbereiden voor het eindexamen, geloof ik.'
'Ik kan niet geloven dat dit je laatste lesweek is', zei pa. 'Het lijkt wel de dag van gisteren…'
'Zeker', zei ma. Een stem in mijn hoofd schreeuwde: WAARSCHUWING NOSTALGIE GEVAAR WAARSCHUWING WAARSCHUWING

[41] While Q calls his parents just "Mon and Dad" in the source text, I used several translations depending on the context. In his first mentioning of his parents, "pa en ma" sounds better than "pap en mam", which is a bit more childish in this sentence. However, in dialogue, the latter might be a better option. Also, "mijn moeder/vader ("my mother/father") in some cases reads better than the more direct translation "mijn ma/pa". When there is no personal pronoun, "vader/moeder" might sound too formal.

WAARSCHUWING. Geweldige mensen, mijn ouders, maar gevoelig voor vlagen van pijnlijk gemijmer[42].

'We zijn gewoon heel trots op je', zei ze. 'Maar, God, wat zullen we je missen komend najaar.'

'Nou, wees maar niet te voorbarig. Ik kan nog steeds zakken voor Engels'.

Mijn moeder lachte, en zei toen: 'O, raad eens wie ik gisteren bij de YMCA zag? Betty Parson. Ze zei dat Chuck komend najaar naar de universiteit van Georgia gaat. Ik ben blij voor hem, hij heeft het altijd moeilijk gehad.'

'Hij is een klootzak', zei ik.

'Nou,' zei mijn vader, 'hij was een pestkop. En zijn gedrag was betreurenswaardig[43].'

Dat waren nou typisch mijn ouders: in hun ogen was niemand zomaar een klootzak. Er was altijd wel iets mis met mensen behalve dat ze gewoon eikels[44] waren: ze hadden socialisatiestoornissen, of het borderline persoonlijkheidssyndroom[45], of wat

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[42] "prone to bouts of crippling sentimentality" almost sounds like poetry. It refers to Q's parents being nostalgic. Because I think a literal translation of "sentimentality" ("sentimentaliteit") sounds less poetic than the original, I used "gemijmer", meaning that they are "daydreaming" about the past, when Q just went to high school for the first time. Q does not like this nostalgia, given the voice shouting in his head, so I used "pijnlijk" ("painful") for "crippling".

[43] "deplorable" is a rather formal word that fits into the register of Quentin's parents, who are both psychologists. Instead of just saying that Chuck's behaviour was bad, he shows off with the word "deplorable". In order to maintain this register, I translated this as "betreurenswaardig", a word that you would not use very often in an informal conversation.

[44] In the sentence "There was always something wrong with people other than just sucking", one verb ("sucking") is enough to evoke the image of "being stupid" or "being an asshole". In Dutch, a paraphrase is necessary as there is no equivalent that expresses the same negative image in just one word. A construction with the verb "zijn" ("to be") seems natural, so I translated "other than just sucking" as "behalve dat ze gewoon eikels waren". Q called Chuck an asshole, but I consider "sucking" less expressive than that, therefore I chose "eikels" instead of "klootzakken".

[45] Several options are available as a translation of "borderline personality syndrome". "Syndrome" can also be translated as "stoornis" ("disorder"), and it can also simply be

dan ook.

Mijn moeder pakte de draad weer op. 'Maar Chuck heeft leerproblemen. Hij heeft allerlei problemen, zoals iedereen. Ik weet dat het voor jou onmogelijk is om je medemens zo te beschouwen, maar als je ouder bent begin je ze - de vervelende kinderen en de leuke kinderen[46], alle kinderen - als mensen te zien. Ze zijn gewoon mensen die het verdienen om liefde te krijgen. Verschillende maten van ziek, verschillende maten van spanning, verschillende maten van zelfverwerkelijking. Maar weet je, ik heb Betty altijd gemogen, en ik heb altijd hoop gehad voor Chuck. Dus het is goed dat hij naar de uni gaat, vind je niet?'

'Eerlijk gezegd, mam, kan hij me niet zoveel schelen.' Maar ik dacht wel: als iedereen zo'n persoon is, hoe komt het dan dat pa en ma nog steeds alle politici in Israël en Palestina haten? Ze praatten over *hen* niet alsof ze mensen waren.

Mijn vader was klaar met kauwen, legde zijn vork neer en keek me aan. 'Hoe langer ik mijn werk doe,' zei hij, 'hoe meer ik me realiseer dat mensen een gebrek hebben aan goede spiegels. Het is zo moeilijk voor iemand om ons te laten zien hoe we zijn, en zo moeilijk voor ons te laten zien hoe we ons voelen.'

'Dat is echt prachtig gezegd', zei mijn moeder. Het deed me goed dat ze het met elkaar eens waren. 'Maar is het ook niet zo dat op een bepaald fundamenteel niveau we moeilijk kunnen begrijpen dat andere mensen net zo goed mensen zijn als wij? We verafgoden ze of verwerpen ze als dieren.'

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shortened to "borderline". However, taking into account the target audience, the young readers may not know what is meant if they only read "borderline", so the mention of "persoonlijkheidssyndroom" is needed as well.

[46] Q's mother probably does not literally mean that there are good and bad kids, but pleasant and unpleasant kids ("leuke en vervelende kinderen").

'Klopt. Bewustzijn zorgt ook voor een slecht mensbeeld[47]. Zo heb ik er denk ik nog nooit over nagedacht.'

Ik leunde achterover. Ik luisterde. En ik hoorde iets over haar en over een mensbeeld en spiegels. Chuck Parson was een mens. Net als ik. Margo Roth Spiegelman was ook een mens. En ik had eigenlijk nog nooit zo over haar gedacht, niet echt: het was een falen van al mijn eerdere verbeeldingen. Al die tijd - niet alleen sinds ze vertrok, maar al wel tien jaar - stelde ik me haar voor zonder te luisteren, zonder te weten dat ze net zo ondoorgrondelijk[48] was als ik. En dus kon ik me haar niet voorstellen als een persoon die angst kon voelen, die zich eenzaam kon voelen in een ruimte vol mensen, die verlegen kon zijn over haar platencollectie omdat het te persoonlijk was om te delen. Iemand die wellicht reisgidsen leest om te ontsnappen aan het wonen in een stad waar zo veel mensen naar toe vluchten. Iemand die - omdat niemand haar als een mens beschouwde - niemand had om echt mee te praten.

En opeens wist ik hoe Margo Roth Spiegelman zich voelde als ze niet Margo Roth Spiegelman was: ze voelde zich leeg. Ze voelde die onbeklimbare muur om haar

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[47] This philosophical conversation between Q's parents is very important: it helps Q to discover not only who Margo is, but he also learns about his own identity and the way you should look at other people. His parents use the symbolic words "windows" and "mirrors". With "humans lack good mirrors", they mean that people lack the ability to look at themselves and find out who they really are. To make sure that the symbolism is still there, "mirrors" can easily be translated as "spiegels", as we all know the metaphor "to hold a mirror up to someone's face". However, it is more difficult to keep the symbolism of "window" in the translation, because it is confusing for Dutch people when they read about someone with "slechte ramen" ("poor windows"). I think Q's father means that people *think* they know each other well, but in reality they do not. For that reason, I used "mensbeeld" ("image of mankind").

[48] Here again, Green uses the "poor window" metaphor: "she made as poor a window as I did". Q means that Margo is just as incomprehensible ("ondoorgrondelijk") as himself: he cannot make her out. The poor window is that Q is unable to look inside her head; he cannot discover her true identity, her "image" ("mensbeeld").

heen. Ik zag haar voor me, slapend op het tapijt met alleen die grillige strook lucht[49] boven haar. Misschien voelde Margo zich daar op haar gemak omdat Margo de persoon altijd zo leefde: in een verlaten kamer met dichtgespijkerde ramen[50], waar het enige licht door gaten in het dak naar binnen viel. *Ja*. De cruciale fout die ik altijd had gemaakt - en die zij mij eerlijk gezegd altijd liet maken - was dit: Margo was geen wonder. Ze was geen avontuur. Ze was geen mooi en kostbaar ding. Ze was een meisje.

4.7. The road trip

Quentin and his friends Radar, Ben and Lacey are on their way to Agloe, a small fictitious town where Margo has to be.

Like the previous translation passage, the style and language use is important here. It is the language of four young adults, joking around and travelling all the way to New York in a minivan filled with sweets and beer. There are several American expressions (culture-specific items) mentioned that could turn out to be quite challenging for a translator as he needs to weigh the options.

[49] The "jagged sliver of sky" refers to the roof that has many holes. So, when Margo looks up to the sky, she sees irregular bits of light ("jagged sliver of sky") due to the holes in the roof.

[50] Although Q is talking about real windows here, they also refer to the metaphorical "poor windows". After all, you cannot see anything through blocked-out windows, just as Q struggles to get inside her mind.

4.8. Translation

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Het derde uur

Ben zit weer shotgun[51]. Ik rijd nog steeds. We hebben allemaal honger. Lacey deelt ons mint kauwgum uit, maar het is een schrale troost. Ze is een gigantische lijst aan het maken met alles wat we bij de BP gaan kopen als we voor het eerst gaan stoppen. Het is wel te hopen dat het een uitzonderlijk goedgevuld tankstation is, want we gaan die tent compleet leegplunderen[52].
Ben blijft maar met zijn benen op en neer stuiteren.
'Wil je daarmee ophouden?'
'Ik moet nu al drie uur pissen.'
'Dat heb je al gezegd.'
'Ik kan de pis helemaal tot aan mijn ribbenkast voelen', zegt hij. 'Ik zit echt vol met pis. Gast[53], op dit moment bestaat zeventig procent van mijn lichaamsgewicht uit pis.'
'Ja ja', zeg ik, amper lachend. Het is grappig en zo, maar ik ben moe.
'Het voelt alsof ik moet huilen, en dat ik dan pis ga huilen.'

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[51] "riding/sitting shotgun" is a popular way of saying you are sitting next to the driver. It is probably derived from the early Hollywood westerns in which stagecoaches were protected by a guard carrying a shotgun (http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/riding-shotgun.html). Although mostly an American expression, it is also well-known in other countries.

[52] "to clear the bitch out" is a really strong expression, typical for rebellious teenagers acting cool. I tried to insert this 'cool language' in my translation as well, by using "we gaan die tent compleet leegplunderen" ("we're going to raid that place completely"). Of course, they will not literally go on the rampage, but it sounds cooler than just saying you will buy everything.

[53] Although I translated "bro" as "man" when at the end of sentence, I now opted for "gast" ("chap") because it sounds better at the start of a sentence than "man".

Dat doet het 'm[54]. Ik lach een beetje.

De volgende keer dat ik opzij kijk, een paar minuten later, houdt Ben zijn hand strak tegen zijn kruis, de stof van zijn toga verkreukeld.

'Wat doe je in godsnaam[55]?' vraag ik.

'Gozer, ik moet *echt*. Ik sta op knappen[56].' Hij draait zich om. 'Radar, hoe lang nog tot de volgende stop?'

'We moeten nog minstens tweehonderddertig kilometer als we het binnen vier keer stoppen willen halen, dat is dus over een uur en achtenvijftig en een halve minuut als Q het tempo erin houdt.'

'Doe ik toch!' roep ik. We rijden iets ten noorden van Jacksonville en naderen Georgia.

'Dat ga ik niet halen, Radar. Geef me iets om in te pissen.'

NEE roept iedereen in koor. Absoluut niet. Houd het op als een man. Houd het op zoals een Victoriaanse dame haar maagdelijkheid behoudt. Houd het op met waardigheid en mededogen, zoals de president van de Verenigde Staten het lot van de vrije wereld[57] dient vast te houden.

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[54] "that gets me" can be interpreted in two ways. It could mean that Q is annoyed with Ben's talk, but I do not think that is the case here, for, though he does not say so, Q thinks it is rather funny. In this case, Ben's remark about crying pee gets him in a positive way: he laughs a little.

[55] Like "anyway", expressions such as "what the hell?" or "what the fuck?" are also often used by Dutch people. A good equivalent in Dutch is "wat doe je in godsnaam?" ("what are you doing, for God's sake?"). It is an exclamation of amazement as well, but Van Eekelen-Benders weakened the expression by replacing it with "Wat nou weer?" ("Now what?") (PT 245), which does not include the image of surprise or disbelief.

[56] "pinching off the flow" is comparable to "clearing the bitch out". In Dutch, "ik sta op knappen" (which means that your bladder nearly 'cracks') covers the same meaning as the original.

[57] While the final part of this sentence can also be paraphrased, for example as "zoals de president van de VS dient te streven naar een vrije wereld" ("like the president of the US has

'Geef me iets of ik pis op deze stoel! En snel een beetje!'

'O, Jezus', zegt Radar terwijl hij zijn gordel afdoet. Hij klimt achterin de auto en opent de koeler, klimt weer terug naar zijn stoel, leunt voorover en overhandigt Ben een biertje.

'Godzijdank heeft deze een draaidop', zegt Ben, grijpt een stuk van zijn toga en opent het flesje. Ben draait het raampje omlaag, en ik kijk in de zijspiegel terwijl het bier langs de auto vloeit en op de snelweg spettert. Ben slaagt erin het flesje onder zijn toga te krijgen zonder ons de naar eigen zeggen grootste ballen ter wereld[58] te laten zien, en daarna zitten en wachten we, te walgend om te kijken.

Lacey zegt alleen: 'Kun je het niet gewoon ophouden?' als we het horen. Ik heb het geluid nog nooit eerder gehoord, maar herken het toch: het is het geluid van pis dat de bodem van een bierflesje raakt. Het klinkt haast als muziek. Afschuwelijke muziek met een hele snelle beat[59]. Ik kijk opzij en kan de opluchting in Bens ogen zien. Hij grijnst en staart in het niets.

'Hoe langer je wacht, hoe beter het voelt', zegt hij. Het geluid verandert snel van het kletteren van pis-op-flesje naar het plonzen van pis-op-pis. En dan, langzaam, verdwijnt zijn glimlach.

'Gast, ik denk dat ik nog een flesje nodig heb', zegt hij plotseling.

'Nog een flesje, nu!' roep ik.

'Nog een flesje onderweg!' In een flits zie ik Radar achter de achterbank gebogen, met zijn hoofd in de koeler, en graaft een flesje uit het ijs. Hij opent het met zijn blote

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to strive for a free world"), but a direct translation is more appropriate as the tone of this sentence is rather formal ("dignity and grace"). In addition, "het lot van de vrije wereld" ("the fate of the free world") is a common Dutch phrase.

[58] The complex English phrase "the world's purportedly largest balls" cannot be translated in a similar construction in Dutch, so a paraphrase is necessary. Especially "purportedly" makes it difficult. "To purport" means "to claim", so I inserted the phrase "naar eigen zeggen" ("by one's own account").

[59] As "beat" is also in Dutch dictionaries, it does not need to be translated.

hand, gooit een van de achterramen open en giet het bier door de kier naar buiten. Daarna springt hij naar voren, zijn hoofd tussen Ben en mij, en geeft het flesje aan Ben, wiens blik in paniek alle kanten op schiet.

'Het… eh, wisselen wordt… eh, moeilijk', zegt Ben. Er is een hoop gerommel onder die toga, en ik probeer me niet voor te stellen wat daar gebeurt als er onder de toga een flesje Miller Lite vandaan komt, gevuld met pis (wat verbazingwekkend veel lijkt op Miller Lite). Ben zet het volle flesje in de bekerhouder, grijpt het nieuwe van Radar en zucht van opluchting.

Ondertussen zijn wij aan het bedenken wat we met de pis in de bekerhouder aanmoeten. De weg is niet echt hobbelig, maar de schokdempers van het busje lieten wel wat te wensen over, dus de pis klotste heen en weer bovenin het flesje.

'Ben, als je in mijn gloednieuwe auto pist, snijd ik je ballen eraf.'

Nog steeds plassend kijkt Ben me aan en grijnst. 'Dan ga je een verdomd groot mes nodig hebben, gast.' Dan hoor ik de stroom eindelijk afnemen. Hij is snel klaar en gooit het nieuwe flesje in een snelle beweging uit het raampje, gevolgd door het volle flesje.

Lacey doet alsof ze moet kokhalzen - of misschien moet ze wel echt. Radar zegt: 'Mijn God, heb je zeventig liter water[60] gedronken toen je vanochtend wakker werd?' Maar Ben straalt. Hij balt juichend zijn vuisten in de lucht en schreeuwt: 'Geen druppel op de stoel! Ik ben Ben Starling. Eerste klarinet van de Winter Park High School Showfanfare[61]. Recordhouder fuststandjes[62]. Kampioen pissen-in-de-auto. Ik

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[60] A linguistic (non-cultural) translation of "gallons" is recommended here, because the Dutch do not use gallons. In the US, one gallon is 3.785 litres, so eighteen gallons is approximately 70 litres.

[61] The American term "marching band" is comparable with "fanfare", which in Dutch is another name for "brass band". As it is a marching band, I added "show" in front of "fanfare", indicating that they do not only perform on stage, but also in marching shows. In addition, I clarified the abbreviation WPHS by writing it in full. In the actual Dutch

heb de hele wereld versteld doen staan! Ik ben de allerbeste!'

Vijfendertig minuten later, als ons derde uur ten einde loopt, vraagt hij met een bedeesd stemmetje: 'Wanneer stoppen we weer?'

'Over een uur en drie minuten, als Q het tempo erin houdt', antwoordt Radar.

'Oké', zegt Ben. 'Oké. Goed. Want ik moet pissen.'

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translation, Van Eekelen-Benders chose to delete the first part ("marching"), but this might give the reader the wrong impression that, for example, Ben plays in a rock band.

[62] Keg stands (drinking beer from a keg while doing a handstand) are especially popular among college students in the US. At a party earlier in the story, Ben performed a keg stand, which is why he now claims to be the record holder. In that passage, Quentin asks what it is and says: "how hard can it be to hang upside down?" (Green 179). The Dutch word for "keg" is "fust". I am not sure if readers know the term, but luckily the 'ritual' is explained earlier so there will not be any confusion about what it means.

Conclusion

In this study, I have researched the phenomenon of young adult literature and attempted to outline the characteristics and translation problems in YA literature in general and *Paper Towns* in particular.
My thesis question was: what are the translation problems a translator stumbles across in *Paper Towns*, what are the available translation options and which options are most advisable, taking into account his translation assignment and the translation strategy he has chosen?

I translated four passages from John Green's novel according to the standard literary translation contract, aiming at "a translation that is equivalent to style and content, written in impeccable Dutch directly from the source text".
The translation difficulties are especially in the culture-specificity of *Paper Towns*. The two goals of the literary contract (equivalence to the source text and a new text in impeccable Dutch) sometimes do not go hand in hand, because some culture-specific items cannot be replaced by a Dutch equivalent. A good example is the text "Heritage not Hate" which appeared on a shirt worn by one of the characters. In cases like these, where intertextuality plays an important role, translators need to ask themselves what the target audience knows about the United States and its history, and to what extent culture-specific items need to be explained in the translation.
Quotations may not seem difficult to translate if a translation of the quoted work already exists, but if there are multiple translations, as we have seen in the case of *Leaves of Grass*, it becomes more problematic. Which translation fits in best with the story as a whole?
The use of language by the different characters also proved to be difficult to translate, as the typical 'Americanness' of some expressions does not always allow the translator to evoke the same connotation.

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