



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in
Lingue e Letterature Europee e Americane
Classe LM-37

Tesi di Laurea

*Translating Chris Colfer's "Struck by Lightning" into
Italian: Focus on Taboo Language, Humour,
Cultural References and Fixed Expressions*

Relatore
Prof. Erik Castello

Laureanda
Valeria Viesti
n° matr.1086904 / LMLLA

Anno Accademico 2015 / 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people I would like to thank for their incredible support and help – not only with this dissertation, but with many, countless, other things. First and foremost, my family. I would like to thank my mother, a strong, resourceful woman who teaches me something new every day. My late father, who showed me what generosity is and whose memory I will forever keep in my heart. My beloved sister, who is the most patient and selfless person I know. Secondly, I would like to thank all my friends. You are all incredible, wonderful people and I love you very much. In particular, I would like to thank “*le solite*” for almost twenty years of being each other's anchors and Federica for being the way she is. Last, but far from least, I would like to thank Michele. He knows why.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The author and the novel.....	3
1.1 The author: Christopher Colfer.....	3
1.1.1 His life.....	3
1.1.2 His literary and film production.....	6
1.2 The novel and the film.....	7
1.2.1 The beginning.....	8
1.2.2 The <i>Clovergate</i> project.....	14
1.2.3 The ending.....	20
1.2.4 The film.....	21
1.3 The main characters.....	22
1.3.1 The protagonist: Carson Phillips.....	22
1.3.2 Carson Phillips' family.....	24
1.3.3 The <i>Chronicle</i> team.....	26
1.3.4 The student council's members.....	28
1.4 Similarities and differences between Chris Colfer and Carson Phillips.....	31
1.4.1 Similarities.....	31
1.4.2 Differences.....	33
Chapter 2: To translate or not to translate.....	35
2.1 The problem of definitions.....	35
2.1.1 Defining <i>translation</i>	36
2.1.2 Defining the role of the translator.....	40
2.2 The perks of being a translator.....	45
2.2.1 Invisibility.....	46
2.2.2 Underestimation.....	51
2.2.3 Every rule has an exception.....	55
2.3 Domesticating a text.....	57
2.3.1 How to define domestication.....	58
2.3.2 Domestication versus foreignization.....	60
2.4 A matter of loyalty.....	62
2.4.1 Equivalence in translation.....	63
2.4.2 Author-related loyalty.....	66
2.4.3 Readership-related loyalty.....	68
2.5 Acceptable translations: dream or reality.....	70
2.5.1 How to define acceptability.....	71
2.5.2 A matter of fluency.....	73
2.5.3 Quality in translation.....	74

2.5.3.1 Two models: House's and Larose's.....	77
---	----

Chapter 3: Some challenging aspects in translation.....83

3.1 Translating taboo language.....	83
3.1.1 Swearwords and where to find them.....	84
3.1.2 From source swearwords to target swearwords.....	87
3.1.3 When insults are at issue.....	91
3.2 Translating humour.....	93
3.2.1 A serious matter.....	94
3.2.2 Different kinds of humour.....	97
3.2.2.1 Meaningful made-up names.....	98
3.2.2.2 Wordplays.....	99
3.2.2.3 Jokes.....	100
3.2.3 Translation strategies.....	101
3.2.3.1 Strategies to translate meaningful made-up names.....	102
3.2.3.2 Strategies to translate wordplays.....	104
3.2.3.3 Strategies to translate jokes.....	106
3.3 Translating culture-related matters.....	108
3.3.1 Defining culture.....	109
3.3.1.1 Culture as an acquired tool versus culture as a learned tool.....	109
3.3.1.2 Culture as fixed versus culture as changing.....	110
3.3.1.3 Culture as an influence.....	111
3.3.1.4 Language and culture.....	112
3.3.2 Translating culture.....	114
3.3.2.1 The first steps.....	116
3.3.2.2 Translation strategies.....	117
3.3.3 Connected matters: culture-related concepts and cohesion.....	120
3.3.3.1 The issue of cohesion.....	122
3.4 Translating fixed expressions and idioms.....	128
3.4.1 Defining idioms and fixed expressions.....	129
3.4.1.1 Defining idioms.....	129
3.4.1.2 Defining fixed expressions.....	131
3.4.2 Translation strategies.....	133
3.4.2.1 An equivalent is available in the target language.....	134
3.4.2.2 An equivalent is not available in the target language.....	135

Chapter 4: Translating *Struck by Lightning*.....137

4.1 Bad language.....	137
4.1.1 Swearwords.....	138
4.1.1.1 An equivalent in the target language is given.....	139
4.1.1.2 The source swearword is omitted.....	143
4.1.1.3 Forms of compensation.....	145
4.1.2 Profanity.....	147
4.1.3 Insults.....	149
4.1.3.1 When vulgarity in insults is preserved.....	150

4.1.3.2 When vulgarity in insults is lost.....	153
4.1.3.3 When an insult is added.....	154
4.2 Humour.....	156
4.2.1 Humorous made-up names.....	158
4.2.1.1 Humorous made-up names which are translated.....	159
4.2.1.2 Humorous made-up names which are added in the target version..	163
4.2.2 Wordplays.....	164
4.2.2.1 The wordplay is translated.....	165
4.2.2.2 The wordplay is lost in translation.....	167
4.2.2.3 Culture-bound wordplays.....	168
4.2.3 Jokes.....	171
4.2.3.1 The cultural reference behind the joke is preserved in translation...	172
4.2.3.2 The cultural reference behind the joke gets lost in translation.....	173
4.3 References to American culture.....	178
4.3.1 Proper nouns.....	179
4.3.1.1 Names that are kept intact.....	180
4.3.1.2 Names that are altered.....	184
4.3.2 References to the American high-school system.....	186
4.3.2.1 References that are kept intact.....	186
4.3.2.2 References that are altered.....	187
4.3.3 References to American books and television products.....	191
4.3.3.1 If they are known in the target culture.....	192
4.3.3.2 If they are not known in the target culture.....	193
4.4 Idiomatic and fixed expressions.....	196
4.4.1 When an equivalent is available in the target language.....	198
4.4.2 When an equivalent is not available in the target language.....	199
4.4.3 When a target-language fixed expression is added.....	200
Conclusions.....	205
Bibliography.....	213
Appendix.....	223
Summary in Italian.....	241

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to discuss the translation strategies I adopted to translate a selection of extracts taken from Christopher Colfer's novel *Struck by Lightning: The Carson Phillips Journal* for the Italian readership. To this end, the author and the novel are first introduced, as knowledge about Colfer's life is fundamental to fully understand the protagonist. Subsequently, issues concerning the translation of literary texts are reviewed, which are needed to understand the choices made during the process of translation. What is offered in this dissertation is not meant to be an end product, but rather a starting point which could guide and eventually lead to the translation of the whole book.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 is about the author and the novel, and provides information about Colfer's life and, at the same time, offers a comparison between Colfer himself and the protagonist of his novel, Carson Phillips. As far as the novel is concerned, both the plot and the main characters are explored and analysed. Chapter 2 is devoted to some issues connected to the art of translation. First, both the word 'translation' and the word 'translator' are defined and discussed. Secondly, two recurrent challenges that translators have to face are analysed, that is, invisibility and underestimation. The matter of domestication in translation is then discussed and compared to its opposite, i.e. foreignization. Subsequently, the delicate matter of loyalty is explored, starting with a definition of equivalence, and proceeding with author- and reader- related loyalty. Lastly, the issue of how to judge the quality of a translation is discussed, along with others, such as acceptability and fluidity. Chapter 3 offers the analysis of four challenging aspects which are found in the source text. The first aspect is the presence of swearwords in the source text, which is dealt with insults. Some translation strategies available to deal with them are then explored. Afterwards, the

phenomenon of humour is explored, particularly when meaningful made-up names, wordplays and jokes are at issue. These three means of triggering laughter in an audience or readership are analysed and various translation strategies which can be used by translators are discussed. Thirdly, culture is first defined, and then the translation of culture-bound elements is explored. Particular attention in this part is paid to the concept of cohesion, and how cohesion can be created in a text. Lastly, idiomatic and fixed expressions are defined, and various strategies to deal with them are discussed. Finally, Chapter 4 presents the readers with the translation of some parts of the extracts which represented a challenge during the process of translation. To be precise, various parts are selected and discussed which contain taboo language in Chapter 4.1, humorous elements in Chapter 4.2, culture-bound elements in Chapter 4.3, and fixed expressions in Chapter 4.4. In this chapter, what is explored are the choices that I made in order to translate the selected parts of the novel at issue. It should be stressed that in this chapter some of the issues discussed in Chapter 2 are used to explain and justify translation choices, together with the theory of translation explored in Chapter 3. In the Appendix at the end of this dissertation the parts which I selected and translated from the novel are presented in their integrity, together with the translation I propose.

CHAPTER 1: THE AUTHOR AND THE NOVEL

In this chapter a brief overview will be given of the novel investigated in this dissertation, that is to say Christopher Colfer's *Struck by Lightning: The Carson Phillips Journal*. The plot and the characters in the book will be introduced, along with the author's life and his literary and film production. This background will then be made reference to for the discussion of challenging aspects of translation encountered in the text, such as jokes and references to cultural aspects. In particular, a translation into Italian of some interesting extracts will be offered, together with an analysis of the translation itself.

1.1 The author: Christopher Colfer

1.1.1 His life

Chris Colfer was born in the twenty-seventh of May, 1990, in Clovis, California. His real name is Christopher Paul Colfer and he is a singer, an actor and, most importantly, a writer. Chris Colfer is a man of many talents. His high-pitched voice being his most distinctive characteristic – in his personal opinion both a blessing¹ – Colfer is not only a well-rounded person, but a well-rounded performer too.

Chris was not blessed with a serene childhood, and his school years too did not always run smooth. As the older brother of an epileptic sister, he spent his childhood in and out of hospitals and he himself had to spend three months in hospital after a surgery that left him with a permanent scar on his neck.² To flee from this difficult reality, Chris

1 Information taken from a YouTube video featuring an interview with Mr. Colfer at the show *Lopez Tonight*.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpZma0JjwIo>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

2 Information taken from a *Los Angeles Times* article about Mr. Colfer.

<<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/15/entertainment/la-ca-chris-colfer-20120715>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

resorted to writing and reading – especially fairy tales – which helped him cope with his sister's illness.

Things were made worse by the fact that Chris was also severely bullied all through middle school. The bullying he had to endure escalated to such a point that he was literally forced to be home-schooled for a couple of years.³ Colfer also talked about the bullying he had to cope during an interview in which he said that he had never been physically abused, but he was constantly mentally harassed.⁴ When he was asked how he would react to such harassment, he stated that he never physically reacted, but just escaped into himself and internalised everything.⁵ Blessed with a great fantasy and with an amazing talent with words, Colfer started to work on a story that mixed all the classical fairy tales he knew since the age of ten.⁶

The unpleasant situation did not change very much when he started high school. Being an openly gay kid with a high-pitched voice and being involved in activities such as the Writers Club was apparently enough to justify more teasing and harassment⁷ on behalf of his peers. Every year, his school would have a talent show and every year he would ask to sing 'Defying Gravity', a classical from the musical *Wicked*, but every year he would be denied the opportunity. His grandmother, however, who was a reverent at the time, let him sing it in their church with the intent to support her nephew.⁸ Colfer used these unpleasant high-school experiences to turn himself around and he even used

3 Information taken from a *Los Angeles Times* article about Mr. Colfer.
<<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/15/entertainment/la-ca-chris-colfer-20120715>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016)

4 Information taken from a YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer at the show *Larry King Now*.
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mwvk5mtdBY>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

5 Information taken from a YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer at the show *Larry King Now*.
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mwvk5mtdBY>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

6 Information taken from a *Los Angeles Times* article about Mr. Colfer.
<<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/15/entertainment/la-ca-chris-colfer-20120715>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016)

7 Information taken from a YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer who talks about *Struck by Lightning* for PEOPLE Magazine.
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfeNxnsZUtI>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

8 Information taken from a PEOPLE Magazine article about Mr. Colfer.
<<http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20421723.html>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016)

them to improve his acting skills. During his years of high school he had his first job experiences as a cafeteria cookie scooper and a dry cleaners clerk,⁹ although he himself stated that he was not very good at them.

His life took an incredible turn when he decided to audition for the role of Artie Abrams for the television series *Glee*. Although he did not get the part, the creators liked him so much that they decided to create a new character just for him.¹⁰ They literally used him as an inspiration to give shape to the character of Kurt Hummel, a gay kid with an amazing counter-tenor singing voice and a passion for musicals and fashion. His performance of Kurt made him win a Golden Globe Award in 2011. When he was given it, he thanked Ryan Murphy – one of the creators of *Glee* – in his speech and called him his fairy godfather. He concluded his speech by dedicating the award:

to all the amazing kids who watch our show and the kids [...] who are constantly told *no* by the people in their environments, by bullies at school, that they can't be who they are or have what they want because of who they are. Well, screw that, kids. Thank you.¹¹

Working in television was only the beginning of his career. In 2012 he published his first book, the one he had been working on since he was just a child: *The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell*. In the same year, the entire *Struck by Lightning* project came to life.

In 2015 *Glee* reached the so-called end of the line with its sixth season. Since then, Colfer has been working on more books for his *The Land of Stories* series. It should also be mentioned his ability with Japanese *sai* swords,¹² ability he was happy to show both during an interview and in an episode of *Glee*. Colfer has also taken part to the Trevor

9 Information taken from a YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer at the show *Larry King Now*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVQfjeldBhs> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

10 Information taken from a PEOPLE Magazine article about Mr. Colfer.

<<http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20421723.html>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016)

11 Information taken from a YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer's speech after winning the Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actor in a TV Series in 2011.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_buU1Xk2w_U> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

12 Information taken from a YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer at BBC's *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross*.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZl1QBOW5X0>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

Project for youths in difficulty with a video in which he assures that despite everything – every bully, every bad days – it always gets better.¹³ Colfer is also rather involved in politics, for he publicly supports Hillary Clinton's campaign.¹⁴

1.1.2 His literary and film production

Chris Colfer is a very prolific writer and his impressive number of works is clear evidence of that. Apart from his novel *Struck by Lightning: The Carson Phillips Journal*, his contribution to children literature should be mentioned. *The Land of Stories* is a series of books about two twelve-year-old twins, Alex and Conner Bailey, whose life changes when they literally enter the world of fairy tales. The first book of this series was published in 2012, the same year that *Struck by Lightning* was published. *The Land of Stories* is up to date composed of four books: *The Wishing Spell*, *The Enchantress Returns*, *A Grimm Warning* and *Beyond the Kingdom*. A tale called *The Curvy Tree* is also part of the series.¹⁵ Colfer said during an interview that he had been working on Alex and Conner's story since he was a child.

Considering how much Chris suffered during middle school – that is to say, when he was about Alex and Conner's age – and how he used to escape reality through imagination, it is not unfounded to think that his work is at least partially autobiographical. While talking about his two young protagonists, Colfer in an interview claimed that twelve “is a very crucial age when kids realize, 'Oh. This is the real world.' It's the age when kids stop believing in magic”.¹⁶ It should also be said that

13 Information taken from a YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer's contribution to the Trevor Project.
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RKmnAJ3ZWM>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

14 Information taken from an ABC News article about people who support Hillary Clinton's campaign.
<<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/beyonce-spielberg-sting-33-interesting-people-wrote-big/story?id=32492794>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016)

15 Information taken from the official website of *The Land of Stories* series.
<<http://thelandofstories.com/>> (last accessed on 9 February 2016)

16 Information taken from a *Los Angeles Times* article about Mr. Colfer.
<<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/15/entertainment/la-ca-chris-colfer-20120715>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016)

both Colfer and the twins have a special bond with their grandmothers. In *The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell*, it is Alex and Conner's grandmother who gives the magical book – the one responsible for their magical adventure – to the children. The fact that Chris cares deeply about his grandmother is no secret, for he even dedicated the very first book of *The Land of Stories* to her:

To Grandma, for being my first editor and giving me the best writing advice I've ever received: “Christopher, I think you should wait until you're done with elementary school before worrying about being a failed writer.” (Colfer 2012a)

As far as his film production is concerned, *Struck by Lightning* is the only thing that Colfer has written for the big screen up to date. In 2012, a screenplay that Colfer wrote – “an expansion of a 10-minute piece he created at 16 for a speech-and-debate event at his high-school”¹⁷ – became a film and he himself took part of it, for he interpreted Carson Phillips, the protagonist and narrator of the story. After the film was brought to the big screen, Colfer decided to write the book at issue, that is to say *Struck by Lightning: The Carson Phillips Journal*. As Colfer himself said during an interview, he did things way backwards.¹⁸

1.2 The novel and the film

Struck by Lightning: The Carson Phillips Journal begins with quite an interesting – and certainly irreverent – sentence: “Dear Journal, one more school year with these shitheads and I'll be free” (Colfer 2012: 1). The first thing that should be said about this novel is that the story is entirely told from the protagonist's point of view. Carson Phillips, a Senior at a fictional high school called Clover High School, uses his journal to tell us his story, to complain about his family, his school and his life. Thanks to the

¹⁷ Information taken from a *New York Times* article about *Struck by Lightning*.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/11/movies/struck-by-lightning-written-and-starring-chris-colfer.html?_r=1> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

¹⁸ Information taken from a YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer who talks about *Struck by Lightning* for PEOPLE Magazine.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfeNxnsZUtI>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

journal, the reader is able to witness all the events and – even more importantly – is given the possibility to know how Carson is truly affected by them. His story is, in a sort of charming way, a tale about how to overcome one's problems and truly fight to achieve one's goals. However, it should be said that Carson definitely uses the wrong method to achieve them, resorting to blackmailing his high-school peers in order to increase his chances of leaving Clover forever. The fact that at the end of the book he fails and *dies* – something totally unexpected – gets to the reader in a way that no fairy tale with its happy ending could have ever done.

1.2.1 The beginning

This story is set in the fictional small town of Clover, whose position is described by Carson with these words: “go to the corner of Nothing and Nowhere, make a left, and you'll find Clover” (Colfer 2012: 5). The first entry in the journal is used by Carson to introduce himself and to talk about his dreams, his dysfunctional family and the environment he is forced to live in. About his family, he says that his father left them when he was ten and that it has been his mother and him since then. Another important member of his family is his beloved grandmother, who lives in the Clover Assisted Living Home because she is affected by Alzheimer's disease.

Carson is walking in a hallway at school when his counsellor, Ms Sharpton, summons him in her office for the Career Day (Colfer 2012: 29), but he is far from impressed, for he already knows what he wants to do with his life. The reader has already found out what he wants to do – “become the youngest freelance journalist to be published in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Boston Globe*, eventually making my way to editor of the *New Yorker*” (Colfer 2012: 1-2) – but it is here that it becomes clear how carefully he has been planning his future:

I've got to get into Northwestern [...]. I've put seventeen good years into this town. People spend less time in prison for murder sentences [...]. I've been the editor of the school newspaper and president of the Writers' Club since sophomore year just to better my chances of getting into that school [...]. So I've already applied and meet all the requirements; I just haven't heard back from them yet. (Colfer 2012: 30-31)

After asking his counsellor to call Northwestern and find something about his acceptance letter, Carson heads for his journalism class. It is during journalism classes that the school newspaper – the *Clover High Chronicle* – is 'proudly' produced.

A brief explanation of the *Chronicle's* history follows: after all the Seniors who took journalism classes graduated, Carson – who at the time was a Sophomore – tried to recruit new members, but failed. At a later time, “the school ended up sticking people in the class who didn't have enough credits to graduate” (Colfer 2012: 33). Subsequently, Carson introduces and describes some of his peers. First, he talks about Dwayne Michaels, a substance-abuser who “probably just pisses liquid weed” (Colfer 2012: 34). Then, he talks about Vicki Jordan, a 'Goth' student who “ditched everything she owned that made her look alive and became the walking undead” (Colfer 2012: 35). Right after, he introduces Emilio López, an exchange student who apparently does not speak a word of English apart from the sentence “I love America” (Colfer 2012: 36). Last but not least, Carson talks about Malerie Baggs, a plump girl who “struggles a bit with concentration, metabolism, and plagiarism” (Colfer 2012: 37). The way Carson feels about his peers can be summed up with this sentence: “One day I swear an ulcer is gonna rip out of me like *Alien* and I'm going to name him Peer Incompetence” (Colfer 2012: 34).

Subsequently, Carson talks about the Writers' Club, a club *he* has been running for three years. Malerie and himself are the only members, in spite of all his efforts to make others join in. It is during a meeting of the Writers' Club that we discover something more about Malerie's problems with writing and about their relationship in general. About her, Carson says that “she may be the closest thing to a sidekick I'll ever have”

(Colfer 2012: 44).

In the following entry of the journal, Carson talks about the student council meetings and about how much he despises those who attend the meetings with him: “They're the kind of people who come from good families, have never had to deal with any major problems, and will most likely never have to *work* for anything in their lives” (Colfer 2012: 45-46). It is at this point of the journal that the reader gets to know about the other peers with whom Carson has to deal. First, Carson introduces Claire Mathews, the president of the student council and head of the cheerleaders. Subsequently, he talks about vice president Remy Baker, who is “smart, ambitious, and driven” (Colfer 2012: 47). After that, he introduces Claire's boyfriend, Justin Walker, the dumb head of the Athletes' Club. The last two members are Scott Thomas – the “performing arts commissioner and president of the Drama Club” (Colfer 2012: 48) – and Nicholas Forbes – the “Student Council treasurer and president of the FBLA”¹⁹ (Colfer 2012: 48). During the meeting, they talk about homecoming and they discuss possible themes for the Sadie Hawkins dance. In the end, the theme that Carson proposes is the most brilliant, but they manage to 'bastardise' his idea, much to Carson's rage and disdain.

In the following entry, the reader catches a glimpse of his domestic life, for s/he follows Carson in one of his daily visits to his grandmother. When he enters her room, she does not recognise him – as it is quite frequent for people who suffer from Alzheimer's not to recognise their beloved ones. Although Carson should be used to this, his comment is “Hearing this hurts every time” (Colfer 2012: 55). The most striking thing about this visit, however, is something that his grandmother tells him: “I'm worried about my grandson [...]. He used to be so happy, but now he walks around with so much negative energy. Sometimes a personal rain cloud can be deadly, you

19 The FBLA is one of the after-school clubs that students can attend at Clover High. FBLA stands for Future Business Leaders of America and it is basically “a place to fight over who has the best cell phone and whose daddy makes the most money” (Colfer 2012: 40).

know” (Colfer 2012: 57). It is a turning point in the story because Carson is indeed going to die because of a cloud – although the reader does not know it yet – more precisely, because of a bolt of lightning. Hearing his grandmother say these words makes Carson think about his life and he wonders whether he is happy or whether he is just waiting to become happy. When he returns home, his mother is sitting on the patio, “drunker than a skunk” (Colfer 2012: 58) and the two have a meaningful conversation.

Another journalism class is described in the following entry, but this time it is stressed how disappointed Carson is to find out that his peers have nothing ready to be published. His disappointment quickly turns into rage after realising that the printing is scheduled for the following day and they have not written a single word. When he starts to complain about having to stay there all night to prepare the new edition all by himself, Vicki and Dwayne tell him that he should not bother because nobody reads the *Chronicle* anyway. Even if he does his best not to show any emotion, Carson is deeply affected by their words. The fact that he cares so much can be considered a sort of weakness because caring leaves the door open for being hurt and disappointed. “I *need* something to care about [...]. I think I hate showing vulnerability to myself more than I do to other people” (Colfer 2012: 65).

It is somehow thanks to his 'peer incompetence' that Carson finds himself in the right place at the right time. After working for a few hours on the new edition of the *Chronicle*, he goes to the boys' bathroom. There, he catches two students making out in a stall: Nicholas Forbes and Scott Thomas. Immediately understanding how scared Nicholas is at the idea of being outed, Carson reassures them that he would never reveal anything: “I know what it's like to be an outcast. I wouldn't wish the struggles of an *outed* outcast on anyone” (Colfer 2012: 68). Of course, he says that he will keep his mouth shut *if* they do something for him in return, that is to say, write something weekly

for the *Chronicle* until they all graduate. Although blackmailing should never be used as a means to reach one's purposes, it must be said that Carson is perfectly aware of how wrong and immoral his actions are: "let me make one thing clear: I am an equal-opportunity extortionist" (Colfer 2012: 70).

The story moves on to Carson's finding a Post-it on his desk: "*Hey, smart guy, I heard back from Northwestern. Come see me in the counseling center when you can. Huggles, Ms. Sharpton*" (Colfer 2012: 76). Once he arrives there, Ms. Sharpton tells him that she called Northwestern and that, although she could not find out whether he had been admitted or not, they told her that high school newspapers "aren't cutting it anymore" (Colfer 2012: 77). Thus, she suggests that he should submit a copy of a literary magazine together with his application. In her opinion, showing that he can inspire others to write would be good for his application. Carson immediately runs to the Principal to ask him permission to start a school literary magazine, permission that is accorded. However, the Principal informs him that he will have to find his own funding because the school is broke. The moment Carson arrives home, he realises that something is wrong, for both the house and his mother are clean. Such an unexpected event is easily explained: his father was there to finally have his mother sign the divorce papers. Knowing that asking her money in that moment would be pointless, he decides to ask her at dinner.

During dinner, his mother tells him that he should be on antidepressants and tries to validate her words by saying that sometimes pills are the only solution. Not willing to take pills of any kind, Carson instead chooses to ask her money to start his literary magazine. It is after a heated argument that Carson agrees to take antidepressants in exchange for the money he so desperately needs. Satisfied that the funding are no longer a problem, Carson realises that there is something else that needs to be taken care of:

“Peer participation? *Jesus Christ, how the hell am I going to manage that?*” (Colfer 2012: 90).

During an assembly at school, Carson proudly announces to his peers that he is going to start a literary magazine and encourages them to submit original works “into the box outside the journalism classroom” (Colfer 2012: 94). Unfortunately, and rather predictably, when he checks the box he sees that it has been used as a waste basket. Discouraged, Carson complains about it with Malerie while they are preparing the Writers' Club's homecoming float. She tries to cheer him up by saying that if he can convince Nicholas Forbes and Scott Thomas to write for the *Chronicle* he can succeed in doing everything he wants. When Carson grimly confesses that he is blackmailing them and explains her the situation, Malerie shares with him an interesting piece of information: “I caught Coach Walker and Claire Mathews bonking each other in the boys' locker room” (Colfer 2012: 97). Knowing that Claire is supposed to be dating *Justin* Walker – Coach Walker's brother – makes Carson realise that everyone has something to hide.

“It's three o'clock in the morning and I can't sleep. I've never been so furious in my entire life” (Colfer 2012: 100). The reader is immediately told that the cause of his rage is the homecoming night and what happened – namely, the fact that once again he has been completely humiliated by his peers. Because the engine of the truck supposed to pull the cheerleaders' float was not working, Claire decided to take the Writers' Club's truck. Of course, Carson tried to find another solution, but Claire's decision was final. Moved by pure rage and determination, Carson decided that *he* himself was going to pull their float across the football field. He actually managed to pull their float with Malerie on top, but the only thing they got was being laughed at by the entire school. This was what is generally called the final straw. Once he returned home, Carson started

to concoct a plan. Then, he called Malerie and told her that they were back into the field with operation *Clovergate*. “I'm done letting them walk all over me. Come Monday morning, I will get my literary submissions, even if I have to blackmail the entire school” (Colfer 2012: 106).

1.2.2 The Clovergate project

It is in this moment that his blackmailing plan – also known as *Clovergate* – is put into action. First, Carson and Malerie decide who their victims are and attach their pictures to a board: Claire Mathews, Coach Walker, Remy Baker, Nicholas Forbes, Scott Thomas, Vicki Jordan and Dwayne Michales. Carson decides to start with Remy Baker. As the girl is rather active on the Clover High School website – obviously using a nickname – Carson sends her a message with the nickname “BadBoy2012” (Colfer 2012: 109). After a brief exchange of messages, he convinces her to send him a hot picture and what he receives is “enough to turn a nun into an atheist” (Colfer 2012: 111). After school, he approaches her and explains her the situation right before giving her a yellow flyer that says “You are cordially invited to attend a mandatory meeting in the journalism classroom Friday after school” (Colfer 2012: 112). Subsequently, Carson stops by the boys' bathroom where he finds both Nicholas and Scott. Without a word of explanation – for he already has them “under his thumb” (Colfer 2012: 113) – he hands both of them a yellow flyer and leaves.

Clovergate day two. Carson and Malerie decide that it is Dwayne and Vicki's moment. When they find Dwayne alone, they show him a Ziploc bag with something resembling weed inside it and they tell him that *he* left it in the journalism classroom. Threatening him with denouncing his behaviour to the school authorities, Carson hands him the yellow flyer. After, it is Vicki's turn. Knowing that the 'Goth' girl has 'Satanfest 2011'

pins on her backpack, Carson decides to search for some information on the internet. He finds out that it is “an annual gathering held at the fairgrounds convention center that attracted all the seriously fucked-up people from the local countries” (Colfer 2012: 118). Luckily for him, he finds a lot of compromising photos of hers that he can merrily use for his purpose. After threatening her with sending those pictures to her religious mother, he gives Vicki the yellow flyer.

Clovergate day three. With only two victims left, Coach Colin and Claire Mathews, Carson feels he is just one step away from victory. He decides to deal with Coach Colin first. Therefore Carson approaches him and tells him that he knows about Claire Mathews and that he even has a video to prove it – thanks to Malerie who always films everything she sees. Finding Claire alone is difficult, for she is followed everywhere by her “cheerleading minions” (Colfer 2012: 126). In the end, he decides to just give her one of his yellow flyers with a note at the bottom: “How does it feel being the Walker boys' girlfriend?” (Colfer 2012: 126). Satisfied with his job and aware of the fact that now he has his victims' attention, Carson goes back to journalism classroom.

Clovergate dia cuatro. In this entry of the journal, the reader witnesses an unexpected turn of events, for Carson finds himself once again in the right place at the right time. Carson is in the teachers' room to make some photocopies when he hears weird noises coming from the supply room and he decides to sneak a peak. What he sees is Emilio – the exchange student – “getting it on” (Colfer 2012: 131) with Ms. Hastings – the Principal's receptionist. Carson is still watching when the woman leaves. In that moment, Emilio's cell phone rings and he answers in perfect English. Once Emilio turns around, he finds out – much to his horror – that Carson knows the truth. Subsequently, Carson and Malerie have a chat with Emilio. During this chat, Emilio reveals that his real name is Henry Capperwinkle, that he is from San Diego – not from El Salvador –

and that he is doing this because “For just a couple hundred bucks a month I get food and housing [...]. And *girls*” (Colfer 2012: 135). After hearing his confession, Carson hands Emilio one of his yellow flyers – which he was planning to keep – and leaves.

Clovergate day five: the meeting. At the end of the lessons, Malerie and himself meet at the journalism classroom, where they wait for their victims to arrive. Once they are all there, Carson tells them that he want a submission for his literary magazine from each one of them. Their reaction to the news gets worse when Carson tells Coach Colin and Claire that he wants a submission from every football player and cheerleader. Angry, Claire tells him that nobody would believe him even if he spread whatever information he has on them because everybody *hates* him. It is in this moment that Carson snaps.

“*Sit down!*” I ordered [...]. Years of stomaching their shit had led to this moment and I went *Dante’s Peak* on their asses.

“For years I have been poked and stabbed with your *bitchfork*, Claire!” I yelled with my whole body. I still don’t know where the words came from. “You have beaten me down to the bottom of the high school food chain with the *shitty end* of the stick for far too long! You don’t think they’re gonna believe me? *I will make them believe!* [...] So go ahead and play all the mind games you want to with me, sweetheart. I’m not accepting that invitation to intimidation any longer. I have nothing to lose and a whole hell of a lot to gain, and this time *none of you are stopping me!* (Colfer 2012: 144-145)

Carson ends his speech by saying that they can write *everything* as long as it is in their own words and as soon as possible. Once he is finished, he tells them to get out of his classroom.

In the following entry, both football players and cheerleaders start to give him their submissions, which makes Carson happy. However, his day is spoiled when he visits his grandmother and she does not recognise him. This entry ends with a dialogue between Carson and Justin Walker. When Justin gives Carson his submission, he says that it is probably going to be disappointing, for writing is not his thing. When Carson asks him what is his thing and Justin does not know what to answer, Carson suggests him to “show the world who you are before it tells you [...]. Otherwise you become victim to

someone you're not" (Colfer 2012: 157).

Justin Walker is just the beginning. One after the other, all those that Carson has blackmailed approach him to give him their submissions and Carson actually has a heart-felt conversation with each of them – and sometimes he even apologises for his actions. Remy is the first, for when she submits her short story she says that she would hate to be remembered for a mediocre piece of writing. When Carson asks her how she would like to be remembered, she tells him that she wants to be remembered as a girl who does not waste her time and she adds that she likes to keep track of her achievements because if she does not do it, nobody will. It is in this moment that Carson tells her that “if you overachieve yourself to death, you'll never know what your real accomplishments are” (Colfer 2012: 163). Right after, Carson is told by Claire Mathews that the student council is going to have a meeting with the principal soon and asks him to be on their best behaviour.

The next one with whom Carson has a conversation is Dwayne, who thanks Carson for opening his eyes, for he has really enjoyed writing. Carson – once he gets over the shock – suggests him to try and *read* something, saying that reading can be quite an experience too. After, Carson tries to give him a suggestion: “there are all kinds of ways to escape out there if that's what you're looking for. *Healthy ways*. And most of them don't cost any brain cells” (Colfer 2012: 171). Malerie is the next person that Carson somehow manages to help. Because of Malerie's habit of affirming she has written something that someone else has created – namely, people like J.K. Rowling, Susan Collins and Adele (Colfer 2012: 174) – it is not easy for them to find something she could submit for the literary magazine. When Malerie tells him that she is the victim, he suggests her to take one of 'her' masterpieces and change the names and the gender of the protagonists. This way, she could be published in the literary magazine with a

perfectly legal satire.

Carson is on his way to the parking lot when he sees Vicki sitting all alone and listening to some music. Wanting to collect her submission, he approaches her, but when she gives him her submission he notices some cuts on her wrist. Worried, he tries to talk to her and give her some sort of advice, but she does not listen to him. Carson feels sad for her, but knows that he is not entitled to judge her for her choices and for the way she decides to deal with her problems.

“I spent the majority of my Halloween bitching with the gays. (I've always wanted to say that.)” (Colfer 2012: 180). When Nicholas and Scott go to the journalism classroom to give Carson their submissions, Carson finally apologises to them. He says that he is sorry for what he has done, but that they really helped him by writing something for his magazine. Both Nicholas and Scott accept his apologies and Nicholas even opens up with Carson and tells him that his family would disown him if they ever found out. When Scott says that it is easy for celebrities to say that it gets better, but in the real world it is much more difficult to be who you really are, Carson replies that “No one is saying it's going to be easy [...]. But if your life is being ruined because you're living in an environment that doesn't accept you, and you don't at least *try* to move to one that does, then you can only blame yourself” (Colfer 2012: 184). After, Carson bids them goodbye to go and visit his grandmother.

Because he has not received his acceptance letter yet, Carson worries that the literary magazine is the only card left to play. Considering that Emilio slips his submission under the journalism classroom's door, Claire is the last one to submit. When Carson asks her if her submission is about contraception, just to madden her, she replies that it is good for him to have big plans to leave, but, unlike him, she is stuck there, so he should not judge her for wanting to have fun before high school is over. Before she can

leave the room, Carson asks her why does she feel trapped there, and reminds her of when they were in second grade and were asked what they wanted to be when they grew up – Carson said a Nobel Peace Prize winner and Claire said a ballerina. When he asks her what happened to that dream, she replies that everybody laughed at her.

“But *I* didn’t laugh at you,” I said [...].

Claire went silent again [...].

“In what grade do we stop believing in ourselves?” I asked. “In what grade do we just stop believing, period? I mean, *someone* has to be a Nobel Peace Prize winner. *Someone* has to be a ballerina. Why not us?”

She stormed out of the room. This time I didn’t stop her. (Colfer 2012: 189)

Malerie and himself are working together on her submission when Carson's cell phone rings. Much to his shock, on the other end of the wire there is his father. Neal Phillips tells Carson that he is going to get married and that his fiancée is pregnant, and asks Carson to have dinner with them so that he can meet her. Carson's major concern is how his mother is going to react to the news. Rather predictably, Sheryl does not take it too well, although she pretends to be happy for her ex-husband. “I didn’t want to leave her, but I was almost glad I wasn’t going to be there for the rest of the night. I didn’t want to witness how Mom was going to handle it. I knew it wouldn’t be pretty” (Colfer 2012: 197-198). Once Carson arrives, he finally meets April, his father's lovely fiancée, and is immediately charmed by her. During dinner his father pretends “to be something other than the selfish asshole he had been my entire life” (Colfer 2012: 201) just to impress April. Not willing to be a puppet in his father's hands, Carson goes back home – where he finds his mother passed out on the couch.

As the literary magazine is ready, a proud Carson sends it to Northwestern with a new application. Unfortunately, his joy does not last long, for a couple of days later the student council and himself have the meeting with the principal and the superintendents. When the student council is told that students are to follow another rule, Carson is the only one to speak his mind and say what he really thinks about it. To punish him for his

disrespectful behaviour, the principal declares that until the end of the school year, all off-campus student privileges are revoked. Once the principal and the superintendents are gone, everybody complains with Carson for his outburst and Claire clearly tells him that now everybody is *actually* going to hate him. To defend himself, Carson says this: “I wasn't just standing up for myself in there—I was standing up for all of you!” (Colfer 2012: 237). Angry and frustrated, he leaves the room.

1.2.3 The ending

Carson is still waiting for news from Northwestern when Ms. Sharpton calls him in her office. Once he is there, he is told that he missed the confirmation deadline, so they will not let him reapply. He was indeed accepted, but he never confirmed – because, according to Carson, he never received the letter – so now he has to go to his second-choice school. Unfortunately, as Carson himself says to Ms. Sharpton, there was no second choice. “I never planned to fail, so I’ve failed to plan” (Colfer 2012: 242). After receiving these news, Carson wonders if he should just go to Clover Community College, but his reflection is brusquely interrupted when his mother calls him and tells him that grandma fell and hurt herself. Fortunately it is nothing serious, but being both there to visit her gives Carson and his mother the occasion to talk. When Carson explains the situation to his mother, she admits that she threw his acceptance letter away, for she wanted to protect him.

“I didn’t want you to get hurt like I did,” she said. “All your talk about growing up and becoming a writer—all these delusions you have won’t happen. Dreams don’t come true, Carson, take it from me. I’m living proof. The world is a very cruel place. You would have left and been eaten alive and come back utterly destroyed. I wanted better for you.” (Colfer 2012: 247-248)

Needless to say, Carson is extremely angry and he leaves his mother there after thanking her for being the perfect example of what he refuses to become.

A few days later, Malerie and himself talk about what awaits them the next year at

Clover Community College – for Carson eventually decided to apply. Suddenly, Carson asks her why does she always film everything and if she really wants to remember everything. Malerie replies that “With good memories come bad memories, and I’ve got a lot of both. At least this way I can fast-forward through all the bad stuff” (Colfer 2012: 252). When he hears this, Carson tells her that she finally has something she can *write* about. The moment the two part, Carson reflects about his actions. He is proud of the fact that he inspired his peers to write, even though he used illegal ways, and for the first time in a long time he feels accomplished and satisfied.

Even if I never get out of Clover, even if I never get into Northwestern or write for the *New Yorker*, even if these are just delusions occupying my time, thank God they are, because a life without meaning, without drive or focus, without dreams or goals, isn’t a life worth living [...]. Like having a great idea, *life* comes at you fast. It hits you and tries to escape and be expressed in any way possible. In a way, it’s a lot like...*lightning*. (Colfer 2012: 255-256)

This is the end of the journal, but not the end of the story. After, there is a fictitious newspaper article about Carson's death. It is in this way that the reader discovers that he has been struck and killed by a bolt of lightning in the school's parking lot.

1.2.4 The film

The film and the book are quite similar, not only – and rather obviously – because the story is the same, but also because Carson is the narrator of the events both in the film and in the book. Thus, what both the audience and the readers are offered is *his* point of view, nothing more.

As Colfer himself stated during an interview, “the film takes place right after he dies and kind of jumps back and forth between his funeral and his last few months alive”,²⁰ so the film is rather different from the book from this point of view. The audience know how Carson's story is going to end, for they have witnessed his death in the very first minutes of the film. The readers, on the other hand, have no idea whatsoever of what is

²⁰ A YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer who talks about *Struck by Lightning* for PEOPLE Magazine. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfeNxnsZUtI>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

going to happen at the end of the novel. The readers wait for a happy-ending they do not know they are not going to get, while the audience observe every move that Carson makes with the awareness that he is going to fail and die.

1.3 The main characters

Some of the characters in *Struck by Lightning* are clichéd characters. The protagonist of the novel himself says that he “hope[s that they] aren't the walking clichés everyone thinks you are, because life is going to walk all over you” (Colfer 2012: 238). Apparently, their stereotypical behaviour should not be overlooked, but it is hard to say whether this was precisely the author's intention or just the way some characters happened to be. What should be stressed, however, is the fact that, due to their being stereotypical, these characters are recognisable and can be associated with people related to real high-school experiences.

1.3.1 The protagonist: Carson Phillips

The entire story is told from his point of view, for the novel itself is actually his personal journal. Carson lives with his mother, for his father abandoned them, in the small fictional city of Clover, a place “where the pockets are small but the minds are even smaller” (Colfer 2012: 4). His greatest aspiration is to leave Clover once and for all and go to New York, where he dreams of becoming the editor of the *New Yorker*. Because of his aspiration, he is frequently mocked and isolated not only by his peers at school, but by the entire community. In the first entry of his journal, Carson stresses that he is somehow different from his peers, and also strengthens this idea by adding several anecdotes from his difficult childhood.

Stuck in a “*Titanic* of a family” (Colfer 2012: 10) and with his ill grandmother as the

only friendly ear he has, Carson is basically forced to discover the power inbuilt within words, which can be moulded and used according to personal whims. To escape his parents' arguments and the sad reality he has to live in, he starts to play with words to distract and amuse himself. It is his passion for the written word that makes him so different, because it is the one thing that gives him the strength to go on and do his best to escape from Clover as soon as possible.

His resentment for his home town is mirrored by his even stronger resentment for the people who live there, starting with his family – with the exception of his grandmother – and his high-school mates. His relationship with his mother is far from idyllic, but it is rather clear that Carson loves her in spite of the contrasts they have. As concerns his father, the two of them do not have a good relationship. In a post he writes: “Things are complicated between me and my dad because there is absolutely nothing between the two of us” (Colfer 2012: 194). Things change when his father gets back in town with his new, pregnant fiancée, for he asks Carson to meet after years of silence. When the two meet, Carson realises what a disappointment his father truly is.

At school, Carson hates practically everybody. The only exception is Malerie, his best friend and 'partner in crime', the only one who always takes his side. Together, they work on *Clovergate*, a project that revolves around the idea of blackmailing students in order to force them to submit something for Carson's literary magazine.

Carson may be seen as a selfish, detached, calculating person – and in some respects he definitely is – but behind the strong, stubborn, unconcerned façade, there is actually a caring, sweet and insecure boy. The reader is reminded of his softer side every time he talks about his beloved grandmother or when he tries to help Malerie with her writing issues. The fact that he often walks on the thin line between hero and villain is just another reason to appreciate him, especially because he is perfectly aware of it, as can

be noticed in this extract:

Have these people made my life a living hell for the past four years? *Yes*. Do these people deserve being treated like this? *In my opinion, yes*. Am I a horrible person for doing this to them? *Maybe*. Is this the most selfish thing I've done to date? *Definitely*. Will the guilt I'm starting to feel outshine the greater good I'm trying to accomplish for the future? *Hopefully not*. Am I a hero in this story, or am I the villain? Which side is the author of my first unauthorized biography going to take? (Colfer 2012: 128-129)

Carson's only weapon to survive high school is his brain. Smarter than any of his peers, he has no problem in letting everyone know that he does not care about their opinion: “what prevents my life from being a sad after-school special is *I don't give a shiiiiit*. I can't reiterate enough, this town is full of morons!” (Colfer 2012: 5).

Carson is probably the most controversial and uncommon personality in Clover. He is quite passionate about his ideas, in particular when it comes to possible ways to improve the local school system. Carson hates high school – which is probably the only thing he has in common with all the other teenagers – and he thinks of it as “society's bright idea to put all the naïve, pubescent, aggressive youth into one environment to torment and emotionally scar each other for life” (Colfer 2012: 23). Differently from the majority of teenagers, however, he is able to make a point when he complains about the school system, in that he has valid and intelligent reasons to back up his statements against the quality of the high-school system.

At the very end of the novel, a fictitious newspaper article states that Carson is killed by a bolt of lightning. The way he dies can be considered comic and tragic at the same time, as the last words in his journal are:

Like having a great idea, *life* comes at you fast. It hits you and tries to escape and be expressed in any way possible. In a way, it's a lot like...*lightning*. Speaking of which, I think I hear a storm coming. I should head home before it starts to rain; I seem to have misplaced my umbrella. (Colfer 2012: 256)

1.3.2 Carson Phillips' family

Sheryl Phillips is Carson's mother. From the very beginning, she is described as an

atypical mother, full of problems and quite depressed. She used to work as a receptionist at a doctor's office, but she quit her job at her husband's request. Her Alzheimer's sick mother lived with them for a while, but Sheryl was soon forced by her husband to put her in the Clover Assisted Living Home. In spite of her attempts to make their marriage work, her husband left Carson and her when their son was only ten. She “never really recovered from the whole thing [...]. She never dated or remarried, replacing my dad with wine instead” (Colfer 2012: 15).

Sheryl spends her days – and nights – on the couch, watching television, drinking and taking prescribed drugs. According to Carson, she “has formed this sick relationship with her doctor [...]. She literally makes up illnesses so she can visit him and is convinced if she doesn't call him once a week he *worries* about her” (Colfer 2012: 20). It is perhaps under her doctor's suggestion that one evening she tells Carson that he needs to be on antidepressants, affirming that “sometimes pills are the only solution” (Colfer 2012: 87).

She does something unforgivable towards the end of the story, when she throws away her son's acceptance letter. To validate her questionable actions, she tells him that she did it for him, to protect him from a world she only knew too well was cruel and dangerous. It may be true that she was worried about her son, but others could believe that she was just afraid of solitude.

In the newspaper article at the end of the book, the journalist reports on Sheryl's declaration about her son's death:

I was reading that lightning is a negative charge that comes from the friction cloud carry. Since opposites attract, I would like to think that he was so positive the moment he died – so happy, he pulled that bolt right out of the sky. I don't know if that's possible, but that's what I believe.” (Colfer 2012: 258)

Neal Phillips is Carson's father. He works as a real estate agent, and – apparently – as regards parenthood he has never been a role model. Considering how much Neal and

Sheryl used to fight, Carson often wonders why his parents bothered to get married. Because of his stormy relationship with Sheryl, Neal decides to leave them when his son was only ten years old. According to Carson, he only saw his father twice before Neal decided to come back to Clover. During Carson's senior year of high school, Neal gets in contact with Carson again, in that he wants his son to meet his new fiancée and “*baby mama*”(Colfer 2012: 194), April. When Neal and April have Carson over for dinner, Neal tries to act like a good father to impress his fiancée, but Carson refuses to play by his father's rules and openly screams and blames him because he left his mother and himself.

Carson's grandmother is probably the most important member of his family and the person Carson loves the most. He visits her daily at the Clover Assisted Living Home and even though she no longer recognises him because of her illness, she is the only one with whom he talks. When Carson's literary magazine is ready, he decides to dedicate it to her.

1.3.3 The Chronicle team

Malerie Baggs is Carson's best – and only – friend. She takes journalism classes together with Carson and is assistant editor of the school's newspaper, the *Clover High Chronicle* (Colfer 2012: 33). Apart from Carson, she is the only member of the Writers' Club. She is “short and round and a little ... *different*” (Colfer 2012: 37). She always carries around a camcorder and films almost everything she sees. When Carson asks her the reason, she tells him that in this way she can fast-forward the bad memories and focus on the good ones. What Carson says about her is: “I wouldn't say she's *slow*, I'd just say other boats make it to the island before hers. She struggles a bit with concentration, metabolism, and plagiarism” (Colfer 2012: 37). As stated in this entry,

according to Carson, Malerie has a problem with 'plagiarism', for she always tries to pass off famous books as her own creations. Since she desperately wants to submit something for the literary magazine, Carson suggests that she could manipulate one of her 'creations' to transform it into a satire of some sort. Malerie is very grateful for this piece of advice, because she feels like he has given her back something that had been taken away from her (Colfer 2012: 176).

Vicki Jordan takes journalism classes with Carson and is the *Chronicle's* weather reporter, or at least this is what she claims she is, because she does not contribute much in actual fact. The first time that Vicki is mentioned is during the journalism class: when Carson asks her if her weather report is ready, she just looks out of the window and says that it is cloudy (Colfer 2012: 35). Carson describes her as a Gothic, reserved girl. To blackmail her into writing something for his literary magazine, Carson uses some compromising photos of hers taken during an 'event' called "Satanfest 2011" (Colfer 2012: 118). Knowing, thanks to Malerie, that Vicki's mother is extremely religious, Carson threatens Vicki to send those pictures to her mother.

The only piece of writing that Vicki submits to Carson's literary magazine is a short story called *Creatures of the Darkness*, which is about a world where there is no light and there are no living creatures. When she submits it to Carson, he notices several marks on her wrist. Worried about her, he tries to talk to her, but she refuses to listen to him, and tells him that it is her right to choose how to deal with her problems.

Dwayne Michaels takes journalism classes with Carson and is supposed to be the *Chronicle's* "movie reviewer" (Colfer 2012: 33). Because of the fact that he spends his time smoking weed, he has never actively contributed to the *Chronicle*. He ends up being one of Carson's victims. Carson blackmails him with the aid of a bag full of fake weed: he tells him that the 'weed' is his and threatens him to tell the principal if he does

not write something for him. When Dwayne gives Carson his submission, he thanks him for giving him the chance to write something, for he actually appreciated it. Even if he is rather surprised, Carson suggests he should try to *read* something if he thought that writing was such an amazing experience – or, as Dwayne called it, such a trip.

Emilio López – aka Henry Capperwinkle – pretends to be an exchange student from El Salvador while he is actually from San Diego (Colfer 2012: 135). He takes journalism classes with Carson, but he is not that useful for the *Chronicle* – just like all the others – because he pretends not to speak English. Carson discovers the truth when he overhears him conversing in English. When Carson confronts him, Emilio tells him all the truth: his name is not Emilio but Henry and he is pretending to be a foreign exchange student to live with just “a couple hundred bucks” (Colfer 2012: 135) and to impress girls. When Emilio begs Carson not to tell the truth to his host family, Carson blackmails him into writing a submission for his literary magazine. His submission is a list of ten reasons that he believes makes him great – all of them in Spanish, of course.

1.3.4 The student council's members

Claire Mathews is the president of both the Student Council and student body. “She’s pretty, popular, petite, a proud cheerleader, and I suspect she also shits cupcakes” (Colfer 2012: 46). She is the younger of five sisters, and is in a relationship with Justin Walker, a football player. Carson cannot stand her, nor can he stand the other student-council's members. When Carson and Malerie decide to blackmail some of their peers, Claire is one of their chosen victims. Carson openly puts the blame on her for cheating on her boyfriend – furthermore with her boyfriend's brother. The moment she gives him her submission, she tells him that since she has no chance of leaving, she wants to have fun during her senior year, for it may be the last chance she will get. Unconvinced,

Carson asks her what happened to her dream of becoming a ballerina, and she tells him that it died the moment she was laughed at because of it. When Carson causes the entire school to be punished because of his disrespectful behaviour, she is the one who tells him that from now on everybody is really going to hate him.

Remy Baker is the vice president of the Student Council and the editor of the yearbook. Carson describes her as a smart girl, for she could *almost* be defined as his true intellectual equal at school. The only indication he gives about her physical appearance is that she is so short she would fit right in in Middle Earth (Colfer 2012: 47). Remy is another victim of Carson's. He blackmails her with the aid of a compromising photo of hers. Remy's submission for Carson's literary magazine is a short story about an overworked princess. When she gives Carson her work, she tells him that she wants to be remembered as a girl who did not waste her time. She has the constant need of keeping track of her achievements, because nobody would do it but her. Apart from the Principal and Sheryl, she is the only one who comments on Carson's death in the newspaper article at the end of the book: "We were best friends [...]. It's so sad to think we won't see him walking through the halls anymore" (Colfer 2012: 257).

Nicholas Forbes is the Student Council treasurer and president of the FBLA – the Future Business Leaders of America Club. Nicholas is "the oldest son of the richest man in Clover" (Colfer 2012: 48), and his family owns basically everything in town. He is a closeted homosexual, and is in love with his high school mate Scott Thomas. When Carson finds out about their relationship, he blackmails them first into writing for the *Chronicle*, then into submitting something for his literary magazine. Nicholas is rather scared of his parents finding out that he is gay, so he bends to Carson's requests without putting up a fight. When Carson apologises for his actions, Nicholas is willing to forgive him. It is after Carson's apology that Nicholas tells him that, if his parents were to know

his secret, they would disown him.

Scott Thomas is “the performing arts commissioner and president of the Drama Club” (Colfer 2012: 48) and he is also a member of the Student Council. Scott hates Carson because of a bad review he wrote about Scott's performance during a school show. He is one of Carson's victims and in his submission he talks about his desire of becoming a great star. Scott is in love with Nicholas Forbes, and is definitely not ashamed of it. When Carson finds out about their relationship, Scott becomes angry with him, but he is not scared at all, for he would not care if the entire school – or the entire city – found out about his homosexuality. It is Nicholas who is the afraid partner, the one who is not ready to come out of the proverbial closet. When Carson confronts them about not being afraid – and apologises for his actions – Scott tells him that:

You know, it's really easy for celebrities and politicians to say that it gets better, but it's a bit more difficult for us in the real world, where kids are getting killed every day. (Colfer 2012: 183)

Justin Walker is a member of the Student Council and a football player. He is the “sports commissioner and also the head of the Athletes' Club” (Colfer 2012: 47). Justin is Coach Colin's younger brother and Claire Mathews' boyfriend. When Carson first mentions Justin, he says that he is so dumb that “if you handed him a box of rocks he'd probably stick one in the ground and say he planted a mountain” (Colfer 2012: 47). When the *Clovergate* project is put into action, Carson does not find himself in need to directly blackmail Justin, but by asking Coach Colin to force his athletes to submit something, Justin inevitably becomes part of his plan. Justin's submission is a sort of awkward essay about why he loves colour green (Colfer 2012: 218) and when he gives it to Carson, he justifies himself by saying that he is not good at writing. When Carson asks him what is it that he is good at, Justin gets angry and says: “I'm not just a dumb jock [...], okay? There's much more to me than that” (Colfer 2012: 157). After hearing this, Carson suggests that he should show the world who he is before the world itself

gives him a label.

1.4 Similarities and differences between Chris Colfer and Carson Phillips

It is rather true that every author puts something personal in their books, such as old memories, beliefs or people they have known. However, saying this is quite distant from asserting that every book is at least partially autobiographical. Keeping this in mind, it is possible to say that when it comes to Chris Colfer, his works say a lot of things about him – about his past and his vision of the world. The fact that Colfer himself played Carson in the film somehow justifies the need to compare the two.

During an interview, Chris talks about *Struck by Lightning*, both the film and the book, and when he mentions Carson he says that:

Carson's journey is not as autobiographical as people may think. We had very very similar high school experiences. I was president of the Writers' Club as well. I got picked on and teased a lot (shocking, I know). We both had crappy homecoming floats, but Carson handled it very differently. He really just didn't care and made sure everyone knew how little he cared what they thought of him, cause he was so set on what was to come later in his life.²¹

1.4.1 Similarities

Chris Colfer himself admits that he is rather similar to the protagonist of his novel, though it should be stressed that their similarities are not just those he mentioned in the interview above. It would probably be inaccurate to say that Carson is somehow Chris' alter ego – a sort of mirror placed in front of the author himself that could have shown him how to cope with problems in a different way – but it cannot be denied that there are many similarities existing between the two of them.

Both Chris Colfer and Carson Phillips have a meaningful relationship with their grandmothers. Chris dedicated the first book of *The Land of Stories* to his grandmother and thanked her for having been his very first editor. In 2015, Colfer talked about his

²¹ Information taken from a YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer who talks about *Struck by Lightning* for PEOPLE Magazine.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfeNxnsZUtI>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

grandmother in an interview and said that she is “much sharper than [he is]”.²² In *Struck by Lightning: The Carson Phillips Journal*, Carson says that when he was just a child, he wrote a story for his grandmother - “Once upon a time, there was a boy” (Colfer 2012: 13) – and when she read it she said that it was nice, but she also claimed that it needed to be further developed. When Carson's literary magazine is ready, he too dedicates his brainchild to his grandma with these words: “To Grandma: Once upon a time, there was a boy who *flew*” (Colfer 2012: 254). By giving closure to the first story he has ever written for his grandmother, he probably wanted to give closure to a part of his life: childhood. It is rather clear that both grandmothers are equally important when it comes to supporting and motivating their grandchildren.

Another thing the two of them have in common is the way they chose to escape from a difficult and unpleasant reality: words. Stuck in a dysfunctional family, Carson had no other choice but to find a safe place in his head where he can take shelter, a peaceful heaven characterised by the presence of a powerful imagination. Words became his best friend, his way of dealing with his parents and his grandmother's illness. Chris too had to live in a difficult domestic environment, mostly because of his epileptic little sister. Furthermore, he had to endure terrible bullying and abuse at school. The fact that reality was so hard, and most likely scary, made him seek some peace both in his imagination and in fairy tales.²³

It can not be stressed enough that both Colfer and Carson had unpleasant high-school experiences. Colfer said in an interview that he had to endure verbal abuse, but he also stated that the abuse never escalated to the point of being physical.²⁴ Carson, on the

22 Information taken from a YouTube video featuring an interview with Mr. Colfer at *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHYixwmNF20>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

23 Information taken from a *Los Angeles Times* article about Mr. Colfer.

<<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/15/entertainment/la-ca-chris-colfer-20120715>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016)

24 Information taken from a PEOPLE Magazine article about Mr. Colfer.

<<http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20421723.html>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016)

other hand, is abused in a very different way, for he is systematically ignored by his peers and he lives with the knowledge of being different from them. When he talks with his father's fiancée about school, he says that he is “active but not popular” (Colfer 2012: 200). The fact that he has a terrible relationship with his peers is also evident by the fact that he does not hesitate to blackmail them in order to achieve his goals.

1.4.2 Differences

The first important difference between the author and the character that should be mentioned is the kind of family they have. While Colfer is the product of a loving family, Carson is the product of a broken, dysfunctional family. It is safe to assume that every family has its own problems – and surely Colfer had his difficulties while dealing with his sister's illness – but in the case of Carson's family speaking of problems may not be enough. Having Sheryl Phillips for a mother, someone completely unfit to act as a parent, surely had serious repercussions on Carson. Knowing that he was unwanted, a desperate means Sheryl tried to use to save her marriage, probably had serious repercussions too (Colfer 2012: 59).

What Chris and Carson do not have in common is the way they reacted to the bullying and abuse they both suffered through high school. Colfer reacted to the verbal abuses he had to endure by internalising everything, while Carson reacted to the isolation he had to endure in a completely different way. While the former decided not to react, the latter overreacted, stressing in every given opportunity how little he cared about the opinion of his peers and how much better than them he was.

Another thing that should be stressed as relevant is the name of the fictional town where Carson lives and where his story takes place: Clover (Colfer 2012: 1). It can be easily supposed that Chris took inspiration from the name of his home town, Clovis, to

invent it. Saying that Chris hates Clovis as much as Carson hates Clover, however, seems quite exaggerated. In his Twitter account, Chris Colfer mentioned his home town on the third of September 2015: “I was so honored/touched by my hometown's tribute today. Big thanks Clovis, especially for making my parents so happy”²⁵ and his words are far from biting.

The passages of Colfer's novel that will be quoted, analysed and translated throughout the chapters of this dissertation can be found in chronological order in the Appendix.

²⁵ Quotation taken from Colfer's Twitter Account.
<<https://twitter.com/chriscolfer>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016)

CHAPTER 2: TO TRANSLATE OR NOT TO TRANSLATE

In this chapter a definition of translation will be given, or rather, many different definitions will be presented and discussed. Subsequently, other matters regarding the process/art of translation will be explored, such as whether any text can be translated or not, the relationship between the translator and the author of the source text (together with the relationship with the readers of the target text) and what is thought to make a translation a good one.

2.1 The problem of definitions

Although it would seem easy to match the word 'translation' with the perfect definition, decades of studies have proved that translation is everything but. The idea that lies at the very bottom of the word 'translation' is rather simple – to translate basically means to take one concept expressed in language A and render it as accurately as possible into language B – but the issues that the use of this word raise are countless and have been studied for many years.

“The word 'translation' comes, etymologically, from the Latin [expression] for 'bearing across’” (Rushdie, quoted in Intonti 2008: 34). According to the *Oxford American Dictionary* (1982: 980), to translate means “to express in another language or in simpler words”. A similar definition is given by *The New International Webster's Student Dictionary of the English Language* (1997: 783), where it is stated that to translate means “to change into another language”. Although little variations of this definition can be found in many other dictionaries, the problem of what a translation is – and what it means to translate – is far from solved. In fact, many questions are still waiting to be answered and many issues are still object of debate.

2.1.1 Defining translation

Juliane House – Professor Emerita of Applied Linguistics at the University of Hamburg – defines translation as “a process of replacing a text in one language (the source language) with a text in a different language (the target language)” (House 2009: 29). Before moving on, it should be said that when the text is spoken, the person who deals with its translation is generally called an interpreter, while the person who performs the translation of a written text is called a translator. For the sake of this dissertation, as the text that will be analysed is a written one, only the role of the translator will be taken into consideration. This is not to say that interpretation is less important than translation, for both are extremely useful when it comes to mediated communication.

Three different types of translation should be taken into consideration and defined. First, interlingual translation, whereby “the message in the source language text is rendered as a target text in a different language” (House 2009: 4). This kind of translation is the one that will be mainly investigated in this dissertation, for the translation that will be attempted and analysed is an interlingual one. Subsequently, there is intralingual translation, a “process whereby a text in one variety of the language is reworded into another” (House 2009: 4). Thirdly, we have intersemiotic translation, a kind of translation where “the replacement involves not another language but another, non-linguistic means of expression” (House 2009: 4). The same distinction was made by Roman Jakobson back in 1959, when he said that he considered interlingual translation the proper one (Jakobson, quoted in Bassnett 2011a: 96). Of course, each of these types of translation can pose different problems which the translator has to face and solve.

It has been said that while the source text is “original and independent” (House 2009: 29), the target text “only exists as a version derived from the first” (House 2009: 29).

Although it is undeniably true that the target text depends on the source text, it does not mean that it should be considered a second-hand product or inferior by any means. On the contrary, some kind of target texts may be considered just as important as the source text from which they derive. For example, when the translation of literary texts is at issue – as it is the case in this dissertation – it should be remembered that its goal is to “convey the qualities of the original text to a readership who would otherwise not have access to it. Literary [...] translation is thus the communication of stories between two cultures” (Barslund 2011: 139). As Charlotte Barslund – a professional translator – points out, the translation of a text allows people who do not speak the source language to read it. In other words, a translation allows a text to move from its culture of origin to other ones and it also allows it to reach people who are different from those for whom the original text was intended. Not only is this the case of literary texts, but also of any other type of translated texts.

When it comes to actually translating a text, a difficult choice has to be made. It is obvious that a translation should preserve the original meaning as much as possible, but it is not clear the extent to which the meaning should be preserved. To address this issue, at least two levels of meaning should be considered: the formal or semantic level and the communicative, context-sensitive level (Bell 1991: 7). In other words, the choice “is between translating word-for-word (literal translation) or meaning-for-meaning (free translation)” (Bell 1991: 7). As Bassnett points out, the distinction at issue is between “word-for-word and sense-for-sense translation” (Bassnett 2011a: 107). J.C. Catford expresses basically the same idea using different words, for he draws a distinction between “formal correspondence and textual equivalence” (Catford, quoted in House 2009: 17). The former is “a matter of the language system (*langue*)” (Catford, quoted in House 2009: 17), while the latter is “a matter of the realization of that system (*parole*)”

(Catford, quoted in House 2009: 17). Peter Newmark uses the terms 'semantic' and 'communicative' translation and states that:

whilst a semantic translation is always inferior to its original, since it involves loss of meaning, a communicative translation may be better, since it may gain in force and clarity what it loses in semantic content. (Newmark 1981: 42)

The choice between literal translation and free translation is probably the first challenging decision that a translator has to make.

According to Bassnett,

literal translation can operate as a first step in a process of acquiring skills that involve thinking in a new way and trying to interpret the world differently, through understanding how another language works. (Bassnett 2011: 14)

In other words, starting with a word-for-word translation and eventually adjusting it – in that “a translation that is too literal can be simply unreadable” (Bassnett 2011: 12) – can be considered a good compromise between literal and free translation. As Chiaro (2010: 7) points out, “a faithful translation does not necessarily mean word for word equivalence”, and “a good translation moves on beyond the literal” (Bassnett 2011: 15). It should be stressed that when it comes to translating literary texts, literal translation and free translation can coexist – that is to say for various reasons some parts can be translated literally while others can be freely translated.

Another issue that should be considered is whether translation is always possible or not. In the last few decades, it has been discussed whether every type of text can be translated or whether translation must bow its – metaphorical – head in front of some types of texts. Probably it would be more appropriate to say that untranslatability does not depend on the type of text, but on the problematic parts of a text that a translator may have to deal with. According to Newmark, “everything without exception is translatable” (Newmark 1988: 6). In his opinion, “whilst translation is always possible, it may for various reasons not have the same impact as the original” (Newmark 1988: 6). To say that everything can be translated is not to say that translation is never

complicated or that it does not involve challenges. By contrast, others believe that some problematic items cannot be translated, that their original meaning cannot be kept in its entirety. This may be the case of puns, idiomatic expressions or fixed expressions, where some changes can turn out to be necessary for the sake of the translation. Furthermore, it should be remembered that “not all linguistic items have their counterparts in other languages by any means” (Bassnett 2011a: 95). This possible lack of correspondence may be called linguistic untranslatability. It is entirely up to the translator's skills and imagination to decide how to deal with this kind of problematic issues. As Lawrence Venuti points out,

translation can also be considered a form of scholarship. Both translation and scholarship rely on historical research in their representations of an archaic or foreign text, but neither can produce a representation that is completely adequate to the author's intention. (Venuti 1998: 44)

The issue of being adequate to the author's intention and of whether a translation can be considered a loyal and proper representation of the original text will be dealt with in another section of this dissertation, that is to say in 2.5.

Going back to the original issue of this section – what a translation is – translation can also be seen as a “tool of language mediation across cultures” (Baker 2011: 7). The fact that a translation can be seen as a bridge between cultures should not be underestimated, for in these years of globalisation translation plays quite an important role. In the last few decades, the world has been changing, almost growing smaller, and translation – which can be seen as “an active, even aggressive act, an appropriation of foreign cultural values” (Macura 1990: 68) – can be partially blamed, or thanked, for this. This 'communicative activity', as Susan Bassnett defines translation, “involves the transfer of information across linguistic boundaries” (Bassnett 2011a: 95). Again, the problem of untranslatability arises when cultural aspects are at issue: “something is culturally untranslatable when there is no equivalent situational feature in the [target] language” (Bassnett 2011a: 97).

Apart from being an important means of communication, translation is “an 'art' or a 'craft' and therefore not amenable to objective, 'scientific' description or explanation” (Bell 1991: 4). The fact that translation can be seen both as an art and a science, or an act, surely does not help when it comes to trying and defining it. According to Professor Roger T. Bell, “to shift from one language to another is, by definition, to alter the forms [...]. Something is always 'lost' (or, might one suggest, 'gained'?) in the process” (Bell 1991: 6). Altering something does not mean worsening or spoiling it, this should always be kept in mind. As far as the dichotomy gain/loss is concerned, Newmark points out that “the basic loss is on a continuum between overtranslation (increased detail) and undertranslation (increased generalization)” (Newmark 1981: 7). When translation is concerned, the act of communication – as communication is always the first goal of a translation – “is conditioned by another, previous act and [the] reception of that previous act is intensive” (Hatim & Mason 1997: 2). In this context, the word 'intensive' is used to point out that a translation always starts with the careful reading and comprehension of the source text, which should be read, re-read and analysed before being translated.

To sum up, a translation should be considered an act of communication secondary to another act of communication – usually expressed in another language. It is a process of rewriting that usually involves many issues that are to be faced, first among them the choice between literal and free translation. It is at the same time an art and a science and can be considered a bridge between cultures, a tool that fosters communication at global level.

2.1.2 Defining the role of the translator

Like 'translation', also the simple and apparently straightforward word 'translator' is hard

to properly define. Clearly, a translator is a person who deals with translation, for a living or as a hobby. However, saying that a translator is a person who translates is hardly enough to cover all the spectrum of meanings that the word *translator* carries.

A translator is first and foremost a reader, for every act of translation starts with an accurate reading of the so-called source text. “What makes translation different from other writing is that there is always a reading process involved prior to the actual writing itself” (Bassnett 2011: xiv). Needless to say, just reading is not enough, and, as said above, re-reading and analysing the text is also always necessary – it is only by analysing the source text that the translator can identify the problems they will have to deal with. As Christopher Taylor points out, “a text needs to be analysed thoroughly before it is translated” (Taylor 2009: 7). A translator should always keep in mind what kind of text they are dealing with and what kind of strategies they can use to properly face the so-called problematic parts – such as culture related issues, puns and idiomatic expressions. Every text is to be translated in a different way, keeping in mind different things while translating it, and an expert translator should be knowledgeable about text differences. It can be said that the ability of a translator really shows when they have to deal with the most challenging aspects in translation.

The second thing a translator needs to do after reading a text is interpreting it, for every person may read and see different things in the same text. In fact, according to Intonti (2008: 30), reading, interpreting and translating are strictly connected. They are all part of the same process: the process of translating a text. “The translator has to take the question of interpretation into account in addition to the problem of selecting a [target language] phrase which will have a roughly similar meaning” (Bassnett 2002: 29). When it comes to interpreting a text, many different aspects should be considered, such as where the translator is from, their gender, their age, their level of experience

etcetera. Furthermore, it should be stressed that:

a translator requires a knowledge of literary and non-literary textual criticism, since [they have] to assess the quality of a text before [they decide] how to interpret and then translate it. (Newmark 1981: 5)

Considering that two translators may attach different meanings to the same sentence, it should not come as a surprise that different translators produce different translations. There is no such thing as two identical translations if they are translated by two different people. The same source text can indeed have thousands of equivalent target texts. It is not an exaggeration to say that a source text can have one different target text for every translator. This is partially because “translation is not only about cognition, about handling information; it is also influenced by emotional processes, such as attitudes and motivation” (Jääskeläinen 2011: 130).

Apart from being a reader and an interpreter, a translator may also be considered a rewriter. In fact, their task is to rewrite a text in another language, usually their first language, and in so doing they become writers themselves. Thus, a translator should have a deep knowledge of their own first language, together with a deep knowledge of the language they translate from. Together with an excellent knowledge of the source language, a translator should also have a good knowledge of the situation features that surround a text. That is to say, a translator should know when the source text was written, who the intended readership is and so on. “Only when you translate [...], do you realize how indispensable the translator's experience of the author's world is” (Zlateva 1990: 31). As concerns their work as a rewriter, “in planning the text in the target language, the translator must be aware of the situational features for the translation and how these shape the target text or translation” (Colina 2015: 53). As writer Jorge Luis Borges said, a translator struggles with their own language, just like source-text writers do (Borges, quoted in Ponzio 2008: 40). This struggle may be

reflected in the fact that sometimes a translator fails at the task of loyally expressing what the original text means. In fact, to translate it is necessary not only to understand, but also to properly transpose and reproduce what has been said by another person (Rega 2008: 117). A translator is a re-teller, a re-writer, for they take something that has already been said in a language and say it again in their own language, claiming no ownership over what they say.

Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. (Bassnett & Lefevere 1992: vii)

Manipulating a text while translating it is inevitable, but it is hard to establish whether there is always a loss or a gain in translation. Unfortunately, everyone seems to have their own opinion when it comes to this matter.

While talking about translation – especially translation of literary texts – the cultural aspects of a text should never be overlooked. Thus, the role of the translator as a negotiator/mediator of differences should be stressed. As Susan Bassnett points out:

translators need to be aware of the culturally determined nuances that underpin texts. What translation does is to focus attention on difference, because the task of the translator is to negotiate difference, to find ways of avoiding homogenisation while at the same time ensuring that difference does not cause misunderstanding. (Bassnett 2011: xiii)

Language is an important part of culture, and thus one should not be isolated from the other. As Juliane House points out, “translation always involves both language and culture simply because the two cannot really be separated. Language is culturally embedded” (House 2009: 11). Furthermore, considering that meaning is generally expressed through language, “awareness of cultural differences and similarities is essential to the interpretation of meaning” (Ulrych 1992: 71). Deciding whether to hide or highlight the cultural differences is a choice that the translator has to make on the basis of their own preferences. According to Lawrence Venuti (1993: 11), “the translator is the agent of a cultural practice that is conducted under continuous self-monitoring and

often with active consultation of cultural rules and resources”. However, keeping in mind cultural differences may not be enough to translate a text. Translators need to remember that they are often moving a culture-bound product to a place where another culture is already present, that it to say that they are providing an encounter between cultures. The inevitable crash and comparison between different cultures should not be underestimated. A translator has to “perform the functions of a mediator in the interlinguistic and crosscultural communication between an author and [their] readers in another culture which uses another language” (Zlateva 1990: 32). It cannot be stressed enough that a large number of factors need to be considered while dealing with the translation of a text, especially when many culture-related features are at issue.

Translators can also be considered communicators, as it is their mission to bring a culture-bound product to their own culture. Thus, it is their duty to reproduce that message as loyally as possible, in that their readers have no other way to approach it. From this point of view, a translation may be considered a place where distant systems meet (Mallardi 2008: 15), and a translator may be considered the one who enables this meeting to take place. Language is an important means of communication, and together with interpreters translators are a useful aid when it comes to communication between different countries. Communication is one of the most important goals of a text – especially when literary texts are involved – and it should be remembered that the translator plays a fundamental role in this.

To sum up, a translator is someone who deals with the translation of written texts. A translator is a reader, and interpreter, and a writer, for it is their job to re-tell in the target language something that has already been said in another language. They may be considered bridges between cultures and mediators of cultural differences – the presence

of culture-bound elements should not be underestimated, as they have to be dealt with with particular care and attention.

2.2 The perks of being a translator

As explained in the previous section of this dissertation, translators play a fundamental role when it comes to mediated communication. Therefore, one should expect the role of the translator to be downright rewarding, but sadly it is not always so. Apparently, often being a translator is everything but gratifying, for a number of reasons that will now be explored.

Over the last few decades, the role of the translator has drastically changed, shifting from an appreciated helper to a potentially dangerous, underestimated person. However, people keep translating and target texts of all types keep being carried all over the world, through different cultures, and keep reaching different people. It would almost seem that translations are indeed needed and overall appreciated, but translators are just endured – and barely so. “The first traces of translation date from 3000 BC, during the Egyptian Old Kingdom, in the area of the First Cataract, Elephantine, where inscriptions in two languages have been found” (Newmark 1981: 3). Translation is a rather old activity, and it comes quite naturally to wonder whether translators, or rather, the role of the translator has changed through the centuries. What should be stressed, however, is the importance translators have, for “languages tend to die when they receive no translations at all” (Pym 2014: 19). That is to say, translators are actually those who keep languages alive.

Translations are beyond fundamental for communication between different cultures these days and, as has been pointed out, the twentieth century has been actually called the “age of translation” (Jumpelt, quoted in Newmark 1981: 3). Sad as it may seem, it

looks like the more important the process of translation becomes, the less important the translator becomes. Susan Bassnett points out that “today, the role of the translator has been radically rethought”, for apparently every translator seems to walk on the thin line between being either a *traduttore* or a *traditore* – an Italian adage that plays on the similarity between the Italian words for *traduttore* ('translator') and *traditore* ('betrayed') (Bassnett 2011a: 97). It should be stressed that this is not just an Italian saying, for “the notion of the translator as a turncoat exists in many cultures” (Bassnett 2011: 21)

Whether translators will be able to take back their role as helpers and leave behind this bad reputation they seem to have gained is yet to be seen. What can be done now is to discuss the 'perks' that come with being a translator nowadays.

2.2.1 Invisibility

What is meant with the word 'invisibility' is rather hard to explain, especially when it comes to the definition of the role of a translator. As translators are just re-tellers they should actually be invisible, and should be like see-through pieces of glass between the eyes of the reader and the source text. The one who really matters is the author of the source text, while translators are just re-writers and should expect no large acknowledgement for their work. In fact, translators are right there, their presence and their work in every single word of the target text, yet they are invisible.

The first thing that should be investigated is how a translator does become invisible. It can be said that a translator becomes invisible when the target text looks like it is not the product of a translation at all, that is to say, when it looks like it is indeed the original one. As Juliane House points out:

when a translation reads fluently, it appears not to have been translated at all. But fluency in a translated text also annihilates differences between source and target communities, and it renders the translator invisible. If, however, translators want to successfully fight their own 'invisibility', they must make their translation 'visible' as sites of linguistic and cultural difference and deliberate re-constitutions of new texts that deviate from their originals. (House 2009:23)

The person who has probably said the most about the issue of invisibility in translation is Professor Lawrence Venuti. His (1995) *The Translator's Invisibility* – which should be considered a real milestone in translation studies – has been studied by a large number of translation scholars and has been quoted in many works. Susan Bassnett sums up the content of Venuti's book when she says that:

in his book [...], Lawrence Venuti explores the history of translation in the Anglo-American world, arguing that the illusion of fluency – i.e. creating the impression that a text has not actually been translated at all – marginalizes translation and effectively renders translators invisible [...]. The greater the fluency, the more the translator is hidden from view, rendered invisible and marginalized as a result of that invisibility. Venuti's book is a call to arms for translators, proposing that translators should emphasize their presence in a text [...] to redress the balance. (Bassnett 2011a: 97-98)

Being fluent to read and being well-written should be the definitive goal of every translation – for a target text is the only thing that many readers have – but at the same time, it looks like being fluent is a sort of handicap. When a translation is fluent, it looks like it is no translation at all, and where there is no translation, there is obviously no translator. The more talented and able a translator is, the less their presence and work are acknowledged and rewarded. Translators have two options: they can either be visible, and in this case their translation may be deemed unworthy and unfaithful, or they can be invisible, and their translation is considered not to be a translation but an independent text over which they cannot make any claim. Which one is the rock and which one is the hard place is hard to determine.

Lawrence Venuti points out that nowadays a translated text is judged to be good – or rather acceptable – when “it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent” (Venuti 1995: 1), that is to say, when the translation gives “the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text” (Venuti 1995: 1). Being transparent, that is being invisible, may be considered the translator's goal by some readers or some editors, but Venuti definitely does not agree.

The illusion of transparency is an effect of fluent discourse, of the translator's effort to insure easy readability [...]. What is so remarkable here is that this illusory effect conceals the numerous conditions under which the translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial intervention in the foreign text. (Venuti 1995: 1-2)

Venuti seems almost to fear that “transparency would become the authoritative discourse for translating” (Venuti 1995: 6).

The translator's intervention in the foreign text is obviously crucial, as without it there would be no target text. Furthermore, it should be stressed that without target texts – and without translators, of course – a large number of important literary texts would not be known outside their culture of origin. It goes without saying that translators should always keep in mind the necessities of target-text readers, in that they are the ones for whom a translation is thought. Hence, the choice between visibility and invisibility should be made not only after an accurate analysis of the source text, but also on the basis of an analysis of the possible target readership.

Fluency is of course a very important matter, as it is strictly connected to the issue of invisibility. As banal as it may seem, fluency while writing – or while re-writing – is not easily achieved, but such an achievement comes hard to treasure when the repercussions are so severe. It has been pointed out that nowadays translations are considered good only on the basis of their fluency. “There is even a group of pejorative neologisms designed to criticize translations that lack fluency” (Venuti 1995: 3). According to Lawrence Venuti, when fluency in translation is concerned, it is possible to talk about an actual 'regime':

under the regime of fluent translating, the translator works to make his or her work “invisible”, producing the illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems “natural,” i.e., not translated. (Venuti 1995: 5)

The issue of how a translation is judged acceptable by readers and editors will be better explored at the end of this chapter and the issue of fluency will be further investigated.

Invisibility in translation is strictly connected to the – absolutely deceiving – belief

that many share of translation as a second-hand product, inferior by any means to the source text. As Lawrence Venuti points out:

translation is defined as a second-order representation: only the foreign text can be original [...], true to the author's personality or intention, whereas the translation is derivative, fake, potentially a false copy. (Venuti 1995: 6-7)

How a translator is supposed to act to try and eliminate such a belief has not been clearly established yet. There are many theories, but the perfect solution is still a utopian idea. For the moment, it looks like translation has little choice:

translation is required to efface its second-order status with transparent discourse, producing the illusion of authorial presence whereby the translated text can be taken as the original. (Venuti 1995: 7)

Transparent discourse is connected with the idea of the translator being a piece of see-through glass. Translators should either learn to live with their invisibility or do something to turn the tables and re-affirm themselves as fundamental experts on mediated communication – as they actually are. According to Lawrence Venuti, translators should aim for:

a recognition of the cultural and social conditions of language and a projection of a translation practice that takes them into account instead of working to conceal them. (Venuti 1995: 114)

Hence, translators should try to stress the differences between the source culture and the target culture and therefore the 'foreignness' of the source culture, so that their work may become visible. The issue of invisibility is strictly connected to what Juliane House calls overt and covert translation. Although the adjectives 'overt' and 'covert' are rather self-explanatory, a definition of what House means with overt translation and covert translation should be given. House (2009: 36-37) goes about the issue of overt translation as follows:

In an overt translation, the original sociocultural frame is left as intact as possible, given the need of expression in another language. An overt translation is thus quite overtly a translation, not as it were a second original [...]. Members of the target culture can 'eavesdrop', and appreciate the original textual function, albeit at a remove. In overt translation, the work of the translator is visible.

According to House, a translator can be visible when they underline the cultural

differences every reader should take into consideration when reading a foreign text. By making it clear that the text is the product of a different culture, readers realise that a work of mediation was indeed necessary before they could read the text. That is to say, they realise that somebody had to intervene on the text, modify it and make it readable for them. When a translation is overt, readers “of the canon of world literature would experience the linguistic and cultural difference of foreign texts” (Venuti 1995: 110). In other words, thanks to overt translations target-text readers can appreciate linguistic and sociocultural differences that they would otherwise miss.

By contrast, in covert translation, the translator can and should attempt to recreate an equivalent sociocultural event. The translator is to act as though it were not a translation. The task of the translator is then, in a sense, to hide the text's real origin. The translator him/herself remains invisible, hiding behind his or her 're-creation' of the original. (House 2009: 37)

When a translation hides its true status, its true being, it may be called 'covert' translation. As House points out, “the result [of a covert translation] may be a very real distance from the original” (House 2009: 37). In a covert translation, the translator actually manages to become invisible, for their work is not visible at all. The source text is deprived of all its culture-bound elements, thus readers do not recognise the text as a foreign one, and thus do not realise that a work of mediation was indeed necessary. To make everything even clearer:

an overt translation is in a sense the 'more straightforward' because the original can be 'taken over' without sociocultural modification. In covert translation, however, the translator has to consider the different discourse worlds of the source and target cultures and apply what is known as cultural filter. (House 2009: 38)

That is not to say that overt translation is easier to produce than covert translation, for both have their pros and cons. Whether to translate in a covert or overt way is at the complete discretion of translators, although it should be stressed that sometimes overt translations may not be appropriate for the kind of readership the translator has to deal with. That said, it is still true that “translators receive minimal recognition for their work” (Venuti 1995: 8).

To sum up, usually translators are invisible because their work and their role in mediated communication are not acknowledged. They are seen as second-class writers who have no ownership over their work. According to Lawrence Venuti:

the translator's invisibility is [...] a weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and [practising] translation that undoubtedly reinforces its marginal status in Anglo-American culture [and, sadly, in many other cultures]. (Venuti 1995: 8)

2.2.2 Underestimation

The issue of underestimation is strictly connected with the issue of invisibility, as if translators are invisible, their work is not acknowledged and thus their role in mediated communication results underestimated. Furthermore, the matter of underestimation is connected with the concept of authorship and how exactly authorship is defined nowadays. The issue of target texts as second-hand products outlined in section 2.1.1 of this dissertation will be resumed and further developed.

Once again, apparently straightforward words fail to help when it comes to explore a translation-related issue. According to *The New International Webster's Student Dictionary of the English Language*, 'authorship' is “the profession or occupation of an author” or the “origin or source, esp[ecially] of a literary work” (1997: 48). Both meanings are rather comprehensible and straightforward per se, yet, when they are applied to translation, they cease to be simple. Many scholars have discussed the issue of authorship in translation over the last few decades, and even today it is not clear whether a target text is the brainchild of one or two authors. In other words, while everything is rather simple for the source text – one author who has complete ownership over it – matters are way more complicated when the target text is the one at issue. The target text is the result of a translation, it is a re-written version of the source text. Subsequently, together with the original author, someone else has ownership over it: the

translator themselves.

This brings some questions into play: who is to be considered the “major” author of the target text – the author of the source text or the translator? If source text and target text are products of different cultures, can they be considered independent, non-related texts? If, on the other hand, target texts entirely depend on source texts, are they to be considered inferior? And if target texts are inferior to source texts, are translators inferior to authors in their claim over the product of their work? As is often the case, there are many questions and few answers.

According to Lawrence Venuti (1998: 2), “translation is degraded by prevalent concepts of authorship, especially in literature and in literary scholarship”. In other words, “translation is marginalized today by an essentially romantic conception of authorship” (Venuti 1993: 3). That is to say, nowadays a translation is seen as a second-hand product, inevitably subdued to the source text it depends on. As a consequence, translation is marginalised and considered inferior.

Perhaps the most important factor in the current marginality of translation is its [offence] against the prevailing concept of authorship. Whereas authorship is generally defined as originality, self-expression in a unique text, translation is derivative, neither self-expression nor unique: it imitates another text. Given the reigning concept of authorship, translation provokes the fear of inauthenticity, distortion, contamination. (Venuti 1998: 31).

Thus, the author of the source text is considered the 'real' one, the important one, the one that should be praised for the product of their work. The original author is the one who will be remembered through the centuries, while the translator will never be acknowledged, let alone remembered. It does not matter that the target text is the product of both their wits and dedications, the translator will share no glory with the author. This reluctance in acknowledging the role and importance of the translator is not to be underestimated, for it is also thanks to this underestimation that the job of the translator is considered one of the less rewarding.

Translation is also an offence against a still prevailing concept of scholarship that rests on the

assumption of original authorship. Whereas this scholarship seeks to ascertain the authorial intention that constitutes originality, translation not only deviates from that intention, but substitutes others: it aims to address a different audience by answering to the constraints of a different language and culture. (Venuti 1998: 31)

Translators are not considered loyal to the original authors, for translators have to intervene on their work to make it readable for a different readership. Thus, translators are not considered reliable, and they are accused not to respect the original intentions of the author, while the original text should be preserved even in the process of re-writing it. Translation “provokes the fear of error, amateurism, opportunism – an abusive exploitation of originality” (Venuti 1998: 31). The author of the source text is seen as the original one, the one who has something new to say, while translators are seen as mere re-writers, who have nothing new to say, thus they just re-tell something that has already been told by someone else, way more skilful than them. According to Susan Bassnett, who offers a different point of view, “translation as a literary practice involves forms of authorship, it involves the translator in decision-making and of course it also involves the translator in rewriting” (Bassnett 2011: 45).

Translators are seen as second-hand writers and, subsequently, translations are seen as second-hand products, inferior by any means to the original works they derive from. As already said before, a translation is a re-writing in another language of an original work, and thus it is made for a different readership.

As translations can never be the same as the original, they cannot ever be so faithful that nothing changes in the transfer process; it simply is not possible to do this. Languages are different. The skilful translator therefore finds ways of reshaping the source text for a new set of readers. That is what the job of translating is. (Bassnett 2011: 41)

Translations should not be considered inferior products, they should be considered different products, which rely on their own independence. They are stand-alone texts, which are written – or, more accurately, re-written – for a specific audience, different from the one for whom the source texts were conceived. Target texts may derive from source texts, but they are not inferior, especially because they are thought for a different

group of readers. Hence, they are to be judged with different parameters. It can be said that source texts and target texts are two faces of the same coin.

Back to the issue of authorship, two different opinions should be taken into consideration. Some scholars believe that there is only one author, and it is the person who wrote the source text. Translators are not to be considered authors, just re-tellers who move somebody else's words and thoughts to another culture. They lack in imagination, so they use their linguistic skills to manipulate the product of somebody else's imagination. They should claim no ownership over the target text, because it is not a product of their wit and dedication. Others think that translators write their own target texts as much as authors produce their own source texts, for “translation can be considered a form of authorship” (Venuti 1998: 43). It is undeniably true that translators re-write instead of writing, but they do make fundamental choices during the process of translating a text. They re-tell, but they re-tell using their own words, using a different language, sometimes intervening on problematic aspects to make the target text fit in the context of a different culture. Translators manipulate texts and make them their own, they take possession of them in a sort of 'authorial' way. Their intervention on the source text has the metaphorical birth of a different text as its consequence. After all, “rewriting manipulates, and it is effective” (Lefevere 1992: 9). The product of their work is no longer the text that the original author wrote, it is something else. As Susan Bassnett points out, “the translator cannot *be* the author of the [source language] text, but as the author of the [target language] text has a clear moral responsibility to the [target language] readers” (Bassnett 2002: 30).

Furthermore, as concerns their writing skills, translators should not be considered inferior, for they are just as good with words as original authors are – and if they are not, for bad translations do exist, it should be remembered that unskilled authors exist too.

As said before, translators need to be skilful with their first language, because target language readers – just like source language readers – expect the things they read to be not only correct from a grammatical point of view, but also pleasant to read. There are many skilful translators who literally put parts of themselves into their translation, just like writers put parts of themselves into their works. “Yet even if the translator's 'experience' can be expressed in a translation, it never makes the translation an original of the same order as the authorized copy” (Venuti 1993: 4). In spite of all the efforts that translators put into their work, translations seem to be destined to be always considered subdued products, inferior in quality and void of originality.

Translation can also be considered a form of scholarship. Both translation and scholarship rely on historical research in their representations of an archaic or foreign text, but neither can produce a representation that is completely adequate to the author's intentions. On the contrary, both translation and scholarship answer to contemporary, domestic values that necessarily supplement that intention: in effect, they reinvent the text for a specific cultural constituency that differs from the one for which it was initially intended. (Venuti 1998: 44).

A translator seems to be destined to live in the original author's shadow, for no matter how hard they try, their name will always be overlooked.

To sum up, the work of a translator is underestimated because the original author is the one who is considered the important one, the one who matters. As a consequence, translations are considered inferior products, less worthy of attention and respect than the original texts. A target text may be 'written' by a translator, but its owner will always be the writer of the source text they derive from. The author is the only one who can claim ownership over their work and the work of the translator too, for they own at the same time both the source text and the target text.

2.2.3 Every rule has an exception

As said in the paragraphs above, being a translator can be considered a far-from-

rewarding activity, but it should be stressed that this is not always the case. There have indeed been some translators whose name is well-known and whose work has been fully acknowledged and praised. This is the case, for instance, of famous writers who work also as translators. To better understand how the role of the translator has changed through time, a brief analysis of the Italian history of translation should be useful.

From the tenth to the fifteenth century, Latin works – such as Cicero's works – were translated into regional dialects “with the obvious intent of raising the quality of the vernacular through a kind of mirror effect” (Duranti 2009: 459). At the same time, French works, such as the Arthurian legends, were translated into Italian dialects for entertainment purposes. It should be stressed that:

whereas in the first instance the names of the translators were often recorded because the translators concerned were major teachers of Law and Rhetorics (Brunetto Latini, Bartolomeo da San Concordio, Bono Giamboni, Lotario Diacono), the translators of the more popular kind of literature remain unknown. (Duranti 2009: 459)

During the second half of the fourteenth century and the whole of the fifteenth, there was a rediscovery of numerous Greek and Latin authors, which is known as Humanism (Duranti 2009: 460). The translators of this period were not famous figures, hence “there is frequently no information about them whatsoever” (Duranti 2009: 460). In this period, religious texts, scientific works, philosophical works and a huge amount of ballads and French poetry were translated (Duranti 2009: 460-461). From the second half of the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, an “outburst of translations from French” happened, and caused an “overwhelming influence of French culture in Italy” (Duranti 2009: 462). From the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, “Latin was replaced by modern languages, in so far as scientists, philosophers and economists began writing in their own language, leaving to Latin the role of official language of the Roman Church” (Duranti 2009: 463). In this period, there was an “unprecedented increase in translation from English” (Duranti 2009: 464), and it should be stressed that many

Italian writers, such as Giacomo Leopardi, wrote about the process of translation. Leopardi, who was a translator himself, “stressed the importance of the aesthetic quality of translations”, and believed that nothing good “could come from the translation of modern writers” (Duranti 2009: 464). Three Italian translators of this period, in particular, should be mentioned: Ippolito Pindemonte, who translated *The Odyssey*; Vincenzo Monti, who translated *The Iliad*; and Ugo Foscolo, who translated Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (Duranti 2009: 464-465).

As far as the contemporary period is concerned, a change in the figure of the translator can be noticed:

[it changes] from the isolated intellectual who proposed a translation project out of a deep personal interest in the foreign text [...], [to] the professional figure of a translator commissioned by a publishing house and often performing his or her task under very unfavourable conditions. (Duranti 2009: 465)

As said at the beginning of this paragraph, not all translators of the contemporary period are “faceless” figures, in that:

one remarkable exception is the role played by writers like Cesare Pavese, Elio Vittorini, and Eugenio Montale in the late 1930s and early 1940s; such writers actively rekindled interest in English, especially American, literature through an intense activity of translation. Especially in the case of Pavese and Vittorini, translating was a way of proposing a cultural and political alternative to the stifling and autarchic cultural policies of the Fascist regime. (Duranti 2009: 465)

Thus, translators can actually be remembered and appreciated for the fundamental work they do. They are not always underestimated or unappreciated.

2.3 Domesticating a text

As already said, there are basically two types of translation when cultural aspects are at issue: overt translation and covert translation. An overt translation stresses and keeps intact cultural differences, so that the translator is visible, while a covert translation hides cultural differences to make the readers believe that what they are reading is not a translation, thus making the translator invisible. Furthermore, in a covert translation

“differences in the cultural presuppositions of the source and target language communities may require the translator to apply a cultural filter” (House 2009a: 225), that is to say “a set of cross-cultural dimensions along which members of the two cultures differ in socio-cultural predispositions and communicative preferences” (House 2009a: 225).

Whether or not translators should be invisible is not the issue of this section, for this matter has already been discussed. What should be discussed now is what it means to domesticate a foreign text – that is to say, a text that originally belongs to another culture and has been thought, conceived and written for a precise readership – and how the process of domestication can be applied in translation – so, in the transition from source text to target text. Subsequently, the process at the other end of the continuum should be discussed, that is to say, the process of “foreignization” (Bassnett 2011a: 98).

2.3.1 How to define domestication

To domesticate a text basically means to identify all the culture-bound elements in it, and either delete them or change them, so that the text can blend in the new culture it wants to reach. Elements like references to typical food, to specific brands that are not present in the target culture, to a different judicial system, and so on need to be identified, studied and dealt with in the best way possible.

According to Lawrence Venuti, translations “inevitably perform a work of domestication” (Venuti 1998: 5), because the process of translation in itself is based on a change. First and foremost, a change in language, but the source language is not the only thing that is changed when a text is translated into another language. A target text is thought and produced for a public, a given readership, so everything that the target-language readership may not recognise has to either be deleted or changed into

something more recognisable for them. In other words, the source text needs to be domesticated. Translators need to bend the source text in such a way that it seems to be part of the target-language culture instead of the product of a different culture – that is to say, the source-language culture. The target text product of this process of domestication seems kin of those text that have effectively been produced in the target-language culture, even though its origins are of a different kind. Furthermore:

a translation always communicates an interpretation, a foreign text that is partial and altered, supplemented with features peculiar to the translating language, no longer inscrutably foreign but made comprehensible in a distinctively domestic style. (Venuti 1998: 5)

The source-language culture needs to be erased and replaced in its entirety with the target-language culture for the process of domestication to be effective. In other words, culture-bound elements are to be substituted with elements that belong to the target-language culture. The final product of this process of domestication is a translation that does not look like a translation at all, for the translator is invisible. As Lawrence Venuti points out:

in practice the fact of translation is erased by suppressing the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, assimilating it to dominant values in the target-language culture, making it recognizable and therefore seemingly untranslated. With this domestication the translated text passes for the original, an expression of the foreign author's intention. (Venuti 1998: 31)

The target-language readers for whom a domesticated translation is conceived do not even realise that they are dealing with a translation. A domesticated text is so 'chameleonish' that those who read it actually think that it is the product of their own culture, not the product of a foreign one. As a consequence, they do not think that the mediation of a translator was indeed necessary, for they do not realise they are reading the product of another culture. In translation all the linguistic aspects are necessarily changed in the transition from source to target language, while what happens to the cultural aspects is up to the translator, who can decide whether to remain invisible or not.

Given the choice, one could wonder why would a translator decide to remain invisible. This surely is not an issue that should be underestimated, for it should be stressed that a domesticated literary text may have some advantages from a target-language reader point of view, even though it loses its 'foreignness' when domesticated. When source-language culture-bound elements are preserved in a translation, explanations may be necessary. Although useful for the comprehension of culture-bound elements, footnotes or long explanations in the text itself may distract and even bore the target-language reader (see paragraph 3.2.3), which should be taken into consideration too. Reading literary texts – whether foreign or not – should be first and foremost a pleasurable act.

2.3.2 Domestication versus foreignization

The idea of foreignization is connected with the idea of overt translation. As already said, an overt translation does not hide or delete culture-bound elements, but it stresses and preserves them. In this way, a translator becomes visible, in that target-language readers somehow recognise the foreignness of the text, even though they are reading in their own language.

Foreignizing translation is based on the assumption that literacy is not universal, that communication is complicated by cultural differences between and within linguistic communities. But foreignizing is also an attempt to recognize and allow those differences to shape cultural discourses in the target language. (Venuti 1995: 146)

By foreignizing a text, translators make sure that their readers do notice cultural differences and probably question themselves about those differences, as noticing cultural differences brings to both a self-investigation and an investigation of one's habits and vision of the world. The importance of this kind of comparison should not be underestimated, for the very goal of translating foreign literature is to bring something new and different into one's own culture.

According to Lawrence Venuti, the first one who put forward the concept of foreignization, readers should be suspicious of:

domesticating translations that assimilate foreign literary texts too forcefully to dominant values at home, erasing the sense of [foreignness] that was likely to have invited translation in the first place. (Venuti 1998: 5)

It cannot be denied that when a 'foreign' text – that is to say, a text which is the product of a source culture and language – is chosen to be translated into another language it is probably because of its foreignness itself, or the fact that it differs from target-language products. When a text is translated its culture-bound elements are likely to be noticed by target-text readers, who inevitably compare the source-text culture to their own. Although a comparison between cultures can be considered interesting, cultural differences are sometimes perceived as problematic, and foreignization is sometimes seen as a menacing translation strategy. For instance:

In a 2008 article entitled “Translator v. Author (2007): *Girls of Riyadh* go to New York,” Marilyn Booth discusses the resistance she met with from both the author and the U.S. Publisher of her “foreignizing” translation of Raja Alsaanea's best-selling Arabic novel *Girls of Riyadh*. Booth argues that the very choice to translate “chick-lit” from the Arab world is a foreignizing move in that it disrupts Anglo-American readers' assumptions about contemporary Arab literary production. (Emmerich 2013: 201)

Booth's foreignizing strategies:

seek not so much to highlight her own intervention into the text as to register the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity of the original text itself, as well as the distance between the culture of the original and the receiving culture of the translation. (Emmerich 2013: 201)

Foreignization is possible through “many different kinds of practices, from the choice of source texts to any deviating practices (archaizing language, for example)” (Paloposki 2011: 41).

It should be stressed that although a translation can never be “*only* foreignizing” (Paloposki 2011: 40), domestication can still be seen as a sort of betrayal on the part of the translator, a plain violation of the author's original product, an excessive manipulation of it. Even though manipulation is inevitable when it comes to translation,

there are boundaries that should be respected, and culture-bound elements that should be preserved. If a text is the product of another culture, an attempt should be done to stress and preserve its foreignness, not to hide it. As Flynn (2013: 16) points out, “translation, whether by authors or professional translators, is being increasingly regarded as the hidden motor generating and driving national literatures”. In other words, translating foreign texts is a way to enrich national literatures by means of incorporating the foreign culture.

To sum up, translators need to consider whether to keep foreignness or domesticate a text when they translate it. Both decisions have their pros and cons and there is no general rule about it. In conclusion, it should be said that:

translation, with its double allegiance to the foreign text and the domestic culture, is a reminder that no act of interpretation can be definitive for every cultural constituency, that interpretation is always local and contingent, even when housed in social institutions with the apparent rigidity of the academy. In such settings, translation is scandalous because it crosses institutional boundaries. (Venuti 1998: 46)

2.4 A matter of loyalty

It has been discussed for decades whether a translator should be faithful to the source text in itself, to its author, or to the target-language readers for whom the translation is actually conceived. After years of debates, a definitive answer is yet to be given, and once again every translator, and scholar, seems to have their own opinion on the matter.

When interlingual translation is at issue, one of the aims of the translator is for his target text to be *equivalent* to the source text. What exactly is meant with the word 'equivalence' will be investigated in this section of the dissertation, as giving the right definition is all but simple. Subsequently, a discussion will be made of what is meant with author-related loyalty and readership-related loyalty, as both matters are important when the loyalty of the translator is at issue. Both loyalties are fundamental, for it

should be stressed that “translation is by its very nature characterized by a double-bind relationship to its original and to the conditions governing its reception in the new environment” (House 2009: 50). In other words, “translations are texts which are doubly constrained: on the one hand to their source text and on the other hand to the (potential) recipient's communicative conditions” (House 2015: 21). As Juliane House points out, every translation is at the same time linked to the author of the source text and to the readers of the target text, and it 'owes' something to both of them. That is to say, a translator has 'responsibilities' towards both of them. Both loyalties are to be taken into consideration and discussed, because loyalty “commits the translator bilaterally to the source and target sides” (Nord, quoted in Maier 2000: 141). The question is: “how to balance the conflicting loyalties that the translator may have or develop towards the sender of the original and/or the ultimate receivers?” (Delabastita 2009: 111).

2.4.1 Equivalence in translation

Although the term 'equivalence' seems to be rather simple, it becomes much more difficult to define it when translation is at issue. According to *The New International Webster's Student Dictionary of the English Language* (1997: 240), “equivalence” is nothing but “the state of being equivalent”, and two things can be considered “equivalent” when they are “equal in value, force, meaning, etc.”. Things change slightly when equivalence in translation is the one being discussed. According to Anthony Pym:

what we say in one language *can* have the same value (the same worth or function) when translated into another language. The relation between the start text and the translation is then one of equivalence (“equal value”), where “value” can be on the level of form, function, or anything in between. Equivalence does not say that languages are the same; it just says that values can be the same. (Pym 2014: 6).

It should be kept in mind that “translation involves communicating in two different languages, and since languages differ, the two texts involved cannot share all of their

properties” (Malmkjær 2011: 69). Needless to say, source text and target text cannot be equivalent from a linguistic point of view, in that translation necessarily requires a transition from language A to language B. The shift in language necessarily implies a loss of equivalence, for two languages are never perfectly equivalent, not even if they are related. When it comes to translation, other kinds of equivalence are to be looked for. In other words, “a translated text will obviously bear very little linguistic resemblance to the original, but can be equivalent, that is to say, equal in value, in that it conveys a similar message and fulfils a similar function” (House 2009: 29). What Juliane House is suggesting here is that target texts should carry the same message carried by the source texts they derive from. To do so, translators should focus on the message itself, on the text, giving little importance to the author. It is the message the one that truly matters.

Over the years, the matter of equivalence has been explored and approached in different ways:

some theorists define translation in terms of equivalence relations [...] while others reject the theoretical notion of equivalence, claiming it is either irrelevant [...] or damaging [...] to translation studies [...]. Thus equivalence is variously regarded as a necessary condition for translation, an obstacle to progress in translation studies, or a useful category for describing translations. (Kenny 2009: 96).

Equivalence is not only hard to define, it is also hard to contextualise when translation is concerned, for its role is rather unclear. What is clear, however, is that equivalence is a relationship that bonds a target text with the source text it derives from, for “it is this relationship that allows the [target text] to be considered a translation of the [source text] in the first place” (Kenny 2009: 96).

Equivalence in translation covers different levels. It is “commonly established on the basis that the [source text] and [target text] words supposedly refer to the same things in the real world”, that is to say “on the basis of their referential or denotative equivalence” (Kenny 2009: 96-97). Together with denotative equivalence, connotative equivalence

should be taken into consideration: “the [source text] and [target text] words [trigger] the same or similar associations in the minds of native speakers of the two languages” (Kenny 2009: 97). Furthermore, other kinds of equivalence should not be overlooked: “one-to-one equivalence” – when there is “a single expression in the [target language] for a single [source language] expression” – “one-to-many equivalence” – when there is “more than one [target language] expression for a single [source language] expression” – “one-to-part-of-one equivalence” – when there is “a [target language] expression that covers part of a concept designed by a single [source language] expression” (Kenny 2009: 97). These kinds of equivalence are particularly useful when translators have to deal with apparently untranslatable expressions, for dismantling the meaning at the core of the expression to find out whether at least a part of it can be preserved can be an efficient way to deal with these problematic aspects of translation.

Many have wondered whether it is possible for a source text to have a completely equivalent target text – that is to say, they question the very idea of equivalence in translation. According to Juliane House,

there can never be a one-to-one relationship between a source text and one particular translation text. Rather, a particular source text will have many different translation texts that can be called 'equivalent' to the source text in different ways. (House 2009: 29)

As concerns equivalence in meaning, equivalence is not impossible to achieve, in that “we all inhabit the same physical world, hence there is a common core of human experience” (Hermans 2009: 300). Since the world we inhabit is the same, we all talk about the same things, even though we use different languages, different words. Thus, “different languages may package meaning differently, but ultimately all languages are able to convey all possible meanings” (Hermans 2009: 300). However, other scholars have a different opinion on this matter. Sturge (2009: 67), for instance, points out that:

[it] is not simply a matter of interlingual, or even intersemiotic, translation, but also a translation between cultural contexts. Since anthropologists assume that language and culture filter our experiences of the world to a very great extent, evidently it will be difficult to grasp and convey

experiences that take place within a different system of filters, outside our own frames of references. The degree to which speakers of different languages can share a common ground of understanding, and communication can proceed in the face of potential incommensurability or untranslatability between viewpoints, has been explored by [many scholars].

In other words, some cultures differ so much that the world itself, although we all inhabit the same planet, is often seen in a different way. According to House (2015: 57), “differences in values and habits, in understanding, emphasizing or disregarding certain emotions or attitudes, etc. [do] exist between any two, however closely related, cultures”. Hence, culture should be taken into consideration when equivalence in translation is at issue (see also Chapter 3.3).

2.4.2 Author-related loyalty

Before talking about author-related loyalty and, as will be done below, readership-related loyalty, it should be stressed that:

loyalty always refers to the attitude or behaviour of the translator during the process of translation. A text or a translation cannot be loyal. It is the translator's behaviour that is or is not loyal. Therefore, loyalty [...] is an interpersonal category affecting the relationship between people. (Nord 2006: 40)

Many believe that a translator should always be loyal to the author, for the source text belongs to them. It is the product of their imagination, a part of themselves, their brainchild, so translators should always keep in mind the author's intentions and their point of view when they translate. Peter Newmark, for example, believes that “the translator's loyalty is to the artist” (Newmark 1981: 11), that is to say, to the original author. Newmark is not the only one, in that many scholars believe in a sort of “autonomy or authority of a source text, that must not be touched in the translation process” (Nord 2006: 32). Being loyal to the author basically means to keep the source text as intact as possible in the transition from source to target language. It is, of course, easier said than done, for many things are to be taken into consideration while translating a text. Being loyal to the original author is not the only thing a translator needs to pay attention to while they translate.

The issue of being loyal to the original author is deeply connected to the matter of overt and covert translation, which was discussed in Chapter 2.2.1. In fact, it can be said that translating covertly a text that, due to its characteristics, would call for an overt translation can be considered a form of betrayal. In other words, if the text to be translated is deeply rooted in its culture of origin, domesticating it and hiding its foreignness during the process of translation can be seen as a break of the important bond of loyalty that should connect author and translator and source text and target text.

Clearly, the original author should be respected and their text should be handled in the best way possible. After all, the source text belongs to them and they should be allowed to believe that the product of their work is not going to be 'butchered' into an unsatisfying translation. It is a responsibility of the translator's to honour the author's work with the best translation possible – hence, the translator should maintain the text as close to the author's intentions as possible. If the original authors are alive, translators might find it useful to contact them during the process of translation and get some explanations and suggestions directly from them.

As Francis R. Jones points out, the question is: “how far translators should prioritize loyalty to the source writer versus producing a text that works in receptor-genre terms. How far, for example, should they adapt or update?” (Jones 2009: 153). Unfortunately, also the matter of loyalty, like that of equivalence dealt with above, is much more complicated than it appears. It has been established that the source text should be preserved as much as possible in the process of its translation into another language. However, it is not clear where the boundary lies between a 'well-written faithful translation' and an 'incomprehensible text written in a language that vaguely resembles the target language'. In the haste to preserve the source text, translators may forget their responsibilities towards the other face of the coin: the target-text readers.

2.4.3 Readership-related loyalty

As said before, translators have many responsibilities – towards the source text itself, towards the original author and towards the target-text readers. They must keep many things in mind at the same time: the original author's intentions, the characteristics of the source text they should try to keep in their translation – register, style, culture-bound elements, puns, and so on – and the ultimate receivers, that is to say, the target-text readers. Some scholars believe that “a translator who takes into account the needs and expectations of her/his target audience must necessarily lose sight of 'the' source text” (Nord 2006: 32), but others still believe that keeping in mind the target readership is fundamental during the process of translation.

Adapting a text for a different readership is not just a matter of language. Changing from source language to target language is probably the easiest step to take while translating a literary text. Translators should first ask themselves who they are translating for, who is going to read their translation and why. Knowing who is going to read the target text is fundamental to shape it in the best way possible. By studying the source-text readership, translators should be able to guess who the target-text readership is going to be – their age, their gender, how much they know about the source culture, and so on. A target text is always thought for a precise readership, as translators always translate for someone else.

It should be kept in mind that target-text readers often do not know the source language, so they “lay their fate in the hands of the translator” (Delabastita 2009: 111). As Walter Benjamin points out, a target text contains the same message the source text contains, it is just expressed in another language – a language that target-text readers understand (Benjamin, quoted in Ponzio 2008: 44). The target text is most likely the

only one they are going to read, the only one they are going to know. Moreover, more often than not they would not realise that they are reading a translation and not the original text (see the issue of the translator's invisibility dealt with above in 2.2.1), and so the target text must be as good as the source text, and should not disappoint the target-text readers' expectations. It comes as no surprise that people want to take a taste of foreign literature, for “readers of the canon of world literature would experience the linguistic and cultural differences of foreign texts” (Venuti 1995: 110). That is to say, reading the products of a foreign literature is a way to get to know a different world, different people and culture.

When loyalty towards target-text readers is at issue, it should be stressed that readers themselves do not always know what they want to read in a target text. According to Nord (2006: 33):

readers might expect, for example, the target text to give the author's opinion exactly; other cultures might want it to be a faithful reproduction of the formal features of the source text; still others could praise archaising translations or ones that are far from faithful reproductions, but comprehensible, readable texts.

As long as there is little clarity about what translation is and what the role of translators is, readers cannot be expected to precisely know what they want their target texts to be like. This absence of clarity plays an important role when it comes to being loyal to a readership that share no agreement about what they want.

To sum up, translators should consider three factors while they translate: the source text in itself, the author of the source text and the readers for whom they are producing the target text. It should be kept in mind that:

as translations can never be the same as the original, they cannot ever be so faithful that nothing changes in the transfer process; it simply is not possible to do this. Languages are different. The skilful translator therefore finds ways of reshaping the source for a new set of readers. That is what the job of translating is. (Bassnett 2011: 41)

The questions that need to be asked are many. For instance, is it possible to

compromise? Is it possible to be loyal to the original author and, at the same time, be loyal to the target-text readers? Nord (2006: 34) proposes a compromise and says:

I would [...] hope to lay the foundations for a trusting relationship between the partners in the translational interaction. If authors can be sure that translators will respect their communicative interests or intentions, they may even consent to any changes or adaptations needed to make the translation work in the target culture. And if clients or receivers can be sure that the translator will consider their communicative needs as well, they may even accept a translation that is different from what they had expected. This confidence will then strengthen the translator's social prestige as a responsible and trustworthy partner.

2.5 Acceptable translations: dream or reality

Over the last few decades, a discussion has been taking place about the parameters that should be used to judge the acceptability of a translation and the requirements a good translation should fulfil. Of course, many factors should be taken into consideration to evaluate acceptability in translation, as producing a target text that is correct from a grammatical point of view is not enough. A target text should of course be grammatically correct and well-written, but it should also be pleasurable to read, and convey to target-text readers the same sensations the source text gives to source-text readers. In other words:

a good translation will read like an original, will surprise, move or entertain us, perhaps in different ways from the original, perhaps in similar ways, but it will always be a rewriting of something written somewhere else, in another culture and another time. (Bassnett 2011: 43)

Thus, when literary texts are at issue, a target text should first and foremost entertain its readers, convey emotions and/or make the readers think. Basically, it should keep the same goals of the source text – for the original author's intentions are to be respected.

A definition will now be given of acceptability, as well as various parameters that should be taken into consideration while judging a translation. Subsequently, the issue of fluidity, which has already been mentioned (see 2.2.1) and which is considered one of the most important parameters to evaluate acceptability, will be further discussed. Lastly, the issue of quality in translation will be dealt with. It must be pointed out that it

is usually easier to talk about what is acceptable in translation and what is not when the translation at issue has been made by someone else. Judging a translation as acceptable or not is bound to be easier if done from an external point of view. However, to judge the quality of a translated/target text, one should at least be familiar with the source text. Every translator makes different choices, but different does not automatically imply worse or not as good. As said before, the same source text can have an infinite number of different target texts, all perfectly acceptable and pleasant to read.

2.5.1 How to define acceptability

Also the issue of acceptability is problematic, especially because everyone has their own idea about how to decide whether a translation is acceptable or unacceptable. Moreover, “different views of translation itself lead to different concepts of translation quality, and different ways of assessing it” (House 2009a: 222). As said before (see paragraph 2.1.1), the concept of 'translation' is a foggy one, for there is more than one way to define it. Hence, there is more than one way to talk about acceptability in translation.

First, it should be stressed that “the assessment of translator performance is an activity which, despite being widespread, is under-researched and under-discussed” (Hatim & Mason 1997: 197). That is to say, everybody is a critic when it comes to translation, but there has been little research on the exact factors that have to do with acceptability in translation. There is not a universal way to deem a translation acceptable or unacceptable, and people are quick to judge a translation when they read a target text, but it has been written little on how to *properly* judge a translation.

According to House, "translation is the replacement of a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language", and thus "an adequate translation text is a pragmatically and semantically equivalent one" (House

2015: 23). In other words, a target text must convey the same meaning – so, it must be semantically equivalent – and it must have the same function – so, it must have the same goal, the same purpose – of the source text it derives from.

As already said, a target text should have the same effect on its readers than the source text they derive from. In other words:

translation evaluation is thus linked to the effect a translation is supposed to have. The claim is that a translation is good when it arouses in its recipients the same effect as the original had – a demand which is at first sight difficult to verify empirically. (House 2009: 44)

Being able to make the readers feel something, however, is hardly enough to judge a translation as acceptable, because other elements should be taken into consideration as well. Moreover, every person reacts in a different way when put in front of a literary text. The same text might 'tell' a lot to someone and absolutely nothing to someone else. Hence, a more scientific and objective way to evaluate translation is needed. Furthermore, collecting a sample of reactions to judge the quality of a translation might be long and may not work so well.

When the quality of a translation is being assessed, the translator's writing style should be taken into consideration. Indeed, a majority of the target-text readers will never read the original text, that is, the way they judge the original author is entirely based on the quality of the translation they read. For example, when a person reads *War and Peace* in a way they judge Leo Tolstoy, even though they are not reading it in the original Russian version. It goes without saying that if a translation is badly written, the original author's reputation runs the risk to get tarnished.

To sum up, defining acceptability in translation is challenging for various reasons. Firstly, because everyone has their own idea about what makes a translation acceptable, and secondly because many factors are to be taken into consideration while judging the quality of a target text. What is certain, however, is that a translation must be well-

written to be considered a good piece of writing. However, being well-written is not enough, in that a target text is the product of a process of re-writing and it should be faithful – at least to a certain extent – to the source text it derives from. Finally, a translation is always produced for a given readership, which must be kept in mind during the entire transition from source to target text.

2.5.2 A matter of fluency

As said before, it seems that target-text readers want their target texts to be “fluent”. This adjective has been often used when target texts are judged: fluency – or a lack of thereof – is a key word when it comes to translation. Readers and reviewers may not always agree when it comes to define what makes a translation a good one, but they all agree about one thing: target texts must be fluent to read.

Many translators and translation scholars have been talking about fluency in translation, but it is yet to be established how one achieves fluency and how important it is for a target text to be fluent to read. About fluency in translation, Lawrence Venuti says that:

a translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation but the “original”. (Venuti 1995: 1)

Why everyone – starting with editors and readers – is so obsessed with fluency is yet to be found out. Target texts must of course be well-written and correct from a grammatical point of view, but it seems that fluency is the one that really matters. “A successful translation is often described as one that is 'fluent', and an illusion of reading the original is sometimes taken to be evidence of quality” (Barslund 2011: 149). In other words, readers do not want to think about translators. Subconsciously or not, they do not want to admit that they are reading a translation and not the original text. As Susan

Bassnett points out:

[target text readers] do not want translations that read like translations. In consequence, politically incorrect or not, most good translators want to produce works that are going to be read, and they want to write well. (Bassnett 2011: 18)

The issue of fluency is deeply connected with the issues of invisibility, quality and acceptability. Target-text readers do not necessarily – or are not in a position to – acknowledge that a mediation was indeed necessary before they could read the foreign text. They want to believe – or they simply do not consider the truth – that they are reading the original text, even when they know that the original writer is a 'foreigner' who belongs to another culture.

This failure in acknowledging the presence and role of the translator can be explained with an “unconscious fear of Otherness” (Bassnett 2011: 20). Target-text readers do not want to think about the Other even when they are reading foreign literature. As long as it is in their own language, it is part of their own culture, not the product of a different culture – 'different' being the key word. Once the transition from source language to target language is complete, the text ceases to be foreign.

It is not a matter of laziness or stupidity, it is a matter of tranquillity. As Susan Bassnett (2011: 21) points out, “not being able to understand what is being said in another language stirs feelings of anxiety, which are quickly translated into feelings of being threatened”. Even nowadays, in the twenty-first century, people still fear the Other. Even though translation can be seen as a perfect way to get to know the Other, it can also be seen as a perfect way to hide the Other, not to think about its existence. Translation still remains a double-edged sword: it can either show you the world or hide it from your eyes.

2.5.3 Quality in translation

As said before, acceptability in translation is a challenging issue, in that there is no

general rule to establish whether a target text can be considered acceptable or not. The issue of acceptability is strictly connected with the issue of quality, and, in particular, with the issue of how to evaluate quality. The general opinion of scholars on the matter is that there is the “need for more nuanced and more explicit methods of determining value” (Maier 2000: 137). In other words, what scholars – together with those who require translations to be done, and those for whom translations are though – need is a universal way to assess translation quality, which, as House (2009a: 225) points out, is “obviously and necessarily product-based”.

The first thing that should be done is asking one question: why is it so important to find a universal way to assess translation quality? Hömig (quoted in Drugan 2013: 41) offers four different points of view on the matter:

Users need it because they want to know whether they can trust the translators and rely on the quality of their products.

Professional translators need it because there are so many amateur translators who work for very little money that professional translators will only be able to sell their products if there is some proof of the superior quality of their work.

Translatological research needs it because if it does not want to become academic and marginal in the eyes of practising translators it must establish criteria for quality control and assessment.

Trainee translators need it because otherwise they will not know how to systematically improve the quality of their work.

Clearly, many points of view are missing, such as the point of view of editors, source-text authors, and so on. However, a point can still be made: it is clear that many different reasons drive this shared want for a universal way to weight the quality of target texts.

There are many approaches to the assessment of translation quality, such as for instance, anecdotal and subjective approaches, response-oriented, psycholinguistic approaches, and text-based approaches. Anecdotal and subjective approaches “see the quality of a translation as solely dependent on the translator and his or her personal knowledge, intuitions and artistic competence” (House 2009a: 222). Response-oriented, psycholinguistic approaches:

focus on determining the [...] manner in which receptors of the translated text respond to it. [According to those who follow this method, the way in which target-text readers respond to the target text] must be equivalent to the manner in which the receptors of the source text respond to the source text. (House 2009a: 222)

It should be stressed that psycho-social approaches are “subjective, intuitive and anecdotal”, and are usually “about 'how good or bad one finds a translation'. In the majority of cases, these judgements are based on simple impressions and feelings” (House 2015: 8-9). Text-based approaches, on the other hand, may be divided into linguistic, comparative and functional models. In the first model, “pairs of source and target texts are compared with a view to discovering syntactic, semantic, stylistic and pragmatic regularities of transfer” (House 2009a: 223). In the second model, the quality of a translation is assessed “according to the function of the translation in the system of the target language literature. The source text is thus of little importance in this approach” (House 2009a: 223). Finally, in the third model, “the way the translated text is adapted to target language and culture norms is [...] taken as the yardstick for evaluating a translation” (House 2009a: 224).

According to House, “in order to make qualitative statements about a translation text [, this] must be compared with the source text” (House 2015: 31). This opinion is shared by many scholars. Maier, in particular, points out that:

given the definition of translation as version, an assessment of that version must constitute a dynamic process that to some extent includes an original as well [, in fact] the original is rarely omitted entirely. The extent to which it is present, however, (and the author's relation to it) are debated frequently. (Maier 2000: 141).

This should not be overlooked, in that a comparison between source text and target text – or, as Maier calls it, version – is fundamental to assess the quality of the latter. As said in Chapter 2.1.1, a translation is the product of a process of rewriting, which qualifies it as a second-hand product. Hence, a confrontation with the original product it derives from may be considered fundamental in the assessment of its quality.

It should be stressed that “all evaluative practices are linked to individual values”

(Maier 2000: 144), in that “evaluation [...] has a subjective component: when we evaluate, we judge” (Colina 2011: 43). This subjectivity that is inevitably a part of every evaluation process has been noticed by “theorists and professionals [,who] overwhelmingly agree [that] there is no single objective way to measure quality” (Drugan 2013: 35). In other words, when the quality of translation is to be assessed, a subjective component to the assessment is likely to occur, in that personal taste is likely to play its role in any type of evaluation. After all, “subjectivity and randomness are unlikely ever to be entirely absent from [translation quality assessment] processes” (Williams quoted in Drugan 2013: 45-46).

Gouadec, for instance, seems to have no doubt about what it means for a translation to be 'high quality'. According to him, a target text can be “as translated”, of “fair average quality”, or of “top quality” (Gouadec 2010: 272-273). “As translated” texts are “rather rough cut” (Gouadec 2010: 272) and give the general impression of not having been reviewed before being offered to the public. “Fair average quality” texts are “correct, readable, and maybe even pleasant to read” (Gouadec 2010: 272). “Top quality” texts, on the other hand, are:

fluent, efficient, most readable, and ergonomic in that both contents and form are more than adequate on two counts, the first one being that the translator “improved on the original” and the second one being that s/he adapted form and content to the particular public and destination within the particular conceptual-linguistic-cultural context of the reception and use of the translation by that public and destination. (Gouadec 2010: 273)

2.5.3.1 Two models: House's and Larose's

To better investigate the matter of quality translation assessment, two models will be presented: House's model and Larose's model.

House's model is based on the concept of equivalence (see Chapter 2.4.1). According to her:

equivalence means 'of equal value' and that it is not all about sameness or, worse still, identity, but about approximately equal value despite some unavoidable difference – a difference, we might add,

that stems from the (banal) fact that languages are different. (House 2015: 6)

Another concept that is fundamental in House's model is the difference between *overt* translation and *covert* translation (see, for instance, Chapter 2.2.1). An overt translation focuses on highlighting and stressing the culture-bound elements that can be found in the source text it derives from. In particular, according to her, source texts which are “historically linked”, or “displaying period- and culture-specificity” (House 2015: 54) require an overt translation. On the other hand, a covert translation focuses on hiding the culture-bound elements that can be found in the source text it derives from. In particular, according to her, source texts which require a covert translation are “scientific text[s]”, “tourist information booklet[s]”, “economic text[s]”, and “journalistic text[s]”, texts, in other words, which are not “source-culture specific” (House 2015: 56). It should be stressed that in a covert translation the translator has to put “a 'cultural filter' between the source text and the translation text”. According to House, to put a cultural filter means to “view the source text through the eyes of a target culture member” (House 2015: 57). In an overt translation, on the other hand, the source text “is, in a way, 'sacrosanct’” (House 2015: 60), and thus the translator:

has to restrict [themselves] to 'simply' transposing [the source text] from the source to the target culture, giving target culture members the opportunity to have access to the original via the medium of the foreign language. (House 2015: 61)

The first version of her model is outlined in three stages: “analysis of [source text] and statement of function”, “[source text] and [target text] comparison”, and “statement of quality” (Drugan 2013: 50-51-52). This model was criticised for many reasons, among which “the 'limits of translatability' and the distinction between 'overt' and 'covert' translation” (Drugan 2013: 52). Hence, House decided to revise her model and offer an improved and updated rendition of the previous version. The revisited model also is outlined in three stages: “analysis of the original”, “comparison of original and translation”, and “statement of quality” (Drugan 2013: 52). The major difference

between the revisited model and its previous version stands in the first stage. In fact, in the revisited model the focus is on “field [topic, content]”, “tenor [the participants in the interaction and the style]”, “mode [channel, spoken or written, and whether it is a monologue or a dialogue or a mixture of both]” and “genre [register and textual function]” (Drugan 2013: 52), while in the previous version of her model the focus was on “medium [spoken or written]”, “participation [monologue or dialogue or a mixture of both]”, “social role relationship [relationship between author and readers]”, “social attitude [level of formality]” and “province [the author's professional activity, the topic of the text, the details of the text production that can be deduced by reading the text, such as register]” (Drugan 2013: 51).

The great critique that has been moved against House's model of quality assessment in translation is “the time needed to apply the model”, as it is considered to make her model “unworkable in the professional context” (Drugan 2013: 53). Another thing that has been criticised about House's model is that its purpose is “to find faults”, in that “her emphasis is on spotting mistakes, whereas the professional emphasis is on approving a translation as an adequate or acceptable product” (Drugan 2013: 54).

Larose “follows a similar approach to House in that he works from the text up, rather than having access to the conditions of production” (Drugan 2013: 56). In other words, Larose's model focuses on translation as a product, not as a process. However, it should be stressed that he is aware of the importance of the context in which a translation is produced. In fact:

his focus on the objective of translations [, which he considers fundamental to assess their quality] means he recognizes that the context in which translation occurs, client brief and so on are essential factors in translation quality, though he nonetheless fails to include most of these in his detailed model. (Drugan 2013: 54)

Larose, “unlike House”, “stresses the importance of diversity, rather than claiming his model is applicable to all contexts” (Drugan 2013: 55). In fact, according to him:

a range of possible approaches to [translation quality assessment] is valid and likely to endure: there are different ways of translating and different purposes for translations, so different ways of assessing translations. (Drugan 2013: 55)

Larose does not exactly propose a well-defined model, but he offers approaches “with no detailed stages, sample texts or translation-specific criteria” (Drugan 2013: 55). He does, however, focus “on the text itself, where he differentiates between three different levels” (Drugan 2013: 55). These levels are: “microstructural [sentence or sub-sentence level]”, “macrostructural [above the sentence level]”, and “superstructural [overall structure of discourse level]” (Drugan 2013: 55). According to him, source text and target text should be evaluated “separately in relation to these three levels, bearing in mind the overall 'objectives' of the author and the translator” (Drugan 2013: 55). The hierarchy of levels he proposes should then be used to weight translation errors, keeping in mind that microstructural errors are considered of less significance than macrostructural or superstructural errors.

According to him:

[translation quality assessment] must not be confused with translation revision: [translation quality assessment] is an overall statement of a translation's quality and can be positive, rather than finding fault. (Drugan 2013: 56)

This, together with his interest on the context in which a translation is created, differentiates him from the majority of scholars and theorists who work on translation quality assessment.

However, Larose and his way of assessing quality have been object of many critics. In fact:

practitioners would be likely to question various aspects of [his] approach. Although he offers [an] account of the context in which translation and [translation quality assessment] take place, his own model does not really account for these factors or accord them much significance in rating translations. The focus on [source texts] and [target texts] omits to include real-world client specifications or the actual working conditions in which translations were produced. (Drugan 2013: 56).

Another critique that may be moved against his approach is that although he realises that translation quality assessment models in the real world must be efficient and must

not require much time to be applied, his approach is “itself time-consuming” (Drugan 2013: 56).

In conclusion, it should be stressed that a universal quality assessment model is yet to be found. A possible reason for this lack of agreement about the best way to assess quality in translation is that:

scholarly approaches to translation evaluation [...] do not account for the reality of translating and translation [. In fact, the yardstick the majority of models] propose are based on general assumptions which are not examined in the light of the actual functions assigned to texts nor the means chosen to realize them. In other words, the [majority of] models neglect the link between the context in which a translation takes place and the impact of this context on the target text. (Lauscher 2000: 158).

In other words, it would seem that up to this moment the models offered do not take into consideration the practical side of the translation process. By looking at the product itself and not knowing the situation in which the before-mentioned product was produced, many parameters that should be taken into consideration to evaluate a target text are overlooked. As Drugan (2013: 49) points out:

a new and useful way to classify approaches might be precisely to separate those which are purely academic and those which are designed, adopted and refined based on ongoing applied professional experience.

CHAPTER 3: **SOME CHALLENGING ASPECTS IN TRANSLATION**

In this chapter some problematic aspects will be discussed that are likely to be encountered in the process of translation of texts from one language to another. The focus will be, in particular, on those aspects that are relevant to the analysis of the translation passages commented upon in Chapter 4. Firstly, taboo language in translation will be discussed. Secondly, the issue of how to deal with humoristic elements in translation will be dealt with. Subsequently, culture-bound elements in translation will be explored, in relation to the various definitions that can be given to the word 'culture'. Finally, the role of fixed expressions and idioms in translation will be presented. It should be kept in mind that these are just some of the many challenging aspects that translators may have to deal with.

3.1 Translating taboo language

Taboo language should not be underestimated, especially when the problem at issue is how to translate taboo words and expressions. As Susan Bassnett points out, “there is, of course, a serious aspect to insults and curses” (Bassnett 2011: 82). Considering that taboo language – that is to say, for instance, swearwords, cursing and insults – is strictly connected to culture, it comes as no surprise that it is so hard to translate it into another language. In fact, transposing swearwords, curses and insults from the source language to the target language is one of the most difficult challenges that a translator may have to face. Every culture conceives insults in a different way, for “unquestionably this is a culture-bound phenomenon. Some insults, when translated appear bland or slightly ridiculous” (Bassnett 2011: 83). Hence, when dealing with the translation of insults, translators may have to sacrifice the meaning of the source insult to focus on its goal.

Taboo language – also known as 'bad language' – is something that everyone can recognise and use, “in fact it is a central feature of human communication, right from language acquisition to old age” (Jay, quoted in Azzaro 2005: 1). The frequency with which taboo language is used varies from person to person, and there are many factors that affect the use of taboo language – for instance, the age, gender, class and even origins of the person at issue. Each one of these factors “play[s] an important role in the use or non-use of certain words or phrases” (Bassnett 2011: 84). Thus, every person uses taboo language in a different way and with different frequency: some people never use it, others carelessly 'swear like troopers'.

It is rather easy to explain what a swearword is, but other things – such as why people swear – are harder to explain, as they are connected with the psychological aspects behind their use. Furthermore, it should be stressed that swearwords are not the only concern while talking about taboo language. In fact, the term “taboo language” covers a long continuum of meanings. As Professor Gabriele Azzaro points out, “there are three basic questions we can ask regarding so-called 'bad language'. How do we use it? Where do we use it? Why do we use it?” (Azzaro 2005: 1). Of course, why, where and how to use them are culture-bound questions (the issue of translating culture will be dealt with in paragraph 3.3.3), hence the translation of bad language becomes much more complicated.

3.1.1 Swearwords and where to find them

First, it should be stressed that “language taboos are a social as well as psychological phenomenon” (Azzaro 2005: 1). Although swearwords and curses are an important part of everyday language, incredibly interesting from a linguistic point of view, and frequently used in literary texts, scholars, teachers and students are still reticent to talk

about them. The feeling of guilt and uneasiness that goes with their use in everyday life is so strong that people seem unable to talk about them in a detached and scientific way, as it is however necessary in this dissertation. According to Peter Newmark, who mentions bad language as part of his investigation of “unfindable”²⁶ words, taboo words are “now usually recorded, but not in all senses” (Newmark 1988: 176). In other words, a science of taboo language is just starting to take form.

Azzaro (2005) talks about the forms and functions of bad language and puts forward this classification:

the general term “bad language” is distinguished from the term “swearing”, which in turn includes phenomena such as “cursing”, “profanity”, “vulgarity” (obscene and dirty language), “abusiveness” and “expletives” [...]. In order to achieve a more detailed definition we have to consider the content, the form and the function of each individual expression at stake. (Andersson & Hirsch, quoted in Azzaro 2005: 2)

As far as content is concerned, “the main feature of the contextual meaning of swearwords and insults is to release mental tension, to assert power or to make an impression on the listener” (Azzaro 2005: 2). When a person is stressed or fatigued, cursing or insulting may make them feel better. In other words, the use of taboo language can almost be stress-relieving. Furthermore, bad language can be used to trigger a reaction in the other party of the interaction, which can be either positive or negative, as will be explained below.

It should be noticed that “some cultures have developed the sexual obscenity, others the scatological, many have both” (Bassnett 2011: 84). Of course, every culture has its own taboos, but generally speaking there are a few recurrent types. In fact, “the most common areas of cultural taboos refer to religion, (im)morality, scatological functions, physical features, sex and illness” (Azzaro 2005: 2). Having one prevalent type of cultural taboo does not mean that other types of taboos cannot be used too. Moreover, over the years many cultures have developed more than one type of obscenity.

²⁶ By “unfindable” words, Newmark means words and expressions that are rarely dealt with by scholars.

According to Azzaro, cursing is used to achieve various possible goals and is characterised by four “ingredients”:

it is reflexive (automatic, like an unconscious reflex), untargeted (not addressed to a particular entity), non-reciprocal (it does not require an answer) and neurologically motivated (it works as an emotional outlet). (Azzaro 2005:2)

In other words, swearing and cursing are the possible consequences of a frustrating or angering situation and they are “void of specific addressee” (Azzaro 2005: 2), that is to say, they are generally done for the mere sake of doing it. In fact, they are not used as a way to attack the interlocutor, while, on the other hand, insults are. It is necessary, as Azzaro points out, to make a distinction between “vulgarity” – that is to say, vulgar language – and proper cursing:

whereas vulgarity is almost exclusively a matter of social class and relative linguistic tastes, curses and insults systematically involve a certain degree of taboo breaking. Vulgar language is defined by the judgement of one class over another, usually considered degraded, and therefore it is not necessarily taboo. Cursing is not a matter of tastes, in that the same expressions can appear across different classes. (Azzaro 2005: 3)

Cursing has two primary functions, an “expletive” and an “abusive” one (Andersson & Hirsch, quoted in Azzaro 2005: 5):

an expletive expression is basically emotive, reactive and exclamatory (*hell! God!, damn*); as we have seen, it is non-reciprocal and has no particular addressee; abusive expressions are tantamount to conscious insults (*you bastard! Shitbrain!*) to others or even to oneself. (Azzaro 2005: 5)

Another secondary function is expressing approval, as exemplified by the expression 'you son of a bitch!', which ceases to be an insult and becomes a way to express admiration. The taboo expression is thus used in a sort of metaphorical way. Another secondary function is binding the two parties of an interaction. For example, in 'you're fucking right!' the taboo function of this variation of the swearword 'fuck' can be considered irrelevant. As Azzaro (2005: 5) points out, taboo expressions are sometimes used out of habit, “mechanically, without any conscious reference to the context or intention to shock, simply as a rhythmical filler”.

To better visualise and understand the various types of swearing, Table 3.1,²⁷ which offers a classification of swearwords, may be useful:

Religious		Sexual	Scatological
Profanity <i>Christ!</i> <i>Jesus!</i> <i>Gee!</i>	Blasphemy <i>Goddamn!</i> <i>Screw the Pope!</i>	<i>Fuck!</i>	<i>Shit!</i>

Table 3.1: A classification of swearwords.

As can be seen from Table 3.1, there are two types of religious taboo: profanity and blasphemy – where blasphemy is to be considered “a conscious, stronger attack to religious respect” (Azzaro 2005: 2). Blasphemy should not be underestimated – nor should it be feared for its scabrous nature – in that it is one of the most difficult things to translate. In fact, some cultures take attacks to religious respect more seriously than others – for example, blasphemous expressions are considered extremely disrespectful and sacrilegious in Christian nations like Italy. The difference in weight that taboo language has in different cultures is one of the main problems a translator has to face when dealing with them.

The frequency with which a taboo expression is used has a consequence over its weight and over the impact its use has: “the higher the frequency of a taboo term, the greater the probability that its original psychological impact will be watered down with tear” (Azzaro 2005: 9). Thus, the more a taboo expression is used, the less it is bound to be considered a taboo term. In other words, what was once a taboo expression wears to a “weakened daily usage void of linguistic strength” (Azzaro 2005: 9). Hence, the frequent use of 'bad language' seems to be the best way to deprive a given expression of its 'tabooness' and thus makes it acceptable.

3.1.2 From source swearwords to target swearwords

²⁷ Examples taken from Azzaro 2005: 3.

As said before, taboo language is strictly culture-bound, for every culture has its own type(s) of bad language. Therefore, translating swearing or cursing is all but simple. It is often not enough to simply substitute a source-language swearword with a target-language swearword that happens to have a rather similar meaning. This is because “insults and curses do not translate easily, and even when they are translated the weight they carry with native speakers is very difficult to determine” (Bassnett 2011: 83).

In fact, it should be stressed that “the question of weight is one that can be very troubling for translators” (Bassnett 2011: 84). For example, although 'bitch' and 'cunt' have a similar meaning, the weight they carry for native speakers is completely different. Calling someone 'cunt' is much worse than calling them 'bitch', as 'cunt' is a much worse and heavier insult. As Azzaro (2005: 38) points out:

cunt is by far the strongest of all genitalia-related items. It is both addressed to male and female characters and works as an insult, as a metaphorical element (synecdoche) as well as literally.

Non-native speakers can easily make mistakes when it comes to catching the weight of a curse or an insult, using swearwords that are way too strong for the context they use them in. Thus, swearwords and insults are to be used carefully, for even though their meaning may be crystal clear, sometimes their weight may be not. In other words, “the weight of an insult [or a curse] is one of the hardest ideas of all to grasp for the non-native speaker, yet it is crucial to both the insulter and the person insulted” (Bassnett 2011: 84). When translators have to find an equivalent in the target culture but are not sure about the weight of the source element, they may want to contact a native and ask for explanations. Of course, this is not always possible and in such cases they may want to opt for a target expression that is similar in meaning and that is frequently used in the target culture.

Many translators have wondered about how swearwords should be dealt with in translation. The matter is more complicated than it might appear. What is considered

taboo in the *source* culture and what is deemed taboo in the *target* culture should be taken into consideration too, for it may happen that something is not taboo in one culture but is the worst of taboos in another. This difference should be kept in mind especially when blasphemy and blasphemous terms are at issue, in that the delicate nerve of religion is hit:

blasphemous cursing in Italian or Spanish is [considered] puzzling rather than deeply offensive [in a non-Italian or non-Spanish context]: *porca M[.....]* is a horrible phrase, but an English speaker would have trouble grasping the degree to which it [is] seen as unacceptable. (Bassnett 2011: 83)

In other words, saying 'bloody hell' or even 'screw the Pope!' – two blasphemous English expressions – cannot be compared to saying a blasphemous Italian expression like the one that Susan Bassnett mentions in her 2011 *Reflections on Translation*. Their weight and the reactions they trigger are completely different. The blasphemous Italian expression she mentions is an awful attack towards the Virgin Mary and it is considered extremely offensive in an Italian context – and, of course, the same thing applies to attacks towards God or Jesus. Saying such things in front of an Italian – especially a religious one – is likely to bring about unpleasant results. It should be kept in mind that what is absolutely unacceptable in one culture may be perfectly acceptable in another one, hence non-natives should always be careful when they swear in front of a native or – as it may happen – insult a native.

The reason why an expression is considered taboo depends on the psychological reaction it triggers in the members of the interaction, together with the bans a particular society imposes on its members:

the strength of taboo expressions lies in their psychological and social ban. The force of an expression has nothing to do with intrinsic linguistic make-up [...], but lies in the disruption it is capable of achieving on a psychological and social level. The stronger the ban, the more efficient the expression is felt to be. (Azzaro 2005: 11)

After all, it should be kept in mind that “to forbid something is to make it meaningful” (Lévi-Strauss, quoted in Azzaro 2005:11). There is nothing people want more than

something they have been told they cannot have, and the same thing applies to language: the more people – especially children – are told that something should not be said, the more they tend to utter it. The thrill caused by saying something forbidden can be compared to an addictive drug: once you experience it, you want more of it.

As already said, swearwords are culture-bound elements, thus translators should be very careful when they deal with them. It is always hard to know what – or who – is targeted the most in the source culture and what – or who – is targeted the most in the target culture:

bad language nowadays aims at minorities in general, and this is obviously a culture-bound phenomenon: in a given culture we may have a proliferation of minority insults such as *queer*, *gay*, *poof(ter)*, *bugger*, *homo*, *lesbian*, *dyke* alongside ethnic ones, like *nigger*, *Paki*, *wop*. (Azzaro 2005: 9)

Considering that swearwords may be misused by non-natives who do not understand their weight, how translators should deal with them is rather hard to determine. However, some general suggestions can be given. Firstly, the weight of the swearword should be evaluated – *idiot* and *stupid* have different weights, and so do *gay* and *queer*. Subsequently, a swearword with a similar meaning and exactly the same weight should be looked for in the target language. The weight can be considered even more important than the meaning itself, because, as said before, a change in weight can have serious consequences. If the swearword at issue cannot be translated – that is to say, is untranslatable, because a given curse does not exist in the target culture – other strategies can be adopted, such as not translating it at all, but rather putting another swearword in another part of the text, or using other ways to obtain the same effect that the source swearword at issue aimed to obtain. As bad language in general is concerned, others believe – because of the “emergence of the concept of political correctness” (Taylor 2009: 86) – that:

certain terms are to be avoided because their connotations give offence to certain members of society, for example, those belonging to a minority group of some sort, and are to be replaced by inoffensive

terminology. (Taylor 2009: 86)

In other words, some people believe that offensive language should be avoided, both in writing and in translating. Whatever strategy the translator decides to use to translate swearwords, the most important thing is to take the matter seriously.

3.1.3 When insults are at issue

The transposition of insults from one language into another is also way more complicated than one may think at first. Detecting them in the source text, understanding their meaning, and translating them is far from enough, and a variety of factors is to be taken into consideration while dealing with their translation.

As Bassnett (2011: 84) points out, “different languages have developed different kinds of insult”. This is obviously true from a linguistic point of view – because different languages use different insulting words – but the issue is more complicated than that, and, as said above, their meaning should be taken into specific consideration. Insults – just like swearwords – are culture-bound elements, hence a different culture can mean a different way of insulting.

Insults share some characteristics with swearwords – after all, they are all part of what is called bad language – but are also rather different from them. As Azzaro (2005: 3) points out, insults “are targeted and reciprocal – they do have a specific addressee, and presuppose an emotional reaction both on the part of the speaker and the hearer”. In other words, insults are personal and are often uttered to hurt, diminish or anger the receiver. Knowing the receiver at a personal level is one of the best ways to know how to trigger a given reaction from them. In other words, the more you know about someone, the more you know what makes them feel insulted.

Many types of insults should be considered and to better visualise and understand

them, Table 3.2,²⁸ which offers a classification of insults, will be commented:

Mental	Sexual	Scatological	Physical
<i>Fool!</i>	<i>Jerk!</i>	<i>Shitbrains!</i>	<i>Fatso!</i>
<i>Idiot!</i>	<i>Bitch!</i>	<i>Fart!</i>	<i>Pigso!</i>
<i>Moron!</i>	<i>Bastard!</i>	<i>Pisshead!</i>	<i>Midget!</i>

Table 3.2: A classification of insults.

Table 3.2 offers a possible classification of the various types of insults. Clearly, other types may be used. Their targets are generally speaking always the same – the body, the brains, the sexuality of a person, and so on – but the ways in which these targets can be attacked are countless. In other words, imagination plays an important role when it comes to insulting someone. In fact, apart from the “classical” insults, anything that aims to hurt or provoke someone can be considered an insult. For example, calling someone a 'hobbit' may be a compliment if you know that the other party of the interaction is going to appreciate the reference to J.R.R. Tolkien, but it may be considered an insult if your intention is, for example, to make fun of their height (a physical insult) in a more imaginative way than simply calling them 'shortie'.

When the translation of insults is at issue, the translator should take various things into consideration. First, they should understand what kind of insult they are dealing with – that is to say, if it is a physical one, rather than a mental or a sexual one, and so on. Subsequently, they should understand whether a similar insult exists in the target language, paying of course attention to the weight of the source insult. For instance, can fool be translated with *idiota* or can *sciocco* be considered a more appropriate translation? Considering that insults are culture-bound elements, a deep change in meaning may sometimes be necessary, for something that is perceived as an insult in one culture may not be perceived so in another one – or it may be perceived as an insult, but given another weight. Sometimes, as it happens with swearwords, the weight of the

²⁸ Examples taken from Azzaro 2005: 3.

insult is what matters the most, the one that should be preserved in the transition from source insult to target insult.

3.2 Translating humour

Humour is probably one of the most difficult things to translate. The issues that come into play with the translation of jokes, puns, and so on should not be underestimated. As will be explored in this part of the dissertation – and as absurd as this may seem – humour is a serious matter. How to make people laugh and how to keep that laughter intact while moving the joke from one language – and from one culture – to another are not easy processes. As Chiaro (2010a: 1) points out: “[humour's] transposition between source and target languages is [always] going to be a difficult task”.

According to *The New International Webster's Student Dictionary of the English Language* (1997: 346), “humour” is “the quality of being amusing, comical, ludicrous, etc.”. For instance, a humorous person is someone able to make other people laugh. It should be stressed that, like the concept of bad language described in 3.1 above, humour generally involves playing with words to trigger a reaction in the other party of the interaction. In fact, wordplays are to be considered humoristic elements when they are encountered in a text and, therefore, are to be treated as such when they are to be translated. As Vandaele (2011: 180) points out: “wordplay [...] does often create some amusement, a smile or even laughter”. Furthermore, “much [humour] is linguistic in the sense that it exploits cognitive rules attached to linguistic constructions” (Vandaele 2011: 182). That is to say, the way through which an amusing meaning is expressed becomes cause of laughter too. From this point of view, playing with words can be considered a type of metalanguage. “Metalanguage” can be defined “a form of language or set of terms used for the description or analysis of another language”.²⁹ In other

²⁹ Quotation taken from the online version of the Oxford Dictionaries.

words, language itself becomes the object of investigation. As Professor Clifford Landers points out, “there is no aspect of translation more frustrating and yet at the same time potentially more rewarding than metalanguage” (Landers, quoted in Bassnett 2011: 133). That is to say, dealing with wordplays – and with every other humoristic element – while translating a text can be an interesting and eventually gratifying challenge, but, at the same time, a difficult one.

One of the questions that should be asked when the translation of humour is at issue is whether it is possible to translate it or not. In fact, as Newmark (1981: 11) points out, “there are some cases where the [same] effect cannot be realized” while moving one joke from source language to target language. That is to say, if a text “describes, qualifies or makes use of a particularity of the language it is written in, the reader of the translation will have to have it explained to [them], unless it is so trivial that it can be omitted”. The issue of the (un)translatability of humour will be dealt further with later.

When the translation of humour is at issue, many aspects are to be tackled. In this section a review will be provided of humour and of how it should be translated. First, an introduction to the matter will be given. Subsequently, humour and various humorous elements – in other words, those strategies generally used by people to trigger laughter in the interlocutor – will be explored. In the last paragraph of this section, some translation strategies apt at dealing with humour will be listed and discussed.

3.2.1 A serious matter

First and foremost, it should be stressed that just because something has as its purpose to make people laugh, it does not mean that it should be underestimated or that it should not be taken seriously. In fact, humour and humorous elements in literary texts – and how to properly translate them – should be properly investigated and explored, because

<<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/metalanguage>> (last accessed on 19 July 2016)

they are all but second-rate issues. As Chiaro (2010: 1) points out, it is the combination of “linguistic and culture-specific features that creates one of the most arduous challenges not only for professional translators [...], but also for anyone who has tried to tell a joke or to be funny in a language other than their own”.

Laughter can be triggered in many different ways that should – and will – be analysed and properly explored. Making someone laugh or smile is not as easy as one may think, especially if the person attempting to cause a laughter with their words does not personally know the other party of the interaction – as it is the case of literary texts, where the author does not know their readers, but they still might want to entertain them. Moreover, humour can be a very personal thing – it is, after all, “in the eyes and ears of the beholder” (Chiaro 2010: 18). What a person deems laughable can be different from what another person considers humorous. In fact, and as Chiaro (2010: 18) points out, “one may not react positively to a humorous text because of personal characteristics”. Laugh is not necessarily triggered in the same way in all the members of a given culture, even though there are some things that a good percentage of a population deems funny. For example, Italians are famous for their jokes about the *Carabinieri*, an Italian armed force which is not highly valued. A typical joke that can be heard about them in Italy is, for instance: 'how many *Carabinieri* do you need to substitute a burnt out bulb? Fourteen: one to do the job and thirteen to praise him'. From this point of view, stereotypes play quite an important role, in that they may be shared among the members of a given culture, hence their humoristic component may be recognised by them all. In other words:

stereotypes are culture-specific, so that the Irish are to English what the *carabinieri* are to the Italians, the Poles to the Americans, the Belgians to the French. [Jokes] could only work in another language if the signifier [...] in the [source language] is substituted by a pragmatically equivalent one in the [target language]. (Ulrych 1992: 77)

Humour is an extremely complex matter, thus it should be explored with caution and

circumspection.

Another thing that should be taken into consideration to define humour is the “pragmatic intentions of the [participants] in the [...] interaction [at issue]” (Mansfield 2012: 253). In other words, why a joke is cracked or a pun made is not something that should be overlooked. Furthermore, a common strategy used to trigger laughter in the readers is the “use of both face-saving and face-threatening acts, since the humour often involves a character being a butt, that is, the person people often joke about or criticise more or less directly to their face” (Mansfield 2012: 261). The concept of “face” – that is to say, a person's public image – is strictly connected with the issue of the participants' intentions:

if a speaker says something that represents a threat to another person's expectations regarding self-image, it is described as a face threatening act. Alternatively, given the possibility that some action might be interpreted as a threat to another's face, the speaker can say something to less the possible threat. This is called a face saving act. (Yule, quoted in Mansfield 2012: 261)

In other words, those acts that show the need to be accepted are face-saving acts, while those acts that show a need for independence are face-threatening acts. Their use as potential humorous elements, whether in an interaction or in a literary text, should not be underestimated.

The matter of humour becomes even more complicated when translation is brought into play. Playing with words in a creative and imaginative way while writing is all but easy, but translating plays on words can be even more challenging, especially if translators lack in imagination – after all, no course can teach someone how to be more imaginative. As Bassnett (2011: 130) points out, “the ability to play is an essential part of translation”. Furthermore, considering that humour is culture-bound – because, as said before, each member of a given culture has their own ideas about what to deem funny and what not to deem funny – it comes as no surprise that it can be so challenging to translate it. “The ability to play with words and in particular to transfer puns and

jokes across languages requires an ability on the part of the translator to think outside the box” (Landers, quoted in Bassnett 2011: 133). As Landers points out, thinking outside the box is indeed necessary when jokes are to be transferred from source language – and culture – to target language – and culture. Translating the mere literal meaning of the joke is far from enough, in that many other factors are to be considered.

As discussed in Chapter two (see in particular 2.1.1), translation is not an easy process, and many things are to be taken into consideration while transferring words and meanings from source language to target language. “Decoding, making sense and playing with language are essential to good translation” (Bassnett 2011: 131), especially when there are humorous elements that need to be translated. Unfortunately, how to be funny and how to play with words is not something that can be taught. Either one is witty and sagacious or they are not, which can have serious consequences on the target text and on its quality. In other words:

creativity [...] can be far more effective than accuracy in the translation of wordplay. Wordplay is an area par excellence where word-for-word translation usually misses the point. (Ballard 1996: 344)

Even though creativity cannot be taught, it is something that can be improved by working on one's writing skills and by reading as much as possible. After all, “creativity is not an inborn faculty, but the result of a protracted learning process in the course of which 'dumb' capacities are made smarter” (Wills, quoted in O'Sullivan 2013: 44).

3.2.2 Different kinds of humour

Many things can be considered akin when talking about humour and humorous elements in literary texts. In fact, humour can take different forms. Humorous elements are, for instance, meaningful made-up names, wordplays, jokes, humoristic insults, irony and sarcasm, which are to be carefully handled when they are translated into another language. In this dissertation, meaningful made-up names, wordplays and jokes will be

dealt with, together with some strategies that can help translate them. It should be kept in mind that wordplays can be considered one of the “case[s] of 'abnormal' functioning of language [...]. [In fact, wordplays] are so closely tied to a particular language system that they cannot be translated” (House 2009: 41). The issue of translatability – or untranslatability – of wordplays and jokes will be dealt with in paragraph 3.2.3.

3.2.2.1 Meaningful made-up names

Made-up names in literary texts can at times be used with the precise purpose of causing laughter in the reader – or to reveal something fundamental about the characters themselves. They are not just names, they are means to transmit something fundamental, something meaningful. That is to say, “meaningful names have an element of wordplay in them” (Manini 1996: 163). In other words:

proper names, especially fictional proper names, may contain connotative elements [...] designed to be [humorous] or instructive, and provide the only real occasion when they need to be translated. (Taylor 2009: 86)

This characteristic of fictional names should not be overlooked, for the matter can be more complicated than it seems. “Normally, [when translating a literary text,] people's first [names] and surnames are transferred, thus preserving their nationality, and assuming that their names have no connotations in the text” (Newmark 1988: 214). In other words, “generally speaking, names of a purely onomastic nature do not translate [...]. However, if the name carries any other kind of meaning, this is when the translator's imaginative faculties are truly tested” (Taylor 2009: 31). The problem arises when the names do carry a connotative meaning that should be preserved in the transition from source text to target text. In fact, laughing because of a joke or a funny name is possible only if one understands the comic component that lies underneath it. Fortunately, there are many possible strategies when it comes to translating meaningful

names, such as keeping the source name but adding an explanation in a footnote or creating a new name that sounds foreign but that target readers can find amusing. How to deal with them will be explored in the next paragraph of this dissertation.

3.2.2.2 *Wordplays*

As Michel Ballard points out: “the term wordplay speaks for itself: puns play with words” (Ballard 1996: 342). Wordplays owe their very existence to the language they are produced in, in that they are of linguistic nature. In other words, wordplays are “inherent in the structure of language and therefore natural to the human mind” (Delabastita 1996: 127). Professor Dirk Delabastita (1996:128) offers this definition of wordplay:

wordplay is the general name for the various *textual* phenomena in which *structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with *more or less similar forms* and *more or less different meanings*.

That is to say, wordplays are entirely based on language and on the very structure of the language itself. Because of this characteristic of theirs, some may believe that they are not hard to identify in a source text. In fact, some may believe that knowledge of the grammar of the source language can be enough to spot wordplays in a text. Other scholars, such as Leppihalme, believe that “allusive wordplay [...] is so culture-specific that it is not only hard for translators working from a foreign language to translate but easy for them to miss altogether” (Leppihalme 1996: 199). In other words, translators may not recognise wordplays as puns and thus their translation can miss the point – for example, they may translate just one of the two, or many, possible meanings. The multiple meanings of wordplays should be preserved in the transition from source text to target text because:

much of the laughter generated [by an allusive wordplay] relies on whether the implied receiver (the character) and the indirect receiver (the [reader]) are able to distinguish between the primary and secondary meanings of words. (Mansfield 2012: 259)

Keeping the two meanings of an allusive wordplay is necessary because “a perceivable logic in the apparent conflict is part of the necessary conditions for humour” (Swain 2012: 270). In fact, both meanings are necessary to trigger laughter in the reader. One may wonder how exactly puns work, what they are exactly. It can be said that puns weigh up linguistic structures with different meanings on the basis of some sort of formal similarity they share.

This relation of complete or partial formal identity can be further specified in terms of homonymy (identical sounds and spelling), homophony (identical sounds but different spellings), homography (different sounds but identical spelling), and paronymy (there are slight differences in both spelling and sound). (Delabastita 1996: 128)

Puns are not mere linguistic devices, however, in that they “often consist of the combination of linguistic play with encyclopaedic knowledge” (Chiaro 2010: 5). They are, in other words, carriers of both linguistic and cultural meaning. Keeping in mind that puns are culture-specific, it should be stressed that “a translator, as reader of the source text, needs to be a competent member of the source-language community to spot the wordplay and understand its meaning” (Leppihalme 1996: 203). The various strategies to deal with the translation of wordplays will be listed and discussed in the next section of this dissertation.

3.2.2.3 *Jokes*

When jokes are at issue, the matter is possibly even more difficult and culture-bound than when wordplays are to be dealt with. In fact, readers need to be “familiar enough with the topic (geographical, historical, etc.) in order to get the joke” (Mansfield 2012: 257). The encyclopaedic knowledge on which a joke is based is even more important than the linguistic means through which it is cracked – even though the linguistic means is important too. In other words, if the person cracking the joke and the person listening to the joke – or reading it, as it is the case of humour in literary texts – do not share the

same knowledge, the joke fails in its purpose of triggering laughter.

Humour is dependent not only on the joke itself, but also on the complex interaction between the joke, the joke teller, and the audience [or the reader]. Indeed, a given joke may be humorous from one source and highly offensive from another. (Chiaro 2010a: 13)

That is to say, the joke itself is not the only thing that should be taken into account, in that, as said in 3.2.1, “humour is very much in the eyes and ears of the receiver” (Chiaro 2010a: 13). This characteristic of humour should not be overlooked, because “nowadays greater care than ever before must be taken if we do not wish to offend others through what we consider to be funny” (Chiaro 2010a: 13). Considering how easy it can be to offend – intentionally or unintentionally – the receiver of a joke, the matter of jokes and how to translate them should be treated with extreme care and attention. In particular, great care should be given when stereotypes or minorities are brought into play and made object of derision in a joke.

3.2.3 Translation strategies

In order to properly translate humour, a translator should be a humorous person, able to play with words and make up jokes and puns in the target language as the original author is in the source language. In other words, being creative and imaginative and knowing how to make people laugh are demanded of translators. Of course, not everyone is gifted with a vivacious sense of humour, but this should not be seen as a handicap. In fact, good translators who are not particularly humoristic do exist, and they certainly know how to deal with humoristic elements. As will be explored below, replacing source humour by target humour is only one of the many strategies that can be adopted.

Before dealing with specific strategies to translate humour, it should be stressed that:

as it crosses geographic boundaries humour has to come to terms with linguistic and cultural elements which are often only typical of the source culture from which it was produced thereby losing its power to amuse in the new location. Humour generating devices such as words and phrases with more than

one meaning and distinctive references to people, history, events and customs of a particular culture are characteristics that are often the basis of wordplay. (Chiaro 2010: 1).

While translating humour, a translator should keep in mind that their goal is to make their readers laugh, being the goal of a given humorous element independent from the language it is expressed in. Sometimes, to achieve this goal, part of the source humorous element has to be sacrificed and replaced by a different one, more likely to trigger a reaction in the target-text reader.

3.2.3.1 Strategies to translate meaningful made-up names

As said in the previous part of this section, made-up names can carry a precise connotative meaning that can be used to “raise a smile or a laugh” (Newmark 1988: 215). When translators deal with them, they should keep in mind the intentions the original author had when they chose that name over many possible ones. In other words, translators should ask themselves what the reasons are behind a given name in order to understand its purpose. Once its purpose is clear, they can work on how to obtain the same purpose in the target text. The following are the steps that translators have to go through when dealing with a meaningful name:

breaking a given name into its components and understanding the process which has led the author to create it; interpreting its components, usually two, which can be either both meaningful, or one meaningful and the other meaningless; deciding what the meaning of the name is, or, if there exists a range of possible meanings, establishing their functional priority; and finally, attempting to reproduce the same semantic effects in the target language. (Manini 1996: 167)

Once translators have understood the meaning and purpose of the proper name, they can decide how to deal or not deal with them. The strategy not to translate them at all consists in:

maintaining the original [...] [name] means maintaining the 'local colour' [...], whereas translating the proper name would appear as a domesticating operation which transfers the action of the play into another country and alters its cultural identity and its 'local genius'. (Manini 1996: 169)

In fact, translators can decide to leave all proper names intact, “thus leaving the foreign

cultural setting as an aspect of the 'otherness' of the original text fully intact and actually emphasizing it” (Manini 1996: 171). It is up to the translator then to decide whether to add an explanation or not. S/he might choose to add one at the end of the text or in the text itself, for example in a footnote. In this respect, it should be kept in mind that “for general readers [...] the scholarly footnote is off-putting” (Bassnett 2011: 119), and that “the use of footnotes or endnotes, or even brackets, is only justified if the information considered necessary is of an encyclopaedic kind and length” (Taylor 2009: 31). As already said, keeping the source name intact can help preserve the 'foreignness' of the source text intact and, as a consequence, it would make the translator visible, but the pleasure of reading the text would be less fluid and thus compromised. However, while some believe that footnotes are not to be used in literary texts, others have a different opinion and are thus ready to plead their cause: “if explanatory footnotes serve the translators' purpose, they can be inserted with relative ease into a work of narrative fiction to inform the reader about what had to be left out” (Manini 1996: 173). After all, reading means learning something new, and reading explanatory footnotes may be considered part of the learning process.

Another possible way to deal with meaningful names is to substitute the obscure source name with a more understandable – but still foreign-looking – one. Peter Newmark (1988: 215) is in favour of this strategy:

where both connotations (rendered through sound-effects and/or transparent names) and nationality are significant, I have suggested that the best method is first to translate the word that underlies the [source language] proper name into the [target language], and then to naturalise the translated word back into a new [source language] proper name.

This way, the apparent 'foreignness' of the name is once again preserved, but the target name – and the joke that lies underneath it – is far more understandable for the target-text readers. Hence, it is likely to trigger in them the same reaction that the source name triggers in its readers. For instance, in the *Harry Potter* series, Professor Severus Snape

becomes Professor Severus *Piton* in the Italian version. The made-up surname *Piton* succeeds in giving the impression of a slimy, treacherous person, just the same meaning that the original Snape wants to convey.

However, it should be kept in mind that:

trying to recreate [...] elusive play of word-echoes will be seen by many translators as risky business, insofar as it entails the danger of fixing what was meant to remain fluid and clarifying what was first ambiguous. (Manini 1996: 170)

For instance, names that are created with the manipulation of Latin words can be kept in their original version when the text they are a part of is translated into a Romance language such as Italian. This is the case of some names in the *Harry Potter* series, where names such as Albus, Bellatrix or Sirius are not translated in the Italian version.

Another possible strategy is to substitute a source name that target-text readers would not recognise as funny with a new, plain, foreign-looking name, making it lose its humorous component. This strategy should be adopted when the translators find no other way to preserve the original joke in their translation. Whatever decision the translators take, they should always make sure that the target text does not end up being an impoverished version of the source text it derives from, in that it should always keep its dignity as a – at least partially – independent text.

3.2.3.2 *Strategies to translate wordplays*

When it comes to translating wordplays, the problem is rather clear and inherent to their very nature:

if puns owe their meanings and effects to the very structure of the source language, how could they be divorced from that language and be taken across the language barrier? (Delabastita 1996: 127)

It cannot be denied that wordplays have a linguistic nature, thus they are apparently untranslatable, but it is also true that “a wide range of translation methods are at the translator's disposal” (Delabastita 1996: 134). As Ritva Leppihalme (1996: 207) points

out, another problem – together with the problem of their nature – should be taken into consideration while dealing with the translation of allusive wordplays:

part of the practical problem of translating allusive wordplay[s] is an inability to identify the point as worth special attention in the first place. In the translation process, this precedes (both logically and chronologically) the difficulty of choosing a suitable method or strategy for the problematic point. Needless to say, if the translator misses the joke, he or she is hardly likely to try to find a creative translation for it.

Delabastita (1996: 134) offers eight possible strategies, which can be combined, to translate wordplays:

- PUN → PUN: the source text pun is translated by a target-language pun, which may be more or less different from the original wordplay in terms of formal structure, semantic structure, or textual function [for instance, translating the title of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* into Italian with *L'importanza di essere Franco*]
- PUN → NON-PUN: the pun is rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other; of course, it may also occur that both components of the pun are translated 'beyond recognition' [for instance, translating the title of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* into Italian with *L'importanza di chiamarsi Ernesto*]
- PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE: the pun is replaced by some wordplay-related rhetorical device (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox, etc.) which aims to recapture the effect of the source-text pun [for instance, translating the title of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* into Italian with an alliterating sentence such as *L'essenzialità di essere Ernesto*]
- PUN → ZERO: the portion of text containing the pun is simply omitted
- PUN ST = PUN TT: the translator reproduces the source-text pun and possibly its immediate environment in its original formulation, i.e. without actually 'translating' it
- NON-PUN → PUN: the translator introduces a pun in textual positions where the original text has no wordplay, by way of compensation to make up for source-text puns lost elsewhere, or for any other reason
- ZERO → PUN: totally new textual material is added, which contains wordplay and which has no apparent precedent or justification in the source text except as a compensatory device
- EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES: explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments provided in translators' forewords, the 'anthological' presentation of different, supposedly complementary solutions to one and the same source-text problem, and so forth [for instance, in the Italian version of Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper*, the translator decided to deal with a wordplay based on the homophony between the words "morning" and "mourning" by adding an explanatory footnote].

These strategies are all acceptable and efficient, but of course translators should be able to recognise which one suits the source text they are working on better, as sometimes one solution may be more fitting than another in a given context. According to Leppihalme (1996: 199), "translators also have to take target-culture norms and reader expectations into account before choosing a strategy". In other words, because target texts are to be read by a different readership – product of a different culture – cultural differences should be taken into consideration too. In particular, translators should know

what is acceptable in the target culture and what is not. For example, a translator should find out whether puns with a sexual double entendre are acceptable in the target culture or not. If not, would changing the object of the original pun make the translator a traitor? It should be stressed that the source puns should not be considered 'holy', unchangeable, but they should be considered just as means to trigger a reaction in the reader, which should be one of the goals of a translator. After all, “the function of allusive wordplay is often to involve the reader in some way” (Leppihalme 1996: 202). In fact, some scholars believe that “the main objective where puns are concerned [...] cannot be to translate the individual words, but rather the play on words” (Ballard 1996: 345), that is to say, the ultimate goal of amusing the readers. From this point of view, every pun can be considered translatable, but it is entirely up to the translator's imagination how to manipulate the text to trigger a laugh in their readers. It should be kept in mind, however, that translators have to make difficult choices when it comes to transferring wordplays from source to target language. In particular:

the translator must have sufficient metacultural competence to recognize that the transfer of culture-specific items can be fraught with problems. Obviously, he or she also needs to have excellent target-language skills. For a translator to be sufficiently bicultural to be able to function as a competent reader in the source-language community and as a competent text producer in the target-language community is a demand that is easily made but not so easily met. (Leppihalme 1996: 203)

As said before (see in particular 2.1.2), being as good with words as the original authors is something that every translator should aim for. Knowing how to play with words, in particular, is indispensable when the translation of allusive wordplays is at issue, in that it “requires exceptional ingenuity” (Newmark 1988: 217).

3.2.3.3 Strategies to translate jokes

When the translation of jokes is at issue, the possible strategies to successfully deal with them are more or less the same discussed above that Delabastita offers for the translation of wordplays. For example, the source joke can be substituted with an

equivalent target joke; it can be ignored and substituted with a non-humorous element instead; it can be substituted with a different joke put in another part of the target text; and so on. However, it should be stressed that the translation of jokes is rather complicated, again because of their being culture-bound elements as puns are. Often, as said in the previous paragraph, jokes mirror what a culture thinks of other cultures, different from theirs, or what a culture thinks of some members of its own community. This is the case, for example, of jokes about particular, shared stereotypes – North Italians are deemed to be cold, reserved and unsociable, while South Italians are considered kind, communicative and friendly (for more information about stereotypes in jokes, see paragraph 3.2.1). As regards how to treat jokes from a linguistic point of view, Christopher Taylor (2009: 13) points out that:

an amusing anecdote or a joke (easily remembered in the short term) [should] be treated as extended autonomous units of language. A joke [should] be translated as a unit rather than a succession of words and phrases.

That is to say, jokes should be conceived as one element made of many words, all linked and together. When their translation is at issue, creativity and imagination, together with a deep knowledge of what is considered funny in the target culture, are indispensable tools that every translator should have. Furthermore, a translator should know what is considered socially taboo in the target culture. Should the need arise, translators should be ready to completely change the source joke not to offend the target-text readers. After all, it should once again be stressed that the goal of humorous elements is to entertain and trigger laughter in the reader. The preservation of the means to obtain such goal in the target language is not indispensable, in that the means can be changed for the sake of a greater good.

To sum up, translating humour and humorous elements is to be considered as one of the most important issues in translation. Many things are to be taken into consideration

while dealing with the translation of meaningful names, wordplays and jokes in particular. Firstly, the intentions of the original author are to be understood and are to be preserved as much as possible. Subsequently, the cultural differences between source humour and target humour are to be taken into account, in that every culture has different conceptions of humour, what can be the objects of jokes and what is taboo. Once again, it should be stressed that what is deemed acceptable in one culture can be considered unacceptable in another one (see 3.1.2). Another thing that should be taken into consideration while talking about the translation of humorous elements is how creative and imaginative the translator should be. Having a good sense of humour and knowing how to make people laugh is fundamental when the translation of wordplays or jokes is at issue.

3.3 Translating culture-related matters

It should be stressed that “[interlingual] translation is necessarily an example of intercultural communication” (House 2009: 71). That is to say, “in the process of translation [...], not only the two languages, but also the two cultures come into contact” (House 2009: 12). Hence, when a text is transferred from source language to target language, two different cultures come in contact, and both their similarities and differences are to be taken into consideration during the process of translation.

The role that culture plays in translation should not be underestimated, in that cultural differences inevitably emerge when a text is transferred from source culture to target culture. Thus, “literary translators are often seen as 'communicators between cultures'” (Jones 2009: 156), for those translators who have to deal with texts which are full of cultural elements – as literary texts are – have to mediate between source culture and their own. As Margherita Ulrych points out (1992: 77):

translators always need to be on the alert for [source language] elements of communication that may conceal subtle, almost subliminal, cultural or ideological assumptions.

As explained in 2.1.2, the role of the translator is all but simple, and the translator as a cultural mediator is no exception to this. In fact, when cultural differences are to be dealt with, translators have often to make challenging choices.

In this paragraph, a range of issues will be discussed and explored. First, an attempt will be made to define culture. Subsequently, an exploration will be made of how cultural elements are translated, and various strategies will be discussed in this respect. Finally, some matters related to cultural elements in literary texts will be explored. Overall, as “awareness of cultural differences and similarities is essential to the interpretation of meaning” (Ulrych 1992: 71), the way one should deal with cultural elements in translation is worth exploring.

3.3.1 Defining culture

According to *The New International Webster's Student Dictionary of the English Language* (1997: 173), “culture” is: “the sum total of the attainments and activities of any specific period, race, or people; civilization”. In other words, a given culture is shared by given people, and it is likely to differ from that belonging to other cultures. The word 'culture' “comes from the Latin *cultus*, 'cultivation', and *colere* 'to till'” (Katan 2004: 17), hence its etymology gives the idea of something that grows and sustains a population, a community.

3.3.1.1 Culture as an acquired tool versus culture as a learned tool

As Katan (2009: 70) points out, “depending on the definition adopted, culture may be formally learnt, unconsciously shared, or be a site of conflict.” For those who see culture as the way a group of people live in a given 'habitat', culture is not learned in a

formal way, but is naturally and unconsciously shared. According to them, culture is not “visible as a product, but it is internal, collective and is acquired rather than learned” (Katan 2004: 17). Culture can be considered acquired rather than learned because it is the “natural, unconscious learning of language and behaviour through informal watching and hearing” (Katan 2004: 17). On the other hand, for those who see culture as a set of rules that establish what is acceptable and what is not, culture is something to be learned, just as, for instance, trigonometry is. It should be stressed that while learning something depends on a conscious decision, acquiring something is an unconscious process.

Culture can also be seen as a site of conflict, in that when different cultures come in contact – as can happen in translation – different views of the world can degenerate into a clash of opinions. As said before, culture has a role to play when different views of the world are at issue, because culture is:

a shared mental model or map of the world. The model is a system of congruent and interrelated beliefs, values, strategies and cognitive environments which guide the shared basis of behaviour. (Katan, quoted in Taylor 2009: 103)

People who share the same culture tend to act in the same way. “Culture refers to a group's shared values and conventions which act as mental guidelines for orienting people's thoughts and behaviour” (House 2009: 12). Of course, this is not always the case, but as a general rule this statement should work. Generally speaking, culture is something shared at the social level. In other words, culture is “the way of life of a society”, “all socially conditioned aspects of human life” (Ulrych 1992: 71).

3.3.1.2 Culture as fixed versus culture as changing

It has been discussed in the literature whether culture is something fixed or whether it changes over time. “Cultures are processes of translation, constantly shifting,

multiplying and diversifying” (Sturge 2009: 69). According to Kate Sturges, cultures are not fixed and, by contrast, keep changing. David Katan does not completely share this opinion, as he believes that “one's culture, inculcated for example through family, school and the media, becomes a relatively fixed internal representation of reality” (Katan 2009: 72). According to him, culture is something relatively fixed, which does not change much once a person 'acquires' it. However, culture might indeed change and evolve while different people acquire it:

culture has to be understood not only as a set of levels or frames but as an integrated system, in a constant state of flux, through which textual signals are negotiated and reinterpreted according to context and individual stance. (Katan 2009: 73)

As said before, culture does change and evolve. However, more should be said about how culture changes and why. Cultures change when people come in contact with people from other cultures, different from theirs. In fact, when they come in contact both of them change, for they take something from the other and make it their own.

The development of national cultures is marked by periods when the culture as a whole, or in part, exhibits some typological features of translation, when it takes over cultural phenomena that have originated elsewhere, and adopts them. (Macura 1990: 70)

In other words, translation plays an important role when cultures change, for it is the exchange of written productions that allows cultures to develop and evolve. These points of view – culture as something that keeps shifting and culture as something that once acquired is fixed – can be both considered valid, although they are quite the opposite.

3.3.1.3 Culture as an influence

Some scholars believe that a person does not acquire or learn only one culture, as people can be under the influence of various cultures. In other words:

sociologists and scholars of cultural studies tend to focus on the influence that culture exercises on society and institutions in terms of prevailing ideologies [...]. Individuals [...] cannot be assigned to 'a culture' in this view. Instead they have many cultural provenances, are variously privileged or suppressed from different perspectives, and will negotiate a position within a set of complex cultural

systems that are constantly jockeying for power. (Katan 2009: 72-73)

This is an interesting idea, particularly valid in this period of globalisation and extremely easy and quick mediated communication. Nowadays, communicating with people born and grown up in different cultures is ordinary – the internet and the various social media such as Facebook and Twitter contribute to this. In fact, global communication is so ordinary that being influenced by different cultures is inevitable. For example, also in Italy and Europe everybody knows McDonald's Happy Meals or Starbucks' muffins, even though they are the products of another culture. From this point of view, it would almost seem that the world is moving towards a unification of cultures. In other words, it would seem that the phenomenon of globalisation, which can be defined as “a situation in which available goods and services, or social and cultural influences, gradually become similar in all parts of the world”,³⁰ is occurring. Whether this unification of cultures is an advantage – after all, one culture may mean less conflicts – or a disadvantage, is premature to tell.

3.3.1.4 Language and culture

The relationship between culture and language should be investigated too, as its role is fundamental when the translation of cultural elements is at issue. It should be stressed that:

languages not only have different structures through which reality is articulated, they have different vocabularies, different traditions and different histories. (Bassnett 2011: 3)

As Christopher Taylor (2009: 102) points out, “anyone communicating in their native language will express themselves in [a] language that reflects their cultural upbringing, and therefore their view of the world”. According to this scholar, language and culture are basically two faces of the same coin, for people use the former to transmit the latter

³⁰ Quotation taken from the online version of the Cambridge Dictionaries.
<<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/globalization>> (last accessed on 27 June 2016)

and their view of the world. It can be said that language and culture work together, as they both “filter our experiences of the world to a very great extent” (Sturge 2009: 67). Susan Bassnett seems to share this opinion, in that she says that “languages articulate the culture in which they are used” (Bassnett 2011: 3). After all, it should be taken into consideration that “different languages reflect different thought processes, different cultural values and different world visions” (Bassnett 2011: 69). It should be stressed that language and culture work together to create identity and, thus, cannot be isolated one from the other. However,

identity is never irrevocably fixed but rather relational, the nodal point for a multiplicity of practices and institutions whose sheer heterogeneity creates the possibility for change. (Laclau and Mouffe, quoted in Venuti 1998: 79)

According to Margherita Ulrych:

language is an integral part of culture and not an isolated phenomenon. The relevance of this to translation lies in the extent to which culture conditions people's behaviour and is reflected in the language they speak. (Ulrych 1992: 71)

Language and culture are strictly connected, in that people use language to talk about the world they live in, and the way they perceive the world is conditioned by their culture. “A common language has a powerful unifying function and force, and in turn helps to mould what we recognise, as outsiders, as a distinct culture” (Taylor 2009: 102). In other words, speaking the same language means sharing a similar view of the world, which is one of the reasons why translation is such a difficult process. Simple as it may seem, cultural differences become apparent when people from different cultures come in contact and communicate. In other words, “different cultural habits and views are encapsulated in language and become externalized when communicated to others in the social group” (House 2009: 12). As said before, people who talk the same language are likely to share the same view of the world. Furthermore, they have a special bond, in that they are part of a community.

Language use and convention, therefore, vitally contribute to social bonding and cultural identity. This

conventionalization of meaning through language within a particular culture is of crucial importance for translation: it is precisely these similarities and differences in kind and degree of conventionalization in the source and target cultures which a translator must be aware of when moving a text from one culture to another. (House 2009: 12)

As House points out, language and culture are both to be taken into consideration while transferring a text from one culture to another, especially if the two cultures are very different. The more the source culture and the target one are different, the more translators will have to intervene on the source text to adapt it for the target-culture readers. However, language is ultimately a means of expression, something people use to talk about the concrete world around them. It is culture that shapes the way someone sees the world, even though it is language that allows one to talk about it. Language is indeed fundamental for the creation of bonds, in that being able to communicate is the first step towards the creation of relationships of any sort.

To sum up, culture is something that those belonging to the same community share, and can be considered the border that divides acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. The idea of culture is strictly connected to the idea of language, for it is through language that one can express their view of the world, their thoughts, and their opinions.

3.3.2 Translating culture

As said before (see, for instance, Chapter 2.1.1), the process of translation involves much more than simply taking the meaning expressed by a string of words in the source language and transferring it to the target language. The matter is far more complicated, especially when the text at issue is full of “culturally specific items such as food or architecture” (Sturge 2009: 67). In such cases, the “translation process [...] involves more than spoken or written language, and encompasses a recognition of cultural differences” (Bassnett 2011a: 101). Generally speaking:

the task of the translator [...] is to transfer the terms and concepts in the source text abroad with minimum loss [...], so that 'what you see' in the source text is equivalent to 'what you see' in the target text. (Katan 2009: 70-71)

However, equivalence in translation is hard to achieve when the text at issue reflects the opinions and view of the world of one culture, especially if the source culture is very different from the target culture. In such cases:

translators act as mediators between the [source language] and [target language] cultures, as interpreters, that is, of the [source language] message and emitters of the same message in the [target language]. (Ulrych 1992: 78-79)

When translators act as mediators between cultures, the translation at issue can be called 'cultural translation'. Sturge (2009: 67) puts forward this definition of “cultural translation”:

the term 'cultural translation' [...] refers to those practices of *literary translation* that mediate cultural difference, or try to convey extensive cultural background, or set out to represent another culture via translation. In this sense, 'cultural translation' is counterposed to a 'linguistic' or 'grammatical' translation that is limited in scope to the sentences on the page.

It should be kept in mind that “translations are subject to the constraints of the external conditions of the contexts in which they are produced” (Brodzki, quoted in Bassnett 2011a: 103). That is to say, the same source text may be dealt with in a different way once it is brought to a different culture, once it has to be adapted to a culture which is different from the one it was originally thought for. Furthermore, “a translation project must consider the culture where the foreign text originated” (Venuti 1998: 83). The particular culture in which a text is written is not something that should be overlooked, as it is a fundamental characteristic of the text itself and it is fundamental when it comes to translating it, that is bringing it to another culture. However, other things should be taken into account when cultural translations are at issue. For instance, the extent to which the text at issue is culture-bound should not be underestimated. In fact:

the more culture-bound a text is, the more difficult it is to translate, or rather, the more scope there is for modification. The less culture-bound a text is, on the other hand, the less it needs to be adapted to suit the [target language] readership and the simpler it is to translate without any or with minimum

information loss. (Ulrych 1992: 72)

As Ulrych points out, the presence of cultural elements may have as a consequence the loss of important meaning in the transition from source text to target text – and, of course, from source culture to target culture. Obvious as it may seem, the presence – or absence – of cultural elements in a text is strictly connected to the kind of text the translator is dealing with. For instance, “an expressive literary text is more likely to be steeped in [source language] culture than an informative text” (Ulrych 1992: 75). This is one of the reasons why an instruction booklet may be considered easier to translate than a culture-bound literary text.

3.3.2.1 The first steps

First and foremost, the cultural elements are to be identified in the text. Easy as it may seem, the mere identification of cultural elements can be a problem on its own, especially if the translator is not particularly familiar with the source culture or with some relevant aspects of it. Many believe that “a cultural interpreter should be to some extent bicultural” (Bassnett 2011a: 102). In fact, a translator has to be acquainted with both the source culture and their own culture in order to know what strategy is best suited for the cultural element they have to deal with. As Christopher Taylor (2009: 103) points out:

translators find themselves in the position of having to straddle two cultures, and in order to successfully make the linguistic jump from one to the other, they should have a thorough knowledge of the potential of both systems to express experience, entities or events. The translator should therefore ideally be bilingual and bicultural.

As explained time and again in this dissertation, ideally translators should be extremely skilled writers and should, of course, have a deep knowledge of the source language too. However, it should be stressed that “since language is an integral part of culture, translators need to be not only proficient in two languages but also familiar with two

cultures” (Ulrych 1992: 79).

Once the cultural element is identified, it should be thoroughly analysed and its level of translatability should be guessed. It should be pointed out that not all cultural elements are equally translatable, thus the translator should be able to understand how much the source text can be preserved during the translation process.

Translation [of culture-specific textual elements] is problematic, for instance, when a situational feature relevant to the [source text] is missing in the [target language] culture. Obviously, the distance between the cultural background of the [source language] and [target language] audiences is also an important factor. (Ulrych 1992: 77)

The more the source culture and the target culture are different, the more it will be difficult to preserve a culture-bound text while transferring it from the source language to the target language. In other words, “the more the source and target cultural framework differ, the more important is the cultural work translators have to do” (House 2009: 12). To guarantee the best translation possible, translators “need to be well versed in the customs, habits and traditions of the two cultures they are mediating between” (Katan 2004: 10). Ideally, they should be both bilingual and bicultural.

3.3.2.2 Translation strategies

Generally speaking, when the translation of culture-bound texts is at issue, two strategies can be adopted: the source text can either be preserved in its 'foreignness' or it can be modified and, by consequence, domesticated. In other words, the translator can either use an 'overt' translation or a 'covert' translation (see Chapter 2.2.1). As House (2009: 71-72) points out:

the nature of intercultural communication differs in overt and covert translation. One major difference is the degree to which the recipients of the translation are necessarily aware of the fact that the translation originates in another culture. In a covert translation, a 'cultural filter' is applied in order to adapt the source text to the communicative norms of the target culture. The recipients of the translation may consequently fail to recognize that what they are reading is in fact a translation, so familiar has the text been made for them. This is the case in a literary text when proper names, names of places and institutions, or references to historical and other culture-specific events are substituted by 'equivalent' items in the target culture. In such cases, the intercultural perception has been absorbed by the translator but denied to the recipients of the translation. In overt translation, intercultural transfer is

explicitly present and so likely to be perceived by recipients. They are presented with aspects of the foreign culture dressed in their own language, and are thus invited to enter into an intercultural dialogue.

An overt translation is not necessarily *better* than a covert translation – nor would this statement be true the other way around. It is entirely up to the translator whether to stress or hide the cultural differences between the source language and the target language. According to House (2009: 73), “[translators] are given new responsibilities for revealing, not concealing, sociocultural and political differences and inequalities.” Other scholars, however, do not share her opinion. According to Venuti (1998: 82), “translation [cannot] rid itself of its fundamental domestication, its basic task of rewriting the foreign text in domestic culture terms”. In other words, once there is a change of language there is bound to be a change of culture. Of course, some countermeasures can be adopted to avoid a complete domestication of the original text. For instance, “a translation project can deviate from domestic norms to signal the foreignness of the foreign text and create a readership that is more open to linguistic and cultural differences” (Venuti 1998: 87). Keeping a few source language terms in the target text is another possible strategy to preserve the presence of a different culture and to make target readers aware of it.

Once the translator has decided whether to adopt a covert or an overt translation, there are various strategies they can adopt. When it comes to covert translations, the most important thing is to either remove all culture-bound elements or, where possible, to find equivalents in the target culture. If, for instance, the original author mentions food typical of their culture, the translator can substitute the foreign food with something that a target culture reader is likely to recognise and relate to. For example, if an Italian translator finds themselves in need to translate the English word 'gravy', which is a particular sauce generally used in meat dishes, they might want to translate it with the Italian word '*salsa*', which means 'sauce'. Although '*salsa*' can hardly be considered an

equivalent of the word 'gravy' – while it can be easily considered a hyponym of the English word – it works as a translation because it is something that, unlike 'gravy' every Italian reader can recognise. The same thing applies to any other aspect – clothes, names, brands, architecture, festivities, and so on.

When it comes to strategies for overt translations, the first that should be taken into account is the use of footnotes or endnotes: “the translator may have to add a brief explanatory note or, if relevant, point to a comparable custom in the target culture” (House 2009: 13). Although it is undeniably true that explanations may distract the reader, sometimes they are fundamental to really understand what is going on in the text. Even though the pleasure of reading might be interrupted by footnotes or long explanations, the importance that an awareness of cultural differences has cannot be underestimated or sacrificed.

It must be pointed out that it is sometimes not possible to find the perfect strategy to deal with a culture-bound element. This is the situation, for instance, in which the target language “lack[s] the concept itself”. When this happens, the target “language can either borrow the language label, do without the concept, or invent its own label” (Katan 2004: 81). In other words:

where [...] no solution can be found, the translator may have to resort to: 1. paraphrase, 2. annotated explanations or even 3. deletion, if the term's omission does not detract from the essential meaning. (Taylor 2009: 105)

To sum up, translation cannot be considered a mere linguistic act, for different languages definitely mean different cultures, and cultural differences are complicated to deal with.

It would be absurd to think that a translator can create a carbon copy of the [source text] in such a way that the two texts can perfectly mirror each other. What does occur in the process of translation, [in fact], is a kind of linguistic and cultural give and take which converts the content of the [source text] into a new form in the [target text]. (Chiaro 2010: 10)

When the translation of culture-bound texts is at issue, translators have to choose between covert and overt translation. Obviously, “many translators now see themselves as interculturally active and socially and politically committed communicators” (House 2009: 73), thus underlying that cultural differences do exist is something that should be seriously taken into consideration. Lastly, it should be stressed that:

what is judged as good translation practice is also guided by culturally-specific translation *norms*, rules and conventions, including, among other things: which texts are accepted for translation; the type of translation and compensation strategies to employ; and the criteria by which a translation is judged. (Katan 2009: 72)

3.3.3 Connected matters: culture-related concepts and cohesion

The first question that one should ask when talking about cultural translation is: “can a translator maintain a critical distance from domestic norms without dooming a translation to be dismissed as unreadable?” (Venuti 1998: 84). In other words, to what extent should a translator give relevance to the source culture and at the same time produce a text that complies with the target-culture literary tradition? It should be kept in mind that translators translate for a given readership, and thus they should question whether their readership is up to an inter-cultural dialogue or not. In this respect, it can be added that people tend to judge other cultures by comparing them to their own. That is, “it is extremely difficult [...] to perceive another culture, except through our own ethnocentric map of the world” (Katan 2004: 164), and thus a balance should be found between domestication and foreignization.

Another thing that should be taken into consideration is whether culture-related concepts are translatable or not. Someone may say that we all live on the same planet, and that therefore everything is translatable, in that everyone has the same knowledge of the world. As Taylor (2009: 103-104) remarks:

the culture-bound element in language must be seen in relation to the vast areas of language use that are of a more universal nature. If the whole of language was culture-bound, then reciprocal

understanding and translation would indeed be almost impossible, but common sense tells us that much of the language we use has universal application.

In other words, many concepts are universal and can therefore be translated, but others are far too culture-bound to be considered universal, and when it comes to talking about culture-bound elements challenges arise (see, for instance, Chapter 2.4.1). Depicting foreign cultures may indeed be tricky and one runs the risk of giving a stereotypical representation of the Other, of those belonging to a culture which is different from their own. Moreover,

in creating stereotypes, translation may attach esteem or stigma to specific ethnic, racial, and national groupings, signifying respect for cultural differences or hatred based on ethnocentrism, racism, or patriotism. (Venuti 1998: 67)

Stereotypes are to be carefully dealt with, because in this age of political correctness words are easily misunderstood, and people often tend to feel offended even when there is no intention of offending them. It should be stressed that “translation wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures” (Venuti 1998: 67), thus one should always be careful when translating a foreign text.

Translators can be conceived of as 'bridges' between languages and cultures, and therefore they should ideally be both bilingual and bicultural. As David Katan (2009: 72) points out, “translation is a bicultural practice [and requires] mediating (or compensating) skills to deal with the inevitable refraction between one reality and another”. In a way or another, it happens that translation causes awareness of cultural differences in the target-text readership, and therefore cultural elements are to be dealt with in the best way possible. If, however, translators do not want their readers to be aware of cultural differences, they can always adopt the strategy of 'acculturation'.

Susan Bassnett (2011: 89) explains what acculturation is in her 2011 *Reflections on Translation*:

acculturation: you make the foreign seem familiar by appropriating it into your own culture, and you find parallels that will appear meaningful to the listener who does not share your acquaintance with the

source language and culture. But in so doing, do you run the risk of diminishing cultural difference somehow? And in reinventing a character in another language when you attempt to translate a conversation, is that strictly fair to the original speaker?

The decision whether to stress or hide cultural differences should be taken by the translator themselves after a critical evaluation of the source text. As House (2015: 54) points out:

in *overt* translation the original is tied in a specific manner to the source language community and its culture, and is often specifically directed at source culture addressees but at the same time points beyond the source language community because it is, independent of its source language origin, also of potential general human interest. Original texts which call for an *overt* translation have an established status in the source language community and potentially in other communities.

For instance, texts that call for an overt translation are sermons, political speeches, and literary texts that “are marked on the [source] language user dimensions” and belong “to the community's cultural products” (House 2015: 54-55). On the other hand, *covert* translations “[enjoy] the status of [...] original source [texts] in the target culture” (House 2015: 56). In other words, “a covert translation is [...] a translation whose source text is not specifically addressed to a particular source culture audience, i.e. it is not particularly tied to the source language and culture” (House 2015: 56). For instance, texts which call for a covert translation are scientific texts, tourist information booklets, economic texts, journalistic texts, and so on (House 2015: 56). Once translators have decided what type of translation the source text they are dealing with calls for, they can decide whether to acculturate it or not. If they decide to acculturate it, they might want to, for instance, change specific brands of source-culture-bound food with something more general and more recognisable for the target-culture readership.

3.3.3.1 *The issue of cohesion*

Another issue which needs to be considered and discussed – particularly when proper names, their recurrence in the text, and their translation are at issue – is cohesion. As explained in Chapter 3.2.2.1, proper names of fictional characters are to be divided in

two categories: those “of a pure onomastic nature” (Taylor 2009: 31), which are generally speaking not translated, and meaningful made-up names, which are generally speaking translated. The latter category has already been investigated in Chapter 3.2.2.1, yet names in the literature which have a pure onomastic nature should be briefly discussed, in that proper names are strictly linked to the matter of cohesion. In this respect, Newmark (1988: 214) points out that:

Normally, [when translating a literary text,] people's first [names] and surnames are transferred, thus preserving their nationality, and assuming that their names have no connotations in the text.

In other words, those names which only make reference to a given character are normally not translated. As regards the term 'reference', it should be pointed out that it “is traditionally used in semantics for the relationship which holds between a word and what it points to in the real world” (Baker 2011: 190). It should be stressed that names can be considered cultural elements, and thus keeping them intact in the transition from source to target language can be seen as part of a process of foreignization (see, for instance, Chapter 2.3.2).

To understand how cohesion and proper names are connected, a definition of cohesion should be given. As Baker (2011: 190) points out, cohesion is:

the network of lexical, grammatical and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text. These relations or ties organize and, to some extent, create a text, for instance by requiring the reader to interpret words and expressions by reference to other words and expressions in the surrounding sentences and paragraph. Cohesion is a surface relation; it connects together the actual words and expressions that we can see or hear.

Cohesion is related to the need to keep track of elements once they are introduced in a text for the first time. To keep track of elements, one makes reference to them, whereas 'reference' in these cases “is limited [...] to the relationship of identity which holds between two linguistic expressions” (Baker 2011: 191). For example, the pronoun 'she' in a sentence like 'Mary is ill. She is not feeling good' can be considered an example of what Baker calls 'making reference to another linguistic element'. A language user – both during the process of writing and during the process of translating – can create

cohesion in many ways within a text, including the following ones:

1 through **conjunction**:

Bond arrived and sat down.

2 through **reference** (generally **pro-forms** that refer back or ahead within a text):

a) Pronouns that refer back to a previously mentioned entity are said to constitute '**anaphoric** reference':

John came in, he did x, he did y, he did z...

b) Where the reference is to an entity further ahead in the discourse, it is termed '**cataphoric** reference':

This is not good news for any of you. You are all fired!

3 through substitution or **ellipsis**:

It might rain but I hope it doesn't. (verb phrase substituted by auxiliary)

I voted for the Greens. Why (...)?

4 through the repetition of words:

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

5 through the use of **synonyms** or near-synonyms:

Having lost one opportunity, he won't get a second chance.

6 through the use of semantically-related items:

a) That's the top and the bottom of it. (relationship of **antonymy**)

b) The tiger is an endangered animal. (relationship of **hyponymy**, that is a superordinate term *animal* is associated with a subordinate, hyponymous term *tiger*)

c) Clear away the tables and chairs. (items in same **semantic field**)

d) She sewed a new button on her jacket. (part/whole relationship). (Taylor 2009: 19-20)

It goes without saying that different languages may favour different ways of creating cohesion. For instance, “English can refer to participants by leaving them out” (Martin and Rose 2003: 167) in a sort of ellipsis, although generally speaking English favours the use of pronouns to create cohesion (Martin and Rose 2003: 148). On the other hand, it should be stressed that “in many languages (e.g. Spanish, Japanese [or Italian]), ellipsis of this kind is far more common than pronouns” (Martin and Rose 2003: 167). This should not be underestimated, in that if the source language and the target language favour different ways of creating cohesion, problems in translation are bound to arise.

As cohesion is used to keep track of elements once they are introduced, it is indeed connected to the matter of proper names, whether made-up or not. In fact, after a given character is introduced in a literary text for the first time, it is not unusual to find them again later in the text, and readers should be able to easily track them throughout the text, otherwise the pleasure of reading is bound to be spoiled. As Martin and Rose (2003: 145) point out:

In order to make sense of discourse, one thing we need is to be able to keep track of who or what is

being talked about at any point. When we first start talking about somebody or something, we may name them, but then we often just identify them as *she*, *he* or *it*. By this means our listener/reader can keep track of exactly which person or thing we are talking about, i.e. which participant in the discourse.

This is clearly true for any kind of text. However, because the text at issue in this dissertation is a literary one, the focus will be on cohesion in literary texts.

In a literary text, it is not unusual to find new participants, which should be introduced in a proper way. By 'new participants' it is meant not only people, that is to say characters, but every kind of entity which is recurrent through the text, such as “objects, institutions and abstractions, as well as figures that function like things” (Martin and Rose 2003: 152). Once these participants are properly introduced, many choices can be made to easily track them. As Martin and Rose (2003: 147) point out, one of the best ways to introduce new people, so new characters, in a narration is to use the indefinite articles 'a' and 'an' – for instance, by saying 'a man' or 'a woman'. Once the identity of the new character is explicitly revealed, for instance by giving their proper name, it is possible to track them through the use of pronouns (Baker 2011: 191) – not only personal pronouns, but also possessive pronouns (Martin and Rose 2003: 149). In these situations, pronouns are used to refer back to the participant that was mentioned before in the text. It goes without saying that when objects or institutions are to be tracked, the most likely personal pronoun to be used is the third-person singular neuter pronoun 'it' (Martin and Rose 2003: 152).

As said above, “each language [...] has what we might call general preferences for certain patterns of reference as well as specific preferences that are sensitive to text type” (Baker 2011: 193), and this is to be taken into consideration during the process of translation. If, for instance, an English text is to be translated into Italian, the translator should take into consideration the fact that Italian can leave the subject implicit, while in English the subject must always be explicit. In other words, the strictly linguistic matters, such as the use of pronouns or articles, connected to cohesion should not be

underestimated.

Another thing that should be taken into account is the kind of encyclopaedic knowledge required to recognise links that are at times established between linguistic elements. Baker (2011: 192) calls this “not strictly textual” reference relation with the name of “co-reference”, and gives the example of Mrs Thatcher, who was called *The Iron Lady* because of her leading style. If a reader does not know who the expression *The Iron Lady* is referred to, they may not understand the reference that is being made in the text. Taylor (2009: 30) suggests that, when real people are mentioned in a text, one should “leave clues to [the identities of lesser-known individuals], role, position or importance”.

It goes without saying that criteria to adopt to determine the extent to which individuals are well-known depend on the readership for whom a given text is thought. For instance, Italian teenagers may be familiar with the French disc jockey David Guetta, but not be familiar with the President of the French Republic François Hollande. Once the identity of a participant is made clear in a text, how to allow readers to track them depends on the writer, or, in the case of translated texts, on the translator. Because, as said above, different languages have different ways of creating cohesion, it is worth noting that:

whether a translation conforms to the source-text patterns of cohesion or tries to approximate to target-language patterns will depend in the final analysis on the purpose of the translation and the amount of freedom the translator feels entitled to in rechunking information and/or altering signals of relations between chunks. Whatever the translator decides to do, every option will have its advantages and disadvantages. Following source-language norms may involve minimal change in overall meaning (other factors excluded). On the other hand, noticeable deviation from typical target-language patterns of chunking information and signalling relations is likely to result in the sort of text that can easily be identified as a translation because it sounds 'foreign'. (Baker 2011: 210)

As Baker points out, deciding between the source-language way of creating cohesion and the target-language way of creating it can be seen as favouring a foreignizing translation in the former case and a domesticating one in the latter. If a translator

decides that they want their translation to sound as domesticated as possible, they may want to intervene on how cohesion is created in the source text. For instance, Italian, contrarily to English, is a language which does not favour repetition, not even when it would be needed to create cohesion. These stylistic differences between the two languages may have consequences when a text is, for instance, to be translated from English into Italian, in that at times ellipsis, or using pronouns instead of proper names, are to be resorted to in order to avoid repetitions in the target text. This necessity can be seen if one compares, for instance, an extract taken from the original version of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* with its Italian translation:

All Harry's spellbooks, his wand, robes, cauldron and top-of-the-range Nimbus Two Thousand broomstick had been locked in a cupboard under the stairs by Uncle Vernon the instant Harry had come home. What did the Dursleys care if Harry lost his place in the house Quidditch team because he hadn't practised all summer? What was it to the Dursleys if Harry went back to school without any of his homework done? (Rowling 2010: 9)

Tutti i libri di magia, la bacchetta magica, gli abiti, il calderone e il suo superbo manico di scopa Nimbus Duemila erano stati chiusi a doppia mandata da zio Vernon in un armadio nel sottoscala nel momento stesso in cui Harry era arrivato a casa. Che gliene importava ai Dursley se lui perdeva il ruolo nella squadra di Quidditch perché non si era allenato per tutta l'estate? Era forse affar loro se tornava a scuola senza aver fatto i compiti delle vacanze? (Rowling 2001: 7)

As can be noticed, in this extract from the original version Harry's name can be found four times, while in the translated version Harry's name can be found just one time. On one of the three occasions in the target extract where Harry's name is not mentioned, a pronoun is used instead, the Italian third-person singular pronoun '*lui*', while in the other two cases his name is plainly omitted. These omissions are possible because Italian, contrarily to English, is a 'null subject' or 'prod-drop' language, that is it permits the omission of the subject in a sentence, which plays an important role when it comes to avoiding repetitions in the Italian language. The same process can be noticed about the Dursleys' name: whereas in the original version their family name is mentioned twice, in the translated version it is mentioned just once. In fact, in the last sentence of the Italian version, the proper name Dursleys is substituted with the Italian pronoun '*loro*', probably

to avoid repeating their name again.

To sum up, there are many challenges posed by the process of translation related to the translation of cultural elements in a text. In particular, translators need to properly evaluate the text before deciding whether to adopt an overt translation – where foreign elements are to be preserved and highlighted – or a covert one – where, on the other hand, foreign elements are to be either acculturated or erased. They also need to adapt the various translation strategies to the text they are dealing with. As far as cohesion is concerned, translators need to be aware of the linguistic differences between the source and the target language. They should be familiar with the differences in style when literary texts are to be translated, together with the possible differences in the encyclopaedic knowledge that source readers and target readers are likely to have.

3.4 Translating fixed expressions and idioms

As said before (see, for instance, Chapter 2.1.1), to translate roughly means to take the meaning expressed by a string of words in the source language and find an equivalent able to convey the same meaning in the target language. However, meaning is not the only thing that is to be taken into consideration while translating a text. In fact, the way meaning is expressed is to be analysed and – whenever possible – preserved too. After all, “translation involves far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages” (Bassnett 2002: 32). Furthermore, “an informal text [...] requires the use of ellipsis, contracted forms, idioms, and all other features that are proper to the register” (Ulrych 1992: 95). That is to say, knowing what kind of text is to be translated is useful to foresee what kind of challenging aspects are waiting for the translator.

This paragraph will deal with fixed expressions and idioms. First, they will both be

defined and, subsequently, the way they should be dealt with during the process of translation will be discussed. Fixed expressions and idioms are considered challenging to translate because they are culture-bound elements, and their meaning goes deeply to the respective cultural roots. Idiomatic and fixed expressions exist in every language, but not always an equivalent can be found for every expression, and some loss in meaning can take place during the process of translation. Therefore, translators should always be careful when they deal with fixed expressions and idioms.

3.4.1 Defining idioms and fixed expressions

An idiom can be defined as a string of words that take on a given meaning when they are used together, a meaning that is not a mere sum of the respective meanings of the single words that make up the stretch. In other words, their meaning is not compositional, and consequently idioms and fixed expressions cannot “be interpreted compositionally” (Moon 1998: 197). This means that their meaning cannot be grasped by analysing the discrete meaning of each one of the words that form them, but it is to be considered as a composite one. Fixed expressions, on the other hand, are units of two or more words that acquire a given meaning once they are used together. In this sense, it could be said that idioms are fixed expressions too, but in fact the term “fixed expression” covers a wider range of meaning.

3.4.1.1 Defining idioms

According to *The New International Webster's Student Dictionary of the English Language* (1997: 352), an “idiom” is “an expression not readily [analysable] from its grammatical construction or from the meaning of its component parts”. That is to say, an expression whose meaning needs to be learnt by heart to be properly used. Delabastita

(1996: 130) expands on the notion of idioms as follows:

languages contain many idioms, i.e. word combinations that have a sum meaning that is historically based on, but can no longer be reduced to the combinations of their components meanings. It is the distance between the 'normal', non-compositional meaning of idioms and their 'literal' or compositional reading that offers opportunity for wordplay.

In other words, an idiom is a “combination of words that is more or less fixed conventionally in the minds of a group of language users” (Leppihalme 1996: 200). Clearly, not all idiomatic expressions are known by all members of a community, in that there are idioms that are more frequently used than others. It should be stressed that idioms are often “peculiar to a language” (Moon 1998: 3). This means that the same meaning can be conveyed through the use of extremely different images in different languages. For instance, the English idiomatic sentence 'to beat about the bush' and its Italian equivalent '*menare il can per l'aia*' both mean 'to approach something indirectly', but the words and the concepts used to convey this meaning are very different. Hence, translators need to be extremely knowledgeable and cautious when they deal with them.

Another thing that should be mentioned is that “many [idioms and many] proverbial expressions are used in truncated form more often than in their canonical form” (Taylor 2009: 29). That is to say, some idiomatic expressions can be used in a sort of shortened version of themselves. For instance, a person who says 'this is *the last straw*' makes it absolutely clear that what they are talking about is the last of a series of unfortunate events that has angered them. They do not need to use the full version of the expression and say 'this is *the last straw that breaks the camel's back*', because the idiomatic expression can be recognised once one arrives at the word 'straw'.

[This is valid for many] traditional proverbs and sayings, downgraded from their canonical or earliest forms to lower-level grammatical units: a compound sentence to a single clause, or a clause to a group: a bird in the hand (is worth two in the bush). (Moon 1998: 131)

This is not only applicable to the English language, but to basically any language. For instance, the Italian idiomatic expression '*questa è l'ultima goccia*' ('this is the last

drop'), is the equivalent of the English 'the last straw', and is equally understandable without the need to utter the entire idiomatic expression. This is especially true in cases in which the idiomatic expression at issue is well-known and frequently used by native speakers. In this respect it is interesting to notice that sometimes:

the original fuller form has almost disappeared from the lexicon: (speech is silver but) silence is golden [...]. [In this case, and similar ones,] the reduced forms have become fossilized as the canonical forms. (Moon 1998: 131)

In such cases, the shortened version is more frequently used than their longer version, and thus people forget about the existence of the original version. Therefore, the shortened version ends up being the only one used.

3.4.1.2 Defining fixed expressions

First, it should be stressed once again that fixed expressions – just like idioms – do not have a compositional meaning, in that their meaning cannot be understood by doing a mere sum of their various parts. In fact, their meaning is fossilised, conventional, and is to be learnt by heart. As Taylor points out, fixed expressions have a historical meaning, which implies that they “may have obscure origins – *campa cavallo*, topsy-turvy – but are predictable in their collocational power” (Taylor 2009: 26). In other words, some fixed expressions are expected in discourse. Once an Italian native speaker hears the word '*campa*', they generally associate it with the word '*cavallo*', and thus the latter can be sensed before it is uttered. Moon (1998: 2) offers this definition of fixed expressions:

fixed expressions is a very general but convenient term [...] used to cover several kinds of phrasal lexeme, phraseological unit, or multi-word lexical item: that is, holistic units of two or more words. These include: frozen collocations, grammatically ill-formed collocations, proverbs, routine formulae, sayings, similes.

Examples of fixed expressions are those formulae that we use in everyday life, such as “greetings, apologies, refusals, expressions of sympathy, exhortations, and so on” (Moon 1998: 92). These expressions are culture-bound, and sometimes lack an

equivalent in another language – for instance, finding an equivalent for the Italian fixed expression '*buon appetito*' in the English language may be rather problematic. Thus, it can be problematic when it comes to translating them. As said before, fixed expressions such as sayings and proverbs are conventional, in that they are shared by a linguistic community and are to be learnt just like, for instance, multiplication tables. The fact that their meaning is not compositional implies that they need to be learnt by heart, for not being able to derive their meaning can cause people, especially non-native speakers, to use them incorrectly.

It is interesting to notice that:

many [fixed expressions] involve exaggerations and implausibilities, rather than actual impossibilities: be worked to death, cost an arm and a leg, in the blink of an eye, wouldn't touch someone/something with a bargepole/ten-foot pole. (Moon 1998: 198)

Hence, it can be said that fixed expressions have a metaphorical meaning. Many fixed expressions “describe theoretically possible actions or attributes, but which are untrue in the context” (Moon 1998: 198). Saying 'I will love you *until the end of time*', romantic as it may be, is not something that can be actually done, but it surely has a strong impact on the listener. It should be stressed that fixed expressions can be used ironically – for instance, by calling someone “God's gift to -” (Moon 1998: 200) and not meaning it – or to cause laughter in the listener. In fact, fixed expressions can be used as humorous components to trigger laughter in the other party of an interaction. For instance, “jokes, riddles, and so on may be built around an idiom [or a fixed expression]” (Moon 1998: 288). A clear example of the humoristic potential that fixed expressions can have is the children's joke “how do you start a teddy-bear race? *Ready, teddy, go!*” (Moon 1998: 289). Humour, as said in 3.2.1, can be achieved in many different ways and, among them, laughter can be caused “through unplanned lexical cohesion, or through the mixing of lexically incongruent metaphors” (Moon 1998: 285). When the humoristic use of fixed expressions is to be translated, translators need to be even more careful.

3.4.2 Translation strategies

As said time and again, the skills and wit of the translator play a fundamental role when it comes to dealing with such culture-bound elements as idioms and fixed expressions are. Translation strategies are helpful, but cannot be enough if the translator has no imagination or is – mean as it may seem – simply not good enough. Thus, translators should not be afraid of opting for creative solutions when the translation of fixed expressions and idioms is at issue.

Firstly, to properly translate idiomatic and fixed expressions, a translator needs to identify them in the source text. As is well known, idioms and fixed expressions are sometimes not straightforward, in that they may be hidden in a joke or may be used in a shortened and less common version of the original form. Hence, translators need to read the source text carefully, preferably two or three times, before translating it. Moreover, “if translators can see what is meant and what is being done with language, they are at liberty to experiment in the same way” (Taylor 2009: 28). As said before, and as Susan Bassnett (2002: 30) points out, “idioms, like puns, are culture bound”. This fundamental characteristic of theirs should not be underestimated, because their being culture-bound makes them hard to translate. Idioms and fixed expressions are culture-bound in that, moving from language to language, the words and images used to convey exactly the same meaning change – see for example 3.4.1 where the example was given of the English 'last straw' and the Italian 'last drop'. This lack of immediate correspondence between words and meaning implies that “the [translation] process may involve discarding the basic linguistic elements” (Bassnett 2002: 32). In other words, when translators deal with idioms and fixed expressions they should focus on their general meaning, not on the specific words that convey that particular meaning. Many believe

that:

fixed registers do not pose much of a problem to translation. The language is so conventionalised that translators simply need to find the equivalent conventional forms in the [target language]. The only setback is when no such conventions exist in the [target language]. (Ulrych 1992: 98)

It may be true that finding an equivalent in the target culture is enough to deal with idiomatic and fixed expressions, but this, to use a fixed expression, is 'easier said than done'. Generally speaking, there are two situations in which translators can find themselves when they have to deal with idioms or fixed expressions: either the source idiom or fixed expression at issue has an equivalent in the target culture or not.

3.4.2.1 An equivalent is available

When the source idiom or fixed expression that has to be translated has an equivalent in the target culture, a mere substitution is a possible strategy. In other words:

in the process of interlingual translation one idiom is substituted for another. That substitution is made not on the basis of the linguistic elements in the phrase, nor on the basis of a corresponding or similar image contained in the phrase, but on the function of the idiom. The [source language] phrase is replaced by a [target language] phrase that serves the same purpose in the [target language] culture, and the process here involves the substitution of [source language] sign for [target language] sign. (Bassnett 2002: 31)

This strategy works both for idioms and fixed expressions. As Bassnett points out, idioms and fixed expressions are to be analysed and their meaning is to be understood to decide what strategy works better in that particular case. Of course, just considering meaning is not enough: “in translating idiomatic into idiomatic language, it is particularly difficult to match equivalence of meaning with equivalence of frequency” (Newmark 1988: 28). Frequency is to be taken into consideration too, in that if an idiomatic or fixed expression is not frequently used by native speakers, its meaning can result obscure and the pleasure of reading may be spoiled.

Another strategy that can be used while dealing with an idiomatic or fixed expression is to convey the same meaning in the target language without using an idiomatic or

fixed expression but a paraphrase of the meaning of the source idiom. For instance, a sentence like 'this is the last straw!' may be translated with a more congruent expression such as '*questo è troppo!*', or '*questa cosa che hai fatto supera ogni limite!*', which conveys the wanted meaning in a less idiomatic way. Of course, if an equivalent idiomatic or fixed expression does exist in the target language, translators may want to use it in the target text. For instance, a translator may want to offer the Italian idiomatic expression '*questa è l'ultima goccia!*' as their translation of the English idiomatic expression 'this is the last straw!'. However, it should be kept in mind that it is always up to the translator how to deal with problematic elements.

3.4.2.2 An equivalent is not available in the target language

What a translator should do when no equivalent exists in the target culture should be discussed too. As said before, idioms and fixed expressions do not have a compositional meaning, hence the semantic of the idiom might need to be checked in a dictionary or other sources. Once the meaning of the source expression is clear, there is no need to find an idiomatic or fixed expression in the target language to convey it. In fact, a paraphrase of the source expression can be enough to convey the original meaning. Clearly, the loss of an idiomatic or fixed expression in the target text is not to be underestimated, because idioms and fixed expressions normally play an important role in a text, and might therefore need to be preserved. For this reason, a possible strategy to deal with an idiomatic or fixed expression that does not have an equivalent in the target culture is to, as a form of compensation, insert a different idiomatic or fixed expression in another part of the text. Another possible strategy, if the idiomatic or fixed expression is not fundamental for the comprehension of the text, is to bluntly erase it with no form of compensation whatsoever. As can be noticed, these strategies are basically the same

as those that were discussed when the translation of humour was at issue (see, for instance, Chapter 3.2.3.2).

To sum up, idioms and fixed expressions are culture-bound combinations of words whose meaning is not compositional, and should therefore be learnt by heart by non-native speakers to be used properly. Generally speaking, they have a historical meaning which has been mostly forgotten over time. For instance, one might wonder why it is 'safe and sound' and not 'safe and intact', or why it is 'to kick the bucket' and not 'to kick the pail'. Translators should find out whether they have an equivalent – in meaning *and* in frequency – in the target language. If no equivalent is available, translators might want to paraphrase the idiomatic or fixed expression to maintain the original meaning or might decide not to translate the idiomatic or fixed expression at issue.

CHAPTER 4: **TRANSLATING “STRUCK BY LIGHTNING”**

In this chapter some passages taken from Chris Colfer's *Struck by Lightning* will be translated into Italian and the translation offered will be analysed and commented upon. In particular, the four problematic areas discussed in Chapter 3 will be explored with reference to the American English version of the source text. Firstly, the bad language used by Chris Colfer will be dealt with as well as its possible renditions into Italian. Secondly, Colfer's humour in the novel will be discussed with reference to the problems it poses to the translation. Subsequently, the culture-bound elements that can be found in the chosen passages will be dealt with. Finally, some of the fixed expressions in the novel will be explored.

It should be stressed that, for reasons of space, it has been necessary to select some extracts which contain such aspects as swearwords, jokes, fixed expressions which were deemed to be interesting from the perspective of literary translation theory. These are the ones which will be discussed in this chapter.

4.1 Bad language

As explained in Chapter 3.1, the term 'bad language' – also known as 'taboo language' – can be used to talk about swearwords, cursing, profanity, vulgarity and even insults. These concepts should be handled with extreme caution, for taboo language “is obviously a culture-bound phenomenon” (Azzaro 2005: 9). In fact, bad language changes from culture to culture and the frequency with which it is used varies from person to person. In the novel at issue, taboo language is frequently used, in that the characters, and the protagonist in particular, use it very often. This frequent use of bad language is mostly due the age of the characters. The protagonist and his friends are

indeed teenagers.

This paragraph is divided in three parts. In the first part, the swearwords used in the passages of *Struck by Lightning* I selected will be analysed as well as the way in which I decided to translate them. In the second part, the profanities used in those passages and the possible translations I offer will be discussed. Lastly, the insults will be considered which can be found in those passages and finally how I decided to deal with them.

Before moving forward, it should be stressed that as far as English taboo language is concerned, my main text of reference is Azzaro's (2005) *Four-Letter Films: Taboo Language in Movies*. Although Azzaro's main area of interest is audio-visual language, his findings can be considered appropriate and applicable to literary texts and written language as well. In particular, they are applicable to the text at issue, which is written in a rather informal language. Other texts on the topic are Munier and Tichelli's (2008) *Talk Dirty Italian. Beyond Cazzo: The Curses, Slang, And Street Lingo You Need to Know When You Speak Italiano*, and Euvino's (2012) *Dirty Italian: Everyday Slang from "What's Up?" to "F*%# Off!"*. These texts focus on the everyday spoken use of bad language in Italian, provide an interesting comparison with English, and will be a useful point of reference for the translations suggested in this dissertation. It goes without saying that my personal experience as an Italian native speaker will be at times resorted to in order to justify my translation choices.

4.1.1 Swearwords

As said in Chapter 3.1.2, many strategies can be adopted when the need to translate swearwords arises. Generally speaking, the first thing that should be done to translate swearwords is to carefully evaluate their weight, because a word's weight might be considered even more important than its meaning. Changing the meaning of a

swearword – for instance, using a sexual one instead of a scatological one – can be considered more acceptable than changing its weight. Once the weight of the source swearword at issue has been evaluated, the translator can verify whether an equivalent exists in the target language or not. If an equivalent does exist, the translator is likely to insert it in the target text. If an equivalent does not exist, the translator can, for instance, eliminate the problematic swearword or use a form of compensation in another part of the source text. Ulrych (1992: 290) defines compensation as a principle according to which: “[source text] meaning can be compensated for at some juncture (not necessarily the same) in the [target text] to preserve the overall pragmatic effect and equivalence of the [source text] and [target text]”.

Another thing that should be taken into consideration while translating swearwords is the frequency with which they are used. If, for example, the source swearword at issue is not frequently used in the source language, the translator might want to use a target swearword that is not frequently used in the target language either. By doing so, the puzzling effect that the original author aimed to trigger in their readers will be kept intact in the target text.

4.1.1.1 *An equivalent in the target language is given*

As said before, source swearwords can be dealt with by giving equivalent swearwords in the target language. However, finding valid, equivalent swearwords can be difficult for many reasons. Furthermore, it should be stressed that the most obvious equivalent is sometimes not the one that should be used in a given context. In Table 4.1 below, a selection of uses of the swearword 'shit' is presented for discussion followed by the translations I offer in each case.

I don't give a <i>shiiiiit</i> . (9/30 Entry)	Non me ne frega un <i>caaaazzo</i> .
---	--------------------------------------

You've got to be <i>shitting</i> me. (11/2 Entry)	Mi stai prendendo per il <i>culo</i> .
Get home at a decent hour ... and all that parenting <i>shit</i> . (11/2 again Entry)	Non fare tardi... e tutte quelle <i>stronzate</i> che ti dovrebbe dire un genitore.
April might have loved hearing this <i>bullshit</i> , but I had had enough of it. (11/2 again Entry)	Magari ad April piacevano le sue <i>stronzate</i> , ma io ne avevo avuto abbastanza.

Table 4.1: A selection of uses of the swearword 'shit' with their translation proposed in this study.

In all the examples above, the source swearword 'shit' and some variations of it are translated. The most obvious translation of the English swearword 'shit' into Italian would definitely be '*merda*', in that: “the Italians use the word *merda* pretty much the same way English speakers use the word 'shit'” (Euvino 2012: 89). Munier and Tichelli (2008: 26) seem to agree, because they offer 'shit' as the most appropriate translation for the Italian swearword '*merda*'. If 'shit' and '*merda*' are used in the same way, as it would seem, it can be said that 'shit' and '*merda*' are equivalent both in frequency – both are frequently used – and in meaning – both are vulgar equivalents of the word 'excrement'. However, in the contexts at issue the Italian swearword '*merda*' is never used, in that other translations were considered more effective.

In the first example, the meaning of the source extract is that the speaker does not care about something. An equivalent, vulgar way to express exactly the same meaning does exist in the target language, which is precisely the one I decided to use, even though the Italian swearword '*cazzo*' is the vulgar equivalent of the word 'penis'. However, according to Euvino, '*minchia*', which is a regional variation of the Italian swearword '*cazzo*', can indeed be “used to say 'Fuck!' or 'Shit!'” (Euvino 2012: 103). A change from scatological to sexual swearword was necessary for the translation, in order for it not to sound odd to target readers. In other words, I decided not to use the most obvious equivalent, which would have been '*merda*', in favour of a highly used vulgar expression

that is likely to be recognised by target readers. '*Non me ne frega una merda*' would indeed keep the general meaning and keep the vulgarity of the original, but according to my feeling as an Italian native speakers, Italian readers would not recognise it as a frequently used expression. According to Munier and Tichetti (2008: 65), an alternative translation for the expression 'not to give a shit' would be '*fregarsene*', which means 'not to care', and which is not a vulgar expression. In other words, the meaning would be preserved, but the vulgarity of the source expression would be lost.

In the second example, the general meaning of the source sentence, which is 'to make a fool out of somebody', is preserved, together with its vulgarity, but a different swearword from the most obvious one has been once again used. The swearword that can be found in the equivalent Italian expression is '*culo*', which means 'ass', so once again the scatological swearword is substituted by a sexual one. This substitution was necessary to provide target readers with an expression they can recognise and relate to. An expression, in other words, that can sound familiar and natural to native speakers of Italian. In fact, Euvino considers the Italian expression "*prendere qualcuno per il culo*", which literally means "to take someone for an ass", an equivalent of the English expression "to shit someone" (2012: 29).

In the last two examples, the swearword 'shit' and the compound word 'bullshit' are used with the meaning of 'meaningless, unimportant things'. The Italian equivalent "*stronzate*" (Munier & Tichelli 2008: 80) derives from the word '*stronzo*', which is an equivalent of the word 'turd'. The English swearword 'turd' can "simultaneously mean 'dumbass,' 'schmuck,' 'jerk,' and 'ass-wipe,' depending on the user and how it's used" (Euvino 2012: 134), just as its Italian equivalent '*stronzo*'. In spite of its many possible uses, this Italian word is more frequently used as an insult, with a meaning similar to the English insult 'asshole'. In both these cases, the scatological source swearword is

translated with a scatological target swearword, that is, not only its meaning, but also its typology is preserved in the transition from source language to target language. While in the examples above the general meaning was preserved, but the typology of the swearword changed – that is to say, a scatological source swearword was translated with sexual target swearwords – in these last cases both meaning and typology are preserved in the transition from source language to target language.

In the example in Table 4.2 below, the source swearword at issue is 'fuck', and its equivalent in the target language is the one that is used in the translation offered: the Italian swearword '*cazzo*'. As said before, the Italian swearword '*cazzo*' is a vulgar equivalent of the word 'penis', and can be used as an equivalent of both 'fuck' and 'shit', depending on the context. '*Cazzo*' and 'fuck' are equivalent in frequency, weight and type, in that they are both highly used sexual swearwords. According to Euvino (2012: 138):

Fuck! *Cazzo!* The catch-all swear word for cock, dick, or prick is *cazzo*. This five letter word is used every-fuckin'-where, in the same way that “fuck” is used in English as an adjective, like “fucking bastard,” or as a verb, like “Fuck you!,” and as a noun, like “a fuck.” Euphemisms for *cazzo* include *cavolo* (cabbage), *cacchio*, and Kaiser.

Who the <i>fuck</i> would live there? (9/30 Entry)	Chi <i>cazzo</i> potrebbe mai viverci lì?
--	---

Table 4.2: A use of the swearword 'fuck' with its translation proposed in this study.

In this context – and differently from the cases seen before – the source swearword 'fuck' appears to be used with no other goal but vulgarity itself. In fact, the meaning of the utterance would not change if one wanted to get rid of it. At the same time, its Italian equivalent can be considered optional too, for its only goal is to make the interrogative sentence at issue vulgar.

In the example in Table 4.3 below, the source swearword at issue is a variation of the swearword 'fuck', which is used as an adjective. In the translation I offer, the Italian swearword '*fottuto*' is used, a sexual, vulgar adjective which in my view succeeds in

keeping the original meaning of a 'messed-up' situation. At the same time, it also preserves the vulgarity of the source expression.

I'm not crazy for thinking that this is a totally <i>fucked-up</i> situation, right? (11/2 Entry)	Non sono l'unico a pensare che sia tutto un <i>fottuto</i> casino, vero?
---	--

Table 4.3: A use of the swearword 'fucked' with its translation proposed in this study.

An alternative to the adjective '*fottuto*' could be the expression '*un cazzo di casino*', where the Italian swearword '*cazzo*' would still preserve the sexual and vulgar idea of the source expression.

4.1.1.2 The source swearword is omitted

As said before, another possible strategy to deal with swearwords is to omit them, that is not to include an equivalent target swearword in that part of the target text. Translators may want to do so for many reasons, as will be explained below with the aid of some examples taken from the selected passages of the novel.

The examples in Table 4.4 concern swearwords which I decided not to render in the Italian version of the book for various reasons.

When they built the first movie theater here, people lost their <i>damn</i> minds. (9/30 Entry)	Quando qui venne costruito il primo cinema, le persone persero letteralmente la testa.
She slammed him against rolls of butcher paper. I was starting to feel sorry for Emilio—he was getting the <i>shit</i> beat out of him. (10/18 Entry)	Poi lo spinse contro degli scatoloni di carta riciclata. Cominciai a sentirmi male per Emilio, la tizia lo stava praticamente pestando a sangue.
That <i>shit</i> is funny! (10/18 Entry)	Andiamo, è esilarante!

Table 4.4: A selection of swearwords which were omitted in the translation proposed in this study.

In the first example, the source swearword 'damn' is used to add emphasis, to make it clear that the speaker is very passionate about the subject at issue. At the same time, 'damn' is also used to denigrate the people that he is talking about – in this case, the protagonist is talking about those who live in Clover, his home town. I decided not to add an equivalent swearword in the target text, for the Italian verb phrase '*perdere la testa*' leaves no place for a swearword, generally speaking. However, the verb phrase could be used with the addition of an adverb like '*letteralmente*' – an equivalent of the English adverb 'literally', which I decided to insert to keep the emphasis that can be perceived in the source text. To keep the vulgarity of the source sentence, I could have added a swearword in another part of the target sentence, though. For instance, I could have translated it with '*Cazzo, quando qui venne costruito il primo cinema le persone persero letteralmente la testa!*' but I considered it odd, for it did not sound familiar to me. In my opinion, the adverb '*letteralmente*' was enough to convey the wanted meaning, hence I decided to sacrifice vulgarity in favour of familiarity and simplicity.

In the second example, the swearword 'shit' is part of a vulgar expression that means 'being badly beaten-up'. In the translation I offer, the general meaning is kept intact, but the vulgarity is once again lost, for there is no swearword in it. In fact, I decided to translate the source vulgar expression with a target non-vulgar fixed expression (for more information about fixed expressions, see, for instance, Chapter 3.4.1.2). Munier and Tichelli (2008: 65) offer two non-vulgar expressions as equivalents to the English expression “to beat the shit out of someone”: “*gonfiare di botte qualcuno*” and “*fare a pezzi qualcuno*”, which are rather similar to the translation I propose. Again, to preserve the vulgarity of the original text, I could have added a swearword at the beginning of the sentence: '*Merda/Cazzo, la tizia lo stava praticamente pestando a sangue*'. However, once again, as an Italian native speaker I considered this translation odd in the context

of the book. Furthermore, the role played by the swearword would have changed drastically, for in the source text it is a part of the verb phrase, while in the target text it would have been just vulgarity for the sake of vulgarity. Thus, I decided that omitting the vulgar component worked better in this particular context.

In the third and last example, the swearword 'shit' is inserted in the source text with no real purpose apart from vulgarity itself. Considering its role, it would have been easy to preserve it in the transition from source language to target language, but once again I decided to omit the swearword instead. It would have been possible to translate the source expression with something like '*Cazzo, è esilarante!*', that is, by adding a target swearword at the beginning of the translation, but I decided not to do so. In fact, I preferred to keep the general meaning and get rid of the component of vulgarity that can be found in the original text. This decision was not influenced by anything but my personal taste. In my opinion, a swearword at the beginning of that sentence would have been out of place and even unpleasant to read, so I decided not to insert one there.

4.1.1.3 *Forms of compensation*

As said at the beginning of this chapter, when translators decide to omit a swearword in a given context for whatever reason, they might decide to compensate for the loss of vulgarity by adding, for instance, a swearword in another part of the text which originally contains no vulgarity. In the examples in Table 4.5 below, I decided to add three vulgar elements to compensate for the omission of three instances present in other parts of the source text (see Chapter 4.1.1.2).

I wish I hadn't flushed those pills Mom got for me. (10/18 Entry)	Quasi mi pento di aver scaricato nel <i>cesso</i> le pillole che mi aveva dato mamma.
Whoa, I've had a rough week. (10/18	Cavolo, devo aver avuto una settimana

Entry)	proprio di <i>merda</i> .
How long have you been a fornicating exchange student? (10/18 Entry)	Da quanto sei uno studente straniero <i>scopaiolo</i> ?

Table 4.5: Three forms of compensation in the translation proposed in this study.

The first form of compensation consists in the use of the Italian noun '*cesso*', which is the vulgar equivalent of the word 'WC'. In the original text, the protagonist is complaining about his rushed decision of getting rid of some antidepressants that his mother wanted him to take. In the translation I offer, the original meaning is kept in the transition from source language to target language, but a component of vulgarity is indeed added. There would have been other, non-vulgar ways to express the same meaning in the target language, but by using this expression, a compensation for a previous loss of vulgarity was achieved.

The second form of compensation consists in the use of the Italian swearword '*merda*', which is here used with an adjectival function. Once again, other, non-vulgar alternatives would have been available – the English adjective 'rough' could have been translated with the Italian adjective '*dura*', for instance – but the addition of a vulgar element was deemed necessary as a form of compensation for a loss of vulgarity in another part of the text.

Similarly, in the third and last example a form of compensation was adopted, in that the source, non-vulgar adjective is translated with a vulgar alternative in the target language. As can be seen, the archaic adjective 'fornicating' has been translated with the vulgar adjective '*scopaiolo*', which derives from the verb '*scopare*', an equivalent of the English vulgar verb 'to fuck'. As Euvino (2012: 95) points out: “*scopare* is a verb that literally means 'to sweep,' but in street speak means 'to fuck'”. I chose the adjective '*scopaiolo*' instead of conveying the same meaning with a paraphrase, because it is not a frequently used adjective, hence I considered it a valid equivalent for such an archaic

term as 'fornicating' is. As a research with Google Trends shows, the Italian adjective '*scopaiolo*' has been less and less used from May 2005 to May 2016.³¹

To sum up, swearwords can be dealt with in two ways: they can be translated if the translator is able to find a target swearword equivalent in weight and frequency of use – while the typology can more easily be changed – or they can be omitted. If the translator decides to omit a swearword in a given context, they might want to add a swearword or a vulgar element in another part of the text as a form of compensation.

4.1.2 Profanity

As said in Chapter 3.1.1, religious swearwords can be divided into two types: profanity and blasphemy. Profanity can be considered “(an example of) showing no respect for a god or a religion, especially through language; an offensive or obscene word or phrase”.³² For instance, *Christ!*, *Gee!* or *Hell!* can be considered profanities. Blasphemy, on the other hand, can be considered “a conscious, stronger attack to religious respect” (Azzaro 2005: 2). In other words, if one consciously decides to be blasphemous, it does not happen by mistake. For instance, expressions like *Goddamn!* or *Screw the Pope!* can be considered blasphemous. Religious vulgarity is to be handled even more carefully than, for instance, sexual or scatological swearwords. In fact, some cultures take religion very seriously, and they might not tolerate offences in this regard. It should be stressed that profanities should be treated like swearwords, in that once the translator understands their weight and frequency, they may offer target swearwords that belong to another typology, such as, for instance, a sexual or scatological one, instead of using a religious one.

31 <<https://www.google.it/trends/explore?q=scopaiolo>> (last accessed on 26 June 2016)

32 Definition taken from the online version of the Cambridge Dictionaries.

<<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/profanity>> (last accessed on 27 June 2016)

In Table 4.6 below, two examples can be found of profanities which were to be translated, together with the translations I offer..

How <i>in hell</i> am I going to break the news to her? (11/2 Entry)	Come <i>cazzo</i> farò a dirglielo?
It still surprised <i>the hell</i> out of both of us. (11/2 again Entry)	Non sembrava ancora <i>fottutamente</i> vero a nessuno di noi.

Table 4.6: Two examples of profanities and the translation proposed in this study.

In the translations offered in Table 4.6 above, the strategy explained above is indeed the one I have decided to adopt. In fact, I have changed the typology of swearword not to enter the delicate and complicated matter of religion, which is taken very seriously in Italy. Euvino (2012: 48) defines Italy a “conservatively minded, mostly Catholic country” and stresses that:

it is actually a bonafide [offence] to *bestemmiare* (curse) in public. Aside from its moral implications, in Italy, taking the Lord's name in vain will get you more than a spaghetti lashing and could result in a [misdemeanour] charge. (Euvino 2012: 142).

Munier and Tichelli (2008: 24) stress that bad language is “part of everyday Italian life”, however blasphemies and profanities are to be considered an entirely different matter. In fact:

speaking *bestemmie* used to be an [unforgivable] crime [, and it is still seen as serious offence]; it was once said that if one man killed someone and another cursed God, only one of them would wind up in heaven ... and you guessed it: that would be the murderer! (Munier & Tichelli 2008: 24)

In the first example, the profanity at issue is substituted with the sexual swearword '*cazzo*'. The translation I offer succeeds in keeping the source meaning in the transition from source language to target language, and it also succeeds in keeping the vulgarity of the source expression, but there is a change in the type of vulgar element used. It would have been possible to use a profanity in the translation; for instance, a translation like '*Gesù/Cristo/Madonna, come farò a dirglielo?*' would have indeed be possible, but I decided that inserting a religious swearword was too risky. In fact, there would have

been good chances of making target readers feel insulted, or of bringing about unpleasant feelings. Hence, I decided to opt for a highly used sexual swearword that is likely to be recognised and appreciated, as far as swearwords can be appreciated, by target-text readers.

In the second example, the religious swearword is once again translated with a sexual swearword. The target swearword at issue is the vulgar adverb '*fottutamente*', which derives from the adjective '*fottuto/a*' and can be considered an equivalent of the English adjective 'fucked-up'. I chose to use this vulgar adverb instead of simply adding at the beginning of the sentence a swearword like '*cazzo/merda*' or even a profanity like '*Gesù/Cristo*', because I wanted the target swearword to be in the middle of the sentence. In other words, I wanted my translation to mirror the source expression. In fact, the source profanity is a fundamental part of the verb phrase, and thus it is not to be considered easily removable. Its role in the source text led me to the decision of using a vulgar adverb in my translation, for I wanted the target vulgar element to have a similar role to the one played by the source element it derives from. The attempt to keep the source-text word-order can be considered a sort of compensation for the change in the type of swearword. As said before, it could have been possible to use a profanity in the target language to preserve the type of swearword used in the source text, but I consciously decided not to do so. Hence, I decided that an effort was to be made to keep something else intact in the transition from source language to target language.

4.1.3 *Insults*

As explained in Chapter 3.1.3, insults are always uttered with the intent to anger, diminish or hurt the receiver, and they are to be considered “targeted and reciprocal – they [...] presuppose an emotional reaction both on the part of the speaker and the

receiver” (Azzaro 2005: 3). Generally speaking, insults can be divided into four types: mental, scatological, sexual and physical (Azzaro 2005: 3), and they may or may not involve some form of vulgarity. For instance, calling someone a 'hobbit' may be perceived as a physical insult, but it does not involve vulgarity at all. On the other hand, calling someone a 'bitch' is basically done aiming at sexual offence, and it is thus bound to involve vulgarity.

While translating insults, various things should be taken into consideration. First, like in the case of swearwords the weight of the source insult is to be evaluated, in that weight can be considered even more important than typology when insults are at issue (again, see Chapter 3.1.3). In fact, changing the type of insult – for instance, using a sexual insult instead of a physical one – may be considered more acceptable than changing its weight. Subsequently, vulgarity is to be evaluated. As said before, insults may be vulgar or not vulgar, and translators should consider whether to preserve vulgarity in the transition from source language to target language or not.

4.1.3.1 When vulgarity in insults is preserved

When the insult to be translated is a vulgar one, the translator may decide to deal with it by preserving its vulgarity, that is to say, by giving a vulgar target-language insult of equal weight, and, sometimes, of the same type of the source insult at issue. This is precisely what I tried to do in the examples in Table 4.7 below, where I evaluated the source insults at issue and offered what I considered to be accurate translations.

One more school year with these <i>shitheads</i> and I'll be free. (9/30 Entry)	Un ultimo anno di liceo con queste <i>teste di cazzo</i> e sarò finalmente libero.
This town is full of <i>morons</i> . (9/30 Entry)	Questa città è piena di <i>idioti</i> .
I am one lucky <i>son of a bitch!</i> (10/18)	Sono un fortunato <i>figlio di puttana!</i>

Entry)	
That sneaky <i>bastard!</i> (11/2 Entry)	Infido <i>bastardo!</i>
Dad was pretending to be something other than the selfish <i>asshole</i> he had been my entire life. (11/2 again Entry)	Stava fingendo di essere un padre modello quando non aveva fatto altro che essere uno <i>stronzo</i> egoista per tutta la mia vita.

Table 4.7: A selection of insults which are preserved in the translation proposed in this study.

In the first example, the vulgar insult at issue is 'shitheads', which is here used by the protagonist of the novel to talk about his schoolmates. In the translation I offer, the vulgarity of the source expression is preserved, and according to my sense as an Italian native speaker the weight of the insult is kept too, but the type of insult is not kept intact in the transition from source language to target language. In fact, 'shitheads' may be considered a scatological insult, while “*teste di cazzo*”, which literally means “dickheads” (Munier & Tichelli 2008: 25), can be considered a sexual one. As Munier and Tichelli (2008: 22) point out:

the dick is not the smartest organ, and a person that thinks with his dick is usually reduced to it. *Il cazzo* and a lot of its regional variations, such as *la minchia*, *la pirla*, *il piccio*, are in fact synonymous with idiot. *Una minchiata* is a dumb action and dummies are [referred] to using *che pirla!* or *che piccio!*

In the second, third, and fourth examples, the vulgar insults at issue are translated with target vulgar insults which are equal both in weight and type to the source insults. The vulgar, mental insult 'morons' is translated with '*idioti*', which is a vulgar, mental insult too. It should be stressed that Euvino offers another translation for the word “moron”: “*carciofo*”, which literally means “artichoke” (Euvino 2012: 129). According to her, “Italians use *carciofo* (artichoke) to describe someone who's not exactly the sharpest knife in the drawer” (Euvino 2012: 129). I decided, however, not to use this translation, in that a loss of vulgarity would have taken place. The two vulgar, sexual insults, 'son of a bitch' and 'bastard', are translated with two vulgar, sexual insults in the target language: '*figlio di puttana*' and '*bastardo*'. As far as the first sexual insult is

concerned, an alternative would have been possible: *'figlio di troia'*, which has the same meaning, in that *'puttana'* and *'troia'* can both be used to talk about promiscuous women. I, however, as an Italian native speaker, decided that *'figlio di puttana'* is the one that is likely to be recognised as familiar by the majority of target readers. Furthermore, Euvino offers the same translation, in that she translates “a son of a bitch” with the Italian expression “*un figlio di puttana*” (Euvino 2012: 115). As far as the second sexual insult is concerned, it should be stressed that:

originally *bastardo* meant “illegitimate”, and in a very Catholic country, where *la famiglia* was the center of society, it was one of the worst things you could call someone. (Munier & Tichelli 2008: 25)

Nowadays, however, *'bastardo'* is mainly used with a meaning similar to that of the English insults 'dick' and 'asshole', so it is generally used to talk about someone that only cares about their own interests. As an Italian native speaker, I think that the original meaning of the insult *'bastardo'* is slowly being forgotten, especially among teenagers and young language users.

As far as the last example is concerned, I found myself not able to properly evaluate the type of the source insult, nor was I able to find anything useful in literature. Azzaro does mention 'asshole', but he just says that it is a compounding of the word 'ass' (Azzaro 2005: 32). Can 'asshole' be considered a mental insult? Yes, in that it is a derivative of the vulgar adjective 'ass', which can be considered a vulgar variation of the adjective 'foolish'. Can it be considered a sexual insult? Yes, again, for anal intercourses do exist, so it definitely has a sexual meaning. Can it be considered a scatological insult? Definitely, because it is involved in the process of defecation. Can it be considered a physical insult? Maybe, if it is used to insult one's appearance by comparing them to a rear end. Because the insult 'asshole' is here used to talk about a person who only cares about their own interests, I decided to use *'stronzo'* as my

translation. I chose the Italian vulgar adjective '*stronzo*' because, according to my experience as an Italian native speaker, it is highly used, and thus I reckoned that target-text readers were likely to recognise it. According to Euvino (2012: 134): “this versatile word can simultaneously mean 'dumbass,' 'schmuck,' 'jerk,' and 'ass-wipe,' depending on the user and how it's used”.

4.1.3.2 *When vulgarity in insults is lost*

Sometimes, the vulgarity of an insult may be lost in the transition from source language to target language, in that the source vulgar insult may be translated with a target non-vulgar insult.

In Table 4.8 below, an example is given of a loss of vulgarity which takes place in the translation offered in this study.

This <i>fucker</i> . (9/30 Entry)	Questo <i>sfigato</i> qui.
-----------------------------------	----------------------------

Table 4.8: An example of loss of vulgarity in the translation proposed in this study.

In the example offered in Table 4.8 above, the vulgar source insult is an adjective derived from the sexual swearword 'fuck'. This adjective generally means “*un fottitore/una fottitrice*” (Euvino 2012: 46), and thus, a person who has a lot of sexual intercourses. In this context, however, 'fucker' means 'loser', in that the protagonist is using it to talk about himself and how unlucky he is to live in Clover. I decided to translate it with the Italian adjective '*sfigato*', an equivalent of the English adjective 'loser' (Euvino 2012: 47), which succeeds in keeping the meaning of the source adjective, but fails in keeping its vulgarity. I offered this translation because the adjective '*sfigato*' may not be vulgar, but, according to my experience as an Italian native speaker, it can be considered deeply offensive, especially when referred to a teenager, because at that age being considered 'cool' is important.

When vulgarity is sacrificed, for a reason or another, a form of compensation may be

offered in the target text. For instance, the translator may decide to add a swearword or another form of vulgarity in that part of the text where there is a loss of vulgarity. For instance, it would have been possible to add a swearword in the translation above: '*questo cazzo di sfigato/questo sfigato qui, cazzo*'. I, however, decided not to do so, and decided to use another form of compensation instead. In fact, another possible form of compensation is to add a swearword, an insult, or another form of vulgarity in another part of the text, where there is no vulgarity or no insult at all.

4.1.3.3 When an insult is added

As said before, the vulgar component of an insult is sometimes lost in the transition from source language to target language. When it happens, the translator may want to add a form of compensation in another part of the text. A possible form of compensation is the addition of an insult that was not present in the source text. Another possible form of compensation is the addition of a vulgar element in a part of the text where no vulgarity is present.

The examples in Table 4.9 below concern insults which I decided to add in the Italian version of the book as a form of compensation for a prior loss of vulgarity.

I'm a very liberal-minded young man in a very obstinate world. (9/30 Entry)	Sono un ragazzo di larghe vedute intrappolato in un mondo pieno di <i>ottusi</i> .
He said as his focus faded off. (10/18 Entry)	Disse prima di assumere un'aria <i>inebetita</i> .
She totally just one-upped me on the deadbeat-dad situation. (11/2 Entry)	Mi aveva appena stracciato nel gioco 'chi ha il padre più di <i>merda</i> '.

Table 4.9: Three insults added in the translation proposed in this study.

In the first example above, the protagonist is talking about the kind of world he lives in, which he defines 'obstinate'. In the translation I offer, however, the focus is not on the

world, but on those who live in it, and thus *they* are the recipients of the insult. The Italian word '*ottusi*' is a non-vulgar adjective that means 'obtuse'. I chose this adjective because I considered it perfect to stress the differences between the bright, 'liberal-minded' protagonist of the novel at issue, and the blind, obtuse people who surround him.

In the second example, the focus is once again moved, and thus an insult is added. In fact, in the source text the focus is on what is happening, which is Emilio's loss of attention. In the translation I offer, however, the focus is not on the action itself, but on Emilio's facial expression as he performs the action at issue. In other words, what is depicted in the source text is a loss of attention, while what is depicted in the translation offered is the 'idiotic' expression that the character is likely to have in that moment. The Italian adjective at issue is '*inebetita*', which derives from the insult '*ebete*'. It is not a vulgar insult per se, but, in my opinion, it works rather well for this character, who is not particularly bright. Other, more vulgar alternatives such as '*aria rincoglionita*', or '*aria da coglione*' would have been possible, but I decided not to use them for a mere matter of personal taste.

In the last example, the informal, non-vulgar adjective 'deadbeat' is translated with the vulgar adjective '*di merda*', which means 'shitty' (Euvino 2012: 89). The choice of adding a vulgar element was made to compensate for a previous loss of vulgarity (see Chapter 4.1.3.2). The original meaning of worthlessness is preserved in the transition from source language to target language, but a component of vulgarity is added. In this particular passage, the element of vulgarity succeeds in keeping the informal register of the source text.

To sum up, taboo language is to be carefully handled, in that it can be tricky and

difficult to translate. The weight, frequency of use and type of the source swearword should be evaluated to offer the best translation possible. It should be stressed that while the type can be rather easily sacrificed and changed, the weight of the expression should be preserved in the transition from source language to target language. This can be considered valid both for swearwords and insults. When religious swearwords, such as profanities and blasphemies, are concerned, translators need to be even more careful, and might want to change the type of swearword to be safe and not to enter the tricky field of religion.

4.2 Humour

As said in Chapter 3.2, “humour is a serious business” (Nash 1985: 1), and should therefore be treated as such. Humour and how to preserve it in the transition from source to target language should not be underestimated, especially because it can take different forms, and can therefore be hard to identify in a source text. In fact, as Nash (1985: 1) points out:

[in humour] we find wit and word-play and banter and bumfun; slogans and captions and catchwords; allusion and parody; ironies; satires; [in humour] are graffiti and limericks; [in humour] is the pert rhyme, and here the twisted pun; [in humour] are scrambled spellings and skewed pronunciations.

It should be stressed that anything can be considered humour that is written/said to trigger a laughter in the reader/listener, and thus, as said before, humour may be hard to identify in a source text. Furthermore, everybody has their own sense of humour, and the very same wordplay or joke may be considered hilarious by one person and dull by another one.

Generally speaking, one should be a humorous person to translate humour, in that one may have to come up with humorous elements – such as meaningful made-up names, wordplays, jokes, and so on – in the target language. In other words, being able to make people laugh may be useful when the need to translate humoristic elements arise.

However, being humoristic is not enough to properly translate humour. In fact, a deep knowledge of source and target cultures is fundamental as well, in that “humour nearly always supposes some piece of factual knowledge shared by humorist and audience” (Nash 1985: 4). That is to say, within wordplays and jokes may at times lie some kind of culture-bound element that, hopefully, readers/listeners will recognise and find amusing. If, however, the audience does not recognise the culture-bound element that lies within the wordplay or the joke, they are likely not to laugh, in that they do not recognise it as humoristic. In other words, they do not 'get it'. For instance, there is an “ancient and child-charming joke” which says that “*Vat 69* is the Pope's telephone number” (Nash 1985: 4). Knowing that the Pope “presides over a city called the Vatican” and that “there exists a whisky called *Vat 69*” (Nash 1985: 4) is fundamental to understand the joke.

This paragraph is divided in three parts. In the first part, the made-up names I found in the passages of *Struck by Lightning* I selected will be analysed as well as the way in which I decided to translate them. In the second part, the wordplays I found in those passages and the possible translations I offer will be discussed. Lastly, the jokes will be considered which can be found in those passages, and finally how I decided to deal with them.

It goes without saying that both my personal experience as an Italian native speaker and my personal sense of humour will be resorted to in order to justify my translation choices. Many texts of reference, such as Nash's (1985) *The Language of Humour: Style and Technique in Comic Discourse* or Newmark's (1988) *A Textbook of Translation*, will be used in the analysis of the translations I offer. However, it should be stressed that translating humour is often a matter of resourcefulness and wit, and no amount of theoretical preparation can be sufficient if the translator lacks in creativity.

4.2.1 Humorous made-up names

As explained in Chapter 3.2.2.1, meaningful made-up names “have an element of wordplay in them” (Manini 1996: 163), and they are generally used to trigger laughter in the reader. Contrary to names with a pure onomastic nature, meaningful made-up names are generally used to reveal something about the character, place, entity, or others they refer to. Whereas names with a mere onomastic nature are rarely translated, especially in overt translations – which tend to highlight cultural differences and make the translator visible (see, for instance, 2.2.1) – made-up names are more likely to be translated, in that target-text readers are likely not to recognise the humoristic element that they are based on.

Generally speaking, humoristic made-up names can be dealt with in many ways. The first possible strategy is to keep the source made-up name in the target text and add an explanation in the text or in a footnote “to inform the reader about what had to be left out” (Manini 1996: 173). Another possible strategy to deal with them is to come up with a new meaningful name, which should still sound foreign to the ears of target-text readers, but be more recognisable and more easily understandable for them (Newmark 1988: 215). For instance, this strategy is used in the Italian version of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, when the character Oliver Wood is first introduced. The Italian version of Wood's name is *Baston*, which quite easily reminds the Italian noun '*bastone*', one of the Italian nouns meaning 'cane'. The obliteration of the last vowel gives a foreign sound to the Italian word, but the original word, together with its meaning, remains recognisable. Hence, the meaning hidden inside the name can still be caught by target-text readers.

Another possible strategy to deal with meaningful made-up names is to translate them with foreign names which have a mere onomastic nature. Clearly, should a translator

choose this strategy, they should be ready to face the consequences of a loss of meaning, or add some kind of compensation in another part of the target text. Finally, another possible strategy to deal with humoristic made-up names is to come up with humoristic names in the target language. In this way, their goal, which is to make readers laugh, would still be accomplished, even though the name would lose its original 'foreignness'. It goes without saying that the decision between translating overtly or covertly deeply influences the choice that has to be done among the various strategies discussed above. In fact, should a translator decide to translate overtly, they may want to keep the foreignness of the made-up names intact, and therefore choose one of the first three strategies explained. Should a translator decide to translate covertly, they may want to use the last strategy.

It should be stressed that since translations can never be entirely “foreignizing” (Paloposki 2011: 40), that is to say entirely overt, elements translated overtly and elements translated covertly can coexist quite harmoniously. Translators should remember that they are always translating for a given readership, and thus should carefully evaluate the extent to which they can keep the foreignness of the source text. In other words, even those texts which call for an overt translation should be readable and enjoyable for target-text readers. Hence, translators should not put a limit to their creativity, especially when humour is concerned.

4.2.1.1 Humorous made-up names which are translated

As said before, translators may at times decide to translate meaningful made-up names. To translate meaningful source names can variously mean: giving a meaningful foreign-looking name, giving a meaningful non-foreign-looking name, or giving a plain foreign-looking name. This is precisely what I have tried to do, as the examples in Table 4.10

below show.

Clovergate. (10/18 Entry)	Cloveropoli.
I just hope there's a <i>Daily Hell</i> I can write for. (10/18 Entry)	Spero solo ci sia un giornale per cui possa scrivere, qualcosa tipo <i>La Gazzetta Infernale</i> .
"My real name is Henry Capperwinkle," he said. (10/18 Entry)	"Il mio vero nome è Henry Pigporck."

Table 4.10: A selection of humorous made-up names and the translation proposed in this study.

In the first example, my attempt can be seen to translate 'Clovergate', which is the name that Carson, the protagonist of the novel, gives to the project of blackmailing his schoolmates. The source made-up name 'Clovergate' is composed of two elements: the name of the city where Carson lives, Clover, and the English suffix '-gate', which is used to talk about scandals.³³ An equivalent suffix does indeed exist in Italian, which is '-opoli', and thus I decided to translate 'Clovergate' with '*Cloveropoli*'. This Italian suffix is the same that was used in the translation into Italian of Walt Disney's 'Duckburg', the fictional universe where Donald Duck lives, which in Italy is known with the name of '*Paperopoli*'. Because Walt Disney products are well-known in Italy, it is likely that target-text readers would recognise this suffix as one used to form names of fictional towns. At the same time, they may recognise this suffix for its other meaning, that is, as said above, to talk about scandals. For instance, they may have heard of '*Calciopoli*', a term used to talk about scandals linked to the world of Italian football.³⁴ In both cases, the target made-up name I offer is likely to be familiar to target-text readers. It would have been possible to keep the original made-up name and add an explanation, but I

³³ Information taken from the online version of the Oxford English Dictionary.

<<http://public.oed.com/aspects-of-english/english-in-use/the-gate-suffix/>> (last accessed on 19 July 2016)

³⁴ Information taken from the online version of the Treccani Encyclopaedia, a reliable Italian Encyclopaedia.

<http://www.treccani.it/lingua_italiana/articoli/scritto_e_parlato/calciopoli.html> (last accessed on 19 July 2016)

decided not to do so.

In the second example, the source made-up name at issue is '*Daily Hell*', which is the name of a fictional newspaper. In the novel, the protagonist is worried that his behaviour will cause his soul eternal damnation, and wonders whether in hell there are newspapers he can work for. In this case, I decided to translate the source made-up name with a meaningful made-up non-foreign-looking name: '*la Gazzetta Infernale*'. '*Gazzetta*' is a hyponym of the word '*giornale*', which is the Italian word for 'newspaper', and '*infernale*' is an Italian adjective which can mean both 'hellish' and 'terrible'. I decided to offer this translation because I liked the double meaning of the Italian adjective '*infernale*', a double meaning which is not present in the source text. It can be said that with this translation, the target text gains something that is not present in the original text. As Bassnett (2011: 118) points out:

of course things are lost in translation, of course a translation is not the same as the original, but that does not mean that someone reading the translation will always be short-changed. A good translation takes the reader into the world of the (translated) book in the same way that a writer took his or her readers into the original book in the first instance. There is loss in translation, but there is also gain, and this elementary fact seems so often to be forgotten.

According to Bassnett, translators should attempt to aim for a gain in translation, together with an inevitable loss, and this is precisely what I have tried to do in this case. It should be pointed out that the assonance which generally characterises English newspapers, such as the 'Daily Mail', would indeed get lost with the translation I offer. However, there is no assonance in the fictional newspaper at issue, so it is safe to assert that in this case there is a gain in translation. If one wanted to preserve the general assonance in English newspapers, a possible translation would be the rhyming '*Giornale Infernale*'.

In the third and last example, the meaningful made-up name is Henry's surname: 'Capperwinkle', which is composed of two words: 'capper' and 'winkle'. According to *The New International Webster's Student Dictionary of the English Language* (1997:

105), “to cap” means “to put a cap or a cover on”, and therefore a 'capper' is a person who puts a cap or a cover on something. As far as 'winkle' is concerned, it is a term generally used by parents when talking to their children about their penis, a sort of synonymous.³⁵ It has other meanings, in that as a noun it is also used to talk about a “small herbivorous shore-dwelling mollusc with a spiral shell”, while as a verb it is used with the meaning of “extract[ing] or obtain[ing] something with difficulty”.³⁶ An English native speaker would immediately understand why this can be considered a hilarious made-up surname, but, on the other hand, an Italian native speaker is not likely to see the double entendre it is meant to trigger. In other words, the original made-up name would not be considered a humoristic element if kept intact in the target text. Clearly, it would be possible to keep it and add an explanation, but I think that once you have to explain a joke, it ceases to be funny. The translation I offer is a complete transformation of the source surname: from 'Capperwinkle' to 'Pigporck'. Henry's main characteristic is an unquenchable thirst for sexual intercourses, and in my opinion his surname should reflect this. Thus, I decided to create a new surname, which is still foreign-looking not to differ from all the other names in the novel, but can be more easily understood by target-text readers. 'Pigporck' is formed by two words: 'pig' and 'porck'. Both words can be easily recognised by target-text readers, the latter even more than the former. In fact, 'porck' is similar to the Italian word for 'pig', which is *porco*. Although the term 'pork' is generally used to talk about food, an Italian reader is likely to recognise 'porck' as linked to the animal. As Euvino (2012: 135) points out, the Italian adjective *porco*, similarly to the English adjective 'pig', can be used to talk about perverts. Because of its meaning and its aspect, which is foreign-looking but, at the

35 Information taken from the online version of the Urban Dictionary.

<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=winkle>> (last accessed on 27 June 2016)

36 Quotations taken from the online version of the Oxford Dictionaries.

<<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/winkle>> (last accessed on 19 July 2016)

same time, recognisable for target-text readers, I reckon that this made-up surname succeeds in triggering in target-text readers the same reaction that the original name is likely to trigger in source-text readers.

4.2.1.2 Humorous made-up names which are added in the target version

At times, meaningful made-up names can be added to a target text. This can be considered one of those cases in which there is gain in translation (Bassnett 2011: 118). As the example in Table 4.11 below shows, a gain of humoristic elements can be noticed hidden in meaningful made-up names.

Go to the corner of Nothing and Nowhere, make a left, and you'll find Clover. (9/30 Entry)	Arriva alla fine di Nientopoli, prosegui in direzione del Nullistan, gira a sinistra e lì troverai Clover.
--	--

Table 4.11: Two humorous made-up names added in the translation proposed in this study.

In the source text, the first letters of the two nouns 'nothing' and 'nowhere' are capitalised, and they are used as names for two imaginary places. In the translation I offer, I decided to use two made-up names: '*Nientopoli*' and '*Nullistan*'. The former is formed by the Italian word '*niente*', which means 'nothing', and the Italian suffix '*-poli*', which, as explained in 4.2.1.1 with the example of '*Paperopoli*', is sometimes used to create names of places.³⁷ The latter is formed by the Italian word '*nulla*', which means 'nothing' too, and the suffix '*-stan*', which can be found at the end of the names of many states, such as Pakistan, Kazakhstan or Afghanistan. It goes without saying that other translation choices were possible. For instance, the source names could be kept in the target text, and target-text readers would probably understand the humour behind them anyway. Moreover, one may argue that my translation goes against the rules of overt

³⁷ Information taken from the online version of the Treccani Encyclopaedia.
 <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/suffissoidi_\(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/suffissoidi_(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano)/>) (last accessed on 19 July 2016)

translation, in that the made-up names I propose 'sound' Italian, not English. However, my decision is based on a reflection: target-text readers are reading the protagonist's thoughts in Italian, so the names I propose do not sound odd in the context they find themselves in. Hence, I reckon that my translation can be considered acceptable, in that the original meaning is preserved, and a humoristic component is added.

4.2.2 Wordplays

As said in Chapter 3.2.2.2, wordplays are of linguistic nature, in that they are “inherent in the structure of language and therefore natural to the human mind” (Delabastita 1996: 127). Because of their linguistic nature, one may wonder whether they are translatable or not. In other words, once a translator tries to move a wordplay from source language to target language, is it possible to keep its meaning intact? The matter is made even more complicated by the fact that, as Mansfield (2012) points out, wordplays are likely to have more than one meaning, and all meanings should be kept intact in the transition from source to target language, in that:

much of the laughter generated [by an allusive wordplay] relies on whether the implied receiver (the character) and the indirect receiver (the [reader]) are able to distinguish between the primary and secondary meanings of words. (Mansfield 2012: 259)

Because of the multiplicity of their meanings, wordplays can be particularly hard to translate.

It should be underlined that wordplays are not only carriers of linguistic meaning, they are also carriers of encyclopaedic knowledge. In fact, wordplays “often consist of the combination of linguistic play with encyclopaedic knowledge” (Chiaro 2010: 5). As far as the linguistic play is concerned, wordplays are based on the evaluation of linguistic structures which have different meanings, but have some sort of formal similarity. As Delabastita (1996: 128) points out:

This relation of complete or partial formal identity can be further specified in terms of homonymy

(identical sounds and spelling), homophony (identical sounds but different spellings), homography (different sounds but identical spelling), and paronymy (there are slight differences in both spelling and sound).

As far as encyclopaedic knowledge is concerned, a given wordplay fails in its goal of triggering a laughter in the readers/listeners if they do not recognise the reference that is being made. Because wordplays make reference to some encyclopaedic knowledge that is supposedly shared between writer and readers – or between speaker and audience – they can be considered culture-bound.

In spite of their linguistic nature and their being culture-bound humoristic elements, there are many translation strategies to deal with wordplays. For instance, translating the source wordplay with a target wordplay, translating it with a non-punning phrase, replacing it with some sort of rhetorical device, or reproducing the source wordplay in the target text (Delabastita 1996: 134). If the translator does not consider any of these strategies suitable for a given wordplay – if, in other words, the wordplay is considered untranslatable – the wordplay at issue may be omitted in the translation, and the translator may add some form of explanation in a footnote or in another part of the target text. When such a loss of meaning takes place, some forms of compensation are possible, such as inserting a wordplay in a part of the source text where originally there was no wordplay.

4.2.2.1 *The wordplay is translated*

As said before, wordplays may at times be preserved in the transition from source language to target language. In the sections I selected from the novel at issue, as Table 4.12 below shows, there is one wordplay which I managed to keep intact.

This is for you, <i>si se puedeophile</i> . (10/18 Entry)	Questo è per te, <i>si se puedeofilo</i> .
---	--

Table 4.12: A wordplay which is preserved in the translation proposed in this study.

In this case, what happens is that:

PUN ST = PUN TT: the translator reproduces the source-text pun and possibly its immediate environment in its original formulation, i.e. without actually 'translating' it. (Delabastita 1996: 134)

The source pun is based on the similarity between the Spanish verb '*puede*' and the first part of the English noun 'paedophile'. The verb '*puede*' is a third person singular, present indicative, of the verb '*poder*', and the Spanish expression in the source text, '*si se puede*', means 'if it is possible'. The context in which the source wordplay is uttered should be explained before proceeding with the translation I offer. The protagonist of the novel is here talking with Henry, a high-school mate of his who has been pretending to be an exchange student who does not speak English and only speaks Spanish. Carson has just seen Henry engage in inappropriate behaviour with the headmaster's secretary, and, right after, Carson heard Henry say that the same morning Henry had sexual intercourse with a high-school mate. In his wordplay, Carson is mixing a Spanish verb with an English noun to accuse Henry of being a paedophile. Although accusing a high-school mate of being a paedophile may seem harsh and out of place, it should be stressed that if Henry is in his last year of high-school, which is not explicitly said in the novel, there are mates who are likely to be three to four years younger than him.

According to California's penal code:

Any person who engages in an act of unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor who is more than three years younger than the perpetrator is guilty of either a misdemeanor or a felony, and shall be punished by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, or by imprisonment in the state prison.³⁸

Although it is not explicitly stated that the made-up city of Clover is in California, because of its similarity with the city of Clovis, where the writer of the novel was born, there are good chances of such a hypothesis to be correct.

The translation I offer is '*si se puedeofilo*'. The target wordplay, as the source wordplay, is based on the similarity between the Spanish verb '*puede*' and the beginning

³⁸ Quotation taken from the online version of California's penal code about age of consent. <<http://www.ageofconsent.com/california.htm>> (last accessed on 19 July 2016)

of the Italian word '*pedofilo*', which means 'paedophile'. It should be stressed that this wordplay can be kept intact in the transition from source to target language thanks to a similarity between the two languages. In fact, both the English word 'paedophile' and the Italian word '*pedofilo*' derive from Greek – where *pais-* means 'child' and *-philos* means 'loving'.³⁹

4.2.2.2 *The wordplay is lost in translation*

As said before, wordplays may at times get lost in the transition from source language to target language. This loss of meaning can take place for many reasons, among which the impossibility for the translator to find a suitable alternative in the target language. In Table 4.13 below, there is an example of wordplay which I did not manage to preserve in the process of translation.

You're so Spangalicious, I love it! (10/18 Entry)	Sei così spagnoleggiante, lo adoro!
---	-------------------------------------

Table 4.13: A non-preserved wordplay in the translation proposed in this study.

The source wordplay, which is uttered by the headmaster's secretary while talking with Henry, is based on the fusion of the English adjective 'Spanish' and the English adjective 'delicious'. In the translation I propose, I have added two Italian suffixes to the Italian adjective '*spagnolo*', which means 'Spanish'. The first suffix is '*-eggiare*', which is used to form verbs out of nouns or adjectives.⁴⁰ For instance, judging by its morphological components, the verb '*spagnoleggiare*', composed of the adjective '*spagnolo*' and the suffix '*-eggiare*', is likely to mean 'to act like a Spanish person'. The second suffix is '*-ante*', which is used to form nouns or adjectives out of verbs.⁴¹ For instance, the

³⁹ Information taken from the online version of the Etymology Dictionary.

<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=pedophilia&allowed_in_frame=0> (last accessed on 26 June 2016)

⁴⁰ Information taken from the online version of the Treccani Encyclopaedia.

<[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/denominali-e-deaggettivali-verbi_\(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/denominali-e-deaggettivali-verbi_(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano)/>) (last accessed on 19 July 2016)

⁴¹ Information taken from the online version of the Treccani Encyclopaedia.

adjective '*spagnoleggiante*', composed of the verb '*spagnoleggiare*' and the suffix at issue, judging by its morphological components, is likely to mean someone 'who acts like a Spanish person' when said in reference to a person, or 'that looks like a Spanish product' when said in reference to, for example, an object. The adjective '*spagnoleggiante*' does exist in the Italian language, but it is rarely used, as a research with Google Trends has shown.⁴² It should be stressed that a loss of meaning takes place in my version, in that the source adjective 'delicious', which is the second half of the source play on words, is not present in the translation I offer. It goes without saying that other translations were possible, but, in my view this was the most appropriate. In fact, wordplays are inserted in a discourse with a precise goal, that is “to involve the reader in some way” (Leppihalme 1996: 202). Keeping this in mind, my choice of translation can be justifiable: if my aim is to amuse target-text readers, using such a rarely-used adjective may accomplish this goal.

4.2.2.3 Culture-bound wordplays

As said at the beginning of this paragraph, wordplays are of linguistic nature, but they are also culture-bound, in that they are based on some kind of encyclopaedic knowledge. In Table 4.14 below, there are three culture-bound wordplays which can be found in the passages I selected from the novel at issue, together with the translations I offer.

I could do witty editorials like “Hell: Hath It Lost Its Fury?”. (10/18 Entry)	Scriverei editoriali taglienti come 'Diamine, è divertente la dannazione!'
It was <i>Fifty Shades of Gringo!</i> (10/18 Entry)	Era praticamente <i>Cinquanta sfumature di gringo!</i>

⁴² <<http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/ante/>> (last accessed on 19 July 2016)

42 <<https://www.google.it/trends/explore#q=spagnoleggiante>> (last accessed on 26 June 2016)

I'm one away from beating my record, man! This morning I literally put the 'dic' in 'valedictorian'! (10/18 Entry)	Me ne manca una per battere il mio record, amico! Giusto stamattina ho testato le capacità orali di una del club di dibattito!
--	--

Table 4.14: Three culture-bound wordplays and the translation proposed in this study.

In the first example, the protagonist mentions the title of an editorial he may write in Hell. In the title there is a reference to a line of *The Mourning Bride*, an English play written by William Congreve (1797: 63), which reads: "Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned". The wordplay here is based on the rewriting of a famous line in the form of the title of an editorial. In the translation I offer the reference to this play is lost, and with reference to the literature on the theory of translation what happens is that:

PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE: the pun is replaced by some wordplay-related rhetorical device (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox, etc.) which aims to recapture the effect of the source-text pun. (Delabastita 1996: 134)

In my translation, all the words that make up the fictitious title begin with the letter 'd', in other words, they alliterate (*'Diamine, è divertente la dannazione!'*). The title I offer means 'damn, damnation is funny', hence its meaning is different from the source wordplay. Although its meaning is different, the solution I offer is still appropriate in the given context. In fact, it works as the title of an editorial written in Hell, which target-text readers may still find amusing.

In the second example, the wordplay is based on the manipulation of the title of a well-known erotic novel: E.L. James' *Fifty Shades of Grey*. When Carson sees Henry and the headmaster's secretary engaging in inappropriate sexual behaviour, he says that what he is seeing is '*Fifty Shades of Gringo*', and thus gives a title to the situation he is witnessing. Considering that 'gringo', which is a Mexican word used to talk about US citizens,⁴³ and 'grey' start with the same letter, the wordplay is accomplished by

⁴³ Information taken from the online version of the Urban Dictionary.
<<http://it.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=gringo>> (last accessed on 27 June 2016)

substituting 'grey' with 'Gringo' in the title of James' novel. The translation I offer achieves the aim of keeping both the reference to James' novel and the linguistic structure of the source wordplay. In fact, the Italian title of James' novel, which is rather well-known in Italy, is '*Cinquanta sfumature di grigio*', where '*grigio*' is the Italian equivalent of the English word 'grey'. Because '*grigio*' and '*gringo*' both begin with letter 'g', the wordplay is once again possible, and can be kept intact in the transition from source to target language. Furthermore, as the novel on which the source wordplay is based is well-known in Italy, the cultural reference can be kept intact too.

In the third example, the source wordplay is based on the homophony between the word 'dick', which is a vulgar word for 'penis', and the middle of the word 'valedictorian'. The term 'valedictorian' is generally used to talk about “a student who has the highest grades in his or her graduating class in high school and who makes a speech at the graduation ceremony”.⁴⁴ This source wordplay is allusive, in that to put the 'dic' in 'valedictorian' is likely to mean having penetrative sex with the best student in school. The translation I offer is a joke rather than a wordplay, in that there is no linguistic component involved. In fact, the translation I offer is '*ho testato le capacità orali di una del club di dibattito*', which literally means 'I tested how skilled a girl from the Debate Team is with her mouth'. My translation can be considered accurate in that a reference to source culture is still made – that is to say, the reference to the Debate Team, which was indeed mentioned in the novel at issue (Colfer 2012: 41) – and the target joke is allusive, just as the source wordplay is, even though the translation I offer alludes to oral sex instead of penetrative sex. If changing the means through which laughter is triggered in the reader is not considered acceptable, an alternative translation strategy would have been keeping the source wordplay in the target text and adding an

⁴⁴ Quotation taken from the online version of the Cambridge Dictionaries.
<<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/valedictorian>> (last accessed on 27 June 2016)

explanation in a footnote.

4.2.3 Jokes

As explained in Chapter 3.2.2.3, jokes are culture-bound humoristic elements, and can be considered rather hard to translate. In fact, jokes, just as wordplays, are generally based on some kind of encyclopaedic knowledge which is supposedly shared between the person cracking the joke and the audience to whom the joke is directed. Jokes, as all humoristic elements, have the aim of amusing the audience and making them laugh. If, however, the audience does not recognise a given joke as humoristic, it fails in its goal. According to Nash, “if a joke has to be explicated before it can be understood, someone is taking a joke a bit too far” (Nash 1985: xiii). In other words, the encyclopaedic knowledge on which a joke is based must be recognisable for the audience, otherwise they are bound not to laugh.

When it comes to translating jokes, the strategies available are, more or less, the same which can be used to translate wordplays. That is to say, translators can find an equivalent joke in the target language, they can give an entirely different joke, or they can eliminate the source joke and add a form of compensation in another part of the text – such as, for instance, a new humoristic element. What should be kept in mind, however, is that jokes are to be treated as any other humoristic element: they can be manipulated freely to make them apt for a new audience, that is to say, target-text readers. It goes without saying that the translation of jokes is strictly connected with the matter of overt and covert translation. In fact, translators should decide whether to keep the cultural reference the joke is based on intact or not. In other words, whether to translate jokes overtly or covertly.

4.2.3.1 *The cultural reference behind the joke is preserved in translation*

As said right above, translators should decide whether to translate a given source text overtly or covertly. Texts which are embedded in their culture of origin and which are rich in culture-bound elements are more likely to call for an overt translation. However, it should be stressed that a target text can never be completely overt, and an apt compromise should always be found, in that target texts are to be first and foremost enjoyable for their readers. As the examples in Table 4.15 below show, it is possible at times to preserve the cultural reference on which a joke is based.

<p>It's just before midnight and I'm back from what has to have been one of the most uncomfortable and awkward dinners in the history of mankind. I'm telling you, the Last Supper has nothing on this. (11/2 again Entry)</p>	<p>È quasi mezzanotte e sono appena tornato a casa dalla cena più spiacevole e imbarazzante nella storia dell'umanità. Seriamente, l'Ultima Cena era niente al confronto.</p>
<p>Are you by chance a trademark of the Walt Disney Company? (11/2 again Entry)</p>	<p>Per caso sei uscita da un film della Disney?</p>

Table 4.15: A selection of preserved culture-bound jokes in the translation proposed in this study.

In the first example, Carson is talking about the dinner he had with his father and his father's fiancée, April. The joke he cracks is biblical, in that he compares his family dinner with the Last Supper, that is to say, the last dinner that Jesus shared with his Apostles. Considering that the Bible is well-known in Italy, in that the Catholic Church and religion are a fundamental part of Italian culture, it is possible to keep the joke and the cultural reference within it in the transition from source language to target language. In other words, as the Bible as well as the encyclopaedic knowledge this joke is based on are known both in the source culture and the target culture, the joke can be translated with no loss of meaning.

In the second example, Carson asks April whether she is a trademark of the Walt Disney Company, for she is so beautiful and fair that she almost looks like a princess – red hair, big eyes and fair complexion are physical traits that can be easily connected to Ariel, the little mermaid, one of the most famous Disney princesses. Because the Walt Disney Company is very well-known in Italy, especially for its films and all the merchandising linked to them, it is possible to keep the cultural reference the joke is based on in Italian. In the translation I offer, the target joke is slightly different from the source joke, in that in my translation Carson asks April whether she is a character of one of the films produced by Walt Disney. In spite of the target joke being different from the source joke, the translation can still be considered acceptable, for it makes reference to a source-culture company, but, at the same time, it is understandable for target-text readers.

4.2.3.2 *The cultural reference behind the joke gets lost in translation*

As said before, at times it is not possible to keep the cultural reference a joke is based on intact, in that target-text readers would not recognise it and therefore the joke would fail in its goal of triggering a laughter in the audience. Hence, it is sometimes necessary to erase the cultural reference and paraphrase the source joke. As an alternative strategy, the obscure cultural reference may be substituted for another cultural reference which is more likely to be recognised by target-text readers. In Table 4.16 below, there is a selection of cases in which the cultural reference the jokes are based on get lost.

<p>Not bad for a kid in a town where the most common intellectual question is, <i>Will he actually eat the green eggs and ham?</i> (9/30 Entry)</p>	<p>Non male per un ragazzino cresciuto in una città dove il quesito intellettuale più frequente è 'mangerà davvero quelle uova verdi col prosciutto?'</p>
---	---

I would tune down the Telemundo. (10/18 Entry)	E io la smetterei con questa farsa.
Everything in the house was so clean and put together, it made Mom's house look like an episode of <i>Hoarders</i> . (11/2 again Entry)	Tutto era talmente pulito e in ordine da far sembrare la casa di mamma una pattumiera.

Table 4.16: A selection of non-preserved culture-bound jokes in the translation offered in this study.

In the first example, Carson is talking about his home town, Clover, and says that the most common intellectual question asked by those who live there is 'will he actually eat the green eggs and ham?'. This is a clear reference to Dr. Seuss' *Green Eggs and Ham*, a famous children's book published in 1960, which is written using a very simple vocabulary for beginning readers. In this book, one of the characters does not know whether he should eat some green eggs and ham. Although Dr Seuss' book has been translated into Italian, with the title of *Prosciutto e uova verdi*, and therefore one may expect target-text readers to recognise the reference, I do not think that the average target-text reader would recognise it. In fact, Dr Seuss' book was translated into Italian in 1960, the same year of its publication, and thus I reckon it is unlikely that Italian teenagers have read it. Clearly, this has to be taken into consideration in the process of translation. The translation I offer is '*mangerà davvero quelle uova verdi col prosciutto?*', which succeeds in keeping the original meaning. As said before, it is likely that the average target-text reader would not recognise the literary reference that is made in the text, and think that 'green eggs' means 'rotten eggs', and therefore an explanation in a footnote could be added to clarify the joke. For instance, one may want to write: "*n.d.t. Prosciutto e uova verdi è un libro per bambini del Dr. Seuss. Carson vuole qui affermare, tramite il riferimento letterario, che le persone che vivono a Clover sono cerebralmente paragonabili a dei bambini*".

In the second example, Carson is talking with Henry, his high-school mate who pretends to be a Spanish-speaker foreign student. Here, Carson tells him to stop pretending and cracks a joke: 'tune down the Telemundo'. Telemundo is an American Spanish-language television network, which is not aired in Italy.⁴⁵ I have therefore omitted its translation, in that I find it unlikely that a target-text reader would get it. Therefore, the translation I propose can be considered a paraphrase of the source joke: '*la smetterei con questa farsa*', which basically means 'I would cut it out'. Although the translation I propose can no longer be considered a joke, the original meaning can still be considered preserved. As said at the very beginning of Chapter 4.2.3, if a translator cannot find a suitable target joke to translate a source joke, the source joke can be eliminated and a form of compensation can be added in another part of the text. Hence, some form of compensation should be added in another part of the text to make up for this loss of meaning.

In the third example, Carson is making a comparison between April's house and his mother's, and he says that compared to April's house, his mother's looks like an episode of *Hoarders*. *Hoarders* is an American series which, as the title reveals, is about people who suffer from compulsive hoarding. Compulsive hoarding can be defined as “the persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their actual value”.⁴⁶ To my knowledge this series has not been dubbed into Italian. It goes without saying that it would be possible to keep the source joke together with the source reference to that series, but then an explanation would have to be added, and, in my opinion, the pleasure of reading would be spoiled. Hence, I decided to eliminate the cultural reference the source joke is based on, and I offered a target joke which should

45 Information taken from the site EuroSat.

<<http://www.eurosat-online.it/canali-alla-ricerca-di-telemundo-e-univision/>> (last accessed on 29 June 2016)

46 Quotation taken from the site of ADAA: Anxiety and Depression Association of America.

<<http://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/hoarding-basics>> (last accessed on 29 June 2016)

keep the original meaning: '*far sembrare la casa di mamma una pattumiera*', which literally means 'it made Mom's house look like a garbage can'.

As said above, when a joke is based on a cultural element that is not likely to be known among target-text readers, that element may at times be substituted with another source-culture element which can be more easily recognised by target-text readers. In other words, translators should evaluate the cultural reference embedded in a given joke and decide whether target readers may recognise it or not. In Table 4.17 below, two cases are given in which a change was deemed necessary in the cultural reference a joke is based on.

<p>Whenever my pen pals from the online Northwestern chat rooms and forums ask me, “Where is Clover?” I’m usually forced to say, “It’s where <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> ended up.” (9/30 Entry)</p> <p>Is there a gene in women that makes them all secretly want to be June Cleaver? Clearly, there was one in April. (11/2 again Entry)</p>	<p>Vuoi sapere cosa rispondo ogni volta che gli amici di penna con cui mi scrivo nelle chat e i forum della Northwestern mi chiedono com'è Clover? Rispondo che è in grado di far sembrare rilassante un racconto di Lovecraft.</p> <p>Le donne hanno forse un gene segreto che le spinge a diventare come Marge Simpson? April sicuramente ce l'ha.</p>
---	--

Table 4.17: Two forms of compensation in the translation proposed in this study.

In the first example, Carson makes a reference to John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. This novel is known in Italy with the title of *Furore*, but, because it was translated into Italian in 1940, I think it is unlikely that an average target-text reader would know it. For this reason, I decided to slightly change the joke – shifting the focus from the question 'Where is Clover?' to 'What is Clover like?' – and change the cultural reference the target joke is based on. That is to say, instead of making a reference to

Steinbeck's novel, I decided to make a reference to the twentieth century American writer Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Lovecraft is known in Italy for his horror tales, which are to my knowledge read by both teenagers and adults. With this reference to Lovecraft, the target joke is still based on a reference to the source culture, but, at the same time, it is something that target-text readers are likely to be familiar with and find amusing.

In the second and last example, Carson cracks a joke about April, his father's fiancée, and compares her to June Cleaver, one of the characters of the television sitcom *Leave It to Beaver*. Because this sitcom is rather old, I once again decided to change the cultural reference the joke is based on. Hence, I substituted June Cleaver with Marge Simpson, one of the most important characters of the American animated sitcom *The Simpsons*. This substitution is possible because the two female characters have many things in common – both are devoted wives, and attentive mothers – but whereas Marge Simpson can be without any doubt recognised by target-text readers, the same thing cannot be said about June Cleaver. Thus, my translation keeps the same meaning of the source joke, and, at the same time, the same humoristic tone, in that a target joke is here present. Furthermore, the target joke is based on a reference to the source culture, just as the source joke is.

To sum up, the translation of humour is not to be underestimated, for many factors are to be kept into consideration while dealing with humoristic elements. As this selection of examples wanted to show, to translate humoristic elements such as made-up names, wordplays, or jokes, a translator should sometimes be creative and possibly not be afraid to alter the source text that has to be translated. In fact, it should always be kept in mind that the first goal of humour is to entertain and amuse a given audience, the specific

features of which should always be kept in mind when a translator weighs up the various strategies they can apply to the translation of humour. The one that is more likely to trigger a laughter in the target-text readers is likely to be the most appropriate one.

4.3 References to American culture

As said in Chapter 3.3, when a source text is to be moved from the source language to target language, “not only the two languages, but also the two cultures come into contact” (House 2009: 12). Because of this contact between cultures, which can differ very much or be very similar, the ideal translator should be not only bilingual, but also “bicultural” (Bassnett 2011a: 102), in that if a translator is not familiar enough with certain aspects of the source culture, a loss in meaning is likely to take place. If, for instance, a translator does not recognise 'green eggs and ham' (see Chapter 4.2.3.2) as a reference to a literary product of the source culture, they may translate it wrongly.

It goes without saying that the matter of 'overt' and 'covert' translation (see Chapter 2.2.1) is fundamental when cultural elements are to be translated. In fact, if a given translator decides to translate a source text overtly, they highlight the cultural elements they find there and keep them as intact as possible in the transition from source to target language. If, on the other hand, a translator decides to translate a source text covertly, they hide the cultural elements they find in the text, and are likely to substitute them with equivalent target-culture elements. As House (2009: 37) points out, “in covert translation, the translator can and should attempt to recreate an equivalent sociocultural event”, and that is to say, translators should attempt to modify the source text so that it can fit in the target culture. It goes without saying that some texts are written with the very intent of depicting the source culture they are a product of, and thus their being part

of a foreign culture should be kept as intact as possible in the translation process. They should, in other words, be translated overtly.

It should be stressed that overtly translated elements and covertly translated elements can coexist quite peacefully in a target text, in that even source texts that call for an overt translation go under a complex process of transformation and adaptation when they are translated into another language. During this process of transformation, some cultural elements are changed so that the target text can be more comprehensible for target-text readers, while others are kept intact to maintain the 'foreignness' of the source text alive. It should be kept in mind that translations are always thought for a given readership, and that the readership should be presented with a target text that they not only can understand, but also appreciate.

This paragraph is divided in three parts. In the first part, the names of places, newspapers, and edible products I found in the passages of *Struck by Lightning* I selected will be analysed as well as the way in which I decided to translate them. In the second part, the references to the American high-school system I found in those passages and the possible translations I offer will be discussed. Lastly, the references to American books and television products which can be found in those passages, such as films and television series, will be considered. Finally, I will explain how I decided to deal with them.

It goes without saying that my personal experiences and intuitions as a member of Italian culture at times inspired my translation choices.

4.3.1 Proper nouns

As said above, this part is about the names of places, newspapers and edible products that can be found in the passages I selected from the novel at issue, together with the

possible translations I offer. When such proper names are to be translated, one should decide whether to keep them intact or alter them in the transition from source language to target language. This decision should be taken after evaluating the kind of possible readership the target text is thought for. In particular, one should wonder whether the possible target-text readers are more likely to appreciate an overt or a covert translation. Firstly, the names that I decided to keep intact will be explored, together with the possible translations I offer. Secondly, the names that I decided to alter, for one reason or another, will be explored, together with the possible translations I propose.

4.3.1.1 Names that are kept intact

In this part, the proper names that I decided to keep intact in the transition from source language to target language will be discussed. The names of places, newspapers and edible products and their translation will be explored in this order.

In Table 4.18 below, some names of places can be found that I decided to keep intact in the transition from source to target language.

My overdue departure from the town of Clover is only <i>days</i> away. (9/30 Entry)	La mia tanto rimandata partenza dalla città di Clover è solamente a giorni di distanza.
A year from now I'll be sitting in my dorm room at Northwestern University. (9/30 Entry)	Tra un anno a partire da oggi mi troverò alla Northwestern University, comodamente seduto nella mia stanza.
I just can't muster up pride for a town whose most cosmopolitan area is the Taco Bell parking lot on a Saturday night. (9/30 Entry)	Non riesco ad essere orgoglioso di vivere in una città in cui il top della vita sia andare a mangiare da Taco Bell il sabato sera.
"I'm from San Diego, not El Salvador,"	"Vengo da San Diego, non da El

Henry said. (10/18 Entry)	Salvador,” aggiunse Henry.
---------------------------	----------------------------

Table 4.18: Names of places kept intact in the translation offered in this study.

In the first example, the name at issue is 'Clover', which is the name of the fictional town where the story is set (see, for instance, Chapter 1.2). Because I wanted my translation to keep the 'foreignness' of the source text as intact as possible, I decided to keep this name intact. In fact, I wanted target-text readers to notice that the story is actually set in a place different from the one they live in. The name 'Clover' has a distinct 'American-ness' to it, and therefore it is perfect to make target-text readers understand that what they are reading is the product of another culture.

In the second example, the name that is to be translated is 'Northwestern University', which I decided to keep intact in the translation I offer. Because the English word 'university' and its Italian equivalent, the noun '*università*', are very similar, I believe that there is no need to translate this name, as target-text readers would be very likely to understand what 'Northwestern University' is even if their knowledge of the English language was limited. Moreover, as explained above, keeping foreign names in the target text contributes in keeping its foreignness alive.

In the third example, the name that is to be translated is 'Taco Bell', which is the name of an American chain of fast-food restaurants. Although to my knowledge there is no 'Taco Bell' restaurant in Italy, and searches on the internet seem to confirm my hypothesis, I decided to keep this name as it is. In my opinion, even though a target-text reader may not know what 'Taco Bell' precisely is, they are likely to recognise 'taco' as a kind of food, and thus the meaning of the source expression can still be considered preserved. To make it even clearer that what is being mentioned is a restaurant, I opted for '*andare a mangiare da Taco Bell*', which literally means 'eat at Taco Bell's'. An alternative translation could be replacing Taco Bell with McDonald's, in that the latter chain of restaurants is well-known in Italy, and thus target-text readers would definitely

recognise it. However, overt translations have as their goal to share with target-text readers information about the source culture, and hence I decided to keep the original name intact.

In the fourth and last example, the names 'San Diego' and 'El Salvador' – respectively a city located in California and a country located in Central America – are to be translated. Because the names of these places are generally not translated into Italian – by contrast, names such as 'London' or 'Paris' are respectively translated into '*Londra*' and '*Parigi*' – I decided to keep them as they are.

In Table 4.19 below, the names of newspapers can be found that are present in the passages I selected from the novel, together with the translations I offer.

One day I hope to become the youngest freelance journalist to be published in the <i>New York Times</i> , the <i>Los Angeles Times</i> , the <i>Chicago Tribune</i> , and the <i>Boston Globe</i> , eventually making my way to editor of the <i>New Yorker</i> . (9/30 Entry)	Un giorno sogno di diventare il più giovane giornalista freelance ad essere pubblicato dal <i>New York Times</i> , dal <i>Los Angeles Times</i> , dal <i>Chicago Tribune</i> e dal <i>Boston Globe</i> , facendomi poi strada fino a diventare il direttore del <i>New Yorker</i> .
I've single-handedly edited the <i>Clover High Chronicle</i> since sophomore year. (9/30 Entry)	Ho gestito da solo il giornale scolastico (il <i>Clover High Chronicle</i>) fin dal mio secondo anno.

Table 4.19: Names of newspapers kept intact in the translation offered in this study.

Whereas in the first example all the names are kept intact and no explanation is added whatsoever, in the second example an explanation is given of the name at issue. In fact, all the names in the first example are well-known American newspapers, whose presence plays an important role in keeping the foreignness of the source text alive. In the second example, however, just keeping the original name is not enough in my opinion. I deem it necessary to add an explanation about what the fictional name *Clover High*

Chronicle is referring to – in this case, the newspaper of the protagonist's high school. In fact, I was not sure that target-text readers would understand what *Clover High Chronicle* is without the aid of a brief explanation, which, as can be seen in Table 4.19, I decided to put in the text itself. As explained in Chapter 3.3.3, when a new participant is introduced in a text which target-text readers may not recognise, an explanation should be given about their identity. Once their identity has been spelled out, translators do not need and should actually not add an explanation each and every time that the same participant is mentioned in the text. As explained in Chapter 3.3.3, for a text to be cohesive readers should be able to track an element throughout the text, but repetition is not the only strategy available for this to happen. For instance, once the name '*Clover High Chronicle*' is clarified the first time it is mentioned in the text, it can then be easily substituted with a shortened version of it, such as '*il Chronicle*', or a paraphrase of what it refers to, such as '*il giornale scolastico*'.

In Table 4.20 below, the names of edible products are offered that are kept intact in the transition from source to target language.

Gallons of Red Bull. (9/30 Entry)	Ingollerò litri di Red Bull.
I'll be living off Thai food and bottles of the finest red wine. (9/30 Entry)	Vivrò di cibo per asporto thailandese e berrò solo il miglior vino rosso.

Table 4.20: Names of edible products kept intact in the translation offered in this study.

Because all these products are well-known in Italy, it is possible to keep them intact in the target text. In particular, in the first example the Austrian energy drink 'Red Bull' is mentioned. This drink is very well-known in Italy, and so is its Italian slogan '*Red Bull ti mette le ali*'. Because of its fame, I deem it unnecessary to substitute it with a local product or to translate it with the type of product instead of the name of the brand – for instance, it would be possible to say '*litri di bibite energetiche*', which in English would be 'gallons of energy drinks'. Contrariwise, in the second example no specific brand is

given. In fact, two edible products are mentioned, 'Thai food' and 'red wine', but no brand is given. Because both Thai food and red wine are sold and consumed in Italy too, the products mentioned in the source text can be kept intact. It should be stressed that whereas in the first example what is to be translated is a proper name, in the second example what is to be translated is two common names. For this reason, the two common names arrive in the target text with their Italian equivalents, and thus changed from a linguistic point of view, whereas the proper name is kept intact, because in Italy 'Red Bull' is known with its original name.

4.3.1.2 Names that are altered

As explained at the beginning of this section, names are at times altered in the transition from source language to target language. It should be pointed out that there may be countless reasons why translators decide to alter source names, some of which will be investigated below. In fact, what will now be discussed are those names that were altered in the process of translation. The name of one place that I altered will be explored, and secondly some names of edible products that I decided to alter while translating them will be discussed.

In Table 4.21 below, the name of one place can be found which I decided to alter during the process of translating the source text.

He goes to Lincoln High. (10/18 Entry)	Lui adesso è al liceo Lincoln di Brooklyn.
--	--

Table 4.21: A name of place altered in the translation offered in this study.

The name at issue is 'Lincoln High', which is a high school located in Brooklyn, one of New York's boroughs. In the source text it is not explicitly said where Lincoln High is, most likely because source-text readers are supposed to know where it is. On the other hand, leaving its location implicit in the target text might make target-text readers think that Lincoln High is located in Clover, the fictional town where the novel at issue is set.

There are reasons to believe that fictional Clover only has one high school, the one that Carson attends, as I find it unlikely that a town “home to barely ten thousand citizens” (Colfer 2012: 5) would need two high schools. Hence, making it clear in the target text where Lincoln High is can be considered necessary for it to be comprehensible. Furthermore, the original name is shortened to 'High', which makes source-text readers understand that it is a high school the character is talking about. In my version it is substituted by the Italian noun '*liceo*', which is, together with other nouns such as '*istituto tecnico*' or '*istituto professionale*', one of the Italian common names for 'high school'. In other words, the proper name in the source text is partially substituted by the target common name. It should be stressed that the hyperonym of the Italian words listed above is '*scuola superiore*', however I decided to offer the hyponym '*liceo*' as my translation because of my personal preference for the assonance with the source high-school's name 'Lincoln'. Furthermore, the type of school at issue, either a '*liceo*' or an '*istituto tecnico*', is not relevant for the plot, in that 'Lincoln High' is not mentioned ever again in the book at issue.

In Table 4.22 below, a selection of names of edible products can be found which I altered during the process of translating the source text.

I'll be living off Top Ramen. (9/30 Entry)	Vivrò di cibi precotti.
Usually it's just Mom asking me if I can pick her up some Midol and a box of Good & Plenty on the way home from Grandma's. (11/2 Entry)	In genere è solo mamma, che mi chiede di prenderle antidolorifici e caramelle mentre torno dalla casa di riposo.

Table 4.22: Names of edible products altered in the translation offered in this study.

To my knowledge, and searches on the internet seem to support my theory, the brands mentioned in the examples above are not familiar to the target culture, and hence I deemed it necessary to alter the source names. In fact, instead of the specific brands, in

my translation I offer the general types of products that are mentioned in the source text. Specifically, a brand of ready-made food (Top Ramen), which I translated with '*cibi precotti*', a brand of painkillers (Midol), which I translated with '*antidolorifici*', and a brand of sweets (Good & Plenty), which I translated with '*caramelle*'. It goes without saying that it would have been possible to keep the original names and add an explanation in a footnote, but I decided not to do so.

4.3.2 References to the American high-school system

As said at the beginning of this paragraph, this part is about the references to the American high-school system which can be found in the parts I selected from the novel at issue. Taking into consideration that the protagonist of the story is a high-school student, it comes as no surprise that there are a lot of references to the high-school system in the novel. As said time and again in this dissertation, the choice between overt translation and covert translation plays an important role in every translation choice. When it comes to translating references to the source-culture high-school system, the references are to be kept intact if one is translating overtly, and they are to be altered if one is translating covertly. Of course, translations can never be entirely “foreignizing” (Paloposki 2011: 40), but rather translations “inevitably perform a work of domestication” (Venuti 1998: 5). Therefore, a good compromise between overt and covert translation should always be found. Firstly, the references that I decided to keep intact will be explored, together with the possible translations I offer. Secondly, the references that I decided to alter, for one reason or another, will be discussed, together with the possible translations I propose.

4.3.2.1 References that are kept intact

As said above, this part deals with those references to the American high-school system which are kept intact in the transition from source to target language.

In Table 4.23 below, two references to the American high-school system can be found which I managed to keep intact during the process of translation.

I've managed to keep the Writers' Club alive after school despite its apparent death wish. (9/30 Entry)	Sono persino riuscito a mantenere in vita il Club degli Scrittori malgrado le sue apparenti tendenze suicide.
"He's part of the Newspaper Club," Dad said. (11/2 again Entry)	"Fa parte del Club di Giornalismo," disse mio padre.

Table 4.23: References which are kept intact in the translation offered in this study.

In both the examples given in Table 4.23, scholastic clubs are mentioned: the Writers' Club in the former example and the Newspaper Club in the latter one. Because, basing on my personal experience as an Italian person, school clubs do exist in Italian high schools, it is possible to keep these references in the transition from source to target language. In fact, target-text readers are likely to recognise them, or, at least, if they have no personal experience on the matter, understand what the characters are talking about. It goes without saying that even though the cultural references may be kept, the language through which these references are made is to be changed. Hence, the Writers' Club becomes '*il Club degli Scrittori*', and the Newspaper Club becomes '*il Club di Giornalismo*'. Although referents change from the English to the Italian expressions, the references to American culture remain intact.

4.3.2.2 References that are altered

As said at the beginning of this part, some references to the American high-school system were to be changed in the transition from source to target language. In fact, the references in Table 4.24 below would not be understood by target-text readers, for the

Italian scholastic system is very different from the American one. In these cases, the translations offered can be considered covert, in that these parts where the references are made are domesticated, and source-culture elements are substituted for target-culture elements.

<p>Granted, I still have a year to go in high school, and <i>senior</i> year at that. (9/30 Entry)</p>	<p>Purtroppo sono ancora alle superiori, ma almeno è il mio ultimo anno.</p>
<p>I've kept my grade point average at an impressive 4.2 since freshman year. (9/30 Entry)</p>	<p>Ho avuto l'impressionante media del dieci in quasi tutte le materie fin dal mio primo anno di superiori.</p>
<p>I've single-handedly edited the <i>Clover High Chronicle</i> since sophomore year. (9/30 Entry)</p>	<p>ho gestito da solo il giornale scolastico (<i>Clover High Chronicle</i>) fin dal mio secondo anno.</p>
<p>"I'm taking the PSAT," Malerie texted back. (10/18 Entry)</p>	<p>Mi arrivò subito la sua risposta: 'ma sto facendo il test di ammissione all'università'.</p>
<p>Malerie is in Spanish Four; she knows a fake Spaniard when she sees one. (10/18 Entry)</p>	<p>Malerie studia spagnolo a scuola da anni e riconosce un finto spagnolo quando ne vede uno.</p>
<p>"I have a four point two," I said, annoyed with him now. He didn't know me well enough to know what my grades were. "I would have a four point five, but I tend to argue with the teachers about their lesson plans, so ..." (11/2 again Entry)</p>	<p>"Ho praticamente la media del dieci," dissi io, cominciando a sentirmi irritato. Non sapeva nemmeno che media avessi. "Potrei fare anche di meglio, ma tendo a litigare coi professori sul programma, quindi..."</p>

Table 4.24: References which are altered in the translation offered in this study.

In the first three examples, the names of three American school years can be found that are to be translated into Italian. In the United States, both high-school and university years are four and have specific names: freshmen year, sophomore year, junior year and senior year. In Italy, on the other hand, high-school years are five, and do not have specific names, as they are simply called first year, second year, and so on. Because of this, I decided to eliminate the specific references that are made in the source text, and substitute them for their equivalent generic terms: '*ultimo anno*', which literally means 'last year', '*primo anno*', which literally means 'first year', and '*secondo anno*', which literally means 'second year'.

In the fourth example, PSAT is mentioned, which is a preliminary test that high-school students take in order to try to obtain scholarships for college.⁴⁷ To my knowledge, PSAT has no equivalent in the Italian high-school system, in that scholarships for university are assigned once one is enrolled at university, not while one is still attending high school. However, some Italian universities allow high-school students to take the admission test while they are in their last year of high school. For this reason, I decided to translate the source expression with the Italian expression '*ma sto facendo il test di ammissione all'università*', which literally means 'but I'm taking my admission test to university'. To my knowledge admission tests in Italy are either taken at the end of the last high-school year or after the last high-school year has ended, while in the source text Malerie is taking her PSAT in October, so at the beginning of her last high-school year. A footnote explaining this cultural difference to target-text readers might be helpful. In fact, target-text readers are likely not to be familiar with this aspect of the US high-school system. Although it is undeniably true that a loss in meaning takes place in the translation I propose, it can still be considered a valid one, in that both

⁴⁷ Information taken from the site Kaplan, which organises English language courses.
<<https://www.kaptest.com/psat/kaplan-psat-prep/all-about-the-PSAT>> (last accessed on 21 July 2016)

PSAT and admission tests are usually not underestimated by students, and can thus be considered of similar importance. It goes without saying that keeping the source word and adding an explanation in a footnote would indeed be possible, but I decided not to do so.

In the fifth example, the cultural reference to be translated is 'Spanish Four'. Judging from the context, it is safe to assume that 'Spanish Four' is the name of the course of Spanish language that American students can take in their fourth and last year of high school. As Italian high schools do not give specific names to the courses that students take, I decided to paraphrase the meaning of the source expression 'Malerie is in Spanish Four'. In fact, I offer as my translation '*Malerie studia spagnolo a scuola da anni*', which literally means 'Malerie has been studying Spanish for years'.

In the sixth and last example, the delicate matter of the American grading system is to be dealt with. Generally speaking, in American high schools students are evaluated with letter grades, where A is the best they can strive for, while F is the lowest grade they can take. However, universities are later going to evaluate their high-school career on a scale from 1.0 to 4.0, which is called GPA – Grade Point Average.⁴⁸ It should be pointed out, however, that in the source text Carson is talking about a Weighted GPA, as it is called in the USA. A Weighted GPA is “a GPA that takes the difficult[y] of [high-school] classes into account along with [a student's] grades” and they typically range “from 0 to 5.0”, but it should be stressed that in many high schools they range from 0 to 4.5.⁴⁹ What are to be translated in this case are two Weighted GPAs: 'four point two' and 'four point five'. As the Italian grading system is very different from the American one, a radical change during the process of translation was considered necessary. In fact, in Italy high-

48 Information taken from the site Fulbright Commission.

<<http://www.fulbright.org.uk/study-in-the-usa/undergraduate-study/applying/transcript#gpa>> (last accessed on 21 July 2016)

49 Information and quotations taken from the site Prepscholar.

<<http://blog.prepscholar.com/whats-a-weighted-gpa-how-to-calculate-it>> (last accessed on 21 July 2016)

schools grades typically range from 1 to 10. As a four point two is very close to the best GPA a student can strive for, I decided to offer as my translation '*ho praticamente la media del dieci*', which literally means 'I have almost an average of ten'. As far as the four point five is concerned, taking into consideration the fact that in Italy there is no grade higher than ten, I decided to paraphrase the original meaning with the Italian expression '*potrei fare anche di meglio*', which literally means 'I could do even better.' It goes without saying that other translation strategies would be possible, such as, for instance, keeping the source grades and adding an explanation in a footnote. Alternatively, one may keep the source reference and add no kind of explanation, by offering as their translation, for instance, '*ho una media del 4.2. Potrei arrivare persino a un 4.5*.' This foreignizing strategy can be considered possible, in that the context in which the original reference is given would be enough for target-text readers to understand that the protagonist's grades are almost as high as they could be.

4.3.3 References to American books and television products

As said at the beginning of this paragraph, this part is about the references to American books and television products, such as films and series, that can be found in those passages I selected from the novel at issue. When translators have to deal with references to source-culture books and television products, they should consider whether those references could be recognised by target-text readers. In other words, they should investigate whether those source-culture products are known in the target culture (see, for instance, Chapter 4.2.3, where it is discussed the role that some kind of encyclopaedic knowledge behind a joke may play). If a given reference is likely to be recognised by target-text readers, translators may want to keep it in the target text. If, on the other hand, a given reference is likely not be recognised by target-text readers,

translators may want to substitute it with a reference that target-text readers are more likely to recognise. Clearly, other translation strategies are possible.

Firstly, the references that are likely to be recognised by target-text readers will be explored, together with the possible translations I offer. Secondly, the references that are unlikely to be recognised by target-text readers will be discussed, together with the possible translations I propose.

4.3.3.1 *If they are known in the target culture*

As explained above, this part deals with those references to American books and television products that are likely to be recognised by target-text readers, and that can therefore be kept in the transition from source to target language. Firstly, references to source-culture films will be dealt with, together with their translation. Secondly, references to source-culture books will be discussed, as well as the possible translations I propose. Lastly, references to source-culture television series will be explored, together with the possible translations I offer.

In Table 4.25 below, a reference can be found to a well-known source-culture film, together with the translation I propose.

The line to see <i>You've Got Mail</i> circled the town. (9/30 Entry)	La coda per vedere <i>C'è posta per te</i> attraversò tutta la città.
---	---

Table 4.25: A reference to a well-known American film in the translation offered in this study.

The film at issue is Nora Ephron's *You've Got Mail*, which is known in Italy with the title of *C'è posta per te*. As this film is known in Italy with this title, which is a literal translation of the source title, I decided to put the Italian title in the translation I offer. Although this translation strategy may be perceived as a domesticating one, the reference that is being made in the target text is still a reference to a source-culture product. Hence, the source reference is kept in the transition from source to target

language, even though it is partially altered. The partial alteration at issue can be considered necessary to help target-text readers recognise the reference that is being made more easily. In fact, it cannot be assumed that target-text readers would recognise the original title of the film at issue.

In Table 4.26 below, a reference can be found to a well-known source-culture book, together with the translation I propose.

I feel like I'm in <i>Eat, Pray, Love!</i> (10/18 Entry)	Mi sembra di essere in <i>Mangia, prega, ama!</i>
--	---

Table 4.26: A references to a well-known American book in the translation offered in this study.

The book at issue is Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*, which is known in Italy with the literally translated title of *Mangia, prega, ama*. The strategy adopted for this reference to a source-culture product is the same explained above, in that the translation offered is once again the Italian title. This strategy has been chosen for even though target-text readers are likely to recognise the source product for its Italian title, it cannot be assumed that they would recognise it with its original title.

In Table 4.27 below, a reference can be found to a source-culture television series, together with the translation I offer.

It was just like <i>Law & Order</i> , except not predictable. (10/18 Entry)	Sembrava di essere in <i>Law & Order</i> , ma senza la componente di prevedibilità.
---	---

Table 4.27: A reference to a well-known American series in the translation offered in this study.

The television series at issue is *Law & Order*, whose original title was kept intact when it arrived in Italy. As this source-culture television series is well-known in Italy, it is possible to keep the source reference intact in the transition from source to target language.

4.3.3.2 *If they are not known in the target culture*

As explained at the beginning of this part, what are to be dealt with now are those references to source-culture products that are unlikely to be recognised by target-text readers. As said time and again in this dissertation, target-text readers are the ones for whom translators translate, and thus the possible readership that is going to read the target text should be kept in mind throughout all the process of translation.

When a reference to a source-culture product is found in a source text that is unlikely to be recognised by target-text readers, many strategies can be adopted. A possible strategy is to keep the source reference and add an explanation in a footnote, or in the text itself, or – if the same strategy has been adopted before – at the very end of the target text. Another possible strategy is to keep the source-culture reference and add no kind of explanation whatsoever, but leave it to the context in which the reference is given to make its meaning clear. It goes without saying that if a translator chooses this strategy, s/he must be ready for a loss of meaning to take place, as s/he cannot be sure that target-text readers would understand what is going on in the text without the aid of an explanation. Therefore, this strategy may not be the most ideal if the reference at issue is fundamental for the development of the novel's plot. Another possible strategy is to substitute the source-culture product being referred to with an equivalent target-culture product. If, for instance, a mystery television series that is deemed not to be recognised by target-text readers is mentioned in the source text, a translator may want to substitute it with a mystery target-culture television series, such as *Il Tenente Colombo*, or the most recent *Romanzo Criminale*. It goes without saying that in this case a process of domestication takes place, whereas in the first two strategies explained a process of foreignization takes place.

In Table 4.28 below, a reference can be found to a source-culture television series which, to my knowledge, is not known in Italy, as it has never been dubbed into Italian,

together with the translation I propose.

Mom, you know that episode of <i>Dr. Phil</i> you saved? (11/2 again Entry)	Mamma, ti ricordi quella puntata di <i>Dr. Phil</i> che avevi registrato?
---	---

Table 4.28: A reference to a less known American television series in the translation offered in this study.

The television series at issue is *Dr. Phil*, which revolves around “Dr. Phil McGraw[, who] invites guests to confront their problems”.⁵⁰ In the novel, Carson is thinking about how to tell his mother that his father is now living with another woman, and about to build a new family with her. The only way he can think of is making a reference to an unspecified episode of *Dr. Phil*. Judging from the context, it is safe to assume that the unspecified episode Carson is talking about is about divorce, or about moving on from a relationship. As I wanted to keep the source reference in the transition from source to target language, I decided to adopt the second translation strategy explained above: keep the source reference and not add any kind of explanation. In fact, I reckon that target-text readers are likely to understand from the context that the television series mentioned is about psychology, and people talking about their problems. It goes without saying that it would be possible to use another strategy such as, for instance, keeping the source reference and adding an explanation in a footnote.

To sum up, two types of translations are possible when one has to translate culture: 'overt' translation and 'covert' translation. With an overt translation, “the original sociocultural frame is left as intact as possible, given the need of expression in another language” (House 2009: 36), whereas in a covert translation “a 'cultural filter' is applied in order to adapt the source text to the communicative norms of the target culture” (House 2009: 71). As the various examples explored in this paragraph have aimed to show, these two translation strategies can coexist quite peacefully in a text, for a target

⁵⁰ Quotation taken from the IMDb page dedicated to *Dr. Phil*.
<<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0329824/>> (last accessed on 24 July 2016)

text can hardly be entirely overt or entirely covert.

4.4 Idiomatic and fixed expressions

As explained in Chapter 3.4, idiomatic and fixed expressions are culture-bound elements which should be carefully handled when a translator encounters them in a source text. To know how to properly deal with them, one should know what they are and what strategies can be used to translate them. Idiomatic expressions, such as the English 'to beat about the bush', are “word combinations that have a sum meaning that is historically based on, but can no longer be reduced to the combinations of their components meanings” (Delabastita 1996: 130). In other words, the meaning of a given idiomatic expression is to be learnt by heart or looked up in a dictionary, because it cannot be understood by simply analysing the single words that – when used in that precise order – contribute to form it. Similarly, fixed expressions, such as the English “it takes two to tango” (Moon 1998: 93), have compositional meaning, in that their meaning cannot be grasped by analysing the single words that form them. It should be stressed that the term 'fixed expressions' is generally used to refer to every kind of “phraseological unit, or multi-word lexical item: that is, holistic units of two or more words. These include: frozen collocations, grammatically ill-formed collocations, proverbs, routine formulae, sayings, similes” (Moon 1998: 2). Following Moon (1998: 2), for whom the term “fixed expression also subsumes idioms”, the term 'fixed expression' will be used to talk about both idioms and fixed expressions.

What is specifically relevant for translators or mediators is that fixed expressions can be used in a shortened version of themselves. They are likely to be still recognisable by native speakers because “they are institutionalized, and many can be regarded as lexical items in their own right” (Moon 1998: 131). For instance, saying “this is the last straw”

conveys the same meaning as saying “this is the (last) straw that breaks the camel's back” (Moon 1998: 131).

When it comes to translating fixed expressions, translators who are not native speakers or bilingual speakers need to resort to specific strategies, which can be broadly divided into two groups: strategies that can be used in cases in which an equivalent expression exists in the target language and those that can be used when an equivalent does not exist in the target language. In the former case one may want to simply render the source fixed expression with the equivalent target fixed expression. It should, however, be stressed that the two expressions should be equivalent not only in meaning but also in frequency of use (see Chapter 3.4.2.1). If one cannot or does not want to take advantage of this strategy, they might want to paraphrase the source fixed expression instead of rendering it with a target fixed expression. This strategy can of course also be used in the latter case, that is when an equivalent in the target language is not available. By paraphrasing the source fixed expression, one prevents a loss in meaning from taking place. If the fixed expression at issue is not fundamental for the comprehension of the source text, one may just want not to render it in the target text. Should a translator decide to do so, s/he may want to use a form of compensation in another part of the target text, for instance adding a target fixed expression in a place in the text where, in the original version, no fixed expression is used.

This paragraph is divided in three parts. In the first part, the fixed expressions which have equivalents in the target language will be analysed as well as the way in which I decided to translate them. In the second part, the fixed expressions which have no equivalent in the target language and the possible translations I offer will be discussed. The last part explores a selection of cases in point in which a target fixed expression was added in the Italian translation while in the source text no fixed expression is used. It

should be stressed that all the fixed expressions analysed and translated in this part are taken from the same passages of *Struck by Lightning* that have been object of discussion throughout this chapter.

4.4.1 When an equivalent is available in the target language

If an equivalent is available in the target language, the translator may want to substitute the source fixed expression with its target equivalent in the target text, yet s/he should also consider the frequency of use of the expression in the target language. In particular, if the source expression is frequently used, a translator may want to opt for an equivalent frequently used target expression.

In Table 4.29 below, a selection of source fixed expressions can be found which have equivalents in Italian. It also shows the translations I propose for each case.

Having aspirations to leave makes me the black sheep of the community. (9/30 Entry)	Avere aspirazioni di andarmene fa di me la pecora nera della comunità.
I was constantly shot down by nitwits who couldn't think outside the box. (9/30 Entry)	Venivo sempre calpestato da zucconi che non vedevano al di là del loro naso.

Table 4.29: Source expressions which have target equivalents and the translation offered in this study.

In the first example, the protagonist of the novel at issue is talking about his project and his profound desire to leave his home-town at the end of the year at school, and he says that wanting to leave makes him 'the black sheep of the community'. A “black sheep” is “a person who has done something bad that brings embarrassment or shame to his or her family [or community]”.⁵¹ While the same meaning can at times be conveyed through the use of different images when different languages are compared, in this case the same

⁵¹ Quotation taken from the online version of the Cambridge Dictionary. <<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/black-sheep>> (last accessed on 21 August 2016)

fixed expression exists in Italian and revolves around the image of the 'black sheep'. It goes without saying that translation necessarily requires a transition from language A to language B, but, apart from the change in language, the source fixed expression is not altered. I offer as my translation the Italian arguably equivalent fixed expression '*la pecora nera della comunità*'.

In the second and last example, Carson is talking about the inhabitants of Clover, his home-town, and says that generally speaking they are 'nitwits' who cannot 'think outside the box'. To 'think outside the box' is an English fixed expression which means “to think imaginatively using new ideas instead of traditional or expected ideas”,⁵² and hence not being able to do such a thing means to think unimaginatively. Similarly, the Italian fixed expression '*non vedere più in là [o al di là] del proprio naso*', which literally means 'not to see beyond one's nose', is used to talk about people who lack in foresight and impetus.⁵³ Because these fixed expressions have roughly the same meaning, translating one with the other can be considered acceptable.

4.4.2 When an equivalent is not available in the target language

As explained at the beginning of this part, at times source fixed expressions do not have equivalents in the target language. When an equivalent fixed expression is not available, a translator can choose between two strategies: paraphrase the source fixed expression or, if the source fixed expression is not fundamental for the comprehension of the text, downright eliminate it. As said above, if a translator goes for the former, they may want to add a target fixed expression somewhere else in the text to make up for the loss in 'idiomaticity'.

52 Quotation taken from the online version of the Cambridge Dictionary.
<<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/think-outside-the-box>> (last accessed on 21 August 2016)

53 Information taken from the online version of the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*.
<<http://dizionari.corriere.it/dizionario-modi-di-dire/N/naso.shtml>> (last accessed on 21 August 2016)

In Table 4.30 below, a source fixed expression can be found which has been paraphrased in the translation offered.

<p>Clover is a place where the pockets are small but the minds are even smaller. It's tiny and conservative, and most of the people are really set on living <i>and</i> dying here. Personally, I've never been able to hop on the bandwagon and have been publicly chastised because of it. (9/30 Entry)</p>	<p>Clover è il tipico posto in cui le menti sono più ristrette delle tasche. È una città piccola e conservatrice e la cosa peggiore è che ci sono persone a cui va bene viverci e morirci. Sinceramente non ho mai sostenuto questa causa e la cosa mi ha procurato parecchia impopolarità.</p>
---	---

Table 4.30: A source fixed expression which is paraphrased in the translation offered in this study.

In the example given, the English fixed expression “to hop [or to jump] on the bandwagon” can be found which means “to follow the trend/[something] popular in advance”.⁵⁴ To my knowledge, this English fixed expression has no equivalent in the Italian language, and searches on the internet seem to confirm my hypothesis, and hence I decided to paraphrase it with the Italian expression '*non sostenere una causa*', which literally means 'not to stand for a given cause'. It goes without saying that although the meaning of the source expression is preserved, its 'idiomaticity' gets lost in the transition from source to target language, in that the Italian translation I offer is not a fixed expression. As said above, to make up for this loss one may want to add a target fixed expression somewhere else in the text, which leads us to the next paragraph.

4.4.3 When a target-language fixed expression is added

At times fixed expressions may be added in the target text where there is no fixed

⁵⁴ Quotation taken from the online version of the Urban Dictionary.
 <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=jump%20on%20the%20bandwagon>> (last accessed on 21 August 2016)

expression in the source text. In other words, target texts may gain something. This choice may be made for various reasons, such as to compensate for a previous loss in 'idiomaticity', or to offer a covert and domesticated translation. Using as many target fixed expressions as possible can be considered a useful means to achieve such a goal, in that fixed expressions are to be considered culture-bound elements. Hence, finding target fixed expressions in a translated text may make target-text readers forget – or downright ignore – the fact that what they are reading is actually a translation, so the product of another culture.

In Table 4.31 below, a selection of target fixed expressions can be found whose equivalents are not present in the source text.

When they read my transcripts they'll see I'm a very liberal-minded young man in a very obstinate world begging to be rescued by means of education: a diamond in a pile of cow shit, if you will. (9/30 Entry)	Quando leggeranno la mia richiesta di ammissione, capiranno che sono un ragazzo di larghe vedute intrappolato in un mondo pieno di ottusi. Vedranno che non aspetto altro che l'istruzione mi salvi, una vera perla in mezzo ai porci, se vogliamo.
What I'm doing right now may be selfish and wrong, but I'm doing it for all the right reasons. So that validates it, right? (10/18 Entry)	Quello che sto facendo può anche essere egoistico e sbagliato, ma il fine giustifica i mezzi, no?
And today, <i>that</i> message practically came with a bright red bow tied around it. (10/18 Entry)	Oggi, questa immagine mi è stata praticamente servita su un piatto d'argento.

Table 4.31: Three target fixed expressions added in the translation offered in this study.

In the first example, the protagonist of the novel at issue is talking about himself, and he asserts that he is to be considered 'a diamond in a pile of cow shit' when compared to

those who live in his home-town, particularly his high-school mates. The fact that he considers himself a diamond and that he considers his high-school mates 'cow shit' conveys the meaning that he considers himself much better than them. The translation I offer for this expression is '*una vera perla in mezzo ai porci*', which literally means 'a pearl among swine'. In my translation I make a reference to an Italian saying, which is '*gettare le perle ai porci*' and can be considered an equivalent of the English fixed expression 'to cast pearls before swine'. 'To cast pearls before swine' means to "offer something valuable or good to someone who does not know its value".⁵⁵ I decided to use '*una vera perla in mezzo ai porci*' as my translation in that a pearl among swine can be considered as wasted as a diamond in a pile of shit would be. Moreover, a pearl can be considered much more valuable than swine, which is the meaning that Carson wants to convey.

In the second example, Carson is talking about his blackmailing project, and he is trying to convince himself that if a person does something wrong for a right cause they cannot be considered at fault. Precisely, in the source text he says that doing wrong things for the right reason validates them. This concept can be summed up with the Italian saying '*il fine giustifica i mezzi*', which literally means 'the goal justifies the means (one uses to achieve their goal)'. In other words, this Italian fixed expression means that people should do anything they can to achieve their goal, in that there is no such thing as a wrong decision if it is made with the right purpose in mind. As this Italian saying conveys the same meaning that the source text conveys, I have decided to offer it as my translation.

In the third and last example, Carson is still talking about his blackmailing project, and says that, in spite of his initial doubts about it, the message of being doing a good

⁵⁵ Quotation taken from the online version of the Cambridge Dictionary.
<<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/cast-pearls-before-swine>> (last accessed on 21 August 2016)

job 'came with a bright red bow tied around it', as if it was a present, in that he finds out that there is another person he can blackmail. To convey the same meaning, I picked the Italian fixed expression '*mi è stata servita su un piatto d'argento*', which literally means 'I have had it served on a silver plate'. This Italian fixed expression is used to talk about things that one does not strive to achieve, in that they happen on their own. In other words, 'having something served on a silver plate' means to obtain something after having done nothing to deserve and obtain it. This target expression can be considered very similar to the English fixed expression 'to hand someone something on a plate', which means "to allow someone to get or win something very easily"⁵⁶. Thanks to this translation, the meaning of the source expression is kept intact. However, by using an Italian fixed expression to convey the original meaning, the target text gains something that the source text does not have in this context.

To sum up, fixed expressions are not to be underestimated when they are to be dealt with and translated, in that they may be fundamental for the domestication of a text. In fact, if a translator wants their translation to sound like it is no translation at all – and hence be invisible – using culture-bound elements which belong to target culture such as fixed expressions may be considered a good strategy. This section has given practical examples of cases in which a translator needs to find out whether a given source fixed expression has an equivalent in the target language. If an equivalent is available, s/he may want to use it in their translation, otherwise paraphrasing the meaning conveyed in the source text is another strategy that can be used.

56 Quotation taken from the online version of the Cambridge Dictionary.
<<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/give-hand-sth-to-sb-on-a-plate>> (last accessed on 24 August 2016)

CONCLUSIONS

The attempt discussed in this dissertation to present Italian readers with a translation of some extracts taken from Chris Colfer's *Struck by Lightning* leads to some final considerations. First and foremost, in order to successfully translate some parts taken from a literary text, the text as a whole is to be taken into consideration. The register used in a given source text, together with the author's style, are to be properly analysed before one can even start to think about translating the text into their own language. Aspects such as the general plot, the development of the various characters, and the means available to make the text cohesive (see Chapter 3.3.3.1) are to be kept in mind throughout the whole process of translation. Furthermore, the literary production and life of the authors themselves, together with the period and country in which they live, or lived, are to be taken into account too, in that they can be fundamental to understand what may have led them to share their words and thoughts with their readers. Moreover, in a novel such as *Struck by Lightning*, which is largely embedded in the writer's culture, the cultural background performs a pivotal role, and therefore its aspects need to be taken into account to a certain extent.

Taking into consideration the source text at issue, *Struck by Lightning* is set in a fictional American town, Clover, and, as discussed in Chapter 1, this fictional town can actually be considered a sort of doppelgänger of Clovis, the American town where the author himself was born. *Struck by Lightning* can be considered very much bound to American culture, and the many references to American culture made throughout the text confirm this hypothesis. As discussed in Chapter 2.3, culture-bound texts can be dealt with in two ways: they can either be translated 'openly', by keeping their foreignness intact, or 'covertly', by domesticating them. As various extracts analysed and translated in Chapter 4 aimed to show, domesticating and foreignizing strategies can and

very often should coexist in a target text, for a translator should attempt to find the right balance between domestic and foreign elements. In other words, a given source text always needs to be filtered, but it is entirely up to the translator to choose the extent to which target-text readers are to be involved with the cultural elements of the original.

Throughout Chapter 4 of this dissertation, extracts taken from the source text and containing challenging aspects were discussed, and possible translations were offered and explored. These challenging aspects could all be related to four main linguistic areas: taboo language, humour, culture-bound elements and fixed expressions. Clearly issues as to how they should be dealt with in translation have been addressed, in both Chapters 3 and 4. During the process of translation it has been often necessary to switch between the use of foreignizing and domesticating strategies. As said above, domesticating and foreignizing strategies can both be used in the translation of a given source text, in that a translation can never be entirely based on foreignization (Paloposki 2011: 40) or entirely based on domestication. It seems to me, and my work on the source text seems to confirm this hypothesis, that the best solution is to keep some of the source-culture elements in the target text, so as to give a taste of foreignness and make the target-text readers realise that what they are reading is a translation. At the same time, however, it would be advisable to change the parts which are too much culturally embedded to be understood by target-text readers without the aid of footnote explanations. Making changes to the text can in many cases be considered the most apt one, in that a target text is ultimately thought for a different readership, which belongs to a different culture. Thus, as has been shown, target readership is to be taken into account while translating a source text into a target language.

To reach the right balance between foreign and domestic, and between being a visible or invisible translator (see Chapter 2.2.1), one should take into account the extent to

which source culture is known by those who are likely going to be the target-text readers. In other words, translators should ask themselves what kind of readership is likely to be interested in reading the target text, and whether they are likely to be familiar with the source culture or not. As far as *Struck by Lightning* is concerned, judging from the style, the characters, the scholastic set and the plot, its original readership most likely ranges from teenagers to young adults. Source-text readers may find the plot of the book interesting as well as the everyday language used. Furthermore, source-text readers are likely to identify themselves with the protagonist, for the book offers a realistic picture of American high schools, and how high-school years are lived from “the bottom of the high school food chain” (Colfer 2012: 144). As regards target-text readers, their age does not differ from source-text readers. The issue as to the extent to which target-text readers are familiar with American culture has been explored. For instance, in *Struck by Lightning* an American television series that is well-known in Italy is mentioned, which is *Law & Order* (see Chapter 4.3.3.1). When a source-culture product is mentioned which is known in the target culture there is clearly no need for translators to add explanations or use a domesticating strategy. On the other hand, when a source-culture product is mentioned which is not known in the target culture it might be necessary to either add an explanation or use a domesticating strategy, which is precisely what I did when the American brand of painkillers 'Midol' was mentioned in the text (see Chapter 4.3.1.2). Generally speaking, it seems to me that American culture – especially some aspects of it, such as edible products or television products – is well-known in Italy. For this reason, it is safe to assume that young Italians, the ones who thanks to their skills with technology can be considered citizens of the world, would appreciate this book for the portrait it offers of American culture. I think that Italian readers would appreciate the set of the novel, and how this set is described, even more

than the plot itself.

As said above, foreignizing and domesticating strategies were both present in the translations I offered in Chapter 4. As far as taboo language in *Struck by Lightning* is concerned, foreignizing strategies can be considered dangerous to choose, in that taboos vary from culture to culture, and thus something that is not considered taboo in culture A, may be the worst taboo in culture B. For this reason, if source culture and target culture differ in their linguistic and cultural taboos, opting for a domesticating strategy may be the best strategy. Similarly, translating humour may at times call for domesticating strategies. As explained in Chapter 3.2.2.3, humour can at times be based not on linguistic elements, as wordplays are, but rather on some kind of encyclopaedic knowledge. When jokes are to be moved from source to target language, and culture, translators should consider whether target-text readers are likely or unlikely to get the source joke. In other words, they should consider whether target-text readers are likely to be familiar with the piece of encyclopaedic knowledge at the base of the joke. For instance, in Chapter 4.2.3 an example was given of a joke based on American culture which could be kept in the target text, in that the encyclopaedic knowledge it was based on was likely to be known by target-text readers: *The Walt Disney Company*, which is American, but known worldwide. As far as culture-bound elements are concerned, translators should switch between foreignizing and domesticating strategies. In particular, they should take into account what source-culture elements need to be explained in the text for target-text readers, what can be kept without the addition of explanation, and what needs to be substituted with equivalent target-culture elements.

As the extracts analysed and translated throughout Chapter 4 aimed to show, I think it is safe to state that there is no such thing as something which cannot be translated. In fact, and even though a balancing between loss and gain is always to be looked for,

everything is translatable as far as translators are able to find a compromise. As Bassnett (2011: 42) points out: “good translators [...] bring their own creativity into the equation”, and creativity is exactly what translators need to “negotiate the delicate passage between the shoals of obscurantism and the reefs of complacency” (Bassnett 2011: 18). In other words, translators need to negotiate between foreignization and domestication. This negotiation, which can be described as a compromise between these two poles, can be considered an art to be mastered when translation is at issue. When one talks about compromise in translation, matters such as compromising between visibility and invisibility, or compromising between foreignization and domestication, come to mind. It goes without saying that translators might need to find a balance between various options, but other skills are clearly also needed. In fact, as Gambier (2010: 414) points out, “problem-solving abilities are at the heart of translation competence”. This statement can be considered true in that, as discussed in Chapter 2.1.1, to translate means to take something expressed in language A and manipulate it from both a linguistic and cultural point of view, so that it can convey the same meaning in language B. Any text presents its translator(s) with challenging elements which can be dealt with in many ways, in that many translation strategies are available to properly face them. A few examples of challenging elements are those which were analysed in both Chapters 3 and 4. As said above, when one translates something, they “need to integrate “linguistic” knowledge and “cultural” knowledge” (Delabastita 2010: 202). The relationship between language and culture, which was discussed in Chapter 3.3.1.4, is not to be underestimated when a source text is to be moved from one language to another. In fact, the two can be considered two faces of the very same coin, and cultural differences in particular are to be taken into account during the transition from source to target language.

As said above, the general goal of this dissertation was to try to demonstrate that everything is translatable. It goes without saying that radical changes may at times be necessary to translate a given text from source to target language, but, as said above, compromises are to be found when translation is at issue. However, this was not the only goal that I had in mind while I was writing this dissertation, in that another aim was meant to be achieved. It was my precise intention to try to present Italian readers with a translation of some parts taken from Chris Colfer's *Struck by Lightning*, as I believe that this book, which has not been translated into Italian so far, could be appreciated by Italian readers. In other words, this book was not a mere means to discuss matters such as translatability, foreignizing and domesticating strategies, and challenging elements such as taboo language or humour which can be found during the process of translation. Translating the book itself, or rather parts of it, was my goal, and I consciously chose it for reasons that I should now attempt to explain. It is my opinion that this book could not only entertain, but also educate young Italian readers that might happen to read it. *Struck by Lightning* has been written by a very young author, yet it nonetheless manages to touch and discuss fundamental present-day matters. In fact, the book presents a very simple plot and rather stereotyped characters to explore matters such as bullying, feeling like one does not belong where s/he lives, disastrous familiar and scholastic situations – and their consequences on the young – same-sex relationships, and the problems related to coming out in bigot and biased societies. It is my opinion that Italian teenagers and young adults should be sensitized about these matters, for ignorance on these matters is still widespread, and sometimes being educated without even realising it may be the best thing. In other words, a book such as *Struck by Lightning*, which makes readers reflect while pretending to be nothing more than a bitter-sweet story about a boy who had the best intentions but the worst means,

may be what Italian youth appreciate.

It goes without saying that this dissertation has been written for mere academic purposes, and much more work could still be done. It should be stressed that for reasons of space it was not possible to analyse a larger number of extracts and to conduct a quantitative analysis of the phenomena. Such further research would, however, be useful to analyse the process of literary translation to the full and could be explored by future investigations. In particular, it seems to me that the matter of cohesion when the text in its entirety is at issue should be explored, in that studying how the author created it just by analysing and translating a few extracts was not possible. Another matter which I did not explore for reasons of space, is the structure of the noun phrase and the use of pre-modification in English, in that English can 'compress' much meaning thanks to pre-modification, which is not possible in Italian. Furthermore, in my opinion other matters connected to translation studies should be explored as well, in that they are relevant to the text at issue. In particular, I think that a study of the variety of literary genres and writing styles the book contains, together with the major difficulties they present translators with, would be useful. As seen in Chapter 1, the book does indeed contain various text types related to the fictitious literary magazine that Carson and his peers write, that is a sort of patch-work of various works written by different hands. Among these text types are fictitious editorials, short stories, essays, poems, and other genres. Lastly, some research could be conducted on the American informal language used in the book. As we have seen, the author uses an informal everyday kind of language, which definitely calls for equally informal and everyday target language.

To conclude, I would like to stress how fundamental translation is, especially in the period we live in, that is a period in which worldwide communication is of utmost

importance. The interchange of literary works, which is possible only thanks to the often underestimated and unappreciated work of professional translators, is the bridge that allows not only the communication but also the understanding between people who speak different languages and belong to different cultures. It should not be forgotten that “nothing creates a stronger sense of Us versus Them than mutual linguistic incomprehension” (Bassnett 2011: 21), and thus working to achieve comprehension through translation is working towards achieving a world with less boundaries and more understanding.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andersson, Lars-Gunnar & Hirsch, Richard, (1985). *Perspectives on Swearing*. Göteborg: Publications of the Göteborg University Department of Linguistics.
- Azzaro, Gabriele, (2005). *Four-Letter Films: Taboo Language in Movies*. Roma: Aracne.
- Baker, Mona, (2011). *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Ballard, Michel, (1996). Wordplay and the Didactics of Translation. In Delabastita Dirk (ed.), *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication*, Vol. 2 *Wordplay and Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome, pp. 333-346.
- Barslund, Charlotte, (2011). The Translation of Literary Prose. In Malmkjær Kirsten & Windle Kevin (eds.), *Translation Studies*. Oxford: University Press, pp. 139-152.
- Bassnett, Susan & Lefevere, André, (1992). General Editors' Preface. In Bassnett, Susan & Lefevere, André (eds.), *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. vii-viii.
- Bassnett, Susan, (2002). *Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Bassnett, Susan, (2011). *Reflections on Translation*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Bassnett, Susan, (2011a). The Translator as Cross-Cultural Mediator. In Malmkjær Kirsten & Windle Kevin (eds.), *Translation Studies*. Oxford: University Press, pp. 94-107.
- Bell, Roger T., (1991). *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*. London & New York: Longman.
- Benjamin, Walter, (1962). Il compito del traduttore. In *Angelus Novus*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Borges, Jorge Luis, (1970). Autobiographical Essay. In *The Aleph and Other Stories, 1933-1969*. New York: E. P. Dutton.
- Brodzki, Bella, (2007). *Can These Bones Live? Translation, Survival and Cultural Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Catford, J.C., (1978). *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: University Press.
- Chiaro, Delia, (2010). Translation and Humour, Humour and Translation. In Chiaro Delia (ed.), *Translation and Humour*, Vol. 1 *Translation, Humour and Literature*. London & New York: Continuum, pp. 1-29.
- Chiaro, Delia, (2010a). Translating Humour in the Media. In Chiaro Delia (ed.), *Translation and Humour*, Vol. 2 *Translation, Humour and the Media*. London & New

York: Continuum, pp. 1-16.

Colfer, Chris, (2012). *Struck by Lightning: The Carson Phillips Journal*. London: Atom.

Colfer, Chris, (2012a). *The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell*. London: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Colina, Sonia, (2011). Evaluation/Assessment. In Yves Gambier & Luc van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Volume 2. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 43-48.

Colina, Sonia, (2015). *Fundamentals of Translation*. Cambridge: University Press.

Congreve, William, (1797). The Mourning Bride: A Tragedy. In Bell (ed.), *British Theatre: Consisting of the Most Esteemed English Plays*, Vol. XIX. London: University Library.
<https://books.google.it/books?id=NmMLAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=it&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false> (last accessed on 19 July 2016)

Delabastita, Dirk, (1996). Introduction. In Delabastita Dirk (ed.), *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication*, Vol. 2 *Wordplay and Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome, pp. 127-139.

Delabastita, Dirk, (2009). Fictional Representations. In Baker Mona & Saldanha Gabriela (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 109-112.

Delabastita, Dirk, (2010). Literary Studies and Translation Studies. In Yves Gambier & Luc van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Volume 1. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 196-208.

Drugan, Joanna, (2013). *Quality in Professional Translation: Assessment and Improvement*. London [etc.]: Bloomsbury.

Duranti, Riccardo, (2009). Italian Tradition. In Baker Mona & Saldanha Gabriela (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 459-467.

Emmerich, Karen R., (2013). Visibility (and Invisibility). In Yves Gambier & Luc van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Volume 4. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 200-206.

Euvino, Gabrielle, (2012). *Dirty Italian: Everyday Slang from "What's Up?" to "F*%# Off!"*. Berkeley: Ulysses Press.

Flynn, Peter, (2013). Author and Translator. In Yves Gambier & Luc van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Volume 4. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 12-19.

Gambier, Yves, (2010). Translation Strategies and Tactics. In Yves Gambier & Luc van

Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Volume 1. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 412-418.

Gouadec, Daniel, (2010). Quality in Translation. In Yves Gambier & Luc van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Volume 1. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 270-275.

Hatim, Basil, & Mason, Ian, (1997). *The Translator as Communicator*. New York: Routledge.

Hermans, Theo, (2009). Translatability. In Baker Mona & Saldanha Gabriela (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 300-303.

Hönig, Hans G., (1998). Positions, Power and Practice: Functionalist Approaches and Translation Quality Assessment. In C. Schäffner (ed.), *Translation and Quality*. Clevedon: Multilingual, pp. 6-31.

House, Juliane, (2009). *Translation*. Oxford: University Press.

House, Juliane, (2009a). Quality. In Baker Mona & Saldanha Gabriela (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 222-225.

House, Juliane, (2015). *Translation Quality Assessment: Past and Present*. London & New York: Routledge.

Intonti, Vittoria, (2008). Literary Translation and Beyond / Traduzione letteraria e oltre. In Mallardi Rossella (ed.), *Traduzione Letteraria e Oltre: La Traduzione Come Negoziazione dell'Alterità* [Literary translation and beyond: translation as negotiation with dissimilarity]. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 25-37.

Jääskeläinen, Riitta, (2011). Studying the Translation Process. In Malmkjær Kirsten & Windle Kevin (eds.), *Translation Studies*. Oxford: University Press, pp. 123-135.

Jay, Timothy, (2000). *Why We Curse: A Neuro-psycho-social Theory of Speech*. Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Jones, Francis R., (2009). Literary Translation. In Baker Mona & Saldanha Gabriela (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 152-157.

Jumpelt, Rudolf Walter, (1961). *Die Übersetzung Naturwissenschaftlicher und technischer Literatur: sprachliche Masstäbe und Methoden zur Bestimmung ihrer Wesenszüge und Probleme* [The translation of technical and scientific literature: linguistic parameters and methods to define its peculiar features and problems]. Munich: Langenscheidt.

Katan, David, (1996). *Translating across Cultures*. Trieste: SERT, Università di Trieste.

Katan, David, (2004). *Translating Cultures: An Introduction for Translators*,

Interpreters and Mediators. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Katan, David, (2009). Culture. In Baker Mona & Saldanha Gabriela (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 70-73.

Kenny, Dorothy, (2009). Equivalence. In Baker Mona & Saldanha Gabriela (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 96-99.

Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal, (1985). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London & New York: Verso.

Landers, Clifford E., (2001). *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Lauscher, Susanne, (2000). Translation Quality Assessment: Where Can Theory and Practice Meet? In Mona Baker (ed.), *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication*, Vol. 6 *Evaluation and Translation*. New York: Routledge, pp. 149-168.

Lefevere, André, (1992). *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London & New York: Routledge.

Leppihalme, Ritva, (1996). Caught in the Frame. A Target-Culture Viewpoint on Allusive Wordplay. In Delabastita Dirk (ed.), *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication*, Vol. 2 *Wordplay and Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome, pp. 199-218.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude, (1962). *La pensée sauvage* [The savage mind]. Paris: Librairie Plon.

Macura, Vladimir, (1990). Culture as Translation. In Susan Bassnett & André Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture*. London: Pinter Publishers, pp. 64-70.

Maier, Carol, (2000). Introduction. In Mona Baker (ed.), *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication*, Vol. 6 *Evaluation and Translation*. New York: Routledge, pp. 137-148.

Mallardi, Rossella, (2008). Introduzione [Introduction]. In Mallardi Rossella (ed.), *Traduzione Letteraria e Oltre: La Traduzione Come Negoziazione dell'Alterità* [Literary translation and beyond: translation as negotiation with dissimilarity]. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 9-24.

Malmkjær, Kirsten, (2011). Linguistic Approaches to Translation. In Malmkjær Kirsten & Windle Kevin (eds.), *Translation Studies*. Oxford: University Press, pp. 57-70.

Manini, Luca, (1996). Meaningful Literary Names. Their Forms and Functions, and their Translation. In Delabastita Dirk (ed.), *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication*, Vol. 2 *Wordplay and Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome, pp. 161-178.

Mansfield, Gillian, (2012). Laughter in the Lecture Theatre – a Serious Matter. Studying Verbal Humour in the British TV Sitcom. In Dalziel Fiona, Gesuato Sara & Musacchio

- Maria Teresa (eds.), *A Lifetime of English Studies*. Padova: Il Poligrafo, pp. 253-265.
- Martin, James Robert & Rose, David, (2003). *Working with Discourse: Meaning beyond the Clause*. London & New York: Continuum.
- Moon, Rosamund, (1998). *Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English: A Corpus-Based Approach*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Munier, Alexis & Tichelli, Emmanuel, (2008). *Talk Dirty Italian. Beyond Cazzo: The Curses, Slang, And Street Lingo You Need to Know When You Speak Italiano*. Avon: Adams Media.
- Nash, Walter, (1985). *The Language of Humour: Style and Technique in Comic Discourse*. London & New York: Longman.
- Newmark, Peter, (1981). *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford [etc]: Pergamon Press.
- Newmark, Peter, (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. London: Prentice Hall Longman.
- Nord, Christiane, (1997). *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functional Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Nord, Christiane, (2006). Loyalty and fidelity in specialized translation. *Confluências – Revista de Tradução Científica e Técnica*, N°4, Maio 2006: 29-41. <http://web.letras.up.pt/egalvao/TTCIP_Nord%20loyalty%20and%20fidelity.pdf> (last accessed on 17 June 2016).
- O'Sullivan, Carol, (2013). Creativity. In Yves Gambier & Luc van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Volume 4. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp.42-46.
- Paloposki, Outi, (2011). Domestication and Foreignization. In Yves Gambier & Luc van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Volume 2. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 40-42.
- Ponzio, Augusto, (2008). Traduzione e testo letterario [Translation and literary text]. In Mallardi Rossella (ed.), *Traduzione Letteraria e Oltre: La Traduzione Come Negoziazione dell'Alterità* [Literary translation and beyond: translation as negotiation with dissimilarity]. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 39-58.
- Pym, Anthony, (2014). *Exploring Translation Theories*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Rega, Lorenza, (2008). Riflessioni su discorso riportato e traduzione [Reflections on reported speech and translation]. In Mallardi Rossella (ed.), *Traduzione Letteraria e Oltre: La Traduzione Come Negoziazione dell'Alterità* [Literary translation and beyond: translation as negotiation with dissimilarity]. Bern: Peter Lang, pp. 115-132.
- Rowling, J.K., (2001). *Harry Potter e la Camera dei Segreti* [Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets]. Traduzione di Marina Astrologo. Milano: Salani.

Rowling, J.K., (2010). *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. London [etc.]: Bloomsbury.

Rushdie, Salman, (1992). Imaginary Homelands. In *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-91*. London: Granta Books.

Sturge, Kate, (2009). Cultural Translation. In Baker Mona & Saldanha Gabriela (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 67-70.

Swain, Elizabeth, (2012). Towards a SFL Reading of Koestler's Bisociation Theory of Humour. In Dalziel Fiona, Gesuato Sara & Musacchio Maria Teresa (eds.), *A Lifetime of English Studies*. Padova: Il Poligrafo, pp. 267-278.

Taylor, Christopher, (2009). *Language to Language: A Practical and Theoretical Guide for Italian/English Translators*. Cambridge: University Press.

Ulrych, Margherita, (1992). *Translating Texts: From Theory to Practice*. Rapallo: Cideb Editrice.

Vandaele, Jeroen, (2011). Wordplay in Translation. In Yves Gambier & Luc van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Volume 2. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 180-183.

Venuti, Lawrence, (1993). *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. London: Routledge.

Venuti, Lawrence, (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London & New York: Routledge.

Venuti, Lawrence, (1998). *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London & New York: Routledge.

Williams, Malcolm, (2004). *Translation Quality Assessment: An Argumentation-Centred Approach*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

Wills, Wolfram, (1996). Translation as Intelligent Behavior. In Harold Somers (ed.), *Terminology, LSP and Translation: Studies in Language Engineering in Honour of Juan C. Sager*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Yule, George, (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zlateva, Palma, (1990). Translation: Text and Pre-Text. 'Adequacy' and 'Acceptability' in Crosscultural Communication. In Susan Bassnett & André Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture*. London: Pinter Publishers, pp. 29-37.

DICTIONARIES

Oxford American Dictionary, (1982). New York: Avon Books.

The New International Webster's Student Dictionary of the English Language, (1997).
New York: Trident Press International.

WEB RESOURCES

ADAA, Anxiety and Depression Association of America:

<<http://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/hoarding-basics>> (last accessed on 29 June 2016);

Beyonce, Spielberg, and Sting: 33 Interesting People Who Wrote Big Checks to Hillary Clinton:

<<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/beyonce-spielberg-sting-33-interesting-people-wrote-big/story?id=32492794>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016);

Chris Colfer's Twitter account:

<<https://twitter.com/chriscolfer>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016);

Glee's Chris Colfer Reveals Real-Life Story Behind Kurt's Diva Moment:

<<http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20421723.html>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016);

Google Trends:

<<https://www.google.it/trends/>> (last accessed on 26 June 2016);

Jakobson, Roman, (1959). On Linguistic Aspects of Translation:

<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic84298.files/Supplementary_readings/JAKOBSON.PDF> (last accessed on 23 March 2016);

Online Version of California's Penal Code:

<<http://www.ageofconsent.com/california.htm>> (last accessed on 19 July 2016);

Online Version of the Cambridge Dictionary:

<<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>> (last accessed on 24 August 2016);

Online Version of the Etymology Dictionary:

<<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php>> (last accessed on 26 June 2016);

Online Version of the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*:

<<http://www.corriere.it/>> (last accessed on 21 August 2016);

Online Version of the Oxford Dictionaries:

<<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/>> (last accessed on 19 July 2016);

Online Version of the Treccani Encyclopaedia:

<<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/>> (last accessed on 19 July 2016);

Online Version of the Urban Dictionary:

<<http://www.urbandictionary.com/>> (last accessed on 21 August 2016);

The IMDb page about Dr. Phil:

<<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0329824/>> (last accessed on 24 July 2016);

The *New York Times* about *Struck by Lightning*:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/11/movies/struck-by-lightning-written-and-starring-chris-colfer.html?_r=0> (last accessed on 13 March 2016);

The official website of *The Land of Stories* series:

<<http://thelandofstories.com/>> (last accessed on 9 February 2016);

The Site EuroSat:

<<http://www.eurosat-online.it/canali-alla-ricerca-di-telemundo-e-univision/>> (last accessed on 29 June 2016);

The Site Fulbright Commission.

<<http://www.fulbright.org.uk/study-in-the-usa/undergraduate-study/applying/transcript#gpa>> (last accessed on 21 July 2016);

The Site Kaplan:

<<https://www.kaptest.com/psat/kaplan-psat-prep/all-about-the-PSAT>> (last accessed on 21 July 2016);

The Site Prepscholar:

<<http://blog.prepscholar.com/whats-a-weighted-gpa-how-to-calculate-it>> (last accessed on 21 July 2016)

The Writing Life: Chris Colfer of 'Glee' inspired by fairy tales (Los Angeles Times):

<<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jul/15/entertainment/la-ca-chris-colfer-20120715>> (last accessed on 28 January 2016);

A YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer who talks about *Struck by Lightning* for PEOPLE Magazine:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfeNxnsZUtI>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016);

A YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer's speech after winning the Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actor in a TV Series in 2011:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_buU1Xk2w_U> (last accessed on 13 March 2016);

A YouTube video featuring an interview with Mr. Colfer at the show *Lopez Tonight*:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpZma0JwIo>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016);

A YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer at BBC's *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross*:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZl1QBOW5X0>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016);

A YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer at the show *Larry King Now*:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVQfjeldBhs>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016);

A YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer at the show *Larry King Now*:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mwvk5mtdBY>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016);

A YouTube video featuring an interview with Mr. Colfer at *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHYixwmNF20>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016);

A YouTube video featuring Mr. Colfer's contribution to the Trevor Project:

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RKmnAJ3ZWM>> (last accessed on 13 March 2016).

**APPENDIX:
THE TRANSLATION**

9/30

Dear Journal,

One more school year with these shitheads and I'll be free. It's taken almost two decades of careful planning, but I'm proud to say my overdue departure from the town of Clover is only *days* away. Three hundred and forty-five days away, to be exact, but who's counting?

A year from now I'll be sitting in my dorm room at Northwestern University taking notes from some overpriced textbook about "the history of..." you know, something historical. I'll be living off Top Ramen and gallons of Red Bull. I'll barely be getting five hours of sleep a night, and that's only when I don't have to yell at my roommate to turn down his porn.

I know it doesn't sound like much to look forward to, but for this college-bound kid, it's *paradise!* All the suffering, now and later, is for a much bigger picture.

It's not much of a secret since I tell anyone who will listen (mostly to get them to stop talking to me), but one day I hope to become the youngest freelance journalist to be published in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Boston Globe*, eventually making my way to editor of the *New Yorker*.

Yes, I know that was a lot of information, so take a minute if you need one. If it sounds overwhelming to you, just think about how I feel living up to my future self every day. It's exhausting!

In a decade, if all goes according to plan, things will be much better for me. I can see it now: I'll be sitting in my New York City apartment applying final touches to my weekly *New York Times* column. I'll be living off Thai food and bottles of the finest red wine. I'll be sleeping ten hours a night, even when I

30/9

Caro Giornale di Bordo,

Un ultimo anno di liceo con queste teste di cazzo e sarò finalmente libero. Dopo quasi vent'anni di meticolosa pianificazione, sono fiero di annunciare che la mia tanto rimandata partenza dalla città di Clover è solamente a giorni di distanza. Per essere precisi, è a trecentoquarantacinque giorni di distanza, ma mica li sto contando, no?

Tra un anno a partire da oggi mi troverò alla Northwestern University, comodamente seduto nella mia stanza a prendere appunti da un costosissimo libro riguardo 'la storia del..' insomma, qualcosa di storico. Vivrò di cibi precotti e ingollerò litri di Red Bull. Dormirò meno di cinque ore a notte, e solo quando non dovrò litigare col mio coinquilino perché abbassi il volume dei suoi video porno.

So che non suona particolarmente invitante, ma ad uno destinato all'università come me sembra il paradiso! Tutte le sofferenze che ho patito, e che patirò, sono per un progetto molto più grande.

Non è un gran segreto visto che lo dico a chiunque voglia ascoltare (e se così ottengo che non mi parlino più tanto meglio), ma un giorno sogno di diventare il più giovane giornalista freelance ad essere pubblicato dal *New York Times*, dal *Los Angeles Times*, dal *Chicago Tribune* e dal *Boston Globe*, facendomi poi strada fino a diventare il direttore del *New Yorker*.

Sì, lo so che è molto da assimilare, prenditi pure un minuto se ti serve. Se *tu* ti senti sopraffatto all'idea, pensa a come mi sento *io* ogni volta che mi confronto con il mio futuro me. È estenuante!

Se tutto va secondo i piani, tempo dieci anni e le cose dovrebbero andare molto meglio per me. Vivrò di cibo per asporto thailandese, berrò solo il miglior vino rosso e dormirò dieci ore a notte

<p>have to yell at my neighbor to turn down his porn.</p> <p>Granted, I still have a year to go in high school, and <i>senior</i> year at that. And I do realize I haven't actually been "accepted" to Northwestern yet, but those are just minor technicalities. Since we're on the subject, I should also mention that I'm well aware Northwestern doesn't send out early acceptance letters until December 15, but, fearing that I may apply somewhere else, I'm sure they've made an exception for me. I'm positive my acceptance letter is on its way from the admissions office and will soon be in my eager hands as I write this...right?</p> <p>I wouldn't be surprised if I was the first applicant. I stayed up half the night to submit my application as soon as the admissions website opened at 6 a.m. Chicago time on the first day. Now it's just a waiting game... and waiting has never been my forte.</p> <p>I can't imagine why they wouldn't accept me. When they read my transcripts they'll see I'm a very liberal-minded young man in a very obstinate world begging to be rescued by means of education: a diamond in a pile of cow shit, if you will.</p> <p>That and the fact that I'm one-sixteenth Native American and one-thirty-second African American (okay, that part I can't actually prove) should make me an admissions jackpot!</p> <p>Even if that doesn't work, my high school career should speak for itself. I've kept my grade point average at an impressive 4.2 since freshman year. I've single-handedly edited the <i>Clover High Chronicle</i> since sophomore year, and I've managed to keep the Writers' Club alive after school despite its apparent death wish.</p> <p>Not bad for a kid in a town where the most common intellectual question is, <i>Will he actually eat the green eggs and ham?</i></p> <p>I'm kidding (sort of). Look, I don't mean to constantly harp on my</p>	<p>persino quando dovrò litigare col mio vicino perché abbassi il volume dei suoi video porno. Riesco già a vedermi a New York, seduto nel mio appartamento a dare gli ultimi ritocchi al mio articolo settimanale per il <i>New York Times</i>. Purtroppo sono ancora alle superiori, ma almeno è il mio ultimo anno. Tra l'altro non è che io sia stato già ammesso alla Northwestern, ma questo è solo un piccolo dettaglio. Dato che ci siamo, dovrei dirti anche un'altra cosa: la Northwestern non manderà le lettere di ammissione anticipata prima del quindici dicembre, e questo lo so, ma sono sicuro che, temendo io possa fare domanda altrove, faranno un'eccezione per me. Sono certo che mentre sto qui a scrivere, la mia lettera di ammissione stia viaggiando e presto ce l'avrò tra le mani. Giusto?</p> <p>Non mi sorprenderebbe sapere di essere stato il primo a fare richiesta di ammissione: il sito apriva alle sei del mattino, fuso orario di Chicago, ed io avevo atteso quel momento in piedi. Adesso si tratta solo di aspettare, ma aspettare non è mai stato il mio forte.</p> <p>Non riesco a trovare un solo motivo per cui dovrebbero rifiutarmi. Quando leggeranno la mia richiesta di ammissione, capiranno che sono un ragazzo di larghe vedute intrappolato in un mondo pieno di ottusi. Vedranno che non aspetto altro che l'istruzione mi salvi, una vera perla in mezzo ai porci, se vogliamo.</p> <p>Gioca a mio favore anche il fatto che io sia per un sedicesimo nativo americano e abbia origini africane per un trentaduesimo (anche se questo non posso esattamente provarlo).</p> <p>Se nemmeno questo dovesse bastare, la mia carriera scolastica dovrebbe parlare da sola. Ho avuto l'impressionante media del dieci in quasi tutte le materie fin dal mio primo anno di superiori, ho gestito da solo il giornale scolastico (il <i>Clover High Chronicle</i>) fin dal mio secondo anno e sono persino riuscito a mantenere in vita il Club degli Scrittori malgrado le sue apparenti tendenze suicide. Non male per</p>
---	--

<p>hometown. I suppose Clover has some good qualities too...I just can't think of any off the top of my head.</p> <p>Clover is a place where the pockets are small but the minds are even smaller. It's tiny and conservative, and most of the people are really set on living <i>and</i> dying here. Personally, I've never been able to hop on the bandwagon and have been publicly chastised because of it. Having aspirations to leave makes me the black sheep of the community.</p> <p>I'm sorry; I just can't muster up pride for a town whose most cosmopolitan area is the Taco Bell parking lot on a Saturday night. And although I've never lived anywhere else, I'm pretty sure normal Sweet Sixteens don't consist of group cow-tipping.</p> <p>When they built the first movie theater here, people lost their damn minds. I was only three, but I still remember people crying and cartwheeling in the streets. The line to see <i>You've Got Mail</i> circled the town.</p> <p>I pray we never get an airport—who knows what kind of cult- sacrificial suicides might occur?</p> <p>Yeah, I'm a little bitter because I'm one of <i>those</i> kids: bottom of the food chain, constantly teased, despised, an annoyance to everyone around them, most likely to find a pile of flaming manure on the roof of their car (oh yeah, it happened), but what prevents my life from being a sad after-school special is <i>I don't give a shiiiiit</i>. I can't reiterate enough, this town is full of morons!</p> <p>Whenever my pen pals from the online Northwestern chat rooms and forums ask me, "Where is Clover?" I'm usually forced to say, "It's where <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> ended up." And that's putting it nicely.</p> <p>Let's be honest: Go to the corner of Nothing and Nowhere, make a left, and you'll find Clover. It's one of those cities you pass along the side of a freeway, home to barely ten thousand citizens, that makes you ask yourself, "Who the fuck</p>	<p>un ragazzino cresciuto in una città dove il quesito intellettuale più frequente è 'mangerà davvero quelle uova verdi col prosciutto?'.</p> <p>Sto scherzando (più o meno). Vedi, non è mia intenzione criticare costantemente la mia città natale. Probabilmente Clover ha anche delle qualità, è solo che non me ne viene in mente nessuna.</p> <p>Clover è il tipico posto in cui le menti sono più ristrette delle tasche. È una città piccola e conservatrice e la cosa peggiore è che ci sono persone a cui va bene viverci <i>e</i> morirci. Sinceramente non ho mai sostenuto questa causa e la cosa mi ha procurato parecchia impopolarità: avere aspirazioni di andarmene fa di me la pecora nera della comunità.</p> <p>Mi dispiace, è solo che non riesco ad essere orgoglioso di vivere in una città in cui il top della vita sia andare a mangiare da Taco Bell il sabato sera. Anche se non ho mai vissuto altrove, sono abbastanza sicuro che la vita mondana dei normali giovani d'oggi non preveda lo zappare i campi in gruppo.</p> <p>Quando qui venne costruito il primo cinema, le persone persero letteralmente la testa. Avevo solo tre anni, ma riesco ancora a ricordare la gente che esultava e faceva i salti di gioia in mezzo alle strade. La coda per vedere <i>C'è posta per te</i> attraversò tutta la città.</p> <p>Prego che qui non venga mai costruito un aeroporto: chissà a che tipo di suicidi rituali porterebbe!</p> <p>Sì, sono un po' acido, ma è perché sono uno di <i>quei</i> ragazzi: quelli alla fine della catena alimentare, che hanno più probabilità di trovare una pila fumante di letame sulla loro macchina (esattamente, a me è successo), costantemente tormentati, odiati, e considerati fastidiosi da tutti quelli che hanno attorno. Vuoi sapere cosa impedisce alla mia vita di diventare una deprimente soap opera televisiva? Semplice: il fatto che non me ne frega un caaazzo. Non credo di poterlo mai ripetere abbastanza: questa città è piena di idioti.</p>
---	--

would live there?” Well, if you’ve recently asked yourself this in a car, the answer is, *This fucker*. Hi, I’m Carson Phillips, if I haven’t introduced myself formally.

I read once that all great writers have issues with their hometowns; guess I’m no exception. You can’t let your origins bring you down, though. You don’t get to pick where you’re from, but you always have control of where you’re going. (That’s a good quote; I’ll have to remember to say that if I’m ever receiving an honorary doctorate one day.)

But this all just fuels my fire even more. Ever since I was eight years old and got asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” and replied, “The editor of the *New Yorker*,” the looks I’d receive after the declaration—as if I had said “dragon slayer” or “transvestite golfer”—always pushed me a little closer to a metaphoric exit sign.

Perhaps that’s why my issues with Clover started at such a young age. I was constantly shot down by nitwits who couldn’t think outside the box—especially in elementary school, aka the first place they try to brainwash you in a small town.

Vuoi sapere cosa rispondo ogni volta che gli amici di penna con cui mi scrivo nelle chat e i forum della Northwestern mi chiedono com’è Clover? Rispondo che è in grado di far sembrare rilassante un racconto di Lovecraft, e giuro che è un modo carino per definirla.

Parliamoci chiaro: arriva alla fine di Nientopoli, prosegui in direzione del Nullistan, gira a sinistra e lì troverai Clover. È una di quelle città in cui vivono a malapena diecimila persone e che ti fanno sorgere la domanda 'chi cazzo potrebbe mai viverci lì?' quando ci passi vicino in autostrada. Beh, se te lo sei chiesto ultimamente mentre guidavi, la risposta è: questo sfigato qui. Non credo di essermi ancora presentato formalmente, vero? Piacere, sono Carson Phillips.

Una volta ho letto che tutti i grandi scrittori hanno problemi con la loro città natale e pare che io non faccia eccezione, ma non puoi permettere alle tue origini di limitarti. Non puoi scegliere da dove provieni, ma sta a te decidere in che direzione andare. Non male questa frase, dovrò ricordarmi di pronunciarla se mai riceverò una laurea ad honorem!

Tutto questo aggiunge solo benzina al fuoco della mia rabbia, comunque.

È da quando avevo otto anni che sogno di oltrepassare una metaforica uscita d'emergenza da questa città, da quando mi hanno chiesto per la prima volta cosa volessi fare da grande. Io risposi 'il direttore del *New Yorker*' e mi guardarono come se avessi detto 'l'ammazza draghi' o 'il golfista travestito'.

Ancora oggi reagiscono tutti allo stesso modo. Forse è per questo che i miei problemi con Clover sono cominciati a così tenera età, perché venivo sempre calpestato da zucconi che non vedevano al di là del loro naso. Specialmente alle elementari, alias il primo posto nelle piccole città dove cercano di farti il lavaggio del cervello.

10/18

CLOVERGATE *DIA CUATRO*

If I thought the night I caught Nicholas and Scott was my birthday, today must be Christmas. So *Feliz Navidad* to me! You'll understand this Spanish madness in a minute, don't worry. ...

Let me start this entry off by saying I've had a lot of morality issues since I started this whole blackmailing escapade. Even I, Carson Phillips, thick-skinned and virtually heartless, have a conscience. It started, of course, with Nicholas and Scott in the bathroom and has quietly been eating at me ever since.

Have these people made my life a living hell for the past four years? *Yes*. Do these people deserve being treated like this? *In my opinion, yes*. Am I a horrible person for doing this to them? *Maybe*. Is this the most selfish thing I've done to date? *Definitely*. Will the guilt I'm starting to feel outshine the greater good I'm trying to accomplish for the future? *Hopefully not*.

Am I a hero in this story, or am I the villain? Which side is the author of my first unauthorized biography going to take?

I also worry about the repercussions constantly. What if I get caught and "blackmailing" goes on my permanent record? Will Northwestern accept me with a scarlet letter? If not, then I'll *really* be stuck in Clover forever.

This kind of thinking puts me in weird depressing funks and I wish I hadn't flushed those pills Mom got for me.

It's such a gamble, and the stakes are so high. But no one ever got anywhere by sitting still, and I keep reminding myself of that. What I'm doing right now may be selfish and wrong, but I'm doing it for all the right reasons. So that validates it, right?

I've always thought I'm going straight to hell, and after this week, I've pretty much cemented my fate. I'm sure

18/10

CLOVEROPOLI *DIA CUATRO*

Ti ricordi che la sera in cui ho sorpreso Nicholas e Scott mi sono sentito felice come un bambino il giorno del suo compleanno? Bene, oggi mi sento felice come un bambino a Natale, quindi *feliz Navidad* a me! No, non sono impazzito, tranquillo. Capirai il perché di questa spagnolescente follia tra un attimo.

Lasciami prima mettere a verbale il fatto che da quando ho cominciato questa bravata del ricatto ho avuto parecchi problemi etici. Persino io, Carson Phillips, uomo fatto d'acciaio e dal cuore di pietra, ho una coscienza. Questi problemi sono ovviamente cominciati quando ho beccato Nicholas e Scott nel bagno, e da allora non ho pace.

Ragioniamo. Hanno reso la mia vita un inferno negli ultimi quattro anni? *Sì*. Meritano di essere trattati così? *A mio parere, sì*. Quello che sto facendo loro mi rende una persona orribile? *Probabilmente*. È questa la cosa più egoistica che io abbia fatto finora? *Sicuramente*. Il senso di colpa che comincia ad attanagliarmi metterà in ombra il bene maggiore per il quale sto lavorando? *Speriamo di no*.

Sono l'eroe di questa storia o sono forse il cattivo? E da che parte starà l'autore della mia prima biografia non autorizzata?

Anche le possibili ripercussioni mi danno parecchie preoccupazioni. Cosa succederebbe se venissi scoperto e bollato a vita come ricattatore? La Northwestern mi accetterebbe lo stesso con una lettera scarlatta? Se non dovesse accettarmi rimarrei *davvero* bloccato a Clover per sempre.

Questi pensieri sono talmente deprimenti che quasi mi pento di aver scaricato nel cesso le pillole che mi aveva dato mamma.

Corro molti rischi e la posta in gioco è alta, ma le cose nella vita non ti piovono dal cielo e devo tenerlo bene a mente. Quello che sto facendo può anche essere

<p>Vicki will be there too; maybe I'll finally get her to write for me down there.</p> <p>I just hope there's a <i>Daily Hell</i> I can write for. I could do witty editorials like "Hell: Hath It Lost Its Fury?" and maybe weekly updates on who is torturing whom. I'm guessing there will be a plethora of CEOs and politicians to interview. There won't be any religious groups to offend in hell, so I imagine I can write anything I want. Maybe it won't be so bad!</p> <p>Wait—am I actually positively depicting <i>hell</i>? Whoa, I've had a rough week.</p> <p>But then, after all these doubts and worries and macabre premonitions, a day comes along that makes me think God is on my side. Like he's sitting up in the clouds saying, "Here you go, kid, keep doing what you're doing!"</p> <p>And today, <i>that</i> message practically came with a bright red bow tied around it. I'll explain...</p> <p>Since I had a lot of success passing out the flyers, I went to the teachers' room to make copies of a poster I made advertising the publication of the literary magazine. I may have been a little full of myself, but I figured I'd be so busy working on the magazine over the next couple weeks I wouldn't have time to make them then.</p> <p>It's been two years since I taped over the lock on the teachers' room door and no one has noticed. I went to the copy machine and found a warning notice that had been put on it:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NO STUDENT USE ALLOWED</p> <p>Clearly, this was intended for me. I ripped it off and made five hundred copies; I wasn't going to miss a single corner of this school.</p> <p>While I was waiting for the copies to print, I heard a loud commotion from inside the supply room around the corner.</p> <p>"Quick, inside here!" I heard a woman's voice say.</p>	<p>egoistico e sbagliato, ma il fine giustifica i mezzi, no?</p> <p>Ho sempre pensato che sarei andato all'inferno e credo che quello che ho fatto questa settimana abbia definitivamente sancito la mia condanna. Penso che troverò anche Vicki lì e magari sarà la volta buona in cui la farò scrivere per me.</p> <p>Spero solo ci sia un giornale per cui possa scrivere, qualcosa tipo <i>La Gazzetta Infernale</i>. Scriverei editoriali taglienti come 'Diamine, è divertente la dannazione!' e magari aggiornamenti settimanali su chi tormenta chi. Penso ci sarà una pletera di amministratori delegati e politici da intervistare. Inoltre, non ci saranno comunità religiose che potrei offendere coi miei articoli, quindi potrò scrivere quello che voglio. Magari non sarà tanto male!</p> <p>Un attimo... Sto davvero trovando dei lati positivi del finire all'inferno? Cavolo, devo aver avuto una settimana proprio di merda.</p> <p>Ma all'improvviso, dopo tutti i dubbi, le preoccupazioni e le visioni macabre, è successa una cosa che mi ha fatto pensare che Dio sia dalla mia parte. Un po' come se l'avessi visto, lì seduto sulle nuvole, e avesse detto: "Ben fatto, ragazzino, continua così!".</p> <p>Oggi, questa immagine mi è stata praticamente servita su un piatto d'argento. Lascia che ti spieghi...</p> <p>Visto che coi ricatti stava andando tutto bene, ero andato nella sala professori a fare delle copie di un poster fatto con le mie mani per pubblicizzare la rivista letteraria. Penserai che fosse presuntuoso da parte mia, ma pensavo che nei giorni successivi sarei stato troppo impegnato a lavorare alla rivista per occuparmi di fare fotocopie.</p> <p>Sono ben due anni che entro ed esco dalla sala professori come mi pare e piace e nessuno si è mai accorto di niente. Sulla fotocopiatrice c'era un cartello fresco fresco di stampa:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">VIETATO L'USO AGLI STUDENTI</p>
--	--

<p>“¿Dónde está la estación de tren?” a man said.</p> <p>There’s a small and awkwardly placed window that sees right into the supply room (which actually inspired my theory that Clover High used to be an institute for the mentally insane). I peered in through the window, and in between the shelves of supplies I could see Emilio getting it on with <i>Ms. Hastings! Mr. Gifford’s receptionist!</i></p> <p>“I could get fired for this, and I really need that dental plan!” she squealed as Emilio kissed her neck.</p> <p>“<i>Necisito tomar prestado un libro de la biblioteca,</i>” Emilio said passionately.</p> <p>She slammed him against shelves of pens and staplers. It was kind of hot.</p> <p>“It’s normal for men to be with older women in your culture, right?” Ms. Hastings asked, suddenly getting self-conscious.</p> <p>“<i>Tenemos varias alpacas en la granja de mi padre,</i>” Emilio said.</p> <p>Ms. Hastings grabbed his neck and forcefully kissed him.</p> <p>“I have no idea what you’re saying, but you are so hot!” Ms. Hastings said, and shoved his face in her breasts. “And young, and tan, and imported! I feel like I’m in <i>Eat, Pray, Love!</i>”</p> <p>“<i>¡Por favor, pásame un pedazo de pollo frito!</i>” Emilio growled.</p> <p>“Wait,” I said to myself. “Pollo?” How was chicken brought up?</p> <p>Ms. Hastings slapped him. “Was that dirty talk? I love dirty talk.”</p> <p>She slammed him against rolls of butcher paper. I was starting to feel sorry for Emilio—he was getting the shit beat out of him. Maybe my theory about Ms. Hastings was wrong; maybe her ex-boyfriend was the one who was hiding from her.</p> <p>“You’re so Spangalicious, I love it!” Ms. Hastings screamed.</p> <p>Their breathing became louder and louder and louder, they pulled each other’s hair, tongues were united—it was</p>	<p>Chiaramente questo era stato messo per me, ma mi limitai a toglierlo e fare cinquecento copie del poster: avrei tappezzato tutta la scuola.</p> <p>Mentre aspettavo che la fotocopiatrice finisse, sentii uno strano rumore provenire dal magazzino lì accanto.</p> <p>“Svelto, qui dentro!” esclamò una donna.</p> <p>“¿Dónde está la estación de tren?” rispose un uomo.</p> <p>C’è una piccola finestrella poco visibile che permette di guardare direttamente nel magazzino (in realtà era stata proprio questa finestra a darmi l’idea che una volta questa scuola fosse un manicomio). Sbirciai dalla finestrella e tra uno scaffale e l’altro vidi Emilio che si dava allegramente da fare con la Signorina Hastings, la segretaria del Signor Grifford!</p> <p>“Potrei essere licenziata per questo, e ho davvero bisogno di quella assicurazione sanitaria!” Si mise a gemere mentre Emilio le baciava il collo.</p> <p>“<i>Necisito tomar prestado un libro de la biblioteca,</i>” rispose lui con passione.</p> <p>Lei lo sbatté contro scaffali coperti di penne e cucitrici e ammetto che fu una vista piuttosto eccitante.</p> <p>“Nel tuo paese è normale che i ragazzi vadano a letto con donne più mature, vero?” chiese lei, come se improvvisamente si facesse scrupoli.</p> <p>“<i>Tenemos varias alpacas en la granja de mi padre,</i>” disse lui.</p> <p>La segretaria lo afferrò per il collo e lo baciò con trasporto.</p> <p>“Non capisco una parola di quello che dici, ma sei così fico!” disse lei schiaffando il suo viso tra le sue tette. “E giovane, e abbronzato, e importato! Mi sembra di essere in <i>Mangia, prega, ama!</i>”</p> <p>“<i>¡Por favor, pásame un pedazo de pollo frito!</i>” Emilio ansimò.</p> <p>Un attimo, pensai tra me e me. “Pollo?” Cosa c’entrava il pollo?</p> <p>La Signorina Hastings lo schiaffeggiò. “Stavi dicendo porcherie? Adoro quando gli uomini lo fanno.”</p>
---	--

Fifty Shades of Gringo!

“Ms. Hastings?” a voice from outside the teachers’ room said.

“*Coming!*” Ms. Hastings peeped. I’m certain it was a double entendre.

Emilio tried following her out the door but she stopped him from doing so and disappeared into the hallway. I wanted Emilio to wash his hands just so I could shake them. Even *I* needed a cigarette after that.

Emilio’s cell phone rang. “¿*Hola?*” he said. He looked around to make sure he was alone. I ducked behind the copy machine. “Hey, what’s happening, bro?” he said.

Wait a second, I thought to myself, *did he just—?*

“Nothing, I was just feeling up a receptionist,” he said ... *in perfect English!* “I’m one away from beating my record, man! This morning I literally put the ‘dic’ in ‘valedictorian!’”

He looked up and saw me on the other side of the window. *El panic loco.*

“I’ll call you back, bro,” Emilio said.

We. Need. To. Chat, I mouthed at him.

I texted Malerie immediately. I figured I could use a hand with this one.

“I’m taking the PSAT,” Malerie texted back.

“I’m tired of your excuses, Malerie!” I texted.

Ten minutes later, Malerie and I were in the journalism classroom, shining a bright lamp in Emilio’s face. Malerie even had her camcorder aimed right at him. It was just like *Law & Order*, except not predictable.

“So, *Emilio*, how long have you been a *fornicating exchange student?*” I said, feeling clever. “And I would tune down the Telemundo. Malerie is in Spanish Four; she knows a fake Spaniard when she sees one.”

“*Sí.*” Malerie nodded. “I’m also fluent in Celtic and Elvish. Now speak! What aren’t you telling us?” Clearly,

Poi lo spinse contro degli scatoloni di carta riciclata. Cominciai a sentirmi male per Emilio, la tizia lo stava praticamente pestando a sangue. Forse la mia teoria sulla Signorina Hastings era sbagliata, forse era il suo ragazzo che si nascondeva da lei, non il contrario.

“Sei così spagnoleggiante, lo adoro!” urlò la signorina Hastings.

I loro sospiri non facevano che aumentare di volume, si tiravano i capelli a vicenda, le loro lingue parevano attaccate con la colla... era praticamente *Cinquanta sfumature di gringo!*

“Signorina Hastings?” chiamò una voce fuori dalla sala insegnanti.

“Vengo!” rispose lei. Sono sicuro che il doppio senso fosse voluto.

Emilio provò a seguirla fuori, ma lei lo fermò e uscì in corridoio. Avrei voluto che Emilio si lavasse le mani solo per potergliele stringere. Persino a *me* serviva una sigaretta dopo questa scena!

A questo punto, il telefono di Emilio squillò. “¿*Hola?*” disse, prima di guardarsi attorno per verificare di essere solo. Io mi nascosi dietro una fotocopiatrice. “Ehi, come butta, fratello?” chiese.

Un attimo, pensai, per caso ha appena...?

“Niente, mi stavo solo facendo una segretaria,” disse... in perfetto inglese! “Me ne manca una per battere il mio record, amico! Giusto stamattina ho testato le capacità orali di una del club di dibattito!”

Alzò la testa e vide me che lo guardavo dall’altro lato della finestrella. *El panic loco.*

“Ti richiamo, fratello,” disse.

Noi dobbiamo parlare, mi lesse dalle labbra. Mandai un messaggio a Malerie perché mi aiutasse con lui. Mi arrivò subito la sua risposta: ‘ma sto facendo il test di ammissione all’università’. Al che le risposi ‘sono stufo delle tue scuse, Malerie’.

Dieci minuti dopo, Malerie ed io stavamo puntando una lampada in faccia a

<p>Malerie was back in character. “Is Emilio even your real name?”</p> <p>Emilio sank into his seat and lowered his head in shame. “My real name is Henry Capperwinkle,” he said.</p> <p>I tried my best not to burst out laughing hysterically but my eyes watered and my shoulders pulsed up and down. <i>Henry Capperwinkle?! Was he serious?! I’m laughing right now thinking about it. That shit is funny!</i></p> <p>“I’m from San Diego, not El Salvador,” Henry said.</p> <p>“Sea World! I knew it! He smelled very faintly of dolphin,” Malerie said, and pointed at him. “What else? Tell us the truth!”</p> <p>I just stayed quiet and let her do her thing.</p> <p>“The only Spanish I know is from level-one <i>Rosetta Stone</i>, which I stole,” Henry said. “I’ve been saying the same ten phrases over and over again and no one seems to notice. The people here are total idiots!”</p> <p>“Huh,” I said. He made an interesting point.</p> <p>“Please don’t tell my host family,” he said.</p> <p>“But why would you do this?” I asked him, much more intrigued than resentful. You know me: I kind of respect anyone working the system to their advantage.</p> <p>“Are you kidding? For just a couple hundred bucks a month I get food and housing,” he said as his focus faded off. “And <i>girls</i>. Girls like nothing more than a guy who speaks a little Spanish. Just a little ‘rrrrrrr’ of the tongue drives them crazy.”</p> <p>“It all makes sense now,” Malerie said. “All those <i>Doctor Who</i> e- cards I sent you in Spanish—they meant nothing to you!”</p> <p>“How long have you been doing this?” I asked.</p> <p>“A couple years,” Henry said. “It was a buddy of mine’s idea. He goes to Lincoln High. They think he’s Nigerian.</p>	<p>Emilio nell'aula di giornalismo. Malerie lo stava persino riprendendo con la videocamera. Sembrava di essere in <i>Law & Order</i>, ma senza la componente di prevedibilità.</p> <p>“Dunque, 'Emilio', da quanto sei uno studente straniero scopaiolo?” gli chiesi sentendomi sagace. “E io la smetterei con questa farsa. Malerie studia spagnolo a scuola da anni e riconosce un finto spagnolo quando ne vede uno.”</p> <p>“Claro,” Malerie annuì. “Parlo bene anche il celtico e l'elfico. Adesso parla! Cosa non ci stai dicendo?” Malerie era chiaramente tornata nel personaggio. “Almeno ti chiami davvero Emilio?”</p> <p>Emilio incurvò le spalle e abbassò lo sguardo dalla vergogna prima di dire: “Il mio vero nome è Henry Pigporck.”</p> <p>Mi trattenei per non scoppiargli a ridere in faccia, ma le mie spalle tremavano dallo sforzo e avevo le lacrime agli occhi. <i>Henry Pigporck?! Ma faceva sul serio?? Rido adesso solo ripensandoci. Andiamo, è esilarante!</i></p> <p>“Vengo da San Diego, non da El Salvador,” aggiunse Henry.</p> <p>“Il Sea World! Ecco perché odorava vagamente di delfino! Lo sapevo,” disse Malerie puntandogli il dito contro. “Che altro ci nascondi? Parla!”</p> <p>Io restai in silenzio e le lasciai fare tutto il lavoro.</p> <p>“L'unico spagnolo che so l'ho imparato da un <i>Rosetta Stone</i> di primo livello che ho persino rubato. Non ho fatto altro che ripetere sempre le stesse dieci frasi e nessuno se n'è mai accorto. È pieno di imbecilli qui!”</p> <p>Effettivamente non aveva tutti i torti.</p> <p>“Per favore, non ditelo alla famiglia che mi ospita,” ci supplicò.</p> <p>“Ma perché ti sei inventato questa farsa?” gli chiesi. Non perché fossi arrabbiato, anzi. Sai che non posso fare a meno di ammirare chiunque inganni il sistema per trarne vantaggio.</p> <p>“Stai scherzando? Ho vitto e alloggio per meno di duecento verdoni al</p>
--	--

<p>The guy is white as rice but no one looks into it because they're afraid it'll seem racist if they do.”</p> <p>I just stared at him. I was totally impressed, but I wasn't going to let him know that.</p> <p>“Dude, you can't blame me,” he said.</p> <p>“Yeah, I can,” I said. “I can blame you <i>mucho</i>.” Luckily, I had one more yellow flyer left I had been planning on saving for a scrapbook. “This is for you, <i>si se puedeophile</i>.”</p> <p>After school, Malerie and I pinned Emilio's picture to the Clovergate board and put an X through it. Clovergate Day Four has been an unexpected success!</p> <p><i>Yo soy un afortunado hijo de puta!</i> Which, according to Google translation, means: <i>I am one lucky son of a bitch!</i></p>	<p>mese,” disse prima di assumere un'aria inebetita. “E poi ci sono le ragazze. Non c'è niente che adorino di più di un ragazzo che parla spagnolo. Basta una piccola <i>rrrrrrrotazione</i> con la lingua per farle diventare matte.”</p> <p>“Ora è tutto chiaro,” disse Malerie. “Se penso a tutti i bigliettini in spagnolo del Dottor Who che ti avevo mandato... Non hanno mai significato niente per te!”</p> <p>“Da quanto tempo lo fai?” chiesi io.</p> <p>“Un paio d'anni. Fu un mio amico ad avere l'idea. Lui adesso è al liceo Lincoln di Brooklyn. Ha detto di essere nigeriano anche se è bianco come il latte, e nessuno gli chiede niente per paura di sembrare razzista.”</p> <p>Mi limitai a fissarlo. Ero davvero impressionato, ma sarei morto piuttosto che ammetterlo.</p> <p>“Non puoi incolpare me, vecchio!” disse.</p> <p>“Sì, invece,” risposi. “Posso <i>mucho</i> incolparti.” Fortuna che avevo conservato uno dei miei volantini gialli per tenerlo per ricordo. “Questo è per te, <i>si se puedeofilo</i>.”</p> <p>Alla fine delle lezioni, Malerie ed io attaccammo la foto di Emilio alla nostra lavagna del progetto Cloveropoli e la sbarrammo con una X. Il quarto giorno del Cloveropoli è stato un successo inaspettato!</p> <p><i>Yo soy un afortunado hijo de puta!</i> Che, secondo il traduttore di Google, significa: sono un fortunato figlio di puttana!</p>
---	--

11/2

Malerie and I were hanging out in the journalism classroom today after school (I swear I am one pillow and blanket away from making it my official residence). We were going through piles and piles of “her writing” that could be submitted for the magazine. I’m still helping her out with this whole “satire” thing.

My cell phone started ringing, which is an odd thing since it’s rung twice since I got it. (Usually it’s just Mom asking me if I can pick her up some Midol and a box of Good & Plenty on the way home from Grandma’s.)

“I just turn my phone off while I’m at school so I don’t hear it not ringing,” Malerie said. Even more shocking was who was calling me. Honestly, it was the last person in the world I ever expected to hear from.

“Who is it?” Malerie asked.

“My dad,” I said. I was so flabbergasted I almost forgot how to answer the phone. “Hello?” I said tentatively.

“Hey, Carson,” he said. “I didn’t mean to call you after school; I’m sure you’re busy with your homework and so forth.”

It was so weird to hear his voice. It felt a little like he was a deceased family member communicating to me from the beyond.

“Anyway,” he went on, never pausing for air, “I have some really exciting news to tell you. I’m getting married! Her name is April and we’re expecting a baby! You’re going to have a baby brother!”

I almost *shat* my pants. Literally, the floor was almost covered in my *shat*. “You’ve got to be shitting me,” was all I could say, hence the choice of words.

“Yes, we’re very happy, thank you,” Dad said. “Anyway, she wants to meet you, so is there any way you could make it over for dinner sometime soon?”

02/11

Oggi dopo scuola Malerie ed io ci siamo trovati a lavorare nell'aula di giornalismo (giuro che mi basterebbero un cuscino ed una coperta per trasferirmi lì definitivamente). La sto ancora aiutando con quel discorso della 'parodia', quindi abbiamo dato un'occhiata a tutto quello che ha 'scritto' per trovare qualcosa che possa essere inserito nella rivista letteraria.

Ad un certo punto, il mio cellulare si mise a squillare, e già questo era anomalo visto che non mi chiama mai nessuno (in genere solo mamma, che mi chiede di prenderle antidolorifici e caramelle mentre torno dalla casa di riposo).

“Di solito spengo il telefono quando sono a scuola, così non devo sentirlo non suonare,” mi disse Malerie. Ancora più sorprendente era la persona che mi stava chiamando, l'ultima persona che mi sarei mai aspettato di sentire.

“Chi è?” chiese Malerie.

“Mio padre,” risposi. Ero così basito che praticamente non ricordavo come si usasse il telefono. “Pronto?” quasi esitai a chiedere.

“Ciao, Carson,” disse lui. “Mi spiace chiamarti dopo scuola, quando probabilmente sei impegnato coi compiti e cose così.”

Era strano sentire la sua voce. Un po' come se un parente morto cercasse di comunicare con me dall'oltretomba.

“Comunque,” andò avanti senza mai interrompersi per respirare, “ho delle notizie davvero eccitanti da darti. Sto per sposarmi! Lei si chiama April e presto avremo un bambino! Avrai un fratellino!”

Mi cadde letteralmente la mascella. Giuro, non sto scherzando. “Mi stai prendendo per il culo,” fu tutto quello che riuscì a uscire dalla mia bocca dolorante.

“Sì, siamo molto felici, ti ringrazio,” rispose mio padre. “Comunque, lei vorrebbe incontrarti, quindi riusciresti a venire a cena da noi un giorno di questi? Diciamo, stasera alle otto?”

Say, eight o'clock tonight?"

I'm not crazy for thinking that this is a totally fucked-up situation, right?

"I'd have to think about it," I said. My head was spinning so fast I'm not sure if I even knew my own name.

"Please do—in fact I'd really appreciate it," Dad said. "Hope to see you soon!"

"Okay," I said, and got off the phone.

"What happened?" Malerie asked me.

I wasn't sure myself, so all I could do was relay the bullet points of what my brain was still trying to process. "Apparently my dad is getting married."

"Congratulations!" Malerie said, and raised her hand to give a high five. I didn't respond.

"I guess," I said. "He wants me to have dinner tonight with his fiancée and, well, *baby mama*."

"Are you going to go?" she asked me.

I didn't know. I hadn't even thought about whether I was going to attend this...*event*. "I'm not sure," I said. "Things are complicated between me and my dad because there is absolutely nothing between the two of us. Does that make sense?"

"Totally," Malerie said. "Things are awkward between me and my dad too. He doesn't really have a relationship with me, because he doesn't know I exist."

"Oh," I said. "Sorry to hear that."

She totally just *one-upped* me on the deadbeat-dad situation. Now I *really* feel like I have to go. Oh well, I guess it couldn't be that bad. It'd be nice to have a meal that wasn't microwaved for a change, assuming this woman was cooking.

No wonder Dad came over to have Mom sign the divorce papers— that sneaky bastard! And I didn't think about Mom. How in hell am I going to break the news to her?

Non sono l'unico a pensare che sia tutto un fottuto casino, vero?

"Ci devo pensare," risposi. Ero talmente confuso da non ricordare più nemmeno il mio nome.

"Fallo, per favore. Lo apprezzerai molto, davvero. Spero di vederti presto!"

"Ok," dissi prima di riagganciare.

"Che è successo?" mi chiese Malerie.

Non lo sapevo con certezza nemmeno io, quindi l'unica cosa che riuscii a fare fu dirle il poco che mi era chiaro di quella conversazione. "Pare che mio padre stia per sposarsi."

"Congratulazioni!" disse Malerie e alzò la mano per darmi il cinque. Io non ricambiai il gesto.

"Grazie, credo. Vuole che vada a cena da lui stasera per conoscere la sua fidanzata e, beh, futura mamma."

"Pensi di andarci?" mi chiese.

Non ne ero sicuro. Non avevo ancora deciso se andare o no a questo... evento. "Non ne ho idea. I rapporti sono tesi tra me e mio padre perché non abbiamo mai avuto nessun rapporto. Ha senso ciò che dico?"

"Assolutamente," disse Malerie. "Anche il mio rapporto con mio padre è complicato. Non andiamo molto d'accordo, specie perché lui non sa che esisto."

"Ah. Mi spiace."

Mi aveva appena stracciato nel gioco 'chi ha il padre più di merda'. Adesso mi sento *davvero* obbligato ad andare. Va beh, non può andare così male. Sarà piacevole mangiare qualcosa fatto in casa per una volta, ammesso e non concesso che questa donna sappia cucinare.

Adesso capisco perché papà è andato da mamma a farsi firmare l'istanza di divorzio. Infido bastardo! Oddio, non oso pensare a come la prenderà mamma. Come cazzo farò a dirglielo?

<p>11/2 again</p> <p>It's just before midnight and I'm back from what has to have been one of the most uncomfortable and awkward dinners in the history of mankind. I'm telling you, the Last Supper has nothing on this.</p> <p>It started with me rehearsing in the bathroom mirror for almost an hour what I was going to say to Mom. The best way I could think of breaking it to her started with me saying, "Mom, you know that episode of <i>Dr. Phil</i> you saved?" So I figured the best thing for me to do was to just sneak out of the house.</p> <p>I walked past the living room to the door as quickly and as quietly as I possibly could. Of course, the one time she's conscious at seven-thirty in the evening had to be tonight. To make matters worse, she was in the middle of watching one of those Lifetime movies about a woman suffering from domestic violence, so I knew she was already not in a good state of mind to hear this.</p> <p>"Where are you going?" she asked from the couch.</p> <p>"I..." It took me a while just to say that. "I'm going to dinner with Dad." It still surprised the hell out of both of us.</p> <p>"Why?" Mom asked.</p> <p>"Um..." I said. This was the moment I'd been dreading. "Apparently, he's getting married."</p> <p>It took a few seconds for Mom to process the information.</p> <p>"Oh, really?" she said. "I didn't know that. Good for him." Her eyes immediately went toward the television, but I knew she wasn't watching it. Her eyes became watery as she held in whatever was building up inside her.</p> <p>My own heart felt like it had fallen out of my body just telling her; I couldn't imagine what <i>she</i> must have felt like. Mom and I have had our issues, but no child should ever have to see their parent look like that.</p> <p>"He wants me to go meet his</p>	<p>02/11 di nuovo</p> <p>È quasi mezzanotte e sono appena tornato a casa dalla cena più spiacevole e imbarazzante nella storia dell'umanità. Seriatamente, l'Ultima Cena era niente al confronto.</p> <p>Tutto è cominciato con me chiuso in bagno per quasi un'ora per decidere come dirlo a mamma. Il modo migliore che ero riuscito a trovare cominciava con: "Mamma, ti ricordi quella puntata di <i>Dr. Phil</i> che avevi registrato?". Alla fine decisi che la cosa migliore da fare sarebbe stata limitarmi a uscire furtivamente di casa.</p> <p>Zitto zitto oltrepassai il salotto e mi avviai verso la porta d'ingresso, ma giustamente l'unica volta in cui mamma è cosciente alle sette e mezzo di sera doveva essere proprio stasera. Come se non bastasse, stava guardando un film strappalacrime su una donna vittima di violenza domestica, quindi sicuramente non era dell'umore migliore per ricevere questa notizia.</p> <p>"Dove stai andando?" mi chiese dal divano.</p> <p>"Sto..." ci impiegai un po' solo per dirlo. "Sto andando a cena da papà." Non sembrava ancora fottutamente vero a nessuno di noi.</p> <p>"Perché?"</p> <p>"Mmm..." proprio quello che temevo mi chiedesse. "Pare che stia per sposarsi."</p> <p>Mamma ci mise qualche secondo a elaborare quello che avevo appena detto.</p> <p>"Ah, davvero? Non lo sapevo. Buon per lui." I suoi occhi tornarono sulla televisione, ma sapevo che non la stava guardando per davvero: le tremava il mento ed era chiaro che si stava trattenendo dallo scoppiare a piangere.</p> <p>Se il <i>mio</i> cuore si era spezzato anche solo a dirglielo, non riesco a immaginare cosa stesse provando lei. Mamma ed io non andiamo sempre d'accordo, vero, ma un figlio non dovrebbe mai vedere un genitore in questo stato.</p> <p>"Vuole presentarmi la sua</p>
---	--

<p>fiancée, so that's where I'm headed," I said.</p> <p>"Have fun," Mom said. "Get home at a decent hour ... and all that parenting shit."</p> <p>"Okay," I said. "Bye, Mom. <i>Love you.</i>"</p> <p>I didn't want to leave her, but I was almost glad I wasn't going to be there for the rest of the night. I didn't want to witness how Mom was going to handle it. I knew it wouldn't be pretty.</p> <p>I got into my car, did my series of tricks to get it started, and drove off hating the night before it had even started.</p> <p>Dad texted me April's address, where they apparently had been living together for the last seven months. Way to drop a line, <i>Dad</i>.</p> <p>Her house was in a really nice part of town. It was painted yellow with white trim and had a picket fence around the front yard. There was even a <i>welcome mat</i>. It completely threw me off. I had no idea what to expect.</p> <p>I still don't know why this woman would have moved to Clover. Dad must have convinced April the suburbs were a good place to raise a child. Is there a gene in women that makes them all secretly want to be June Cleaver? Clearly, there was one in April.</p> <p>I rang the doorbell, which was positioned on the stomach of a kitty-cat doorbell cover. It was weirdly sweet. It made the house seem like the kind of place you'd eat freshly baked cookies or get murdered in. You know what I mean?</p> <p>"I'll get it, I'll get it," I heard my dad say. He opened the door. "Hey, Carson, come on in."</p> <p>It was a little jarring seeing my dad for the first time in so long. His hair was much grayer now and we were the same height. We awkwardly shook hands, each afraid to grip the other's.</p> <p>"Good to see you, buddy, thanks for coming over," he said, and showed me into the kitchen. Everything in the house was so clean and put together, it made</p>	<p>fidanzata, quindi sto andando da loro."</p> <p>"Divertiti. Non fare tardi... e tutte quelle stronzate che ti dovrebbe dire un genitore."</p> <p>"Ok. A dopo, mamma. Ti voglio bene."</p> <p>Anche se non mi andava di lasciarla sola, ero quasi sollevato di non vedere come si sarebbe sfogata. Sapevo che non sarebbe stato un bello spettacolo.</p> <p>Entrai in macchina, usai i soliti trucchi per farla partire e mi avviai. Già odiavo la serata anche se non era ancora nemmeno cominciata.</p> <p>Mio padre mi aveva mandato un messaggio con l'indirizzo di casa di April. Pare che abbiano vissuto lì insieme durante gli ultimi sette mesi. Gran bel modo di dirmelo, <i>papà</i>.</p> <p>Casa di April si trovava in una bella zona della città. Era gialla con le rifiniture bianche. Una staccionata delimitava il giardino anteriore e aveva persino un tappetino d'ingresso. Ero decisamente sorpreso e non sapevo davvero cosa aspettarmi.</p> <p>Proprio non mi è chiaro perché questa donna si sia trasferita a Clover. Papà deve averla convinta che la periferia è il posto ideale in cui crescere un figlio. Le donne hanno forse un gene segreto che le spinge a diventare come Marge Simpson? April sicuramente ce l'ha.</p> <p>Suonai il campanello, che era graziosamente incastonato in un copri-campanello a forma di gattino. Almeno credo che fosse grazioso. Faceva sembrare quella casa il classico posto in cui vengono cucinati biscottini... o commessi omicidi. Mi capisci?</p> <p>"Vado io, vado io," sentii mio padre dire prima che aprisse la porta. "Ehi, Carson. Entra pure."</p> <p>Era spiazzante rivedere mio padre dopo tanto tempo. I suoi capelli erano diventati brizzolati e ormai ero alto quanto lui. Ci stringemmo le mani con un po' di imbarazzo, come se ciascuno di noi fosse a disagio a toccare l'altro.</p> <p>"È bello vederti, figliolo. Grazie</p>
---	---

<p>Mom's house look like an episode of <i>Hoarders</i>.</p> <p>"And this is April," Dad said. He referred to the woman standing in the kitchen. I had to do a double take; I couldn't believe what I was seeing. She was beautiful, with bright red hair and fair skin. Her eyes were big and bright, but in a really pleasant way, not in a substance-abuse way.</p> <p>"Hi, Carson!" she said happily. "It's so nice to meet you."</p> <p>"You too," I said, and shook her hand. "Are you by chance a trademark of the Walt Disney Company?"</p> <p>"Huh?" she asked.</p> <p>"He's joking. He's very sarcastic," Dad said.</p> <p>"Oh, I get it," she said. "That's very sweet, thank you." She put her hands on her pregnant belly and from then on I had a hard time taking my eyes off it all night. It was so weird to think there was a baby cooking inside there that shared DNA with me.</p> <p>"Let's eat, shall we?" Dad said.</p> <p>Dinner was mostly quiet, with short-lived small-talk topics. I couldn't stop eating—the food was amazing. I kept waiting for April to start talking to herself or see an imaginary animal walking around the house or something crazy; there had to be something wrong with her. Otherwise, why was she engaged to Dad?</p> <p>"Your dad tells me you're quite popular at school?" April asked me.</p> <p>I snorted. "No, I'm active but not popular."</p> <p>"He's part of the Newspaper Club," Dad said.</p> <p>"Actually, I'm president of the Writers' Club, editor of the school newspaper, and just started a school literary magazine," I corrected him.</p> <p>"Well, check you out!" April said warmly. I hated how easy it was to like this woman. "You must get really good grades!"</p> <p>"He does okay," Dad said.</p> <p>"I have a four point two," I said,</p>	<p>per essere venuto," disse e mi fece strada verso la cucina. Tutto era talmente pulito e in ordine da far sembrare la casa di mamma una pattumiera.</p> <p>"E lei è April," disse papà indicandomi la donna in cucina. Giuro che dovetti stropicciarmi gli occhi perché non credevo a quello che vedevo. April era bellissima: aveva la pelle chiara e lucenti capelli rossi. I suoi occhi erano grandi e luminosi, ma non vacui come quelli dei drogati.</p> <p>"Ciao, Carson!" disse allegramente. "È un piacere fare la tua conoscenza."</p> <p>"Anche per me," risposi stringendole la mano. "Per caso sei uscita da un film della Disney?"</p> <p>"Come?" mi chiese.</p> <p>"Sta scherzando. È un ragazzo molto sarcastico," disse mio padre.</p> <p>"Ah, ora l'ho capita," disse lei. "Sei molto carino, grazie." Si mise le mani sul pancione e dal quel momento fino alla fine della serata mi fu difficile guardare altro. Era così strano pensare che lì stava lievitando un bambino con il quale condividevo parte del DNA.</p> <p>"Mangiamo, vi va?" chiese mio padre.</p> <p>La cena fu silenziosa, salvo per qualche raro scambio di parole sul nulla. Non riuscivo a smettere di mangiare, era tutto ottimo. Aspettavo solo che April cominciasse a parlare da sola o ad avere allucinazioni deliranti riguardo animali immaginari o qualcosa del genere. Doveva esserci qualcosa che non andava in lei, altrimenti perché stava con papà?</p> <p>"Tuo padre mi ha detto che sei popolare a scuola, giusto?" mi chiese April.</p> <p>Le risi quasi in faccia. "No, sono attivo, ma non popolare."</p> <p>"Fa parte del Club di Giornalismo," disse mio padre.</p> <p>"Veramente sono il presidente del Club degli Scrittori, il direttore del giornale scolastico e ho appena cominciato ad occuparmi di una rivista letteraria," lo corressi.</p>
---	---

<p>annoyed with him now. He didn't know me well enough to know what my grades were. "I would have a four point five, but I tend to argue with the teachers about their lesson plans, so ..."</p> <p>"Do you play any sports?" April asked. I didn't even have the urge to throw up on her after she asked that question, that's how sweet she was.</p> <p>Dad started laughing. "God knows I tried," he said. "We'd always go down to the park and throw a ball around, but he never showed any interest."</p> <p>"Did we?" I said with a mouth full of food.</p> <p>"I quickly realized I wasn't going to get the major-leaguer I was hoping for," Dad said. "He kind of threw like a girl."</p> <p>And then I got it—Dad was pretending to be something other than the selfish asshole he had been my entire life. April might have loved hearing this bullshit, but I had had enough of it.</p> <p>"Dad, we never did that."</p> <p>"Sure we did—you just don't remember," Dad quickly shot back at me.</p> <p>"No, I would have remembered something like that."</p> <p>"He's just exaggerating," Dad said, looking straight at April, as if I wasn't in the room anymore. "He has this creative imagination. I think it's what makes him such a good writer."</p> <p>"Dad, who are you pretending to be?" I borderline shouted at him. "You left how many years ago and I've seen you maybe <i>twice</i> since then?"</p> <p>"Carson, you're young, maybe you don't understand." Dad said.</p> <p>"You're right, I don't understand!" I said. "I don't understand how you could abandon your old family and act like everything is okay in front of the new one!"</p> <p>April's eyes fell to her plate.</p> <p>"Your mom was unstable," Dad said.</p> <p>"Yeah, I know," I said. "And you left me with her. What kind of father does that?"</p>	<p>"Ma guardati un po'!" disse lei con calore. Odiavo quanto fosse facile apprezzarla. "Devi avere ottimi voti!"</p> <p>"Se la cava," disse mio padre.</p> <p>"Ho praticamente la media del dieci," dissi io, cominciando a sentirmi irritato. Non sapeva nemmeno che media avessi. "Potrei fare anche di meglio, ma tendo a litigare coi professori sul programma, quindi..."</p> <p>"Pratichi qualche sport?" mi chiese lei. Era talmente dolce che non mi venne nemmeno da vomitarle addosso per avermelo chiesto.</p> <p>Mio padre si mise a ridere. "Dio sa che ci ho provato. Andavamo sempre al parco per fare qualche tiro, ma non gli è mai interessato."</p> <p>"Davvero?" gli chiesi con la bocca piena.</p> <p>"Ho capito presto che non avrei mai avuto il figlio sportivo che desideravo. Tirava come le femmine."</p> <p>In quel momento, capii. Stava fingendo di essere un padre modello quando non aveva fatto altro che essere uno stronzo egoista per tutta la mia vita. Magari ad April piacevano le sue stronzate, ma io ne avevo avuto abbastanza.</p> <p>"Non lo abbiamo mai fatto, papà."</p> <p>"Certo che l'abbiamo fatto, è solo che tu non te lo ricordi," replicò immediatamente.</p> <p>"No, me lo ricorderei."</p> <p>"Sta solo esagerando," disse ad April come se io non fossi più nella stanza. "Ha una fervida immaginazione. Penso sia proprio quella a renderlo uno scrittore tanto capace."</p> <p>"Ma chi stai fingendo di essere?" quasi gli urlai contro. "Te ne sei andato anni fa e quante volte ti ho visto da allora? Due?"</p> <p>"Sei giovane, Carson, forse non capisci."</p> <p>"Hai ragione, non capisco! Non capisco come hai potuto abbandonare la tua vecchia famiglia e fare come se niente fosse davanti alla nuova!"</p> <p>April guardò il piatto.</p>
---	--

<p>“Carson, I can only say ‘sorry’ so many times,” Dad said. The funny thing was he had never said it once. I must have inherited that from him.</p> <p>“Thank you for dinner, April. It was lovely,” I said, and got up from the table. “But I have to go now.”</p> <p>I walked right past my dad, not even able to look him in the eye, and walked out the front door. It suddenly became very clear to me what that dinner had been; it was Dad’s way of authenticating something with April. He had tried using me, and it didn’t work.</p> <p>Adults can really suck more than teenagers sometimes.</p> <p>I was so mad it felt like I got home in a matter of seconds. I cautiously entered the house, not knowing what state I was going to find Mom in. She was passed out on the couch. Balled-up clumps of tissue were everywhere. She had obviously cried herself to sleep. She was also clutching a framed portrait of her, Dad, and me taken years ago.</p> <p>I turned off the television and covered Mom with a blanket. It’s amazing how many lives one person can ruin.</p> <p>I just hope Mom is going to be all right once I’m gone. There’s only so much you can do over the phone.</p>	<p>“Tua madre era instabile,” disse lui.</p> <p>“Sì, lo so. E mi hai lasciato solo con lei. Che razza di padre fa una cosa simile?”</p> <p>“Carson, non posso chiedere scusa all’infinito.” La cosa buffa era che non lo aveva mai fatto. Credo di aver preso da lui.</p> <p>“Grazie per la cena, April. È stato un piacere,” dissi alzandomi da tavola. “Ma devo proprio andare.”</p> <p>Passai proprio accanto a mio padre, ma non riuscii a guardarlo negli occhi. Una volta fuori, capii finalmente a cosa serviva questa cena: papà voleva provare qualcosa ad April e per farlo gli servivo io. Peccato che non abbia funzionato.</p> <p>A volte gli adulti fanno più schifo dei teenager.</p> <p>Ero così arrabbiato che mi sembrò di arrivare a casa in un lampo. Entrai cautamente, non sapendo in che condizioni avrei trovato mamma. Si era sicuramente addormentata piangendo: era sdraiata sul divano, circondata da fazzolettini appallottolati e teneva stretta una foto incorniciata di lei, papà ed io di anni fa.</p> <p>Spensi la televisione e le misi sopra una coperta. È incredibile quante vite possa rovinare una persona sola.</p> <p>Spero solo che mamma se la cavi quando me ne sarò andato. Non si può fare più di tanto al telefono.</p>
---	---

SUMMARY IN ITALIAN

Questa tesi propone al lettore l'analisi e traduzione di alcune parti tratte dal libro *Struck by Lightning: The Carson Phillips Journal* scritto dal giovane autore americano Christopher Colfer. Questo libro, pubblicato nel 2012, non è ancora stato tradotto in italiano, malgrado altri libri di questo autore siano stati invece portati nel nostro paese. Dato lo stile giovanile, il registro informale e il contenuto irriverente, è mia personale opinione che questo libro potrebbe essere una buona lettura per i ragazzi dai quindici ai venticinque anni, soprattutto considerato che temi particolarmente rilevanti per questo periodo di estremo cambiamento sono toccati con la leggerezza e sensibilità di un giovane uomo. Di questo libro, strutturato come un diario, e scritto quindi dal punto di vista del protagonista, ho selezionato tre parti, che ho poi proceduto ad analizzare e tradurre. Successivamente, ho preso in considerazione quegli aspetti della teoria della traduzione che più mi sembravano rilevanti per giustificare alcune scelte fatte durante il lavoro di traduzione. Partendo quindi dal romanzo in sé, l'attenzione è stata poi spostata sulla teoria che è alla base della traduzione, e che viene usata nell'ambito della traduzione intesa come professione. Alla fine della tesi, vengono presentati alcuni estratti presi dalle parti del romanzo che ho selezionato in cui viene applicata la teoria discussa e analizzata fino a quel momento.

Il Capitolo 1 riguarda Christopher Colfer e il suo romanzo trattato in questa tesi. Il primo aspetto a essere considerato nel paragrafo 1.1 è la vita di Colfer, assieme alla sua produzione letteraria e alla sua produzione cinematografica. Chris Colfer nasce a Clovis, California, il 27 maggio 1990 e, oltre a essere uno scrittore, è anche un attore e un cantante. La sua infanzia è negativamente segnata dalla malattia della sorella minore che soffre di epilessia e la sua vita scolastica si può definire tutt'altro che felice, poiché è

ripetutamente vittima di atti di bullismo, sia durante gli anni delle medie che durante quelli delle superiori, per via della sua voce acuta e del suo essere apertamente e dichiaratamente omosessuale. La difficile realtà che gli stava attorno lo porta a cercare rifugio nella lettura, in particolare di favole, e nella scrittura. È grazie alla sua situazione scolastica infelice che, oltre al mondo della scrittura, Chris conosce quello della recitazione, e questo lo porta a fare un provino per ottenere una parte nella serie televisiva *Glee*. Colfer non la ottiene, ma piace talmente tanto ai produttori che decidono di scrivere un personaggio solo per lui, ed è così che passa i successivi sei anni ad interpretare Kurt Hummel, un arguto controtenore fissato con la moda. Entrare nel mondo della televisione non gli fa però dimenticare il suo primo amore, quello per le parole, e nel 2012 escono ben due libri scritti da lui: quello di cui questa tesi si occupa e *The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell*, il primo romanzo di una serie di libri per bambini. È rilevante sottolineare come i due protagonisti di questa serie di libri, i gemelli Alex e Conner Bailey, siano quasi considerabili una rappresentazione dell'autore stesso, in quanto anche loro soffrono di una vita familiare infelice, hanno un rapporto stretto con la nonna e scoprono le favole più o meno nello stesso periodo in cui Colfer le aveva utilizzate come rifugio. Per quanto riguarda la sua produzione cinematografica, Colfer ha scritto la sceneggiatura di un unico film: *Struck by Lightning*. Dalla sceneggiatura di questo film, Chris ha poi ricavato un libro, che è esattamente quello di cui questa tesi si occupa.

Passando al romanzo, a cui è dedicato il paragrafo 1.2, la prima cosa che dovrebbe essere sottolineata è che anche questo romanzo si può considerare parzialmente autobiografico. Il protagonista, e autore del diario, è Carson Phillips, un ragazzo al suo ultimo anno di scuola superiore che non vede l'ora di lasciare la sua città natale, la fittizia Clover. Odiato e tormentato dai compagni, Carson conta i giorni che lo separano

dalla sua partenza per l'Illinois, dove vuole frequentare l'Università Northwestern per poi diventare un acclamato giornalista e, alla fine della sua scalata nel mondo del giornalismo, diventare direttore del *New Yorker*. Malauguratamente, la consulente scolastica gli dice che per aumentare le possibilità di essere ammesso all'università dei suoi sogni dovrebbe mandar loro una rivista letteraria creata da lui e, ovviamente, dai suoi compagni di scuola. Insomma, dovrebbe ispirare altri a scrivere. Dato il suo brutto rapporto con i suoi compagni di scuola, Carson sa di non poterli convincere con le buone ad aiutarlo e decide quindi di ricattare alcuni di loro e un insegnante. Aiutato dalla sua unica amica Malerie, Carson utilizza a suo vantaggio i panni sporchi dei suoi colleghi del Club di Giornalismo e quelli dei rappresentanti di istituto. Una volta che li ha tutti in pugno, Carson spiega loro il suo progetto di creare una rivista letteraria e obbliga ciascuno di loro a scrivere qualcosa per lui. Del tutto inaspettatamente, mano a mano che raccoglie le loro "opere" Carson si rende conto di come i suoi compagni siano meno stereotipati e banali di quanto pensasse e arriva addirittura a sentirsi in colpa per averli ricattati. Il senso di colpa non gli impedisce di mandare la rivista letteraria all'Università Northwestern e di rimanere in attesa di una loro risposta. Qualche mese dopo, Carson viene a sapere che la Northwestern gli aveva mandato la lettera di ammissione ma, non avendo mai ottenuto risposta, non lo aveva ammesso. Uscito da scuola, viene a sapere la verità dalla madre, che aveva visto la lettera di ammissione ma l'aveva gettata via. Sheryl, la madre di Carson, motiva il suo gesto dicendo di averlo fatto per lui, perché sarebbe arrivato all'università con l'innocenza di un sognatore e il mondo reale lo avrebbe fatto a pezzi, ma in realtà era solo spaventata di rimanere sola e di essere abbandonata dal figlio così come anni prima era stata lasciata dal marito. Comprensibilmente, Carson impiega qualche giorno per riprendersi, ma grazie alla sua amica Malerie l'idea di restare a Clover e frequentare l'università lì non è poi una

prospettiva così deprimente. Il diario si conclude con una riflessione da parte di Carson su come la vita sia simile a un fulmine, che ti colpisce e ti attraversa e in un attimo sparisce. L'ultima pagina del libro è sotto forma di articolo di giornale, articolo grazie al quale il lettore viene a sapere che il diario è finito non perché Carson non avesse altro da dire, ma perché è stato colpito da un fulmine nel parcheggio della scuola ed è così deceduto.

Per quanto riguarda i personaggi, che vengono analizzati nel paragrafo 1.3, sono tutti sufficientemente stereotipati, tanto da sembrare usciti da un qualsiasi film americano. Tra i membri del Club di Giornalismo, sono presenti, e presentati, l'unica amica di Carson, la ragazza gotica, il “fattone” e lo studente straniero, che viene ricattato da Carson quando il protagonista scopre che tanto straniero non è. Tra i membri dei rappresentanti degli studenti, invece, sono presenti la tipica cheerleader, la ragazza che si occupa dell'annuario scolastico, lo sportivo e i due ragazzi omosessuali e innamorati ma non dichiarati. L'unico personaggio a non essere monodimensionale è il protagonista, Carson, che viene confrontato con Colfer nel paragrafo 1.4. In questo paragrafo, che va a concludere il primo capitolo, alcune similitudini e alcune differenze tra scrittore e personaggio vengono analizzate. In particolare, una caratteristica che hanno in comune è che entrambi hanno un rapporto particolare con la nonna, mentre una differenza che va sottolineata è che mentre Carson reagisce al bullismo dei compagni esternando la sua rabbia, Colfer ha sempre interiorizzato tutto quanto.

Il Capitolo 2 ruota attorno alcuni aspetti fondamentali connessi con l'arte della traduzione. Per prima cosa, nel paragrafo 2.1 viene discusso cosa si intenda per traduzione e successivamente viene analizzato da cosa è caratterizzata la figura del traduttore. Tradurre significa prendere un concetto espresso nella lingua A e portarlo in

modo più fedele ed equivalente possibile nella lingua B. Ovviamente, la faccenda è molto più complicata di così, poiché tantissimi fattori sono da tenere in considerazione quando si traduce, tra cui, ad esempio, l'apparente intraducibilità di alcune cose. Una delle tante cose da tenere a mente è che una traduzione deriva, ovviamente, da un testo originale, ma questo non significa che si debba considerare inferiore o peggiore. Bisogna ricordare che una traduzione permette a coloro che conoscono la lingua B di avere accesso a un testo che altrimenti non potrebbero mai leggere, non conoscendo la lingua A. Una scelta che i traduttori devono compiere quando lavorano su un testo è quella tra traduzione letterale e libera, scelta che apre poi un'ampia discussione sul concetto di fedeltà, che verrà però trattato successivamente. È importante sottolineare come la traduzione non riguardi esclusivamente la lingua in sé, ma anche l'aspetto culturale connesso al linguaggio. Nel paragrafo 2.1.2 si esplora la figura del traduttore e ne viene definito il ruolo. Un traduttore è prima di tutto un lettore, che dopo aver letto un testo in una lingua che non è la sua lo analizza linguisticamente, ne interpreta il contenuto e procede poi a tradurlo. Un traduttore si può considerare un “riscrittore”, poiché prende cose che sono già state scritte, anche se in un'altra lingua e le porta in una lingua e, di conseguenza, in una cultura diversa. Poiché la traduzione porta un testo da una cultura ad un'altra, un traduttore si può considerare un mediatore culturale, un ponte tra culture. Insomma, un traduttore permette la comunicazione tra persone che non parlano la stessa lingua e che sono membri di culture diverse.

Una volta finito di analizzare il ruolo del traduttore, due aspetti negativi connessi con questa figura sono analizzati nel paragrafo 2.2: l'invisibilità e la sottostima. L'aspetto dell'invisibilità è connesso con i due principali tipi di traduzione disponibili quando il testo originale è chiaramente prodotto di una determinata cultura: traduzione aperta e traduzione coperta. Se un traduttore opta per una traduzione aperta, fa di tutto perché sia

evidente che il testo sia figlio di una cultura diversa, lasciando ogni elemento culturale presente nel testo originale intatto. Se, d'altra parte, un traduttore opta per una traduzione coperta, fa di tutto per mascherare l'origine del testo che sta traducendo, tanto da eliminare o cambiare tutti quegli elementi legati alla cultura di partenza. Collegandosi all'invisibilità, un traduttore diventa invisibile quando la sua traduzione non sembra una traduzione, ma un testo figlio della sua cultura. Insomma, un traduttore diventa invisibile quando non si vede il suo tocco nel risultato del suo lavoro. Per quanto riguarda la sottostima, questa è legata alla paternità di un'opera. Chi è il vero autore di un testo tradotto, l'autore del testo originale o il traduttore? Da un certo punto di vista, sono entrambi gli autori, poiché un traduttore mette del proprio quando traduce un testo, compie precise scelte stilistiche e manipola un testo perché lettori appartenenti a una diversa cultura possano apprezzarlo. Tristemente, siccome le traduzioni sono spesso viste come prodotti di seconda mano, i traduttori sono a loro volta visti come autori di serie B.

Nel paragrafo 2.3, la traduzione aperta e quella coperta vengono riprese e il discorso viene ampliato con un'analisi di cosa si intende per “domesticazione” e “stranierizzazione” di un testo. Un testo straniero viene domesticato quando tutti gli elementi culturali presenti nel testo vengono eliminati o sostituiti con elementi equivalenti ma appartenenti alla cultura di arrivo, non a quella di partenza. Per esempio, cibi tipici, strutture architettoniche o opere letterarie appartenenti alla cultura A e citate nel testo sono sostituite con cibi, strutture o opere appartenenti alla cultura B, cioè quella di arrivo. Dovrebbe essere sottolineato che, poiché lingua e cultura sono legate, compiere un lavoro di domesticazione è inevitabile quando si sposta un testo dalla sua cultura di origine a una diversa cultura. D'altro canto, quanto domesticare, o non domesticare, un testo è a discrezione del traduttore. Il processo inverso della

domesticazione è la stranierizzazione di un testo, che prevede appunto il preservare gli elementi culturali presenti in un testo per far notare ai lettori che quello che si trovano di fronte è il prodotto di un'altra cultura.

Nel paragrafo 2.4, a essere trattate sono l'equivalenza e la lealtà quando si parla di traduzione. Una traduzione, essendo una riscrittura, deve proporre una corrispondenza, ma, nonostante ciò, definire cosa si intenda per equivalenza rimane piuttosto complicato. I due testi, l'originale e la traduzione, non possono essere identici dal punto di vista linguistico, dato che sono ovviamente scritti in due lingue diverse. Possono però essere equivalenti dal punto di vista del contenuto dato che entrambi parlano della stessa cosa. Insomma, anche se i loro significanti sono diversi, i loro significati sono gli stessi. Chiaramente, questo non sempre è possibile, soprattutto se un testo viene portato in una cultura molto diversa da quella di origine. È vero che viviamo tutti nello stesso mondo fisico, ma è anche vero che questo mondo è decisamente eterogeneo. Per quanto riguarda la lealtà, una traduzione è costantemente vincolata sia a quelli che saranno poi i suoi lettori che all'autore del testo da cui deriva. La faccenda è piuttosto complicata dato che è innegabile che l'autore, assieme al suo testo, vada rispettato e il suo messaggio vada preservato, ma è anche vero che una traduzione è comunque pensata per un pubblico diverso e anche il lettore va tenuto in conto. Sapere chi sarà il lettore è fondamentale durante il processo di traduzione, poiché è determinante per compiere scelte non solo stilistiche, ma anche di contenuto.

Il paragrafo 2.5 è incentrato sull'accettabilità di una traduzione e su come giudicarne la qualità. Negli ultimi anni una discussione è nata sui parametri che bisognerebbe utilizzare per giudicare l'accettabilità di una traduzione. Tutti concordano che una traduzione dovrebbe essere grammaticalmente corretta, ben scritta e che dovrebbe suscitare nel lettore le stesse emozioni che il testo originale suscita, ma questo non è

sufficiente. Una traduzione deve anche leggersi come fosse un testo originale, deve trasmettere le stesse cose che l'originale trasmette. D'altra parte, ciascuno ha i propri parametri per giudicare una traduzione, e questo porta a una mancanza di chiarezza per quanto riguarda l'accettabilità di un testo tradotto. Un'altra cosa che va tenuta in conto è che i lettori vogliono testi fluidi, scorrevoli e questo parametro diventa essenziale quando una traduzione viene giudicata. Per quanto riguarda la qualità di una traduzione, va sottolineato come non esista un metodo universale per definirla, poiché ciascuno usa un metro di giudizio diverso. Sono stati proposti diversi modi di giudicare una traduzione, alcuni basati su un confronto col testo originale, altri sulla reazione dei lettori, ma purtroppo rimangono tutti almeno in parte soggettivi.

Il Capitolo 3 riguarda alcune problematiche che un traduttore può trovarsi a dover affrontare. In particolare, sono stati scelti quegli aspetti che si sarebbero poi rivelati utili per l'analisi della traduzione a cui è dedicato il quarto capitolo di questa tesi. Il paragrafo 3.1 è incentrato su quella che può essere considerata la parte tabù di una lingua: parolacce e insulti. Inizialmente, viene discusso cosa si intende per parolacce e imprecazioni e viene analizzato cosa spinge una persona a utilizzarle in un discorso. La prima cosa a essere sottolineata è che le imprecazioni e le parolacce sono fini a loro stesse, in quanto non sono utilizzate contro un'altra persona, mentre invece gli insulti hanno come obiettivo quello di offendere o far arrabbiare qualcuno. Successivamente, alcune strategie per tradurre le parolacce vengono analizzate, e particolare enfasi è messa sul fatto che il peso e la gravità di una parolaccia sono quelle caratteristiche che vanno tenute in considerazione quando la si vuole tradurre. Poco importa usarne una sessuale quando quella di partenza era scatologica o fisica, l'importante è che il peso rimanga quello originale. Un'altra cosa da tenere in considerazione è cosa è ritenuto

tabù nella cultura di partenza e cosa lo è ritenuto in quella di arrivo. Le stesse cose si applicano alla traduzione di insulti.

Nel paragrafo 3.2 il focus è spostato sul senso dell'umorismo ed in particolare sui nomi “parlanti”, sui giochi di parole e sulle battute e su come questi si possano tradurre. Gli elementi umoristici non sono per niente facili da tradurre e gli esperti ancora si chiedono se l'umorismo si debba considerare intraducibile o no. Uno degli aspetti che rende l'umorismo così complicato da tradurre è il suo essere, al tempo stesso, dipendente dalla lingua in cui viene espresso e basato su conoscenze enciclopediche. Inoltre, va sottolineato che far ridere qualcuno non è banale, in quanto ciascuno ha un'idea diversa di cosa sia divertente, ma l'umorismo dipende molto anche dalla cultura di appartenenza. Nella parte successiva del paragrafo, si approfondiscono le caratteristiche dei nomi “parlanti”, cioè quei nomi inventati che contengono al loro interno un indizio su quel particolare personaggio. I giochi di parole, invece, sono quegli elementi umoristici che sfruttano l'ambiguità di una lingua per far ridere i lettori. Contrariamente, le battute si basano non tanto sulla lingua in sé, quanto sulla conoscenza del mondo di una persona e la sua conoscenza è proprio quella che viene sfruttata per fare dell'umorismo. Le strategie per tradurre questi elementi sono piuttosto simili. Generalmente, se la componente umoristica si può preservare integra nel testo di arrivo si predilige una strategia conservativa. Se, d'altro canto, l'elemento originale è troppo legato alla lingua o cultura di partenza, allora si può scegliere se eliminarlo, se offrire un'alternativa legata alla lingua di arrivo, anche se il senso originale potrebbe venire stravolto, o se tenere l'originale e aggiungere una spiegazione, nel testo o in una nota a fine pagina.

Il paragrafo 3.3 è dedicato alla cultura e a come gli elementi culturali si possano tradurre. Per prima cosa, cosa si intende con cultura viene analizzato, partendo dalla

definizione di cultura come l'insieme di attività e conseguimenti che caratterizzano un popolo in un dato periodo storico e viene discusso se essa sia insita in una persona o se venga acquisita con gli anni. Un altro aspetto a essere discusso è se una cultura sia fissa e stabile o se cambi e si evolva nel tempo. Il rapporto tra lingua e cultura viene poi investigato, mettendo particolare enfasi sul fatto che quando una persona si esprime in una data lingua usa come filtro la sua cultura di appartenenza. Inoltre, parlare la stessa lingua crea un forte legame tra persone e questo facilita il processo di creazione di una comunità. Il processo di traduzione di elementi culturali è strettamente legata ai concetti di traduzione aperta e traduzione coperta visti nel Capitolo 2, in quanto un traduttore deve scegliere se evidenziare o nascondere la cultura di partenza percepibile in un testo. Va sottolineato che riconoscere elementi culturali può non essere un processo facile, specialmente se il traduttore non ha molta familiarità con la cultura di partenza. L'ideale, ovviamente, sarebbe che il traduttore fosse biculturale oltre a essere bilingue, ma questo non è sempre possibile. Come detto prima, un traduttore deve decidere se mantenere o cambiare gli elementi culturali di un testo. Se decide di mantenerli, aggiungere spiegazioni per i lettori può a volte essere necessario; se invece decide di non volerli mantenere, il traduttore ha due opzioni: può eliminare gli elementi culturali, posto che non siano necessari per la comprensione della trama, oppure può applicare un filtro culturale al testo e sostituirli con elementi più o meno equivalenti propri della sua cultura. L'ultimo tema a essere affrontato in questo paragrafo è quello della coesione, e viene sottolineato il fatto che diverse lingue sfruttano diversi modi per crearla in un testo.

Nel paragrafo 3.4 a essere analizzate sono le frasi idiomatiche e le espressioni fisse proprie di una data lingua. Con frasi idiomatiche ed espressioni fisse si intendono quelle brevi frasi nominali o verbali il cui significato si è fissato nel tempo e che quindi spesso

non può essere ricavato facendo una banale somma dei significati individuali delle parole che li compongono. Spesso si possono utilizzare in forma abbreviata e rimangono comunque riconoscibili per i madrelingua. È importante ricordare che si possono considerare elementi culturali e vanno gestite di conseguenza quando bisogna tradurle. Per quanto riguarda la loro traduzione, le strategie a disposizione del traduttore si possono dividere in due gruppi: quelle disponibili quando un'espressione equivalente esiste nella lingua di arrivo e quelle disponibili quando la lingua di arrivo è sprovvista di un'espressione equivalente. Nel primo caso, la soluzione più facile è sostituire all'espressione di partenza la sua equivalente espressione di arrivo. Nel secondo caso, invece, un traduttore può, ad esempio, parafrasare il significato dell'espressione di partenza, o eliminarla se non è essenziale per il testo. Ovviamente, visto che nel primo caso avviene una perdita di "idiomaticità" e nel secondo una di significato, adottare misure di compensazione in un'altra parte del testo sarebbe consigliabile.

Il Capitolo 4 è interamente dedicato all'analisi della mia traduzione di alcuni pezzi tratti dalle parti selezionate di *Struck by Lightning*. Nel paragrafo 4.1, a essere analizzati e tradotti sono quegli elementi tabù della lingua che Colfer usa nel suo libro, cominciando dalle parolacce, passando poi alla blasfemia e terminando con gli insulti. Per quanto riguarda le parolacce, due situazioni si sono verificate durante la loro traduzione: o la parolaccia veniva sostituita con una equivalente appartenente alla lingua di arrivo, oppure veniva eliminata, causando così una perdita di volgarità. Per impedire che una tale perdita rimanesse non colmata nel testo, è stata utilizzata una strategia di compensazione. Infatti, alcune parolacce sono state aggiunte nella mia traduzione in parti del testo in cui nell'originale non c'era volgarità. La stessa cosa si può considerare valida per gli insulti che si possono trovare nel testo di partenza. Infatti, non ho sempre

mantenuto la loro volgarità, per un motivo o per un altro, e questo mi ha portato ad aggiungere alcuni insulti per compensare. La blasfemia, d'altra parte, è molto più spinosa da trattare, poiché essa, avendo un peso diverso, è perfettamente accettabile in inglese, ma è un tabù assoluto in italiano. Quindi, ho deciso di sostituire gli elementi blasfemi nel testo con “banali” parolacce, in modo che la religione non venisse chiamata in questione.

Il paragrafo 4.2 riguarda quegli elementi umoristici che si possono trovare nel testo originale e come ho deciso di tradurli. La prima parte è dedicata ai nomi “parlanti” ed è divisa in due sezioni: per prima cosa vengono trattati quei nomi inventati presenti nel testo e la loro traduzione, subito dopo vengono analizzati alcuni nomi inventati che non erano presenti nel testo originale, ma che io ho ritenuto di aggiungere. La seconda parte di questo paragrafo è incentrata sui giochi di parole, quelli che sono riuscita a tradurre prima e quelli che non sono riuscita a tradurre subito dopo. Dato che nel secondo caso si verificava una perdita di significato, una forma di compensazione doveva essere inserita da qualche altra parte nel testo. A essere analizzati dopo sono quei giochi di parole che si basano sulla cultura di partenza, cioè che non sono esclusivamente legati alla lingua. Per esempio, uno di quelli analizzati in questa parte si basa sulla modifica del titolo di un recente romanzo inglese. La terza e ultima parte è dedicata alle battute presenti nel romanzo. Come detto prima, questo tipo di umorismo si basa tipicamente su un aspetto culturale, non linguistico. Dunque, nella prima sezione di questa parte sono discusse quelle battute il cui aspetto culturale viene preservato durante la traduzione, mentre nella seconda parte sono discusse quelle il cui aspetto culturale non viene mantenuto. Preservare o non preservare l'informazione culturale alla base è una scelta del traduttore, ma quello che deve essere tenuto in considerazione è quante possibilità ha il lettore del testo di arrivo di capire quel determinato riferimento alla cultura di partenza.

Nel paragrafo 4.3, a essere analizzati sono quegli elementi relativi alla cultura americana che si possono trovare nel testo di partenza. Per prima cosa vengono discussi i nomi di luoghi, giornali e prodotti commestibili che è possibile mantenere intatti nel testo di arrivo, seguiti poi da quelli che invece non si possono conservare. La scelta di mantenere o non mantenere un nome è ancora una volta determinata da quanto il lettore del testo di arrivo è familiare, o non familiare, con la cultura di partenza. Come seconda cosa sono oggetto d'indagine i riferimenti fatti al sistema scolastico americano che si possono trovare nel testo. Anche in questo caso è necessario fare una distinzione tra caratteristiche della scuola americana con cui i lettori del testo di arrivo possono essere familiari, tipo l'esistenza del giornale scolastico o dei club, e quelle invece che è improbabile che conoscano. I riferimenti che i lettori italiani faticerebbero a capire si possono gestire sostanzialmente in due modi: o applicando un filtro culturale e, di conseguenza, addomesticando il testo, oppure mantenendo i riferimenti integri e aggiungendo delle spiegazioni. Per facilitare il lettore, ho deciso di domesticare tutti quei riferimenti che erano troppo legati alla cultura americana per essere capiti. L'ultima parte è dedicata agli elementi presenti nel testo che richiamano libri, serie televisive e film americani. Anche in questo caso, un'analisi è necessaria di quante possibilità ci siano che questi siano conosciuti nella cultura di arrivo. Infatti, se le possibilità sono alte l'elemento culturale può essere mantenuto intatto nel testo di arrivo. Se, invece, le probabilità sono basse, un filtro culturale deve essere applicato e l'elemento appartenente alla cultura di partenza deve essere sostituito con un elemento equivalente appartenente alla cultura di arrivo. Oppure, una sostituzione è possibile con un altro elemento della cultura di partenza che ha più probabilità di essere riconosciuto dai lettori della cultura di arrivo.

L'ultimo paragrafo di questo capitolo, cioè il 4.4, è dedicato alle frasi idiomatiche e

alle espressioni fisse che si trovano nel testo di partenza. Per prima cosa, quegli elementi che hanno un equivalente nella lingua di arrivo vengono presi in considerazione, come ad esempio l'espressione fissa italiana "pecora nera", equivalente dell'inglese "*black sheep*". Successivamente, vengono analizzati quegli elementi che non dispongono di un equivalente nella lingua di arrivo. Come spiegato nel terzo capitolo di questa tesi, diverse soluzioni possono essere adottate in situazioni di questo tipo, tra cui quella di eliminare l'espressione fissa in questione. Quella utilizzata nel caso specifico trattato in questo paragrafo è quella di parafrasare l'espressione fissa della lingua di partenza, in modo da preservarne il senso, anche se una perdita di "idiomaticità" avviene inevitabilmente. Per compensare questa perdita, nella terza e ultima parte di questo paragrafo sono studiati quei casi in cui un'espressione fissa appartenente alla lingua di arrivo è aggiunta nel testo in una parte dove nell'originale non c'era nessuna espressione fissa equivalente. È importante sottolineare come utilizzare espressioni fisse appartenenti alla lingua di arrivo nel testo sia un ottimo modo di domesticarlo, dato che le frasi idiomatiche e le espressioni fisse sono elementi culturali oltre che linguistici.

Per concludere, gli obiettivi di questa tesi vanno messi in chiaro e discussi. Lo scopo principale di questa tesi è quello di dimostrare, tramite lo studio di alcuni aspetti problematici estrapolati dall'analisi di *Struck by Lightning*, che non esiste nulla di intraducibile. Infatti, è possibile affermare che la traduzione altro non è se non una ricerca di compromessi, un tentativo di bilanciamento tra inevitabili perdite di significato in alcune parti del testo e guadagni in qualche altra parte, guadagni che vanno a fungere da elemento di compensazione. Va però sottolineato che questo romanzo non era un mero strumento per il raggiungimento di questo scopo, ma è stato

consapevolmente scelto per una ragione ben precisa. Infatti, provare a offrire la mia traduzione proprio di questo romanzo è il secondo obiettivo di questa tesi, poiché ritengo che questo libro avrebbe molto da offrire al pubblico italiano. Come detto all'inizio di questo sommario, in questo libro vengono toccati temi, come il bullismo o il rapporto tra persone dello stesso sesso, che sono d'importanza fondamentale nel periodo storico in cui viviamo. La carta vincente di questo romanzo è parlare di cose serie fingendo di non essere altro che l'ennesima storia scolastica e proprio per questa sua capacità di educare e al tempo stesso divertire ritengo che sia una storia degna di essere letta anche nel nostro paese.

