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Summary

All'interno della mia tesi, ho tradotto sei capitoli dal libro *The Spinning Heart* (2012) dell'autore irlandese Donal Ryan, il quale ha vinto il premio letterario del The Guardian nel 2012 ed è stato acclamato da molta parte della critica. Il libro tratta in modo originale di come l'attuale crisi economica abbia rovinato le vite e le relazioni in un piccolo paesino irlandese senza nome. Di fatto, possiamo trovare ventuno personaggi e, per ogni capitolo, ciascun personaggio racconta, dalla propria prospettiva, alcune vicende accadute nel piccolo paese. In questo modo possiamo ricavare un ritratto psicologico dei personaggi e le diverse personalità che emergono dallo stile di scrittura. In particolare, tra i personaggi di cui ho scelto di tradurre un capitolo, troviamo Bobby, un capocantiere che si può considerare il protagonista della vicenda. Bobby odia profondamente il suo crudele padre, e medita seriamente di ucciderlo. Quando Frank viene davvero ucciso, Bobby si sente talmente in colpa da non riuscire a negare di aver compiuto il fatto. Il secondo e terzo capitolo che ho tradotto sono dedicati ad un ragazzo schizofrenico di cui vengono presentate le due personalità: Trevor e Lloyd. Mentre Trevor è ancora cosciente del fatto di essere malato di schizofrenia, Lloyd è pienamente convinto del fatto di essere un solipsista, e perciò è costretto a rapire un bambino, Dylan, per salvarlo dalla madre e dall'amica della madre che sarebbero due pericolosi esseri demoniaci. Nel quarto capitolo che ho tradotto, il lettore entra invece nella mente di una bambina di tre o quattro anni di nome Millicent. La bambina soffre nel vedere i genitori pieni di rabbia e rancore, non solo l'uno verso l'altra, ma anche verso "uno sporco barbone" e una collega di lavoro della madre, che lavora da *Tesco* e viene schernita continuamente dalle altre commesse. Un altro personaggio pieno di rancore è Denis, il quale ha perso il lavoro per colpa dell'imprenditore locale Pokey Burke. Quest'ultimo personaggio è fondamentale nel libro anche se non gli viene mai data direttamente la parola. Pokey è scappato dall'Irlanda, lasciando in rovina l'economia del paesino, e i suoi dipendenti arrabbiati e senza stipendio. Denis è uno di questi, e dato che sospetta che Bobby stia nascondendo l'imprenditore, è deciso ad incontrarlo, ma finisce per uccidere suo padre e a rintanarsi in se stesso per il senso di colpa. C'è infine Triona, la moglie di Bobby, che è l'unica in grado di rimettere insieme tutti i pezzi di

questo sfaccettato mosaico, affermando che ogni azione compiuta è dovuta alla paura, che accresce l'odio e fa sì che i più buoni risultino il capro espiatorio della vicenda.

Il linguaggio usato nel libro è molto colloquiale. I personaggi narrano le vicende in modo diverso l'uno dall'altro, e ognuno fa emergere la propria personalità. Nel capitolo di Millicent, per esempio, appaiono molti errori e l'uso di un linguaggio infantile. I capitoli di Trevor e Lloyd sono sconclusionati e pieni di un linguaggio gergale, mentre Triona usa un linguaggio un po' più elevato. Inoltre, nel libro è molto forte l'accento irlandese. Tutti i personaggi infatti tendono ad usare il linguaggio non-standard dell'irlandese con molte espressioni idiomatische tipiche, parolacce e riferimenti religiosi. Il ruolo della comunità assume un rilievo importante nel romanzo. Di fatto, ognuno gode nel veder gli altri fallire. L'essere contraddittori è un tratto caratteristico degli abitanti del piccolo paese: sebbene si dichiarino tutti dei buoni cristiani, ognuno di loro è egoista e falso. Oltre ai singoli personaggi, nel libro emergono anche l'ipocrisia, la curiosità e la disperazione dovuta alla crisi di un'intera comunità. La mancanza di comunicazione tra di essi porta alla paura e all'indifferenza spesso presenti nel libro. La mancanza di comunicazione, inoltre, è un elemento fondamentale perché è la causa dell'incomprensione e dell'odio che esiste tra i personaggi, e porta infine anche all'omicidio di un vecchio. Quella che Ryan descrive è una realtà presente anche al di fuori del romanzo perciò il lettore si sente coinvolto emotivamente in queste sensazioni: la crisi e i problemi presenti nel romanzo sono gli stessi che in molti stanno vivendo attualmente. Il linguaggio usato da Ryan è un vero e proprio flusso di pensiero, poichè ogni personaggio esprime ciò che pensa senza alcun filtro.

Nel libro sono presenti anche molti elementi considerati tipici della cultura irlandese. Per questo motivo, nella sezione introduttiva del primo capitolo ho presentato e analizzato alcune caratteristiche tipiche dell'inglese irlandese che si trovano nel libro. Questi elementi sono fondamentali perché contribuiscono a creare l'identità irlandese del libro. Il romanzo di Ryan è stato anche associato, da parte del Telegraph (2013), all'opera teatrale *Under the Milk Wood* di Dylan Marlais Thomas (1914-1953). Di fatto, la struttura di quest'opera, come quella di Ryan, presenta varie voci di diversi personaggi che narrano una storia dal loro punto di vista. Sia Dylan Thomas che Ryan sono riusciti a creare un'intera comunità di personaggi, che vengono presentati come una polifonia di voci. Inoltre, anche in *Under the Milk Wood*, la comunità viene

presentata come chiusa ed egoista, bigotta e piena di contraddizioni, e l'ambiente in cui si svolge la storia è sempre un piccolo paese irlandese. Secondo The Guardian (2013), alcuni elementi presenti nel libro, come il parricidio o l'uso di un linguaggio tipico, che riflette quello usato realmente in Irlanda, richiamano le opere dello scrittore Edmund John Millington Synge (1871-1909). In particolare, l'ambientazione del libro di Donal Ryan è simile a quella descritta in *The Playboy of the Western World* (McCormack 2010). Inoltre, a partire dal 1893, c'è stato, da parte di alcuni intellettuali tra cui lo stesso Synge, un tentativo di far rivivere l'irlandese, con la pubblicazione di materiale didattico, romanzi e riviste (Amador-Moreno 2010: 26). Questo tentativo di rendersi indipendenti dall'inglese standard era stato compiuto per creare un'identità autentica ed è stato portato avanti anche nei decenni successivi. L'uso di un linguaggio irlandese informale perciò, può essere stato usato da Ryan per cercare una nuova unità etnica tra gli irlandesi. L'uso della variante irlandese invece che l'inglese standard, può venir percepito da un comune lettore come espressione di un contesto con caratteristiche rurali. In ciò, l'accento viene associato con forza al contesto sociale (Amador-Moreno 2010: 4). Tuttavia, la varietà linguistica irlandese non dovrebbe essere considerata inferiore da un punto di vista linguistico. All'interno dell'inglese irlandese troviamo inoltre diverse varianti che indicano la provenienza da diverse zone dell'Irlanda. L'inglese irlandese è diverso da quello standard sia da un punto di vista fonologico, che dal punto di vista delle strutture grammaticali e del vocabolario. Molte di queste strutture sono presenti anche in *The Spinning Heart*. Tra queste strutture grammaticali troviamo ad esempio l'uso del Past Participle senza l'ausiliare, usato come Past Simple: 'They never seen me' (Ryan 2012: 50) invece di 'They have never seen me'. Inoltre troviamo anche l'uso del Present Perfect senza ausiliare: 'I never seen her' (Ryan 2012: 50) invece di 'I have never seen her'. Altre strutture tipiche della variante irlandese sono l'uso dei 'after' (in particolare di *be + after + V-ing*) nel senso di 'stare per', per esempio 'I was after finishing my secret bottle' (Ryan 2012: 118). Abbiamo poi differenze nell'uso dei relativi come ad esempio l'omissione di 'who' in 'He's the only one never slagged me' (Ryan 2012: 30) e il diverso uso dei pronomi: 'your man' (Ryan 2012: 20) usato nel senso di 'that man'. Altri tratti tipici dell'irlandese sono l'uso di maggiore o minore enfasi rispetto all'inglese standard, in particolare l'uso del verbo 'do' come rafforzativo: 'I do hate walking' (Ryan 2012: 52). L'uso di forme indirette è un altro

elemento tipico dell'inglese irlandese che si può trovare in *The Spinning Heart*, per esempio l'uso del 'would' in 'would ye not try to make it up, love' (Ryan 2012: 45). Per quanto riguarda le differenze di vocabolario, abbiamo l'uso frequente di riferimenti ad elementi religiosi, l'uso frequente di parole oscene e di espressioni e singole parole usate con significati diversi rispetto all'inglese standard.

Per tradurre un linguaggio non-standard come la varietà irlandese, vari traduttori hanno discusso sul metodo da adottare. In particolare, le possibilità più plausibili possono essere la traduzione del linguaggio non-standard della lingua di origine con un altro tratto non-standard scelto tra quelli della lingua di arrivo; oppure mescolare elementi standard e non-standard nella lingua di arrivo; oppure tradurre con un linguaggio standard nella lingua di arrivo, con il rischio di perdere alcuni elementi del testo di partenza nella traduzione.

Inoltre, è importante sottolineare che nella stesura della mia tesi ho cercato di sviluppare un lavoro di ricerca per dimostrare come tradurre questo tipo di testi contemporanei che presentano tratti linguistici non-standard, per dimostrare quale può essere il ruolo del traduttore quando si trova a dover far fronte a particolari sfide traduttive.

Capitolo 1: Teoria della traduzione

Nella prima sezione del Capitolo 1 ho parlato della storia della traduzione e dello sviluppo degli studi in ambito traduttivo, chiamati Translation Studies (TS). Infatti, non esiste una sola opinione su come tradurre un testo da una lingua di origine ad una lingua di arrivo. In particolare, possiamo far risalire l'inizio della traduzione da un bisogno di comunicare tra due comunità. Il ruolo del traduttore è sempre stato quello di mediatore tra due lingue e culture diverse. A partire da Cicerone e Quintiliano, si hanno le prime testimonianze di ipotesi e teorie sulla traduzione, sviluppate in seguito da molti altri letterati che hanno portato alla ricerca di una teoria della traduzione. Inoltre si è considerato necessario educare nuovi traduttori, dato che il processo di traduzione coinvolge non solo un'equivalenza linguistica, ma anche la conoscenza della storia e della cultura del contesto di partenza e di arrivo (Woodsworth 2001: 100). Tuttavia, non

è ancora stata trovata una teoria unitaria per tradurre un testo, e la disciplina dei Translation Studies è ancora relativamente acerba.

La relazione tra la traduzione e la linguistica consiste nell'applicare teorie linguistiche nella traduzione. Il primo a teorizzare la struttura del linguaggio è stato Ferdinand De Saussure che alla fine del XIX secolo aveva sostenuto che le parole vengono scelte subconsciamente dal cervello umano e poi organizzate in un certo ordine da chi parla o scrive per produrre un certo significato (Taylor 1998: 11).

In seguito, grazie a Leonard Bloomfield e allo Strutturalismo, gli enunciati sono stati suddivisi in parti più piccole (noun phrases, verb phrases, adverb phrases, etc.) e questo metodo è stato applicato anche alla traduzione, in modo da considerare unità più piccole da tradurre. Tuttavia, esistono anche unità di significato che non possono essere considerate come unità linguistiche. In questo caso, il traduttore dovrebbe modificare queste unità nel testo di arrivo per mantenere lo stesso significato dell'originale e poi mettere insieme ogni singola unità con un ordine logico. Nel 1957, nel contesto linguistico, anche Noam Chomsky svilupperà questo metodo. Nella sua teoria delle 'kernel sentences', Chomsky considerava una parte del linguaggio come la parte fondamentale che doveva essere tradotta da una lingua ad un'altra. Alcuni studiosi del linguaggio, tuttavia, tendevano a criticare Chomsky in quanto, secondo loro, la semplicità e universalità del discorso venivano considerate più importanti della finalità comunicativa di una traduzione e dell'individualità del linguaggio.

Mentre in America le teorie dello Strutturalismo venivano diffuse, in Europa, con la Scuola di Praga e con Michael Halliday in particolare, si cominciava a dare importanza alla traduzione di messaggi considerando anche il contesto in cui erano inseriti e non solamente alla traduzione di singole parti linguistiche. Questa teoria chiamata "grammatica funzionale" è stata utilizzata ampiamente in contesto scientifico e non solo, per permettere ai traduttori di tradurre e analizzare varie caratteristiche linguistiche. Secondo Halliday (1985: 17), la funzione del testo non deve essere intrepretata come il semplice uso della lingua, ma come una proprietà fondamentale del linguaggio stesso. In questo modo le frasi venivano considerate messaggi o rappresentazioni e non solamente come oggetti formali. In particolare, un messaggio è comprensibile grazie al suo aspetto funzionale all'interno di una società più che al suo aspetto formale (House 2009: 16). La teoria della "grammatica funzionale" è stata

considerata fondamentale da molti studiosi per tradurre e analizzare caratteristiche linguistiche. In seguito, c'è stato un distacco tra l'approccio linguistico verso la traduzione e quello dei Translation Studies. Nel primo caso il linguaggio è visto come un codice simbolico incentrato su strutture linguistiche universali. Nel secondo caso, il traduttore si focalizza sui vari metodi per tradurre nel modo più efficace possibile il significato di un testo da una lingua all'altra. Il termine "Translation Studies" è stato usato per la prima volta da James S. Holmes nel 1972. Il suo fine era quello di mettere le diverse teorie sulla traduzione sotto un'unica denominazione. All'inizio il termine si riferiva alla traduzione di testi letterari, ma ora è considerata una disciplina accademica che include qualsiasi tipo di analisi della traduzione, sia letteraria che non letteraria. Negli ultimi anni, nell'era della tecnologia e dei mass media, c'è un bisogno sempre maggiore di raggiungere una comunicazione globale e questo è il motivo per cui la traduzione assume un rilievo sempre più importante e aspira a raggiungere una teoria comune. Come sostiene Baker (2001: 280), la frammentazione delle teorie sui Translation Studies può solo ostacolare le opportunità di progresso in questo campo.

Nella seconda sezione del primo capitolo ho affrontato il tema del ruolo del traduttore. Come sostiene House (2001: 197), la qualità di una traduzione dipende innanzitutto dalla competenza soggettiva e personale del traduttore, ma ci sono altre caratteristiche fondamentali che un traduttore dovrebbe considerare. Ci sono criteri contrastanti che servono a determinare la qualità di una traduzione, per esempio traduzione letterale o libera, equivalenza tra il testo di partenza e il testo di arrivo, dipendenza o meno dall'originale e uso dello stesso stile dell'originale o manipolazione da parte del traduttore. Di fatto, però, le caratteristiche che determinano quando una traduzione sia migliore di un'altra vengono tuttora discusse e dipendono dalle varie teorie e dai processi di traduzione. Secondo Venuti (1995: 41) per esempio, le competenze di un traduttore dovrebbero essere di tipo grammaticale, dato che un traduttore dovrebbe conoscere le strutture linguistiche di entrambe le lingue; di vocabolario per comprendere completamente il significato del testo originale; sociolinguistiche perché il traduttore dovrebbe essere in grado di produrre enunciati appropriati nella lingua di arrivo. Inoltre, esiste la competenza discorsiva che riguarda l'abilità di mettere insieme il significato del testo e le strutture grammaticali. Infine,

troviamo la competenza strategica che riguarda le strategie comunicative.

Un traduttore dovrebbe essere bilingue e biculturale, dato che per tradurre un testo servono competenze linguistiche in entrambi i contesti e lo stesso vale per le conoscenze culturali. Il traduttore è di fatto un mediatore tra due comunità, che adatta la lingua di un testo di partenza per un gruppo sociale differente (Fawcett 2001: 121).

Di fatto, nel tradurre un testo, la lingua e la cultura sono due elementi che non possono essere separati. Ecco perché un traduttore dovrebbe conoscere la cultura di arrivo per comprendere pienamente il testo che sta per tradurre. Il termine "mediatore culturale" è stato usato per la prima volta nel 1981 da Stephen Bocher, ma il primo a definire il traduttore come un mediatore tra due culture è stato Steiner nel 1975 (Katan 2014). Un mediatore culturale dovrebbe rendere più facili le comunicazioni tra parlanti di sue lingue diverse. Per tradurre un testo è necessario tener conto delle differenze di significato di determinati elementi culturali tra la lingua di origine e quella di arrivo. Inoltre ci sono molti elementi tipici di una cultura che dovrebbero essere cambiati se trasportati in un contesto culturale diverso. Di conseguenza, anche tratti linguistici tipici di una certa cultura devono essere tradotti con attenzione. Per esempio, come suggerisce Eco (2013: 132), "l'italiano (e le altre lingue latine in genere) sono ricche di bestemmie ed espressioni oscene, mentre il tedesco è assai più contenuto". Il contesto di riferimento è fondamentale per capire in che modo tradurre un testo perché attraverso la traduzione, due popoli entrano in contatto. Tra diverse culture esistono anche diversi sistemi di valori e convenzioni che non devono essere trascurati. Inoltre, secondo Taylor (1998: 94) un altro elemento da tenere in considerazione è se due popoli appartengano o meno allo stesso "universo di discorso" (*universe of discourse*). Di fatto, nonostante due culture comunichino tramite lingue diverse, possono comunque condividere sistemi di valori simili e più sono diversi questi valori, più una traduzione risulterà difficile. Sta al traduttore, dunque, informarsi accuratamente sulla cultura di partenza per trovare equivalenze culturali nel testo di arrivo.

La questione dell'equivalenza è stata molto dibattuta dagli studiosi del campo della traduzione. Molti di loro, ad esempio, considerano un tipo di traduzione libera come inadeguata. Per questo motivo tendono a tradurre letteralmente da una lingua all'altra, correndo il rischio però che il testo che ne risulta non venga percepito come naturale dal lettore di arrivo, sia dal punto di vista linguistico che culturale. Dal punto di

vista culturale, un traduttore può orientarsi sul testo di partenza o su quello di arrivo. Nel primo caso, il traduttore manterrà riferimenti culturali familiari al lettore della lingua d'origine, mentre il lettore d'arrivo percepirà il testo come una traduzione che viene da un contesto straniero. Nel secondo caso, adottando un metodo libero di traduzione, il testo di arrivo sarà una transposizione di lingua ed elementi culturali da un testo all'altro e i riferimenti culturali saranno familiari al lettore del testo di arrivo. In questo caso, il testo tradotto sarà ancora fedele all'originale per quanto riguarda il significato, ma i riferimenti saranno tipici della cultura di arrivo e il testo sarà quindi orientato verso il testo di arrivo.

Un altro punto fondamentale che deve essere preso in considerazione è che per tradurre da un testo all'altro, è necessario considerare il testo originario nel suo insieme e non come una serie di singole frasi. Come sostiene House (2009: 3) in una traduzione si rimpiazza un *testo* originale con un altro testo. Per quanto riguarda la traduzione di testi letterari e in particolare di romanzi, è importante mantenere la ricchezza di vocaboli e altri elementi, come l'ambiguità cercata intenzionalmente dall'autore, anche nel testo tradotto. Per questo motivo ci sono molte caratteristiche che sono difficili da tradurre nella lingua d'arrivo. Infatti, in alcuni casi non è possibile mantenere un'equivalenza da un testo all'altro. Nei casi dove il significato di un testo può risultare ambiguo, sta al traduttore interpretare un testo creando un nuovo percorso in una lingua differente, basata sulla lettura, sulla ricerca e creatività personali (Bush 2001: 127-129). Inoltre, all'interno dei testi di letteratura, esistono diversi generi ed è bene comprendere innanzitutto qual'è la finalità e la funzione principale di un testo prima di affrontare una traduzione. Per tradurre un testo di letteratura, è importante capire quel'è il fine dell'opera e anche il tipo di pubblico a cui l'opera è rivolta. In questo contesto, il linguista Hans Vermeer aveva denominato la teoria per cui per tradurre un testo era necessario mantenere la finalità principale di quel testo come 'Skopostheorie'. In questo senso, era necessario mantenere un approccio volto all'orientamento verso il testo di arrivo, più che verso quello di partenza. Un altro aspetto fondamentale è quello che riguarda il mantenimento dello stesso stile o registro del testo originale nel testo tradotto. Anche in questo caso lo 'skopos' e quindi l'intenzione dell'autore deve essere mantenuta anche nel testo di arrivo. Come sostiene Toury (2012: 197) ogni testo che deve essere tradotto è nuovo e quindi va reso in un modo particolare, perché è qualcosa

che prima non esisteva.

In relazione a quanto discusso finora, ho citato anche la critica di Parks (1995: 33) alla teoria della lingua pura (*pure language*) di Walter Benjamin. Infatti, attraverso questa teoria, Benjamin voleva dimostrare l'esistenza di una lingua astratta, che si situa tra quella di origine e quella di arrivo. Tutte le lingue vengono così raggruppate sotto questa nuova lingua astratta, che serve per creare un'equivalenza tra la lingua di partenza e quella di arrivo (Benjamin 1923: 74). Secondo Parks, il voler portare la lingua di arrivo vicina a una purezza ipotetica, distoglierebbe lo sguardo dalla finalità di tradurre un testo da una lingua ad un'altra. Inoltre, la teoria di Benjamin porterebbe ad avere un testo tradotto che risulterebbe non fedele all'originale, dato che tramite la teoria della "lingua pura" sarebbe possibile tradurre solo un significato univoco. Di conseguenza, in questo modo verrebbe persa la pluralità di significato cercata dall'autore in casi di ambiguità o uso di un registro particolare.

Un altro punto che ho trattato in questa sezione è quello che riguarda gli universali della traduzione, definiti da Laviosa-Braithwaite (2010: 288) come un numero di caratteristiche considerate comuni a tutti i tipi di testi tradotti. Tra questi universali troviamo: semplificazione, omissione delle ripetizioni, esplicitazione, normalizzazione, distribuzione diversa degli elementi nella lingua di arrivo e trasferimento del discorso, espresso tramite la legge dell'interferenza. Quest'ultima, secondo Toury (1995 in Laviosa-Braithwaite 2010: 291) dipende dalla prospettiva psicolinguistica e dai processi mentali usati durante traduzione. Di fatto, il testo di arrivo potrebbe mostrare tracce di interferenza quando il processo di traduzione stesso viene considerato come un fattore usato per creare un testo di arrivo. Questi universali possono dunque essere considerati come una serie di affermazioni su caratteristiche o tendenze linguistiche che sono comuni a tutti gli esseri umani (Greemberg 1966, in Mauranen e Kujamaki 1994: 2).

Infine, nell'ultima sezione del primo capitolo ho trattato l'uso dell'inglese d'Irlanda e l'uso del linguaggio standard e non-standard in letteratura. Per quanto riguarda la differenza tra inglese standard e non-standard, Labov (1970: 14) sostiene che le varianti dialettali dell'inglese sono in genere considerate come incorrette. Di fatto le differenze nella struttura grammaticale e nell'uso dei vocaboli dà un'idea del linguaggio non-standard come inferiore e viene associata ad un parlante poco colto. Questo effetto può

essere scelto volontariamente dall'autore per conferire particolari caratteristiche ad un personaggio. Perciò, quando si traduce un testo è molto importante fare attenzione alle differenze dell'inglese standard e non-standard e capire l'intenzione principale del testo letterario. Il registro deve quindi essere il più simile possibile a quello del testo di partenza, in modo da mantenere lo stesso *skopos* del testo originale. Scrivendo con un linguaggio minoritario, come può essere l'inglese d'Irlanda, si va incontro ad una difficoltà di traduzione nella quale molti elementi culturali tipici di una data comunità devono essere trasposti nella lingua d'arrivo (Zuccato 2012: 9). Il traduttore può dunque decidere se mantenere un linguaggio non-standard equivalente nella lingua d'arrivo, oppure tradurre il testo originale in un linguaggio d'arrivo standard, mantenendo lo stesso significato, anche se molti elementi del testo originale possono essere perduti nel testo tradotto. Per dimostrare come un traduttore si può approcciare a questo tipo di romanzi contemporanei scritti con un linguaggio non-standard, ho analizzato la traduzione di Laura Noulian di *Paddy Clarke ha ha ha* scritto dall'autore irlandese Roddy Doyle e pubblicato nel 1993, per verificare come il traduttore ha deciso di rendere il testo originale. La storia, narrata da un bambino di dieci anni, è ambientata in un piccolo paese a nord di Dublino nel 1968. Il protagonista, Paddy Clarke, racconta vari episodi avvenuti a scuola e a casa, parlando della sua famiglia e dei suoi amici. L'uso di un linguaggio colloquiale e ironico contribuisce a rendere simile, sotto alcuni aspetti, lo stile di Roddy Doyle a quello di Donal Ryan. Nell'analizzare alcuni pezzi di *Paddy Clarke ha ha ha*, ho notato che elementi del linguaggio non-standard dell'originale venivano tradotti in un italiano standard, sebbene alcuni accenti regionali venissero aggiunti in alcuni casi. Nella mia versione non ho adottato questo tipo di traduzione, ma ho cercato di mantenere comunque il linguaggio colloquiale dell'originale, senza dare una particolare accezione regionale nella lingua di arrivo. Di fatto, le varietà regionali dell'italiano non possono essere comparate al linguaggio non-standard irlandese, che è parlato in un'intera nazione. Per questo motivo, nella mia traduzione ho usato un italiano standard per la maggior parte dei casi.

Capitolo 2: Traduzione del libro *The Spinning Heart*, di Donal Ryan

Nel secondo capitolo della mia tesi, ho riportato il testo originale dei sei capitoli scelti dal romanzo *The Spinning Heart*, e ho poi tradotto il testo in italiano. I personaggi che ho deciso di tradurre sono interessanti sia dal punto di vista psicologico che da quello linguistico. L'uso di un linguaggio non-standard come quello irlandese contribuisce a dare un certo orientamento al testo. Per questo motivo è necessario anche tenere presente il contesto in cui questo testo si inserisce per tradurre da una lingua all'altra. Il registro informale del testo, inoltre, deve essere mantenuto anche nella versione tradotta.

Capitolo 3: Analisi della traduzione

Nel capitolo 3 ho analizzato il testo originale di *The Spinning Heart* e la mia traduzione, comparando il testo di partenza (ST) e quello di arrivo (TT) secondo diversi criteri. Di fatto, quando si traduce un testo è bene tener conto anche delle differenze culturali. In particolare, è fondamentale adattare elementi culturali nel testo di arrivo, per rendere più chiaro e leggibile la versione tradotta per un lettore. La transposizione di elementi culturali è fondamentale, dato che la finalità della traduzione è principalmente la comunicazione tra culture diverse (House 2009: 11). In particolare, ho diviso la mia analisi in quattro gruppi riguardanti i riferimenti culturali. Il primo è la modalità di espansione (*Expansion*) teorizzata da Bastin (2001: 7), che consiste nello spiegare il significato nascosto del testo originale nel testo tradotto, sia tramite note, sia nel testo stesso. In secondo luogo, ho considerato il fenomeno chiamato 'Chunking up', teorizzato da Katan (2004: 207), che consiste nella traduzione di elementi specifici del testo originario in elementi più generici nel testo di arrivo. In terzo luogo, in alcuni casi è necessaria un'equivalenza nella cultura di arrivo e quindi, più precisamente, l'uso di un elemento culturale equivalente nel testo di arrivo. Questo fenomeno è stato chiamato anche 'Addomesticamento' (Eco 2013). Alla fine, mi sono focalizzata sulla traduzione dei nomi che vengono tradotti in modo diverso a seconda del contesto in cui sono inseriti.

Per quanto riguarda la seconda sezione del Capitolo 3, ho analizzato il testo dalla prospettiva del testo di partenza (*source-text oriented*) o del testo di arrivo (*target-text oriented*). Nel primo caso, il traduttore sceglie un'equivalenza lessicale e grammaticale con il testo di origine, mentre nel secondo caso il traduttore fa apparire il testo di arrivo come se fosse un originale e può scegliere una interpretazione soggettiva del testo. Di fatto sta al traduttore scegliere se orientarsi verso una o l'altra scelta. In questa sezione ho trattato anche il fenomeno degli anglicismi, ovvero il mantenimento o meno di un termine in inglese nel testo tradotto. Nel libro di Ryan, ho scelto di tradurre in italiano la maggior parte degli anglicismi, con l'eccezione di alcuni casi in cui un termine inglese viene usato allo stesso modo anche in un contesto italiano.

Nella terza sezione del secondo capitolo invece ho trattato il fenomeno dell'omissione (*Omission*), contrapposto a quello dell'espansione (*Expansion*), citato sopra. L'omissione si riferisce alla riduzione del testo attraverso l'eliminazione di alcune parti nel testo di arrivo (Bastin 2001: 7).

Inoltre, nella quarta sezione troviamo il problema dell'equivalenza, riferita in particolare alla traduzione di espressioni idiomatiche. Queste ultime possono infatti essere tradotte tramite l'uso di una espressione equivalente nel testo tradotto, tramite la traduzione letterale della stessa espressione idiomatica nella lingua di arrivo, oppure attraverso la traduzione verso la lingua di arrivo senza usare una espressione idiomatica (o viceversa). Anche le metafore possono essere collegate alla traduzione delle espressioni idiomatiche, dato che in entrambi i casi è necessaria una spiegazione o l'uso di una metafora equivalente.

Per tradurre un testo è necessario mantenere un'equivalenza di significato per mantenere lo stesso senso del testo di origine. Nella quinta sezione del Capitolo 3 ho inserito il fenomeno della Negoziazione (*Negotiation*), che permette al traduttore di scegliere una determinata sfumatura di un vocabolo in un determinato contesto. Come spiega Eco (2013: 93) il termine inglese 'mouse' può essere tradotto in italiano con 'topo' o 'ratto', e l'uso dell'uno o dell'altro termine dipende dal contesto in cui appare. È

compito del traduttore scegliere l'uno o l'altro vocabolo. Se una traduzione letterale porta ad avere una frase senza senso nel testo di arrivo, il traduttore potrebbe decidere di riscrivere o riformulare parti del testo per renderlo accettabile per il lettore di arrivo. Per quanto riguarda invece la traduzione di elementi soprasegmentali, ovvero le strutture stilistiche che esprimono determinati sentimenti o caratteristiche peculiari dei personaggi (Eco 2013: 54), il traduttore dovrebbe mantenere questi elementi anche nel testo di arrivo.

Nella sesta sezione del Capitolo 3 ho esposto il problema della differenza linguistica nel tradurre da un testo all'altro. Strutture che vengono usate in modo frequente in una lingua originale potrebbero corrispondere a strutture diverse nella lingua di arrivo. In particolare, il fenomeno della Divergenza (*Divergence*) si riferisce al fenomeno per cui un termine che nella lingua di partenza ha più significati non abbia una corrispondenza nella lingua di arrivo. Perciò, il traduttore dovrà capire che nella lingua di arrivo dovranno essere usati più termini, a differenza che nella lingua di partenza. Per esempio, come sostiene Taylor (1998: 539), il termine inglese 'cream' può essere tradotto con 'panna' o 'crema' in italiano.

Nella settima sezione ho messo in evidenza altre sfide che un traduttore deve affrontare. In primo luogo, il problema dell'ambiguità, dato che, come sostiene Eco (2013: 111), essa può essere voluta o meno dall'autore. Di fatto, se l'ambiguità è cercata appositamente dall'autore, il traduttore dovrebbe mantenere questa ambiguità anche nel testo di arrivo. Se invece l'autore stesso non si rende conto di aver creato delle ambiguità in alcune parti del testo, il traduttore potrebbe chiarire ed esplicitare l'ambiguità anche all'autore. Tuttavia, lo *skopos* principale del testo dovrebbe essere mantenuto in ogni caso. Un'altra differenza tra l'inglese e l'italiano è l'uso delle ripetizioni. In particolare, queste possono risultare più accettabili nell'inglese, mentre in italiano è meglio usare dei sinonimi. Anche lo *skopos* e il registro sono elementi che devono essere tenuti in considerazione, dato che la finalità principale dell'autore deve sempre essere mantenuta nel testo di arrivo. Nel testo di Ryan, infine, è presente anche il linguaggio infantile, che dovrebbe venire tradotto anche nel testo di arrivo con elementi tipici della parlata di un bambino.

Nell'ultima sezione ho analizzato alcuni tratti dell'inglese irlandese per mostrare come sono stati tradotti nella mia versione italiana. Seguendo questi criteri ho analizzato le parti del testo scelte, cercando di giustificare e dimostrare le ragioni per cui ho scelto di tradurre l'originale in questo modo specifico.

Per concludere, scrivendo questa tesi mi sono resa conto che il ruolo del traduttore non è ancora stato ben definito. Di fatto, molte teorie e metodologie sono state prese in considerazione, ma ogni traduttore può scegliere il metodo da adottare per rendere il testo d'origine in un'altra lingua. Il ruolo del traduttore dipende dalla soggettività del traduttore e dal tipo di testo che deve tradurre. Questo ruolo indefinito può essere un modo per dare più importanza ad ogni singolo traduttore, dato che l'interpretazione di un testo è soggettiva.

General Introduction

In my thesis I have translated six chapters from the contemporary novel *The Spinning Heart*, by Donal Ryan (2012). I have focused on approaches to translating literary texts, using different devices in order to apply translation theory in practice. Donal Ryan is a young Irish writer, who published his first novel, *The Spinning Heart* in 2012 and in the same year he won the Guardian Book Awards. In this book, many features of Irish English traits can be found, alongside numerous cultural references. The plot is set in a small and unnamed Irish village in which the economic crisis is the trigger for rage, madness and the murder of an old man. There are twenty-one characters, each of whom narrates one chapter, in which they have chance to tell their own stories and of their relationship with the other characters. In this way there are many different perspectives – even that of a child and the double personality of a schizophrenic boy – which help to create a single story.

In the introducing section I have provided an introduction to the book and I have presented some of the characteristics of Irish English. In fact, in Ryan's novel these help to create the Irish identity of the book. However, the question of how to translate non-standard language is an extreme challenging one. In the first section of Chapter 1, I discuss translation history and the development of Translation Studies (TS). In fact, there is not a single opinion about how to translate texts from one language into another. From De Saussure, at the end of the 19th century, language was analyzed in its structure and a link between linguistics and translation was established. Then, with Bloomfield and Structuralism, clauses were divided into smaller parts and this method was applied to translation too. This method was later developed by Noam Chomsky in the theory of 'kernel sentences', which considered a 'core' language that were to be translated from the source into the target text. Nevertheless, some scholars, claimed that for Chomsky the simplicity and universality of language were more important than the communicative task and the individuality of language. On the other side, with the The Prague School and in particular with Halliday, the importance of linguistic forms and their functions was replaced by attention to the translation of messages in contexts. Different approaches to translation have led scholars to create the discipline of Translation Studies, in order to search for a homogeneous theory of translation. Yet, this discipline

is still changing and developing and the scholars' theories are still in evolution.

In the second section of Chapter 1, I have discussed the role of the translator. In particular, a translator should be bilingual and bicultural, because in order to translate a text, both a linguistic and a cultural transposition should be taken into account. In particular, the role of the translator is that of mediator between two communities. There are many criteria that determine when a translation can be considered good or not. Some of these criteria can be: literal or free translation, equivalence between original and target text, independence of the target text from the original and use of the same style as the original or manipulation by the translator. Another important point is whether a translator should focus on the ST or TT in translating a text. While through source text oriented translation, the language of the original text is of fundamental importance, target text oriented translation focuses on how to make the translated text seem to be an original itself. Moreover, the main purpose or *skopos* of the original text should be considered in order to produce an equivalent text in the target version.

In the third section I have focused on literary texts. In fact, when we approach a text, we should be able to understand the final purpose of it and the audience to whom it is addressed. In order to translate literary texts, the ST should be considered as a whole and the main message and purpose of the original text should be translated into the TT. Moreover, it is fundamental to understand both the linguistic and the cultural context in which the text is inserted in order to transpose it into the target culture. Finally, the target text should appear as familiar as possible to the target reader.

In the last section of this chapter I focus on the translation of standard and non-standard language, analyzing another contemporary novel published in 1993 by the Irish writer Roddy Doyle. In his book *Paddy Clarke ha ha ha*, this author used many features of Irish English and it was interesting to see how these were translated by Laura Noulian in the Italian version titled *Paddy Clarke ah ah ah!* (1994). In fact, non-standard language was generally translated into standard Italian, and this leads us to lose several elements of the original text in the Italian translation. In fact, the translator should decide whether to use non-standard language in the target text or just to maintain the overall meaning and register of the original text, even if it may lead to losing several elements of the ST.

In Chapter 2, I have translated six chapters of Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*.

In particular, the characters whose narratives I have decided to translate are interesting from a linguistic point of view and the originality of their personality. Bobby can be considered the main character of the book; he is a good man, but he hates his cruel father. For this reason he is accused of his murder, despite not being guilty of the crime. Trevor and Lloyd are the same character, a schizophrenic boy whose double personality is shown. Then we can see events from the perspective of a child, Millicent. She uses typical child language, with several mistakes too. Then we have Denis, who is a hateful man and the murderer of Bobby's father. Finally Triona, Bobby's wife, concludes and recollects every part of the book. In translating the text I have faced many translation challenges that I have analyzed in the third chapter.

In Chapter 3, I have analyzed my translation, following the different criteria that I used in translating *The Spinning Heart*. As concerns cultural references, I used the mode of Expansion and the strategy of "Chunking up" (Katan 2004), which is the translation of a specific element into a more generic one in the Target Text, paying particular attention to the translation of names. As concerns idiomatic expressions, there are various ways to translate them. In particular, there are idiomatic expressions in ST which can be translated into a similar idiomatic expression in TT, or idiomatic expressions in ST that can be translated into an equivalent idiomatic expression in the TT, or idiomatic expressions in ST that can be translated without an idiomatic expression in the TT. Then we have the question of Equivalence that I have divided into Situational Equivalence and Equivalence of Meaning, Negotiation, Rewriting and Reformulation and Creation. Then I have also considered the translation of the non-standard features of Irish English, and other challenges such as Ambiguity, Repetition and Child language.

It is also important to underline that this thesis was written with a research purpose in order to analyze how to achieve equivalence when translating this kind of contemporary text and those with non-standard language features.

Introduction to Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*

Donal Ryan (1976) is a new Irish writer, who won the Guardian First Book Award in 2013 with the book *The Spinning Heart*. Many critics from *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, considered this author as "a new Irish writer of the very first order" and his work as "a formidable debut". Unfortunately, since the author is a contemporary writer, not much critical literature can be found about him and his works. *The Spinning Heart* is the mirror of a small reality of an unnamed rural village in Ireland. Every one of the twenty-one "speaking" characters has their own personality shown in the book, and every story is important and linked to each other. Nevertheless, we can say that the main character is the contemporary recession and crisis which is damaging every single life and human relationships.

As a matter of fact, every character in the book is influenced by the crisis, both in their way of living and in their relationships with the other people in the small village. There is a stress on the curiosity, the despair and the hypocrisy which comes out in a period like this, and the reader is psychologically involved in it too: that crisis and those problems are the same we are still facing. Every single character has something to say about the others and, because of that, there are many different points of view. Through that kind of narration we can recollect the fragmented pieces of a real puzzle in which nothing is actually as it appears. Moreover, every character confesses his or her own inner feelings in a way they cannot actually do in their "real" life. In an article for *The Guardian*, Justine Jordan (2013) wrote: "With each internal monologue we deeply inhabit the speaker's confusion and uncertainty, yet also gain a new angle of perspective on the other characters". For this reason, a psychological frame is fundamental to understand the development of the plot. We can feel the hate of a son to his own, sharp-tongued father, the madness and double personality of a schizophrenic boy, the sadness of a child whose parents are arguing all the time with each other, the confession of a murder and a moving conclusion in which we can recollect the whole book. The theme that joins all the characters is a concrete and metaphorical "spinning heart", which undergoes the plot: "Each character is halting and uncertain, puzzling out their place in a changed world: each heart is spinning".

The first character to speak is Bobby Mahon, a man whose father Frank ruined his

youth with his cold behaviour. The first lines strike the reader: "My father still lives back the road past the weir in the cottage I was reared in. I go there every day to see if he is dead and every day he lets me down. He hasn't yet missed a day of letting me down" (Ryan 2012: 9). Then, we learn why: "I can forgive him for turning piles of money into piss and to leaving my mother to her holy hell [...]. I'll never forgive him for the sulking, though, and the killing sting of his tongue. He ruined every day of our lives with it" (Ryan 2012: 18). Bobby is Pokey Burke's foreman, but when the owner of the local building firm disappears with the workers' money and stamps, he feels "like an orphaned child, bereft, filling up with fear like a boat filling with water" (Ryan 2012: 20). But he cannot express his feelings, even to his beloved wife Triona. In this first chapter, Bobby tells of his inner emotions in the first person: he confesses that he thinks about killing his father every day, his rage against Pokey and the despair for his and the other workers' future, the way he hides his intelligence because of the fear of being judged by the others, the way his father "drank out the farm to spite his father" (Ryan 2012: 17) and the love for his wife.

We then enter a schizophrenic boy's mind, and come into contact with his two personalities which are both speaking in the book, presented as two different characters: Trevor and Lloyd. He is a fat *Montessori* teacher who lives with his mother. He knows that his father was schizophrenic too, but he is not completely aware of his disease, nor does he want to know anything about it: "Am I a schizophrenic? [...] I could find out, but I don't want to. Like I needed only to open the wardrobe door to find out if there was a monster waiting in there to kill me, but I never did. I might have woken him if I did. I'm not waking a monster. No way" (Ryan 2012: 66).

Trevor/Lloyd is in love with another character, Rélatin, a young woman who lives alone with a little child, Dylan. She has had many lovers, and she is said to have had a relationship with Bobby, but this is not true. Lost in his thoughts, thinking he is a Solipsist, who created his own universe "and nothing exists outside of my consciousness" (Ryan 2012: 105), Trevor/Lloyd kidnaps little Dylan. He thinks that the child is cute, but he is also considering the possibility of killing him. His double personality is confounding him, and he cannot distinguish the good from the bad.

At first, Trevor and Lloyd seem to be two different characters, but we then realize that they are the same person. In fact, the reader gets embodied in a schizophrenic mind,

since Lloyd speaks as if we were himself: "Solipsism isn't as easy as it might seem. It's difficult living in a universe with a population of one. But you already know this, being me" (Ryan 2012: 106).

The language in this chapter may recall Joyce's "stream of consciousness", because we enter the character's way of thinking without any filter. Trevor and Lloyd's thoughts are reported as if we were in his own mind. He does not follow a linear order when he speaks: he uses disparate sentences and words. Here Ryan's style may seem to be inspired by James Joyce. In particular, he shares his "rebellion against the fixity of language and meaning" (Stewart 2007), but not only this. Like Joyce, Ryan is showing his contemporary reality under a political, cultural and psychological perspective, expressed through a style that reports the character's thoughts as they are coming from their conscience.

Some chapters later, through a monologue, the reader is embodied into a child, Millicent, who feels very sad because of the never-ending quarrels between her parents. From her perspective, we can see another side of the recession, in which even children are indirectly involved. In fact, her father Hughie does not work any more and her mother is obliged to maintain the whole family working at a supermarket. She is disheartened and she pours her fear and dissatisfaction out onto her husband. Millicent's father suffers from this situation, but is unable to speak with his wife: silence and misunderstandings are central in the whole book. He has a completely different attitude to his daughter and his wife: "Daddy in the mirror is always smiling when Mammy isn't with us. Daddy in the mirror is always sad when Mammy is with us. Daddy in the mirror never sings on the way home from Tescos, only on the way in" (Ryan 2012: 116).

Millicent can understand her parents' feelings, but she cannot get a sense of the reason why they act in that way. Moreover, Millicent tries to "mimic her parents' rage and fear" (Jordan 2013) swearing just to "test it out to see how does it sound coming out of my mouth" (Ryan 2012: 115) or insulting a tramp along the street, as her father used to do. In the final part of this chapter, Millicent is fearful too at hearing about the kidnap of Dylan. She fears that the "Children Snatcher Monster" could kidnap her too, but she is afraid of showing her worry to her parents even more: "I don't want to be calling Mammy or Daddy though because they might have a fight again over me being scared and Mammy might blame Daddy for me being scared" (Ryan 2012: 118). Children

perhaps can understand and express the effects of the crisis better than adults can. Their gaze on the world is fundamental to analyze it from a new perspective, but often no one pays attention to it.

Millicent's monologue is very interesting from a linguistic point of view too, because here Ryan reports the typical child spoken language, with very long periods and grammar mistakes. Millicent is maybe two or three years old and she cannot speak proper English. The fact that the author reports exactly the language of a child is another element that helps to make his characters more real, apart from the diversity of one character from another. Moreover it is another example of stream of consciousness, but from the peculiar perspective of a small child.

Denis is a hateful and grudging man. He is married to Kate, but she cannot understand him. His firm has been closed because of the recession and he is "owed near a hundred grand" (Ryan 2012: 121). Unfortunately, he cannot have his money back because of dishonest Pokey Burke, the owner of the local building firm, who "has fled the country, leaving his employees betrayed as well as broke" (Jordan 2013), and this is the reason why he feels so furious to this unfair society and eventually he goes mad. He thinks that Bobby Mahon knows where Pokey is and that he is hiding him. Therefore, Denis decides to tail Bobby; he follows him and he discovers that he always goes to his father's cottage. Waiting for him, he decides to enter the cottage to talk to Bobby Mahon's father, and he realizes he has a length of timber in his hand. Frank reacts to the intruder in a strange way: he laughs, thinking that Denis is there to rob him. Laughing leads the hateful Denis to another unexpected reaction: "His laugh reminded me of my own father [...]. My father looked at me [...] and he laughed that same shrill laugh and he told me I was nothing but a useless cunt" (Ryan 2012: 124). Thinking he is hearing these same words from Frank's mouth, Denis kills Bobby Mahon's father, because he thinks he is killing his own father.

It is clear that every character has a different psychological feature, and that their stories and the context in which they all are living influence their way of acting. The theme of parricide has very ancient roots: we can find it in William Shakespeare too, in particular, in *Henry IV, Part I and Part II* and in *Henry V*. In that context, the character of Falstaff was considered as Prince Henry's father-substitute, who was finally condemned to death as a scapegoat. Falstaff here was the sacrificial object, who was

killed by Prince Hal instead of his real father. As a matter of fact, the Prince had a difficult relationship with his father and when he died at the end of *Henry IV, Part I*, Hal could grow up, becoming a king and leaving his past of immature and dishonourable person. However, the tension between the Prince and his father lead the new King Henry V to desire to kill Falstaff --considered as his father-substitute-- to break with the past.

As in Shakespeare, the character of Denis also threw his hate to Frank because of his desire to kill his real father: "God help me, I thought I was killing my own father, just for that time that'll be the rest of time for me" (Ryan 2012: 125). In this chapter, Denis makes his own confession. He is a man who suffers from the injustice of the world and, from his perspective, his real father was the first one who contributed to his fury leading him to madness. The recession here is perceived to be the crisis of a human being who feels alone and unappreciated: he is scared and his feelings surged murdering a stranger. As a matter of fact, Frank Mahon seems very similar to Denis' father, but while Bobby reacts to his dad's spite with silence, Denis cannot swallow his rage. Like Prince Henry in the Shakespearean play *Henry V*, he feels the need to repress his resentment killing a person who resembles his own father.

Finally, it is Triona's "speech" which closes the circle of the book. She rarely talks about herself, rather about the other characters and, in particular, about her husband Bobby and his relationship with his father. She is reflecting over the two main events in the story. On one side there is Bobby's silence, even when he has been accused of being his own father's murderer. He hated his father, but he did not kill him. Nonetheless, he cannot say that he was not Frank's killer because he feels partially responsible for his death. He had wished his death, and this makes him feel guilty anyway. He is not able to express his feelings, and even if Triona tries to make him speak to her, he can do it just in the dark of their bedroom, before sleeping and all that Triona can do is listening to him silently. Moreover, the whole community is convinced that Bobby is a murderer, using him as a scapegoat because of his goodness and their need to hate.

The community as a whole is also important here: Bobby is a very good man, and this is the reason why everyone hates him. Actually, each of them is secretly and deeply happy in his failure. As Triona puts it in the last chapter: "We'll all pull together. We're a tight-knit community. We'll all support each other. Oh really? Will we?" (Ryan 2012:

154). As a matter of fact, the community in the book is presented as the really deceiver, since everyone claims to be a good Christian, but actually they are selfish and false.

On the other side there is Dylan, who is found alive and fine in the *Montessori* teacher's flat but full of strange signs written on his skin and his hair shaved off. The whole community is worried about the little kidnapped child, but as Triona puts it:

Everyone talked about him and looked all sad and serious in Mass when he was prayed for [...] but deep, deep down some of them were more worried about their pensions and medical cards and wages and profits and welfare payments and what they haven't that their neighbours have and who's claiming what and how many foreigners were allowed in to the country and the bottom line is the bottom line as far as I can see (Ryan 2012: 154).

The last lines are open-ended. When Triona talks to Bobby about Dylan and how he was found safe and sound, he is looking out of the window, and suddenly he starts crying. He is watching their child Robert playing happily with a pigeon. Maybe Bobby fears his own child might have been kidnapped too, or he is thinking of his own father wondering what he should have said to him before he died. His tears may symbolize his relief over his father's death, the conclusion of a nightmare, or maybe it is a metaphorical reflection on the actual state of things. In fact, this crisis is dragging everyone to their knees and turning people mad, and Robert represents the future: how can we give a better future to our children? What is going to happen in the future?

Bobby is a very good-hearted man, but he cannot express his inner feelings through words. Going back to the first chapter, we can find another reference to Shakespeare when Bobby Mahon talks about *King Lear*:

I had that King Lear's number from the start, well before the teacher started to break things down slowly for the thick lads: he was a stupid prick. He had it all and wanted more, he wanted the whole world to kiss his arse. I had Goneril an Regan pegged for bitches too, and I knew that Cordelia was the one who really, truly loved him. She wouldn't lie to him, no matter how much he wanted her to. You're a man and no more, she said, you're not perfect, but I love you. Cordelia was true of heart. There aren't many Cordelias in the world. Triona is one (Ryan 2012: 14).

In this passage, Ryan is summing up in few lines the story of *King Lear* in very informal language. Here the heart of Shakespeare's tragedy is presented, but maybe Ryan chose to mention *King Lear* not for chance.

The difficult relationship between Frank and Bobby may perhaps resemble that between King Lear and Cordelia with the same disastrous effects, even if there is not an

equivalent development of the plot. Frank seems to be evil and not to love his son at all, but actually we learn from Triona (and from himself in the chapter in which he talks as a ghost, after he was murdered) that this is not entirely true. He was not so indifferent to his son as Bobby thought:

But afterwards, after thinking and thinking about it, I wondered: why was he there at all? What brought him in to stand just inside the door of the Munster Tavern and watch his son? And even though I was so raging with him for casting a shadow on Bobby's moment, I started for the first time to think that there was more inside in Frank than just spite (Ryan 2012: 151).

Nonetheless, Bobby's way of loving his father, as Cordelia did in King Lear, was silence. Through the book, he never tries to speak to his father about their relationship, and he acts in the same way with his mother: "I asked Bobby early on why he'd fallen out with his mother. He said they stopped talking, not to be drawing his father on them, and they just got stuck in that auld way. *Stuck in that auld way?* Well that makes no sense, I said. He just said I know it doesn't, I know it doesn't" (Ryan 2012: 148).

In *The Spinning Heart* Bobby compares Cordelia to Triona, who has a pure and good heart too. Bobby's wife is maybe the only one in the book who has the power to understand all the characters deeply from a psychological point of view. She can see under the surface and understand that the reason why everything is happening is mostly due to the fear: "God, I'm gone awful cross. People are scared, that's all. I know that" (Ryan 2012: 155). This fear is one of the focal points of the whole book because, apart from the crisis, it is precisely people's fright that causes indifference to the others and selfishness.

We know that Bobby loves reading and going to the theatre. He is clever, but in that kind of rural context he is obliged to hide it. In the first chapter, Bobby is watching a play with his wife and, from the description, we can understand that it is a contemporary play in which just a man and a woman are on the stage talking about each other. Bobby can see that the man is similar to his father: "Your man was like my father, only not as bad" while "the wife was so lovely" (Ryan 2012: 20) and maybe resembles his mother. I think that the whole book should be a theatrical play: every character speaks in the first person speaking about the others and no one of the other characters can actually hear each other. The lack of communication between all characters leads to misunderstandings, hate to each other, and also to death.

Another element which is important to underline are the names used for some of the characters, in particular Pokey Burke and Seanie Shanahan, called Seanie Shaper. Both names are strictly linked to the inner features of the characters. The word *pokey*, for instance, gives the idea of something that is not clear, an inefficient person and it is exactly how Pokey Burke turns to be through the book. Moreover, it is ironic how his name was changed and mangled by his little brother Eamon from the original Pope's name Seàn Pòl. Maybe these two names, Eamon and Seàn Pòl, have also been chosen not for chance by the author, to recall two famous contemporary singers. As a matter of fact, Pokey Burke reveals to be as the opposite of the Christian symbol which was Pope Seàn Pòl, and his personality is as bad as his name can foresee. On the other hand, through the book Seanie Shanahan is always presented as Seanie Shaper, except in the final chapter when Triona calls him Seanie Shanahan. It is clear that Seanie's nickname was given to him because of the similar sound 'sh' which is present both in Shanahan and in Shaper. Moreover, 'shaper' means someone who gives a form, creates something, and he is a young man who had a son with Rèlatin, a character who is not completely mature and has not got a precise 'form' already.

As far as the style is concerned, according to Jordan (2013), "There's a powerful sense of place and shared history binding Ryan's many voices, their inner and outer selves, distilling a linguistic richness comparable to *Under Milk Wood*" (Jordan 2013), by Dylan Marlais Thomas (1914–1953). According to Ferris (2004), *Under Milk Wood* was:

a series of comic sketches with darker undertones about twenty-four hours in the life of a town called Llareggub—a backwards-reading joke that he resurrected from an early story. The play became *Under Milk Wood*, a poor relation to the poetry, in Thomas's view, but the work by which he is best known. It was completed in spring 1953, during a third visit to America, and first performed there on the stage. (Ferris 2011)

The dark humour and the setting in an imaginary small village is very similar to Ryan's novel. Moreover, also the theatrical way of presenting many voices and different characters can resemble *Under Milk Wood*. Both Dylan Thomas and Ryan are able to create a whole community with a huge richness of voices and many emotions involved in it. Another common element is the presentation of that community as very self-righteous and rural, but a deceiver and full of contradictions too.

As Taylor puts it: “Ryan’s structure resembles a more caustic version of Dylan Thomas’s *Under Milk Wood*, with its clamorous polyphonic style and voluble, if insular, voices – both living and dead” (Taylor 2013). Ryan introduces many characters with deeply credible psychological features. This is his most successful achievement.

Moreover, according to *The Guardian*, Ryan's use of colloquial Irish language and the theme of the father-killer resembles Edmund John Millington Synge (1871–1909) and his play *The Playboy of the Western World*. Another work by Synge was *The Aran Islands*, in which he is “celebrating a primitive but also transitional way of life, responding to a dying language, building friendship among ordinary people” (McCormack 2010). The setting of Synge's plays are also similar to Ryan's description of a typical small Irish village. In fact, Synge was rediscovering the typical language of fishing families, trying to “make the language of his characters reflect authentic speech” (Amador-Moreno 2010: 97). His attempt to transpose the colloquial language of a closed and small Irish village can be considered similar to Ryan's use of informal language. As a matter of fact, from 1893 there was an attempt started by many intellectuals to “revive Irish as a living language [...] by the publication of Irish-language learning materials, novels and periodicals” (Amador-Moreno 2010: 26). This attempt at independence from British English was made in order to build an ethnic identity and it was also carried on by authors between the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Belonging to the Irish Literary Revival, John Millington Synge was considered one of these. In fact, Ryan's use of this informal Irish language can be seen as an attempt to revive the Irish language in order to construct a new ethnic unity among Irish people.

The use of Irish English (IrE) instead of Standard English (StE) may be perceived by the reader as making the text belong to a more rural context too. In fact, according to Amador-Moreno (2010: 4), the use of a certain accent can give a different perception to the listener: “the concept of accent [...] is very much related to social evaluation”. StE is perceived as the 'proper' variety of English, even though it should not be considered inferior from a linguistic perspective. Instead, it has been observed that there is “the view of Irish English as rustic and less sophisticated than Standard English” (Amador-Moreno 2010: 5). Since the word *dialect* may be perceived as negative, scholars tend to speak about different *varieties* of English. Although we usually refer to the English spoken in Ireland in general as Irish English, there are different varieties of the English

language in Ireland. In particular, IrE has been divided by scholars into three main groups: *Hiberno-English*, which nowadays is mainly understood in Ireland, *Anglo-Irish*, a dialect that can be found in most of Ireland, and the *Irish dialect of English* (Irish English), which is generally understood outside Ireland too. Moreover, in the past, the marked Irish accent was called *brogue* and it is often considered as negative and incorrect even in the Irish context. The dialectical varieties are different depending on region, gender, social class, age or individual characteristics (Bauer 2002: 4). Many dialectalisms were and sometimes are still considered as errors.

The variety of English used in Ireland is different not only from a phonological point of view, but also in grammatical structures and vocabulary. This can also be found in *The Spinning Heart*, since it is full of typical Irish spoken language. Even if we do not know the name of the village in which the plot is set, we learn from Trevor that it is not so far from Galway, in the area of Connacht: “I drive as far as Galway some days. I still get scared crossing the bridge in Portumna, like I used to as a child. [...] On a sunny day in Eyre Square you can sit and look at girls' legs all day long” (Ryan 2012: 62). In particular, we can find several examples of Irish English in Donal Ryan's work, both in the structure of verb and noun phrases and in vocabulary choices. In the following table, I will present examples from *The Spinning Heart*, in which a typical Irish variety is present. In fact, it is important to focus on the linguistic differences between Standard English and Irish English. As concerns the grammatical structure, in IrE there are differences in the use of Past Participle (without an auxiliary) as Past Simple, the use of Present Perfect without an auxiliary, the use of 'after', relative clauses, indirectness and expressions that indicate emphasis. Examples of typical IrE vocabulary are then shown.

Structure	Examples from <i>The Spinning Heart</i>	Comments
Past Participle (no auxiliary) as Past Simple	“They never seen me” (Ryan 2012: 50); “I seen Bobby” (Ryan 2012: 49); “I done an interview” (Ryan 2012: 55)	In these cases the Past Participle replaces the Simple Past.
Present Perfect without an auxiliary	“I never seen her” (Ryan 2012: 55)	Here, there is another IrE

auxiliary	2012: 119); “I seen his big fat head” (Ryan 2012: 53); “After all I done for them” (Ryan 2012: 30)	typical trait in which Present Perfect is used without an auxiliary.
After	“I was after finishing my secret bottle” (Ryan 2012: 118)	The <i>after</i> construction <i>be + after + V-ing</i> is very common in Irish English, but it has been considered as incorrect by some scholars such as Stoney (1882). However, it has also been considered “a composed past, but not a remote past” (Hayden and Hartog 1909). This structure has the meaning of “to be busy with, to be about to” (Amador-Moreno 2010: 39).
Relatives	“He's the only one never slagged me” (Ryan 2012: 51); “There's plenty calls me a witch” (Ryan 2012: 30)	This structure is called subject-contact relative. In this kind of construction, relative pronouns (<i>who</i> , <i>whom</i> , <i>that</i> , <i>which</i> , <i>whose</i>) are omitted and act as a subject (Amador- Moreno 2010: 51).
Pronouns and determiners	There's no Dublin Four arsehole going using <i>ye</i> to make a name for himself” (Ryan 2012: 44); “The hospital does be full of them auld black doctors. How's it them boys do be so worried about Irish people” (Ryan 2012: 50); “Some of them foreign boys” (Ryan 2012: 55), “In them days” (Ryan 2012:	In this case, <i>ye</i> (with the variants <i>ya</i> , <i>yiz</i>) means <i>you</i> and the use of <i>himself</i> is another typical trait of spoken Irish English (Amador-Moreno 2010: 138). In these cases <i>them</i> (also in the variant <i>dem</i>) is used as a determiner and replaces <i>those</i> or <i>these</i> . In fact, this is another IrE trait.

	<p>28);</p> <p>“Your man's auld selfish ways” (Ryan 2012: 20)</p>	That <i>your man</i> “is used as a deictic when talking about a person” (Amador Moreno 2010: 68), meaning 'that man'.
Emphasis	<p>“I'm fierce devoted to Our Lady, so I am” (Ryan 2012: 50);</p> <p>“What sort of a man am I at all?” (Ryan 2012: 23)</p> <p>“Everyone does be going the same way anyway” (Ryan 2012: 51);</p> <p>“I wonder did he just go up” (Ryan 2012: 49);</p> <p>“I do hate walking” (Ryan 2012: 52);</p> <p>“I do see that boy of the Mahons nearly every day” (Ryan 2012: 31);</p>	<p>The use of <i>so I am</i> is another typical discourse feature of spoken Irish English.</p> <p>The use of <i>at all</i> is a very common and redundant Irish English trait.</p> <p>In the use of <i>do</i> there are typical traits of Irish English in order to give more emphasis to the sentence.</p> <p>In other cases <i>do + be</i> may indicate habitual aspects (Amador-Moreno 2010: 55).</p>
Indirectness	“Would ye not try to make it up, love, he says” (Ryan 2012: 45)	The use of indirectness is used in order to “reduce the force or the emotional impact of an utterance, or when they do not want to be perceived as over-assertive” (Amador Moreno 2010: 118). Moreover, it has been seen that this kind of spoken trait is used more frequently by Irish English speakers than by British or American ones.
Vocabulary	“Christ on a bike” (Ryan 2012: 13)	Religious reference is a very typical trait in Irish English language and it has been observed that the use

		terms as <i>God</i> , <i>Jesus</i> and <i>Jesus Christ</i> and different variants were more common to be found in Irish English than in British English (Amador-Moreno 2010: 69).
	“We all thought we were feckin elected” (Ryan 2012: 13), “What the feck” (Ryan 2012: 50)	The use of swear words or taboo language in contemporary spoken IrE is a frequent way of expressing. In particular the word <i>fuck</i> and the variant <i>feck</i> have been very used also in films to “portray a character as Irish” (Amador-Moreno 2010: 69).
	“There's no Dublin Four arsehole going using ye to make a name for himself” (Ryan 2012: 44)	The term <i>arsehole</i> is another example of swear words and it is a variant of <i>asshole</i> .
	“I was standing outside the door, roaring in” (Ryan 2012: 121)	The verb <i>to roar</i> , usually applied to animals, can be used for people too, and it can be refer to rage or to laughing (Amador Moreno 2010: 68).
	“I fell into the drink one time” (Ryan 2012: 24)	This is a metaphorical way to indicate alcoholism.
	“I wonder what sort of a yoke it is at all” (Ryan 2012:119)	<i>Yoke</i> is used to refer to a thing which is not specified (Amador- Moreno 2010: 68).

From a linguistic point of view, in translating *The Spinning Heart* it is fundamental to maintain informal and spoken language in the Italian form too. However, the choice of whether to include non-standard language is a challenging one for the translator, since he or she should decide what is the better way to translate these

sort of linguistic *varieties*. Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart* describes different characters and presents a society and a contemporary psychological frame through the summing up of different pieces of the same jigsaw. The colloquial language and the different perspectives are elements which give the text its distinctive feel, discovering the possible causes and solutions of the current crisis, starting from its results.

Chapter 1: Theory of Translation

As this thesis is about the translation and analysis of Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*, it is necessary to focus on the theory of translation in order to provide an outline of the different ideas about the discipline of translation. In particular, I will focus on the history of translation, and then on the different approaches that scholars have adopted in order to translate texts. I will mention the debate over Literal and Free translation, the different devices in order to translate a text, the goal of maintaining equivalence between Source Text (ST) and Target Text (TT) and the role of the translator, mainly considering literary texts.

Even if we do not exactly know when the theory of translation was born, we are sure that the need to translate from one language to another is linked to people's desire to understand each other. First of all, Cicero and Quintilian contributed to some hypotheses and theories about translation because of the need to communicate for political or trade purposes. In 1661, Huet wrote *On the Best Way of Translating*, in which he focused on the translators of Antiquity, comparing their ideas about translation to those of St. Jerome or Erasmus in order to propose a method about how to translate. In 1759 with his work *The Idler*, Samuel Johnson wrote a history of translation from ancient Greece to the 17th century (Woodsworth 2001: 100). Human civilization was the starting point from which an interest in translation grew, but an academic and coherent discipline of Translation Studies is just few decades old (Baker 2001: 277).

The first course in translation history was taught by Paul Horguelin at the Université of Montréal in Canada in the early 1970s. As a matter of fact, the history of Translation Studies was considered necessary to educate new translators, since translating texts is a discipline that involves not only linguistic equivalence, but also the knowledge of the history and culture of the target context (Woodsworth 2010: 100). Linguistic theories and the research into Translation Studies have helped to spread different ideas about the most effective ways to translate from a ST to a TT. Nowadays, it is difficult to describe a homogeneous theory of translation. According to Nida (1976: 78), it is clear that "the diversity of translation goals has considerably obstructed the development of a 'unified theory of translation'". Moreover, we have to consider that the discipline of Translation Studies is still very young and it is in constant change.

1.1 Translation history

In order to speak about translation theories it is necessary to start by considering linguistics and the research into the link between language and thought. The relationship between translation and linguistics concerns the application of linguistic theories to the practice of translation (Fawcett 2001: 120). First of all, it is necessary to mention the linguist Ferdinand De Saussure (1857-1913) who at the end of the 19th century decided to theorize language structure. For the first time he "described the horizontal nature of structure in terms of the joining of words or longer units (syntagms) to form grammatically acceptable and meaningful clauses and sentences" (Taylor 1998: 11). According to De Saussure, words are subconsciously chosen by the human brain (paradigmatic approach) and then organized to a meaningful order by the speaker or the writer (syntagmatic approach).

A few years later, in America, the work of Leonard Bloomfield (1887-1949) and a group of linguists led to the rise of *Structuralism*. Bloomfield's concept of language was that of "an integrated linguistic knowledge system which is manifest in the mind of all language users as linguistic competence" (Wilss 1996: 16). Through the Immediate Constituent Analysis, Structuralists "enabled grammarians to split sentences, clauses and clause constituents (noun phrases, verb phrases, adverb phrases, etc.) in their components parts" (Taylor 1998: 12). This approach can clearly be applied to translation: the source text can be divided in smaller units and then translated. Nevertheless, there are also units of meaning that cannot be translated as units of language. In this case the translator should modify this unit in the target text in order to maintain the same meaning as the original version and then he or she should put together every single unit into a logical order.

In the same period, in Europe, the *Prague School* was developing two important concepts: on the one side there was the Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP), in which clauses were divided into theme and rheme. In particular the theme is an element which has already been mentioned in the text, while the rheme is a new information, something which is needed in order to develop the discourse. On the other side there was the phenomenon of "communicative dynamism", which is the level of dynamism given by the new information in order to have a low communicative or high

communicative clause (Taylor 1998: 15). An important scholar who belonged to the Prague School was Michael Halliday, who underlined the importance of a connection between linguistic forms and their functions. In particular, according to Halliday (1985: 17) "function will be interpreted not just as the use of language but as a fundamental property of language itself". His theory of "systemic-functional grammar" considered sentences as messages or representation and not only as formal objects. In particular, "the conceptual framework on which it is based is a functional one rather than a formal one" (Halliday 1985: XIII). As House (2009: 16) points out, for Halliday, "linguistic forms are the semantic encodings of the social functions that a language has evolved to serve". In other words, sentences are seen in their context, not only as single linguistic parts. As Musacchio (2012: 577) points out, Halliday made a distinction between three macrofunctions in language, in order to analyze communication from one linguistic and cultural context to another. In particular, the *ideational* function is about the representation of experience, the *interpersonal* function expresses attitude and textual function is required in order to reflect "the internal organization of language and the connections between texts and their contexts of situation" (Musacchio 2012: 576). Moreover, even though pragmatic and semiotics have also been applied to translation, Halliday's functional grammar is still considered fundamental – scientific translation, in particular – by many scholars in order to translate and analyze linguistic features.

In 1957, with the book *Syntactic Structures*, the linguist Noam Chomsky developed Bloomfield's theory of the universal structural elements in linguistics, considering the presence of an innate "core" language. In particular this "deep' grammar suggested that the underlying structures of language may be stable over time [...]. Only the 'surface' grammar changes, that which manifests itself in the many different languages spoken in the world" (Taylor 1998: 14). According to Wilss (1996: 15), his book produced a real revolution in the development of linguistic theory. From Chomsky's theory of universal structure, the translation scholar Eugene Nida (1914-2011) applied this method of finding minimal structures in a language in order to make the translation process easier. He theorized the concept of "kernel sentences", in which a complex sentence is reduced to a "core" structure, to which it is necessary to add the translated extra information and organize all parts into a logical order.

Another translation scholar who developed linguistic theory was J.C. Catford

who, in 1965, published the book *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. In his book, he explained that "meaning is not assumed to be 'transferred' from an original to its translation; rather it can only be replaced, so that it functions in a comparable way in its new contextual and textual environment" (Catford 1965). In this way Catford underlined the importance of considering the meaning interwoven with a linguistic unit. He also claimed that the theory of language has to be strictly linked to a general linguistic theory (Fawcett 2001: 120).

The different approaches to languages of translation theorists on one side and linguists on the other led to tensions in the way of approaching a translation. Since the linguistic revolution started by Chomsky, there have been different approaches to his theory that have led many scholars to choose between a pro-generative or anti-generative approaches to translation. For this reason, in 1965 Chomsky wrote a note to underline that generative grammar was not intended to be involved in translation: "the existence of deep-seated formal universals [...] does not, for example, imply that there must be some reasonable procedure for translating between languages" (Chomsky 1965, in Fawcett 2001: 120). Nevertheless, some scholars, claimed that for Chomsky the simplicity and universality of language were more important than the communicative task and the individuality of language. This matter was debated by Wilss (1996) too, through the concept of creativity. He claimed that human beings have the ability to "create" an infinite number of utterances. Nevertheless, in the translation context, these utterances depend on the context and register that has been used in the original text.

The tension between linguists and translation scholars was still going on in the 1990s when many scholars such as Bell and Pergnier claimed that translation should be completely separated from linguistics (Fawcett 2001: 120). That is why, a distinction between the linguistic theory started by Chomsky and Translation Studies has to be shown. On the one hand, there is generative theory, which is far from the theory of Translation Studies: in generative theory, language is seen as a symbol code centered on universal linguistic structures. Translation scholars such as Nida and Wilss agree with Chomsky's scientific approach to linguistics and translation. On the other hand, Translation Studies focuses on different methods in order to translate the meaning from a source to a target text effectively (Wilss 1996: 17). According to Bassnett and Lefevere (1992 in Venuti 1995: VII): "Translation Studies brings together work in a

wide variety of fields, including linguistics, anthropology, psychology and economics". For this reason, it is a continually changing discipline, which has grown in the 1980s and is still developing into the 21st century.

It is difficult to attribute the foundation of modern Translation Studies to a single person or to fix its beginning at a certain time. However, it is clear that this subject developed in Europe and America with the need to spread different thoughts through communication, for example translation became relevant for scientific investigation in the 1960s. The term "Translation Studies" was first used by James S. Holmes in 1972. He wanted to put the different studies on translation under a single denomination. At first, the term referred to literary text translation, but now it is considered an academic discipline that includes every kind of translation analysis, both literary and non-literary.

Holmes also divided Translation Studies into two main areas: *Pure* and *Applied Translation Studies*. Pure translation studies were divided into *descriptive translation studies*, which deal with the description of the developing of translation phenomena, and *theoretical translation studies* which were also called translation theory (Baker 2001: 277). In the course of 1970s and 1980s, Gideon Toury and a few other scholars remarked that it was fundamental to take account of the findings of *systematic descriptive studies*. They stressed the importance of describing the translation process through methodological schemes and principles (Lambert and Van Grop 1985: 42).

Recently, in the age of computers and mass media, there is a need to achieve global communication and that is the reason why translation is becoming more and more important and there is an increasing need to theorize it too. Translation Studies is still developing as a subject and many scholars are involved in the search for a common theory of translation. As Baker (2001: 280) puts it: "Translation Studies can [...] encourage pluralism and heterogeneity. Fragmentation and the compartmentalization of approaches can only weaken the position of the discipline in the academy and obscure opportunities for further progress in the field".

1.2 Translation and the role of the translator

To focus on the figure and the role of the translator, it is important to speak about what a translation is, or should be like. In fact, even the term 'translation' has been debated by scholars. In particular, Venuti (1995: 4) claims that the term 'translation' "is

itself ambiguous" because it can refer to the process of translating or to the product that comes out from that process. Moreover, it can indicate the concept or notion that encompasses the activity of translating and the result. Bell (1991: 26) also makes a distinction between translation as process, product or process and result. He points out that a theory of translation as a process deals with the process of collecting information, and also other subjects such as perception, memory, encoding and decoding messages. A theory of translation as product analyzes a text by its linguistic level and by means of stylistic and discourse analysis. A theory of translation that concerns both the process and the result is the goal of Translation Studies.

As House (2001: 197) notes, "different views of translation itself lead to different concepts of translation quality, and different ways of assessing it". There are many criteria that determine when a translation can be considered good or not. Some of these criteria can be: literal or free translation, equivalence between original and target text, independence of the target text from the original, use of the same style as the original or manipulation by the translator, use of contemporary language or use of a language more typical of the historical period which the source text belongs to (House 2009: 44). As House (2001: 197) also points out, translation quality depends, first of all, on the subjective and personal competence of the translator. The personal approach to an original text by a translator may contribute to the idea of a translator as a co-author of a text. Secondly, as Nida also points out, a good translation should focus on the target text receiver, adapting the language of the source text to a different social group (Fawcett 2001: 121). Nida's criteria for a good translation are: efficiency of the communicative process, comprehension of intent and equivalence of response. However, this kind of approach is too dependent on measures such as intelligibility and informativeness, because the translator should know the response to every translation to consider its quality (House 2001: 197-198). Thirdly, text-based approaches deal with the comparison between an original and a translated text and the verification of the maintenance of syntactic, semantic, stylistic and pragmatic equivalence. The criteria about how and why to consider a translation better than another are still being discussed and obviously depend on the studies into translation and the process of translation.

The features necessary to describe the 'good translator' have been widely debated in order to typify a particular translation competence. Venuti (1995: 41) divides the

main competences of the translator into: grammatical competence, which relates to the knowledge of grammatical structures; vocabulary in order to understand the meaning of the original text; sociolinguistic competence, which is the ability of the translator to understand and produce appropriate utterances; discourse competence, which concerns the ability to combine both the grammatical structure (cohesion in form) and the meaning of a text (coherence in meaning); finally, there is strategic competence, which involves communication strategies. In particular, an ideal translator should know both the source and the target language and should be bilingual. In fact, the translator is the person who has to understand a message in a code, and then to communicate the same message through another code. As House (1977: 1) puts it, a translator is "a bilingual mediating agent between monolingual communication participants in two different language communities". In order to understand the structure of prepositions, to synthetize and analyze the content of the causes in the source text, a translator is required to have both semantic and syntactic knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge is also fundamental in order to transpose the original content into another linguistic structure.

Moreover, a translator should also be bicultural (see 1.2.1 Culture), since he or she is actually a mediator between two different cultures. For this reason a translator should also be able to transpose cultural elements from an original to a target text, maintaining the same meaning and the same register. A translation can be considered as a social relationship between two communities and the role of the translator is to mediate between the source and the target community. According to Wilss (1996: XI), "translation is the manifestation of a dynamic interaction between the source text author and the source text (ST), the translator, the target text (TT), the TT's reader and [...] the social environment in which the translator works". The translator, as a communicator, should be able to have not only semantic knowledge about the original text, in order to understand and transpose the meaning of the text, but also syntactic and rhetorical knowledge, so as to use a linguistic structure which can be understandable and communicative for a target reader.

In this context, another debated topic is equivalence. There are two different kinds of equivalence that a translator should take into account. On the one hand there is the semantic equivalence, which refers to the need to maintain the same meaning from a source to a target text. On the other hand, there is formal equivalence, which also

involves matters such as style and register. It is clear that it is not an easy subject and a translator should be able to maintain equivalence from the original to the target text. Venuti stresses the fact that "the ideal of total equivalence is a chimera. Languages are different from each other; they are different in form having distinct codes and rules regulating the construction of grammatical stretches of language and these forms have different meanings" (Venuti 1995: 6). Finally, we can again mention Eugene Nida, whose theory of dynamic equivalence was considered as "a sociolinguistics of translation" (Fawcett 2001: 121). In fact, Nida focused on the result of the process of translation and, in particular, on the target text receiver. Translation, in this case, is seen as a process of adaptation of the language of an original text to a different social group.

In this context, another important point to stress is that a translator should not consider translation as a bare transposition from a language to another, but the text has to be considered as a whole. As House (2009: 3) affirms: "translation is the replacement of an original text with another text", and thanks to that it can be considered a link between languages and cultures. It is important to underline that each one of the two texts is taken as a whole and not as a sum of different parts of a text. Moreover the translator, in order to maintain the equivalence from a source text to a target text, should understand, interpret and then explain the original text both from a linguistic and a cultural point of view. The translator's role is thus to "link the source text in its cultural context to the target communicative-cultural conditions" (House 2009: 12). That is why a translator needs to have wide knowledge and competence in order to be able to translate a text.

The translator can also choose to translate by focusing on the original or on the target text. For instance, the two scholars Nida or Catford believed that a translation should be source-text oriented. In their opinion, the equivalence of meaning of the source and the target text has to be as close as possible. In particular, "Catford sees language as a set of systems operating at different levels" (Fawcett 2001: 121). In other words, he focuses on the linguistic structure of the source text, considering equivalence from a grammatical and lexical point of view. On the contrary, by interpreting a text, the translator could be subjectively involved in a personal interpretation of an original text, and manipulate it although he or she is maintaining the same meaning. As concerns cultural transposition, the translator has to try to mediate between faithfulness to the

original text and an attempt to hide from the reader the presence of a source text, in order to maintain fluency and achieve understanding. For this reason, the translator is often considered as a co-author of the book he or she is translating, because of the manipulation or 'rewriting' of the original text. As House (2009: 22) puts it: "the question arises [...] as to how far this licence should run: does a translator really have the right to engage in such 'creative rewriting'? [...]" . Another point is to decide whether a translation can be seen from an artistic or scientific point of view. According to Venuti (1995: 4):

the linguist inevitably approaches translation from 'scientific' point of view, seeking to create some kind of 'objective' description of the phenomenon [...]. It could, however, be argued that translation is an 'art' or a 'craft' and therefore openable to objective, 'scientific' description and explanation and so, *a fortiori*, the search for a theory of translation is doomed from the start.

Another point to discuss is that before approaching a text, a translator should be able to understand the purpose or 'skopos' of the target text. The term 'skopos' derives from Greek and, in this context, indicates the purpose of the translation. The "skopos theory" (in German *Skopostheorie*) was established by the German linguist Hans Vermeer. In his article "Skopos and Commission an Translational Action" (1978) Vermeer presents and explains his theory, which comprises the idea that in order to translate a text, the main purpose should be always maintained. The "skopos theory" adopts an attitude which is "opposed to the retrospective attitude adopted in theories which focus on prescriptions derived from the source text" (Schaffner 2001: 235). In fact, a target text orientation is to be taken into account in order to translate a text. While through *source text oriented* translation, the original text is adapted in order to appear as an equivalent into a target structure, *target text oriented* translation focuses on the transposition of a text in order to make seem the translated text as an original itself. Moreover, in the cultural transposition from ST and TT, House points out that there is a difference between overt and covert translation. In fact, according to House (2009: 36), "in an overt translation, the original sociocultural frame is left as intact as possible, given the need of expression in other languages". In particular, through this approach, the individual text's functional profile or the interpretation of the target reader of a text, is not considered. Thus, in this context the meaning of the original text should be maintained faithfully, but without considering the 'skopos' of the translation.

Nevertheless, as Shaffner (2001: 235) puts it: "the contextual factors surrounding the translation cannot be ignored [...]. These factors include the culture of the intended readers of the target text and [...] the function which the text is to perform in that culture for those readers".

Opposed to overt translation there is covert translation, through which the translator should recreate an equivalent text, hiding the sociocultural context of the original text. In other words, the target text should appear as not translated, but recreated by the translator. In this way, a translator remains invisible, while register and 'skopos' of the text are equivalent to the original. According to House (2009: 38): "in covert translation [...] the translator has to consider the different discourse worlds of the source and target cultures and apply what is known as a cultural filter". The translator's invisibility has been a very debated matter too, above all in the literary context. The problem concerns whether the translator, like a target reader, should understand and personally interpret a text or not. In this context, a translator is a social being into a particular community. For this reason, the translator's creative role is important in order to mediate between two cultures.

In this context, Parks (1998: 37) criticizes Walter Benjamin's concept of 'pure language' and, as a consequence, his tendency of submitting every text genre to a determinist purpose. In order to create equivalence between the source and the target text, in 1923 with his work *The Task of the Translator*, Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) theorized a translation technique which aimed to solve the problems of translating literary texts and their expressive nature. In Benjamin's opinion, every text in every language can potentially contain a 'pure language' which is hidden and goes "beyond the immediate shell of words. It is the task of the translator to reach out to and release that potentiality" (Bush 2001: 194). With Benjamin's words, 'pure language' is "the intention underlying all languages as a whole [...] an intention which no single language can attain by itself, realized only by the totality of their intentions supplementary to each other: pure language" (Benjamin 1923: 74). This is an abstract language which is above every language and lies between the original and target texts. There are many discordant opinions about the effectiveness of this theory. Since in this context language goes beyond itself, Benjamin considered language as something mystical and, in particular, "the task of the translator is thoroughly spiritualized, differentiated from the scribe with

a dictionary" (Bush 2001: 194). He was against word-for-word translation and rendering of meaning; he preferred a natural and fluent kind of translation.

Parks (1998: 33) however accuses Benjamin's "unfounded theory" of trying to use a "source text to bring the target language closer to an hypothetical purity" instead of transferring a text from one language to another. Moreover, Benjamin's conception of 'pure language' leads the translated text to be not faithful to its original, in particular when an 'univocal signified' is not the author's purpose. In cases of ambiguity or of a different register, it would not be possible to create an equivalent effect in the target text.

In this context, another important matter are universals. This phenomenon is described by Laviosa-Braithwaite (2001: 288) as "a number of features considered common to all types of translated texts". Universals of translation have been very debated by translation scholars, above all after Baker (1993) published an article about Corpora as useful tools in order to investigate "the linguistic nature of translation" (Mauranen and Kujamäki 2004: 1). These corpora were seen as means in order to put together translation studies accomplished by scholars and make hypotheses to find common, universal features about translation. Among these universals we can find simplification, avoidance of repetitions present in the source text, explicitation, normalization, discourse transfer, and distinctive distribution of lexical items. According to Laviosa-Braithwaite (2001: 288) in translated texts, *Simplification* has been divided into lexical, syntactic and stylistic. Lexical simplification concerns the process or result of "making do with less words" (Blum-Kulka and Levenston 1983 in Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001: 288), but it also depends on semantic competence in the translator's mother tongue. Then there is syntactic simplification which is a reduction of complex sentences, and stylistic simplification which is about the tendency of reducing repetitions, long sentences and the modification of phrases or words. In translated texts, there are many examples of omitted *repetitions* and redundant elements which were present in the source text. As a matter of fact, this is a very common feature which is present in every translated language. The feature of *Explicitation* concerns the insertion of words into the target text, which result from the interpretation of the source text in order to render more readable the translated text. Another important feature is *Normalization*, which concerns the modification of textual organization such as

punctuation, lexical choices etc., in order to make the translated text accepted and familiar to a target audience. Moreover, Toury (1986a; 1995) identified another universal of translation into *Discourse Transfer* which is expressed through the "law of interference".

According to Toury (1995, in Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001: 291), in translation, interferences are "phenomena pertaining to the make-up of the source text [that] tend to be transferred to the target text". In fact, this law depends on the psycholinguistic perspective and mental processes used in translation, and the target text may show traces of interference when the process of translation is taken as a factor in the make-up of the translated text. Finally there is the *Distinctive distribution of target-language items*. This feature concerns the distribution of certain lexical items in target texts, compared to the use of the same items into the original and target language. As Baker (1993, in Laviosa-Braithwaite 2001: 291) points out, "such unusual distribution indicates that translation represents a specific variety of linguistic behaviour which merits attention in its own right".

In conclusion, universals have been very discussed in linguistics, and only into the "Memorandum concerning language universals" (1966), written by Greemberg et. al. seemd to find a suitable point of view into the context of Translation Studies. In Greemberg's (1966, in Mauranen and Kujamäki 2004: 2) point of view, "language universals are by their very nature summary statements about characteristics or tendencies shared by all human speakers".

1.2.1 Culture

Now it is necessary to go more deeply into the importance of culture in translation, since the biculturality of a translator has a relevant role in this context. According to House (2009: 11), translating is a linguistic and cultural act and "an act of communication across cultures. Translating always involves both language and culture simply because the two cannot really be separated". That is why, a translator should know the target culture in order to understand the original text before translating it. According to Katan (2014) the term "cultural mediator" was used for first time by Stephen Bocher in his "The Mediating Person" in 1981, but the idea of the translator as a mediator between cultures was initiated by Steiner in 1975. A cultural mediator should

be able to facilitate communication between two cultures, as well as communication between two languages. In translating a text, to take into account the different meanings of cultural elements in the source and target culture is fundamental. Moreover, there are many traits that should be changed if transposed into another cultural context, since cultural reality is also shaped by the use of linguistic traits or by the cultural context in which particular elements are used. For instance, a substantial difference can be the different use of religious exclamations or swear words in texts. This element can be seen in translation from Italian into German. As Eco (2013: 132) points out, "l'italiano (e le altre lingue latine in genere) sono ricche di bestemmie ed espressioni oscene, mentre il tedesco assai più contenuto".

The cultural frame of reference is fundamental in order to understand how to translate a text because through translation, two peoples come into contact. In fact, in different cultures there are different systems of values and conventions. That is why it can be difficult to mediate from one culture to another. Another element that should be taken into account is the fact whether two peoples are in a different "universe of discourse" or not. According to Taylor (1998: 94), even if they speak different languages, two cultures can share a similar system of values. The more different these cultures are, the more difficult the transposition of one text from one language – and one culture – into another will be. The translator's role is to be informed about the source culture in order to be able to find cultural equivalences in the target culture.

Since the text that we are considering in this context is a literary text, I will now focus on the analysis of the translation of these kinds of texts. Parks (1998: 12-13) points out:

in the literary texts syntax and lexis will often combine or collide with the semantic surface precisely in order to generate that richness and, frequently, ambiguity, which we associate with literature [...]. The translator may find that it is not possible to express all of these complications simultaneously in the target language.

This is precisely what I will focus on in the next section.

1.3 Literary texts

The concept of literature as we intend it is a very recent one. As Lambert (2001: 130) points out: "the use of the term 'literature' in its equivalents in various languages to refer to specific patterns of creativity in style, genre and so on seems to be rather

modern development, dating back only to the eighteenth century". As a matter of fact, there is an ambiguity in the concept of literature because it depends on the territory and the language that we are considering and a universal idea of literature does not exist. Furthermore, the term 'literary translation' is itself ambiguous too. In particular, there are translations of texts considered as literary in the source culture and texts which are regarded as literary in the target culture. Nevertheless, neither one and the other "is enough to secure a position for the end product in the recipient literature, much less a position which would simply reflect the one the original enjoyed in its own cultural environment" (Toury 1995: 200). Since literary texts can be intended as poetry, prose and drama, it is important to specify that in this case I am focusing on the translation of prose and, in particular, of novels. The translation of poetry has been much more widely debated because considered more difficult. However, in prose texts there are many elements that are worth analyzing.

When we approach a text, we should be able to understand the final purpose of the text and the audience to whom it is addressed. The three main functions of a text, theorized by Buhler in 1934, are the informative function, referred to facts and events of the real world, the vocative function which deals with influencing or persuading the other people and the expressive function in which literary texts are inserted (Taylor 1998: 117). In order to translate a literary text, it is important for a translator to take into account three main devices. First of all, the original work has to be considered as a whole and not as a series of sentences that are put together, in order to render the whole sense of the source text into the target text. As a matter of fact, approaching a literary text, a translator should analyze it by a denotative and connotative point of view considering its meaning through the whole book. Before translating, we should understand how to render elements which can have a determined meaning in that determined context (Bassnett 1998: 110-111). For instance, when referring to Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*, it is necessary to read the whole book, so as to be aware that the language used by the author is very informal, and that kind of register should also be maintained in the target text.

Secondly, a literary translator should be bilingual and bicultural, since his or her role is to understand the sociological, geographical and political context and the reality in which an author is writing that literary work. As Bush (2001: 127) points out:

"literary translation is then a very social, culturally-bound process where the translator plays a key role in a complex series of interactions". Considering once again *The Spinning Heart*, the translator should understand that the context in which this book is describing a rural context and that the recession is a fundamental link through the whole book. Furthermore, Belloc (1931 in Bell 1991: 117) claims that "the essence of translating is 'the resurrection of an alien thing in a native body'". The translator should render a target text as familiar as possible to the target reader, both from a linguistic and a cultural point of view. Thirdly, what should be rendered in a literary translation is the intention of the author, and this also means using the same register as the original text (Hilaire Belloc 1931 in Bell 1991: 116). As we have already mentioned, the 'skopos' of a translation is fundamental in order to know how to render the original purpose of the author.

In order to achieve equivalence between a source text and a target text, many scholars have debated the matter of whether a translation should be free or literal. On the one hand, many translation scholars are convinced that a translation should be as close as possible to the original text. Literal translation is a word-for-word translation, which was very much used in ancient times (for example by Cicero and Horace, but also by Dryden during the 17th century). Some scholars claimed that literal equivalence is required in order to be faithful to the original text. In this context, Wilss (1996: 128) points out that "if one prefers (as I do) a rather wide conception of literal translation, using structural identity or near-identity on the syntagmatic/syntactic level [...], the range of the (legitimate) use of literal translation is astonishing, and, as such, by no means marginal for Translation Studies". The method of literal translation is considered something that is often impossible because the result would be an unreadable text for a target reader (Robinson 2001: 125). In fact, Wilss also admits that some unacceptable literal equivalences may lead to nonsense, or "interferences" in the structural and semantic result in the target text. The process of translation is not a mere process of transferring words, because it is important to maintain the equivalence of the meaning from one language to another. It is clear that one word in a source language can correspond to more than a single word in a target language. For this reason, the correspondence of meaning is preferred by scholars who choose a free translation approach over a literal one. As a matter of fact, the equivalence of meaning depends on

the context in which a word has been used.

Furthermore, it is necessary to underline that a translator is also a reader and a writer. Among literary texts, there are different genres and it is important to understand the function and the purpose of the text too. This can be a problematic matter since literary texts can be complex and ambivalent both in syntax and in meaning. Clearly, the translator cannot transfer every one of these complexities into the target text (Parks 1998: 11-13). Thus, the translator's role is that of understanding the author's purpose in order to create an equivalent, but also readable text for a target reader. Nevertheless, in some cases, the translator should also recreate a text following his or her interpretation. In recent years the role of the reader has been reconsidered too and, in particular, the reader has been considered as a producer of a literary text since he or she can interpret it. For this reason it is impossible to view a translator's interpretation of a text as incorrect. As Bassnett (1991: 82) puts it, the reader "translates or decodes the text according to a different set of systems and the idea of one 'correct' reading is dissolved". The translator is therefore a reader who interprets in a subjective and creative way an original text, transposing it into a target language and structure. Moreover, Bush (2001: 127-129) also points out that "the literary translator creates a new pattern in a different language, based on personal readings, research and creativity" and "the imaginative, intellectual and intuitive writing of the translator must not be lost to the disembodied abstraction which is often described as 'translation'".

A translated text whether literary or not is new both in the source and in the target culture and for this reason, it is difficult to classify and to translate. As Toury puts it:

whatever is produced in a translation event (or act) is always something which hasn't been there before: even in cases where the same source text is retranslated into the very same language, the resultative entity [...] will definitely not have been there before" (1995: 197).

For this reason, a translator should take into account several elements and solve many problems in order to achieve acceptable translation quality.

1.4 Standard and Non-standard language with examples from *Paddy Clarke ha ha ha* by Roddy Doyle

In this section I will discuss the use of non-standard language in literature. In

particular, I will report examples from Roddy Doyle's novel *Paddy Clarke ha ha ha* (1993), comparing the original text to the Italian translation by Laura Noulian (1994) in order to analyze how the Irish English colloquial variety has been translated into Italian. As concerns the difference between standard and non-standard English, Labov (1970: 14) points out that dialectical variants of English are generally perceived as "mistakes". In fact, differences in grammatical structures and vocabulary help to give an idea of non-standard language as inferior and an unlearned way of speaking. This effect can be willingly chosen by an author in order to give a peculiar trait to a character. For this reason, in translating a text it is important to be very careful about the differences between standard and non-standard English and understand the main purpose of a literary text. According to Parks (1995: 38), "the novel offers a mix of standard and non-standard discourse, genre and departure from genre". Since a translator should be able to maintain the *skopos* of the author in the target text, it is fundamental to use a kind of language and a register as similar as possible to the source text. This purpose can be achieved through the transposition to an equivalent variant in the translated text. In particular, a translator can decide to be oriented to the Source text or to the Target text. As already seen, a Source-oriented text tries to translate literally or to maintain a close copy of the original text, not changing cultural elements and linguistic forms. Otherwise, a Target-oriented text has the purpose of making the text as familiar as possible to the target reader; for this reason in this context, a translator should find equivalent cultural elements and linguistic forms to put in the target text. These approaches can be also seen in the translation of non-standard language. As Zuccato (2012: 9) puts it, "writing in a minority language means going towards difficult translatability and the preservation of culture-specific elements". That is why the translator should decide whether to use an equivalent non-standard trait in the target text or translate the original text trying to maintain just the main meaning of the original text, even if it may lead to losing several elements of the original text.

In order to find examples of the translation of non-standard language from Irish English into Italian, I will analyze the novel *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*, by Roddy Doyle and its Italian version. This Irish writer first published this novel in 1993 by Secker and Warburg, and in that year he won the Booker Prize. The Italian text was translated by Laura Noulian in 1994 into *Paddy Doyle ah ah ah!*. The story is set in 1968 in a town in

North Dublin and narrated from the perspective of a ten-year-old boy. In particular, he tells several personal episodes that took place at school or in his own family. The way of writing is very informal and ironical. In fact, like *The Spinning Heart*, this is a contemporary novel and it is full of typical Irish traits in the plot and, above all, in language too. That is why it was useful to focus on the analysis of the translation of Roddy Doyle's novel in order to see whether equivalence of the Irish English variant has been maintained in the target Italian text or not. I will report some examples from *Paddy Clarke ha ha ha*, by Roddy Doyle of non-standard language and how they were translated into the target text:

ST	TT
Heno brought Liam to the teachers' toilet [...] he brought him to his auntie's in his car because there was no one at home in his own house.	Heno portò Liam nel gabinetto degli insegnanti [...] lo portò dalla zia, in macchina, perché a casa sua non c'era nessuno.

In this sentence, the verb "to bring" used instead of "to take" is a typical Irish trait. In Italian an equivalent trait as concerns the verb "portare" is not present. In fact, in this case the register of TT is informal, but it does not maintain a regional variant. That is why this IrE trait is lost in TT, which is not fully equivalent to the ST.

ST	TT
Liam and Aidan's da howled at the moon. [...] my ma said that he did it because missed his wife.	Il padre di Liam e Aidan ululava alla luna. [...] mamma disse che lo faceva perché sentiva la mancanza della moglie.

In Irish English "ma" and "da" are frequently used to replace the informal "mum" and "dad". In the Italian version there is a change of register in the use of "padre" and "mamma". As a matter of fact, the term "padre" is less colloquial than "papà" and it may be used by the translator in order to refer to someone else's father (it refers to Liam and Aidan's father). Then, "mamma" is used to refer to the narrator's own mother. This is a more colloquial way of calling a mother and this difference was probably intentional on

the part of the translator, but once more there is a loss in the translation of a non-standard trait from ST to TT.

ST	TT
Will you look who's talking [...].	Guarda da che pulpito [...].

The use of "will" is another typical Irish English trait that belongs to a colloquial register. In the target text, the translator uses an idiomatic expression, but a non-standard language is not introduced here.

ST	TT
He's codding you.	Ti piglano in giro.

The verb "codding" means "to make fun of" and indicates the act of fooling someone. In this case, the informal expression has been maintained in Italian too. Nevertheless, the translator is here using a variety that the reader might associate with a speaker from the South of Italy. As a matter of fact, she decided to give a particular accent or trait to the character that should be maintained through the whole text. Other possibilities in order to translate this passage could be for example "ti prendono in giro" or "ti prendono per i fondelli".

ST	TT
"Ah, gick", said Kevin.	"Oh, cacca", disse Kevin.

The term "gick" is an Irish slang word for "shit". The translator decided to translate it as "cacca". In this case, the translator appears to have softened the original vulgar term.

ST	TT
My ma once smelt the smoke off me.	Una volta mamma si accorse che puzzavo di fumo.

In this case the translator was obliged to rewrite this sentence. The Italian form "puzzare di fumo" is not an Italian colloquial trait, but there is not an equivalent more

informal way to transpose this form. Once more, non-standard language has not been translated into an equivalent Italian form.

ST	TT
I can slap mine, look it.	Io la mia riesco a picchiar mela, guardate.

Once more, the Italian form "picchiar mela" belongs to a typical trait of Southern Italy. Standard Italian would have preferred the form "batter mela". In this case an equivalence of register has been maintained, but the use of the Southern trait should be coherent through the whole text. As concerns the form "look it", it is a typical informal Irish English trait. The use of "guardate" cannot be considered as equivalent to the source text in register since is a Standard Italian form.

ST	TT
Stand up till we see you.	Alzati in piedi, di modo che possa vederti.

The original form is an informal trait, that has been translated into a Standard Italian form. Moreover that "we" was not maintained in the Italian version, rather the translator transposed the verb into a singular first person: "di modo che possa vederti". Nevertheless, "di modo che" can be considered more informal than the form "in modo che". Moreover, that "till" – an informal form for "until" – is completely lost in the TT.

ST	TT
What about yourself?	Tu no?

As mentioned before, the use of the reflexive form in the use of "yourself" instead of "you" is common in Irish English informal language. Here, the translator decided to use a completely different form in ST, maintaining the main sense, but losing the non-standard trait of ST.

ST	TT
What age are you?	Tu quanti anni hai?

The non-standard trait "what age are you?" instead of "how old are you?" in ST is

again not maintained into an equivalent non-standard form into Italian. In fact, an equivalent translation does not exist in Italian and the form "tu quanti anni hai?" belongs to a Standard Italian register. However, the equivalence of meaning is maintained.

ST	TT
Can I've a dog for my birthday?	Papà, potrei avere un cane come regalo di compleanno?

In this case, not only is the non-standard language not equivalent in the TT, but also the verb "potrei" belongs to a more formal register too. In the ST the short form "I've" instead of "I have" used in an interrogative, belongs to a spoken register. In the Italian form this informal register is not maintained.

ST	TT
Malachy O'Lears after going toilet.	Malachy O'Lears vuole andare al gabinetto.

The use of "gabinetto" instead of "bagno" is an informal Italian trait. Nevertheless, in ST there is the use of "after" with the meaning of "to be about to" that is not equivalent in the TT version.

ST	TT
- Stay quiet, Patrick. - Sit down, you bloody eejit.	- Zitto, Patrick - Seduto, idiota.

In this case an equivalence of meaning is maintained from ST to TT, but unlike the original text, in the target version the translator uses a Standard Italian register. In fact, the use of "stay quiet" instead of "be quiet" is translated into "zitto". There were many other more informal forms that could have been used in the TT in this context. Moreover, the translation of "you bloody eejit" into "idiota" leads to a loss of this typical Irish English trait. As a matter of fact, the term "eejit" is a slang form for "idiot", but the term "bloody", that means "fucking" and reinforces the original text, is not maintained in TT.

ST	TT
They looked at our	Ci hanno guardato il

mickeys, he said.	pisello, disse.
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The term "mickeys" is a taboo word that can be translated into the equivalent Italian form "pisello". In this case the non-standard trait is maintained, since it has been translated into an equivalent non-standard term in the TT too.

ST	TT
– Not us anyway, said James O'Keefe. – Maybe some of yourse.	– Non a noi, comunque, disse James O'Keefe. – Non so voi.

In this case the reflexive form is used again, but in a different form. Here "yourse" stands for "yourself". In the Italian version, the main sense is maintained, while the non-standard language is not. The Italian form "non so voi" belongs to a Standard register.

ST	TT
Will you not? I asked again.	D'accordo? Le domandai.

Once more, the non-standard form of ST, is translated into a Standard Italian form. Here there is another loss of an IrE trait, even if the main sense is maintained.

ST	TT
Bed time, sonny jim	Ora di andare a letto, ragazzi.

The expression "sonny jim" is a colloquial way to say "young fellow". As a matter of fact, the Italian translation "ragazzi" cannot be considered an equivalent form in the target text.

ST	TT
D'you not want to play three-and-in?	Non volete giocare a tre-e-dentro?

As concerns the name of the game, it was translated literally even if for an Italian reader it would prove something unfamiliar. Moreover, the Irish English informal form has not been translated into an Italian non-standard form. For this reason, there is not a precise equivalence between ST and TT and in the target version, some traits of the

original form have been lost.

ST	TT
Will we go to the barn, said Kevin, – will we?	Andiamo al fienile, disse Kevin, – Dai.

In this passage, the question of the original text was turned into the Italian colloquial form "dai". In this context, this Italian form can be accepted since it belongs to an informal register too and it can be considered as non-standard language in Italian too.

ST	TT
Did you do your eccer yet? I asked.	Hai già fatto i compiti? Domandai.

In this case, "eccer" is the pronunciation of the abbreviation of "exercises". This non-standard spoken form has not been maintained into TT. Otherwise, the Italian word "compiti" is commonly used in Standard Italian.

ST	TT
Ad-a-boy.	Questo è un annuncio pubblicitario.

The expression "ataboy", here written as it has been pronounced, is a colloquial expression used to show approval to a boy. In this case, the translator recreated a new meaning – without maintaining an equivalence in the use of non-standard language – that is very different from the original form. In this case, the main sense is not maintained, but the sentence has been rewritten.

In conclusion, the use of nonstandard English in literary texts is a challenge for translators. For this reason, translation scholars should investigate effective ways in order to not lose the equivalence between the original text and the target text. In the next chapter I will focus on the translation of some parts of Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*, and then I will analyze it.

Chapetr 2: Translation of Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*

2.1 Bobby

My father still lives back the road past the weir in the cottage I was reared in. I go there every day to see is he dead and every day he lets me down. He hasn't yet missed a day of letting me down. He smiles at me; that terrible smile. He knows I'm coming to check is he dead. He knows I know he knows. He laughs his crooked laugh. I ask is he okay for everything and he only laughs. We look at each other for a while and when I can no longer stand the stench off of him, I go away. Good luck, I say, I'll see you tomorrow. You will, he says back. I know I will.

There's a red metal heart in the centre of the low front gate, skewered on a rotating hinge. It's flaking now; the red is nearly gone. It needs to be scraped and sanded and painted and oiled. It still spins in the wind, though. I can hear it creak, creak, creak as I walk away. A flaking, creaking, spinning heart.

When he dies, I'll get the cottage and the two acres that's left. He drank out Granddad's farm years ago. After I have him buried, I'll burn the cottage down and piss on the embers and I'll sell the two acres for as much as I can get. Every day he lives lowers the price I'll get. He knows that too; he stays alive to spite me. His heart is caked with muck and his lungs are shrivelled and black, but still he manages to draw in air and wheeze and cough and spit it back out. I was left go from my job two months ago and it was the best medicine he could have got. It gave him an extra six months, I'd say. If he ever finds out how Pokey Burke shafted me, he'll surely make a full recovery. Pokey could apply to be beatified then, having had a miracle ascribed to him.

What reason would I have ever had not to trust Pokey Burke? He was young when I started working for him – three years younger than me – but the whole parish had worked for his auld fella and no one ever had a bad word to say much beyond the usual spinning. Pokey Burke was called after the Pope: Seàn Pòl, his parents christened him. But his brother Eamonn was not yet two years old when his parents brought the new baby home and he decided the new baby was Pokey and everybody agreed away with him an the little Seàn Pòl was stuck with Pockey for a lifetime. And beyond, if he leaves anyone behind that will remember him or talk about him when he's gone.

I should have known something was up the day last year when Mickey Briars came in asking about his pension. Did ye boys know we are all meant to be in a proper pension? We didn't, Mickey. Ya, with some crowd called SIFF. A proper pension like, not just a state one. Tis *extra*. Mickey's left hand was outstretched. It held the invisible weight of what he should have been given but wasn't. He tapped out his list of ungiven things, a bony finger slapping on sundried, limeburnt flesh. There were tears in his yellow eyes. He was after being shafted. Robbed. And not even by a man, but by a little prick. That's what he couldn't get over.

He went over and started to beat the prefab door until Pokey opened it a crack and threw an envelope at him and slammed the door again, just as Mickey put his head down and went to ram him like an old billy goat. Mikey's hard old skull splintered that door and it very nearly gave away. Pokey must have shat himself inside. I want my fuckin pension, you little prick, Mickey roared and roared. I want my fuckin pension and the rest of my stamps. Come out, you bullocks, till I kill you. For a finish he went on a rampage around the place, turning over barrows and pulling farmwork apart and when he picked up a shovel and started swinging, we all run for cover. Except poor innocent Timmy Hanrahan: he only stood grinning back to his two ears like the gom that he is.

Auld Mickey Briars lamped Timmy Hanrahan twice across both sides of his innocent young head before we subdued him. We locked Mickey into the back of Seanie Shaper's Hiace until he became more philosophical for himself. Then we left him out and we all dragged crying, bleeding Timmy up the road to Ciss's and fed him pints for the evening. Mickey Briars softened his Jameson with tears and told Timmy he was sorry, he was always fond of him, he was a grand boy so he was, it was only that he thought he was laughing at him. I wouldn't laugh at you, Mickey, Timmy said. I know you wouldn't, son. I know you wouldn't.

Pokey had shouted after us to put the first round of dink on his slate. There wasn't a man of us put his hand in his pocket all evening. Poor Timmy puked his guts up early on in the session and we slagged him – good-naturedly of course – and he laughed through his snots and his tears and the blood of his head caked up grand and came off in one thin scab before we sent him walking home for himself with a bag of chips and three battered sausages and a dose of concussion that could have easily killed him.

To this day there's a quare auld draw on one of his eyeballs, as if it's not able to keep time with its comrade. But it makes no odds to Tim; if there's a mirror in that house he hardly pays it any heed. And if he's thicker than he was before, who's to say? Who's to care? You don't need brains to shovel shit and carry blocks and take orders from rat-faced little men who'll use you all day and laugh at you all night and never pay in your stamps.

That's the worst of the whole thing. We all went in to draw our stamps and they only laughed at us. Stamps? What stamps? There wasn't a stamp paid in for any of us, nor a screed to the Revenue, either. I showed the little blonde girl at the hatch my last payslip. You could clearly see what was taken out: PRSI, PAYE, Income levy, pension. She held it in front of her with her wrinkled up like I was after wiping my armpit with it. Well? I said. Well what? What's the story? There's no story sir. I wasn't on the computer as an employee of Pokey Burke or anyone else. Did you never look for a P60 from your employer? A what, now? You're some fool, she said with her eyes. I know I am, my red cheeks said back. I think she started to feel sorry for me then. But when she looked at the line of goms behind me – Seanie Shaper, innocent Timmy, fat Rory Slattery and the rest of the boys, all clutching their dirty payslips – she started to feel more sorry for herself.

Triona lets on she doesn't blame me for being taken for a fool. Sure why would you ever checked, love? It wasn't just you. He fooled everyone. My lovely, lovely Triona, she fairly let herself down when she married me. She could have gone with any of them smart boys that got the real money out of the boom: the architects, solicitors, auctioneers. They were all after her. She went for me bald-headed though, as if to spite them. She put her hand in mine one night inside in town after the disco and that was that; she never let go of me. She saw more in me than I knew was there. She made me, so she did. She even softened my father. How did you pull her, he wanted to know. She won't stay with you. She's too good for you. You're her bit of rough, he said. All women goes through this auld phase. Ya, I thought, like my mother, except her auld phase didn't end until she died, twisted and knotted up and spent, exhausted, pure solid burnt out from him.

And now I can't pay for the messages. Christ on a bike. I had a right swagger there for a

couple of years, thinking I was a great fella. Foreman, I was, clearing a grand week. Set for life. Houses would never stop going up. I'd see babies like our own being pushed around the village below and think: lovely, work for the future, they'll all need their own houses some day too. We knew Pokey was a prick, but none of us cared. What matter what kind of a man he was, once the bank kept giving him money to build more and more? Once they buried that boy of the Clunliffes years ago and his auld auntie grabbed that land and divided it out among the bit shots, we all thought we were fuckin elected. That poor boy knew more than any of us. I remember when they carried him up to the Height, how the Penroses wheeled little one-legged Eugene out on to the street as he passed on his way to lie between his mother and father, and Eugene spat on the hearse and the big dirty gob slid down along the side window. He couldn't stop black guarding that boy even and he dead. I remember him well. He got kicked around the place and all I ever did was laugh. He was the quietest boy you'd meet, he never threw a shape nor said a cross word, and he ended up getting shot down like a mad dog. And everyone was glad. We all hated him. We all believed the newspapers, over the evidence of our own eyes and ears and a lifetime of knowing what we knew to be true. We wanted to hate him. He hadn't a hope.

I was as smart as any of the posh lads in school. I was well able for the English and geography and history. All those equations in physics and maths made sense to me. I couldn't ever let on I knew anything, though, that would have been suicide in my gang. I did pass maths even though I know I could have done honours. I never opened my mouth in English. A lad from the village wrote an essay one time and Pawsy Rogers praised him from a hight; he said he showed great fair and imagination. He got kicked the whole day back to the village.

I had that King Lear's number from the start, well before the teacher started to break things down slowly for the thick lads: he was a stupid prick. He had it all and wanted more, he wanted the whole world to kiss his arse. I had Goneril an Regan pegged for bitches too, and I knew that Cordelia was the one who really, truly loved him. She wouldn't lie to him, no matter how much he wanted her to. You're a man and no more, she said, you're not perfect, but I love you. Cordelia was true of heart. There aren't many Cordelias in the world. Triona is one. I was scared before I knew I was, of facing Josie

Burke, and she told me. I was scared, imagine, even though I was in the right. Pokey Burke left his father and mother to mop up after him. The auld lad said he didn't know where Pokey was, but I knew he was lying. He owes me money, Josie, I said. Does he now? Did he not pay you a fine wage? He was looking down at me from the third step before his front door. I might as well have had a cap in my hand and called him sir. My stamps. My pension. My redundancy. I could hear my own voice shaking. The state looks after all that when fella goes burst, he said. Go in as far as town to the dole office. He said no more, only kept looking down at me, down along his nose. Right so. Right so, I will. I didn't say I'd been there already, we all had, and it turned out Pokey had rowed us up the creek and left us there. I should have said I'd been on to the taxman and the welfare inspectors and and the unions and they'd soon soften Pokey's cough, but I hadn't and I didn't and I turned away with with a pain in my heart for the man I'd thought I was.

Triona said don't mind them love, don't think about them, the Burkes were always users and crooks dressed up like the salt of the earth. Everyone's seen their real faces now. The whole village knows what they've done. You're a worker and everyone knows it. People look up to you. They'll be fighting each other to take you on once things pick up. Everyone around here knows you are the only one can keep the reins on them madmen. Who else could be a foreman over the lads around here? Who else could knock a day's work out of fat Rory Slattery? And stop Seanie Shaper from trying to get off with himself? I laughed then, through my invisible tears. I couldn't stand myself. I couldn't stand her smiling through her fear and having to coax me out of my misery like a big, sulky child. I wish to God I could talk to her the way she wants me to, besides forever making her guess what I'm thinking. Why can't I find the words?

Right so, right so, right so. Imagine being such a coward and not even knowing it. Imagine being so suddenly useless.

I thought about killing my father all day yesterday. There are ways, you know, to kill a man, especially an old, frail man, which wouldn't look like murder. It wouldn't be murder, anyway, just putting the skids under nature. It's only badness that sustains him. I could hold a cushion or a pillow over his mouth and nose. He'd flail about, but I'd bat his hands softly back down. I wouldn't mark him. His strength is gone from him. I wouldn't

like to see his eyes while I killed him; he'd be laughing at me, I know well he would. He'd still be telling me I'm only a useless prick, a steak of piss, a shame to him, even and he dying. He wouldn't plead, only laugh at me with his yellow eyes.

I was always jealous of Seanie Shaper growing up. Any time I ever called to Seanie's, I'd hear them laughing when I got to the bend before their house. They'd all be roaring laughing at some aping their father would be at, and their mother would be cooking and telling them to shut up their fooling but she'd be laughing herself. The odd time, I'd stay and eat, and Seanie and his brothers and sister would take ages to finish because they'd be laughing so much. Their father was wiry and kind-looking. He had a lovely smile. He'd warm you with it. You knew there was nothing in him only good nature. He had a big pile of old Ireland's Own magazines he'd look for when they had the dinner ate. He needed them for the song words. They'd all roll their eyes and let on to be disgusted but still and all they'd clap and sing along while he pounded at the songs: 'The Rathlin Bog' and 'The Rising of the Moon' and 'Come Out Ye Black and Tans'. It twisted my soul, the pleasure of that house, the warmth of it and the laughter; it was nearly unbearable to be there and to have half my mind filled with the chill and the gloom and the thick silence of our cottage. I hated Seanie Shaper for having a father like that and not even knowing his luck.

My father never drank a drop until the day the probate was finished on Granddad's farm. Paulie Jackman sent off a cheque that same day to the Revenue for the inheritance tax. He handed my father Granddad's savings in cash. Then my father went to Ciss Brien's and ordered a Jameson and a pint and drank them down and vomited them up and Ciss herself, who was still going strong that time, gave him a sog into the mouth of her experienced fist for himself. It took him months to train himself to be a drinker. He was laughed at and talked about and watched in wonderment by the old guard of Ciss's front bar; here was a man they always knew yet hardly knew at all, a quiet son of a small farmer who was never known for intemperance or loudness, a cute fucker they all thought, and he drinking out a farm. They loved him, or loved the thought of him, what they thought was: a man who could easily have had a good life who chose instead their life: spite and bitterness and age-fogged glasses of watery whiskey in dark, cobwebbed country bars, shit-smeared toilets, blood-streaked piss, and early death. He could have

helped it but didn't. They couldn't help it and loved him for being worse than them. He was the king of the wasters. He bought drink for men he didn't like and listened to their yarns and their sodden stories. He gave an eye filled with darkness they could mistake for desire to women he thought were only common whores. The day he spent the last penny that was got for the land he stopped drinking. It took him nearly five years to drink out the farm and when it was done he never took a sup again. He wasn't a drinker at all, really. The old guard were heartbroken after him. They couldn't understand it; he never looked at them again.

He drank out the farm to spite his father. It was the one thing Granddad said he knew my father wouldn't do, so my father did it. At least I can trust him not to drink out the farm, Granddad would say. It was the *at least* that galled my father, I'd say. It meant nothing and everything: Granddad was saying he was good for nothing, every badness was possible with him, but he didn't drink and never had, so at least there was that one thing, one thing only that could nearly be seen as a good thing. My father called his dead bluff. I walked him home from his last session. I haven't a bob left now, he said, and if we went over this minute to my father's grave and dug him up, he'd be face down inside in the coffin. And he laughed and coughed and laughed and pissed down the leg of his pants and laughed and fell in the cottage door and woke up sober the next day and was never drunk again a day in his life.

I can forgive him for turning piles of money into piss and for leaving my mother to her holy hell, too mortified to sit up past the back row in Mass; walking quickly, head down through the village, sneaking about her business for fear of being forced to talk to anyone; sitting crying tears of frustration out beyond Cool-cappa in a crock of a car with a burnt clutch and a steaming engine and a screaming child in the back of it while he sat silently swallowing her claim to a life. I'll never forgive him for the sulking, though, and the killing sting of his tongue. He ruined every day of our lives with it. Drunk, he was leering and silent and mostly asleep. Sober, he was a watcher, a horror of a man who missed nothing and commented on everything. Nothing was ever done right or cooked right or said right or bought right or handed to him properly or ironed straight or finished off fully with him. We couldn't breath right in a room with him. We couldn't talk freely or easily. We were mad about each other, my mother and me, but he made us afraid to look at each other for fear he'd want to know were we conspiring against him

again. We stopped looking at each other for good for a finish and stopped talking to each other a few years later and the day we buried her I wanted to jump into the ground and drag her back out and scream at her to come back, come back, we'll walk to the shop and I'll hold your hand and we won't mind Daddy and I'll pick a bunch of flowers and leave them on your locker for you and if he calls me a pansy we'll tell him to feck off and we'll give back all these years of ageing and dying and stupid, stupid silence and be Mammy and Bobby again, two great auld pals.

I always knew Pokey Burke was a bit afraid of me. Triona says I *exuded menace* when she met me first. She has a lovely way of putting things. There was no one stopping her doing honours English. She says I stood against the bar inside in the disco in town and stared at her. Her friend said what the fuck is that *freak* looking at, but Triona knew the friend was only raging I wasn't staring at her. Oh, don't look back, for Christ's sake, the friend said, he's from an awful family, they live in a hovel, the father is a weirdo and the mother never *speaks* – but Triona looked back all the same and when I scowled at her she knew I was trying to smile, and when I hardly spoke to her on the way home she knew deep down that I was terrified of the lightness and loveliness of her, and when she said are we going to shift so or what, I thought I'd never again regain the power of movement.

Pokey Burke had been mad after her; she'd shifted him weeks before, and he'd been rough, biting her lip and clawing at her bra, and I'd never forgive him for having touched her. Even when he told me I was foreman, and was handing me an envelope every week with twenty fifties in it, he was afraid of me, and I was afraid I'd kill him. But still and all he needed me, and I sneered at him, and we called him a prick, but now he's beyond, sunning himself in God only knows where, hiding from the bank and the taxman and probably trying to ride foreign wans. And here am I, like an orphaned child, bereft, filling up with fear like a boat filling with water.

Having a wife is great. You can say things to your wife that you never knew you thought. It just comes out of you when the person you're talking to is like a part of yourself. We went to a play inside in town one time; I can't remember the name of it. You couldn't do that without a wife. Imagine it being found out, that you went to see the

play, on you own! With a woman, you have an excuse for every kind of soft thing. The play was about a man and wife; they just sat on the stage on either side of a table, facing the audience, talking about each other. Your man was like my father, just not as bad. The wife was lovely; she was dog-tired of your man's auld selfish ways, but she persevered with him all the same. He sat there, drinking a glass of whiskey that was really red lemonade and smoking fag after fag, grinning back to his two ears as she read him to the audience. He had an auld smart reply for every criticism. They aged onstage, as they were talking. I don't know how it was done. For a finish, they were both old and their lives were near spent, and at the very last, your man turned around and admitted he thought the world of her; he'd always loved her. He put his hand on her cheek and looked at her and cried. Christ, your man was some actor. On the way home in the car, tears spilled down my face. Triona just said oh love, oh love.

Bobby

Mio padre vive ancora nella casetta in cui sono cresciuto, in una stradina appena dopo il mulino. Vado lì ogni giorno per vedere se non è ancora morto, e ogni volta rimango deluso. Non passa giorno senza che mi deluda. Mi sorride; quel sorriso. Sa bene che ci vado per controllare se è ancora vivo. Sa anche che io so che lui lo sa. E ride con quella sua risata sguaiata. Gli chiedo se va tutto bene e lui ride e basta. Ci fissiamo per un po' e quando non riesco più a sopportare la puzza che emana il suo corpo, me ne vado. Stammi bene, gli dico, tornerò domani. Sì che tornerai, mi risponde. So che lo farò.

Infilzato in un perno rotante, al centro del cancelletto dell'entrata principale, c'è un cuore di metallo pitturato di rosso. Si sta squamando adesso, il rosso è andato via quasi del tutto. Andrebbe raschiato, scartavetrato, ripitturato e il perno andrebbe oliato. Dopo tanto tempo, continua ancora a vorticare al vento. Mentre mi allontano lo sento fare cick, cick, cick...un cuore rotante, cigolante e arrugginito.

Quando muore, il cottage e i due acri di terreno che restano andranno a me. Si è bevuto la fattoria del nonno un po' di anni fa. Quando l'avrà seppellito, brucerò quella casa, piscerò sulle ceneri e venderò questi due acri al miglior offerente. Per ogni suo giorno di vita, il prezzo di mercato si svaluta. Ovviamente sa bene anche questo, e resta vivo apposta per farmi un dispetto. Ha il cuore incrostato di chissà che schifezze e i polmoni raggrinziti e anneriti, ma riesce ancora a respirare, rantolare, tossire e risputare fuori aria. Mi hanno licenziato dal lavoro due mesi fa e questa notizia l'ha rinvigorito più di qualsiasi altra medicina. Credo gli abbia dato almeno altri sei mesi di vita. Chissà poi se avesse scoperto come mi aveva fottuto il lavoro Santo Burke, sarebbe di certo guarito completamente e, a quel punto, Santo avrebbe anche potuto cominciare l'iter per la beatificazione per aver compiuto un vero e proprio miracolo.

E perchè non avrei dovuto fidarmi di Santo Burke? Era giovane quando ho cominciato a lavorare per lui, tre anni più giovane di me, ma praticamente tutto il paese aveva lavorato per suo padre e nessuno aveva mai avuto niente da ridire, a parte i soliti pettegolezzi. Santo Burke era stato chiamato così secondo il nome del Papa: quando è nato, i suoi genitori l'avevano chiamato Seàn Pòl per ricordare Giovanni Paolo, ma suo fratello Eamonn, che non aveva ancora due anni quando il nuovo nato era stato portato a casa, aveva deciso che il marmocchio si doveva chiamare Santo (ovvero il diminutivo di

“Santone”) e allora tutti quanti avevano cominciato a chiamarlo così. Da allora il piccolo Seàn Pòl venne etichettato come Santo per il resto della sua vita. E anche oltre se qualcuno parlerà di lui dopo che sarà crepato.

Avrei dovuto capire che qualcosa puzzava già l'anno scorso, quando Mickey Briars era entrato chiedendo della sua pensione. Ehi, ragazzi, ma lo sapete che tutti dovremmo aver diritto a una pensione come si deve? No non sappiamo niente, Mickey. Sì con una una roba chiamata pensione integrativa. Vi danno un'altra pensione, non solo quella statale. Questa è *extra*. La mano sinistra di Mickey era aperta come per sorreggere il peso invisibile di quello che gli sarebbe spettato, ma che in realtà non aveva mai avuto. Contava sulle dita la lista di quello che non gli avevano dato, con un dito scheletrico e raggrinzito come carne essiccata al sole. I suoi occhi gialli erano pieni di lacrime. Era appena stato fottuto. Derubato. E non da un uomo, ma da un' insignificante testa di cazzo. Era questo ciò che non riusciva proprio ad accettare.

Era arrivato e aveva cominciato a prendere a calci la porta del prefabbricato finché Santo non l'ha aperta con un colpo secco, gli ha lanciato una busta e ha sbattuto di nuovo la porta, proprio mentre Mickey voleva entrare a testa bassa per pestarlo a sangue. Il vecchio cranio di Mickey batteva violentemente sulla porta, che stava quasi per cedere. Santo là dentro si sarà cagato sotto dalla paura. Mickey continuava ad urlare voglio la mia dannata pensione, merdosa testa di cazzo. La mia dannata pensione e anche le marche. Esci da lì, coglione, che ti ammazzo. Alla fine andava in giro come una furia rovesciando carriole e sollevando cassaforme e quando ha preso in mano una vanga e ha cominciato ad agitarla siamo corsi tutti ai ripari. Tutti tranne il povero, innocente Timmy Hanrahan che se ne stava lì a sghignazzare come un idiota.

Il vecchio Mickey Briars ha colpito Timmy Hanrahan due volte su entrambi i lati del suo giovane visino prima che riuscissimo a calmarlo. Poi lo abbiamo chiuso nel furgoncino di Seanie Shanahan (detto Spianatrice) finché non è tornato ad essere padrone di se stesso. Solo allora lo abbiamo lasciato uscire e, insieme a lui, ci siamo messi tutti a piangere e ci siamo avviati per andare da Ciss e riempire di birra per il resto della serata il povero Timmy, ancora sanguinante. Mickey Briars diluiva il suo Jameson con le lacrime e ha detto a Timmy che gli dispiaceva per ciò che era successo, che era sempre stato affezionato a lui, che era un ragazzo d'oro, eccome se lo era, è solo che

pensava che stesse ridendo di lui. Non riderei mai di te Mickey, ha risposto Timmy. Si, lo so che non lo faresti mai, figliolo. Lo so.

Santo ci ha gridato di mettere il primo giro sul suo conto. E nessuno di noi per tutta la sera ha messo mano al portafogli. Il povero Timmy ha vomitato anche l'anima quando eravamo solo all'inizio del nostro giro di bevute e ovviamente ci siamo andati giù pesante con gli insulti – con affetto, s'intende – e lui rideva come un matto tra le lacrime, smoccolando dal naso e col sangue rappreso sulla testa, con la ferita che si era un po' cicatrizzata e aveva formato una leggera crosticina. Dopodichè lo abbiamo mandato a casa a piedi, da solo, con una busta di patatine fritte, tre salsicce mezze spappolate e una commozione cerebrale che avrebbe benissimo potuto ucciderlo.

Da quel giorno c'è uno strano segno in uno dei suoi occhi, che lo fa muovere come se non riuscisse a stare a tempo con l'altro. Ma tanto a Timmy non gliene frega niente; se anche ci fosse uno specchio in casa sua, neanche lo noterebbe. Se dimagrisce nessuno può dirlo. A chi importerebbe? Mica serve una laurea per spalare merda tutto il giorno, spostare blocchi, prendere ordini da degli idioti ubriaconi che ti usano per tutto il giorno, ti sfottono la notte e non ti pagano neanche le marche.

Perché alla fine, è proprio questa la cosa peggiore. Siamo andati tutti quanti a ritirare queste dannate marche e ci hanno semplicemente riso in faccia. Marche? Ma quali marche? Neanche mezza ce ne hanno pagata, figuriamoci poi dover fare un reclamo all'Ufficio fiscale. Ho mostrato la mia ultima busta paga alla biondina dello sportello. Se guarda qui si capisce benissimo quello che non torna dal mio estratto conto: assicurazione sociale, trattenute, l'imposta sul reddito, la pensione... Reggeva il foglio davanti a sé storcendo il naso come se mi ci fossi appena asciugato l'ascella. Bè? Le ho chiesto. Cosa bè? Allora com'è la storia? Che non c'è proprio nessuna storia, signore. Sul computer non risultavo come dipendente né di Santo Burke né di nessun altro. Il suo datore di lavoro non le ha mai parlato di una trattenuta? Cos'è sta roba? 'Sei un idiota' le si leggeva chiaramente in faccia. 'Sì è vero', ammettevano le mie guance mentre arrossivo. Credo che in quel momento cominciasse a provare pena per me. Ma quando ha visto la fila di disgraziati che avevo dietro – Seanie Spianatrice, l'innocente Timmy, il ciccone Rory Slattery e il resto dei ragazzi che reggevano in mano la loro busta paga – ha cominciato a provare più pena per se stessa.

Triona continuava a ripetere che non era colpa mia se mi avevano preso per stupido. E perché mai avresti dovuto controllare, tesoro? Non è successo solo a te. Ha fregato tutti quanti. La mia dolce, adorabile Triona, ha abbassato parecchio i suoi standard sposando me. Sarebbe potuta andare con chiunque di quei bellimbusti pieni di soldi: architetti, avvocati, banditori d'asta... erano tutti ai suoi piedi. Eppure ha perso la testa per me, come se volesse far loro un dispetto. Ha messo la sua mano nella mia una sera che eravamo in paese, tornando dalla discoteca, e questo è quanto; non mi ha mai lasciato andare. Ha visto in me qualcosa che non sapevo neanche di avere. Mi ha fatto maturare, proprio così. È riuscita addirittura ad addolcire mio padre. Come hai fatto a rimorchiarmi, mi ha chiesto. Non resterà a lungo con te. È troppo per te. Sei solo un passatempo per lei, diceva. Tutte le donne passano per questa fase. Sì, ho pensato, come mia madre, solo che questa fase per lei è finita quando è morta, aggirata e in trappola, sfinita, esausta, fino ad essere consumata da lui.

E ora non riesco a pagare le commissioni. Cristo Santo. Per un paio di anni mentre ero lì potevo andare a testa alta, pensando di essere un brav'uomo. Ero *supervisore*, e guadagnavo mille euro a settimana. Sistemato a vita. Il prezzo delle case non smetteva di salire. Vedeva bambini come il nostro che venivano portati in giro giù per il villaggio e pansavo: piccolo, lavora per il futuro, tutti avranno bisogno di una casa propria, prima o poi. Ci avevano detto che Santo era una testa di cazzo, ma nessuno di noi ci aveva badato. E a chi importava di che tipo di uomo fosse, una volta che la banca continuava a dargli sempre più soldi per costruire? Una volta che era stato seppellito quel ragazzo del Cunliffes, e la sua vecchia zia aveva comprato quel terreno e lo aveva diviso tra i pezzi grossi della zona, pensavamo tutti di essere dei fottutissimi eletti.

Quel povero ragazzo la sapeva più lunga di tutti noi. Mi ricordo di quando lo avevano portato al cimitero, di come i Penroses spingevano per la strada la carrozzella del piccolo Eugene (a cui mancava una gamba), e di quando era passato per essere posto a giacere tra sua madre e suo padre, ed Eugene ha sputato sul carro funebre e il grosso, sporco sputo è colato giù lungo il finestrino laterale. Non aveva smesso di insultare quel ragazzo nemmeno da morto. Mi ricordo molto bene di lui. Ha cominciato a dare calci a destra e a manca e tutto ciò che ho fatto io è stato ridere. Era il ragazzo più tranquillo sulla faccia della terra, non aveva mai fatto male a una mosca né detto una parola sbagliata e ha finito per l'essere abbattuto come un cane impazzito. Tutti ne eravamo

felici. Lo odiavamo tutti. Credevamo ai giornali anche davanti all'evidenza dei nostri stessi occhi, delle nostre orecchie e di quello che sapevamo da sempre essere la verità. Volevamo odiarlo. Non aveva speranza.

Ero elegante come ogni altro tipo sofisticato a scuola. Ma la cavavo bene in inglese, geografia e storia. Tutte quelle equazioni di fisica e matematica avevano un senso per me. Tuttavia non avevo mai potuto dare a vedere che sapevo tutte quelle cose, perché sarebbe stato un suicidio nella mia compagnia. Ho passato a malapena matematica anche se so che avrei potuto prendere il massimo. Non ho mai aperto bocca in inglese. Un tizio del paese ha scritto un saggio una volta, e Pawsy Rogers in persona lo ha elogiato dicendo che aveva dimostrato grande gusto e immaginazione. Tornando in paese è stato picchiato per tutta la strada del ritorno.

Sapevo tutta la storia di King Lear già prima che l'insegnante cominciasse a spiegarlo ai più tonti: era una testa di cazzo di prima categoria. Aveva tutto ma voleva di più: voleva che tutto il mondo gli baciasse le chiappe. Avevo già etichettato Goneril e Regan come puttane e avevo già capito che Cordelia era l'unica che lo amava veramente e sinceramente. Non gli avrebbe mai mentito, non importa quanto le sarebbe costato. Sei solo un uomo, gli ha detto, non sei perfetto, ma ti voglio bene. Cordelia aveva un cuore puro. Non ci sono molte Cordelie a questo mondo. Triona è una di queste. Avevo paura prima ancora di saperlo, ero spaventato persino di guardare in faccia Josie Burke, e lei me l'ha detto. Pensa, ero spaventato anche se ero nel giusto.

Santo Burke aveva lasciato suo padre e sua madre nelle peste. Il suo vecchio mi ha detto che non aveva idea di dove fosse Santo, ma ero sicuro che stesse mentendo. Mi deve dei soldi, Josie, gli ho detto. Davvero? Non ti ha già dato un ottimo stipendio? Mi stava guardando dal terzo scalino davanti alla sua porta. Forse avrei anche dovuto togliermi il cappello e magari chiamarlo signore. Le mie marche. La mia pensione. La mia buonuscita. Potevo sentire la mia voce tremolare. È lo stato che provvede a tutto questo quando qualcuno va in rovina, mi ha detto. Vi basta andare in paese all'ufficio e chiedere un sussidio. Non ha detto altro, ha continuato solo a guardarmi sprezzante dall'alto del suo naso. Sì giusto, giusto, lo farò. Non gli ho detto che ci ero già stato, e anche gli altri. Santo ci aveva tascinati nel fiume e ci aveva lasciati lì, fine della storia. Avrei dovuto dire che ci sarei andato a fondo all'esattore fiscale, ai servizi sociali e al sindacato, così

gli avrebbero fatto abbassare le ali a Santo, ma non l'ho fatto. Non è successo niente del genere e me ne sono andato con l'orgoglio ferito per non essere l'uomo che pensavo di essere.

Triona mi ha detto non farci caso tesoro, non pensarci, i Burke da sempre sono truffatori, approfittatori travestiti da brava gente. Adesso tutti quanti li vedranno per quello che sono veramente. L'intero paese ha visto quello che hanno fatto. Tu sei un buon lavoratore, lo sanno tutti. La gente ti stima. Faranno la fila per chiamarti una volta che le cose si saranno sistamate. Lo sanno tutti qui intorno che sei l'unico che riesce a tenere a bada quei pazzi. Chi meglio di te può fare il capocantiere con dei tipi del genere? Chi altro può riuscire a far lavorare quel grassone di Rory Slattery? O impedire a Seanie Spianatrice di farsi le seghe? Allora mi sono messo a ridere, attraverso le mie lacrime invisibili. Non sopportavo me stesso. Non sopportavo il suo sorriso pieno di paura, mentre cercava di tirarmi fuori dalla compassione per me stesso come un grande bambino imbronciato. Vorrei tanto riuscire a parlare con lei nel modo in cui ha bisogno, senza doverle sempre far indovinare quello che sto pensando. Perché non riesco a trovare le parole giuste? Va bene così, va bene, va bene così. Immagina com'è essere un tale codardo e non saperlo nemmeno. Immagina com'è sentirsi, improvvisamente, inutile.

Ho pensato a come uccidere mio padre per tutto il giorno ieri. Insomma, ci sono molti modi per uccidere un uomo senza che sembri un omicidio, specialmente un uomo vecchio e debole. E comunque non sarebbe stato omicidio, ma solo un agevolare il corso naturale degli eventi. L'unica cosa che ancora lo sostiene è la sua cattiveria. Avrei solo dovuto prendere un cuscino e premerglielo sul naso e la bocca. Si sarebbe dimenato, ma gli avrei abbassato le mani dolcemente. Non avrei dovuto lasciargli nessun segno. Le forze che pian piano lo abbandonano. Non mi piacerebbe proprio vedere il suo sguardo mentre lo uccido; riderebbe di me, eccome se lo farebbe. E continuerebbe a dirmi che sono un inutile stronzo, un buono a nulla, una vergogna per lui, anche in punto di morte. Non mi supplicherebbe, riderebbe semplicemente di me con quei suoi occhi gialli.

Sono sempre stato invidioso di Seanie Spianatrice, fin dall'infanzia. Ogni volta che andavo a chiamarlo, sentivo le loro risate addirittura dalla curva prima di casa sua. Se

ne stavano tutti lì a ridere vivacemente per qualcosa che suo padre stava scimmiettando, e sua madre era lì che cucinava e che diceva di smetterla con quelle buffonate, ma sicuramente se la stava ridendo anche lei. Qualche volta magari mi fermavo da loro a mangiare e Seanie con tutti i suoi fratelli e sorelle ci mettevano una vita a finire per il troppo ridere. Il loro padre era un uomo magrolino e sembrava molto premuroso. Aveva un sorriso amorevole, che riusciva a scaldarti il cuore. Si vedeva che non c'era niente di cattivo in lui, ma semplicemente un carattere allegro. Aveva una grossa pila di vecchie riviste che leggeva sempre finita la cena. Gli servivano per i testi delle canzoni. Alzavano tutti gli occhi al cielo mostrandosi disgustati, ma poi zitti, zitti si mettevano a battere le mani e cantare mentre lui teneva il ritmo di: 'The Rathling Bog', 'The Rising Moon' e 'Come Out Ye Black and Tans'. Mi contorceva l'anima il piacere che emanava quella casa, il suo calore e il suono delle loro risate; era quasi insostenibile per me stare lì dentro avendo metà della mente che pensava al gelo, all'oscurità e al profondo silenzio di casa mia. Ho odiato Seanie Spianatrice per avere un padre così senza rendersi neanche conto di quanto fosse fortunato.

Mio padre non aveva mai bevuto un goccio fino a quando fu conclusa la convalida del testamento del nonno per la fattoria. Quello stesso giorno Paulie Jackman ha inviato un assegno all'Agenzia delle Entrate per l'imposta di successione. Aveva dato a mio padre tutti i risparmi del nonno in contanti. Allora mio padre è andato da Ciss Brien e ha ordinato un Jameson e una pinta di birra, li ha buttati giù e poi li ha vomitati fuori e Ciss, che in quel periodo ci stava dando dentro anche lei, gli ha dato un malrovescio sulla bocca di quelli che solo lei sapeva dare. Gli ci sono voluti interi mesi di allenamento per diventare un buon ubriacone. Nessuna esitazione pur di raggiungere il suo obiettivo. Non dava retta né alle critiche né a chi cercava di dissuaderlo. Veniva deriso, gli parlavano alle spalle ed era guardato con stupore dal vecchio guardiano del bar di fronte a Ciss; tutti lo conoscevano, ma a stento gli avevano rivolto parola. Era il figlio di un piccolo contadino, considerato da sempre un tipo tranquillo, l'opposto dell'intemperanza e della chiassosità, un adorabile stronzo pensavano tutti, e poi si è bevuto l'intera fattoria. Gli volevano tutti bene, o forse amavano l'immagine che avevano di lui, quello che pensavano che fosse: un uomo che avrebbe potuto avere benissimo una vita felice che aveva deciso invece di seguire le loro orme: astio e

amarezza, gli occhiali annebbiati da anni di whiskey annacquato bevuto nella penombra, squallidi bar pieni zeppi di ragnatele, cessi strisciati di merda, pipì venata di sangue e morte precoce. Avrebbe potuto uscirne ma non l'ha fatto. Loro non potevano cambiare le cose e lo amavano ancora di più per essere diventato peggiore di loro. Era il re dei perditempo. Offriva da bere a uomini che non sopportava e stava lì a sentire tutte le loro lamentele e le loro storie losche. Lanciava occhiate piene di tristezza che loro interpretavano come desiderio sessuale a donne che lui considerava solo sguardine. Il giorno in cui ha speso l'ultimo centesimo che aveva ereditato per il suo pezzo di terra, ha smesso di bere. Gli ci sono voluti quasi cinque anni per bersi fuori la fattoria e quando ha finito non ha toccato mai più un goccio d'alcol. Non era mai stato un gran bevitore in realtà. A quelli della vecchia guardia si spezzava il cuore. Non potevano capirlo; e lui non li ha mai più cercati.

Si era bevuto la fattoria solo per fare un dispetto a suo padre. Era l'unica cosa che, diceva il nonno, era certo che mio padre non avrebbe mai fatto; per questo l'ha fatta. Almeno posso star sicuro che non si farà fuori la fattoria bevendo, aveva detto il nonno. Era quell'*almeno* che aveva attizzato mio padre, direi invece io. Voleva dire tutto e niente: il nonno stava dicendo che era un buono a nulla, avrebbe potuto compiere qualsiasi cattiva azione possibile, ma non beveva e non l'aveva mai fatto prima, così almeno aveva quell'unica cosa, quell'unica cosa che poteva assomigliare ad una cosa positiva. Mio padre poi la finì con la sua sceneggiata. L'ho riaccompagnato a casa dopo la sua ultima bevuta. Non ho un soldo adesso, mi ha detto, e se andassimo in questo momento alla tomba di mio padre e la aprissimo, lo troveremmo girato a testa in giù nella bara. E scoppia a ridere, tossì forte, e rise, si pisciò nei pantaloni, e rise e poi si accasciò davanti alla porta di casa e il giorno dopo si risvegliò sobrio e non bevve mai più, neanche una volta, per il resto della sua vita.

Posso anche perdonarlo per aver trasformato una montagna di soldi in piscio e per aver abbandonato mia madre nel suo profondo inferno, così mortificata da sedersi in ultima fila durante la messa; camminava veloce a testa bassa per il paese, alludendo a degli impegni per paura di dover parlare con qualcuno faccia a faccia; sedeva singhiozzando lacrime di frustrazione al di là della Coolcappa nel catorcio di una macchina con una frizione bruciata e il motore fumante, con un bambino che urlava sul sedile posteriore mentre lui stava seduto in silenzio mandando giù a forza la sua supplica di una vita

migliore. Tuttavia, non lo perdonerò mai per il suo muso lungo e per il letale pungiglione che è la sua lingua. Ha rovinato ogni singolo giorno delle nostre vite così. Da ubriaco aveva uno sguardo voglioso, ma almeno era silenzioso e dormiva per la maggior parte del tempo. Da sobrio ti sorvegliava, uno schifo di uomo al quale non sfuggiva niente e che faceva commenti su qualunque cosa. Niente era mai fatto come voleva lui: mai un piatto cucinato bene, o una parola detta nel modo giusto, o un acquisto azzeccato, mai che una cosa gli venisse detta in modo appropriato, mai una camicia che fosse stirata abbastanza accuratamente, mai che una storia fosse veramente finita per lui. Non riuscivamo nemmeno a respirare nel modo giusto nella stessa stanza in cui c'era lui. Non potevamo parlare liberamente o tranquillamente. Io e mia madre eravamo pazzi l'uno dell'altra, ma non osavamo guardarci per paura che volesse sapere se stavamo di nuovo tramando qualcosa contro di lui. Alla fine abbiamo smesso di guardarci del tutto, e qualche anno dopo abbiamo smesso anche di parlarci e il giorno in cui l'abbiamo seppellita volevo saltare laggiù sottoterra e trascinarla di nuovo fuori e urlarle di tornare, torna... Andremo a piedi al negozio e ti terrò la mano e chi se ne frega di papà e ti raccoglierò un mazzo di fiori e li lascerò nel ripostiglio per te e se lui mi dice che sono un finocchio gli diremo di andare a farsi fottere e gli faremo pagare tutti questi anni in cui ci ha fatto invecchiare, morire, e vivere in questo stupido, stupido silenzio ed essere di nuovo mamma e Bobby, due vecchi, grandi amici.

Ho sempre saputo che Santo Burke era un po' intimorito da me. Triona dice che le *incutevo soggezione* la prima volta che mi ha visto. Ha un modo adorabile di dire le cose. Nessuno ha mai potuto dissuadere *lei* dal parlare con un linguaggio appropriato. Dice che me ne stavo lì al bancone del bar della discoteca del paese e la fissavo. La sua amica sbraitava che cazzo ha da guardare quel *maniaco*, ma Triona sapeva che le rodeva solo che non stessi guardando lei. Oh non voltarti, per l'amor del Cielo, le diceva, viene da una famiglia disastrata, vivono in una topaia, suo padre è uno sballato e sua madre *non parla* – ma Triona si è voltata lo stesso e quando l'ho guardata aggrottando le sopracciglia sapeva che stavo cercando di sorridere, e quando tornando a casa dalla discoteca a fatica cercavo di parlarle, sapeva nel profondo del suo cuore che ero terrorizzato per la luce e la bellezza che emanava, e quando ha detto che ne dici se andiamo in un posto più tranquillo, credevo che mi avrebbero ceduto le gambe.

Santo Burke era innamorato perso di lei; lo aveva respinto qualche settimana prima e lui era stato un cafone, le aveva morso un labbro e l'aveva afferrata per il reggiseno; non lo perdonerò mai per averla toccata. Anche quando mi ha offerto il posto da supervisore, e ogni mese mi faceva avere un ottimo stipendio, aveva paura di me, e io avevo paura che avrei potuto ucciderlo. Ma nonostante tutto, aveva ancora bisogno di me, e io lo prendevo in giro e tutti lo chiamavamo cazzo, ma ora l'ha superata, è là spaparanzato al sole Dio solo sa dove, nascosto dalla banca e dall'esattore fiscale, cercando di fottersi qualche straniera. E io sono qui, come un bambino rimasto orfano, in lutto e imbarcando paura come una nave che lentamente si riempie d'acqua.

Avere una moglie è meraviglioso. Puoi dire cose a tua moglie che neanche sapevi di pensare. Ti vengono semplicemente fuori quando la persona con cui stai parlando è come una parte di te. Siamo andati a vedere una commedia in paese una volta; non ricordo il titolo. Non puoi farlo se non hai una moglie. Pensa se si sapesse che sei andato a teatro *da solo!* Con una donna hai la scusa per fare qualsiasi tipo di cosa frivola. La commedia parlava di un uomo e di sua moglie; i due stavano semplicemente lì sul palcoscenico, seduti ognuno ad un lato opposto di un tavolo, guardando il pubblico e parlando l'uno dell'altra. Quell'uomo era tipo mio padre, solo non così cattivo. La moglie era una donna deliziosa; era stufa marcia dell'egoismo ossessivo di suo marito, ma stava con lui nonostante tutto. Lui se ne stava lì seduto a sorvegliare il suo bicchiere di whiskey – che in realtà era limonata tinta di rosso – e fumandosi una cicca dopo l'altra facendo un sorriso forzato a trentadue denti mentre lei lo descriveva al pubblico. Ad ogni critica replicava sempre in modo elegante. Invecchiavano sul palco mentre parlavano. Non so come ci riuscissero. Verso la fine erano entrambi vecchi e le loro vite erano quasi trascorse del tutto, e durante le ultime battute quell'uomo si è guardato intorno e ha ammesso che aveva una profonda stima di lei; l'aveva sempre amata. Le ha sfiorato la guancia con la mano e si è messo a piangere. Cristo, quell'attore era dannatamente bravo. Tornando a casa in macchina le lacrime mi rigavano il viso. Triona ha detto solo oh, amore, amore mio.

2.2 Trevor

I'm not sure what time Mother gets up. I'm always gone before she stirs. I drive as far as Galway some days. I still get scared crossing the bridge in Portumna, like I used to as a child. The planks on the wooden stretch still clank loosely, as though they could break under the car. On a sunny day in Eyre Square you can sit and look at girls' legs all day long. Some of those girls wear skirts so short you can almost see their underwear. I bought a pair of sunglasses that block the sides of my eyes so that they can't seeme looking at them. The trick is not to let your head move as you follow them with your eyes. I tried to hide my wraparound shades from Mother. She found them, though; she must have been rooting around in my car. She asked me what I was doing with them. She said they were plastic rubbish. She said she hoped I didn't wear them going through the village. She said people would think I was gone mad. She said I'd look a show wearing those things. She looked at me and shook her head. I didn't know what to say, so I just looked at the ground. I saw her putting my shades into the pocket of her apron.

I'm dying. I'm sure of it. One day soon my heart will just stop dead. I sometimes have a striking pain in my left hand. It could be a blockage in an artery. Sometimes I feel light-headed, sometimes I feel a pounding in my temples; my blood speeds and slows, speeds and slows. Last night, just as I was drifting off to sleep, I started violently. My heart must have stopped and then kick-started itself again. I'll die soon. I hope I don't know it's coming; I hope I'm asleep. I hope my lungs don't constrict and burn for want of air. I hope my brain doesn't show me scary pictures as it shuts down. I hope my life isn't concentrated into seconds and flashed across my consciousness like a scream. I hope I just stop.

I saw that girl again yesterday afternoon. She was standing outside her house, watching a child playing on a plastic tractor. The child was shouting, loudly and almost absentmindedly; long shouts with a rising note at the end. He looked like he was two and a half or maybe three at the oldest. He looked happy. Her house is painted white and there are flowers planted in the borders of her small front garden. It's like one good tooth in a row of decaying ones. Mother's friend Dorothy lives in the only other house that's occupied in that estate. She seems to think I'm her houseboy. Mother says she paid through the nose for that house, way more even than the market value at the time. She

was desperate to downsize from her draughty old lodge. She got rightly stuck above in that place, Mother says. She thought she'd be right swanky!

Dorothy asked me to paint her window sills last week. I came on Saturday with white paint and brush. I brought a flat-head screwdriver to open the tin. That's not emulsion, she screeched at me. You need *emulsion*. I imagined myself plunging the screw-driver into one of her milky eyes. Would she die straight away, I wonder? Maybe she'd spin and scream and claw at the protruding screwdriver. A fine mist of blood would spray in a widening arc as the spun. The blood would be pink, full of oxygen. That girl might run down to see what was going on. Dorothy would have finished gurning by then. You *killed* her, she'd say. I had to, I'd tell her. She wasn't really a humanShe was a vampire. Dorothy would explode into dust, then. And that girl would rush into my arms.

I feel a pain in my lower arm back lately, if I stand still for too long. The pain travels around to the front sometimes. It could be my kidneys failing, shutting down, stopping. It could be testicular cancer, too. The pain from that often manifests in disparate body parts; it can travel down your leg, up your spine, into your stomach. I could be riddled with tumours. I probably am. I definitely have skin cancer. Mother never used sun block on me when I was a child. She murdered me when I was a child by giving me skin cancer. A slow, undetectable murder, a pre-emptive strike, a perfect crime. She's a genius, the way she makes evil seem so normal. She can be evil while making a cake, without even blinking. She flaps around in a cloud of flour so that her sharp old head seems to float, disembodied, above it, and says things like: What were you doing for so long in the bathroom? Or: Dorothy's son is a captain in the army now, you know. Or: Who ever heard of a young man with a certificate in Montessori teaching? Or: You're gone as fat as a fool.

Sometimes I just catch a glimpse of her black, forked tongue as it flicks back in. I wonder if she knows I've seen it. I think she thinks I see it but don't believe it to be real. I think she thinks I think I'm going mad. She's trying to drive me mad. These creatures feed on madness, obviously. Dorothy is one as well. I could easily just kill them both, but I need a way of making sure everyone knows what they are before I move against them. If I just kill them, I'll be sent away to prison, or to the Central Mental Hospital in Dundrun if I plead insanity. If I kill them and expose them for what they are, I'll be a

hero. They smell the same; they look more or less the same; they are concomitant in evil. I'm going to have to take that child from the girl who lives near Dorothy. Lloyd will help me. I won't let Lloyd hurt him or anything. We probably have to put some marks on him, though. Then I'll kill Mother and Dorothy and tell everyone that I apprehended them just as they were about to sacrifice the child. They're witches, I'll say. They've held me prisoner with a spell since I was a baby. Don't touch their bodies, I'll say, they may not be really dead. The authorities might require my services as a consultant. I am probably the only living soul who knows how to spot these creatures and deal with them.

Sometimes I sit and think for hours about things. And then I fall into a sort of reverie. After the reverie abates, I don't remember what I was thinking about before it, I just know that I was thinking too hard. My head pounds dully. It happened last evening, while I was sitting on the couch, watching through the kitchen door as Mother baked a cake. After it, I was slumped forward. My head was almost resting on my knees. *Judge Judy* was nearly over. Mother was shaking me. I had a strange picture in my head of Mother with a forked snake's tongue. Trevor, Trevor, oh Trevor, she was saying as she shook me awake. Her eyes were wet with tears. I'm okay, Mother, I told her. You're not, she said, you're not okay at all. We'll have to send you over to Doctor Lonergan. You'll have to get something to keep you together. I couldn't bear it if you fell to pieces the way your father did. My father split in two, and then spell to pieces. That's what I think schizophrenic is: splitting in two and then falling to pieces. Am I a schizophrenic? Is it hereditary? I could find out, but I don't want to. Like I needed only to open the wardrobe door to find out if there was a monster waiting in there to kill me, but I never did. I might have woken him if I did. I'm not waking a monster. No way.

I wonder if that girl that lives near Dorothy has a boyfriend. She has no husband anyway, Dorothy says. Dorothy obsesses about her. Three different men call to her. A scruffy-looking character who seems to be the child's father; he takes him walking by the hand up and down the road. An older man who must be her father. He mows grass all up and down the road. He tidies up that whole road by himself. He's a respectable-looking man, too, Dorothy says, very straight-backed and just handsome enough to not

be too aware of it. He must be pure solid ashamed of that one, with her brazen chest and her bastard child. And a tall, fair-haired chap with muscles and sunburn started to call to her a few weeks ago. He's called at least three times now. He marches in and out with tools and pieces of wood. He could be just doing jobs for her, Dorothy says, but they're very *familiar* with each other. She always *touches* him. There's no knowing what way she pays him for his work. She has no job, that one. She probably was given that house by the County Council. Imagine that, Dorothy says, you get rewarded handsomely these days for being a little hussy!

I'm going to paint Dorothy's window sills very, very slowly indeed. I need to see this tall, sunburnt, muscle-bound person for myself. I need to know what kind of relationship he has with the girl. He is a bogey, an unknown quantity. I can't think of her without him creeping into my mind's eye. She was wearing a denim skirt one day. Does he put a big, rough hand up her skirt? I'd like to think he is respectful of her, but there aren't many respectful men in the world. He probably asks her to do things for him and she feels she has no choice, because she is afraid he won't finish the jobs he has started. That's what those fellows are like. I would have to intervene if I happened to see him forcing himself on her while I painted Dorothy's upstairs window sills. I would kick in her front door and he'd turn towards me and I'd hit him with the heel of my hand full force into his solar plexus, killing him instantly. It's okay, I'd tell the girl, while she sobbed in my arms. It's okay, the monster is gone, the monster is gone. I hope my heart doesn't stop before I get to save that girl. I don't feel very well. I think I've been thinking too hard again.

Trevor

Non so bene a che ora si alzi mamma. Sono già uscito di casa quando si sveglia. Guido anche fino a Galway a volte. Ho ancora paura di attraversare il ponte a Portumna, proprio come quando ero bambino. Le assi sul tratto di legno scricchiolano ancora forte, come se si potessero crepare sotto il peso della macchina da un momento all'altro. Se fa bello, mi siedo in piazza Eyre e sto a fissare per tutto il giorno le gambe delle ragazze che passano. Alcune di queste indossano gonne talmente corte che si può quasi intravedere cosa indossano sotto. Ho comprato un paio di occhiali da sole che mi coprono bene tutti gli occhi così non si accorgono che le guardo. Il trucco è non muovere la testa mentre le segui con lo sguardo. Ho provato a nascondere alla mamma i miei occhiali da sole coprenti. Però li ha trovati; deve aver frugato nella mia macchina. Mi ha chiesto che ci facevo con quelli. Ha detto che erano fatti di plasticaccia. Ha detto che sperava che non li indossassi giù in paese. Ha detto che se no tutti avrebbero pensato che ero andato fuori di testa. Ha detto che sarei sembrato un pagliaccio con quella roba addosso. Mi ha guardato scuotendo la testa la testa. Non sapevo cosa rispondere così guardavo il pavimento. L'ho vista infilare i miei occhiali da sole nella tasca del grembiule.

Sto morendo. Ne sono sicuro. Uno di questi giorni il mio cuore si fermerà e morirò. A volte mi viene una grossa fitta alla mano sinistra. Potrebbe essere il blocco di un'arteria. A volte ho le vertigini, a volte sento martellare nelle tempie; il mio sangue accelera e rallenta, accelera e rallenta. L'altra notte giusto quando mi stavo per addormentare sono sussultato violentemente. Il mio cuore dev'essersi fermato e rimesso in moto da solo. Morirò presto. Spero di non sapere quando arriverà il momento; spero che starò dormendo. Spero che i miei polmoni non si comprimano o non brucino per la mancanza d'ossigeno. Spero che il mio cervello non mi mostri immagini spaventose quando starà per spegnersi. Spero di non rivedere la mia vita concentrata in pochi secondi e riproiettata come tanti flash all'interno della mia coscienza come un grido. Spero di farla finita e basta.

Ho visto di nuovo quella ragazza ieri pomeriggio. Era in piedi fuori da casa sua, che guardava un bambino giocare con un trattore di plastica. Il bambino urlava forte e quasi distrattamente; lunghe grida con una nota crescente alla fine. Mi sembrava che avesse

due anni e mezzo o forse tre al massimo. Sembrava felice. La sua casa è dipinta di bianco e ci sono dei fiori piantati ai lati del giardinetto anteriore. Era come l'unico dente sano in una fila di denti cariati. Dorothy, l'amica di mamma occupa l'unica altra casa in quel complesso residenziale. Credo pensi che io sia il suo domestico. Mamma dice che ha pagato un occhio della testa per quella casa, anche di più del suo valore di mercato dell'epoca. Era disperata pur di lasciare quella catapecchia piena di spifferi dove stava prima. Era stata bloccata in quel posto, diceva mamma. Pensava che sarebbe stata veramente chic.

La scorsa settimana Dorothy mi ha chiesto di dipingerle il davanzale. Il sabato sono arrivato con vernice bianca e cacciavite. Ho portato un cacciavite a testa piatta per aprire il barattolo. Questa non è vernice, si è messa a strillarmi addosso. Devi usare la *vernice*. Mi sono immaginato mentre ficcavo il cacciavite in uno dei suoi occhi lattiginosi. Sarebbe morta all'istante, mi chiedevo? Forse avrebbe urlato ruotando su se stessa e tenendo stretto il cacciavite che sporgeva dall'occhio. Una sottile nebbiolina di sangue sarebbe fuoriuscita creando un arco sempre più grande mentre lei girava su se stessa. Il sangue sarebbe stato rosato perché pieno di ossigeno. Magari quella ragazza sarebbe scesa a vedere cosa stava succedendo, ma per Dorothy sarebbe già stato troppo tardi. L'hai *uccisa*, avrebbe detto. Dovevo farlo, le avrei risposto. Non era umana, in realtà era un vampiro. Dorothy allora sarebbe esplosa in una nuvola di cenere. E quella ragazza sarebbe corsa tra le mie braccia.

Ultimamente ho un dolore alla parte bassa della schiena, se sto in piedi per troppo tempo. A volte il dolore si espande anche alla parte anteriore. Potrebbero essere i miei reni che si indeboliscono, smettono di funzionare e si bloccano. Potrebbe anche essere un cancro ai testicoli. Il dolore che deriva da questo cancro può manifestarsi in parti disparate del corpo; può arrivare giù alle gambe, lungo la spina dorsale o nello stomaco. Potrei essere pieno zeppo di tumori. Probabile che lo sia. Sicuramente ho il cancro alla pelle. Mamma non mi ha mai messo la crema solare quando ero piccolo. Mi ha ucciso già da piccolo facendomi venire il cancro alla pelle. Un omicidio lento e impercettibile, una mossa preventiva, un delitto perfetto. E' un genio per far sembrare la sua cattiveria una cosa così normale. Riesce ad essere cattiva anche mentre fa una torta, senza neppure battere ciglio. Svolazza in mezzo a una nuvola di farina così che la sua vecchia testa

dura sembra fluttuare, sospesa, come uno spirito disincarnato, dicendo cose tipo: che ci sei stato a fare nel bagno per tutto questo tempo? Oppure: il figlio di Dorothy è diventato *capitano* nell'esercito adesso, sai? Oppure: e dove mai si è visto un giovane *uomo* con un diploma per insegnare alla Montessori? O ancora: stai diventando più grasso che pazzo.

A volte riesco a vedere di sfuggita la sua lingua nera e biforcuta mentre la ritira di scatto tra le fauci. Chissà se sa che l'ho vista. Credo che pensi che la veda, ma non creda che sia vero. Credo che pensi che io sia convinto di ammattire. Sta provando a farmi diventare pazzo. Queste creature si nutrono di pazzia, evidentemente. Anche Dorothy è una di loro. Potrei semplicemente ucciderle entrambe, ma devo trovare il modo di far sapere a tutti chi sono prima di agire. Se le uccido e basta mi spedirebbero in prigione, o all'ospedale psichiatrico di Dundrum se mi dichiarassi malato di mente. Se le uccido e dimostro quello che sono, sarò un eroe. Entrambe hanno lo stesso odore, sembrano più o meno uguali, e sono cattive allo stesso modo. Ho paura che dovrò portar via quel bambino alla ragazza che vive vicino a Dorothy. Lloyd mi aiuterà. Non lascerò che Lloyd gli faccia del male o cose così. Tuttavia, è probabile che dovremo lasciare dei segni su di lui. Poi ucciderò mamma e Dorothy e dirò a tutti che le ho fermate giusto un attimo prima che sacrificassero il bambino. Sono streghe, dirò. Mi hanno tenuto prigioniero sotto l'effetto di un incantesimo fin da quando ero un bambino. Non toccate i loro corpi, dirò, potrebbero essere ancora vive. Le autorità potrebbero aver bisogno dei miei servizi come consigliere. Probabilmente sono l'unica anima vivente che ha avuto a che fare con queste creature e sa come riconoscerle.

A volte mi siedo e penso per ore intere alle cose e poi cado in una sorta di trance. Dopo che questa fantasticheria è svanita, non ricordo più a cosa stavo pensando prima. So solo che stavo pensando troppo intensamente. La mia testa pulsa fastidiosamente. È successo ieri sera, mentre stavo seduto sul divano, guardando attraverso la porta della cucina mentre mamma preparava una torta. Dopodichè mi sono accasciato in avanti. La mia testa si stava quasi appoggiando alle ginocchia. *Forum* era quasi finito. Mamma mi stava scuotendo. Nella mia mente è apparsa una strana immagine di mamma con una lingua biforcuta come quella di un serpente. Trevor, Trevor, oh, Trevor, mi diceva mentre continuava a scuotermi per svegliarmi. I suoi occhi erano pieni di lacrime. Sto

bene, mamma, le ho detto. No che non stai bene, mi ha risposto lei, non stai bene per niente. Dovremo spedirti dal dottor Lonergan. Dovrai prendere qualcosa per rimetterti in riga. Non potrei sopportarlo se cadessi a pezzi come ha fatto tuo padre.

Mio padre si è rotto a metà e poi è caduto a pezzi. Ecco cosa penso che sia la schizzofrenia: spaccarsi a metà e poi cadere a pezzi. Sono schizzofrenico? È ereditario? Potrei scoprirlo, ma non voglio. Come se mi fosse solo bastato aprire l'anta dell'armadio per scoprire se dentro c'era un mostro pronto ad uccidermi, ma non l'avessi mai fatto. L'avrei dovuto risvegliare se l'avessi fatto. Non sveglierò un mostro. Nossignore.

Chissà se quella ragazza che abita vicino a Dorothy ha un fidanzato. Dorothy dice che non è sposata, comunque. Dorothy è ossessionata da lei. Tre uomini diversi le stanno attorno. Un personaggio alquanto sciatto che sembra essere il padre del bambino; l'ha portato a passeggiare per mano su e giù per la strada. Un uomo più vecchio che deve essere il padre di lei. Lui le taglia l'erba di tutta la strada. Sistema l'intera via da solo. È anche un uomo dall'aspetto rispettabile, dice Dorothy, se ne va a testa alta ed è abbastanza affascinante da non esserne troppo consapevole. Deve vergognarsi parecchio di quella, dice Dorothy, con quel seno in mostra e un figlio bastardo. Poi c'è un tizio alto con i capelli chiari, abbronzato e pieno di muscoli, che ha cominciato ad andarla a trovare qualche settimana fa. È venuto almeno tre volte finora. Continua a sfilare dentro e fuori da casa sua con attrezzi e pezzi di legno. Magari sta solo facendo qualche lavoretto per lei, dice Dorothy, ma sono molto *in confidenza* l'uno con l'altra. Lei lo tocca di continuo. Nessuno sa come lo paga per il suo lavoro. Non ha neanche un lavoro, quella. Probabilmente a dargli questa casa sono stati quelli del comune. Figurati, dice Dorothy, al giorno d'oggi vieni ricompensata generosamente se sei una puttanella.

Ho proprio intenzione di dipingere il davanzale di Dorothy molto, molto lentamente. Devo vedere con i miei occhi questa persona alta, abbronzata e indurita dai muscoli. Devo sapere che tipo di legame ha con la ragazza. Chissà che razza di mostro è. Non riesco a pensare a lei senza che lui si insidi nella mia mente. Un giorno lei portava una gonna di jeans. Chissà se lui le avrà messo la sua mano grande e ruvida su per la gonna. Vorrei credere che lui le porta rispetto, ma al mondo non ci sono molti uomini rispettosi. Probabilmente lui le chiede di fare delle cose per lui e lei si sente di non avere altra

scelta, perché teme che lui non finisca i lavori che ha iniziato. È così che sono questi tizi. Sarò costretto a intervenire se mentre dipingo il davanzale al piano di sopra di Dorothy vedessi che lui la forza a fare qualcosa. Sfonderei la porta d'ingresso con un calcio e lui si volterebbe verso di me. Lo colpirei con tutte le mie forze sull'alto addome con il palmo della mano, uccidendolo all'istante. Va tutto bene, direi alla ragazza, mentre lei singhiozza tra le mie braccia. È tutto ok, il mostro non c'è più, il mostro non c'è più. Spero che il mio cuore non si sarà fermato prima di aver salvato quella ragazza. Non mi sento molto bene. Credo di aver pensato troppo intensamente un'altra volta.

2.3 Lloyd

I kind of thought actually that Trevor was gone completely mental when he called up here a few weeks ago. Like, why would he not text or email or Facebook? What's with all the reality, I thought. Does he not know he's a million times cooler in virtual form? God, he's misshapen. He wanted me to help him to *kidnap a kid*. I thought he was pitching something to me, some concept or something, some angle to keep the Dryffids guessing in Warlock Universe – like the thing he thought of last year where we hacked into their harems and stole all their girls (and boys in Ming's case) and totally screwed up the spec of all their sex slaves and made them into fat animal-headed creatures and wiped out millions of their cred points. But he wanted me to actually swipe a *living* child with him: he was going deep undercover as a goddamn *Montessori teacher* in some nursery or something and all I was meant to have to do was drive up, he'd hand over the kid and I'd keep him for like, a night or some shit.

Mom was here like three weeks ago. I let her in this time. She saw my bong. I watched her for ages while she glanced at it, again and again. I knew she knew what it was. She was alive in the sixties, fur fuck's sake. I hadn't left it out of purpose, but this apartment is so goddamn small that shit just piles up everywhere and you lose your ergonomic perspective. The bong was torturing her. I saw beards of sweat lining themselves up along the skin between her nose and her upper lip. What's that part of the body called? I can never remember. I started to really enjoy myself as her initial discomfort turned to pain and the pain wrote its signature across her stupid face. And I wondered what part of her was in me. Then I remembered. Every part. As she left she said please, Lloyd, please... and I said what, Mom? Please what? And I raised my eyebrows and half-smiled in a mock pleasantness that I know for a fact creeps her right out. Creeps *me* right out. Just take care. I... I...

And she turned and scurried away, like a little white mouse, down the communal stairs and back to her terrified, dipsomaniac life.

My dad fucked off when I was a kid. I think he just couldn't stand to look at her any more. I remembere the last time I ever saw him. He looked different, wearing a T-shirt and jeans and a jacket with the colla turned up. I remember thinking he looked really

cool. He kissed me on the top of my head and said love you., kiddo. I didn't say anything back, just stood looking at him from the hallway, wondering why my mother was taking giant breaths and covering her face with one hand while pulling at my dad's arm with the other. Mom told me some bullshit story about how he had to go and do important work for the government to fix the hole in the ozone layer. I made myself believe that for years, until I overheard her on the phone to one of her mental-case friends, talking about him. He'd had another kid with another woman. A boy. I started to grind my teeth that night, and didn't stop for years, till finally I ground through to a nerve and the pain made me pass out.

I know now that all that shit was a series of tests I'd set myself. I think I failed some of them, that's why I'm still groping around in the dark.

I dreamt I killed the kid. That kind of fucked things up, I can tell you. And not in the way you might think. I didn't mean it; I only wanted to see how far I'd go before I made myself sick and stopped. Then I woke up and the kid was standing up looking at me over the edge of the travel cot with his big scared eyes and I shouted *thank fuck* and frightened the crap out of him, literally. But being a solipsist, I know the danger of crossing boundaries in the dream dimension. It's a dream precedent; I know now it's an actual possibility. It's something my inner warrior wants to do and is not able to, being bound by the structures of this false human reality. I still won't allow myself to be fully immersed in the truth: I am alone in the universe; the universe is created by me and for me and nothing exists outside my consciousness. I have to explore the edges of myself. I have to learn more before I can break through the barrier. I have to not care about the feelings I ascribe to my creations. Why did I do this to myself, cripple myself with conscience? It must have some meaning, the fact that I worry about doing certain things, when I know that nothing has any consequence outside of me. It's another test I've set myself, obviously. But I don't know how to pass it – am I overcoming an obstacle by giving in to my urges to destroy, or by resisting them? What do I want for myself? Why am I so unknowable?

Having killed the kid in my dream bugs me, no matter what way I think about it. Now I don't know what to do. Opacity has trumped clarity again. These test, these test. Trevor has some meaning – he must be like a behaviour modifier or something. Obviously he's

an integral part of me. He's an impulse, an instinct, a fight or flight mechanism. Him giving me this kid is me showing myself something. Maybe I should just ask straight out. I've always tried to stay icy cool around Trevor, though. I don't think he knows he doesn't really exist as an entity independent of me. Actually I'm sure of it. I need him to feel inferior to and fearful of me. I think that's how I'm supposed to make all my creations feel. It's easier with Mom. But then I've been working on her for longer. Solipsism isn't as easy as it might seem. It's difficult living in a universe with a population of one. But you already know this, being me.

I remember when I told Trevor I'd decided to be a solipsist. He laughed like a fat, retarded duck. He *honked* at me. Wow, he said, that's like a really good excuse to give yourself for not having a *job*. I disgusted myself by suddenly dropping my cloak of aloof superiority and becoming defensive. I can't help the *economy*, I said, in a pathetic, loser voice. *Pardon*, the bastard said, with glee in his eyes, *you can't help the economy?* But didn't you *create* the fucking economy, being a solipsist? And then he started to do his honking laugh again and I slapped him in his fat face. The tears that sprang immediately to his eyes fascinated me. I hurt him; I hurt myself. I felt my cheek sting later. This battle I'm having with Trevor is obviously some inner conflict, some breaking-down- building-up process of growing and strengthening, like a muscle being worked out. It has to be damaged to develop.

So now I have this kid, who is wrecking my gaff. I've put myself in this position, that's obvious; I just have to figure out why. The kid is kind of cute. Dylan is his name. He keeps saying *Mama* and *Gaga* and crying and pointing, and the only thing that shuts him up is *showing* him things. Like, I have to pick him up and point at stuff and say look, Dylan, look at the stereo, look, Dylan, look at the coocker, look, Dylan, look at the fucking sofa. The kid loves looking at shit. I'm getting a bit pissed over this whole situation. Like, I could go down for this. I'd be in the news and everything. Sometimes I forget the solipsism thing and start believing myself to be vulnerable to outside forces. They're really *inside* forces; the things I'm afraid of are the weak parts of myself that I have to deal with. When I feel no fear, I'll have completed my journey. Then I'll become the being I was meant to be. I'm not sure what my true form is. I won't discover that until I've slain every demon.

Lloyd

Ho veramente pensato tipo che Trevor fosse andato completamente fuori di testa quando è venuto qui qualche settimana fa. Della serie, perché non mi ha mandato un sms o una e-mail, o un messaggio su Facebook? Cos'è tutto questo rapportarsi in modo reale, ho pensato. Non lo sa di essere un milione di volte più figo in forma virtuale? Dio, è deforme. Voleva che lo aiutassi a *rapire* un *bambino*. Ho pensato che mi stesse dando una scossa, un'idea o qualcosa del genere, una specie di nuova prospettiva per continuare a far credere ai Dryffids che esiste l'universo di Warlock. Tipo l'anno scorso aveva avuto questa idea di entrare illegalmente nel loro harem virtuale e gli aveva rubato tutte le ragazze (e anche i ragazzi nel caso dei Ming) e aveva totalmente distrutto la specifica di tutti i loro schiavi sessuali trasformandoli in grasse creature con la testa di animale e aveva spazzato via milioni dei loro punti bonus. Ma aveva veramente bisogno di me per portarsi via un bambino *vivo*. Stava andando con massima segretezza in quanto dannato *insegnante della Montessori* in un asilo nido o una roba così e tutto quello che voleva che facessi io era portarlo là in auto, lui avrebbe preso il bambino e io l'avrei tenuto per tipo, una notte, o una merda del genere.

Mamma è venuta qui tipo tre settimane fa. L'avevo lasciata entrare, per quella volta. Ha visto il mio bong per l'erba. L'ho guardata per un'infinità di tempo mentre lei lo fissava, ancora e ancora. Ero certo che sapeva cosa fosse. Ha vissuto negli anni Sessanta, e che cazzo. Non l'avevo tirato fuori apposta, ma questo appartamento è così maledettamente piccolo che la merda si accatasta dappertutto e tu perdi la tua prospettiva ergonomica. Quel bong la stava torturando. Ho visto delle goccioline di sudore che si raggruppavano nello spazio di pelle tra il suo naso e il labbro superiore. Come si chiama quella parte del corpo? Non riesco mai a ricordarmelo. Cominciai proprio a spassarmela nel vedere come il suo iniziale disagio ti era trasformata in sofferenza e la sofferenza le si era dipinta sulla sua stupida faccia. E mi sono chiesto quale parte di lei ci fosse in me. Poi mi è venuto in mente. Tutto. Mentre se ne andava mi ha detto per favore, Lloyd, per favore... e io ho detto cosa mamma? Per favore cosa? E ho sollevato le sopracciglia e un mezzo sorriso, con un'espressione fintamente gentile che, lo so per certo, le ha dato veramente i brividi. Ha dato a *me* veramente i brividi.

Solo...abbi cura di te. Io...io...

E si è voltata affrettandosi ad uscire, come un piccolo topo bianco che scende per le scale di un condominio per tornare alla sua terrificante vita da dipsomane.

Mio padre se l'è svignata quando ero piccolo. Penso che semplicemente non sopportasse più di guardarla. Mi ricordo l'ultima volta in cui l'ho visto. Sembrava diverso, indossava una maglietta, un paio di jeans e una giacca con il colletto tirato su. Mi ricordo di aver pensato che aveva proprio un aspetto da figo. Mi ha baciato sulla testa e mi ha detto ti voglio bene, piccolo. Non gli ho risposto, sono solo rimasto a guardarla dall'entrata, chiedendomi perché mia madre stesse facendo grossi respiri mentre si copriva la faccia con una mano e con l'altra tirava mio padre per il braccio fuori dalla porta. Mamma mi ha raccontato un sacco di strondate su come mio padre abbia dovuto andarsene e fare un lavoro importante per il governo per riparare il buco nello strato di ozono. Me lo son fatto andare bene per anni, finchè non l'ho sentita parlare al telefono con uno dei suoi amici idioti, mentre stavano parlando di lui. Avrebbe avuto un figlio con un'altra donna. Un ragazzo. Ho cominciato a dignignare i denti quella sera, e ho continuato per anni finchè alla fine non ho toccato un nervo e sono svenuto dal dolore.

Adesso so che tutta quella merda erano una serie di test per mettere alla prova me stesso. Credo di averne toppato qualcuno, ecco perché sto ancora brancolando nel buio.

Ho sognato di uccidere il bambino. Quel tipo di fottute cose che succedono, sai. E non nel modo in cui potresti pensare. Non intendeva quello; volevo solo vedere quanto in là mi sarei spinto prima di sentirmi uno schifo e fermarmi. Poi mi sono alzato e il bambino era lì che mi guardava, in piedi sul bordo della brandina con i suoi occhi spaventati e gli ho urlato *grazie al cazzo* e l'ho fatto cagare sotto, letteralmente. Ma essendo un solipsistico, conosco il pericolo di oltrepassare i limiti nella dimensione onirica. È un esempio di un sogno; adesso so che è una possibilità reale. È qualcosa che il mio guerriero interiore vuole fare ma non ci riesce, essendo imprigionato dalle strutture di questa falsa realtà umana. Non permetterò ancora a me stesso di essere immerso completamente nella verità: sono solo nell'universo; l'universo è stato creato da me e per me e nulla esiste fuori dalla mia coscienza. Devo esplorare i miei limiti, devo imparare di più prima di rompere la barriera. Non devo far caso ai sentimenti che attribuisco alle mie creazioni. Perché ho fatto questo a me stesso, indebolendomi con la mia coscienza?

Deve avere un qualche significato il fatto che *ho paura* di fare certe cose, quando so che niente ha delle conseguenze. È un altro test al quale mi sto preparando, è chiaro. Ma non so come passarlo. Forse sto cercando di superare un ostacolo cedendo alle mie necessità di distruggere, o resistendo ad esse? Cosa voglio da me stesso? Perché sono così imperscrutabile?

Mi secca aver ucciso il bambino nel sogno, non importa in quale modo ci pensi. Ora non so cosa fare. L'opacità ha sconfitto di nuovo la chiarezza. Questi test, questi test. Trevor ha una spiegazione – dev'essere tipo un modificatore di comportamento o qualcosa del genere. Evidentemente lui è una parte integrale di me. È un impulso, un istinto, una disputa o un meccanismo di difesa. Dando a me questo bambino è come se lui mostrasse qualcosa a me stesso. Forse potrei chiederglielo senza giri di parole. Tuttavia ho sempre cercato di essere freddo come il ghiaccio con Trevor. Non credo che lui sappia che in realtà non esiste come entità indipendente da me. In realtà sono sicuro di questo. Ho bisogno che si senta inferiore e spaventato da me. Credo che è così che dovrei far sentire tutte le mie creature. Con mamma è più facile. Ma poi ci lavoro su da più tempo. Il solipsismo non è facile come può sembrare. È difficile vivere in un universo popolato solo da una persona. Ma tu questo lo sai già, essendo me.

Ricordo quando ho detto a Trevor che avevo deciso di essere un solipsista. Ha riso come una grassa anatra ritardata. Mi *starnazzava*. Wow, ha detto, tipo questa è *veramente* un'ottima scusa con la quale puoi giustificarti per non avere un *lavoro*. Ho disgustato me stesso indossando improvvisamente il mio mantello di distaccata superiorità e mettendomi sulla difensiva. Non posso risollevarre *l'economia*, ho detto con una patetica voce da sfigato. *Scusa?* Disse il bastardo, con sguardo soddisfatto, *tu* non puoi risollevarre *l'economia*? Ma non l'avevi *creata* tu la merdosa economia, visto che sei un solipsista? E poi ha cominciato di nuovo a fare quella risata starnazzante e gli ho dato uno schiaffo su quella sua faccia cicciona. Le lacrime che fuoriuscivano dai suoi occhi mi hanno subito affascinato. L'avevo ferito. Avevo ferito me stesso. Dopo ho sentito che la mia guancia pizzicava. La battaglia che sto conducendo con Trevor è chiaramente una sorta di conflitto interiore, tipo un processo di distruzione e poi ricreazione per crescere e rafforzarsi. È come quando un muscolo viene allenato: deve essere lesionato per svilupparsi.

Così ora ho questo bambino che mi sta distruggendo il rifugio. Mi sono messo io in questa posizione, è ovvio; devo solo capire perché. Il bambino è tipo carino. Si chiama Dylan. Continua a dire *mama e mato* piangendo e indicando qualsiasi cosa, e l'unico modo per fargli chiudere la bocca è *mostraragli* le cose. Tipo, devo prenderlo in braccio e indicargli le robe e dire, guarda, Dylan, guarda lo stereo, guarda, Dylan, guarda il fornello, guarda, Dylan, guarda il fottuto divano. Il bambino adora guardare questa merda. Mi sto un po' rompendo dell'intera faccenda. Tipo, potrebbero arrestarmi. Andrei al telegiornale e tutto. A volte dimentico il fatto di essere solipsista e comincio a credere di essere vulnerabile a forze esterne. In realtà sono forze interne; le cose di cui ho paura sono le parti deboli di me stesso con le quali devo avere a che fare. Quando non avrò più paura, avrò completato il mio viaggio. Allora sarò la creatura che ero destinato a diventare. Non so bene quale sia la mia vera forma. Non lo saprò finché non avrò eliminato ogni demone.

2.4 Millicent

Daddy done a rudey this morning at breakfast and Mammy went mad. She called him a smelly bastard and told him farting was all he was good for. I felt sad for Daddy then because he looked sad on his face and he went all red and he said sorry love to Mammy and she started putting her arm over her nose and banging stuff on the table with her other hand and acting like she hated Daddy. Right after he done th rudey he smiled over at me like he always does and Mammy said don't be trying to bring *her* down to *your* level, you're a pure solid *show* opposite the child, you're such a bad *example*. I don't know what Mammy means half the time. Mammy told Daddy *I* was a better earner than *him* because *I* bring in a hundred and fifty euros a month and he brings in sweet fuck all. I heard her saying this before too. The child brings in more than you Hughie; the *child* brings in more than you. Mammy used to be always giving out stink to Daddy for accidentally saying that word in front of me but now she says it the whole time herself. It's a funny word. Fuck fuck fuck. I say it in my room but not so's Mammy can hear me. I test it out to see how does it sound coming out of my mouth. Daddy called Mammy a really bad word one night but I can't remember it but I know it must be real bad because he told her sorry straight away after he said it and Mammy was crying instead of shouting. Daddy doesn't have any work and he isn't allowed to get the dole because he was the boss of himself. Daddy says loads of words about the people who give out the dole. Real bad words. Daddu says he built the country with his own bare hands while they were inside drinking tea. Mammy tells himah shut up.

Mammy works in Tescos. She told Daddy she has to work her fingers to the bone. I cried when I heard Mammy saying that. I thought all the skin was going to come off her fingers. I thought her fingers would fall off. Like that man in the village whose leg fell off and now he has a leg made out of metal and he does be drunk and falls on the footpath and people have to pick him up and Daddy tells me don't be looking at him, and one time we were coming home from Mass and we seen him falling over and Mammy said oh Hughie pull over and give him a hand and Daddy said he would in his bollocks, that fella was only a knacker and he could stay inside in the gutter. Mammy gave out the whole way home telling Daddy how it was awful to be coming from Mass

and he wouldn't give a proper Christian example to the child and how would he like if it was him who was lying in the street and people driving past him and walking out over him. Daddy said nothing back to her only got redder and redder and then when we were eating our dinner later on I saw a big long snot from my nose falling into my gravy like a little waterfall and then I knew I was crying and I didn't really know why. I get really sad and I start crying before I know I'm going to. Then Mammy and Daddy always stop fighting and stop not talking and do start hugging me and saying sorry, sorry darling, sorry little love, oh it's not your fault, sorry, sorry, sorry. I don't know what they do be on about half the time.

Daddy collects Mammy and Assumpta Gill from Tescos. All the other fellas driving their cars are only pricks. I shout PRICKS and Daddy does laugh and says not to be saying bold words. Then I do shout it again and he laughs again and pretends to be cross. YOU'RE ONLY A PRICK AND A BOLLOCKS I do shout out the window like daddy does and he says MILLICENT! And I know well he does be only letting on to be cross with me. He always smiles back at me straight away after. Daddy in the mirror is always smiling when Mammy isn't with us. Daddy in the mirror is always sad when Mammy is with us. Daddy in the mirror never sings on the way home from Tescos, only on the way in. Assumpta Gill smells like fags. She does be telling Mammy about all them little bitches in work and how they're all real sly. They do be forever getting Assumpta into trouble, licking on her. Mammy agrees away with her. Then when she's gone, Mammy tells Daddy she's an awful silly cow. I never say any bad words in front Mammy and Assumpta Gill because I don't want to get Daddy in trouble.

I'll be going back to school soon at the end of this summer and then Daddy won't be minding me any more and he does be saying what'll he do without his baby girl in the mornings, he'll have to go way and get a real job besides sitting down on the couch with me looking at Iggle Piggle and Peppa Pig and I feel real sad when he says that because I don't want to go to school and leave my daddy all sad without me and it'll beno good watching Peppa Pig without me. How's it daddies can't come to school anyway? Maybe they'll have to now if everyone is still going around scared of the Children Snatcher Monster. A child got kidnapped in the city and the child was belonging to a lady that lives up the road from our house and the child was took away by a fella in a car from the

house where he was getting minded near the big huge shopping centre inside in town. Mammy had her hand over her mouth when her friend came in to tell her about the lost baby and she kept saying oh sweet Jesus, oh sweet Jesus, oh sweet Jesus, and she started crying and then I started crying because I got an awful fright. Then Daddy came in and Mammy started giving out stink to daddy saying you better not ever take your eyes off of her, do you hear me, don't ever take your eyes off of her, and Daddy just stood there saying of course I won't, and Mammy said sure I don't know what way you mind her when I do be at work, sure you're an awful eejit, you could let her run out onto the road or anything, and she kept giving out and I said Mammy, Daddy is brilliant at minding me, I wouldn't ever go out near the road, Daddy never takes his eyes off of me, and then the two of them had a fight over me trying to hug me at the same time and Mammy was trying to hug me and so was Daddy at the same time, and Mammy was pushing Daddy away until Daddy started *crying*, and I got an awful worser fight than when Mammy had started crying because daddies never cry and Mummy must of felt right sorry for giving out stink to Daddy because she went real quiet and rubbed his arm up and down and held his hand and Daddy was trying to hide his face with his other hand and they must of forgot about me then because they stayed hugging each other like mad and I didn't mind them having forgot about me for a while when I seen that.

Then later on I was sitting up on Daddy's lap and I was after finishing my secret bottle that I'm still allowed have before I go down to bed even though Mammy says I'm way too big now to be sucking bottles like a baby and Daddy was rubbing my hair and I could feel the warmth of his breath on the top of my head and he was whispering, I love you baby girl, I love you baby girl, I love you baby girl and he kept saying over and over until I was nearly asleep and when he took me over for a kiss off Mammy before he took me down I seen her give *him* a kiss as well and I felt real happy. But now I'm not able to go asleep because I heard Assumpta Gill saying to Mammy imagine he's still out there, there's a monster out there who snatches children imagine, oh Lord save us and guard us, Assumpta Gill was saying, but I wasn't afraid of the Children Snatcher Monster when I heard Assumpta Gill saying it to Mammy earlier because Mammy and Daddy were there on either side of me and it was sunny outside and no monster would be able to steal a child on a sunny day in front of her mammy and daddy but now I'm in bed and Mammy and Daddy are off down the hall and through the kitchen and inside in

the sitting room and the Children Snatcher Monster could easily be hiding outside in the hot press and my night light is no good at keeping away the dark because my room is full of dark over around the wardrobe and at the bottom of my bed and all. I don't want to be calling Mammy or Daddy though because they might have a fight again over me being scared and Mammy might blame Daddy for me being scared.

I'll hide in under in the blanket. I won't move and if the Children Snatcher Monster comes into my room he'll think there's no one inside in the bed. I'm not going calling Mammy or Daddy. I'll roar and scream at the Children Snatcher Monster if he comes near me the way Daddy roars at the pricks and bollockses and stupid fuckers in the other cars and the way Mammy roars and shouts at daddy over all the things Daddy done wrong to leave us without a bob to our name only what she gets from the poxy few hours that fat bitch allows her on the roster inside in Tescos. Thet roster does make mammy awful cross. I wonder what sort of a yoke it is at all. Is a roster as bad as a dirty owl tramp? Mammy said one time that that's all Daddy's mammy is. Daddy's mammy is my other nana. I never seen her. I'll use the awful word that Daddy said to Mammy, so I will, if that Children Snatcher Monster comes near me. I'll say my prayer over and over again. Saying your prayers is the same as talking to Holy God so it is. Oh Angel of God my guardian dear to whom God's love commits me here ever this night be at my side to light and guard to rule and guide. Amen.

Millicent

Stamattina a colazione papà ha fatto una scorreggia e mamma è uscita di testa. L'ha chiamato puzzolente bastardo e gli ha detto che l'unica cosa in cui è bravo è scorreggiare. Mi sono sentita triste per papà allora, perché lui aveva la faccia triste ed è diventato tutto rosso e ha detto alla mamma scusa amore e lei ha cominciato a coprirsi il naso con il braccio e a colpire roba sul tavolo con l'altra mano comportandosi come se odiasse papà. Subito dopo aver fatto la scorreggia mi ha sorriso come fa sempre e la mamma ha detto non provare a portare anche *lei* al tuo *livello*, sei veramente più *ridicolo* di un bambino, sei talmente un cattivo *eSEMPIO* per lei. Non ho idea di cosa voglia dire mamma per metà del tempo. Mamma ha detto a papà che *io* guadagno più di *lui* perché io porto a casa centocinquanta euro al mese e lui non porta a casa proprio un cazzo. Glielo avevo già sentito dire altre volte. Tua figlia guadagna più di te Hughie; tua figlia guadagna più di te. La mamma rimprovera sempre il papà perché per sbaglio dice quella parola di fronte a me ma adesso è lei che la dice per tutto il tempo. È una parola divertente. Fanculo fanculo fanculo. La dico in camera mia ma senza che la mamma mi senta. Ho provato per vedere che suono ha quando esce dalla mia bocca. Papà ha chiamato mamma con una parola veramente brutta una sera ma non me la ricordo però so che doveva essere proprio brutta perché lui le ha chiesto continuamente scusa dopo averla detta e la mamma piangeva invece di urlare. Papà non ha più un lavoro e non può avere nessuna assistenza perché era lui il capo di se stesso. Parole veramente brutte. Papà dice che ha costruito lui l'intero Paese a mani nude mentre loro erano al calduccio a bere il tè. La mamma gli dice ah tappati quella bocca.

La mamma lavora ai supermercati Tesco. Ha detto a papà che deve lavorare consumandosi le dita fino all'osso. Ho pianto quando ha detto così. Ho pensato che le veniva via tutta la pelle dalle dita. Ho pensato che le cadevano le dita. Come a quell'uomo in paese a cui si è staccata una gamba e adesso ne ha una fatta di metallo e si ubriaca e cade sul marciapiede e la gente lo deve tirare su e papà mi dice non guardarlo, e una volta stavamo tornando a casa dalla messa e l'abbiamo visto cadere e la mamma ha detto oh Hughie accosta e dagli una mano e papà ha detto col cazzo, quel tipo era solo un coglione e dovrebbe stare nei bassifondi. La mamma l'ha sgridato per tutta la

strada fino a casa e diceva a papà che era una cosa orribile tornando da messa e non stava dando un buon esempio cristiano a sua figlia e come si sentirebbe se fosse lui a stare disteso sulla strada con la gente in macchina o a piedi che passa oltre. Papà non le ha risposto niente è solo diventato sempre più rosso e più tardi a cena mentre stavamo mangiando ho visto un moccio grosso e lungo cadere dal mio naso nel sugo di carne come una piccola cascata e poi mi sono accorta che stavo piangendo e non sapevo bene perché. Divento molto triste e comincio a piangere prima ancora di sapere che sto per farlo. Poi mamma e papà smettono sempre di litigare e smettono di non parlarsi e cominciano ad abbracciarmi e dire scusa, scusa cara, scusa amore, oh non è colpa tua, scusa, scusa, scusa. Non so cosa stanno dicendo per tipo metà del tempo.

Papà va a prendere la mamma e Assumpta Gill da Tesco. Tutti gli altri tizi che guidano la macchina sono solo cazzoni. Io urlo TESTE DI CAZZO e papà ride e dice che non si dicono le parolacce. Poi io lo urlo di nuovo e lui ride ancora e fa finta di arrabbiarsi. SEI SOLO UNA TESTA DI CAZZO E UN COGLIONE urlo forte fuori dal finestrino come fa papà e lui dice MILLICENT! E lo so che vuole proprio solo fare finta di avercela con me. Mi sorride sempre subito dopo. Nello specchietto retrovisore papà sorride sempre quando mamma non è con noi. Nello specchietto retrovisore papà è sempre triste quando la mamma è con noi. Nello specchietto retrovisore papà non canta mai tornando a casa da Tesco, solo all'andata. Assumpta Gill puzza di sigarette. Si mette sempre a raccontare alla mamma di tutte quelle puttanelle al lavoro e di come siano così furbe. Mettono sempre Assumpta nei casini che sparano di lei. La mamma è sempre d'accordo con lei. Poi quando scende, dice a papà che è una brutta e stupida vacca. Non dico mai neanche una parolaccia di fronte alla mamma e Assumpta Gill perché non voglio mettere papà nei guai.

Tornerò a scuola presto, alla fine dell'estate e poi papà non dovrà più preoccuparsi di me e starà proprio lì a dire come farà la mattina senza la sua piccolina, dovrà andarsene e cercare un vero lavoro oltre a stare seduto con me sul divano a guardare i Teletubbies e Peppa Pig e mi sento molto triste quando mi dice che dato che non voglio andare a scuola e lasciare il mio papà tutto solo senza di me, non sarà bello guardare Peppa Pig da solo. E come mai i papà non possono venire a scuola? Forse dovranno sapere se qualcuno se ne va ancora in giro spaventato dal mostro ruba bambini. Un bambino in

città è stato portato via ed era figlio di una donna che vive alla fine della nostra strada e il bambino è stato preso dalla casa dove era tenuto vicino al grande centro commerciale in centro al paese da un tizio con una macchina. La mamma si è messa la mano sulla bocca quando la sua amica è entrata per raccontarle del bambino scomparso e lei continuava a ripetere oh Dio Onnipotente, oh Dio Onnipotente, o Dio Onnipotente, e ha cominciato a piangere e poi io ho cominciato a piangere perché mi è venuta una paura tremenda. Poi papà è entrato e la mamma ha cominciato ad alzare la voce con lui dicendo è meglio che non le togli mai gli occhi di dosso, mi hai sentito, mai toglierle gli occhi di dosso, e papà stava semplicemente lì dicendo certo che lo farò e la mamma ha detto sicuramente non so in che modo badi a lei quando sto al lavoro, sicuramente sei un terribile idiota, avresti potuto lasciarla correre fuori per strada magari, e continuava a sgridarlo e sgridarlo e io ho detto mamma, papà è bravissimo quando sta dietro a me, non andrei mai fuori vicino alla strada, papà non mi perde mai di vista e poi entrambi facevano a gara mentre provavano ad abbracciarmi insieme e la mamma provava ad abbracciarmi e allo stesso tempo ci provava anche papà, e la mamma stava spingendo via papà finché lui non ha cominciato a *piangere*, e ho avuto una terribile paura ancora più grande dopo, quando la mamma ha cominciato a piangere perché i papà non piangono *mai*, e la mamma si doveva sentire proprio dispiaciuta per averlo rimproverato perché è diventata molto tranquilla e accarezzava il suo braccio su e giù e gli teneva la mano e papà cercava di nascondere il viso con l'altra mano e si devono essere dimenticati di me perché poi hanno cominciato ad abbracciarsi come due matti e per un po', vedendoli così non mi importava se si erano dimenticati di me.

Poi più tardi ero seduta in braccio a papà e stavo per finire la mia bottiglia segreta, che mi danno ancora il permesso di usare prima di andare a dormire anche se la mamma dice che sono un po' troppo grandicella adesso per succhiare biberon come un neonato e papà mi stava sfiorando i capelli e riuscivo a sentire il calore del suo respiro sulla mia testa e mi sussurrava ti voglio bene piccolina, ti voglio bene piccolina, ti voglio bene piccolina, e ha continuato a ripeterlo ancora e ancora finché mi sono quasi addormentata e quando mi ha alzata per darmi un bacio, prima che mi mettesse giù ho visto la mamma che dava un bacio anche *a lui* e mi sono sentita veramente felice. Ma ora non riesco ad andare a dormire perché ho sentito Assumpta Gill che diceva alla mamma pensa, è ancora là fuori, c'è un mostro là fuori che rapisce i bambini, pensa. Oh Dio salvaci e

proteggici, diceva Assumpta Gill, ma non avevo paura del mostro ruba bambini quando prima ho sentito Assumpta Gill che lo diceva alla mamma, perché mamma e papà erano lì di fianco a me e fuori c'era il sole e nessun mostro sarebbe capace di rapire un bambino con il sole e davanti alla sua mamma e al suo papà, ma ora sono a letto e mamma e papà sono giù nel salone, e dopo la cucina e il salotto, e il mostro ruba bambini potrebbe benissimo essere giù che si nasconde nel condotto del riscaldamento e la mia lampada notturna non va tanto bene per tenere lontano il buio perché la mia camera è piena di oscurità tutt'attorno all'armadio, sotto al mio letto eccetera. Non voglio chiamare di nuovo mamma e papà perché potrebbero litigare ancora perché io ho paura e la mamma potrebbe dire che è colpa di papà se ho paura.

Mi nasconderò per bene sotto la coperta. Non mi muoverò e se il mostro ruba bambini entra nella mia stanza penserà che non ci sia nessuno nel letto. Però non voglio chiamare mamma e papà. Se il mostro ruba bambini mi si avvicina gli griderò e ruggirò come fa papà con quelle teste di cazzo, quei coglioni e quegli stupidi stronzi nelle altre macchine e come fa la mamma quando urla addosso a papà ogni volta che fa qualcosa di sbagliato e ci lascia senza un soldo se non quelli che guadagna lei in quelle poche ore miserabili quando quella puttana cicciona le lascia il turno da Tesco. Quel turno deve dar fastidio alla mamma in modo tremendo. Chissà che roba pesante che è. Un turno è brutto come uno sporco barbone? Una volta la mamma ha detto che papà è tutto sua madre. La madre di papà è la mia altra nonna. Non l'ho mai vista. Userò la terribile parola che papà aveva detto alla mamma, farò così se quel mostro ruba bambini mi si avvicina. Dirò la mia preghiera ancora e ancora. Se dici le preghiere è come se parlassi con Dio, davvero. Oh Angelo di Dio che sei il mio custode, illumina, custodisci, reggi e governa me, che ti fui affidato dalla Pietà Celeste. Amen.

2.5 Denis

You'd often see lads in films that are thrown in jail and afraid of their lives or being held prisoner and after getting the shite bate out of them, lying curled up with their knees up near their chins. The foetal position it's called, because that's the way a child lies in the womb. Small children do often lie that way in their cots to give themselves comfort. They're reminded of the warmth and safety of the time before life. Them lads that are thrown in jail in the films are looking for that comfort back. There's something in it; I know that. I've been lying that way for days now. Kate thinks I'm sick. She was in a right flap the first day because she never seen me sick before. I was never sick a day in my life. Now she's only barely tolerating me. She isn't far off of telling me cop the Jaysus on and go out and get things sorted out in the name of God before the sheriff comes and empties out the house. The crèche is closed since the child went missing. I haven't a snowball's chance in hell of a job. I'm owned a small fortune. The sky is falling down. I drove around the country for weeks looking for Pokey Burke and Conleth Barry and four or five more bollockses that owe me money. I'm owed near a hundred grand. I had the taxman roaring in one ear and the lads roaring in the other ear, and plant strewn all over the country. I done four or five jobs there I was never paid a cent for. I done them on the strength of jobs done before where I was paid as I went along and there wasn't enough hours in the day to get the work done. It's always the subbies gets shafted for a finish. I have thousands of miles done looking for lads. I didn't even know as I was driving around like a blue-arsed fly what I'd say if I found any of them. We done the second fixing for a hotel for a fella from Limerick – kitchens, stairs, bedrooms, ballroom, boardrooms, the whole shebang. Then it all went wallop and he done away with himself. What was I meant to say to his widow? Go hardly there on the big spread for the funeral, hey, I has to get paid yet?

Things was building up a long time inside me. I nearly drove over a gimpy lad up above in Lackagh that wouldn't leave me in to a site to take plant back. There was no bollocks else up there; I could easily have drove out over him. I thought about it and all, gave it proper consideration. He'll never know how close he came to being shipped back out foreign, flat-packed. I nearly went in through a plate-glass door of an office of a fat arsehole in Galway that wouldn't come out and talk to me. I would've been happy with a

promise, with a sorry, with a pay-you-next-Tuesday. I knew he was in there and he wouldn't come out. I was standing outside his door, roaring in, and the little blondie wan behind a desk inside wouldn't press the button to leave me in, she only sat there looking out at me with her mouth open. I had to take a hold of myself and close my eyes and make myself breathe slowly and deeply. I saw silvery stars, floating and popping in front of my eyes. I went back and sat in the van a while and smoked a fag and listened to my heart pounding in my ears. Palpitations, that's called, when you can feel your heart beat. Then I pulled the wipers off of his Mercedes and fucked off. Imagine that. I pulled the wipers off of his car, like a bold schoolboy.

I couldn't think as I drove the roads. I couldn't listen to the radio. Whingers on Joe Duffy moaning and groaning about their shitty little problems, little jumped-up know-it-alls rattling on and on and on about whose fault it all is. Fellas that never done a day's work in their lives, besides spouting shite about how everyone is wrong except them. They'd make you puke. How's it they all have squeaky voices? They have the whole country afraid of their own shadows. I killed a man. There's nothing as bad as a wanker who thinks his shit doesn't stink, with a poncey accent, talking about how things was done all wrong. FUCK OFF, FUCK OFF, FUCK OFF, I shouted at the radio as I drove. Shouting at the radio . Isn't that some waste of energy? I killed an old man. Kate wanted to know every evening how much did I get, did I send the invoices by registered post, did I call to the bank to know would they extend the overdraft, did I get back the plant? I sat there a few evenings picturing myself punching her into her mouth. I sat thinking about hitting my wife, and that was the only way I could stop myself from hitting her. She didn't know. She doesn't know me. Then I killed a man.

I knew Pokey Burke's foreman was still knocking about the sites. I knew he had stuff took out of some of the houses, and not just the ones Pokey done himself – he had stuff swiped out of our ones too. The subbie always gets shafted. I heard he was still over abroad in Coolcappa now and again and he and a foreign lad and a couple more was doing patch-up work on a few of the houses in that disaster area out along the Ashdown Road. I drove ovr in Kate's car one morning and I seen him coming out of a house up above near the top of the estate. Your wan whose house it was walked out along with him. She had a child in her arms. I drove off again, feeling like I shouldn't have been watching him, like she was a fella like me and I shouldn't be blaming him for the sins of

another. Then I started thinking more about him and the thoughts kind of heated up and burnt the inside of my brain. He was always stuck to Pokey like shit to a blanket. Pokey always got his approval for the smallest plan – when to pour concrete into formwork, when to start foundations, when to eat his sandwich. Pokey hadn't a hand of his own. One of the lads told me your man Bobby went down every single day to his home-house where his father still lived, away off down past the weir. I said I'd corner him on the road and ask him to know where was Pokey and what was happening with the sites and did he know anything about the finances. I thought I'd get it all out of him; he's a fella like me, we were forever smirking over at each other during them meetings Pokey used to love having. We were on the same level, I thought. I knew the father's house straight away; Andy said there was a couple of acres of briars and brambles alongside it and a slatted house with a hole in the roof. I drove the van a half a mile down the road and up a boreen and crossed back through fields to the stone wall across from the cottage. Andy told me your man Bobby often walked down for his visit. I said I'd wait and watch across for him. Then I thought about him knowing where Pokey was and protecting him to feather his own nest and I got vexed and impatient and went in along the yard. I had it in my mind to ask his father where was he, the way the auld fella would think there was people looking for him and he mightn't be thinking he had a grand boy for a son whose shit didn't stink. I wanted the father to know his son fraternized with rats. I wanted to frighten him. I wanted to frighten someone, *anyone*, so I wouldn't be the only one feeling this way.

There was a red metal heart, spinning in the breeze in the centre of the low front gate. The hinge was loose but rusty, it squeaked and creaked but still allowd that little heart to spin. It reminded me of my palpitations. I drew a kick at it as I passed in. I pushed the front door; it was solid and heavy. I pushed again and it opened. He was expecting his son. I didn't know until then that I had a length of timber in my hand, I swear on my life. He was standing inside in the dark kitchen, in that crooked-legged, bent-back way that some aul boys have of standing, like they don't know whether to take a step forward or fall down on their arse. He looked at the timber and then up at me, and he laughed. His laugh reminded me of my own father, the time I came home with my eyebrow split and my collarbone broke after we lost to Roscrea in the under-sixteen championship. My father looked at me that day and my face streaked with blood and muck and tears and he

laughed that same shrill laugh and he told me I was nothing but a useless cunt. Are you going robbing me? Bobby Mahon's father wanted to know. He was pure matter of fact about it. He asked the question the very same way you might ask a lad is he going making a mug of tea. You're a fine boy, he said. And he laughed again. His laugh made my eardrums vibrate, the way a child's cry would. Go on away, you prick, there's fuck all to rob here. Unless you like cornflakes: I have rakes of them. Is that what you're at? Robbing cornflakes off of old men? Then he smiled at me and his eyes shone and in a soft voice he said you're nothing but a useless cunt, and I nearly fell backwards, back out the kitchen door. Did he really say it, or did I imagine it? You're nothing but a useless cunt, he said. Or did he? I'll never know now. He started laughing again, and my eardrums vibrated again, and my eys went a kind of blurry. I took two or three steps forward and I saw him bracing himself and he spat sideways and looked straight into my eyes just before I lamped him as hard as I could into the fucking bald old poll.

God help me, I thought I was killing my own father, just for them two or three seconds, just for that time that'll be the rest of time for me, I swear to almighty God. I killed Bobby Mahon's father, a man I'd never before in my life laid eyes on and I'm lying here ever since, curled up like an unborn child, with my murdering hands between my knees and my guilty heart pounding, pounding, pounding in my ears.

Denis

Spesso nei film si vedono tizi che vengono sbattuti in galera e che hanno paura per la propria vita oppure quando sono detenuti, dopo essersi fatti una sega, stanno distesi tutti ricurvi con le ginocchia vicine al mento. È chiamata posizione fetale, perché è il modo in cui un bambino sta dentro l'utero. I bimbi piccoli giacciono spesso in questo modo nella culla per consolarsi. Ciò gli rimanda alla mente il calore e la sicurezza di quando non erano ancora nati. Quei tizi che vengono sbattuti in prigione nei film cercano di nuovo quella consolazione. C'è qualcosa sotto a questo comportamento; lo so. Sono disteso in quella posizione da giorni. Kate pensa che stia male. Era tutta agitata il primo giorno perché non mi aveva mai visto star male prima. Mai stato male un solo giorno della mia vita. Adesso riesce a malapena a sopportarmi. Non è tanto distante dal dirmi in nome di Dio vai via e vedi di risolvere le cose prima che lo sceriffo arrivi a svuotare la casa, che Dio ci aiuti. L'asilo è chiuso da quando è scomparso il bambino. Non ho una sola possibilità al mondo di trovare un lavoro. Mi spetterebbe una piccola fortuna. Il mondo mi sta crollando addosso. Ho girato il Paese in lungo e in largo per settimane a cercare Santo Burke e Conleth Barry e altri quattro o cinque coglioni che mi devono soldi. Mi spettano quasi centomila euro. Avevo l'esattore delle tasse che mi urlava in un orecchio e i dipendenti nell'altro, e fabbriche disseminate per tutto il Paese. Ho fatto quattro o cinque lavori per i quali non sono mai stato pagato un centesimo. Li ho fatti con la forza con cui avevo fatto i lavori precedenti nei quali ero stato pagato man mano che andavo avanti e non c'erano ore sufficienti in un giorno per finire il lavoro. Alla fine sono sempre quelli che lavorano in nero ad essere fregati. Ho fatto migliaia di chilometri per cercare quei ragazzi. Mentre guidavo e giravo come un matto, non sapevo neanche cos'avrei detto se avessi trovato uno di loro. Abbiamo fatto le ultime rifiniture di un hotel per un tizio da Limerick – cucine, scale, camere da letto, sala da ballo, sale riunioni, l'intera baracca. Poi è andato tutto in malora e lui si è ammazzato. Che avrei dovuto dire alla vedova? Andare là al grande banchetto del funerale dicendo hey, vedete di risparmiare che c'ho da essere pagato?

Le cose si stavano sviluppando da un po' di tempo dentro di me. Ho quasi preso sotto uno storpio a Lackagh che non mi voleva lasciare entrare a riprendermi la fabbrica. Non c'erano altri coglioni lì. Avrei potuto senza dubbio prenderlo sotto. Ci ho pensato su e

tutto, dandogli la giusta considerazione. Non ha idea di quanto è andato vicino all'essere rispedito all'estero, bello pressato. Ho quasi sfondato la porta in vetro laminato di un ufficio di uno stronzo ciccone di Galway che non voleva uscire a parlare con me. Non mi sarebbe bastata una promessa, una scusa o un ti pagherò martedì prossimo. Sapevo che era là dentro e non voleva uscire. Ero in piedi fuori dalla porta urlando di farmi entrare, e la biondina che stava dentro, dietro alla sua scrivania non voleva premere il bottone per farmi entrare, stava solo seduta a bocca aperta a guardare me lì fuori. Dovevo riprendere il controllo di me stesso, chiudere gli occhi e respirare, lentamente e profondamente. Ho visto le stelle che fluttuavano scoppiettando davanti ai miei occhi. Sono tornato indietro e mi sono seduto nel furgone a fumarmi una cicca e sentivo il cuore che mi pulsava nelle orecchie. Vengono chiamate palpitazioni, quando senti il tuo cuore che batte. Poi ho strappato via i tergilavoro dalla sua Mercedes e che andasse a fare in culo. Pensa. Ho strappato via i tergilavoro dalla sua macchina, come un ragazzino sfrontato.

Non riuscivo a pensare mentre guidavo per strada. Non riuscivo a sentire la radio. Gente piagnucolona che chiamava Joe Duffy lamentandosi e brontolando dei loro piccoli problemi di merda, piccoli presuntuosi so-tutto-io che si affannavano ancora ancora e ancora su di chi fosse tutta la colpa. Tizie che non avevano lavorato un solo giorno nella vita, a parte schizzare merda, che parlavano di come tutto fosse sbagliato tranne loro. Facevano vomitare. Com'è che tutti avevano quella voce stridula? C'è tutto il Paese che ha paura della propria ombra. Io ho ucciso un uomo. Non c'è nulla di peggio di una mezza sega che pensa che la sua merda non puzzzi, con un ostentato accento, che parla di come tutte le cose siano fatte male. FANCULO, FANCULO, FANCULO, urlavo alla radio mettevo a guidavo. Urlare alla radio. Non è uno spreco di energia? Ho ucciso un vecchio. Kate ogni sera voleva sapere quanto hai preso, hai mandato le fatture per raccomandata, hai chiamato la banca per sapere se hanno prolungato il prestito, hai avuto indietro la fabbrica? Qualche sera mi sono seduto immaginandomi mentre le davo un pugno sulla bocca. Stavo seduto pensando di picchiare mia moglie, e quello era l'unico modo per *bloccarmi* dal farlo. Lei non lo sapeva. Lei non mi conosce. Poi ho ucciso un uomo.

Sapevo che il capocantiere di Santo Burke stava valutando l'area. Sapevo che aveva roba presa da qualcuna delle case, e non solo da quelle che Santo aveva fatto da solo –

aveva roba intascata anche dalle nostre. Quelli che lavorano in nero vengono sempre fregati. Ho sentito che adesso era ancora via all'estero nella Coolcappa e lui, un tipo straniero e un altro paio stavano facendo un lavoro di riparazione su alcune delle case in quell'area disastrata lungo via Ashdown. Stavo guidando la macchina di Kate una mattina e l'ho visto uscire da una casa lì sopra vicino alla parte alta della tenuta. La donna proprietaria della casa lo stava accompagnando fuori. Aveva un bambino tra le braccia. Sono ripartito in macchina, sentendomi come se non avessi dovuto vederlo, come se fosse un uomo come me e non avessi dovuto incolparlo per le colpe di un altro. Poi ho cominciato a pensare di più a lui e i pensieri tipo si sono surriscaldati e mi hanno bruciato dentro al cervello. Stava sempre incollato a Santo come la merda su una coperta. Santo aveva sempre la sua approvazione, anche per il più piccolo progetto – quando mettere il calcestruzzo nella cassaforma, quando cominciare le fondamenta, quando mangiare il suo panino. Santo non aveva una mano sua.

Uno dei ragazzi mi ha detto che quel Bobby scendeva ogni santo giorno nella casa dov'era nato e dove suo padre viveva ancora, giù da qualche parte dopo il mulino. Ho detto potrei prenderlo da parte per la strada e chiedergli che mi dicesse dov'era Santo e che ne sarebbe stato delle aree e se sapeva qualcosa della situazione finanziaria. Ho pensato che avrei buttato fuori tutto in faccia a lui; è un tipo come me, ci lanciavamo sempre dei sorrisetti durante quelle riunioni che Santo amava tanto organizzare. Eravamo allo stesso livello, pensavo. Ho riconosciuto subito la casa del padre; Andy diceva che c'erano un paio di acri di rovi e cespugli di more lì di fianco e una casa fatta di assi di legno con un buco sul tetto. Sono andato avanti con il furgone per quasi un chilometro giù dalla strada principale e su per una stradina sterrata, intersecata da campi fino al muretto di pietra di fronte alla vacchia casa. Andy mi aveva detto che quel Bobby andava spesso giù a piedi per fargli visita. Ho detto potrei aspettarlo e vedere se arriva. Poi ho pensato che lui sapeva dov'era Santo e lo proteggeva per difendere il proprio nido e mi sono infastidito e impazientito e sono entrato attraverso il cortile. Avevo in mente di chiedere a suo padre dove fosse lui, così il vecchio avrebbe pensato che c'era gente che lo cercava, e non avrebbe pensato che aveva un ragazzo stupendo come figlio la cui merda non puzza. Volevo che suo padre sapesse che suo figlio fraternizzava con dei vermi. Lo volevo spaventare. Volevo spaventare qualcuno, *chiunque*, così non sarei stato l'unico a sentirmi in quel modo.

Al centro del cancelletto dell'entrata principale, c'era un cuore di metallo pitturato di rosso che vorticava al vento. Il perno era ampio ma arrugginito, cigolava e strideva ma faceva ancora roteare quel cuore. Mi ricordava le mie palpitazioni. Gli ho dato un calcio passando. Ho spinto la porta d'entrata; era solida e robusta. L'ho spinta di nuovo e si è aperta. Lui stava aspettando suo figlio. Solo dopo mi sono reso conto che avevo un pezzo di legno in mano, lo giuro sulla mia vita. Lui era in cucina avvolto nell'oscurità, messo in quel modo sbilenco e ricurvo che hanno certi vecchi quando stanno in piedi, come se non sapessero se fare un passo avanti o cadere sulle chiappe. Ha guardato il pezzo di legno e poi me, e si è messo a ridere. La sua risata mi ricordava quella di mio padre, quella volta che ero tornato a casa con il sopracciglio spaccato e la clavicola rotta dopo che avevamo perso con il Roscrea nel campionato degli under-quindici. Quel giorno mio padre mi aveva guardato, la mia faccia era rigata di sangue, fango e lacrime e si è messo a ridere con la stessa risata penetrante e mi ha detto che non ero altro che un inutile stronzo.

Hai intenzione di derubarmi? Voleva sapere il padre di Bobby Mahon. Era assolutamente inespressivo. Me l'ha chiesto nello stesso modo in cui potresti chiedere a uno se ha intenzione di preparare una tazza di tè. Tu sei un bravo ragazzo, mi ha detto. E si è di nuovo messo a ridere. La sua risata mi ha fatto vibrare i timpani, come farebbe il pianto di un bambino. Vattene via, coglione, non c'è un cazzo di niente da rubare qui. A meno che non ti piacciono i corn flakes: di quelli ne ho a vagonate. È per questo che sei qui? Per rubare cereali ai vecchi? Poi mi ha sorriso e i suoi occhi brillavano, e con voce dolce mi ha detto non sei altro che un inutile stronzo, e io sono quasi caduto, indietreggiando fino alla porta della cucina. L'aveva detto davvero o me l'ero solo immaginato? Non sei altro che un inutile stronzo, ha detto. O no? Non lo saprò mai ora. Ha cominciato di nuovo a ridere, e i miei timpani vibravano ancora, e i miei occhi si sono come offuscati. Sono andato avanti di due o tre passi e ho visto che si reggeva e ha sputato di lato e mi ha guardato dritto negli occhi appena prima che lo colpissi più forte che potevo con una lampada, su quella sua fottuta vecchia zucca pelata.

Dio mi aiuti, ho pensato che stessi uccidendo mio padre, giusto per quei due o tre secondi, giusto per quel lasso di tempo che era tutto il tempo che mi restava, lo giuro su Dio Onnipotente. Ho ucciso il padre di Bobby Mahon, un uomo con cui non avevo mai

neanche incrociato la sguardo prima, e sto sempre disteso qui da allora, ricurvo su me stesso come un bambino mai nato, con le mie mani da assassino raccolte tra le ginocchia e il mio cuore colpevole che pulsa, pulsa, pulsa nelle mie orecchie.

2.6 Triona

My auntie Bernadette liked things to be unadorned and liturgically correct. Like the rough cross she had my cousin Coley carve from a limestone block. Coley wanted to smooth it and add Celtic rings and swirls to its front. He spent a whole day with his bony arse in the air as he chipped and hacked and sanded, an acute angle of unnatural adolescent concentration. Bernadette put a halt to its artisan's gallop with a savage flourish: she smacked him into the side of his head, sending his chisel flying from his hand and his sinful pride flying from his heart. It's fine as it is, she said. Leave it over at the top of the path by the front door, let you, so that all who enter here know we are followers of Christ. Fucking old c-cunt, spat Coley when she'd returned to baking her unleavened bread. I suddenly saw the beauty in him, as the darkness of anger and frustration threw his angular jaw and blazing eyes into sharper relief. I've always needed to be shocked into awareness.

Bobby was the first person ever to remind me of Coley. Like Coley, he'd never have said the things the other lads around here would say. He stood with but was never a part of the herd of donkeys. Hee-haw, hee-haw, look at the knockers on your wan! Hee-haw, hee-haw, Jaysus lads I'm *red* from riding! Hee-haw, hee-haw, fuck it lads, I'd *bate* it into her! Bobby was silent, tall, red-faced in summer and ghost-white in winter. I always knew him, years and years before he first spoke to me, standing on the sticky floor in front of the bar of the Cave inside in town. His nervousness shocked me; I'd always thought he'd thought he was too cool to talk to us. Then I was suddenly aware of all the other things behind his eyes: fear, doubt, shyness, sadness. I was wrapped in him from that minute. I'd never look at another man again. Mobiles were still fairly new in those days. Pokey Burke must have been one of the first to get dumped by text.

Bernadette would fry pieces of chicken in their own juice and serve them with boiled green beans and unleavened bread. When my parents dropped me over there to be minded I ate the Communion of the Faithful at every meal. Bernadette never went to Mass; she was a fundamentalist Christian. Mother often said she only used religion as a framework for her craziness. She could just as easily have been a Muslim or a Buddhist or a white witch. She hung around with some group of Bible-bashers inside in town. They met in a leaking, groaning flat and read all the best bits from Genesis to

Revelations, slowing down to a near stop at Leviticus. Bernadette used The Word to torture Coley, just as Frank used his own spiteful words to torment Bobby. Coley didn't survive Bernadette's terrible reign over his childhood. At a tender, gangly fourteen he hung himself from the branch of an elder in their back garden that looked hardly stout enough to hold his weight. Bobby only barely survived Frank. Every time I met Frank I got the ghostly smell of unleavened bread baking; I could almost taste its thin dryness in my mouth. There was a spinning heart on the gate at the front of their house, a mocking symbol, Bobby's rough cross.

I wouldn't care if Bobby never again brought a cent into this house. Earlier in the summer, when the whole village had it that he was going with that girl from Pokey's ghost estate, I couldn't have cared less; I knew he wouldn't betray me in a million years. When he wouldn't talk to me after they left him out on bail, thought, I could have killed him. I screamed at him, into his face, over and over again to just *talk*, please, please just talk to me. I don't even care if he *did* kill Frank. I wouldn't love him any less. I'd perjure myself for him without breaking a sweat. I'd swear on a Bible and lie through my teeth in a heartbeat. Why wouldn't I? I'd use the same Good Book that Berbadette used to bruise poor Coley's soul.

Bobby hated his father and never got over his mother and thought of himself as a failure for not protecting her properly from his father's cruel tongue. His putdowns put her in the ground. It took me three years to get that much from him. I asked Bobby early on why he'd fallen out with his mother. He said they stopped talking, not to be drawing his father on them, and they just got stuck in that auld way. *Stuck in that auld way?* Well that makes no sense, I said. He just said I know it doesn't, I know it doesn't. Bobby whispers when what he's saying upsets him. Then he stops. I learned quickly. I never pressed him to say anything until after the frank thing. All of our years together, I never pushed, I just let him feel that I knew his pain was there and that I'd help him with it and there was no rush, no need to tell me anything until he wanted to. He had the words; I knew that. Bobby always read a lot.

Every now and again, and with no trigger that I could ever figure out, Bobby would start to tell me things. A few times I was just asleep when he started talking, in that kind of dozing where you're not fully unconscious but still able to dream, maybe even with

your book still in your hand. Bobby's soft voice, as gentle as it is, would be shocking in its suddenness in the silent room, and I'd try not to move so as not to put him off. Even a start of alarm, or sitting up too quickly, or putting my hand out to him, or trying to encourage him would snap him out of whatever spoken daydream had overtaken him to allow him to speak to me about the things I wanted him to so badly. Thinking about it now, the dead stillness I'd assume, the way I'd almost hold my breath while he spoke, it was the very same as when I'd be trying to startle a wild animal that had wandered into the garden. That's the only way I could help him with his pain, imagine. To lie there in silence, not moving a muscle.

It's not like he even said anything that would sound to someone from outside as being all that terrible. I mean to say, Frank never laid a finger on him or his mother. It was just the life of awful, awful coldness, and the constant wearing down of their spirits, a gloomy, nervy slog of a life, punctuated by days and nights of mad rage when he'd wreck the house and Bobby's mother would grab him and run for it, just in case he forgot himself altogether and took at *them* as well as the furniture and the crockery. But it was always all too far down in Bobby for it not to cut and wound on the way out. I sometimes believe on those nights that he spoke about things that he was forcing himself to do it just for my benefit, that he was suffering the reliving of that keen-edged sadness and regret because he thought I wanted him to say it out, because of some notions he thought I had of the healing and redemptive power of talking things out. But all I could really do was lie there and listen and think: this is Bobby, this is my husband. I have one memory of Frank that will always abide, though, when all the other memories are faded to a series of blurred impressions, the way memories of a book will fade, even on that gripped you so much that you couldn't sleep until you finished it. It was the club awards ceremony the year the lads were robbed of the country championship. One of the old boys from Ciss Brien's front bar had written a song of never-ending verses called 'The Ballad of Bobby Mahon'. It was just a silly thing, really, a bit of craic to raise people's spirits, the kind of thing that's been done a thousand times for a thousand village heroes. He set the words to the tune of 'The Wearing of the Green'. After Bobby had been given his shield for being the club's player of the year and had mumbled his pride and apologies, *apologies* imagine, into the microphone on the little stage against the back wall of the Munster, the words he'd learned by rote drowned

out by cheers of the parish, the old boy and a few session players struck up the song. I could see that Bobby was mortified. He didn't know where to look. But I knew by his smile and his eyes that he was happy, too, as if it was only in that moment that he'd realized how much people thought of him and how no one blamed him for losing the final, and how all these rowdy, clapping, laughing people knew he'd drawn and shed and sweated blood for them, more than anyone. And then he looked along the length of that packed room, over the heads of the half-drunk, bellowing crowd, and his face changed. In a way that only I could see. And when I turned and followed his gaze, I saw Frank, and he was just inside the door, wearing an expression of contempt; a twisted half-smile that plainly said: You fool. This is a room full of fools, and you're chief among them. And I hated him in those seconds more than any other time. More even than when he'd looked into baby Robert's crib and said not a word. I felt like jumping up from my seat and throwing myself on him and wringing his mangy old neck, scratching the blackness from his eyes. But afterwards, after thinking and thinking about it, I wondered: why was he there at all? What brought him in to stand just inside the door of the Munster Tavern and watch his son? And even though I was so raging with him for casting a shadow on Bobby's moment, I started for the first time to think that there was more inside in Frank than just spite.

I tried to never do it, but I constantly compared Frank to my own father and felt an awful, hollow bitterness at Frank's continued existence, festering in the dark inside of the cottage, tormenting Bobby daily still, after all the years lived and all the words said and not said. Some people, like Bobby, take on the troubles of others and others can't see anything past their own. Isn't there something to be said all the same for everyone just minding their own business? When my father got really sick all he worried about was me and my mother and whether I was able to keep up my work and study and whether I was worrying about him and no one was to worry about him and there was no fear of him and did Joe Brien drop up that load of blocks and make sure your mother knows to pay Joe from the money in the locked drawer on the left-hand side of the desk and the key is at the back corner of the drawer on the right-hand side and tell her not to use money from her purse and was she checking the slips every month to know was the ESB paying out his proper pension and was the health insurance still being paid automatically. He was a constant worrier, and never about himself. Thank God it was

Bobby I fell for, and not someone who would have added to his worries. He was stone mad about Bobby. They could sit in a room together and watch a match and not even talk, except for a few bits of shouts and cheers and tuts and sighs here and there. They never felt the need to make idle conversation, to talk for talk's sake. Bobby loved just sitting in the same room as him. I think they were an ease to each other.

My father told me once, not long before he died, that he couldn't keep the passing days straight in his mind. That was the first time I was really frightened for him, that I got a sense of what was coming. Bobby and I weren't married long. He'd been to see a new GP in the village and she'd told him to do all the things he enjoyed doing, to not think about what food was good for his health and what wasn't, to have a drink if he felt like it. She was being kind, and she smiled at him and touched his hand gently, but her words frightened the life out of him, more than any of the talk from the doctors inside in the Regional Hospital about the size of tumours and their rapid growth and the pressure they exerted on organs and their explanations of how the medicine worked that he lay down inside in, with his eye closed tight and his fists clenched as if to fight against the fear he had of being in that hollow tube, nearly naked and fully alone, closed in on all sides.

My goose is cooked, he said, on the way home from the village, as he looked out the passenger side window at the Arra Mountains in whose vale he'd lived his whole life. Ah boys. And he laughed gently. And that was as much as he ever said of his fear or his sadness. I was afraid to open my mouth to speak. I should have said no Dad, there's loads of fight left in you yet, you have years and years, come on, please, don't just give up. But those words would have been for me and not for him. For all my talk, I had nothing to say.

Frank shook my hand at Daddy's funeral and looked straight into my eyes and said he was very sorry for my trouble. And he kind of smiled at me. I couldn't even say thanks to him. God forgive me, all I could think was: why couldn't you have died instead, Frank?

Bobby was never able to see how he affected people. People always saw what they wanted to see in Bobby. He could never see the way people reacted to him. The adoration of the young lads, the respect of the builders, the misty-eyed devotion of the

old codgers who roared themselves raw from the sidelines while he led a team of committed losers to the gates of glory. But still and all, songs and pints and backslapping nights of praise and speeches aside, some people will hate you for your goodness. They'll revel in your undoing. They'll rejoice at the news of your downfall. It felt to me as thought that was the way everyone was this summer. I couldn't see the good in anyone. I stood one day in the post office queue and Robert was wriggling and whining and I hadn't showered and my roots were in shit and the story about Bobby having the affair was flapping around like a crow with a broken wing and I saw one of the Teapot Taliban staring at me with *rapture* on her face.

People say things like we shouldn't complain lads, look at that poor girl whose child was stole. People say things like shouldn't we be counting our blessing lads that we at least have our health? People say things like look at that poor girl of the Mahons, Bobby's wife, and he after doing the dirty on her and killing his father and she still with him. Bobby Mahon done the dirt. He killed his father. The girl he done the dirt with is after having her child snatched. How many of them really cared about the little boy? He was only young Seanie Shanahan's bastard. That lady is only a blow-in from town, a right-looking little rap. Everyone talked about him and looked all sad and serious in Mass when he was prayed for and joined in the search and made sandwiches and shook their heads mournfully and asked how in God's name that girl was coping, but deep, deep down some of them were more worried about their pensions and medical cards and wages and profits and welfare payments and what they haven't that their neighbours have and who's claiming what and how many foreigners were allowed in to the country and the bottom line is the bottom line as far as I can see; if we were all in the black we'd all be in the pink. The air is thick with platitudes around here. We'll all pull together. We're a tight-knit community. We'll all support each other. Oh really? Will we?

The Teapot Taliban fattened on their stories about Bobby and that girl. And she had the child for young Sean Shanahan, imagine! What a triangle! Or is it a square? Ha ha ha! When Frank was killed they must have nearly exploded with pleasure. Now! He is only an animal! Who'd have thought he'd stoop that low? Blood will out, the father was a desperate quare hawk too, God rest him! Jesus, the sweet scandal, it must have been almost too rich for their pill-thinned blood. It could have easily caused embolisms. Their eyes glistened with glee in the post office queue. They looked at me and tut-tutted

and whispered and nodded and shook their heads and counted off blessing on their rosary beads. They wondered was Bobby the snatched child's father. They wondered was it Bobby snatched the child. They wondered how was it they never knew he was a madman. Poor Triona, they said, and she stuck in the middle of all that. Poor Triona, they said, but secretly they were delighted for me, with my fine dormer bungalow on the lovely site Bobby got for a song off of the Burkes, swanning around the place in my big oh-eight car. My cough was after getting well and truly softened. The missing child didn't put anything into perspective for anyone the way they were all saying it did , he was just tacked on to the end of the list of things that just showed you how terrible it all is and how the country is pure solid destroyed and there's no end to the heartbreak and aren't we a right show now with the television cameras and the place crawling with guards. God, I'm gone awful cross. People are scared, that's all. I know that.

The child's little body was covered in weird marks when he was found a few days ago: pentagrams and crosses and lines from poems and drawings of naked people, all in permanent marker, like tattoos drawn by a lunatic, he was wearing Spiderman pyjamas. His hair was all shaved off; he looked like a little refugee from a concentration camp. Mary Gildea had the whole story. The whole village had it inside an hour. It was the husband Jim who found the child. He spotted something in one of the guys who helped with the search. He couldn't put his fingers on it; he just had a feeling. And Timmy Hanrahan brought him some piece of evidence that confirmed his hunch. Our Timmy, imagine! Jim followed te guy until he led him to a flat inside in town. Jim called no one else in to help, only walked straight in the door behind that guy and there was little Dylan, sitting on a beanbag watching a DVD of *Bob the Builder*, and the fat Montessori teacher sitting beside him, feeding him a bowl of ice-cream. Jim picked him up in his arms and walked back out the door and the two freaks didn't even try to stop him. He was fine exceptfor the drawnings all over him and the skinned head. They'll wash off and his hair will grow back and he'll forget all about the whole thing. May he always be fine and happy, te little darling.

When I told Bobby the child had been found safe and sound he said nothing. He stood looking out the back window at our little Robert, screaming for joy as he tried to catch a

fat pigeon that eas fluttering madly in the birdbath. Tears spilled down his face. I just said oh love; oh love, what matters now?

What matters only love?

Triona

A mia zia Bernadette piaceva che le cose fossero disadorne e liturgicamente corrette. Come la croce che aveva fatto intagliare rozzamente a mio cugino Coley da un blocco di roccia calcarea. Coley la voleva levigare e aggiungere anelli celtici e spirali sulla parte anteriore. Ha passato un giorno intero con il culo all'aria mentre scheggiava, intagliava e scartavetrava, una visione acuta della concentrazione forzata di un adolescente. Bernadette ha posto fine all'entusiasmo del suo artigiano con un drastico gesto plateale: gli ha dato un ceffone su un lato della testa, facendogli volare via lo scalpello dalla mano e l'orgoglio peccaminoso dal cuore. Va bene com'è, ha detto. Lasciala là sopra, alla fine del vialetto che porta all'entrata, *vai*, così chiunque entri qui saprà che siamo seguaci di Cristo. Fottuta vecchia testa di c-cazzo, ha detto Coley sputacchiando quando lei era tornata a preparare il suo pane azzimo. Improvvisamente ho visto la bellezza in lui, quando l'oscurità della rabbia e frustrazione ha lanciato la sua mascella spigolosa e i suoi occhi ardenti a un sollevo più intenso. Ho sempre avuto bisogno di sbattere addosso alla consapevolezza delle cose.

Bobby è stato la prima persona a ricordarmi Coley. Come Coley, non avrebbe mai detto le cose che direbbero gli altri tizi qua attorno. Non ha mai fatto parte del branco di scimmie, anche se stava con loro. Ha ha, ha ha, guarda le tette di quella! Ha ha, ha ha, Gesù ragazzi sono rosso a furia di scopare! Ha ha, ha ha, fottetevi ragazzi, io glielo sbatterei dentro! Bobby era un tipo silenzioso, alto, con la faccia rossa d'estate e bianca come un fantasma d'inverno. Lo conoscevo da sempre, da anni e anni prima che mi parlasse per la prima volta, in piedi sul pavimento appiccicoso del bar del The Cave giù in paese. La sua agitazione mi ha colpita; avrei sempre detto che pensasse di essere troppo figo per parlare con noi. Poi mi sono improvvisamente resa conto di tutte le altre cose dietro ai suoi occhi: paura, dubbio, timidezza, tristezza. Sono stata presa da lui in quel momento. Non avrei mai più guardato un altro uomo. I cellulari erano ancora abbastanza nuovi in quei giorni. Santo Burke dev'essere stato uno dei primi ad essere stato scaricato via messaggio.

Bernadette friggeva il pollo a pezzetti nel suo sughetto e lo serviva con piselli verdi al vapore e pane azzimo. Quando i miei mi hanno portato là per avere un comportamento retto, ho mangiato la particola dell'Eucarestia ad ogni pasto. Bernadette non andava mai

a messa; era una Cristiana *fondamentalista*. Mamma diceva spesso che usava la religione solo come impalcatura per la sua pazzia. Avrebbe potuto ugualmente essere Musulmana, Buddista o una strega bianca. Se ne andava in giro con un certo gruppo di entusiasti fanatici della Bibbia in paese. Si incontravano in un appartamento cigolante e pieno d'infilazioni, e leggevano tutte le parti migliori dalla Genesi all'Apocalisse, rallentando e facendo una sosta nel vicino Levitico. Bernadette usava il Verbo per torturare Coley, proprio come Frank usava le sue parole velenose per tormentare Bobby. Coley non è sopravvissuto al terribile controllo di Bernadette sulla sua infanzia. Quando era un tenero, smilzo quattordicenne si è impiccato nel loro giardino sul retro dal ramo di un sambuco, che non sembrava abbastanza robusto per sostenere il suo peso. Bobby è sopravvissuto a malapena a Frank. Ogni volta che incontravo Frank sentivo l'odore spettrale del pane azzimo che si cuoceva: potevo quasi sentire in bocca il suo sapore sottile e secco. C'era un cuore rotante sul cancello davanti alla loro casa, un simbolo di derisione, la croce rozzamente intagliata di Bobby.

Non mi avrebbe importato se Bobby non avesse più portato neanche un centesimo in questa casa. Poco prima, quest'estate, quando tutto il paese ce l'aveva con il fatto che lui andasse con quella ragazza della tenuta fantasma di Santo, non avrebbe potuto fregarmene di meno; sapevo che non mi avrebbe tradito nemmeno tra un milione di anni. Quando non mi parlava dopo che l'avevano piantato tutti in asso, tuttavia, avrei potuto ucciderlo. Gli ho urlato contro, in faccia, ancora e ancora perché semplicemente *parlasser*, per favore, per favore, solo *parla* con me. Non me ne importava niente se *veramente* aveva ucciso Frank. Non l'avrei amato meno di prima. Avrei giurato il falso per lui senza battere ciglio. Avrei giurato sulla Bibbia e mentito tra i denti senza pensarci due volte. Perchè non avrei dovuto? Avrei usato lo stesso buon Libro che Bernadette aveva usato per ferire la povera anima di Coley.

Bobby odiava suo padre e non aveva mai smesso di pensare a sua madre e pensava di essere un fallito per non averla protetta abbastanza dalla lingua tagliente di suo padre. Le sue mortificazioni l'hanno buttata a terra. Mi ci sono voluti tre anni per tirarglielo fuori. Ho continuato a chiedere a Bobby perché avesse litigato con sua madre. Lui ha detto che hanno smesso di parlare, per non far scagliare suo padre contro di loro, e loro semplicemente sono rimasti bloccati in quel modo. *Bloccati in quel modo?* Bene, questo

non ha senso, gli ho detto. Lui ha detto solo, lo so che non ha senso, lo so. Bobby bisbiglia quando quello che dice lo turba. Poi si blocca. Ho imparato in fretta. Non l'ho mai forzato a dire niente fino a dopo la faccenda di Frank. Tutti quegli anni passati insieme, non ho mai insistito, gli ho solo fatto sentire che capivo che il suo dolore era lì e che l'avrei aiutato e non c'era fretta, nessun bisogno di dirmi niente fino a quando non l'avesse voluto lui. Aveva le parole; lo sapevo. Bobby ha sempre letto molto.

Ogni tanto, scatenato da qualcosa che non avrei mai potuto capire, Bobby aveva cominciato a dirmi le cose. Qualche volta mi ero appena addormentata quando ha cominciato a parlare, in quella sorta di dormiveglia in cui non sei del tutto incosciente, ma riesci ancora a dormire, magari con il libro ancora in mano. La voce dolce di Bobby, delicata com'è, era scioccante, così inaspettata, nella stanza silenziosa, e provavo a non muovermi per non scoraggiarlo. Anche un allarme che suonava, o mettersi seduti troppo velocemente, o tendere la mano verso di lui, o provare a incoraggiarlo l'avrebbe fatto richiudere di scatto in qualsiasi sogno ad occhi aperti che l'aveva colto di sorpresa e ciò gli permetteva di parlarmi delle cose di cui volevo così tanto che mi parlasse. Pensandoci adesso, il silenzio di tomba che tenevo, il modo in cui quasi trattenevo il respiro mentre parlava, era esattamente lo stesso atteggiamento che avrei tenuto se avessi provato a non spaventare un animale selvatico che vagava per il giardino. Questo è l'unico modo in cui potevo aiutarlo con il suo dolore, pensa. Stare lì in silenzio, senza muovere un muscolo.

Non è che abbia mai detto qualcosa che dall'esterno potrebbe suonare così tremendo. Voglio dire, Frank non ha mai alzato un dito su di lui o su sua madre. Era solo quella vita di terribile, terribile freddezza, e il costante indebolimento dei loro spiriti, un modo cupo, tesò di tirare a campare, accentuato da giorni e notti di rabbia pazza quando aveva distrutto la casa e la madre di Bobby l'aveva afferrato, e di corsa, giusto nel caso in cui si fosse dimenticato di stare tutti insieme e prendesse loro per mobili o stoviglie. Ma era tutto troppo nascosto nel profondo in Bobby per tagliare col passato e non ferirlo al momento di farlo uscire. A volte, in quelle notti in cui parla di queste cose, credo che lui si sentisse costretto a farlo solo per il mio bene, che lui stesse soffrendo nel rivivere quella tristezza e quel rimorso, affilati in modo tagliente, perché pensava che io volessi che tirasse fuori le cose, a causa di nozioni che pensava avessi sul potere di guarigione e redenzione che ha il parlare delle cose. Ma tutto ciò che realmente potevo fare era stare

lì distesa ad ascoltare e pensare: questo è Bobby, questo è mio marito.

Ho un ricordo di Frank che resterà per sempre, anche se tutti gli altri ricordi sono sbiaditi in una serie di impressioni offuscate come svaniscono i ricordi di un libro, addirittura di uno che ti prendeva talmente tanto che non riuscivi a dormire prima di averlo finito. Era la cerimonia di premiazione del club, l'anno in cui ai ragazzi avevano rubato il podio del campionato provinciale. Uno dei vecchi ragazzi del bar di fronte a Ciss Brien aveva scritto una canzone con un numero infinito di versi intitolata 'La ballata di Bobby Mahon'. Era solo una stupidaggine, davvero, una cosa divertente per risollevar gli animi della gente, quel tipo di cose che vengono fatte mille volte per altri mille eroi cittadini. Aveva adattato le parole alla melodia di 'The Wearing of the Green'. Dopo che a Bobby è stato dato lo scudetto di giocatore dell'anno del club e ha borbottato il suo orgoglio e le sue scuse – *scuse*, pensa – nel microfono sopra al piccolo palco appoggiato al muro sul retro del Munster, recitando le parole che aveva imparato a memoria sovrastate dal tifo di quelli del distretto, il vecchio ragazzo e alcuni altri giocatori della sessione hanno iniziato a cantare la canzoncina. Riuscivo a vedere che Bobby era mortificato. Non sapeva dove guardare. Ma capivo dal suo sorriso e dai suoi occhi che era felice anche, come se solo in quel momento si rendesse conto di quanto la gente ci tenesse a lui e di quanto nessuno lo incolpasse per aver perso la finale e come tutta quella gente chiassosa, che applaudiva e rideva, sapesse che lui aveva tirato tanto, si era spellato e aveva sudato sangue per loro, più di chiunque altro. E poi ha passato lo sguardo lungo tutta la sala gremita, sopra alle teste della folla urlante e mezza ubriaca, e la sua faccia è cambiata. In un modo che solo io potevo vedere. E quando mi sono voltata e ho seguito il suo sguardo, ho visto Frank, e lui era appena dentro all'entrata, indossando un'espressione di disprezzo; un mezzo sorriso contorto che chiaramente diceva: sei un buffone. Questa è una sala piena di buffoni e tu sei il loro capo. E in quei secondi l'ho odiato più che in qualsiasi altra occasione. Anche più di quando ha guardato nella culla del piccolo Robert e non ha detto una parola. Mi sentivo come se avessi potuto saltare su dal mio posto e scagliarmi su di lui e torcergli quel suo vecchio collo ignobile, cancellando l'oscurità dai suoi occhi. Ma dopotutto, dopo averci pensato e ripensato, mi sono chiesta: perché era là, comunque? Cosa l'ha portato a stare lì in piedi vicino alla porta della taverna Munster a guardare suo figlio? E anche se ero piena di rabbia verso di lui per aver gettato un'ombra sul momento di gloria di Bobby, per la

prima volta ho cominciato a pensare che in Frank ci fosse qualcosa in più di semplice cattiveria.

Ho provato a non farlo mai, ma comparavo costantemente Frank a mio padre e sentivo un'amarezza orribile, vuota per la continua esistenza di Frank, inasprita nell'oscurità di quella vecchia casa, tormentando Bobby giorno dopo giorno, dopo tutti quegli anni trascorsi e tutte quelle parole dette e non dette. Alcune persone, tipo Bobby, raccolgono i problemi degli altri, e altri non riescono a vedere nient'altro che i propri. Si può dire lo stesso per chiunque pensi solo al proprio interesse? Quando mio padre cominciò a stare molto male, tutto ciò di cui si preoccupava era di me e mia madre, se riuscivo a mantenere il mio lavoro mentre studiavo, se mi preoccupavo per lui e nessuno doveva preoccuparsi per lui e lui non aveva paura; se Joe Brien aveva portato su quel carico di ceppi, di assicurarsi che tua madre sappia di pagare Joe con i soldi nel cassetto chiuso a chiave sulla parte sinistra della scrivania e la chiave è nell'angolo in fondo a destra del cassetto e dille di non usare i soldi per sé, e se stava controllando ogni mese i passaggi di denaro per sapere se l'INPS gli pagava la pensione e se l'assicurazione sanitaria quindi veniva pagata sempre in automatico. Era costantemente preoccupato, e mai per se stesso. Grazie a Dio è di Bobby che mi sono innamorata, e non di qualcuno che avrebbe accresciuto le sue preoccupazioni. Era letteralmente pazzo di Bobby. Potevano stare seduti insieme in una stanza e guardare una partita addirittura senza parlare, tranne urlare o esultare un po' o fare qualche sospiro o qualche verso di disapprovazione ogni tanto. Non hanno mai sentito il bisogno di fare inutili conversazioni, di parlare solo per il gusto di farlo. Bobby amava stare nella stessa stanza con lui. Penso che si dessero sollievo l'un l'altro.

Mio padre una volta, non molto prima di morire, mi ha detto che non riusciva a tenere i giorni che passavano bene a mente. Quella è stata la prima volta in cui mi sono sentita veramente spaventata per lui, in cui mi sono fatta un'idea di quello che stava per succedere. Io e Bobby non eravamo sposati da tanto. Aveva visto un nuovo dottore in paese e lei gli aveva detto di fare tutte le cose che gli piacevano, di non pensare a quale cibo faceva bene alla salute e a quale no, e di bere qualcosa se ne aveva voglia. Era molto gentile, gli sorrideva e gli toccava la mano dolcemente, ma le sue parole hanno spaventato chi gli stava attorno più di qualunque altro colloquio con i dottori dell'ospedale regionale sulla grandezza dei tumori, la loro rapida crescita, la pressione

che esercitano sugli organi, la loro spiegazione di come funzionano le macchine dove lui sta steso dentro, con gli occhi chiusi stretti e i pugni serrati come per combattere contro la paura che aveva di essere in quel tubo vuoto, chiuso da tutte le parti, mezzo nudo e completamente solo.

Siamo alla frutta, ha detto, tornando a casa dal paese mentre, fuori dal finestrino dalla parte del passeggero, guardava le montagne Arra, nella valle in cui aveva trascorso la sua intera vita. Ah ragazzi. E ha riso dolcemente. E questo è tutto quello che gli abbia mai sentito dire sulla sua paura e la sua tristezza. Avevo paura di aprire la bocca e parlare. Avrei dovuto dire no papà, ci sono un sacco di battaglie che devi ancora combattere, hai ancora anni e anni davanti, dai, per favore, non buttarti giù e basta. Ma quelle parole sarebbero state per me e non per lui. Nonostante la mia parlantina, non mi veniva in mente nulla da dire.

Frank mi ha stretto la mano al funerale di papà e mi ha guardata dritto negli occhi dicendo che era molto dispiaciuto per il mio lutto. E in qualche modo mi ha sorriso. Non sono neanche riuscita a ringraziarlo. Dio mi perdoni, tutto quello che ho pensato è stato: perché non sei morto tu al posto suo, Frank?

Bobby non è mai stato capace di vedere quanto interessava alla gente. Hanno sempre visto quello che volevano vedere in Bobby. Non riusciva mai a vedere le reazioni della gente verso di lui. L'adorazione dei ragazzi più giovani, il rispetto dei muratori, la devozione e gli occhi velati di lacrime dei vecchiotti che esultavanorudemente dagli spalti laterali mentre lui conduceva una squadra di perdenti patentati verso le porte della gloria. Canzoni, pinte di birra, serate da pacche sulle spalle in cui ti ricoprono di lodi e ti prendono da parte per parlare, ma zitti zitti della gente ti odierà per la tua bontà. Gioiranno della tua rovina. Si rallegreranno alla notizia del tuo fallimento. Quest'estate mi sembrava come se fosse quello il modo in cui tutti si comportavano. Non riuscivo a vedere il buono in nessuno. Un giorno ero lì in fila all'ufficio postale e Robert piagnucolava e si dimenava e io non mi ero fatta la doccia e la mia ricrescita era una merda e la storia su Bobby che aveva un'amante si stava sollevando come un corvo con un'ala rotta e ho visto uno dei Teapot Taliban che mi fissava con un'espressione di *estasi* sulla faccia.

La gente dice cose del tipo ragazzi, non dovremmo lamentarci, guarda quella povera

ragazza a cui hanno rapito il bambino. La gente dice cose del tipo ragazzi, non dovremmo ritenerci fortunati che almeno abbiamo la salute? La gente dice cose del tipo guarda quella povera ragazza dei Mahons, la moglie di Bobby, dopo che lui l'ha tradita e che ha ucciso suo padre, sta ancora con lui. Bobby Mahon ha fatto cose cattive. Ha ucciso suo padre. Alla ragazza con cui ha avuto una tresca hanno appena rapito il figlio. A quanti di loro importava veramente del bambino? Era solo il figlio bastardo del giovane Seanie Shanahan. Quella donna è solo una tizia piombata qui dalla città, un'autentica, piccola bugiarda. Tutti parlavano di lui e sembravano tutti tristi e seri durante la messa quando pregavano per lui e partecipavano alla ricerca, preparavano panini, scuotevano tristemente le loro teste e si chiedevano in nome di Dio come facesse quella donna a superare tutto questo, ma giù, giù nel profondo, molti di loro erano più preoccupati per la propria pensione, le assicurazioni mediche, i salari, i guadagni, i pagamenti pubblici, di quello che loro non avevano, ma che i loro vicini avevano, chi sta reclamando cosa, a quanti stranieri era permesso di entrare nel Paese e i profitti sono i profitti, per conto mio; se i nostri conti non fossero in rosso, avremmo avuto tutti un futuro roseo. L'aria è densa di luoghi comuni qui attorno. Remiamo tutti nella stessa direzione. Siamo una comunità affiatata. Ci supportiamo tutti l'un l'altro. Ah davvero? Lo faremo un giorno?

Il Teapot Taliban si rimpinzava di quelle storie su Bobby e la ragazza. E lei ha avuto il bambino da Seanie Shanahan, pensa! Ma che triangolo! O magari è un quadrato, non l'avevo considerato. Ha ha ha! Quando Frank è stato ucciso devono essere quasi esplosi di piacere. Dai! Lui è solo un animale! Chi avrebbe detto che si sarebbe abbassato fino a quel punto? La verità verrà fuori alla fine, anche il padre era un disperato tipo strambo, che Dio lo faccia riposare in pace! Gesù, il dolce scandalo, dev'essere stato anche troppo per quel sangue assottigliato dalle pillole. Avrebbe potuto facilmente provocare embolie. I loro occhi brillavano di soddisfazione nella fila per l'ufficio postale. Mi guardavano e si zittivano, bisbigliavano, annuivano e scuotevano la testa e aggiungevano preghiere per la loro corona del rosario. Si chiedevano se non fosse Bobby il padre del bambino rapito. Si chiedevano se non fosse stato Bobby a rapire il bambino. Si chiedevano come mai non avessero mai saputo che era un pazzo. Povera Triona, dicevano, è bloccata in mezzo a tutto questo. Povera Triona, dicevano, ma in realtà godevano nel vedermi così, con la mia casetta raffinata in quel posto adorabile che Bobby aveva ottenuto come

ultima esibizione di valore da parte dei Burke, andando in giro con la mia macchina sportiva. La mia tosse stava per migliorare e ammorbardarsi. Il bambino scomparso non ha messo proprio niente in una nuova prospettiva per nessuno come invece tutti pensavano, è stato solo inserito alla fine della lista delle cose che ti fanno vedere quanto tutto sia terribile e come lo Stato sia veramente distrutto e non c'è fine allo strazio e non siamo diventati famosi con le telecamere della tv e la zona piena di guardie. Dio, sto diventando teribilmente arrabbiata. La gente è spaventata, ecco tutto. Lo so.

Il corpicino del bambino era coperto di strani segni quando è stato trovato qualche giorno fa: pentagrammi, croci, righe di poesie, disegni di gente nuda, tutto con pennarello indelebile, come tatuaggi disegnati da un malato di mente. Indossava un pigiama da Spiderman. I suoi capelli erano tutti rasati; sembrava un piccolo profugo di un campo di concentramento. Mary Gildea ha saputo l'intera storia. Tutto il paese l'ha saputa nel giro di un'ora. È stato suo marito Jim a trovare il bambino. Ha individuato qualcosa in uno dei tizi che aiutava nelle ricerche. Non sapeva perché; aveva solo un presentimento. E Timmy Hanrahan gli ha portato delle prove che confermavano i suoi sospetti. Il nostro Timmy, pensa! Jim ha seguito il tizio finché non lo ha condotto fino a un appartamento giù in città. Jim non aveva chiamato nessun altro per aiutarlo, semplicemente è entrato dritto dalla porta dietro a quel tipo e lì c'era il piccolo Dylan, seduto su un pouf che guardava un DVD di *Bob L'aggiustatutto*, e il grasso insegnante della Montessori che gli sedeva di fianco, che gli dava da mangiare una coppetta di gelato. Jim l'ha preso in braccio e ha camminato all'indietro verso la porta e i due maniaci non hanno nemmeno provato a fermarlo. Stava bene a parte i disegni su tutto il corpo e la testa rasata. Gli laveranno via tutto e i suoi capelli ricresceranno e dimenticherà l'intera faccenda. Auguro a quel piccolo caro che stia sempre bene e che sia felice.

Quando ho detto a Bobby che il bambino era stato trovato sano e salvo non ha detto niente. Stava in piedi guardando fuori dalla finestra sul retro il nostro piccolo Robert, che urlava di gioia mentre provava a prendere un grasso piccione che svolazzava follemente nella vasca per uccelli. Le lacrime scendevano sul suo viso. Ho detto solo oh amore, amore mio, che c'è ora?

Cosa conta davvero se non l'amore?

Chapter 3: Analysis of the translation

In this chapter I will compare the original text of Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart* to my translation into Italian. I have compared the Source Text (ST) and the Target Text (TT) following different criteria. Clearly, in translating from an original into a target text, it is important to translate *Cultural differences* too. In particular, the adaptation of cultural elements into a translated text is fundamental in order to make the target text more readable and natural for a target reader, who cannot otherwise understand the core meaning of the original text. The transposition of cultural elements is fundamental, since "translating is not only a linguistic act, it is also a cultural one an act of communication across cultures" (House 2009: 11). In particular, I divided my analysis into four groups of Cultural References. The first one is Bastin's (2001: 7) mode of *Expansion* which consists in explaining the hidden meaning of the original text in the translated text, both in the main body of the text and through notes. According to Bastin (2001: 7) the *Modes of Adaptation* are the procedures or devices used by the translator in order to transpose the original text into a target text. Several modes exist, such as *Transcription of the original*, *Omission*, *Expansion*, *Exoticism*, *Updating*, *Situational Equivalence* and *Creation*. However, in my translation I only focused on the examples of *Expansion*, *Omission* and *Creation*. Secondly, I considered Katan's (2004: 207) phenomenon of Chunking, which consists in the translation of a specific element into a more generic one in the Target Text. Thirdly, in some cases it is necessary to find a Target Equivalence in the target culture, and, more precisely, to use an equivalent cultural element in TT. Finally, I will focus on the traslation of names that will be translated in different ways into different contexts.

In this context, it is important to mention the phenomenon of *Domestication* (as opposed to *Foreignisation*), which consists in transposing a term in a way that can prove as natural as possible for a target reader (see Venuti 1998). For instance, as Eco (2013: 174) points out, the term 'attractive' can be translated into 'attraente', but in some cases it would be better to translate it into 'bella, carina, affascinante', because of the better acceptance of this synonym in a particular context. As concerns the phenomenon of *Anglicism*, we can define it as the maintainance of an English term in a translated text. More precisely, the Oxford Dictionary defines it as "A word or phrase borrowed from

English into a foreign language". Another mode of Adaptation is *Omission*, which is the reduction of the text through the elimination of some parts of it in the target text.

Moreover, it is important to maintain equivalence in translating *Idiomatic Expressions* too. In particular, these elements should be translated through the use of an equivalent expression in the translated text, in order to make the target reader more familiar with the text. In the case of *Metaphors*, the translator should be able to understand and to translate them literally, or to explain them. Metaphors can be also linked to *Idiomatic expressions*, since in both cases an explanation or an equivalent expression is required in order to render the same meaning and effect in the target text. Delabatista also made a distinction between *cultural analogy* and *cultural omology*. The first one refers to the equivalent cultural element into the target text, for example in translating *King Lear*, 'creaking shoes' would have been translated into an equivalent brand of expensive shoes, since in that context the main feature of that shoes was that they were expensive. Otherwise, using *cultural omology*, the translator could translate 'creaking shoes' literally, leaving the interpretation of the meaning to the reader.

In translating a text, *Equivalence of Meaning* is needed in order to maintain the main sense of the source text (Eco 2013: 50). In this context, I have also linked phenomenon of *Negotiation* which allows the translator to choose a particular hint of a term in a particular context. As Eco (2013: 93) explains, to use 'ratto' or 'topo' in translating the English term 'mouse', depends on the context in which this term appears and it is the translator's task to understand where to use one or the other. In some cases, if a literal translation leads to nonsense, *Rewriting* is necessary in order to make the target more familiar to a target reader. In fact, it is better to *Rewrite* or *Reformulate* a part of the text, in order to make it more acceptable for a target reader. As a matter of fact, another mode of adaptation can sometimes be used. According to Bastin (2001: 7), the phenomenon of *Creation* is "a more global replacement of the original text with a text that preserves only the essential message/ideas/functions of the original". *Suprasegmental elements* are considered, according to Eco (2013: 54) as the stylistic features that can express feelings or typical traits of characters (literate or illiterate forms etc.) that should be maintained also through different devices in the target text. As a matter of fact, there are *Linguistic Differences between ST and TT*. Some structures that are common in the English version, should be translated in a different way in the

Italian text. In particular, the phenomenon of *Divergence* refers to the fact that there is a one-to-many relationship between two languages. For instance, according to Taylor (1998: 53), the term 'cream' can be translated into 'panna' or 'crema' in Italian.

Other challenges for the translator that are worth mentioning are Ambiguity, Repetition and Child Language. In this context, *Ambiguity* is an important 'problem' that a translator should be able to solve. As a matter of fact, there are different kinds of ambiguity, since it may or may not be desired by the author. As Eco (2013: 111) points out, if the author willingly creates ambiguity, the translator should maintain it in the target text. Otherwise, if the author did not realize the ambiguity in some parts of the text, the translator could make clear the ambiguity and make it explicit, showing it to the author too. Anyway, the 'skopos' of the original text should always be maintained. Another difference between English and Italian is the use of *Repetition*. In particular, it may be more acceptable in English, while in Italian it is better to change a term in order to avoid repetition. Furthermore, *Skopos* and *Register* should also be taken into account, since the main purpose of the original text should always be maintained into a translated text (House 2009: 26). In this book, Child Language is present and it should be translated with typical traits of a kind of language pronounced by children in the target text too. Finally I have analyzed some IrE traits that I have translated from English into Italian. Following these phenomena, I analyzed the whole text, trying to justify and demonstrate the reasons why I chose to translate the original text in this particular way.

3.1. Cultural References

3.1.1 Mode of Adaptation: Expansion (Amplification)

ST	TT
He'll surely make a full recovery. Pokey could apply to be beatified then, having had a miracle ascribed to him.	Sarebbe di certo guarito completamente e, a quel punto, Santo avrebbe anche potuto cominciare l'iter per la beatificazione per aver compiuto un vero e proprio miracolo.

This passage was hard to translate since the translator needed to know how a

person can apply to be beatified, and there were semantic problems in the meaning of the character of Pokey Burke's name. Moreover, I changed the punctuation too: while in the original text there is a full stop, I decided to change it into a comma, in order to give more continuity to the sentence. The sentence *apply to be beatified* can be translated into Italian with *chiedere di essere beatificato*, but in order to explain this passage better and I added *cominciare l'iter per la beatificazione*. As a matter of fact, this is a mode of adaption classified as a phenomenon of 'expansion'. According to Bastin (2001: 7), it consists in "making explicit information that is implicit in the original, either in the main body or in footnotes or a glossary".

ST	TT
Sometimes I just catch a glimpse of her black, forked tongue as it flicks back in.	A volte riesco a vedere di sfuggita la sua lingua nera e biforcuta mentre la ritira di scatto tra le fauci.

As concerns the sentence *as it flicks back in*, a specification of the object was needed in the Italian form. In particular, I added *la ritira di scatto tra le fauci*, since this character is speaking about his mother as if she were a monster. Moreover, I translated *a glimpse* into *di sfuggita*, because in this case the English *glimpse* indicates that the character can notice his mother's forked tongue just for a second. Once more, we have a phenomenon of 'expansion', that was needed in order to explain better the sense of this sentence.

ST	TT
She saw my bong.	Ha visto il mio bong per l'erba.

This is another case of 'expansion'. Once more, it was necessary to specify what a *bong* was used for. For this reason, in the Italian version I translated it into *il mio bong per l'erba*.

ST	TT
Mammy works in Tescos.	La mamma lavora ai supermercati Tesco.

In this passage, there is a problem of culture, since *Tescos* is the most famous supermarkets chain in Britain and Ireland. However, in Italy these supermarket are not present and a target reader would not have understood what *Tesco* is. For this reason I decided to add *supermercati Tesco*. In this passage I applied the phenomenon of *Foreignisation*, since the name *Tesco* is a sign that makes the target reader aware that this is a translation from a foreign language and culture.

ST	TT
Bobby was silent, tall, red-faced in summer and ghost-white in winter.	Bobby era un tipo silenzioso, alto, con la faccia rossa d'estate e bianca come un fantasma d'inverno.

In this passage, I decided to add *era un tipo silenzioso* instead of *era silenzioso*, since in the first case it can give the idea that to be silent was a trait of his personality. By the other hand, the second form may prove as ambiguous since it can also refer to the fact that he was silent at that moment. As Eco (2013: 110) the translator should be able to translate the original text into the target language trying not to enrich the translated text from a stylistic point of view. Nevertheless, if the target version were to prove ambiguous, it would be necessary to make it clearer and more familiar for the target reader. For this reason I decided that here a specification was needed.

3.1.2 Katan's Chunking up: Specific ---> generic

ST	TT
What stamps? There wasn't a stamp paid in for any of us, nor a screed to the Revenue, either.	Quali marche? Neanche mezza ce ne hanno pagata, figuriamoci poi dover fare un reclamo all'Ufficio fiscale.

The term *Revenue* deals with a problem of culture since it is a governmental department that collects public funds. The term "revenues" is also used for "taxes" in some contexts. I felt it would be better to translate it into the Italian *Ufficio fiscale*.

ST	TT
Ya, with some crowd called SIFF.	Sì, con una roba chiamata pensione integrativa.

Even if *crowd* refers to a group of people, I thought it was better to translate it into a more colloquial *roba*, since this element was not relevant in the equivalence of the meaning from the original source to the translated text. As a matter of fact, we can understand the meaning of this sentence because we are translating two texts and not only words. Thus, the context is fundamental in order to adapt elements that would have been nonsensical if translated literally. In particular, a translator should be able to interpret the core meaning of the original text and "scegliere l'accezione o il senso più probabile e ragionevole e rilevante in *quel* contesto e in *quel* mondo possibile" (Eco 2003: 45). Moreover, e SIFF is an invented Irish group providing pension services, but actually it does not exist. For this reason I translated it into the more general form *pensione integrativa*.

ST	TT
We locked Mickey into the back of Seanie Shaper's Hiace until he became more philosophical for himself.	Poi lo abbiamo chiuso nel furgoncino di Seanie Shaper (detto Spianatrice) finché non è tornato ad essere padrone di se stesso.

I decided not to repeat the name Mickey and to use a pronoun in order to lighten the construction of the sentence. Instead of maintaining the van's brand *Hiace* – that would probably not have been understood by an Italian reader – I used the generic term *furgoncino*.

ST	TT
You could clearly see what was taken out: PRSI, PAYE, Income Levy, pension.	Se guarda qui si capisce benissimo quello che è stato detratto dal mio estratto conto: assicurazione sociale, trattenute, l'imposta sul

	reddito, la pensione.
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Once more we have a problem of cultural equivalence, and it was necessary to understand what these abbreviations were in order to translate them properly. Actually, an adaptation was here necessary, and in particular, I had to add explicit information that was not clear if translated literally into the target text (Bastin 2001: 7).

ST	TT
Did you never look for a P60 from your employer?	Il suo datore di lavoro non le hai mai parlato di una trattenuta?

In this case there is the same problem as above. As a matter of fact, I translated *P60* into *trattenuta* because there is another cultural problem in the equivalence of an Irish bureaucratic element that has to be explicit in Italian.

ST	TT
I remember when they carried him up to the Height, how the Penroses wheeled little one-legged Eugene out on to the street as he passed on his way to lie between his mother and father, and Eugene spat o the hearse [...].	Mi ricordo di quando lo avevano portato al cimitero, di come i Penroses portavano in giro per la strada in carrozzella il piccolo Eugene (a cui mancava una gamba), e di quando era passato per essere posto vicino a sua madre e suo padre, ed Eugene ha sputato sul carro funebre [...].

In this passage I used the word *cimitero* in order to explain what the *Height* is. It is another cultural problem which would be not comprehensible for an Italian reader, if not explained. This is another case of 'culture' in which I used a more general term in order to explain the meaning to the target reader, who otherwise would probably not have understood the meaning of this sentence.

ST	TT
He is a bogey, an unknown quantity. I can't think of her without him creeping into my mind's eye.	Chissà che razza di mostro è. Non riesco a pensare a lei senza che lui si insidi nella mia mente.

The term *bogey* in this case has the meaning of "evil spirit". For this reason, I translated it into *mostro* in order to give an idea of an evil person. The verb *creeping* means something insidious in a figurative way. Then, I thought that it was better to translate *into my mind's eye* into *nella mia mente* instead of *nell'occhio della mia mente*, because this form may result as more direct for an Italian reader.

ST	TT
I'm owed near a hundred grand.	Mi spettano quasi centomila euro.

The expression *a hundred grand* is a slang form and means a hundred thousand euros or pounds. In this case, since we are in Ireland, I translated it into *centomila euro*, but I did not maintain a slang form. In particular, I thought that, for instance, *verdoni* or *bigliettoni* is mainly a translation of *dollars*, and *grana* cannot be used in this context.

3.1.3 Find Target Equivalent (Domestication)

ST	TT
Good luck, I say, I'll see you tomorrow. You will, he says back. I know I will.	Stammi bene, gli dico, tornerò domani. Sì che tornerai, mi risponde. So che lo farò.

For an Italian reader it would sound strange to wish *good luck* to say goodbye. That is why I preferred to translate this form into *stammi bene*, which is as informal as the register used in the original style of writing. In this way thus, I am maintaining the same meaning and purpose of the author in the source text. Another important element here is the use of *will*. Since in Italian there are not any short answers and the principal verb cannot be implied, it is necessary to express it. In particular, *you will* suggests the meaning "you will see me tomorrow". That is why I preferred to use the verb *tornare* because of the better acceptance of this form for an Italian reader. For this reason, I

translated it into *Sì che tornerai*. Adding that "sì" I gave more emphasis to the sentence, and I created a more comprehensible sense to the whole passage. This addition is not made in order to change the meaning of the text, but rather to use an element that Eco (2013: 54) called "suprasegmentale", in order to express the same feeling of the character in the original version. Finally, I translated the last sentence *I know I will* into *So che lo farò*, preferring to use the verb *fare* instead of repeating *tornare*.

ST	TT
Judge Judy was nearly over.	Forum era quasi finito.

In this case there is a problem of culture. In particular, I decided to substitute the name of the Irish television programme *Judge Judy* with the name of a similar Italian version of that programme.

ST	TT
Saying your prayers is the same as talking to Holy God so it is. Oh Angel of God my guardian dear to whom God's love commits me here ever this night be at my side to light and guard to rule and guide. Amen.	Se dici le preghiere è come se parlassi con Dio, davvero. Oh Angelo di Dio che sei il mio custode, illumina, custodisci, reggi e governa me, che ti fui affidato dalla Pietà Celeste. Amen.

In this passage there is another problem of culture, since to translate that prayer literally would result as nonsensical for a target reader. For this reason, I decided to translate it with an equivalent Italian prayer.

ST	TT
I wanted the father to know his son fraternized with rats.	Volevo che suo padre sapesse che suo figlio fraternizzava con dei vermi.

In this passage, *rats* means bad, shady people. For this reason, instead of translating it literally, I preferred to use the term *vermi* since in Italian it is more common to see this form in order to indicate the same concept.

ST	TT
What a triangle! Or is it a square? Ha ha ha!	Ma che triangolo! O magari è un quadrato, non l'avevo considerato. Ha ha ha!

Here a literal translation would not have justified Triona's final laughter. In fact, in the original version, there is a double sense of the word 'square' that was hard to keep in the target text. For this reason, I decided to insert a quotation from a famous Italian song, which could be familiar to the target reader. In this case it was important to justify the final laughter in a different way from the English version. Thus by means of domestication, this change was made in order to use a more familiar cultural element in the TT, so that a similar effect was created in the reader.

3.1.4 Names

ST	TT
Pokey Burke was called after the Pope: Seàn Pòl, his parents christened him. But his brother Eamonn was not yet two years old when his parents brought the new baby home and he decided the new baby was Pokey and everybody agreed away with him an the little Seàn Pòl was stuck with Pockey for a lifetime.	Santo Burke era stato chiamato così secondo il nome del Papa: quando è nato, i suoi genitori l'avevano chiamato Seàn Pòl per ricordare Giovanni Paolo, ma suo fratello Eamonn, che non aveva ancora due anni quando il nuovo nato era stato portato a casa, aveva deciso che il marmocchio si doveva chiamare Santo (ovvero il diminutivo di "Santone") e allora tutti quanti avevano cominciato a chiamarlo così. Da allora il piccolo Seàn Pòl venne etichettato come Santo per il resto della sua vita.

As can be seen, the Italian version is much longer than the English version. In fact, here it was necessary to explain the meaning of Pokey Burke's name. In the

English colloquial language, the term *pokey* means "prison", and the verb *to burke* means "to strangle". In order to understand this name we should know the character too, because, as the ancient Latins would have said: nomen omen. According to Taylor (2008: 32), this is a phenomenon in which the name of the character is "calqued" on another term, in this case on the term "pokey" and on the verb "to burke". That is why I decided to use an equivalent strategy in order to not lose this element in the Italian text, since a literal translation would have lead to nonsense. In fact, I tried to create a new name which had an equivalent connotation in the target culture. The name of this character indicates his dubious personality and his role in the economic crash of the small Irish village in which the plot is set. Furthermore, it is ironical that the name Pokey Burke derives from the mispronunciation of the Pope's name in Irish, Seàn Pòl. Another thing that should be taken into account is that it was necessary to maintain a name which sounded mangled by a small child too. In order to maintain this kind of meaning, I decided to call him *Santo Burke*, because the antithetical use of the name "Santo" for a person who acts the opposite of a real Saint is somewhat ironical. In this case I used irony as the author did in the original text, but in a different way from the source text. In particular, as Eco (2013: 213) puts it: "si ha ironia quando maliziosamente si dice il contrario di quello che il destinatario crede o sa di essere il vero". For this reason, I feel that in this case the main purpose of the author was to make the reader understand the character's real personality through his name, and to make it sound like something paradoxical the way in which that name was created. For this reason, I think that this translation strategy can be considered as equivalent to the source version.

ST	TT
Whingers on Joe Duffy moaning and groaning about their shitty little problems [...].	Gente piagnucolona che chiamava brontolando Joe Duffy, lamentandosi dei loro piccoli problemi di merda [...].

Here there is another problem of culture. In this case, I decided to maintain the name of the Irish radio speaker, because translating it using the name of an Italian radio speaker would have been dangerous, since it might not be known by everyone and in

every context. As a matter of fact, I also changed the structure of the sentence in order to translate the whole meaning, but using a more natural form for a target reader.

ST	TT
We locked Mickey into the back of Seanie Shaper's Hiace until he became more philosophical for himself.	Poi lo abbiamo chiuso nel furgoncino di Seanie Shaper (detto Spianatrice) finché non è tornato ad essere padrone di se stesso.

In this case, we have a problem as concerns the name of the character *Seanie Shaper*. As a matter of fact, this is a nick name, and we know in the last chapter that his real name is "Seanie Shanahan" (Ryan 2012: 153). The nick name *Shaper* probably derives from the onomatopoeical original name, and to maintain the repetition of "s" in his name I decided to substitute *Shaper* with *Spianatrice*. This is another example in which a nick name is calqued on an element which is more familiar to a target reader.

3.2. Source-oriented vs Target-oriented text

One of the choices a translator has to make is to decide whether a translation should be more Source or Target Text oriented. In the first case, the translator searches for a lexical and grammatical equivalence to the source text, while when a text is Target-oriented, the translator uses lexical and grammatical resources to try to make the TT sound like an original, rather than a translated, text. In fact, in this case, the translator is subjectively involved in the recreation of texts, since he or she should interpret them.

ST	TT
[...] well before the teacher started to break things down slowly for the thick lads.	[...] già prima che l'insegnante cominciasse a spiegarlo ai più tonti.

This is a very informal way of writing. In this passage I decided not to translate literally the form *break things down slowly*, rather to translate the meaning, transposing it into *spiegarlo* – referred to Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Another very colloquial

expression is *thick lads* which in England has the sense of *stupid*. Actually, I translated it into *i più tonti*, trying to use an equivalent register. In my opinion, the whole meaning is here maintained.

ST	TT
Auld Mickey Briars lamped Timmy Hanrahan twice across both sides of his innocent young head [...].	Il vecchio Mickey Briars ha colpito Timmy Hanrahan due volte su entrambi i lati del suo giovane visino [...].

In this sentence I preferred to use *visino* instead of *testa* because this form is more direct for an Italian reader. I think the image that the author wanted to give was that of an innocent boy and *visino* can express better this purpose. Moreover, it can also appear more ironical and, in my opinion, this was the aim of the author for this passage. In fact, it is important to maintain the 'skopos' of the translation, or "a 'core meaning' independent of the meaning which the recipients of a text earmarked for a certain purpose ascribe to it" (House 2009: 26).

ST	TT
It took him months to train himself to be a drinker.	Gli ci sono voluti interi mesi di allenamento per diventare un vero ubriacone.

The author is here ironical. The verb *to train* can be translated into the verb *allenarsi*, and a more literal translation may have been *gli ci sono voluti mesi per allenarsi ad essere un bevitore*. Nevertheless, I think that this structure may result too forced and redundant for a target reader, for this reason I translated it into *interi mesi di allenamento*, and I changed the verb "to be" into *diventare*. Moreover, in the Italian version, translating it into *bevitore* would be too vague, thus I translated *drinker* into *ubriacone*. While in the original text an explanation would not be needed, I decided to add *un vero ubriacone*, in order to make the Italian reader understand the main sense of this sentence. This is a case of what Venuti (1998) would have called 'domesticating', since if translated literally the original expression would have been not familiar to the target reader, and the kind language that would have resulted, was not natural. Thus, an

adaptation is necessary. As Eco (2013: 177) explains: "talora i casi di 'addomesticamento' sono indispensabili, proprio perché si deve rendere il testo consono al genio della lingua di destinazione".

ST	TT
[...] I thought I'd never again regain the power of movement.	[...] credevo che mi avrebbero ceduto le gambe.

In the original text there is an assonance between *again* and *regain* that was difficult to transpose into Italian. That is why I changed the structure of the sentence. Nevertheless, I tried to keep the main sense and I transposed *the power of movement* into *mi avrebbero ceduto le gambe*, because I thought that it was a more common and accepted form in the target language.

ST	TT
You don't need brains to shovel shit and carry blocks and take orders from rat-faced little men who'll use you all day and laugh at you all night and never pay in your stamps.	Mica serve una laurea per spalare merda tutto il giorno, spostare blocchi, prendere ordini da degli idioti ubriaconi che ti usano per tutto il giorno, ti sfottono la notte e non ti pagano neanche le marche.

Here *little men* has a derogatory connotation, while the literal translation "piccoli uomini" would have been too soft in this context. For this reason, I used the adjective *idioti*. Similarly, I translated *laugh at you* into the more colloquial expression *ti sfottono*, since in this way the meaning is equivalent to the source text. The traits called "soprasegmentali" should have been adapted from the source into the translated text.

ST	TT
[...] gave him a sog into the mouth of her experienced fist for himself.	[...] gli ha dato un manrovescio sulla bocca di quelli che solo lei sapeva dare.

In this case, it was difficult to render the same meaning of this sentence, but I think that the purpose of the author was to show Ciss' masculinity. She is the owner of the village's pub and it can be considered as a typical male job. Here, *her experienced fist* refers to the fact that she acts like a man and she is allowed to give fists. I took into account the main 'skopos' of this passage. For this reason, I decided to render the main sense and purpose of this sentence, rather than to translate it literally. The use of the reflective *himself* then, is another typical Irish English trait.

ST	TT
And I wondered what part of her was in me. Then I remembered. Every part.	E mi sono chiesto quale parte di lei ci fosse in me. Poi me lo sono ricordato. Tutto.

Even if a literal translation of *every part* into *ogni parte* would have been perfectly understood from an Italian reader, I thought that in this context it would have resulted as not so natural in the target version. For this reason, I preferred to translate it into *tutto*.

ST	TT
I think I failed some of them, that's why I'm still groping around in the dark.	Credo di averne toppato qualcuno, ecco perchè sto ancora brancolando nel buio.

I decided here to translate the verb *to fail* into the Italian *toppare* since this character is speaking in a very colloquial way and I think that this trait can be maintained using an equivalent register into the Italian form too.

ST	TT
Go hardly there on the big spread for the funeral, hey, I has to get payed yet?	Andare là al grande banchetto del funerale dicendo hey, vedete di risparmiare che c'ho da essere pagato?

In this case, the register of the original form is spoken and very informal. In

particular, this character is imagining and reporting what he would have said if he went to his client's funeral. For this reason, here the main purpose was to maintain this colloquial register into the Italian form too. In particular, that *c'ho da essere pagato*, can be almost considered a dialectical expression in the target text, and in my opinion it can be considered as an equivalent of the original form.

3.2.2 Anglicisms

ST	TT
[...] that would have been suicide in my gang. I did pass maths even though I know I could have done honours.	[...] perchè sarebbe stato un suicidio nella mia compagnia. Ho passato a malapena matematica anche se so che avrei potuto prendere il massimo.

In this case keeping the original term *gang* may have sounded strange for an Italian reader, because it is a term which is full of other cultural implications, and an Italian reader should have known them in order to fully understand this sentence. On the other hand, the term *compagnia* cannot express precisely this kind of almost negative connotation, but I think that in this context it can be accepted. As a matter of fact, as Eco (2013: 97) puts it: "bisogna evitare gli anglicismi in una traduzione dall'inglese".

ST	TT
[...] he never took a sup again.	[...] ha smesso di bere.

Once more, the main sense is here maintained, even if *a sup* indicates *a drink* and a literal translation could have been *non ha mai più preso un drink*. Even if in this case the literal translation would have been perfectly understood by a target reader, and the term *drink* is commonly used by Italians, I preferred to change the structure of the sentence in order to use a more familiar form.

ST	TT

[...] in the under-sixteen	[...] nel campionato degli
championship.	under-quindici.

In this passage, I decided to maintain the form *under-*, even if it is an anglicism. As a matter of fact, in Italy it is a common form, also used in the field of sports.

ST	TT
Unless you like cornflakes: I have rakes of them.	A meno che non ti piacciono i corn flakes: di quelli ne ho a vagonate.

In this case, I maintained the anglicism *cornflakes* too. This word can be perfectly understood by a target reader and in Italy this term is commonly used in everyday life. Then, I translaed the colloquial expressaion *rakes of* into the Italian *vagonate*, because I think that it can be an equivalent expression in the target text.

3.3. Mode of Adaptation: Omission (Reduction)

ST	TT
Except poor innocent Timmy Hanrahan: he only stood grinning back to his two ears like the gom that he is.	Tutti tranne il povero, innocente Timmy Hanrahan che se ne stava li a sghignazzare come un idiota.

In the Italian version I decided not to split the two sentences and, instead, to use a relative clause in order to maintain the continuity of the sentence. Furthermore, I used the term *sghignazzare* instead of translating literally "grinning back to his two ears", because it would be too heavy a structure in the Italian version. What is more, the idiomatic expression *sghignazzare come un idiota* is direct and common in the Italian language. Nevertheless, I think that the equivalence of meaning is maintained anyway. I decided not to translate the sentence "that he is" because in this case it was not necessary to explain it. Actually, this is an Irish Enlish trait that is lost in the translated text, since it would have resulted as redundant for a target reader. This mode of adaptation is called 'omission' since there is "the elimination or reduction of part of the text" (Bastin 2001: 7).

3.4. Idiomatic Expressions

3.4.1 Idiomatic Expression in ST translated into the same Idiomatic Expression in TT

ST	TT
I knew he wouldn't betray me in a million years.	Sapevo che non mi avrebbe tradito nemmeno tra un milione di anni.

I think that in this case a literal translation can be accepted, since *nemmeno tra un milione di anni* is a common form in Italian too.

ST	TT
[...] filling up with fear like a boat filling with water.	[...] imbarcando paura come una nave che lentamente si riempie d'acqua.

In the original text there is the repetition of *filling*, but I chose not to maintain this repetition in order to soften the Italian structure of the sentence. As a matter of fact, using the verb *imbarcando*, I would not have used the literal translation of *boat, barca*. That is why I changed it into *nave*, but the main sense was equivalent to the English text. Moreover, I added the adverb *lentamente*, because it could better explain this kind of metaphorical visual image for a target reader.

3.4.2 Idiomatic Expressions in ST translated into an Equivalent Idiomatic Expression in TT

ST	TT
I'll sell the two acres for as much as I can get.	Venderò questi due acri al miglior offerente.

In this case, I changed the perspective of the sentence. While in the English

version the two acres will be sold *for as much as I can get*, the object of the Italian translation is *al miglior offerente*. As a matter of fact, the Italian form "vendere al miglior offerente" is an expression that can better express the meaning of the source text. For this reason I decided to use this expression instead of translating this sentence literally from the original text. According to Eco (2013: 67) "un ragionevole principio di reversibilità vorrebbe che i modi di dire e le frasi idiomatiche venissero tradotte non letteralmente bensì scegliendo l'equivalente nella lingua d'arrivo". In fact, this is exactly what I will try to do in my whole translation.

ST	TT
Just as Mickey put his head down and went to ram him like an old billy goat.	Proprio mentre Michey voleva entrare a testa bassa per pestarlo a sangue.

The idiomatic expression *ram like [an animal]* is a typical English idiomatic expression. Here we have another problem of equivalence since in Italian it cannot be translated into *pestarlo come un vecchio caprone* because it would not result as familiar to the target reader. For this reason I thought it was better to translate it, using the idiomatic expression *pestare a sangue*.

ST	TT
We locked Mickey into the back of Seanie Shaper's Hiace until he became more philosophical for himself.	Poi lo abbiamo chiuso nel furgoncino di Seanie Shaper (detto Spianatrice) finché non è tornato ad essere padrone di se stesso.

I used the idiomatic expression *è tornato ad essere padrone di se stesso*, in order to substitute the expression *he became more philosophical for himself*, because it is an equivalent Italian expression which maintains the same meaning.

ST	TT
There wasn't a man of us put his hand in his pocket all evening.	E nessuno di noi per tutta la sera ha messo mano al portafogli.

In this sentence, there is a problem of culture because in the English version the idiomatic expression *put his hand in his pocket* is equivalent to the Italian *mettere mano al portafogli* and a literal translation would lead to something not familiar to an Italian reader.

ST	TT
You don't need brains to shovel shit and carry blocks and take orders from rat-faced little men who'll use you all day and laugh at you all night and never pay in your stamps.	Mica serve una laurea per spalare merda tutto il giorno, spostare blocchi, prendere ordini da degli idioti ubriaconi che ti usano per tutto il giorno, ti sfottono la notte e non ti pagano neanche le marche.

The idiomatic expression *you don't need brains* has here an equivalent meaning to the Italian *mica serve una laurea*, in which the term "mica" belongs to a very colloquial and almost dialectical register. The translated sentence is also turned into an impersonal form. That alliteration of "the" is here substituted by a comma – this element can be also seen in other parts of the text.

The typical colloquial expression *rat-faced* do not have an equivalent into Italian, but since it has a connotation of someone who is always drunk, I decided to translate it into *ubriaconi*.

ST	TT
I might as well have had a cap in my hand and called him sir.	Forse avrei anche dovuto togliermi il cappello e magari chiamarlo signore.

In this passage we have another cultural problem in which *have a cap in my hand* could have been literally translated also into *tenere/reggere il cappello in mano*, but the Italian form *togliersi il cappello* may sound more familiar to a target reader and gives a better idea of subjugation.

ST	TT
They'd soon soften Pokey's cough, but I hadn't, and I didn't [...].	Così gli avrebbero fatto abbassare le ali a Santo, ma non l'ho fatto. Non è successo niente del genere [...].

The idiomatic expression *soften Pokey's cough* can be transposed into Italian using the equivalent expression *far abbassare le ali*.

ST	TT
She went for me bald-headed, though.	Eppure ha perso la testa per me.

The informal expression *go bald-headed into* means to do something without care or caution. In this case I used an idiomatic Italian expression in order to express this meaning, because in my opinion it could prove more direct for an Italian reader.

ST	TT
He got kicked around the place and all I ever did was laugh. He was the quietest boy you'd meet, he never threw a shape [...].	Ha cominciato a dare calci a destra e a manca e tutto ciò che ho fatto io è stato ridere. Era il ragazzo più tranquillo sulla faccia della Terra, non aveva mai fatto male ad una mosca [...].

In this passage I translated the idiomatic expression *got kicked around the place* into an equivalent Italian idiomatic expression. In this case a literal translation was not possible either. Another idiomatic expression is *he never threw a shape*, that I translated into the Italian idiomatic expression *non aveva mai fatto male ad una mosca*. I also have to add that the conditional in the sentence *the quietest boy you'd meet* is a typical Irish form (see Introduction to Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*), and in this case I used another idiomatic expression to translate it into the Italian version.

ST	TT

Pokey Burke left his father and mother to mop up after him.	Santo Burke aveva lasciato suo padre e sua madre nelle peste.
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In the colloquial English, *to mop up* means 'to overcome decisively'. Actually, I decided to translate it with the more direct and colloquial expression *lasciare nelle peste*. This form can result more natural to an Italian reader, and makes the meaning of the sentence clear anyway.

ST	TT
They'd all roll their eyes and let on to be disgusted but still and all they'd clap [...].	Alzavano tutti gli occhi al cielo mostrandosi disgustati, ma poi zitti zitti si mettevano a battere le mani [...].

In this passage I have found problems in translating the typical Irish English form of the use of conditionals instead of past simple (see Introduction). Moreover, it is a colloquial language and has different structures compared to Standard English. As Eco (2013: 136) puts it, the translator could have transferred this typical Irish language into a particular variant of Italian. Nevertheless, through this way there was the risk of changing too much the text, or maybe this dialectical variant would not have been understood by another Italian reader. That is why I decided to translate *let on to be disgusted* into *mostrandosi disgustati*, trying to maintain the main sense. The idiomatical sentence *still and all* can be considered as equivalent to the Italian form *zitti zitti*.

ST	TT
Pokey Burke had been mad after her;	Santo Burke le andava dietro come un matto;

In this case, it was necessary to explain that this character was *mad after her* means that he was 'in love' with her. For this reason I adapted the original text in my translation. Moreover, *andare dietro*, referred to a girl or a boy, is a common colloquial expression that here can be considered equivalent to the original form.

ST	TT
She said I'd look a show wearing those things.	Ha detto che sarei sembrato un pagliaccio con quella roba addosso.

Here I tried to maintain a very informal register also in the Italian version. In particular, I decided to use the form *con quella roba addosso*, which belongs to a more spoken level of language, instead of using *indossando quelle cose*, for instance. Furthermore, I translated *I'd look a show* into *sarei sembrato un pagliaccio*, because I think that *sembrare un pagliaccio* is a common way of speaking, that is very often used in the Italian informal language.

ST	TT
You'll have to get something to keep you together.	Dovrai prendere qualcosa per rimetterti in sesto.

In this passage I decided to translate the idiomatic expression *to keep you together* of the original text into *rimetterti in sesto*. Actually, this Italian expression metaphorically means to recollect pieces and to return to the normal situation, and it is often referred to the health context. I decided to translate this idiomatic expression into an equivalent Italian one because I think that in this context it was important to maintain an equivalent meaning. As a matter of fact, quoting Taylor (2008: 27): "the problem of the translator arises when the marked collocation makes no sense, even with a leap of imagination on the part of the reader, in the target language". Obviously, to translate literally this expression into Italian the core meaning would probably not have been understood by a target reader.

ST	TT
I think I failed some of them, that's why I'm still groping around in the dark.	Credo di averne toppato qualcuno, ecco perchè sto ancora brancolando nel buio.

In this case I translated the idiomatic expression *groping in the dark* into the equivalent expression in the target text *brancolare nel buio*.

ST	TT
I haven't a snowball's chance in hell of a job.	Non ho una sola possibilità al mondo di trovare un lavoro.

In the original text, there is here a typical idiomatic expression, that was difficult to render literally for a target reader, since it would probably not been understood. Actually, once more I translated it reporting the whole meaning. In particular, in my opinion the Italian form *non avere una sola possibilità al mondo* can result as equivalent in meaning to the original form. Moreover, it will result as more direct and natural to an Italian reader than a literal translation.

ST	TT
[...] as I was driving around like a blue-arsed fly [...].	[...] mentre guidavo e giravo come un matto [...].

In this passage I decided to translate the idiomatic expression *like a blue-arsed fly* into the equivalent Italian form *girare come un matto* which belongs to a colloquial register too.

ST	TT
I'd perjure myself for him without breaking a sweat.	Avrei giurato il falso per lui senza battere ciglio.

The colloquial form *to break a sweat* means to win or get something effortlessly. That is why I decided to translate it into the Italian idiomatic expression *senza battere ciglio*, because I think that it is equivalent to the original form.

ST	TT
[...] a gloomy, nervy slog of a life, punctuated by days and nights of mad rage when he'd wreck the house and Bobby's mother would grab him and run for it, just in case he forgot himself	[...] un modo cupo, teso di tirare a campare, accentuato da giorni e notti di rabbia pazza quando aveva distrutto la casa e la madre di Bobby l'aveva afferrato e di corsa, giusto

altogether and took at <i>them</i> as well as the furniture and the crockery.	nel caso in cui si fosse dimenticato di stare tutti insieme e prendesse loro per mobili o stoviglie.
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In this case, I had to change the structure of the sentence, and in particular I translated the English form *a nervy, gloomy slog of a life* into *un modo cupo, teso di tirare a campare*. Actually, here I used an equivalent Italian form in order to maintain the same meaning.

ST	TT
My goose is cooked, he said [...].	Siamo alla frutta, ha detto [...].

Once more, in this passage I translated an idiomatic expression into an equivalent one into the target text.

ST	TT
[...] if we were all in the black we'd all be in the pink.	[...] se i nostri conti non fossero in rosso, avremmo avuto tutti un futuro roseo.

In this case it was necessary to use idiomatic expressions which uses colours. While in England, to have a financial crush leads to "be in the black", in Italy the equivalent expression is "essere in rosso". Furthermore, "to be in the pink" has the meaning of being in a good situation, and in Italian it means to have better perspectives. For this reason, I adapted the original sentence into *avremmo avuto tutti un futuro roseo* in the target text, in order to maintain colours in both versions.

3.4.3 Idiomatic Expressions in ST translated without an Idiomatic Expression in TT and vice versa

ST	TT
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<p>[...] users and crookers dressed up like the salt of the earth. Everyone's seen their real faces now.</p>	<p>[...] truffatori e approfittatori travestiti da brava gente. Adesso tutti quanti li vedranno per quello che sono veramente.</p>
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In this case, I translated the metaphorical expression *dressed up like the salt of the earth* explaining it: *travestiti da brava gente*. I decided to maintain the general meaning instead of translating this sentence literally. Similarly, as concerns the other metaphor *everyone's seen their real faces*, I decided to translate it into *tutti quanti li vedranno per quello che sono veramente*. As a matter of fact, as Eco (2013: 167) points out, metaphors are another cultural problem, which can be solved through explaining the metaphor or by using an equivalent one in the target language. In this case I have chosen the first option.

ST	TT
<p>He couldn't put his fingers on it; [...].</p>	<p>Non sapeva perché; [...].</p>

Here I translated the English idiomatic expression into an Italian form, in order to indicate that it was something not completely sure. In fact, I could not translate it into an equivalent idiomatic expression.

ST	TT
<p>[...] a man who could easily have had a good life who chose instead their life [...].</p>	<p>[...] un uomo che avrebbe potuto avere benissimo una vita felice che aveva deciso invece di seguire le loro orme [...].</p>

In this passage I decided to render *good life* into *vita felice*, in order to maintain the same meaning, even if I used another adjective – a more familiar form to an Italian reader, instead of *buona vita*, that could mean something not excellent. Then I decided to explain that *their life* is referred to *their way of life* and for this reason, I used an idiomatic Italian form: *seguire le loro orme*.

3.5. Equivalence:

3.5.1 Situational Equivalence and Equivalence of Meaning

ST	TT
I can hear it creak, creak, creak as I walk away.	Mentre mi allontano lo sento fare cick, cick, cick...

In addition to the syntactical change from the English form to the Italian version, there is a problem in translating an onomatopoeia. As a matter of fact, the sound of creaking or squeaking in English is "creak" – from which the verb *to creak* derives. In Italian the onomatopoetic verb "cigolare" exists and it probably derives from the sound "cick". Apart from this change of onomatopoeia, I want to add that I decided to maintain the sound of the metallic hinge and not to use the verb "cigolare" in order to give the same idea of hearing that sound to the Italian reader too. As Eco (2013: 80) points out, "una traduzione [...] deve produrre lo stesso effetto a cui mirava l'originale". Actually in some cases a *functional equivalence*, or *skopos theory* are required, more than an equivalence of meaning. I also used suspension dots because I wanted to link this sentence with the next one, differently from the original text in which there is a full stop.

ST	TT
He drank out Grandadd's farm years ago.	Si è bevuto la fattoria del nonno un po' di anni fa.

In this passage, I maintained the form *he drank out [the farm]* translating it literally into *si è bevuto [la fattoria]* because I felt it would appear as an informal way of writing both in the English and in the Italian form. The sense of this sentence is clear in Italian too, and the colloquial register is maintained. This expression can also be found in other parts of the text. Moreover, in translating *years ago* I decided to add *un po' di anni fa* instead of the literal translation "anni fa", because I think it can better give the same idea of the original text. In this case, I adapted the original text into the Italian version. According to Bastin (2001: 7), I used the phenomenon of 'situational

'equivalence', in which there is "the insertion of a more familiar context than the one used in the original".

ST	TT
I can forgive him for turning piles of money into piss and for leaving my mother to her holy hell.	Posso anche perdonarlo per aver trasformato una montagna di soldi in piscio e per aver abbandonato mia madre nel suo profondo inferno.

In this passage, I translated *holy hell* into *profondo inferno*. Once more, the equivalence of meaning is transposed into the target text, but the religious reference is not maintained. This is a contrastive image, but I did not translate it literally because it would not sound as natural in the target language. However, while in the original form there is the alliteration of the letter "h", I maintained an alliteration of the letter "f" in order to keep the same rhythm and richness of sound of the original text.

ST	TT
The wife was lovely; she was dog-tired of your man's auld selfish ways [...].	La moglie era una donna deliziosa; era stufa marcia dell'osessivo egoismo di suo marito [...].

In this passage I had to add *una donna* because this form sounds more common for an Italian reader. I thought that in order to make the target text more comprehensible, it was necessary to specify. Here many Irish English terms or structures can be found. In particular, the term *auld* is very commonly used along with *your man* (see Introduction of Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*). As concerns the term *auld*, I decided to translate it into *osessivo*, even if the real meaning of this term is a variant of *old*. I preferred to translate it this way to underline his long-enduring egoism.

ST	TT
I tried to hide my wraparound shades from Mother.	Ho provato a nascondere alla mamma i miei occhiali da sole coprenti.

In this passage it was actually necessary to change the structure of the sentence from the English into the Italian form. I decided not to maintain a capital letter in the translation of *Mother*, because in the Italian version it would not be right. Nevertheless, I used the more colloquial *alla mamma*, instead of *a mamma*. Another element which was difficult to transpose was *wraparound shades*, since a precise translation is not present in Italian. For this reason, once more, I decided to explain what this element is and I translated it into *occhiali da sole coprenti*, because of their function.

ST	TT
She said they were plastic rubbish.	Ha detto che erano fatti di plasticaccia.

In this case, I tried to maintain the main sense of this sentence. In particular, *plastic rubbish* cannot be translated literally into Italian and for this reason I decided to use a noun which in this context has got an equivalent meaning.

ST	TT
He looked like he was two and a half or maybe three at the oldest.	Mi sembrava che avesse due anni e mezzo o forse tre al massimo.

In this case I translated *at the oldest* into *al massimo*, since in Italian an equivalent form does not exist. Anyway, in this context, the meaning is maintained.

ST	TT
He's called at least three times now.	È venuto almeno tre volte finora.

In this case, that *he has called three times* cannot be translated into *ha chiamato tre volte*. Actually, this is a colloquial way of saying *è venuto tre volte*. In this context a literal translation would have been inappropriate too.

ST	TT

He wanted me to help him to kidnap a kid.	Voleva che lo aiutassi a rapire un bambino.
--	--

In this case, the assonance between *kidnap* and *kid*, which is present in the original form, cannot be maintained into the target text. As a matter of fact, here I used a literal kind of translation, because an equivalent assonance in the Italian version was not possible.

ST	TT
I wonder what sort of a yoke it is at all.	Chissà che roba pesante.

The word *yoke* in Ireland is used to indicate something that cannot be described accurately. In this case I decided to translate it into *roba*, which can be considered as an equivalent term in Italian.

ST	TT
He was pure matter of fact about it.	Era assolutamente inespressivo.

Here a literal translation would have been wrong, since in this case *pure matter of fact* means to be completey blank. As Wilss (2001: 58) points out, "source text ad target text normally stand in a one-to-many relation, i.e. translation is not a formal procedure of substitution on the basis of simple one-to-one correspondance".

ST	TT
[...] why was he there at all?	[...] perché era là, comunque?

In this passage there is the typical Irish English feature *at all* (see Introduction) that may be result as difficult to translate. In fact, I decided to translate it into a final *comunque*, since it can maintain the meaning of the original form.

ST	TT

Poor Triona, they said, but secretly they were delighted for me, with my fine dormer bungalow on the lovely site Bobby got for a song off of the Burkes, swanning around the place in my big oh-eight car.	Povera Triona, dicevano, ma in realtà godevano nel vedermi così, con la mia casetta raffinata in quel posto adorabile che Bobby aveva ottenuto come ultima esibizione di valore da parte dei Burke, andando in giro con la mia macchina sportiva.
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In this passage, I tried to focus on the equivalence of meaning between the original and the target text. For this reason, I translated the sentence *but secretly they were delighted for me* into *in realtà godevano nel vedermi così*, because I think that this form is more natural for an Italian reader rather than a literal translation. Moreover, I translated *dormer bungalow* into *casetta*, and *oh-eight car* into *macchina sportiva* because these elements help to give the idea that Triona and Bobby are considered to be rich, by the community.

3.5.2 Negotiation

ST	TT
My father still lives back the road past the weir in the cottage I was reared in.	Mio padre vive ancora nella casetta in cui sono cresciuto, in una stradina appena dopo il mulino.

In this sentence we can find a syntactical problem, since the structure of the English sentence would be not so easily understood by an Italian reader if translated literally. As Venuti (1995: 6) explains: "languages are different from each other; they are different in form having distinct codes and rules regulating the construction of grammatical stretches of language and these forms have different meanings". As a matter of fact, unlike linguists who only consider the two languages as systems, a translator should consider the language as a process, and in particular, he or she shoud consider the two texts as a whole (House 2009: 3). For this reason I preferred to change the order of the sentence in the Italian form and to put a comma, unlike the English form. Here, the author wanted to create an idea of a spoken language and punctuation is

barely used in this book. Nevertheless, comparing the English to the Italian construction of sentences, we know that there are many differences in the use of punctuation. In the Italian form, a pause was necessary in order to create a more familiar structure for the target reader. As concerns the sentence *back the road past the weir*, I translated it into *in una stradina appena dopo il mulino*. As a matter of fact, *back the road* means that the cottage is isolated and far from the main street. For this reason, the term *stradina* can suggest an idea of a secondary road to a target reader.

As far as the term *cottage* is concerned, we have a problem of culture. An Italian reader may know that a "cottage" is a typical English and Irish house, but here it has the meaning of a poor and very small kind of house. Going on with the book it will be described as a "hovel" (Ryan 2012: 19), but here this negative connotation is not expressed yet, and I chose to translate *cottage* into *casetta*. In order to explain this choice better, I quote Eco (2013: 83), who has the same problem in translating the French term "chaumières". This word refers to a typical small French house, but this term and this concept does not exist in the Italian language. For this reason he made a list of the main features of this kind of house, trying to maintain the more useful in that context. This is exactly what I tried to do with the word *cottage*, since in this context the most important elements to underline for this kind of house was that it is small and isolated. In this case, I think that the term *casetta* was the better one in order to maintain these elements.

ST	TT
[...] that would have been suicide in my gang. I did pass maths even though I know I could have done honours.	[...] perchè sarebbe stato un suicidio nella mia compagnia. Ho passato a malapena matematica anche se so che avrei potuto prendere il massimo.

The term *gang* has here a complex meaning, and it is difficult to render it into an equivalent word in Italian. Here we have a problem of 'negotiation', since we have to choose the term that can be as similar as possible to the original meaning through the tools that the target language offers. As Eco (2013: 93) points out: "tradurre significa

'limare via' alcune delle conseguenze che il termine originale implicava". In fact, the term *gang* has got the meaning of a group that is tipically created into a urban context.

ST	TT
Then later on I was sitting up on Daddy's lap and I was after finishing my secret bottle that I'm still allowed have before I go down to bed even though Mammy says I'm way too big now to be sucking bottles like a baby [...].	Poi più tardi ero seduta in braccio a papà e stavo per finire la mia bottiglia segreta, che mi danno ancora il permesso di usare prima di andare a dormire anche se la mamma dice che sono un po' troppo grandicella adesso per succhiare biberon come un neonato [...].

As concerns the term *neonato*, I think that we have the phenomenon of 'negoziazione'. In particular, "in lingue diverse termini apparentemente sinonimi permettono o meno di elaborare le stesse inferenze". In Italian *bambino* and *neonato* can be considered as synonyms in some context, but in this case, the term *bambino* would have been too generic, and *neonato* was the best alternative.

ST	TT
I drove the van a half a mile down the road and up a boreen [...].	Sono andato avanti con il furgone per quasi un chilometro giù dalla strada principale e su per una stradina sterrata [...].

In this case I could not have traslated the verb *to drive* as *guidare*, since in the target text it would have been an inappropriate structure. For this reason I used the verb *andare*. Moreover there is a problem of culture because the term *boreen* refers to a kind of Irish country street, which is typically known to be an isolated single line, with grass growing in the middle. Furthermore, boreens are often lined by close stone walls, and for this reson it is difficult to drive along these roads. As a matter of fact, it was impossible to report the whole description into the Italian version, except by putting a note. Nevertheless, according to Eco (2013: 110), "la nota [...] è sempre segno di debolezza da parte di un traduttore". That is why I translated it into *stradina sterrata*,

because it can give the idea of a country, isolated and narrow street.

Furthermore, here we have a case of 'ipotiposi', since the translator should be able to create a visual image into the reader through words (Eco 2013: 197). However, the visual image that the word *boreen* can evoke into an Irish reader, is not the same image that an Italian reader will have through the form *stradina sterrata*. In fact, it is a cultural problem, since the conception of an element, depends on the cultural experience that we have of that object. For this reason, as in the case of 'cottage', we should be able to transfer the essential elements and the main concept of this term in order to create a visual image for the target reader too.

3.5.3 Rewriting and Reformulation

ST	TT
I was left go from my job two months ago and it was the best medicine he could have got.	Mi hanno licenziato dal lavoro due mesi fa e questa notizia l'ha rinvigorito più di qualsiasi altra medicina.

In the first sentence I turned the passive English form into the active form in order to obtain a lighter effect for the reader. I think that in this case a passive voice would be too heavy. Moreover, I thought I should explain that *it* stood for *questa notizia*, for this reason I had to add it into the Italian translation. Because of that, to make sense of the sentence I added the verb *l'ha rinvigorito*, changing the perspective of the sentence and using another active form instead of a passive one. In any case, I have maintained the same meaning as the original text; to translate a text it is fundamental to undertake "a rewriting of an original text [...]. Rewriting can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another" (Venuti 1995: VII).

ST	TT
He could have helped it but didn't.	Avrebbe potuto uscirne ma non l'ha fatto.

This is a typical case of translation, in which a translator may understand the meaning of this structure by the context and a literal translation would have been inappropriate. As a matter of fact, as in other cases, the main sense should have been understood and translated into an equivalent structure in the target text. An automatic translation – such as the one made by a computer – would have been surely wrong.

ST	TT
[...] she knew deep down that I was terrified of the lightness and loveliness of her [...].	[...] sapeva nel profondo del suo cuore che ero terrorizzato per la luce e la bellezza che emanava [...].

In this passage I thought that it was necessary to add the object of *deep down*, and I decided to add *nel profondo del suo cuore*. Otherwise, the sentence would have been suspended. What is more, I translated *lightness* into *luce*, rather than *lucentezza*, turning the adjective into a noun. In this case the Italian translation *la lucentezza e la bellezza* would have sounded too heavy. Moreover, I translated *of her* into *che emanava*, because it makes it possible to maintain the same register as the original and it is necessary in order to make the target text appear more natural to an Italian reader. Once more, the original text, should have been adapted in the translated text.

ST	TT
On a sunny day in Eyre Square you can sit and look at girls' legs all day long.	Se fa bello, mi siedo in piazza Eyre e sto a fissare per tutto il giorno la gambe delle ragazze che passano.

I decided to translate *on a sunny day* into the colloquial Italian form *se fa bello*, because is more immediate than *in una giornata di sole* or *quando c'è il sole*, and it keeps a more informal register. Moreover, I changed the impersonal form of the original text, using a first person narration, in order to render the target text more readable for an Italian audience. I also added that *che passano*, because otherwise the main sense could be tricky or sound as not so natural in the translated text.

ST	TT

She wasn't really a human. She was a vampire.	Non era umana. A dire la verità, era un vampiro.
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I decided here to change the place of the adverb *really*, putting it in the second sentence rather than in the first one. In my opinion it was better not to add anything in the first sentence, and to add that *a dire la verità* as an explanation of the previous sentence. This is an adaptation made in order to make the translated text more readable and natural.

ST	TT
[...] they may not be really dead.	[...] potrebbero essere ancora vive.

In this passage I decided to turn the sentence into a positive clause. As a matter of fact, instead of translating literally the negative clause *they may not be [...] dead* into *potrebbero non essere ancora morte*, I changed the perspective of the sentence, because it can appear softened for a target reader.

ST	TT
Him giving me this kid is me showing myself something.	Dando a me questo bambino è come se lui mostrasse qualcosa a me stesso.

Here it is important to maintain the idea of the double personality in the Italian text too. Actually the character is revealing his schizophrenic personality, and the grammatical structure of the sentence is very confused. I think that this aspect is also maintained in the translated text. In particular, I had to keep all elements in order to show the character's personality. Nevertheless, while in the original version there is an initial *him*, I thought that to translate this element literally into *a lui*, would have been too confusing for an Italian reader. The character is raving, but a completely meaningless sentence could have made a target reader to lose the focus on the character's double personality. To reach the 'skopos' of this passage is the most important element to maintain, in this context.

ST	TT
[...] to talk for talk's sake.	[...] di parlare solo per il gusto di farlo.

This is an English idiomatic expression, but since there is not an equivalent expression in the target language, once more I translated the whole meaning. Actually, this is a phenomenon of "Reformulation" (Taylor 1998: 28-29), since in the target language there is not a similar equivalence, and it was necessary to maintain the main sense and register of the English text.

ST	TT
I think they were an ease to each other.	Penso che si dessero sollievo l'un l'altro.

In this passage, a literal translation of *they were an ease to each other* into *erano un sollievo l'uno per l'altro* could have resulted as not so clear and familiar to an Italian reader. That is why I translated it into a different form, maintaining the same meaning anyway.

ST	TT
[...] her words frightened the life out of him [...].	[...] le sue parole hanno spaventato chi gli stava attorno [...].

In this case, a literal translation would have led to a wrong result. For this reason, I translated it keeping the main sense. In particular, I translated *the life out of him* into *chi gli stava attorno*.

ST	TT
For all my talk, I had nothing to say.	Nonostante la mia parlantina, non mi veniva in mente niente da dire.

Here I decided to translate the main sense of this sentence instead of translating it literally. In particular, I translated *I had nothing to say* into *non mi veniva in mente niente da dire*, since it is a more familiar form for an Italian reader.

ST	TT
But still and all, songs and pints and backslapping nights of praise and speeches aside, some people will hate you for your goodness.	Canzoni, pinte di birra, serate da pacche sulle spalle, in cui ti ricoprono di lodi e ti prendono da parte per parlare, ma zitti zitti della gente ti odierà per la tua bontà.

In this case I changed the structure of the sentence, since it is a colloquial way of speaking, and for this reason, I tried to transpose the same effect into the target text. As a matter of fact, I put the list of things first and then I used an avversative clause which express the contrary of what has been told before. I found difficult to translate *backslapping nights*, since in the Italian language there is not an equivalent. For this reason I decided to translate it into *serate da pacche sulle spalle* to maintain the main sense of being friendly to each other.

3.5.4 Creation

ST	TT
I was always jealous of Seanie Shaper growing up.	Sono sempre stato invidioso di Seanie Spianatrice, fin dall'infanzia.

Here to translate *growing up* into an Italian verb would lead to nonsense. For this reason I changed the sentence, adding a comma in order to render it more comprehensible for a target reader.

ST	TT
[...] not even knowing his luck.	[...] senza rendersi neanche conto di quanto fosse fortunato.

Once more, it is necessary to translate a noun into a verbal sentence. In particular,

in translating *his luck* literally, would result a form that can be not familiar to an Italian reader. For this reason, I decided to translate it into *di quanto fosse fortunato*, explaining and making the main sense of the sentence clearer.

ST	TT
You're some fool, he said with her eyes. I know I am, my red cheeks said back.	'Sei un idiota' le si leggeva chiaramente in faccia. 'Sì è vero' ammettevano le mie guance mentre arrossivo.

Even if there is no inverted commas in the original text, because the author wanted to report the characters' inner thoughts, I think that in the Italian version they were necessary in order to show that here we have a direct 'speech'. In omitting inverted commas, that passage would not be completely understood by an Italian reader. Furthermore, I changed *in her eyes* into *in faccia* because it is an idiomatic Italian expression which can sound more familiar for a target reader. I decided to transpose *I know I am* into *sì è vero* instead of a more literal translation such as "so di esserlo" because in my opinion it was more direct. What is more, I used the verb *arrossire* instead of translating literally the sentence *my red cheeks said back* for the same reason.

ST	TT
Or: you're gone as fat as a fool.	O ancora: stai diventando più grasso che pazzo.

In this case, I translated the comparative of equality into an Italian comparative of majority. In particular, the form *stai diventando tanto grasso quanto pazzo* in the target text would not seem so natural. What is more, translating it with a comparative of majority allows to keep a more informal register into the Italian version. This is a case of 'creation' since the original text is replaced with another one that preserves only the essential message of the original (Bastin 2001: 7).

ST	TT
[...] like the thing he thought of last year where he hacked into their harems and stole	Tipo l'anno scorso aveva avuto questa idea di entrare illegalmente nel loro harem

<p>all their girls (and the boys in Ming's case) and totally screwed up the spec of all their sex slaves and made them into fat animal-headed creatures and wiped out millions of their cred points.</p>	<p>virtuale e gli aveva rubato tutte le ragazze (e anche i ragazzi nel caso dei Ming) e aveva totalmente distrutto la specifica di tutti i loro schiavi sessuali trasformandoli in grasse creature con la testa di animale e aveva spazzato via milioni dei loro punti bonus.</p>
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Here there is a difference in punctuation: in particular, I decided to separate in two parts the Italian form with a full stop because in the target text it would have proved too long. Moreover, it was important to make the reader understand that in this passage, a typical computer language has been used. Words such as *spec* and *cred* cannot be maintained into the Italian form, because they would not have been understood, and there are no equivalent words in Italian. For this reason, I tried to use different devices in order to make the target readers understand that this is not the description of a real fact, but everything is set into a virtual aim. In particular, I used words such as *harem virtuale* and *punti bonus*.

ST	TT
He was standing in the dark kitchen [...].	Lui era in cucina avvolto nell'oscurità [...].

Here I had to change the structure of the sentence. In particular, to translate *in the dark kitchen* into a literal translation such as *nella cucina oscura* would have been a strange form for an Italian reader. For this reason I decided to translate it into *era in cucina avvolto nell'oscurità*, since this structure can result as more familiar to a target reader, and it can maintain an equivalent meaning.

3.5.5 Elementi soprasegmentali

ST	TT

I want my fuckin pension, you little prick, Mickey roared and roared.	Mickey continuava ad urlare voglio la mia dannata pensione, merdosa testa di cazzo.
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In this case I changed the order of the sentences to make the Italian version sound more authentic. Moreover, the term *to roar* used for a person and not for animals is a typical Irish English trait (see Introduction to Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*). Since in Italian there is not an equivalent term, I used the verb *urlare*. Another important thing is the use of swear words, which should be adapted to the context in which are used. In particular, I softened *fuckin pension* using the Italian form *dannata pensione*, and I gave more emphasis translating *little prick* into *merdosa testa di cazzo* instead of just "cazzzone". In my opinion, in this context strong emphasis was required. Here, I used elements that Eco (2013: 54) called "soprasegmentali" in order to create an equivalence of expression between the original and the target text. The use of different words – in this case swear words – can give a different idea of the character's feelings to the target reader.

ST	TT
I'm not waking a monster. No way.	Non sveglierò un mostro. Nossignore.

I think that in this context, *no way* could have been translated also into *neanche per sogno*, but the Italian form *nossignore* is more direct and conclusive than the other one and can better translate the original expression.

ST	TT
Then I pulled the wipers off of his Mercedes and fucked off. Imagine that. I pulled the wipers off of his car, like a bold schoolboy.	Poi ho strappato via i tergilicristallo alla sua Mercedes e che andasse a fare in culo. Pensa. Ho strappato via i tergilicristallo dalla sua macchina, come un ragazzino sfrontato.

I think that in this case, this character is both surprised with himself, but also proud. I tried to maintain this mixture of feelings in the target version too, by using the

form *che andasse a fare in culo* and the conclusive sentence *come un ragazzino sfrontato*. Actually, that *bold* can also have a meaning of "brave" and I think that the Italian term *sfontato* can have this kind of meaning too.

3.6. Divergence and linguistic differences between ST and TT

ST	TT
They'd soon soften Pokey's cough, but I hadn't, and I didn't [...].	Così gli avrebbero fatto abbassare le ali a Santo, ma non l'ho fatto. Non è successo niente del genere [...].

Here there is an example of making a verb in Italian explicit which was implicit in the English version because of the use of an auxiliary to avoid repetition. In particular, I had to explicit the verbs *I hadn't, and I didn't* adding *non l'ho fatto. Non è successo niente del genere*. Moreover, I added a dot instead of continuing the same sentence with a comma.

ST	TT
They'd all roll their eyes and let on to be disgusted but still and all they'd clap [...].	Alzavano tutti gli occhi al cielo mostrandosi disgustati, ma poi zitti zitti si mettevano a battere le mani [...].

Another difference from Italian is the use of the verb *to clap* without an object because *hands* is here implicit. In Italian it was necessary to make it explicit and I translated it into *si mettevano a battere le mani*.

ST	TT
Nothing was ever done right or cooked right or said right or bought right or handed him properly or ironed	Niente era mai fatto come voleva lui: mai un piatto cucinato bene, o una parola detta nel modo giusto, o un

straight or finished of fully with him.	acquisto azzeccato, mai che una cosa gli venisse porta in modo appropriato, mai una camicia che fosse stirata abbastanza accuratamente, e mai che una storia fosse veramente finita, per lui.
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In the English version there are several verbs in the passive voice with an indefinite pronoun as subject. In the Italian version a different subject was needed for every verb in order to render the translation comprehensible. In some cases I used the form *mai che qualcosa fosse fatta* which is a more informal way of saying the same thing and I thought it could be useful to maintain a colloquial register. Another thing worth attention is the use of "right", which in English can be used in all contexts, while in Italian there is not an equivalent word that can be used with every kind of verb. According to Taylor (1998: 48), this phenomenon is called "Divergence", since there is a relationship of one-to-many words, from the original to the target language. Moreover, in Italian, repetitions are not always very well accepted. For this reason, I added a colon and I compiled a list.

ST	TT
[...] I wanted to jump into the ground and drag her back out and scream to come back, come back, we'll walk to the shop [...].	[...] volevo saltare laggiù sottoterra e trascinarla di nuovo fuori e urlarle di tornare, torna... Andremo a piedi al negozio [...].

Here there is a problem of equivalence between the English and the Italian structure of verbs: while in English the form *come back* can be a bare infinitive, and an imperative, in Italian there is a different form for every person of the verb. This is another case of "Divergence", in which the same kind of verb can have different meanings in the target text. This can also be considered a phenomenon of ambiguity (Eco 2013: 111), maybe intention on the part of the author, who plays with the English language, but this kind of ambiguity cannot be maintained through the Italian linguistic structure. As a matter of fact, in English it is possible to interpret the meaning of the verb *come back*, but in Italian, the translator should interpret and share his or her own

interpretation of the original text. In this case, I decided to change from an infinitive to an imperative form of the verb and to add the suspension dots as a pause.

ST	TT
She has no husband anyway, Dorothy says.	Dorothy dice che non è sposata, comunque.

In this passage I decided to change the structure of the sentence in the Italian version, placing the reporting verb at the beginning, unlike the English version. Then I changed the way of saying that the girl is not married. In particular, in the source text, there is the form *she has no husband*. Nevertheless, in Italian a literal translation would not have been familiar to an Italian audience. For this reason I translated it into the more usual and accepted form *non è sposata*.

ST	TT
Or: Dorothy's son is a captain in the army now, you know.	Oppure: il figlio di Dorothy è diventato capitano dell'esercito adesso, sai?

In this passage I translated that colloquial *you know* into an equivalent colloquial and spoken Italian form which is *sai?*, turning the English form into a question in the Italian text.

ST	TT
An older man who must be her father.	Un uomo più vecchio che deve essere il padre di lei.

Here we have a problem of transposing a grammatical English form into Italian. As a matter of fact, in English there is a difference between masculine e feminine personal pronouns for the third singular person (*his* and *her*). However, in Italian there is a unique personal pronoun which is *suo*. In this case, that "*suo*" could have been referred both to the child, and to the girl. For this reason, it was needed to specify to whom that personal pronoun was referred to.

ST	TT

I could easily just kill them both [...].	Potrei semplicemente ucciderle entrambe [...].
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Here there are two adverbs in the original text, which translated into Italian may have result as too much weight. For this reason, I decided to translate just one of the two adverbs, but I think that the main meaning of the sentence is not altered anyway.

ST	TT
After it, I was slumped forward.	Dopodichè mi sono accasciato in avanti.

In the English version, the author uses a passive form, but in Italian the verb *accasciarsi* is an intransitive verb. For this reason I translated it into *mi sono accasciato*.

ST	TT
Like, why would he not text or email or Facebook?	Della serie, perchè non mi ha mandato un sms o una e-mail, o un messaggio su Facebook?

In this passage, I decided to translate that *like* into an equivalent colloquial Italian form, which is *della serie*. This form is very widely used when people try to comment on something in a sarcastic way. There is an evident difference between the English and the Italian version, because in English *text*, *email* and *Facebook* are used as verbs. Nevertheless, in Italian it is necessary to use them as nouns, using the verb *mandare*. Here we have another case, in which the syntax of the original text is different from the translated text. As a matter of fact, the whole meaning has to be maintained, and a literal translation would have been inappropriate. According to Wilss (2001: 58): "language use simply cannot be treated in terms of binary oppositions, at least not exhaustively". A one-to-one substitution can rarely be the best solution and the translator should be able to solve problems of correspondance from one language into another.

ST	TT
He'd had another kid with another woman.	Avrebbe avuto un figlio con un'altra donna.

In this passage, I used a conditional. Actually, the use of conditional in the original form is a typical Irish trait (see Intrduction). In the Italian version this form is used in order to express that this fact was something alleged by this character. For this reason I decided to introduce a conditional form into the target text.

ST	TT
He keeps saying Mama and Gaga and crying and pointing [...].	Continua a dire Mama e Mato piangendo e indicando qualsiasi cosa [...].

Since *mama* and *gaga* are two words pronounced and mangled by a two or three-year-old child, two equivalent mangled words were needed in the Italian version too. For this reason I translated it into *mama* and *mato*, since *gaga* means "mad, insane". Moreover, I had to add *qualsiasi cosa* to the verb *indicando*, because unlike English, in Italian an object was required for this verb.

ST	TT
Them lads that are thrown in jail in the films are looking for that comfort back. There's something in it.	Quei tizi che vengono sbattuti in prigione nei film cercano di nuovo quella consolazione. C'è qualcosa sotto a questo comportamento.

In this case, I translated the typical Irish English trait *them lads* (see Introduction) into *quei tizi*, in order to maintain an equivalent informal register. Then, in the target translation I had to specify the object of the original form *there's something in it*. In particular that final *it* cannot be exactly translated into Italian, and translating it into *quello* would have been ambiguous for an Italian reader. That is why I decided to explain the whole meaning of the sentence, instead of translating it literally.

ST	TT
[...] just before I lamped him as hard as I could into the fucking bald old poll.	[...] appena prima che lo colpissi più forte che potevo, con una lampada, su quella sua fottuta vecchia

	testa pelata.
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In this case it is interesting to see how in English a noun such as *lamp* can be easily turned into a verb. As concerns the Italian language, it is not possible. For this reason, I had to change the structure of the sentence into *prima che lo colpissi più forte che potevo, con una lampada.*

ST	TT
Like the rough cross she had my cousin Coley carve from a limestone block.	Come la croce che aveva fatto intagliare rozzamente a mio cugino Coley da un blocco di roccia calcarea.

The adjective rough (which could be translated as *rozzo*, *grezzo*, *ruvido* etc. in Italian) is used to modify the noun cross; I decided to express the meaning by using the adverb *rozzamente*, as I deemed this to be a more effective translation than using an adjective in Italian, for example *croce rozza*.

ST	TT
I've always needed to be shocked into awareness.	Ho sempre avuto bisogno di sbattere addosso alla consapevolezza delle cose.

Here I had to turn a passive form into active, since in Italian the expression *sbattere addosso alla consapevolezza* is more common than *essere sbattuta addosso alla consapevolezza*. Moreover, unlike the original text, I had to specify *delle cose*, because otherwise the sentence would have been unfinished.

ST	TT
Bobby was silent, tall, red-faced in summer and ghost-white in winter.	Bobby era un tipo silenzioso, alto, con la faccia rossa d'estate e bianca come un fantasma d'inverno.

The two compound adjectives *red-faced* and *ghost-white* cannot be used in the

same structure in the target language. That is why I translated them into the prepositional phrase *con la faccia rossa d'estate*, since it is his own physical feature, *e bianca come un fantasma d'inverno*. Even if in the second case *ghost-white* probably refers to his whole body and not only to his face, I thought that this was the most effective way to translate this passage.

ST	TT
[...] the year the lads were robbed of the country championship.	[...] l'anno in cui ai ragazzi avevano rubato il podio del campionato nazionale.

In this passage I changed the verb from a passive into an active form, because the verb *rubare* cannot be used into a passive form in this context.

3.7. Other challenges

3.7.1 Ambiguity

ST	TT
I hurt him; I hurt myself.	L'avevo ferito. Avevo ferito me stesso.

In this passage I translated the verb *to hurt* into *ferire*. I chose a literal translation since here it was important to maintain the sense of hurting both in the physical and in the interior aspect. I think that the only way in order to keep this kind of double connotation in the target text also, was to translate it in this way. Moreover, I made a change in punctuation and I turned a semicolon into a full stop. I felt that in this case a longer pause was needed in the translated text.

ST	TT
It's always the subbies gets shafted for a finish.	Alla fine sono sempre quelli che lavorano in nero ad essere fregati.

The slang term *subbie* can both mean *submissive* or, in the construction industry, a

subcontractor. I think that here, the author wanted to give both meanings to this word, but in Italian it was not possible to maintain this duality. For this reason, since we are in the context of a construction industry, I translated it into *quelli che lavorano in nero*.

ST	TT
I just said oh love; oh love, what matters now? What matters only love?	Ho detto solo oh amore, amore mio, che c'è ora? Cosa conta se non l'amore?

This conclusive sentence clearly has a double meaning that cannot be exactly transposed into Italian. In particular, that *what matters only love?* can be interpreted as "what matters my only love?" or "nothing else matters but love". In the end, I interpreted it in the second way, because I think this was this was the best way to express the original meaning in the target text. According to Salama-Carr, the interpretive approach, or 'theory of sense', is based on "the distinction between linguistic meaning and non-verbal sense, where non-verbal sense [...] consists on three stages: interpretation of exegesis of discourse, de-verbalization, and reformulation" (2001: 112).

3.7.2 Repetition

ST	TT
What stamps? There wasn't a stamp paid in for any of us, nor a screed to the Revenue, either.	Quali marche? Neanche mezza ce ne hanno pagata, figuriamoci poi dover fare un reclamo all'Ufficio fiscale.

In this passage I did not repeat the term *marche*, leaving it implied. Then, I used the expression *neanche mezza ce ne hanno pagata* in order to maintain an equivalent colloquial register. Moreover, I adapted *either*, translating it into *figuriamoci poi*, because this Italian expression belongs to an informal register, and I wanted to maintain that colloquial way of writing.

ST	TT

<p>[...] Cordelia was the only one who really, truly loved him. [...] You're not perfect, but I love you.</p>	<p>[...] Cordelia era l'unica che lo amava veramente e sinceramente. [...] Non sei perfetto, ma ti voglio bene.</p>
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In this case, apart from the different construction that has to be changed from English into Italian, there is a problem of repetition. Unlike the Italian structure, in English repetitions may not sound as heavy. Thus, in the Italian version I decided not to repeat the same form twice, rather I used the verb *amare* in the first case, and *volere bene* in the second case.

ST	TT
<p>[...] he thought the world of her; he'd always loved her.</p>	<p>[...] aveva una profonda stima di lei; l'aveva sempre amata.</p>

In my translation, I preferred to use the form *aveva una profonda stima di lei* in order not to repeat the verb *amare*. I think that the main sense is here maintained too.

ST	TT
<p>Sometimes I sit and think for hours about things. And then I fall into a sort of reverie. After the reverie abates, I don't remember what I was thinking about before it.</p>	<p>A volte mi siedo e penso per ore intere alle cose e poi cado in una sorta di trance. Dopo che questa fantasticheria è svanita, non ricordo più a cosa stavo pensando prima.</p>

Apart from the change of punctuation, since I avoided the full stop in order to give a continuity to the sentence, here there is a problem of repetition. In the original English text it was normal to repeat the word *reverie* in the same line, but in the Italian version I preferred to translate it with the two synonyms *trance* and *fantasticheria*.

ST	TT
<p>I don't want to be calling Mammy or Daddy though because they might have a fight again over me being</p>	<p>Non voglio chiamare di nuovo mamma e papà perché potrebbero litigare ancora perché io ho paura e</p>

scared and Mammy might blame Daddy for me being scared.	la mamma potrebbe dire che è colpa di papà se ho paura.
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Here I decided to maintain a literal translation in repetitions too. As a matter of fact, will always use repetition also in Italian, and that is why I wanted to use this form in the target text too.

3.7.3 Child language

ST	TT
She told Daddy she has to work her fingers to the bone. I cried when I heard Mammy saying that. I thought all the skin was going to come off her fingers. I thought her fingers would fall off.	Ha detto a papà che deve lavorare consumandosi le dita fino all'osso. Ho pianto quando ha detto così. Ho pensato che le veniva via tutta la pelle dalla dita. Ho pensato che le cadevano le dita.

Here, I decided to maintain the idiomatic expression of the English version, since the protagonist of this chapter is a little child and in this case she is scared because she has understood that the English form *work her fingers to the bone* was something real, and not a metaphorical expression. Here we should have focused on what Eco (2013: 50) calls "manifestazione lineare" – the literal meaning --, and not on the general meaning of the sentence.

Then, I had to adapt the Italian text, using a simple kind of language, with mistakes too, in order to report the child language as in the original text. In particular, I used an *imperfetto* instead of a *congiuntivo*, since in Italy it is a very common mistake for children and it would sound strange if a child used this kind of form in her speech. As a matter of fact, I tried to use a very simple kind of language in the whole chapter, because here language was a fundamental element that makes the reader understand that the person who is speaking is a child.

ST	TT
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<p>Like that man in the village whose leg fell off and now he has a leg made out of metal and he does be drunk and falls on the footpath and people have to pick him up and Daddy tells me don't be looking at him, and one time we were coming home from Mass and we seen him falling over and Mammy said oh Hughie pull over and give him a hand and Daddy said he would in his bollocks, that fella was only a knacker and he could stay inside in the gutter.</p>	<p>Come a quell'uomo in paese a cui si è staccata una gamba e adesso ne ha una fatta di metallo e si ubriaca e cade sul marciapiede e la gente lo deve tirare su e papà mi dice non guardarlo, e una volta stavamo tornando a casa dalla messa e l'abbiamo visto cadere e la mamma ha detto oh Hughie accosta e dagli una mano e papà ha detto col cazzo, quel tipo era solo un coglione e dovrebbe stare nei bassifondi.</p>
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In this passage there is another case of child language. In particular, there is no full stop for several lines and little punctuation. This is a typical childish way of speaking and for this reason I decided to report it in the target text too. Then, there are mistakes in the English form which I reported into the Italian version. For instance I translated the sentence *and he does be drunk and falls on the footpath and people have to pick him up and Daddy tells me don't be looking at him*, in which there is no coherence of tenses, into: *e si ubriaca e cade sul marciapiede e la gente lo deve tirare su e papà mi dice non guardarlo*. I feel that in this way I also maintained a typical child's language in the Italian text.

ST	TT
<p>Maybe they'll have to know if everyone is still going around scared of the Children Snatcher Monster.</p>	<p>Forse dovranno sapere se qualcuno se ne va ancora in giro spaventato dal mostro ruba bambini.</p>

In this case I translated *the Children Snatcher Monster* into *il mostro ruba bambini* since it is a name that could be given to a monster by a child. As a matter of fact this *rubba* means *to snatch*, even if it would be better to use the verb *rapire*. Nevertheless, it would be unlikely for a little child to say "un mostro che rapisce i bambini". Moreover, *il mostro ruba bambini* seems to have a more playful acceptance

and, in my opinion, it can be considered as equivalent to the English form *Children Snatcher Monster*.

ST	TT
Then later on I was sitting up on Daddy's lap and I was after finishing my secret bottle that I'm still allowed have before I go down to bed even though Mammy says I'm way too big now to be sucking bottles like a baby [...].	Poi più tardi ero seduta in braccio a papà e stavo per finire la mia bottiglia segreta, che mi danno ancora il permesso di usare prima di andare a dormire anche se la mamma dice che sono un po' troppo grandicella adesso per succhiare biberon come un neonato [...].

In this passage I decided to conduct a literal translation of *secret bottle* into *bottiglia segreta*, and to use the word *biberon* in the second case, in order to explain what she means with *bottiglia segreta*. As a matter of fact, we have still to consider that an expression of child language is needed. Then I used *grandicella* because it is a typical word which a mother would have used to speak to her child, for this reason I adapted the original text into a more natural form for a target reader.

3.8. Features of Irish English: standard and non-standard language

In this section I would like to point out that I considered the choice not to translate a non-standard variety of Italian as inappropriate. What can be retained is the informal register of the characters, who speak to the reader directly through their narratives. Here I will present just a few of the many examples from the text that I have translated:

ST	TT
I never seen her.	Non l'ho mai vista.

In this passage there is the typical Irish English trait in which a Present Perfect is used without an auxiliary. Here, I have translated this sentence of the ST into a Standard Italian form, since an equivalent non-standard trait was not present in the target

language.

ST	TT
[...] I was after finishing my secret bottle, [...].	[...] stavo per finire la mia bottiglia segreta, [...].

In this case, in the ST there is the use of *after* with the meaning of 'to be busy with' or 'to be about to' (see Introduction to Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*). For this reason, I have translated the whole meaning, even if I have not maintained a non-standard trait into the TT.

ST	TT
I don't want to be calling Mammy and Daddy, though.	Però non voglio chiamare di nuovo mamma e papà.

In the original text, there is a typical Irish English structure, the use of the progressive infinitive. Here once again I decided to translate this part into Standard Italian, but I started the sentence with *però*, which may be considered as informal and perhaps even incorrect in Italian. In this context, the main purpose was to render the target text as if it were pronounced by a child, as this was the section narrated by the young girl, Millicent.

ST	TT
I wonder what sort of a yoke it is at all.	Chissà che roba pesante che è.

In this case, I tried to maintain a colloquial register in the Italian text too. In fact, the term *roba* instead of *cosa* belongs to an informal register and I feel that a non-standard register is maintained into the Italian form too. Moreover I added that *che è* in order to reinforce the Italian structure and to maintain an equivalent to the Irish English form *at all*.

Conclusions

To conclude, it is important to underline that in my thesis I focused on how to translate a contemporary novel containing non-standard language. In Donal Ryan's *The Spinning Heart*, there are many features of Irish English combined with a colloquial use of language. In fact, in order to translate this text into Italian, first of all it was necessary to understand the meaning of the text and in particular of the Irish English varieties in order to decide how to render them through the use of different devices. Secondly, the translation quality depends on the translator's subjective competences, since he or she can be considered as a co-author of the text. As a matter of fact, the translator can interpret a text and give his or her personal point of view in the target text. Moreover, the translator is the person who mediates between a source and a target text and for this reason, his or her role is to make communication possible between two languages and cultures. That is why a translator should be bilingual and bicultural: he or she should know both the source language and culture and that of the target reader. In order to find out how translators can approach this kind of contemporary novel, written in a colloquial and non-standard English, I have also analyzed the Italian translation of Roddy Doyle's *Paddy Clarke ha ha ha* by Laura Noulian in order to realize how she has translated examples of Irish English. I noticed that non-standard elements were generally translated into Standard Italian, although some regional flavour was at time added. However, I did not adopt this strategy in my own translation, as regional varieties of Italian have a very different sociolinguistic relevance from a variety of English spoken throughout a country, in this case Ireland. However, I kept the informal register of the source text and the frequent expletives related to religion.

The matter of equivalence has always been a very debated subject. Many scholars consider a free kind of translation as inadequate. That is why some of them prefer to translate a text literally in order to maintain equivalence from a linguistic and a cultural point of view. In fact, in maintaining literal equivalence, and in being faithful to the source text, the risk is to create a text that may be felt as not familiar in its language and culture from a target reader's point of view. This aspect can be seen in the cultural aim too: if a translation is source-text oriented, the translator should maintain cultural references that are familiar to a source reader, while the target reader perceives that the

text belongs to a foreign culture. In this case, the reader may not understand several elements of the translated text since he or she may not know enough about the target culture. Instead, through a free kind of translation, a target text can appear as a transposition of language and culture into another text. In this case, the translated text is still faithful to the original meaning, but it focuses on the target text. This kind of approach is called target-oriented because several elements are translated into their equivalent in the target text in order to make the translated text more readable and familiar for a target reader. Through this method of translation, the target reader may perceive the TT as an original, instead of a translated text.

In my thesis I preferred to use a target-oriented kind of translation, but at the same time I tried to capture the purpose of the original text and to arouse similar feelings in the target reader. In translating *The Spinning Heart*, the main aim of the author was to let the characters enter into the reader's head. For this reason, translating it into a formal Italian would have been inappropriate, since the target reader may not have understood a fundamental element of the original text. In fact, in this way the translation would have lost its effectiveness. The equivalence of meaning is an element that should always be taken into account in translating a text. In fact, if a text is target-oriented, a free kind of translation is adopted, but a correspondence of meaning is required. Since one word of the source language can often correspond to more than a single word into the target language, the role of the translator is to understand what the author wanted to express in order to report the same meaning into the target text. As a matter of fact, in my translation I tried to maintain the main purpose of the original, and to create a text that can be considered as faithful in meaning, register and cultural references.

Another important point that should be taken into account is that, in order to translate one text into another, it is necessary to consider the original text as a whole. In fact, even if I translated only six chapters of Donal Ryan's novel, I read the whole book in order to understand how to translate the chapters that I have chosen. In particular, I realized that each character was interwoven with the others and that each one of them had his or her own personality. This was another important feature of the original text that had to be maintained in the target text. Furthermore, as concerns literary texts, a richness of vocabulary and ambiguity are present and several elements are often difficult to express in the target language. Among literary texts, there are different

genres and it is important to understand the function and the purpose of the text too. For this reason, depending on the kind of literary text that has to be considered, a translator should also take into account several elements. That is why in the third chapter of my thesis I have analyzed my translation, taking into account several aspects of culture, source or target text orientation, the translation of idiomatic expressions, equivalence, linguistic differences between ST and TT, the translation of features of Irish English and other challenges. In this way I have demonstrated how to apply methods of translation from theory into practice. In particular I have stressed the challenges of adaptation in a cultural perspective, since the role of the translator is to mediate between two cultures, using different codes. Furthermore, it was important to focus on the maintenance of the original purpose of the author in the target text and this could also be seen in the use of informal language in the target text.

In conclusion, in writing this thesis I have realized that a translator's role is not yet perfectly defined. In fact, many theories and methods have been taken into account, but actually every translator may choose which method to adopt and how to render a ST in another language. The translator's role depends on the subjectiveness of the translator and also on the text that he or she is required to translate. This indefinite role can be a way to give more importance to every single translator, since every interpretation of a text is subjective.

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