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Refugee Boy: Reflections on the Translation into Italian of a Novel for Young Adults

Relatrice
Prof.ssa Fiona Claire Dalziel

Correlatrice
Prof.ssa Maria Teresa Musacchio

Laureanda
Anna Rossi
n° matr.1144322 / LMLCC

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Table of contents

Introduction

Young adult literature has become a very popular genre in Italy in the last twenty years thanks to the success of the *Harry Potter* saga, which taught the world that also writing for children can also be read by adults because, according to Nodelman (2008), "its distinctively inclusive representation of the genre if children's literature as a whole gives it the complexity that theoretically distinguishes adult texts from ones written for children" (Nodelman, 2008: 339). Indeed, writing, and even more, translating for children is not so easy and sometimes, as pointed out by Nodelman (2008) this genre can also be addressed to adults thanks to certain features of the text.

The novel that will be discussed in this study belongs to this category, that is to say, it is a children's and young adults' book that is addressed implicitly to adults as well. Although the author of the book, Benjamin Zephaniah, a well known writer in the UK, usually writes novels for children, as well as poetry and pieces dedicated to childhood, he also wants to reach a wider audience and, touch adults as well. This implies that the book that I will analyse will have particular features aimed at being suitable for both; however, this also implies that its genre will be hard to define. As a consequence, this will have several implication when it will be translated into another language.

That is why I decided to analyse this in my work: it will focus on my personal translation into Italian of parts of an original English novel called *Refugee Boy* (Zephaniah, 2001). I chose this novel because this was an untranslated and interesting novel not onlybecause of the topics dealt with in the story but also for the linguistic and cultural problems that it presented from a translation point of view. For this reason, I not only analysed some of the parts of the book that I thought represented a translation challenge, but I also decided to propose my translation of two chapters that I thought condensed some of the main relevant features of the book.

The process was complex due to both the intrinsic features of the text and differences in the source and target culture. First of all, some challenges were posed by the genre itself, as hinted at above, since the context and the intended audience are some of the first things to look at if a translator wants to respect the original work: the lack of a precise audience for this book creates uncertainty and doubts in the translator who has

to take into account the possible age range of the intended audience, from an average of 10- year- old children to adults ones. Translating for children is not easy and it is even more so if the age of the intended audience is not so specific.

In the first chapter I will introduce some of the main debates about translation theories that have characterised the last decades in Europe, many of which are still valid today. All those theories will be the premises for the translation itself in Chapter Two and the analysis in Chapter Three of this thesis. This works presents only what I decided was the best alternative for this specific text, according to the theories and the reasoning that I will include in the analysis.

Amongst other topics, the novel deals with migration, an issue that now involves all Europe today: it focuses on the themes of refugees and human solidarity. From this point of view, the book is a very modern one: even though it was written almost twenty years ago, the author could catch the sensibility towards refugees that was already being perceived in the UK and that is present still today in many countries, including Italy.

Furthermore, in this translation analysis, apart from the formal differences between English and Italian,I will discuss how I dealt with the translation of cultura referencesl and specific challenges that I faced. As will be explained later, the text presented many cultural issues that depended on the different cultural background of the two languages involved. For instance problems of politically correct language and cultural distance.

In addition, I had to find strategies to deal with the connotation and use of some words considered to be negative, especially in a book addressed to children. These are only some of the issues that will be dealt with in this work and that will be described in greater detail later.

For all the reasons listed above, this book was the a good choice for a personal analysis focusing on the main cultural aspects that a translator can face when working with a book with such features. Indeed, this book presented some specific cultural challenges; many of them will be explained in their complexity in the analysis and I will also discuss how I dealt with them.

Chapter 1 – Translation Issues

This first chapter aims to be a short introduction to the different approaches that scholars have adopted towards the analysis of the process of translation, especially those that deal with cultural issues in translation. It will briefly talk about some of the most important translation theories that have fuelled the debate among different scholars about how translators should work when facing a text. It will then focus on the explanation of the features of the novel that will be translated in this thesis, focusing on the type of book and the strategies adopted to proceed with the translation of such a genre.

The first step to make when facing text is to read it form a "translators' point of view" (Newmark, 1988: 11). It may seem obvious but it is necessary in order to have a clear idea of what the text is about and what type of text it is. The aim is to reproduce a text that has the same features and effects as the original one (Newmark,1981: 10). Thus, it is useful to analyse the source text first, from every point of view.

1.1 Translation Theories

Before moving on to the book in question, it is important to have in mind the studies that have previously discussed translation and especially those that will lead the translation preliminary process, These present the concept of equivalence in translation stated by the pioneers Jakobson (1959) and Nida (1964) as well as these of foreignisation and domestication elaborated by Venuti (1995), since those are some of the main procedures that translators should keep in mind in his or her translation in order to produce a coherent and effective text.

1.1.1 Translation Strategies: Eequivalence

First of all, as mentioned before, it is necessary to provide an outline of the translation theories about the concept of equivalence. Among the first scholars that theorised the concept of equivalence in translation there is Jakobson (1959: 233) who claimed that there are cases where there is no equivalence at the "code-unit level" but rather in the message. He takes as example the word "cheese" that has different connotations both in

English and Russian, stating that "no full equivalence" is reachable at an interlingual translation level, which is the term used by the scholar to identify "proper translation" (Jakobson, 1959: 233). On the other hand, while working on the translation of the Bible, Nida (1964) elaborated the concept of equivalence in a linguistic interpretation. According to Nida (1969) the translating process is divided into three main phases: the analysis, transfer and restructuring. The first one stands for an analysis of the structures of the language that will be transformed in the second phase in the translator's mind and then synthesised in the original message third one. However, in the description of the process Nida does not take into account the context through which the message depends and the role of the translator. In order to mediate between the two limitations, the scholar defined two definitions of equivalence "formal" and "dynamic". The former works on the form, grammar and vocabulary of the texts, especially the message, whereas the latter focuses on the message and content that the audience receives. For Nida (1964) the most important thing to achieve in a translation is the same effect on the audience as with the source text.

Another scholar that studied equivalence from a linguistic point of view, was Catford (1995) who defines translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)" (Catford, 1995: 20), underlining the fact that translation is an activity that takes place mainly in a textual level but not all the original text

The equivalence is due thanks to those items that are interchangeable in a given situation, especially he distinguishes between equivalence at level shift and category shift. The first one is defined as the shift from one linguistic level to other grammatical, or graphological or phonologic level. The second one, implies a category shift where all the levels of the source text are replaced by some other equivalent form in the target text. Furthermore, the first is defined as a simple a textual equivalence between textual parts of the two texts, whereas the second is a formal correspondent or category that occupies "the 'same' place in the 'economy' of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL" (Catford, 1995: 27). As it was previously distinguished by Saussure (1971), Catford based his theory on the distinction between langue and parole, where the former corresponds to the formal correspondence and the latter to the textual one.

Furthermore, Koller (1995), took as example the works of his former colleague Catford and he tried to identify all the factors that can interfere with the result of equivalence, classifying it in different frameworks: "denotative equivalence" which has the "real word" as a referent; "connotative equivalence", that is to say the associations evoked by a particular term, which may depend, for example, on cultural or social factors; "text-normative equivalence", which identifies textual differences in cultures; "pragmatic equivalence", which takes into account the recipients of the translation; and finally "formal-aesthetic equivalence", which works on the maintenance of the aesthetic, formal features of the original text. The previously cited scholars made part of the source-oriented approach to equivalence, that is to say, the scholars that mainly focused on linguistic aspects of the texts.

The second major approach to equivalence is represented by Toury (1995), and it is more target oriented, in the sense that the target text and its cultural context are more important than the analysis of the source text. According to Toury (1995), one should study the translation from an empirical approach, that is to say the datas represented in the translation. It is the translator itself that produces the "norms" that will be leading the translation process, as a consequence, those "norms" may vary through space and time, according to the social context to which the target text is addressed.

While the two main sides of equivalence approaches are still valid, more other scholars tried to give their definition of equivalence. For instance, House (2013: 7) defines equivalence, by saying that when one describes two texts as equivalent, one refers to a target text that is semantically and pragmatically equivalent to the source text, in other words, the target text has the same function as the original one. House (1981: 194) developed this concept of functional equivalence by stating that it is only through a covert translation that it is possible to achieve this functional equivalence, whereas in an overt translation this is not possible due to the social and cultural distance. Overt and covert translation derive from the application of an empirical approach to the functional equivalence theory. The first one is a proper translation based on the equivalence theory, which aims at keeping the original socio-cultural frame "as intact as possible" (House, 2013: 36). On the other hand, the latter is a translation that "enjoys the status of an original text in the receiving lingua- culture" (House, 2010: 245), in other words, the

translator " is to act as though it were not a translation" (House, 2013: 37), for example the translation of advertisements.

Despite all the different theories that have been proposed, Pym (2014), agreeing with Toury (1980) who thinks that every equivalence is present in every translation because of their definition, believes that the concept of equivalence is mostly bound to the history of translation (Pym, 1992a/ 2010 cited in Pym, 2014: 37). Thus, he states that equivalence is not always possible, or rather, "is an illusion" (Pym, 2014: 37). He argues that many scholars elaborated binary definitions of equivalence whereas the ways to approach a translation are more than two. Furthermore, how far can these definitions of equivalence go in defining a translation (Pym, 2014, 33) ? This is the case because scholars appear to be saying that equivalence defines an "illusion of symmetry between languages, which hardly exists beyond the level of vague approximations and which distort the basic problem of translation" (Snell-Hornby, 2016: 22).

House (2013: 31) has not such a negative view and thinks that total equivalence is achieved in particular cases. She thinks it not only depends on the content but also to the different approaches to translation that one decides to adopt. Furthermore, Baker (1992: 21), who proposes a detailed definition of equivalence at different levels, tried to classify some cases in which there is no correspondence between the languages involved in the translation. She divided the problems into several sections depending on the type of non- equivalence. These are the cases in which the problem of non-equivalence is due to a culture specific cultural concept that does not exist in the target culture, for example a type of food or a political role in the government and so on, or when the word cannot be translated because the concept is not lexicalized or it is semantically complex in the target language. Sometimes it may also happen that there is no equivalence because the target and source language make different distinctions in meaning or have different perceptions of some words Baker (1992) gives the example of an Indonesian word describing the distinction between going out in the rain and knowing that it is raining and going out in the rain ignoring that it is raining. It is clear that very few languages have such distinction. Finally, if the source text has several loan words it may be difficult to translate them into a target language in which loan words may be a sign of non-understanding of the culture.

A list of the main problems in translation is also useful because as Newmark (1988: 6) points out "the translator cannot afford the luxury of saying that something cannot be translated". Thus it is important to recognise the cases in which a translation gives rise to the most controversial solutions. Indeed, those listed above are problems that every translator faces, and when equivalence is seemingly not possible, the solution proposed by Jakobson, is working at another level of translation, adopting other strategies for example the solutions previously elaborated by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) in order to solve an apparently non-equivalent translation. For example, they claim that a translator may look for a modulation, operating a discursive convention change, a transposition switching grammatical categories, they can opt for a loan, a calque or even a literal translation preferably between cognate friends, but keeping in mind that there is also the possibility of using a "false friend". Finally, if translators want to work on a level of culture, then they will be careful about possible adaptation. Those listed below are part of the two general translation strategies identified by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995/2004: 128–37): the direct translation, consisting in borrowing; calque and literal translation; oblique translation, in which there is modulation, transposition, and adaptation and equivalence, intended as the description of the same situation through different stylistic and semantic meanings, particularly useful in translation idioms and proverbs. These strategies will be also dealt later in the chapter of the translation's analysis.

It is also for this reason that Newmark (1982) prefers not to talk about equivalence, but rather about different types of translation. He defines two types of translation: semantic and communicative. The former has a "source oriented bias" that is intended to render the "exact contextual meaning" of the original (Newmark, 1982: 37) while the latter is defined by the scholar as "target language bias" (Newmark, 1982: 37) and it tries to reproduce for the reader the same effect as the source text.

In conclusion, Kenny (2009: 96) highlights the strict tie between equivalence and translation, stating that "equivalence is supposed to define translation, and translation, in turn, defines equivalence". However, since the latter is a central theme in translation, the fact that there is not agreement on its definition means that there is still more to know on how a translation works and what can be defined from a qualitative point of view (House, 2013: 42).

1.1.2 Translation Strategies: Domestication and Foreignisation

Although equivalence is considered one of the most difficult aims in translation and the most important one, it is not the only factor to keep in mind when translating a text. The orientation of the translator towards the text is relevant in order to decide what strategy is more suitable to use for the text. The two main literary translation techniques are those elaborated by Schleiermacher in a lecture " On the different methods of translating" in 1813 (1813/ in Venuti, 2012) and Nida (1964) and further analysed by Venuti (1995).

Schleiermacher (1813/ in Venuti, 2012) proposed that German translated texts should leave the writer alone as much as possible and thus the work of the translator moved the reader towards the writer so that then reader will be aware that he or she was perceiving the same as the original intended audience. On the other hand, the Bible translator Nida (1964) wanted to gain the most "naturalness of expression", while he was working so as to decode all the meanings of the holy text and thus he tended to "domesticate" the text.

Those two tendencies adopted either by Schleiermacher and Nida, the former deciding to focus his work moving towards the original author and the second deciding to focus the comprehension of the target culture, showed the first basis for further studies about foreignisation and domestication respectively. As Lefevere (1977) synthesised, translators can choose what to emphasise: "either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Lefevere 1977: 74). In the first case, Lefevere is referring to a foreignisation, whereas in the second case he introduced domestication. Both two methods can even be measured, as studied by Vinay and Darbelnet (1957) who stated that the level of domestication d foreignisation be "measured" by classifying the range of "shifts" (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1957), also called "strategies" (Baker, 1992) that translators use in the text. Domestication is accompanied by the translator's invisibility, criticised by Venuti (1995) because this "contemporary activity" makes the text transparent by eliminating any peculiar stylistic or linguistic peculiarities. Moreover, the global domination and use of English in every aspect of life is preventing English audiences from the choice of having an "alien

reading experience" (Venuti, 1995: 20). Venuti (1995) disagrees with the pure domestication because if a text is completely domesticated, the target culture will perceive itself as dominant. The scholar takes global English as an example:

> Foreignizing translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation, it is highly desirable today, a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs, pitched against the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others. Foreignizing translation in English can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations.

Venuti's foreignisation has been also criticised for being too general in its definition (Baker, 2010) and too optimistic because "any translation procedure can become a tool of cultural colonization, even foreignizing translation" (Tymoczko 2000: 35). Thus, a mediation between the two can be a good compromise when working on a translation, but everything depends on how the translator decides to treat the text, how to treat the readers and how to approach the translation. However, Venuti (2008) also adds that the two theories must not be conceived separately, but rather on a continuum detecting "ethical attitudes towards a foreign text and culture, ethical effects produced by the choice of a text for translation and by the strategy devised to translate it" (Venuti, 2008: 19).

In conclusion, the above shows why it is often so difficult to follow one precise strategy in translation, instead translators have to adapt their work to their needs at the moment and the perception of the text in the target culture. All in all, it is important to keep in mind what will be perceived by the target audience.

1.1.3 Translation Strategies: Translation Universals

In recent years, some scholars detected that there are some common features that make a translated text different and more recognisable from an original text of the same type: the so called "universals" (Baker, 1993). The first research in translation universals defines them as follow: "features which typically occur in translated texts rather than original utterances and which are not the result of interference from specific language systems" (Baker, 1993: 243). Baker (1993) claimed that there are several recognisable

features that repeat in a translation and they can help distinguishing translated texts from original ones. In her preliminary research, she suggested that it could be useful for a linguistic research in translation to analyse a corpus of translated texts and untranslated one. The result was a collection of common features that recurred only in translated texts but were not present in untranslated ones. She noticed, for example, that, in the corpus she analysed, translators made large use of explicitation or simplification of the original parts, deletion of repetitions or even exaggeration of features of the translated text. She named them translation universals and today the research to reach a complete information about them is present and alive more than ever.

However, she was not the first one to sustain this thesis. The first scholars that thought of a research that could look for common features were Toury (1980), who called them "laws" (Toury,2004: 29) rather than "universals" and Chesterman (2000), who looked for a more scientific approach to translation studies. The study of the phenomenon is used in translation especially to investigate on languages and their translation. Researchers tend to divide them into S-universals and T- universals, depending respectively on the relation that there is between the source text and the translated one – called relation of equivalence- or the relation between translated text and other similar non- translated texts – called relation of textual fit (Chesterman, 2004: 7). The potential S- universals are lengthening, laws of interference, standardisation, dialect normalization, reduction of complex narrative voices, explicitation, retranslation hypothesis and reduction of repetitions, whereas the potential T universals are simplification, conventionalization, untypical lexical patterning and under representation of TL specific items (Chesterman, 2004 :39-40).

In spite of that, some scholars diverge with all the research about them, because they believe that the notion of "universal" is simply impossible in translation for the impossibility of gathering and analysing all the material that has been written in the history of translation. As a result, those results may be more culture- bound in present times, instead of universals (Tymoczko, 1988). House (2008) as well disagrees with the research of translation universals because she is convinced that they cannot be defined as universals in translation, but rather as "universals of language also applying in translation" (House, 2008: 11), a conception that limits the definition of the scholars

studying them. Furthermore, she claims that the definition of the repeated features is far too general and it is necessary to have a clear description of them before they are used (House, 2008: 11).

Finally, the controversial definition of universals is quite recent and maybe because of that, scholars need to look for a explicit implication for them in translation studies, and many doubts need to be solved. For this reason the analysis of translation universals is constantly updating and implementing in the research.

1.1.4 Translation strategies: Translation and Culture

While working on a text, another important question that the translator needs to ask is whether the future text will be accepted and understood by the target culture. Working with languages also means working with different cultures, and for this reason translators cannot work without taking into account that culture is another important issue that could influence their target text. However, it has not always been like this in translation studies. In fact, it is only in the last few decades that Snell-Hornby (2006) identified a shift in translation, which from a linguistic approach, towards a "relative, but fruitful position among the plurality of languages and cultures in the globalised world of today with its need for international and intercultural dialogue" (Snell-Hornby, 2006: 164), that is to say, translation studies moved towards a more cultural approach instead of being only linguistic and formal.

The interconnection of languages, globalisation and the predominance of English made scholars reflect on the link that can be found between language and culture in translation. "Passive multilingualism" defined by Finkerstaedt and Schröder (1992) may well be the key, not only to transcultural communication among the countries in Europe, but also to a more diversified and more accurate scholarly debate in the discipline of translation studies worldwide (Snell-Hornby, 2006: 174). Translation is, thus, defined not only as a process involving different languages but also as a "communication across cultures" (Snell-Hornby, 2006: 166). Furthermore, Katan (1992) explains how now the role of the translator or interpreter should shift more towards a cultural approach to the text; they are, thus, requested to go further in the translation and gain the role of

"cultural mediator" (Katan, 1992: 16), and they should do "more than just translate" (Pym, 2000 cited in Katan, 1992: 16).

When considering translation one cannot exclude the concept of culture, which has been commented on and defined by almost every field of study. But as House (2013: 36) points out, "it may be advisable to look at culture as a diversified entity that is dynamic, fluid and hybrid with cultural borders being increasingly difficult to determine in a globalised world", mentioning again a connection not only between language and culture but also with what is happening today: globalization. This factor has major consequences because due to the fact that English has now become a *lingua franca,* the demand for translation has increased exponentially. As a result, the language is not just used by its native speakers but also to many non-English cultures, creating their own English variant. Nowadays we are witnessing the co presence of many *Englishes* (Santipolo, 2006) and since the language is a material that is constantly changing, this progression may also complicate the translators' work. Take for example the co presence of different varieties in the single city of London, such as the so called multicultural London English, a variety of English mainly based on phonological differences, that has been studied by Kerswill (2009). The presence of many different communities from different classes implied a different "stratification" (Kerswill, 2009: 358) of language, and this happens in the societies every day, not just in London. Thomason (2001: 10) analysed how the contact between languages changed and shaped them, not only from a linguistic point of view, but also phonological and syntactical and so on. There are some cases, accompanied by specific constraints, in which the "shift-induced interference" (Thomason, 2001) happens and the minority group can shape changes by using forms resulting from their interlanguage variety of the target language. As a result, translators should always be updated on how language develops in its social contexts because languages are as alive as the world that constantly changes.

As far as culture is concerned, Newmark states that translation not only is merely a transmission of language but it "has been instrumental in transmitting culture" (Newmark, 1988: 8). If a translation is to be considered "acceptable" for the audience, then, it needs to be both grammatically and culturally correct, as Zlateva (1990: 30) points out. In order to do so, the translator needs not only to have a good knowledge of

the language, but also of the set of cultural norms of the target culture. As a result, when talking about language and translation one cannot forget to take into account culture (House: 2013: 12). The latter has been widely discussed and identified in many scholars' works. Each spoken language identifies a culture, as highlighted by Kramsch (1998: 65), as "a natural connection between the language spoken by the members of a social group and that group's identity".

 Furthermore, the role of the translator is compared to that of the mediator or cultural interpreter in Katan (2004) who also quotes the definition given by Hatim and Mason "the translator is first and foremost a mediator between two parties for whom mutual communication might otherwise be problematic" (Hatim and Mason, 1990: 223-224). House (2013: 8) underlines the fact that a text has to be interpreted before being translated, in order to achieve equivalence. This is very true for both those cultures that share the same cultural background such as Nederland and Belgian, and most of all for those who are considered not culturally bounded, for instance, Korean and French. Hatim and Mason (1990) go on to explain that the translator can be considered as the "privileged reader" of a text that is in between two cultures. His or her main task is to help the readers understand the text as if they were reading the original because, as Zlateva says, "the language of a translation is good when and only when the translator has managed adequately to render the original's overall content, both aesthetic and conceptual" (Zlateva, 1990: 34). Moreover, may other scholars state that translators should be bi-cultural (Vermeer, 1978) and a cross-cultural specialists (Snell-Hornby, 1992), but most of all, extremely aware of "their own cultural identity" (Katan, 2004: 21).

As regards, Venuti (2013: 34) states that even before a text is translated there are differences in content and reception, that is to say the differences that exist among languages and cultures. This is why the translator needs to know both the source and target language as well as culture in order to "mediate" that disparity. However, it is not always possible to achieve a correct translation from a cultural point of view. There are for example puns, idioms and so on that need a deep knowledge of both the target and source language. What is more, as House (2013) points out, when translating it is also important to pay attention to the "context of situation" (House, 2013: 13) that is to say,

a reflection on the text, for example who wrote it, in which period of time and why and most importantly who is now reading it and why.

According to Bassnett (2002: 27), who agrees with House (2013), it is important to bear in mind the function and value of the objects in their cultural context, or rather, how they are perceived in their context. This is also linked to the concept of political correctness which will be dealt later in this chapter. As Bassnett (2002: 29) explains, translators need to take "the question of interpretation" into account. In the book *Refugee Boy* there are several examples of cultural bound information. The most banal could be the translation of the phrase "meat -and-two-veg dish", which is not only a linguistic problem, but also culturally bound because it is a term used in Great Britain to describe their food tradition. Furthermore, in the book there is a section that will lead the main character to attend a trial in the UK. Not only there is the problem of two different legal systems in the UK and Italy, but also the distinction that should be made when talking about "attorney" or "lawyer" because in English two words are needed in order to define those two types of jobs, but in Italy there is not such a distinction.

Thus, not only does the professional have to produce a grammatically and semantically correct translation, but also one which is culturally correct. This of course includes a deep knowledge of the target language and especially of those topics that are considered as morally or religiously wrong in that society and thus produce also some sort of deletion or avoidance of certain topics considered off limits. As remarked by Bassnett (2002: 6), the process of translation implies some negotiation. There is also another risk while translating: "The main problem that affects translation is also the loss of meaning" (Newmark, 1981: 7), or more specifically, the "inevitable loss of textually and culturally relevant features" (Hervey et al, 2000: 19). Thus the main concern of a translator should not be the loss itself but the reduction of the problem, since it is almost inevitable even with a single word. Hervey et al (2000) suggest continuing to question the text, deciding which feature should be keep in the translation and deciding what to sacrifice in the process, always bearing in mind the main features of the text (Hervey et al, 2000: 21). Yet, disagreement on the definition of both the process and its product has given rise to continual theorizing (Newmark, 1991: 38).

In conclusion, the issue of culture is clearly extremely complicated than that, and every new text presents a new challenge. Research continues because, as Pym (2000: 190) points out, in future a translator will need to do more than just translate, but also he or she will have to guarantee an effective intercultural mediation.

1.2 The Translation of Children's Literature: The Genre

Due to the specific features of the target audience for this type of book, children's literature is a genre that requires understanding so as to translate it in such a way that its original characteristics are maintained (Tabbert, 2006: 101). Even though this field still needs more study, the following sections will try to gather the main features that are useful for the classification of the book that has been translated for this study.

Refugee boy (2001) by Benjamin Zephaniah tells the story of a 14-year-old boy, Alem, and the problems he has to face when he is left alone by his father in London, UK in order to escape from the war that has broke in his home country. This is considered young adult fiction, maybe addressed to 10 to 14 year- old children, the same age as the main character, but, as will be mentioned later in this chapter, the book has some features that could place it in between children's and adult's literature.

To begin with, it should be noticed that there is not one single definition of young adult literature, due partly to the same difficulty in defining childhood (Grenby, 2008). It has only recently been considered as a "destination literature, rather than an in-between phenomenon" that occupies the transition period between childhood and the "serious work of studying capital L literature" (Coats, 2011: 317). What distinguishes the former type of literature from the latter is the audience addressed in those texts, as Nodelman (2008: 3) points out. The literary genre for "young adults" stands between the children's literature and adult narrative. However, it is often generally connected to the definition of children's literature, including an age range that varies from children "as young as 10 and (arguably) as old as 35" (Cart, 2004: 734), but this definition has changed over the years, as Hill (2016: 3) discusses. Furthermore, others even call it "junior literature", defining its target readers as children from 7 to 11 years old (Cross, 2011: 1). All these opinions show that it is hard to provide a definition for the genre. In fact, critics in this field are still discussing who the actual readers of those books are (Hill, 2016: 5):

"adolescents are not the only ones reading YA fiction on a regular basis". This lack of a definition may also generate some problematic questions as to what is a "good" or "bad" book for children.

Even though critics may include under the definition of children's literature also that addressed to young adults, one could argue that a distinction should be made for translation purposes. However, Briggs et al (2008) talk about popular children's literature when mentioning both the author of the Harry Potter series and Jane Eyre, even though the two have different features and intended audience. If a distinction is made on the basis of the "certain qualities of the text themselves" as Grenby et al (2013: 6) suggest, then *Refugee boy* could still be placed in the young adult category, because of the presence of a main character on his adolescent age, even though, from the point of view of the topic there are several details that might also suit an adult audience, for instance legal issues and migration. However, the most important thing to consider is that everything is narrated from Alem's point of view, that is to say that of the teenage main character, and everything is filtered through his words and thoughts.

In general, scholars have identified some common qualities to distinguish children's literature from other genres. For example, they gather together all those books that have mainly a didactic and moral function in that group (see, for example, Müller, 2011). Moreover, some other generic features include the use of pictures in order to explain the story (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2011), the text being quite simple, even with repetitions and intended to be read out loud (Nobile, 2015: 34). Books for children usually have a main character that embodies good qualities (see Picherle, 2005: 30). These are just some of the main features that make people recognize a children's book when they see it, but it is evident that not all of those may be found in this genre. Moreover, although this is literature intended for children and also read by them, adults play an important role in the process. They not only decide what to translate (the editor) but also what to read to children (parents) (Hunt, 2005: 11). On the other hand, young adult books have a different selection process, since, as Nodelman notices, they are chosen by a taste-independent adolescent (Nodelman, 2008: 5).

However, as has been previously pointed out, *Refugee Boy* is far from having all the main features that are associated with children's literature. Maybe, due to the use that the author makes of quite simple language in the text, even when it is time to explain complex matters, it can be argued that it is very similar to them. However, its shape, its format, its topics, suggest that this is a more complex book, one that is intended for also an older audience. This is the trait that Alvstad calls "the dual readership" (alvstad, 2010: 24) that is to say the feature of a children's books to be addressed not only to children but also adults. It is for these reasons and because of the clash between standard children's literature features and this novel's ones that I would not categorize *Refugee Boy* just in the wide category of children's books, but rather in that of books for young adults / adults. Grenby et al (2013: 22) would perhaps also call it a "transition book".

All in all, the importance of this preliminary analysis is revealed when it is time to translate such books since it is important that translators detect who its intended audience is and what it is its main aim in the source culture in order to produce a similar text that has those original features. Furthermore, when addressing to an audience all the features of the book change. Not only in their content but also in the formal features, for example the fact t that in book stores are found in special and dedicated sections for young readers (Grenby et al, 2013: 21). Merletti, (1999: 15) though, points out that there is no book that suits every child. It is important then to identify the correct age of the target audience, especially at a young age, in order to have a quality product. This is the same process that translators regularly need to follow: they need to be aware of the characteristics of the target audience in order to produce a suitable and effective translation, since for every stage different features are required.

As a consequence, if when considering the audience, one does not have a clear idea of who the book is addressed to, then translators may also think about the aim of the book. In fact, translators should not limit themselves to reproducing the language but also to aim at the same purpose that the author thought for the book. As will be explored later in this chapter, the author of the book wanted to write a book to inform people about the treatment that refugees in Britain are forced to undergo in order to obtain their asylum application and to do so he decided to make the book as clear as possible to every type

of audience, from children to adults. As a result, even though this book deals with relevant matters, it still keeps its language plain and understandable to everyone. This implies that translators respect this decision and try to imitate the original intentions of the author. It is also for this reason that this book cannot be classified in any children's book category but rather a book that embraces a wider range of audience. As it may be predictable, this implies more difficulties when dealing with the translation because not only does translator need to be careful with a correct translation of the parts but also to be aware of all the consequences explained before about the inclusion of the younger audience.

In conclusion, not only grammatical and semantic correctness are required but also the coherence with the genre. The specific identification of this latter is quite difficult for the book that will be translated in this work, for this reason it will arise some problems that will be dealt later in the following chapter.

1.2.1 The Translation of Young Adult Literature in Italy

In 2000, the year before *Refugee Boy* was published in the UK, 20. 1% of the total of young adult and adult books published in Italy were books that were originally written in English and then translated into Italian[1]. However, according to the ISTAT report[2] about the production and reading of books in Italy, the figures for translated young adults books are diminishing now. Even though the total amount of translated texts reaches a very high result- 43% of total book-, only one quarter of the books were originally written in English. However, it is clear that in Italy almost the majority of the young adult literary market is still based on translated books and it often becomes evident for the audience that they are reading a translation.

As mentioned above, it is important to identify who a translation is addressed to in order to produce an effective translation, and here it is when translation theories are narrowed down to suit the characteristics of the texts in this field. First of all the translator should decide how to translate when choosing if move the reader or the writer towards the

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[1] The figures are taken from the *Letteratura Per Ragazzi In Italia, Rapporto Annuale 2000*, Comune Di Verbania: Il Battello A Vapore, Casale Monferrato: Piemme Ed., p.90

[2] The figure is taken from "Rapporto ISTAT Sulla Produzione E Lettura Dei Libri In Italia, anno 2017", dated 27/12/2018, released online in the istat website www.istat.it, last accessed June 8th.

author. As Lathey (2017) points out, in recent years, publishers in the UK prefer that the translator's presence is kept evident in the translated text, that is to say, to "make translators visible, so that the inclusion of information on translators' blurbs, prefaces and postscripts has become a marketing strategy to draw children's attention to the translation process, or indeed to that very fact that they are reading a translation" (Lathey, 2017: 239).

In Italy this does not always appear to be the case. Taking for example names in young adult books. Taylor (1998) reminds us that in the past proper names tended all to be translated, take for example the names of famous historical characters such as philosophers – Descartes that becomes Cartesio in Italian- or kings – king John Lackland becomes Giovanni Senzaterra or Giovanni Plantageneto in Italian. However, when it comes to literary translation, especially in children's literature, it is possible that "if the name carries another kind of meaning, this is when the translator's imaginative faculties are truly tested. Self explanatory names such as Bluebeard / Barbablù and even Cappuccetto Rosso / Little Red Riding Hood are easily dealt with." (Taylor, 1998: 31) see also for example in the Harry Potter's books, all names have been adapted to the Italian translation because they were names that carried a semantic content or expressed a trait that was associated to the character and the story. For instance, the name of "Argus Flick" becomes *Argus Gazza*, in order to keep the sense of a man that is used to steal as quick as a flick, or also the "Daily Prophet" that becomes *Gazzetta del Profeta* because the term G*azzetta* refers to one of the most famous newspapers in Italy.

On the other hand, Delabastita (1996b: 169) justifies the fact that some translators decide to keep the British or American names on purpose because, following Venuti's (1995) concept of foreignisation, they want the text to seem like a translation, like a foreign book and thus they want that text to look like a British or American product to the audience. However, translators may prefer to translate or adapt everything, domesticating the translation in order to make it seem close to the audience.

Adaptation is one of the strategies suggested by scholars that studied the problems of the transmission of the concepts between the two cultures involved in translation (see for example Nida and Taber (1964), Vinay and Darnelet (1958), Venuti (1995)). Some

of these problems might involve for example organizations, customs, activities, procedures or concepts, material and social culture (Newmark, 1988) or environment, behaviour, values, beliefs, identity and so on (Katan, 1992). When facing those obstacles, the translator can choose to deal with them by using one of the solutions proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) when talking about the strategies of direct and oblique translation because "it is based on either (i) parallel categories, in which case we can speak of structural parallelism, or (ii) on parallel concepts, which are the result of metalinguistic parallelisms." (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995: 30). But when translators face a gap, they may choose one of three direct translation methods (borrowing, calque or literal translation) and seven oblique methods (adaptation, amplification, compensation, equivalence, explicitation, modulation, omission and transposition). These strategies were the starting point for further ones elaborated by Hurtado (1999) who also adds some other methods: extension, amplification, compression, discursive creation, description, generalisation, particularisation, reduction, paralinguistic or linguistic substitution, and variation. Also Newmark (1988) studied some other strategies to deal with cultural terms: transference, naturalization, substitution of cultural equivalent in the target language, functional and descriptive equivalent, substitution of a term with a similar but non one-to-one equivalent, synonym, calque, transposition, modulation, compensation, paraphrase, couplets and notes.

In addition, there is also another factor to take into account: historical time, as Brisset (cited in Venuti, 2002) notices, and she poses another important question: "should the translator recreate the feeling of the time period of the text for the contemporary reader?" (Brisset cited in Venuti, 2002: 344) the answer to that question is bound to the tendency that the translator has towards the target readers, and this will also affect the choice of the above mentioned strategies to solve cultural- bound problems. Some of those listed above will be also described more in detail later in the analysis as some of them were those that I decided to use in the translation I proposed here. As Nikolajeva (1996: 27) points out, in children's book translation is merely "a problem of reception", that is to say the process is not audience independent and translators should work adopting strategies that are suitable for their target audience, thus their use and frequency vary according to how the translators view the target audience.

When there is difficulty in translating, translators may prefer not to work on certain books with a certain subject matter because of the distance between the source and target cultures (Oittinien, 2000). Some translators can even chose to completely change the ending of a book (see Yokota, 2017: 214) because of the different sensibility that the source and target language have. Yokota (2017) for instance, refers to a Japanese picture book for children written by Taro Gomi (1989/1990) that was translated into English. The title and the type of story was changed, because, as analysed by Yokota (2017) the book translated had to respond to a certain educational canons that were popular in that period in US. For this reason, from the title to the order and meaning of the sentences, the translator decided to manipulate the original text to fit the audience's demands.

All in all, as shown by ISTAT, today translated books make up the majority of the Italian children's literature market. Translating those types of books is demanding, due to the particular audience they are addressed. It is for this reason that scholars that studied translation in this field recommend a mediation between Venuti's (1995) concepts of foreignisation and domestication including the use of adaptation in order to bring the text closer to the audience.

1.2.2 The Language of *Refugee Boy*

The language is one of the most striking traits that characterises the novel *Refugee Boy* because while at the beginning it gives the impression of being so plain so as to suit a children's book, while reading, it then becomes clear that the language is the tool used by the author to convey complex messages to the audience, who, for this reason, can be either a young person and an adult.

First of all, a more complete description of the author will be provided in the second chapter, but for now it is important to know that Benjamin Zephaniah is a well-known writer in England. He has not only written novels like the one that is analysed in this work, but also poetry and pieces. *Refugee Boy* is very different in its genre and it also outstands in the category of the young adults books. In fact, while nowadays modern young adults books try to invent and elaborate a creative book in order to stimulate youngster's fantasy (Picherle, 2005: 233), this book keeps the style quite simple. Even

tragic scenes, such as the description of war in his hometown or the death Alem's mother, language and style are kept the most plain possible, even though the point of view is the one of the desperate husband that has lost his beloved wife and son.

Even though the author has many years of writing experience about his own personal life, this book is a particular case in his literary production, since the writer is Jamaican and writes about a war that he has not experienced himself on the borders of Eritrea and Ethiopia. He deliberately decided to write about this important and maybe not well known issue of migration and the difficulties of refugees in the UK because he wanted to use his prose to inform and report their conditions in a way that was comprehensible both to a younger and adult audience. This behaviour has already been previously observed by Giroux (1992), who claims that black writers have often preferred to convey their message of politics of difference and resistance through their literary works. Moreover, Bista (2012) observed that many black authors that wrote books for children had the tendency to influence also their readers: "authors of multicultural literature for children are acting as cultural messengers, but they may unconsciously impose their own cultural beliefs and values on the culture they try to recreate, exhibit, and locate in any fictional text" (Bista, 2012: 323).

Thus, the cultural powerful message of this book is mitigated by the plain language, because this author wanted his audience to dedicate their entire attention to the facts narrated, more specifically to the ignored war in Eritrea and Ethiopia and the condition of immigrants in England, which are the core topics of the book. Therefore, the most direct way to do that was to keep the language as basic as possible so that anyone, from young adult and adult, could perfectly understand it.

Another consequence derived from that is the aim that the author wanted to give to the book, which can be considered a good example of educational book, that can have a pedagogical function because it could also "contribute to an educational design constructed upon multicultural principles, equitable practice, and culturally relevant pedagogies" proposed by Kinloch (2012: 114) and retaken by Hinton and Rodríguez (2014: 100).

The main consequence of that is that when it is time to face the text for the translation translators need to keep in mind that *Refugee Boy* focuses a lot on words and language and may have a pedagogical function. This is clearly perceived at the beginning of the text in which there are two symmetrical prefaces that describe with vivid words the condition of Alem's family in Africa.

> The soldier who was in command went and stood so that his mouth was six inches away from Alem's father's ear and shouted, 'what kind of man are you?'
> Alem's father shuddered with fear; his voice trembled as he replied, 'I am an African.'
> Alem looked on terrified as the soldier shot a number of bullets into the floor around the feet of his father and mother.
> His mother screamed with fear. ' Please leave us! We only want peace.'
> The soldier continued shouting. 'Are you Ethiopian or Eritrean? Tell us, we want to know.'
> 'I am an African,' Alem's father replied.
> The soldier raised his rifle and pointed it at Alem's father. 'You are a traitor.' He turned and pointed the rifle at Alem's mother. ' And she is the enemy.' Then he turned and pointed the rifle at Alem's forehead. 'And he is a mongrel.'
> Turning back to Alem's father, he dropped his voice and said, 'Leave Ethiopia or die.' [3]

> The soldier who was in command went and stood so that his mouth was six inches away from Alem's mother's ear and shouted, 'what kind of woman are you?'
> Alem's mother shuddered with fear; his voice trembled as she replied, 'I am an African.'
> Alem looked on terrified as the soldier shot a number of bullets into the floor around the feet of his mother and father.
> His father screamed with fear. ' Please leave us! We only want peace.'
> The soldier continued shouting. 'Are you Ethiopian or Eritrean? Tell us, we want to know.'
> 'I am an African,' Alem's mother replied.
> The soldier raised his rifle and pointed it at Alem's mother. 'You are a traitor.' He turned and pointed the rifle at Alem's father. ' And he is the enemy.' Then he turned and pointed the rifle at Alem's forehead. 'And he is a mongrel.'
> Turning back to Alem's mother, he dropped his voice and said, 'Leave Eritrea or die.' [4]

The two prefaces are basically describing the same situation but one is set in Ethiopia and the second in Eritrea. Few words changes because the focus is on the places and the

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[3] Zephaniah, 2001: 7-8.
[4] Zephaniah, 2001: 9-10.

way the police treats the family. Furthermore, not only the simple language is a problem, but also the peculiarity that the author included in the plot. In fact, in the story there are some features that characterize it, for example the use of Multicultural English language, he also decided to add some wordplay in the story, in chapters' titles as well. There is also a more complicated issue arising with this book, which is the political correctness connected to the use of certain words. I am referring to those words whose translation in Italian could not be accepted by a young audience for its racist shade. Then, words such as "black", "Romani", and so on, need to be carefully translated because in Italy the use of for example "negro" or "zingaro" are considered as negative connotated by the Italian audience, the reason for this is explained by Kramsch (1998: 67):

> the problem lies in equating the racial, ethnic, national identity imposed on an individual by the state's bureaucratic system, and that individual's self-ascription. Group identity is not a natural fact but a cultural perception[…]. Our perception of someone's social identity is very much culturally determined. What we perceive about a person's culture and language is what we have been conditioned by our own culture to see, and the stereotypical models already built around our own.

When it comes to talk about Italy in specific, the racial tradition and history is not rooted in Italian people since, according to Labanca (2002) and Petrovich Njegosh (2012), it dates back to the fascist years and it is only since the last thirty years that Italy has become a destination for immigrants. As a result, the image of immigrants and black people in Italy is quite stereotyped (Scacchi, 2012: 269).

It is for these reasons that the translation of vulgar and offensive words may be problematic. Take for instance the translation of the word "black": its translation was once used with a racist connotation to distinguish white people from the colonized population, but now it has lost its pejorative connotation in English because it is used by black people in order to indicate a wider meaning of black people's culture and a set of values that distinguish them (Bradford, 2011: 168). However, in Italy there is not this deep culture of immigration and colonialism that has shaped this connotation. Immigration is quite a recent phenomenon and still the word "nero" may sound like a racist comment to indicate someone's origin (Scacchi, 2012: 274). Furthermore,

Pasolini (in Scacchi, 2012) says that since today the word "negro" has been used as an equivalence for the translation of "nigger", it has lead to the negative connotation of the word (Scacchi, 2012: 274). Moreover, Bradford (2011) suggests checking how the native coloured people identify themselves in the foreign country in order to be more correct, or even to explain the personal choice of any name referring to them (Bradford, 2011: 169). However, as stated by Zacchi et al (2002: 97), also the use of offensive language in books for young adults can be tolerated because they give personality to the story: thus, translators need to understand when and where those words are acceptable and when they are offensive.

In conclusion, when dealing with a book that talks about delicate cultural topics through an apparently direct but simple language, the translator should not underestimate the difficulty of such text, because the author's choices are made on purpose. Thus, agreeing with Piacentini (2015), one should take into account that the personality of the book should not be deleted through the total invisibility of the translator, but also let the young reader approach a multicultural reality and meet the polyphonic dimension of the translated text (Piacentini, 2015: 192).

1.2.3 The Topics

As mentioned above, young adult fiction has a very important function: these are books that will be read by children that are in a delicate period of their life, the educational period. As a consequence, as Ascenzi (2002) analyzed, those books usually are meant to teach and in order to do so they usually use examples of what everyone, young people and adults, should be and do (Ascenzi, 2002: 88-91), and thus showing a close tie between children's literature and society. Connected to that there is also the will to "protect the child" (Ramonda, 2013: 96) from any strange and misleading interference, in other words, censoring some topics and paying attention to the language.

In the past, scholars were inspired by the idea of child and childhood formulated by the Romantic philosophers Rousseau (1762/ 1961) and Locke (1975). These latter are also considered to be the inventors of the definition of childhood and the initiators of the education-amusement divide which is a way of conceiving the educational process of children's book both as not teaching and as teaching with amusement. Of course those

two philosophers were not the first ones to consider children's needs[5] but they are mainly thought to be the first to have enriched the study of the educational literature by stating that if the educator lowers his or her authority and keeps a kind and respectful discipline instead, he or she will improve the child's learning process. It is clear then that the critics do not see the use of literature detached from the educational process and therefore they believe that it is an instrument that improves the civilization of the society. That is why certain topics are considered a taboo. On the whole, a children's book, no matter what age, needs to bear in mind that it should have the function of protecting the reader from inappropriate topics (Picherle, 2005: 65).

Among the main topics that *Refugee boy* touches on, there is also the issue of war. The latter is not a usual topic for young adults but Benjamin Zephaniah was not the first one to talk about delicate topics in books defined as "young adult" books. Another famous and dated novel was the *Silver Sword* appeared in UK in 1956. The book is mainly about the second world war and when it was released provoked scandal in the reader's parent because war was not considered a usual topic for young readers (Grossfeld, 1993: 192).

Whit these types of novel, where war is the main setting for the plot, Lathey, (2005: 124) notes that translations may "yeald significant insights into cultural and socio-historical difference". For example, novels produced in Germany about the Second World War in the last decades showed a criticism towards Nazi ideology, whereas other books in Japan were used to keep alive the memory of the atomic bombs dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

According to Hunt (1988) and Bhroin et al (2012) in children's books it is the adult censorship that decides what is suitable for children and what is not, because, even though it is implicit that the receiver will be a child, the first selection of what is suitable or not for them is decided by adults who write (editors) and buy (parents) books for them (Grenby, 2013: 20). Despite of the fact that some source text covered some unconventional topics, translators following this "protective path" often trying to

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[5]See the works of Plato, Comenius, Luther for example.

manipulate and adapt stories in order to produce an acceptable translation for the audience. For instance, the firsts English adaptations made out of the original Andersen's tales showed the censorship of some sexual and ironic parts, considered to be inappropriate for a children's audience (Øster, 2006: 148).

Thus, some topics that are generally considered to be for "adults" may appear in a young adult fiction and, as a consequence, this also effects translation, because, as Jobe (1996) said, the function has developed: "translated books become the windows allowing reader to gain insights into the reality of their own lives through the actions and characters like themselves" (Jobe, 1996: 519). Today the topics of fiction for young readers started dealing with problems of the world of today because finally authors realised that young readers can also think (Picherle: 2005, 160).

1.3 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has touched on the main translation theories that have fuelled the debate in the last decades to define how the process of translation works and how to deal with cultural issues. The debate however is still alive and in constant change. The same is true also of the study of this particular genre, young adult literature, because, although the presence of translated books for young adults is so relevant in Italy, there are still few studies that have really managed to understand and study this genre. The latter is not only important for its impact in the Italian literary culture, but also because of its audience, as highlighted previously in this chapter. As a consequence, it is important, perhaps even more than other genres, because it not only involves translation skills, but also requires a mediation between the two cultures and the addresses in order to create a text that can be accepted and correct for its own intended audience. Finally, the translation and spread of this type of book should not be underestimated because, since they are referring to a delicate age, they tend to have an educational function that, as said before, can help the reader become a "multicultural reader" (Pascua, 2003: 227) thanks to an effective translation, especially of a book like *Refugee Boy*. In the following chapter I will give more information about the book before addressing issues related to the process of translation.

Chapter Two – The Translation

This second chapter resent an introduction to the author Benjamin Zephaniah and the book Refugee Boy that will be translated, and will also include my translation of the two chosen chapters.

2.1 The Author

Benjamin Obadiah Iqbal Zephaniah is a well known poet, song writer and novelist in Britain. He was born in 1958 in Birmingham from a family of immigrants, a Jamaican nurse and a Barbadian postman. His background seems unusual for a writer since, due to his dyslexia he left school at an early age. It was only after a period in prison for burglary[6] that he decided to dedicate his life to poetry and novel writing.

Not only is he famous for his art, but he is also an activist. Rastafarian and vegan[7], he has always stood up for the principles that he believes are right: for example, he is a member of Amnesty International, he stands up for homosexual rights in his home country[8], he promotes women's rights and animal rights[9]. He even declined the invitation to become an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) as a moral protest against colonialism[10].

Benjamin Zephaniah considers racism as the starting cause of his career due to his colour and his will to change the attitude that people had towards black communities in London[11]. He experienced racist treatment himself, not only when he was young, but even when he was offered a fellowship from Trinity College, when an article in The Sun newspaper reported the news with this heading: "Would you let this man near your daughter?"[12].

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[6] https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/from-prison-to-poetry-1.92004
[7] http://evolvecampaigns.org.uk/evolve/patrons.aspx
[8]https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/jamaica-benjamin-zephaniah-calls-jamaicans-everywhere-stand-against-homophobia
[9] https://www.peta.org/blog/benjamin-zephaniah-opens-liberation-exhibit/
[10]https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/benjamin-zephaniah-declines-an-obe-in-protest-against-colonialism-80247.html
[11] https://lacuna.org.uk/equality/benjamin-zephaniah-interview-wanted-criminal-best-loved-poet/
[12] http://interestingmedia.co.uk/benjamin-zephaniah

It is for this reason that in his novels there is always some sort of stand: they often speak about adolescents, black or white, from an East London multicultural background and facing social challenges. In all of them there is criticism of how people are treated because of their difference. For example *Face* (1999) talks about a boy that has to undergo plastic surgery to save his life and he has to face the new reaction that his disability causes people, and *Refugee Boy* (2001) talks about how asylum seekers are treated.

Benjamin Zephaniah was already well-known in the UK, mainly as a poet, when he published his first novel *Face* (1999), which consolidated his celebrity in the early 2000s. After that year indeed he was listed 48th out of 50 greatest British artists by the Times[13], he won the Portsmouth Book Award (Longer Novel category) in 2002, and the British Book Awards Decibel Writer of the Year in 2005 and Manchester Book Award in 2006, as well as other awards before 2000[14]. Furthermore he has now sixteen honorary doctorate degrees from different universities in Britain. Lately he has also worked as a play writer and adapted some of his books for the theatre, including *Refugee Boy*, which was first performed in March 2014[15].

Apart from the provoking and almost didactic tone of his books, he is a master of the use of a particular type of language developed recently in London called multilingual London English which will be described later. From his first poems to his later works he has always let his characters speak through this dialect which represents him and his origins. He is also already known in Italy thanks to the translation into Italian of the novel *Face* (1999) made by Alfredo Guaraldo, *Al Di Là Del Volto* (2000).

Benjamin Zephaniah claims that he mainly writes about and for young adults because "the young make the best listeners"[16], but his novels are directed to adults as much as they are to children[17]. This was also my first impression of the book I translated. At first it seemed to be a young adult book, with quite plain language and a simple plot, but then the more I read it, the more I realized that in view of its themes and almost didactic

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[13] https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-50-greatest-british-writers-since-1945-ws3g69xrf90
[14] https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/Benjamin-Zephaniah
[15] https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-21753181
[16] https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/nov/04/poetry.fiction
[17] https://benjaminzephaniah.com/biography/

purpose it could also suit an adult audience. The strong beliefs of this author appears in his books where the characters embody the principles worth fighting for and the need to be listened so as to obtain their rights.

2.2 The Book

Refugee Boy book is one of Zephaniah's bestsellers, but not his first one, since he first published *Face* (1999) and it was only in 2001 that he published *Refugee Boy*. The latter is based on a true historical event, that is to say the Eritrean and Ethiopian, the so called "unfinished war"[18] that burst out in 1998, formally ended in 2000 but it was finally declared over only in recent years, in 2018, with a state- of- war agreement made by the two countries' leaders[19]. The main character is Alem, a 14-year old boy who, due to his origins is considered an enemy in both Ethiopia and Eritrea since he was born from an Eritrean mother and an Ethiopian father. Thus, he is forced to leave his home country or he would be persecuted.

The plot starts with an extract about the violence committed by Eritrean soldiers when Alem and his family lived in Ethiopia and another extract in which soldiers from Eritrea break into the family's house to threaten them. Since Alem is both Ethiopian and Eritrean he is unwanted in both the two countries and for this reason his father decides to take him to a safer place where he can stay until the war is over, Europe and to be precise Britain. With the excuse of a holiday he takes Alem with him and leaves him in the care of the Refugee Council, who can appeal for his asylum in London. The book talks about his life in Britain after his father leaves him and all the problems, also legal, that he has to face to be accepted in the country.

This novel can be defined as a young adult novel but the themes treated and the way they are treated make it also suitable for a more adult audience. Indeed, even though at first it seems like an ordinary novel for adolescents, while reading the audience perceives that the author included themes such as, bulling, how Britain treats asylum

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[18] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44004212
[19] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44764597

seekers, the fight for their rights, the difficulties of a young orphan boy in a country where he is not welcome, war and deaths, which aim to raise awareness in the readers and leave a trace in them. Moreover, the use of the language as well make it also involving for every kind of audience, because it not too simple and not too hard to understand, in spite the fact that legal issues are discussed.

Language is also an important feature of the book since, as said before, it is simple and everyone can understand it, but it also has a peculiarity that marks every works of this author, that is to say the inclusion of a contemporary Londoner dialect, made up of the mixture and the contact of the different cultures living in the Eastern part of London, the same districts where the author lived. This is not the only personal experienced feature in the book, since also the author experienced racism, war and death[20]. This novel was also awarded with the Portsmouth Book Award in 2002.

2.3 Multilingual London English

This novel has a remarkable feature for as concerns its main issues in translation, that is to say the presence of a young way of speaking negatively called by the media "Jafaican" (Chester et al, 2013) but it is more formally identified as Multilingual London English (MLE). This variety of English has developed in the last fifty years due to the presence of different ethnic groups in East London districts where there was an already existing dialect, Cockney. Furthermore, this kind of change was seen also in other European cities, for instance Berlin and Stockholm, so much so that "there are increasing indications that these varieties have become the unmarked Labovian 'vernacular' for many speakers, and that it is this that older people are reacting to when they claim that young Londoners, for example, sound as if they are 'talking black'" (Cheshire et al, 2011: 3).

As regards the city of London, the main differences noticed by the scholars that researched MLE (Kerswill et al, 2007) were not only phonetic in the different

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[20]https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/benjamin-zephaniahs-refugee-boy-comes-6919887

pronunciation of some words compared to Cockney ("face" and "goat" for example), but also in the use of frequent words ("innit", "this is me", "man" and so on) as discourse markers and grammatical changes in the use of the same form of the verb "to be" for all the persons of the past as well as some borrowings from Jamaican English ("yard", "whagwan" and so on) (Kerswill et al, 2007); these modifications are used both by non native English speakers and native speakers.

According to Kerswill (2013), there are some main factors that work for the increasing of this phenomenon in London: the presence of a relevant community of immigrants from different countries living together in a close area, whose presence increases multilingualism, especially among children and young people in educational age, and the relative social deprivation. Kerswill underlines that "they interact in a quasi-statistical sense in that they do not "mean" the same thing in different places" (Kerswill, 2013: 129). Thus, not only is their interaction important but also how they do it. Kerswill et al (2013) highlights that face to face contact between children from different social classes as well as "engagement with television as a part of everyday practice" (Kerswill et al, 2013: 265) are some of the main factors that ease the contact with them. This brand new variety of London English is mainly spoken by young people from different social backgrounds and it symbolizes the deep influence of different cultures in an already existing variety.

2.4 The Translation of Chapter 6

Original – Meet the Lads

The call of "Good morning, boys" echoing from the corridors woke Alem up at seven. The first thing he did was to make sure he still had his photo and check to see whether Stanley was all right. Stanley was very quiet. He put a thumb up to Alem, smiled and get out of bed as if nothing had happened.

Another female member of staff knocked on the door and entered the room. "Good morning, boys," she said. "How are you today, Stanley?"

"I'm happy Maureen," Stanley replied.

"Did you sleep well, Stanley?"

"I don't know," he said.

She turned to Alem. "And you must be the new boy – Alem. Good morning, Alem," she said, almost skipping away to the next room.

Alem put the photo in his bag and followed the crowd. This time he managed to get a wash and then they went down for breakfast in the large dining hall. First the boys had to line up and choose their meal. They could have bacon, eggs, toast, sausages, tomatoes and cornflakes in any combination. The tables were laid out in three parallel lines. The boys were watched over by three members of staff, the bubbly posh lady who had woken Alem up and two men whom Alem had not seen before. Alem was just not sure what to eat; it was food but not food as he knew it. He played it safe and had toast and tea. He wasn't sure where to sit and for a while he stood with his tray looking for a place until he spotted Mustafa, the boy who had given him the warning about Sweeney. The seat next to Mustafa was empty so Alem went and sat next to him.

"Is it OK if I sit here, please?"

"No worries, yu safe," Mustafa replied.

Capitolo 6 – Incontro tra rivali

L' echeggiare del "buongiorno ragazzi" proveniente dal corridoio svegliò Alem alle ore sette. La prima cosa che fece fu controllare se avesse ancora la foto della sua famiglia e assicurarsi che Stanley stesse bene. Quest'ultimo era molto tranquillo. Salutò Alem con il pollice in alto, sorrise e si alzò dal letto come se non fosse successo niente. Un' educatrice bussò alla porta ed entrò nella stanza, «Buongiorno ragazzi» disse, «Come stai Stanley?»

«Sono felice, Maureen » rispose il ragazzo.

«Hai dormito bene?»

«Non lo so» disse lui.

La giovane si rivolse quindi ad Alem. «E tu devi essere il nuovo arrivato, Alem. Buongiorno Alem» disse lei, passando di fretta alla stanza successiva.

Alem ripose la foto nel suo zaino e seguì gli altri ragazzi. Questa volta riuscì a darsi una lavata e scese a fare colazione nel grande refettorio. Per prima cosa i ragazzi dovevano mettersi in fila e scegliere il loro pasto. Potevano scegliere tra pancetta, uova, fette di pane, salsicce, pomodori e corn flakes. I tavoli erano disposti in tre file parallele. A sorvegliare i ragazzi vi erano tre educatori, la frizzante e raffinata ragazza che aveva salutato Alem prima e due uomini che non aveva mai visto. Alem non aveva idea di cosa mangiare, era cibo ma non come lo intendeva lui. Andò sul sicuro e scelse del pane e del tè. Non sapeva dove sedersi e stette per un po' in piedi con il vassoio in mano a cercare un posto quando vide Mustafa, il ragazzo che l'aveva avvertito riguardo Sweeney. Il posto vicino a Mustafa era vuoto e quindi Alem si sedette di fianco a lui.

« Posso sedermi qui, per favore?»

« Tranquillo, sei al sicuro» rispose Mustafa.

A boy on the other side of the seat just glanced at Alem before tucking back into his breakfast.

Mustafa began speaking to Alem as if he was simply continuing the conversation from the night before. "I ain't trying to frighten ya, yu know. I am just telling yu, guy, yu have to watch out."

Alem nodded his head in reply.

Mustafa continued, "Thing with dat Sweeney is dat if you let him get away with stuff, he'll keep coming back to you." He pointed his finger to someone at the other table. "You see him?"

"Yes," Alem replied, "I share a room with him."

"He's Stanley, Sweeney beat him up once and now every time Sweeney wants extra biscuits or toast or anything, Stanley gives it to him. Shame, man. Sweeney troubled me once and me and him fight, yu check? I would of buss him up if staff never come but he don't mess with me now. Stanley's soft."

"He talks so much," Alem replied.

"For sure, if you let him talk he'll just talk yu crazy. I actually see him talk a guy to sleep. For real. He's weird but it's not his fault. His dad died in the Gulf War."

"the Gulf?" Alem said, looking down into his breakfast while trying to make sense of it. "Why the Gulf, why Aden?"

"No," Mustafa slowed down. "Not the Gulf of Aden. Dat boy's father died in the Persina Gulf War- yu know, Saddam Hussein – Iraq – Kuwait. It's in the Middle East and Britain fought there with the Americans and them, and that's where his father died."

"Oh that's sad," Alem said, feeling for Stanley but trying hard not to think of the war himself had left behind.

Un ragazzo seduto dall'altra parte del tavolo diede un'occhiata ad Alem prima di fiondarsi di nuovo sulla sua colazione.

Mustafa riprese a parlare con Alem come se stesse continuando la conversazione della sera precedente. « Cioè, non è che ti voglio spaventare, voglio solo che tu stai in campana».

Alem annuì con la testa in risposta.

Mustafa continuò. « Sweeney è una vera rottura, se gli dai del cibo una volta lui torna ». Con il dito indicò un ragazzo seduto dall'altra parte del tavolo, «lo vedi quello?».

«Sì» rispose Alem « è il mio compagno di stanza».

«Quello è Stanley, Sweeney gli ha dato una bella batosta una volta e ora ogni volta che Sweeney vuole degli altri biscotti, o del pane, cioè qualsiasi cosa, capisci, Stanley glielo da. Che vergogna amico. Sweeney c'ha provato anche con me, abbiamo fatto a pugni sai? Se gli educatori non venivano io vincevo ma ora non vuole altre rotture da me. Invece Stanley è un pappamolla».

«Parla così tanto» rispose Alem

« Ma certo, se lo lasci fare ti sfinisce amico. Cioè, una volta l' ho visto far addormentare un ragazzo da quanto parlava. Sul serio. È un tipo strano, ma non è colpa sua. Suo padre è morto nella guerra del Golfo».

«Il Golfo?» rispose Alem, abbassando gli occhi sulla sua colazione per cercare di trovare un senso alle sue parole. «come nel Golfo, perché Aden?»

«No» Mustafa rallentò, « mica il golfo di Aden. Suo padre è morto nella guerra del Golfo Persico, capisci? Tipo, Saddam Hussein, Iraq, Kuwait. È in Medio Oriente e la Gran Bretagna ha combattuto con gli americani e loro, è lì che suo padre è morto».

«Oh, povero» rispose Alem, capendo il dolore di Stanley ma cercando inutilmente di non pensare alla guerra che lui stesso si era lasciato alle spalle.

"That's not all man," Mustafa continued. "When his father died, his mother lost it, she went loco, loony. She used to lock him up for hours in his room and sometime if he cried too much he would take the light bulbs out and leave him in the dark. Could you imagine that, man? Left in the dark for hours, serious hours, yu know, sometimes she would be gone all night, and sometimes he was starving to death. Wickedness man, pure wickedness."

Alem looked towards Stanley, who was talking away to someone. He felt that he understood him a little bit more now and he was trying to think of something he could say to him, some words of comfort. Then he thought he might get plenty of time for that later and anyway he couldn't really go up to him and say that he knew his life story.

Mustafa spoke again. "He's weird, he don't harm no one but he's weird."

"He had a very bad dream last night," Alem said, chewing on his toast.

" Bad dream?" Mustafa replied. "dat guy has nightmares, dat guy wakes up screaming his head off in the night. He even goes sleepwalking. He walks in his sleep talking to his mother. I don't wanna frighten yu, but everyone knows it."

"What's your name again?" Alem asked in an abrupt change of subject. "I was told but I forgot."

"Mustafa," the boy replied proudly, " and you're Alem, I know."

The boys then got down to their breakfasts. Alem was feeling very much wiser for the conversation and wondering whether he had found a friend in Mustafa.

After breakfast all the boy returned upstairs to brush their teeth and make their beds. Alem spoke very little to Stanley, not wanting to start him off on another rant, although he did ask him what would be happening next. Stanley told him that all they had to do now was to go to the recreation room. If there were any special jobs to be done, boys would be picked from there, or maybe there would be a trip somewhere, but boys who went on trips would have had to be there for a little longer than one day.

«C'è dell' altro, amico» continuò Mustafa, «quando suo padre è morto, sua madre è andata fuori di testa, uscita pazza, matta, capisci? Lo chiudeva in camera per ore e qualche volta se piangeva tanto lei gli toglieva perfino le lampadine e lo lasciava al buio, cioè tu immaginati amico, stare al buio tante ore, brutte ore, capisci. Qualche volta se lei stava via tutta la notte lui se ne stava lì a morire di fame. Una cattiveria, amico, vera cattiveria».Alem volse il suo sguardo verso Stanley, che stava parlando con qualcuno. Sentì che lo stava capendo un po' di più ora, e stava cercando di pensare a ciò che avrebbe potuto dirgli, qualche parola di conforto magari. Poi pensò che avrebbe avuto tempo per farlo più tardi e ad ogni modo non poteva andare fin da lui e dirgli che conosceva tutta la sua storia.

Mustafa parlò ancora « è un po' fuori di testa, non è pericoloso, ma è strano forte».

« Ha fatto proprio un brutto sogno la scorsa notte» disse Alem, masticando una fetta di pane.

« Brutto sogno?» ribattè Mustafa « quel ragazzo ha dei veri e propri incubi, con tanto di urla e così sveglia tutti in piena notte. Cioè, lui cammina mentre dorme, cammina e parla a sua madre. Non ti voglio spaventare ma lo sanno tutti praticamente».

« Mi puoi ripetere il tuo nome?» chiese Alem cambiando improvvisamente discorso, «me l'avevano detto ma me ne sono dimenticato».

«Mustafa» rispose l'altro con orgoglio, « e tu sei Alem, lo so».

I ragazzi poi si rimisero a mangiare la colazione. Alem si sentiva più saggio dopo la conversazione con Mustafa e si stava chiedendo se avesse trovato un amico in lui.

Dopo la colazione tutti i ragazzi tornarono alle proprie stanze per lavarsi i denti e per fare il letto. Alem parlò poco con Stanley per non farlo ripartire a parlare come una macchinetta, però gli chiese cosa avrebbero fatto in seguito. Stanley gli rispose che ciò che dovevano fare era tornare nella sala comune. Se ci fossero stati dei lavori particolari da fare i ragazzi sarebbero partiti da lì, oppure i ragazzi potevano andare in gita da qualche parte, ma coloro che potevano andarci erano quelli che stavano in comunità da più di un giorno.

Alem finished making his bed went down to the recreation room. Once again he found himself just standing alone watching the other boys. They seemed to be playing the same games in the same groups. It felt to Alem as if he hadn't been to sleep at all, nothing has changed except for the staff members. The only time that any of the boys spoke to Alem was when the table football flew off the table and Alem handed it back to a man. All they said was "Cheers" but it was enough to keep Alem's mind busy wondering what "cheers" meant. Then there was Mustafa, but he tended to sit alone most of the time looking out of the window.

As Alem went to walk away to venture elsewhere in the room, someone bumped into him from the side.

"Sorry, mate but I meant it."

It was Sweeney and his two friends, Alem tries several times to walk away but one of them would block him each time he tried. He wanted to avoid panicking, conscious that he was in a room full of people. He looked around for help. Everyone was doing their thing, and those that did catch a glimpse of the standoff just looked away as if seeing nothing. Mustafa was unaware of what was happening.

"Right," said Sweeney, placing himself right in from of Alem. "Yu mess with me already, right, now I'm gonna show yu dat yu can't mess with me again. But first I'm gonna give yu a chance. Today we have wonderful cod and chips and beautiful broccoli for dinner. All I want you to do is give me your cod and chips and you can enjoy yu broccoli in peace. It won't make me and you best friends but life will be much easier for you."

Alem tried to show no fear. "You will have your own chips and if there's some leftover you can get some more. Why do you want my chips?"

Sweeney took a step for word, placing himself inches away from Alem. As he spoke into Alem's face, Alem could smell his bacon breath, even at this time of danger Alem could still find a moment to think " this boy has not cleaned his teeth".

Alem terminò di fare il letto e scese nella sala comune. Ancora una volta si ritrovò in piedi da solo a vedere cosa facevano gli altri. Sembrava stessero giocando agli stessi giochi negli stessi gruppi del giorno precedente. Ad Alem sembrava di non essere mai andato a letto, nulla era cambiato, eccetto per gli educatori. L'unica volta che qualcuno rivolse la parola ad Alem fu quando una pallina volò via dal tavolo da calcetto e Alem gliela porse. Tutto ciò che gli dissero fu "bella" ma fu abbastanza per tenere la mente di Alem occupata a pensare a cosa quel "bella" facesse riferimeto. Poi c'era Mustafa, ma lui in genere stava seduto tutto il tempo a guardare fuori dalla finestra.

Appena Alem provò a spostarsi nella stanza qualcuno gli venne addosso.

« Scusa amico, ma l'ho fatto apposta».

Erano Sweeney e i suoi due amici. Alem fece dei tentativi per schivarli ma ogni volta che ci provava uno di loro gli bloccava la strada. Non voleva avere un attacco di panico, visto che erano in una stanza piena di gente. Si guardò intorno in cerca di un aiuto. Tutti erano intenti a fare dell'altro, e chi aveva visto la scena aveva distolto subito lo sguardo come se non avesse visto nulla, mentre Mustafa era ignaro di ciò che stava succedendo.

« Bene», disse Sweeney posizionandosi proprio di fronte ad Alem « ti sei messo nei casini con me già una volta, ora ti mostro che non puoi metterti nei casini con me di nuovo, ma prima ti voglio dare una possibilità. Oggi mangeremo del magnifico pesce con le patatine e dei bellissimi broccoli per cena. Quello che voglio è che tu mi dai il tuo pesce con le patatine così tu puoi goderti i tuoi broccoli in pace. Non diventeremo amici per la pelle, ma la vita sarà molto più facile per te».

Alem non volle mostrarsi debole. « Tu avrai le tue patatine e se ne avanzeranno potrai prendere quelle. Perché vuoi le mie?»

Sweeney fece un passo avanti posizionandosi a pochi centimetri da Alem. Appena aprì la bocca per parlare Alem fu colpito dal suo alito che sapeva di pancetta. Perfino in un momento di pericolo come quello la sua mente riusciva a pensare « questo ragazzo non si è nemmeno lavato i denti».

"I want your chips that's all you need to know," Sweeney said smiling wickedly and breathing all over Alem's face.

 "Well, I don't think I'm having any dinner," Alem replied in an attempt to outsmart him.

"Well," Sweeney said, spraying bacon-flavoured saliva all over Alem's face, "that's even better, you have nothing to lose then, do you? Just get the cod and chips and give them to me and that will save you from getting a kicking, won't it?"

Sweeney spoke fast. Alem didn't catch all that he said but he had his principles and he was going to stick to them. "I don't care what you say, I am not giving you any food."

The moment Alem finished this sentence, Sweeney struck him with his fist in the solar plexus. Alem's breath was completely take away and as he went down Sweeney kicked hum under his chin, causing him to bite his tongue. The pain was excruciating. Alem just wasn't prepared. All he could do at that moment was cling on to Sweeney's legs. Sweeney was unable to kick but he rained down a whole leap of punches over Alem's head and back. Alem could hear other boys cheering Sweeney on; he couldn't understand why no one was coming to his rescue. He clung on for dear life but the shouting got louder and the punches increased. Quickly, Alem had a change of heart. He had to defend himself; he could no longer be passive, he held on to Sweeney's feet with one hand, then he used his other hand to push him over. Sweeney fell. There was now a scrap on the floor. They traded kicks and punches at a rate of six per second. Alem noticed that he was feeling extra kicks, kicks that weren't coming from Sweeney, but there was nothing that he could do about them, he just tried his best to deal with the aggressor in hand. Suddenly Alem felt a change in the action, it was Mustafa, and he wasn't fighting but trying to separate them.

Just then came those immortal words, "Break it up, lads, that's enough." Mustafa backed off and the two male members of staff began pulling them apart, but the two boys still desperately tried to kick and punch each other as if the last punch was a matter of pride.

« Voglio le tue patatine, ti basta sapere questo» disse Sweeney, con un sorriso da pazzo e impregnando la faccia di Alem con il suo alito.

« Beh io non credo che cenerò» replicò Alem pensando di essere più furbo di lui.

« Perfetto» disse Sweeney, ricoprendo la faccia di Alem di sputi al gusto pancetta « ancora meglio, così non avrai nulla da perdere, no? Prenditi solo il pesce con le patatine e poi me li dai a me, e questo ti salverà dalle mie botte, no?»

Sweeney parlava rapidamente e così Alem non riuscì a seguire il discorso ma aveva i suoi principi e voleva rispettarli. « non mi interessa, non ti darò il mio cibo».

Nel momento in cui Alem terminò la frase, Sweeney lo colpì con un pugno allo stomaco. Alem rimase senza fiato e, quando si piegò in due, Sweeney gli diede un calcio sotto il mento, facendogli mordere la lingua. Il dolore era lancinante. Alem era stato colto di sorpresa e tutto ciò che poteva fare in quel momento era aggrapparsi alle gambe di Sweeney, così questi non poteva più calciare ma si scatenò lo stesso in una furia di pugni sulla testa e sulla schiena del ragazzo. Alem sentiva gli altri che incoraggiavano il bullo. Non capiva perché nessuno non venisse in suo soccorso. Lui non lasciava la presa ma le grida di incoraggiamento si facevano sempre più forti e i pugni più frequenti. All'improvviso Alem ebbe un colpo al cuore: doveva difendersi, non poteva subire soltanto. Con una mano tenne il piede di Sweeney e con l'altra lo spinse. Sweeney cadde e la rissa si spostò sul pavimento. Si scambiarono calci e pugni a una frequenza di sei al secondo.

Alem notò che arrivavano anche calci da altre persone, non solo da Sweeney ma non poteva farci nulla, fece solo del suo meglio per poter tenere testa all'aggressore che aveva davanti. All'improvviso la frequenza dei colpi cambiò: era Mustafa che era intervenuto non per combattere ma per cercare di separarli. In quel momento arrivò l'ordine perentorio «smettetela ragazzi, è ora di finirla!». Mustafa indietreggiò e i due educatori iniziarono a dividere i rivali ma i due ragazzi continuarono disperatamente la lotta come se l'ultimo pugno o calcio fosse una questione di orgoglio.

They were eventually separated and both panted hard for breath, even though, like most fights, it had actually lasted about one minute. As they were being held back from each other, Alem stayed silent, still not confident enough to speak English and fight at the same time. Sweeney shouted threats as if he had rehearsed them hundreds of times before:

"I'll kill you, yu bastard – yu don't mess with me and get away with it . iill turn yu lights out – you are dead – yu understand – yu dead meat – I mean really dead."

Alem was quite shocked by the whole episode. It happened so suddenly, so unexpectedly, but what for? Alem's biggest pain still came from the first punch to his stomach. He looked at Sweeney, whose nose was bleeding and said, "You do all this for some chips?"

They were both taken to the staff room and given the usual warnings, except the ycouldn't be threatened with detention or extra homework. Sweeney was warned that he had a report being prepared for a court case and that he needed to be on his best behavior. Alem was told not to use violence to overcome violence, but to report all violent acts to a member of staff. This was rubbish, of course, and Alem knew it. he was tempted to ask how practical it was to report an act of violence just after you've been winded, considering how quickly the next kick follows up, but he decided not to.

For the rest of the day Alem felt miserable. He spoke very little to anyone and no one made an effort to speak to him. Only Mustafa asked if he was OK and said he was sorry about what happened and that he did warn him about Sweeney. Stanley wanted to talk for hours about the type of gun he planned to buy, but then Alem decided to walk away and leave him talking to himself. One or two of the other boys saw him and said no more than "All right?" but Alem knew by now that when most people said "All right?" they didn't really mean, "are you all tight?" he thought this was a gross misuse of the language, he just couldn't understand how they could say "All right?" and walk away without waiting for an answer.

Alle fine vennero separati ed entrambi respiravano affannosamente per lo sforzo, anche se, come quasi tutte le risse, era durata circa un minuto. Da quando erano stati trattenuti Alem non disse una parola, ancora troppo insicuro per parlare inglese e lottare nello stesso momento. Sweeney gli urlò contro delle minacce, come se le avesse già esternate tantissime altre volte:

« Ti ammazzo, stronzo, non te la caverai liscia, non sai contro chi ti sei messo, sei morto, mi capisci, morto, un cadavere».

Alem era rimasto scioccato da ciò che era successo, era accaduto in modo imprevisto, all'improvviso, ma per quale motivo? Il dolore lancinante provocato dal primo pugno allo stomaco si fece più persistente in Alem, « tutto questo solo per delle patatine?»

Entrambi furono portati nell'ufficio degli educatori e furono dati loro i soliti avvertimenti, solo che non potevano essere messi in punizione con compiti extra e non potevano essere reclusi in camera. Sweeney fu avvisato che per lui c'era già una relazione pronta da spedire in tribunale e che doveva comportarsi meglio. Ad Alem fu chiesto di non usare la violenza contro altra violenza, bensì di riportare tutto agli adulti. Non avevano senso questi rimproveri, e Alem lo sapeva bene. Avrebbe voluto chiedere come si può riportare un atto di violenza subito dopo essere rimasto senza fiato, perché non si riesce nemmeno respirare da quanto frequenti sono i colpi, ma si trattenne.

Per il resto della giornata Alem rimase sulle sue. Parlò pochissimo con gli altri e comunque loro non facevano nemmeno uno sforzo per scambiare qualche parola con lui. Solo Mustafa gli chiese se stesse bene e che gli dispiaceva per ciò che era successo, ma gli disse che l'aveva avvisato riguardo Sweeney. Stanley avrebbe parlato per ore del tipo di pistola che avrebbe voluto comprarsi, ma Alem decise di andarsene e di lasciarlo parlare da solo. Qualche altro ragazzo lo vide e gli chiese "Come va?" ma Alem sapeva bene che quando te lo dicevano così non erano veramente interessati a come stavi. Alem non riusciva a capire perché prima ti chiedessero "come va?" e poi se ne andassero via senza ricevere risposta.

What made the rest of the day difficult was Sweeney and his two friends. Every time they saw him they made him dirty looks, and every time they were near him they threatened him. At the dinner table Alem had nothing to eat, but Sweeney came over to him all the same to tell him that they still had unfinished business. Alem didn't say a word. He hardly said a word for the rest of that day. By now he had decided that words weren't enough, now was the time for action.

2.5 The Translation of Chapter 12

Original - Court in action

The bike was used regularly over the next few days as Alem began to expand his knowledge of the area. Even when riding his bike he would travel with a small notepad and pen to write down the names of streets and buildings that he thought were interesting. He quickly learned that many of the street names had a relevance to the history of the area or commemorated interesting people. Forest Gate used to be the gateway to Epping Forest, and not far from where he lived he discovered Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Shelley, Byron and Ruskin avenues and many other avenues named after famous writers. One day he rode his bike deep into the forest in the belief that he would spot some wild animals, but all he saw was a few squirrels, which seemed too nice to be called wild. He heard that there were deer and foxes in the forest but he saw none of them.

The time of Alem's first major challenge was nearing and he was reminded of it when he received a visit from Mariam and Sheila on 6th of January. In the living room Mariam began to explain to Alem and Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald what was going to happen. Sheila butted in from time to time when she felt that things were getting too technical and some emotional reassurance was necessary. The file that Mariam had on Alem looked as if ot had doubled in size. She took a couple of paper from it and put it on the table.

"We really don't expect much to happen tomorrow, Alem. We certainly don't expect the adjudicator to make a decision."

La giornata di Alem fu resa difficile sempre per colpa di Sweeney e dei suoi amici. Ogni volta che lo vedevano gli lanciavano delle occhiatacce e quando gli passavano vicino lo minacciavano. Per cena Alem non aveva preso nulla, ma Sweeney arrivò al suo tavolo lo stesso per dirgli che avevano ancora un conto in sospeso. Alem non disse una parola, non lo fece per il resto della sera. Ormai a quel punto aveva deciso che le parole non servivano, era il tempo di agire.

Capitolo 12 – L'udienza

Nei giorni successivi Alem usò spesso la bici per esplorare la zona. Perfino mentre era in sella, teneva con sé carta e penna per annotare i nomi delle vie e dei palazzi che considerava interessanti. Imparò velocemente che molte delle vie avevano il nome legato a importanti fatti o personaggi storici. Forest Gate una volta era uno degli ingressi della Foresta di Epping, e non troppo lontano da dove viveva scoprì che c'erano le vie chiamate Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Shelley, Byron, Ruskin e tante altre dedicate a scrittori inglesi famosi. Un giorno si avventurò con la bicicletta all'interno della foresta nella speranza di poter vedere qualche animale selvatico ma gli unici che vide furono alcuni scoiattoli, che erano troppo carini per essere considerati selvatici. Aveva sentito che nella foresta vi abitavano cervi e volpi ma non ne vide nessuno.

L'ora della prima vera prova di Alem si stava avvicinando e glielo ricordò la visita di Mariam e Sheila il 6 gennaio. Nel salotto Mariam iniziò a spiegare ciò che sarebbe successo. Sheila interrompeva ogni tanto quando sentiva che la collega si addentrava troppo sul tecnico e c'era bisogno di una rassicurazione emotiva. La cartellina che Mariam aveva riguardo Alem sembrava essere raddoppiata di spessore. Vi prese un paio di fogli e li mise sul tavolo.

« Non ci aspettiamo molto da domani Alem. Di sicuro non ci aspettiamo che il giudice prenda una decisione».

" Well, what will he do?" Alem asked.

"Oh, he'll just want to familiarize himself with the case. He may ask for some reports to be made and he may ask you a few questions."

Alem looked worried. "Will I have to make some kind of speech?"

 "No," Mariam replied, "you may have to answer a few simple questions but most of the talking will be dome by your barrister. His name is Nicholas Morgan and he's one of the best. He does a lot of these types of cases."

"Don't worry," Sheila said, smiling, "you'll be all right."

"So when will I see Nicholas Morgan?" Alem asked Mariam.

"You'll see him in the morning. But really, Alem, don't worry. He'll talk to you before you go into the court and he has already read a lot about you and your case."

It took some time for Alem to get used to the idea that someone he had never met was going to represent him, but he soon realized that everyone knew what they were doing and he felt a bit better. However, he couldn't help thinking that he was about to face some kind of trial. He spent a couple of hours lying on his bed thinking of what was going to happen the next day, then ne spent a couple of hours reading in order to stop thinking about what was going to happen the next day.

The next morning Alem was woken up by Mrs Fitzgerald, who entered his room carrying a black suit. "Good morning, Alem. I got you this." She held the suit up high by its hanger as if waiting for a response.

Alem wasn't sure how to respond. Was this something that he had earned, or was this something that he should put away for a rainy day? He rubbed his eyes. It took some time for words to come out. These were this first words of the day, and they sounded as if they were leftover from the day before. "What – what is it for?"

"It's your suit," Mrs Fitzgerald replied. "You have to make a good impression in court and there's no better way to make a good impression than by wearing a smart suit."

« E quindi cosa farà? » chiese Alem.

« Beh vorrà solo capire come va il caso. Potrebbe chiedere che vengano fatti alcuni rapporti e potrebbe farti qualche domanda».

Alem sembrava preoccupato: «dovrò per caso tenere una specie di discorso?»

« No» rispose Mariam, «potresti dover rispondere a qualche semplice domanda ma il più verrà fatto dal tuo avvocato. Si chiama Nicholas Morgan ed è tra i migliori. Si occupa spesso di questo tipo di casi».

« Non preoccuparti» disse Sheila sorridendogli, «andrà tutto bene».

« Quindi quando vedrò Nicholas Morgan?» chiese Alem a Mariam.

« Lo vedrai la mattina stessa. Ma davvero Alem, non devi preoccuparti. Ti parlerà prima di andare davanti al giudice si è già informato molto su di te e il caso».

Alem ancora non aveva assimilato l'idea che una persona stava per rappresentarlo, ma ben presto capì che tutti sapevano bene ciò che stavano facendo e quindi si sentì un po' meglio. Ciò nonostante, non poteva smettere di pensare che stava per affrontare un processo. Stette un paio d'ore sdraiato a letto a pensare a ciò che sarebbe accaduto il giorno successivo e poi stette altre due ore a leggere per poter smettere di pensare all'udienza dell'indomani.

La mattina dopo Alem fu svegliato dalla signora Fitzgerald che entrò nella sua camera porgendogli un completo elegante nero. «Buongiorno Alem. Ho comprato questo per te». Tenne il completo per la gruccia, come se si aspettasse una risposta.

Alem non sapeva bene cosa dirle. Era qualcosa che aveva guadagnato o era qualcosa da mettere da parte per i momenti di difficoltà? Si strofinò gli occhi. Gli ci volle un po' per riuscire a spiaccicare una parola. Queste erano le prime parole della giornata e sembravano un avanzo del giorno precedente. «A- a cosa serve?»

« È il tuo completo» rispose la signora Firzgerald «devi fare una bell' impressione al processo e non c'è modo migliore per farlo che con un completo elegante».

Alem had always avoided disagreement with the Fitzgeralds and he certainly didn't want to have one on a day like this, so he chose his words carefully. "I thought that the barrister will be there to make a good impression for me, so he should be wearing a suit."

"Very good," Mrs Fitzgerald replied, acknowledging Alem's logic. "But this is all about you, you'll be standing there tight in front of the judge, he'll be looking straight at you. I know these things; a suit will make a good impression, take my word for it. I know how these people judge character."

Alem rubbed his eyes again and paused for thought. "If these judges are so intelligent, they should know that you cannot always judge by first impressions, they should know that a suit is just pieces of material sewn together and that you cannot judge a person's character by the pieces of material that they wear. And besides I thought the judge was going to look at the facts – why I'm here and can I stay, things like that. I didn't think h was going to judge my character."

Mrs Fitzgerald looked down at Alem sitting up in the bed; the reasoning of this half-awake mind impressed her. "You're right," she said as she placed the suit across the bottom of the bed.

Alem looked at the suit. "So I don't have to wear it then?"

She turned and began to leave the room. "It's up to you."

Half an hour later Alem looked in the wardrobe mirror and whispered to himself, "I hate this suit." The sleeves were too long, the legs were too long and the chest was too tight, but he felt that he had to wear it to please Mrs Fitzgerald.

"We have to leave soon," Mr Fitzgerald shouted from downstairs. "Get yourself together."

Alem opened his door. "Mr Fitzgerald, do I have to carry anything?"

"No, not really. You'll be back in no time," he shouted back.

Alem aveva sempre cercato di evitare discussioni con i Fitzgerald e di sicuro non ne voleva una proprio quel giorno quindi scelse le parole attentamente. « Pensavo che l'avvocato fosse lì per fare una bell'impressione per me, quindi lui dovrebbe indossare un completo elegante».

«Esatto» rispose la signora Fitzgerald, riconoscendo la logica del ragazzo. «Ma qui si tratta di te, tu sarai là proprio di fronte al giudice che ti osserverà. Me ne intendo di queste cose, un completo ti farà fare una bell'impressione, credimi. So come quelle persone giudicano gli altri».

Alem si stropicciò ancora gli occhi e si fermò a riflettere. « Se questi giudici sono così intelligenti dovrebbero sapere che non si può giudicare una persona dalla prima impressione. Dovrebbero sapere che un vestito è solo pezzi di stoffa cuciti assieme e che non si può giudicare il carattere di una persona dai pezzi di stoffa che indossa. Oltretutto, io pensavo che il giudice guardasse ai fatti, perché sono qui, se posso restare eccetera. Non pensavo che avrebbe anche giudicato il mio aspetto».

La signora Fitzgerald guardò Alem seduto sul letto. Il ragionamento del ragazzo appena svegliato l'impressionò. « Hai ragione» gli disse mentre appoggiava il completo sul bordo del letto.

Alem guardò il completo. «Quindi non dovrò indossarlo? »

 Lei si girò e fece per andarsene, «sta a te decidere».

Un'ora e mezza dopo Alem si guardò allo specchio dell'armadio e disse tra sé e se : "odio questo completo". Le maniche e i pantaloni erano troppo lunghi e gli stringeva il torace, ma si sentiva in dovere di indossarlo per fare un piacere la signora Fitzgerald.

« Presto Alem dobbiamo andare!» lo chiamava la signora Fitzgerald da basso, «preparati!»

Alem aprì la porta. « Signor Fitzgerald, devo portare qualcosa?».

«No, non direi. Saremo a casa presto» gli rispose.

"Mr Fitzgerald, can I bring a book?"

"of course you can," Mr Fitzgerald replied. "You won't have much time to read in court but you can read on the tube down if you like."

Alem went to one of his piles of books and grabbed the one at the top of the pile. He then left the room and went downstairs without looking at what he had chosen. When he entered the living room, Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald were waiting for him, Ruth wandered about in her nightdress. It was the first time they had seen him in the suit. As they looked down, they all gasped as if horrified by some unsightly slime.

"Alem," Mrs Fitzgerald said loudly, "you can't do that – you can't wear trainers with that suit."

Ruth shook her head. "No, Alem, get real, it doesn't rock."

He searched for more from Ruth. "It doesn't rock?" he said. "It doesn't rock what?"

"It don't go, it doesn't match," she said.

Mr Fitzgerald circled around him as if inspecting a car. "Everything's fine except the trainers."

"Do you think I should change them?" Alem asked.

"I think you should," Mr Fitzgerald replied. "I think you should try wearing your shoes, the black ones we bought for you, they'll do nicely."

After a short bus ride to East Ham Underground station they caught the tube and headed towards the court. Alem had not been outside the East End for a long time. Most journeys, no matter how small, would normally arouse some excitement in him but this morning he was very subdued. Fortunately they had all managed to find seats, but as the train moved closer to central London it began to fill up. By the time it had reached Mile End, the train was packed; there was standing room only, and very little of that.

« Signor Fitzgerald posso portarmi un libro?»

« Certo che puoi», gli rispose l'uomo,« non avrai molto tempo per leggere durante l'udienza, però puoi farlo nella metro se vuoi».

Alem andò verso una delle pile di libri e ne scelse uno che stava in cima. Poi lasciò la stanza e scese le scale senza guardare cosa avesse preso. Quando arrivò in salotto i signori Fitzgerald lo stavano già aspettando. Ruth stava gironzolando indossando ancora la camicia da notte. Era la prima volta che lo vedevano in completo. Nel momento in cui abbassarono lo sguardo, tutti sussultarono come fossero inorriditi dalla vista di una macchia sgradevole.

«Alem» avvertì il signor Fitzgerald «non puoi farlo, non puoi mettere le tue scarpe da ginnastica con quel completo».

Ruth scosse la testa, «eh no Alem, sii realista, non è stiloso!»

Cercò di capire cosa pensava Ruth «non è stiloso?» disse il ragazzo «non è stiloso cosa?»

« Non ci sta, non stanno bene assieme» rispose lei.

Il signor Fitzgerald lo esaminò, come se stesse ispezionando un'auto «è tutto perfetto, tranne le scarpe».

« Credi che dovrei cambiarle?» chiese Alem.

« Penso proprio di sì» confermò il signor Fitzgerald, « Penso che dovresti provare a metterti le scarpe, quelle nere che ti abbiamo comprato andranno benissimo».

Dopo un breve tratto in autobus arrivarono fino alla stazione della metropolitana dell' East Ham, presero la metro e si avviarono verso il tribunale a Londra. Era da molto che Alem non si allontanava dal quartiere dell' East End. I viaggi, anche quelli brevi come quello, di norma lo esaltavano ma quel giorno era piuttosto silenzioso. Per fortuna riuscirono a trovare i posti nella metro, però, più il convoglio si avvicinava al centro della città, più si riempiva. Quando aveva raggiunto la fermata del Mile End la carrozza

As the bodies filled the carriage, the temperature rose and Alem began to sweat in his heavy suit. The train rocked from side to side and forwards and backwards as it was braking and accelerating, and as it did so the only part of Alem that remained still was his feet, weighed down by his heavy shoes.

Alem wondered why the people on the train were trying so hard not to be noticed. Some would just stare at the advertisement boards as if they were trying to see through them, some read newspapers or book as if they were being forced, some tried to go back to sleep, and others listened to music on their Walkman. But no one was making eye contact with him and no one smiled. These were the employed people, he thought, those that had left school and obtained jobs. They were not starving at war but they look miserable. I wonder, Alem thought to himself, are they all going to court? There was nothing else for him to do so he opened his book.

The book turned out to be a collection of was poems by Wilfred Owen. Alem had not read much poetry but he soon turned into what was in front of him. He quickly picked up on the big stories behind the sometimes short poems. He held the book tightly with both hands close to his chest, trying to minimize the amount of movement caused by the train. At times he would stop reading and look up to digest a verse, only to find that some of the faces had changed in the carriage but they were still pretty miserable.

Alem and the Fitzgeralds got off at Borough Underground station and walked to the court in Swan Street. It was a very old building, grey and lacking in colour. Alem felt that there was something menacing about the building, yet it had a timeless beauty about it. It looked as if giants had carved it by hand out of one solid piece of stone. They entered the building and were directed to the notice board, where Alem found his name along with many others.

era al completo e vi erano soltanto posti in piedi, e pure pochi. Mano a mano che i corpi riempivano la carrozza, la temperatura si alzava e Alem iniziò a sudare nel suo pesante completo elegante. Il convoglio sballottava le persone da parte a parte: le spostava in avanti quando si arrestava e indietro quando ripartiva e mentre si muoveva l'unica parte di Alem che restava immobile erano i suoi piedi ancorati dalle scarpe pesanti.

Alem si domandava perché la gente in treno si sforzasse così tanto per non essere notata. Alcuni fissavano insistentemente i cartelloni pubblicitari come se potessero vederci attraverso, altri leggevano giornali o libri come se fossero costretti a farlo, altri ancora cercavano di dormire e altri ascoltavano musica con il loro Walkman[21]. Tuttavia nessuno lo guardava e nessuno sorrideva. Tutti loro erano le persone impiegate, coloro che, rifletteva Alem, non andavano più a scuola e avevano un lavoro. Non morivano di fame, non erano in guerra eppure sembravano così infelici. "Chissà se", pensava Alem, "stavano tutti andando in tribunale?" Non aveva altro da fare e quindi aprì il libro.

Quest'ultimo si rivelò essere una collezione di poesie sulla prima guerra mondiale di Wilfred Owen. Alem non aveva letto molte poesie, ma ben presto si ritrovò in molte delle parole scritte davanti a lui. Capiva al volo il nocciolo delle storie complesse che si nascondevano dietro quelle poesie, a volte molto corte. Reggeva il libro sul suo petto con entrambe le mani in modo da ammortizzare il movimento del treno. A tratti smetteva di leggere e alzava lo sguardo per riflettere su un verso, così scopriva che alcuni visi nella carrozza erano cambiati, ma anche loro accomunati dall'aspetto infelice.

Alem e i Fitzgerald scesero alla stazione della metro di Borough e si incamminarono nella Swan Street per raggiungere il tribunale. Era un palazzo antico, grigio e stinto. Alem sentiva che c'era un che di minaccioso in quel palazzo, sebbene fosse di una bellezza senza tempo. Sembrava che dei giganti l'avessero forgiato da un unico e solido blocco di pietra. Entrarono nel palazzo e si diressero verso la bacheca dei procedimenti in cui Alem trovò il suo nome insieme a quello di tanti altri.

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[21]   Antenato del più moderno I pod o mp3.

"I found my name," Alem told the others, who were still searching the many names.

"What does it say?" asked Mrs Fitzgerald.

Alem took a moment to read it through to himself, then he read it aloud. "Case Number C651438, Appellant – Alem Kelo. Respondent – the Secretary of State. Ten o'clock, Court Number Nine."

All four turned to look for signs giving directions. In this part of the building everybody looked as if they knew exactly where they were going, everybody looked so confident.

"Oh I know where it is," Mrs Fitzgerald exclaimed. "It's upstairs, I know exactly where it is."

"How do you know?" Alem asked as they all began to follow her.

"I've been here before with little Themba."

"Who is little Themba?" Alem was trying to keep up with her as she strode up the stairs. Mr Fitzgerald lagged way behind.

"Themba was such a nice boy. He stayed with us a long time ago. We came here because they wanted to send him back."

"Back to where?"

"Back to South Africa," Mrs Fitzgerald said almost as if Alem should have known. "His mother and father were there but they didn't want Themba to grow up in a country that was officially racist. Nor did I."

By now Alem was struggling not to burst into a run, "Did he have to go back, Mrs Fitzgerald?"

Mrs Fitzgerald slowed down as they reached court number nine. A large figure 9 hung over the door. "Now that's a long story. The court allowed him to stay, so he stayed for a while.

« Eccolo» Alem indicò il proprio nome ai due che stavano ancora cercando

« Che dice? » chiese il signor Fitzgerald.

Alem si prese un momento per leggerlo da solo, poi lo lesse ad alta voce. «Causa numero C651438, attore – Alem Kelo, convenuto – Commissione Territoriale. Ore 10.00, aula numero 9».

Tutti e quattro si guardarono intorno per trovare dei cartelli con le indicazioni. In quella parte del palazzo tutti sembravano sapere esattamente dove stavano andando, sembravano tutti così sicuri di sé.

« Oh, io so dov'è! » esclamò la signora Fitzgerald, « è al piano di sopra, so benissimo dove si trova».

« Come fai a saperlo? » chiese Alem mentre iniziava a seguirla.

« Ci sono già stata con il piccolo Themba».

« Chi è il piccolo Themba? » Alem cercava di starle al passo mentre lei si incamminava a passo deciso verso le scale. Il signor Fitzgerlad invece restava indietro.

« Themba era un ragazzo così gentile. Ha abitato con noi tanto tempo fa. Siamo dovuti venire qui perché volevamo riportarlo indietro».

« Indietro dove? »

« Volevano riportarlo in sud Africa», rispose la signora Fitzgerlad come se Alem avesse dovuto capirne il motivo. « La sua mamma e il suo papà non volevano che il proprio figlio crescesse in un paese che si proclamava razzista. Nemmeno io lo volevo».

A quel punto Alem stava quasi per mettersi a correre per mantenere il passo della donna « è dovuto tornare a casa signora Fitzgerald? »

La donna rallentò mano a mano che si stavano avvicinando all'aula nove. Sopra la porta vi era un gigante cartello con il numero "9". « No, è una storia lunga. Il giudice gli permise di restare così stette con noi per un po'.

Then when Nelson Mandela was freed and things began to change, he went back and now he's a computer programmer. He still phones me sometimes."

Outside courtroom number nine there were two other families. Both families looked anxious and both spoke languages that Alem couldn't recognize. There was just enough room left on the bench for Alem and the Fitzgeralds to sit. Alem looked down the corridor where he could see other numbered signs hanging outside courtrooms, with other families sitting in front of them. In this part of the building the people didn't look as though they knew where they were going, and these people certainly didn't look confident.

Small children walked up and down, some would try to communicate with others through touching and offering to share toys. Many of the adults smoked nervously. When Alem heard people speaking, he seemed to hear a different language every time. He sat and watched two small boys, one black African and one white European, colouring a book. Unable to communicate verbally, they smiled and made noises to each other as crayons magically left their colour on the pages. Suddenly, Alem heard a familiar voice.

"Hello, Alem – Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald."

"Hello," Alem replied.

It was Sheila, she was with a man in his late twenties with very short brown hair and a goatee beard. His grey suit, grey tie and white shirt all looked as if he has bought them that morning. He smiled.

"This is Nicholas Morgan," Sheila said, "I told you about him."

"I hope she's told you some good things too," he said, flashing his perfect teeth and his clean-cut smile.

Sheila had heard that one before. A little embarrassed, she began to introduce the family to Nicholas. "This is Alem and this is Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald, his foster parents."

Nicholas kept smiling. "Pleased to meet you."

Poi quando Nelson Mandela fu liberato e le cose iniziarono a cambiare tornò indietro e ora lui è un programmatore di computer. Mi telefona ancora qualche volta».

Fuori dall'aula numero nove c'erano altre due famiglie. Entrambe sembravano nervose ed entrambe parlavano due lingue che Alem non riconosceva. Sulla panchina c'era rimasto giusto un po' di spazio perché si sedessero anche Alem e i Fitzgerald. Il ragazzo guardò lungo il corridoio se vedeva altri cartelli con il numero delle aule con altra gente davanti. In questa parte del palazzo le persone non sembravano sapere dove stessero andando e di sicuro non sembravano sicuri di sé.

Dei bambini piccoli camminavano avanti e indietro, altri cercavano di comunicare con gli altri toccandoli o chiedendo loro di scambiare dei giocattoli. Molti degli adulti fumavano nervosamente. Quando Alem sentiva qualcuno parlare gli sembrava di sentire ogni volta una lingua diversa. Mentre era seduto si mise a osservare due bambini piccoli, uno era un africano e uno europeo che stavano colorando un libro. Sebbene non sapessero parlare, comunicavano tramite sorrisi e suoni mentre i colori lasciavano una traccia sul foglio come per magia. All'improvviso Alem udì una voce familiare.

« Ciao Alem, signori Fitzgerald».

« Ciao» rispose Alem.

Era Sheila. Era venuta con un uomo che avrà avuto quasi trent'anni con i capelli bruni molto corti e il pizzetto. Il suo abito grigio, la sua cravatta grigia e la sua camicia bianca sembravano fossero stati appena usciti da una sartoria. Sorrise.

« Lui è Nicholas Morgan» disse Sheila, « ti ho già parlato di lui».

« Spero ti abbia raccontato anche cose positive» disse lui, sfoggiando un perfetto sorriso bianco smagliante».

Sheila aveva già sentito quella battuta in precedenza. Con un po' in imbarazzo, iniziò a introdurre la famiglia a Nicholas. « Lui è Alem e loro sono il signore e la signora Fitzgerald, la sua famiglia affidataria».

Nicholas continuava a sorridere, « lieto di conoscervi».

He shook everyone's hand and then sat precariously on the bench next to Alem. As he spoke, he looked directly at Alem; hi voice was clear, soft and sympathetic.

"Alem I just need to chat a little about what's going to happen this morning. This case has arisen because the Secretary of State, in other words the government, has doubts about your reason for being here. What we have to do is to convince the adjudicator that the reasons you put in the statement you made are legitimate. Now, today nothing much will happen. The adjudicator will ask you if you are Alem Kelo; the person that represents the state will stand up and say why he thinks you should go; and then I'll stand up and say why I think you should stay. The adjudicator should then ask us to go away and prepare our cases. It should be as simple as that. Do you have any questions?"

Alem looked around. "Who are these people? Will they will be there too?" he asked with a slight nod of his head in the direction of the other people seated on the bench.

"No, these are other cases that will be heard after you. I think they're Polish Romany people, probably in a similar position to you," Nicholas replied. He looked at his notes and pointed to something that he had spotted. "There's an interpreter available if you want one to but I've been told that you're happy without one. Is that right?"

"Yes, I think I'll be OK. Do you think my English is good enough?" he asked.

"I think you'll be fine," Nicholas said as he reached out and touched Alem on his shoulder.

Nicholas stayed with them until a woman came from the courtroom and called out Alem's name.

Mrs Fitzgerald jumped up as if startled by a ghost. "Oh, that's us!"

Nicholas led them into the courtroom. Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald went to the family seats, and Nicholas led Alem to his seat. Directly opposite was the adjudicator's seat. It was big, red and empty, and stood on a raised platform, which Alem immediately thought was to symbolize superiority. Mounted on the wall above the seat was a large gilded crest. It portrayed a large lion and unicorn facing each other; above them was a golden

Strinse la mano a tutti e poi si sedette in equilibro precario sulla panca vicino ad Alem. Mentre parlava guardava dritto al giovane, la sua voce era chiara, morbida e comprensiva.

« Alem, ti spiego brevemente ciò che succederà questa mattina. Questo caso è importante perché il Segretario di Stato, in poche parole il governo, mette in dubbio le tue motivazioni per restare qui. Ciò che dobbiamo fare e convincere il giudice della loro legittimità. Oggi non aspettarti grandi cose. Il giudice ti chiederà se sei Alem Kelo, la persona che rappresenterà lo Stato si alzerà in piedi e pronuncerà i motivi per cui tu devi uscire dal paese e poi io mi alzerò e dirò perché tu invece devi restarci. Il giudice poi ci dirà tutti di uscire e preparerà tutto per il caso. Sarà tutto molto semplice. Hai qualche domanda?»

Alem si guardò intorno. « Chi sono queste persone? Saranno anche loro dentro con noi?» chiese lui facendo segno con il capo verso le altre persone sedute sulla panca.

« No, loro sono qui per altre udienze che si terranno dopo la tua. Credo siano zingari polacchi, con molta probabilità nella tua stessa situazione» rispose Nicholas. Guardò i suoi appunti e indicò qualcosa che aveva notato. « C'è un interprete per te ma mi hanno detto che non lo vuoi. È così?»

« Sì credo che ce la farò. Pensi che il mio inglese non sia abbastanza buono?» Domandò il ragazzo.

« Penso che te la caverai» ripeté Nicholas e gli appoggiò una mano sulla spalla.

Nicholas rimase con loro finché una donna uscì dall'aula e chiamò il nome di Alem. La signora Fitzgerald si alzò di scatto come se avesse visto un fantasma. « Oh siamo noi!»

Nicholas li condusse all'interno dell'aula. I signori Fitzgerald si sedettero nei posti assegnati alla famiglia e Nicholas accompagnò Alem nel posto assegnatogli. Proprio nella parte opposta c'era lo scanno del giudice. La sua seduta era grande, rossa e vuota ed era su una piattaforma rialzata che, pensò Alem, simboleggiava la sua superiorità. Sulla sommità dello scanno era montato un enorme stemma dorato che rappresentava un grande leone e un unicorno faccia a faccia. Sopra di questa immagine vi era una corona

crown and below them were the Latin words "*Dieu et mon droit*". In front of Alem to the left stood Nicholas, making last-minute notes, and to the right of him stood the representative of the Secretary of State. Underneath the adjudicator's platform sat the usher who had called Alem in, and to the left of her sat the clerk. The walls of the room were high, panelled halfway up in a rich, dark wood, but from there on up to the ceiling they were painted in cheap magnolia. Alem admired the paneling but noticed that the top half of the room had been neglected; the magnolia paint was flaking and cobwebs stretched from the corners and light fittings as if protected by a preservation of order.

Suddenly, everyone stood up. Alem was taken by surprise; he was the only one left seated. He looked towards Nicholas, who signalled with his hand and mimed the words "Stand up". Alem stood up. The adjudicator walked in and sat in his seat and everyone sat down, except Alem. Nicholas signaled him down with his hand and mimed the words "Sit down". Alem sat down.

The hearing began as predicted. The state representative spoke first.

"The state believes that the appellant faces no personal threat if he were to be returned to his country. We are of the belief that if he were returned, he would live a relatively peaceful life."

Next Nicholas stood up and said his piece. "My client believes that he has much to fear in he were to return home at this time. He has in fact suffered persecution there in the past and the political circumstances in both Ethiopia and Eritrea have not changes since then."

Alem watched the adjudicator as he read form some of the papers in front of him, and knew that he was reading about him. The adjudicator then turned to Alem, took of his spectacles and began to speak. "What I am going to do in adjourn this hearing so that reports can be prepared. Do you understand?"

Alem was nervous, his reply was barely audible. "Yes, I understand."

dorata e sotto le parole latine "Dieu et mon droit"[22]. Davanti ad Alem alla sinistra c'era Nicholas in piedi che cercava di sistemare le cose dell'ultimo minuto e alla sua destra c'era il rappresentante dello Stato. Sotto la piattaforma del giudice sedeva la donna che aveva chiamato Alem e alla sua sinistra c'era dattilografo. Le pareti dell'aula erano alte, per metà ricoperte di pannelli di legno scuro e per metà dipinti di un color magnolia scadente. Alem ammirava il rivestimento in legno ma notò l'incuranza che avevano messo nella parte superiore della stanza: la tinta magnolia si era scrostata e grandi ragnatele passavano dagli angoli ai lampadari come se questi ultimi fossero protetti da un ordine di mantenimento.

All'improvviso tutti si alzarono. Alem fu preso alla sprovvista e rimase l'unico ancora seduto. Guardò verso Nicholas, il quale gli fece segno con la mano di alzarsi e mimò l'ordine "in piedi". Alem si alzò. Il giudice entrò nell'aula e si sedette sul suo scanno, così anche gli altri si sedettero, tutti eccetto Alem. Nicholas gli indicò ancora cosa fare, gli fece segno di sedersi e mimò l'ordine "siediti", così il ragazzo si sedette. L'udienza iniziò come prefissato. Il rappresentante dello Stato parlò per primo.

« Lo Stato ritiene che l'imputato non incorra in alcuna minaccia personale nel caso in cui lo stesso debba fare ritorno al suo paese d'origine. Noi riteniamo che se dovesse tornarvisi vivrebbe una vita relativamente serena».

Poi, Nicholas si alzò e disse la sua parte: « il mio cliente ritiene che la sua incolumità sarebbe violata se ritornasse nel suo paese d'origine adesso. Infatti in passato finché vi viveva fu perseguito e le circostanze politiche di entrambi i paesi, ossia Etiopia ed Eritrea, non sono ancora cambiate da allora».

Alem fissò il giudice che stava leggendo ciò che era riportato nei fogli davanti a lui e il giovane sapeva che stata leggendo la sua storia. Il giudice poi si girò verso Alem, si tolse gli occhiali e iniziò a parlare. « La seguente seduta verrà aggiornata in seguito affinché siano preparati i dovuti rapporti, capisce ciò che sto dicendo, Signor Kelo?»

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[22] Inscrizione che appare nello stemma reale sopra descritto che in francese significa "Dio e il mio diritto", motto del Re d' Inghilterra.

Alem was nervous, his reply was barely audible. "Yes, I understand."

The adjudicator continued. "Until you come back before me, you will stay with your foster parent at 202 Meanly Road. Is that agreeable?"

"Yes," Alem said more positively.

"Very well," the adjudicator concluded. "Do you have anything to say?"

"Yes," Alem replied.

There was a look of surprise on the face of Nicholas. He had no idea what Alem could possibly want to say; he just hoped that he wouldn't say anything that would jeopardize his case. The Fitzgeralds looked at each other, not knowing what was going to happen next. Alem wasn't working on the script.

Alem looked around the courtroom and said, "I would like to wish you all a happy Christmas."

A smile came to the faces of all in the courtroom and the clerk noted his remarks.

The adjudicator's tone changed, and he leaned forward and spoke to Alem as if he was genuinely trying to help him. "It's difficult to tell whether you mean that in retrospect or are speaking of the Christmas to come. You see, we have just had Christmas."

"I know," Alem replied, "people were very nice to me at Christmas, but today it is Christmas in Ethiopia and Eritrea and many other parts of the world, and I think that if Christmas makes us nicer to each other, we should celebrate as many Christmases as we can."

There were smiles from all in the courtroom and quiet laughter from some. Mrs Fitzgerald smiled as rears rolled down her face.

The adjudicator laughed the loudest. "Not only have I learned something new today, I have also been made wiser. I would like to thank you for imparting your knowledge t me and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you happy Christmas."

Alem era nervoso, la sua risposta si sentiva a malapena. « Sì, Vostro Onore ».

Il giudice continuò « in attesa della prossima seduta, starà con la sua famiglia affidataria nella residenza di Mainly Road numero 202. Intesi?»

« Sì, Vostro Onore», asserì Alem con più convinzione.

« Ottimo» concluse il giudice, « ha qualcos'altro da aggiungere, Signor Kelo?»

« Sì, Vostro Onore» rispose inaspettatamente Alem.

Nicholas ebbe un tuffo al cuore: non aveva alcuna idea di ciò che Alem avrebbe detto. Sperava solo che non dicesse nulla che potesse mettere a repentaglio il caso. I Fitzgerald si guardarono, ignorando ciò che sarebbe successo. Alem stava improvvisando.

Alem guardò tutti quelli in aula e disse: « vorrei augurare a tutti buon Natale!»

Sul viso dei presenti in aula comparse un sorriso e il dattilografo annotò l'accaduto nei documenti.

Il tono del giudice cambiò e si sporse per parlare al giovane come se volesse sinceramente aiutarlo. « Non so se intende farlo valere retroattivamente o se si riferisce al Natale che verrà ma le rammento che le feste sono appena passate».

« Lo so» rispose Alem, «le persone erano molto gentili con me a Natale, ma oggi è Natale in Etiopia, Eritrea e in molte altre parti del mondo. Credo che il Natale ci renda più felici e gentili con gli altri, quindi dovremmo celebrare quanti più Natali possiamo».

Tutti nell'aula sorrisero e ci fu anche qualche risata. La signora Fitzgerald sorrise mentre lacrime di gioia scorrevano sul suo viso.

Il giudice fu quello che rise più forte di tutti. « Non solo ho imparato una cosa nuova oggi, ma mi ha anche reso più saggio. La ringrazio per aver condiviso la sua conoscenza con me e vorrei cogliere l'occasione per augurarle buon Natale».

Alem smiled at the adjudicator. The adjudicator put on his spectacles and continued. "This hearing will now be adjourned until 15 February on the condition that the appellant resides with his current foster parent. I hope by then that all the relevant reports can be prepared."

The two representatives nodded. The adjudicator stood and the whole court stood. This time Alem followed the crowd. The adjudicator turned and left, whereupon the courtroom filled with talk as everyone began to leave.

The Fitzgeralds headed straight for Alem. Mr Fitzgerald shook his hand and said, "You had us worried there for a moment."

Mrs Fitzgerald hugged him, kissed him in his forehead and said, "Alem, you were great! Happy Christmas!"

Alem sorrise al giudice. Quest'ultimo si rimise gli occhiali e continuò: « la seduta sarà aggiornata il giorno 15 febbraio all'unica condizione che l'imputato risieda con l'attuale famiglia affidataria. Mi auguro che per allora tutti i dovuti rapporti saranno pronti».

I due rappresentanti annuirono. Il giudice si alzò in piedi e tutti quanti in aula fecero lo stesso. Questa volta Alem li imitò. Il giudice si volse e se ne andò e a quel punto si sollevarono le chiacchiere indistinte delle persone che uscivano dal'aula.

La famiglia Fitzgerald si diresse verso Alem. Il signor Fitzgerald strinse la mano ad Alem e gli disse «a un certo punto ci hai fatti preoccupare».

La donna invece lo abbracciò e lo baciò sulla guancia e gli disse: « Alem sei stato fantastico! Buon Natale!»

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter was meant to give an overview about the author of the novel and the novel itself, showing also one of its main particular feature, that is to say the use in the dialogues of a new form of London language only spoken by young people, especially adolescents, who are the main characters of the story.

From an Italian translator's point of view this means that this peculiar textual feature can become a cultural issue due to the differences in the background that there are both in England and Italy. The solution proposed for the other problems faced in the text will be in the following chapter, and it is only a personal suggestion.

All the book is filled with translation issues that imply a further thought form the translator, thus some parts can be complicated for a translator to deal with, but among all the chapters in the book I chose to propose the translation of only these two because I thought that they could be a good example for a translation analysis that will be carried out in the following chapter. Both these texts, indeed, embody the main features that I noticed immediately while reading the text: the presence of a simple language at the beginning was only the frame for a more complex translation problem, that is to say the newborn MLE, the presence of puns, idioms, both specialized legal language and

informal one, cultural bound problems and correspondence problems that will be dealt in the following chapter.

This book is characterized by the thought use of the language, it first appears to be simple but then it hides many translation challenges, not only from a lexical point of view, but also cultural.

Chapter 3 – Translation Analysis

This chapter will focus on the translation presented in Chapter Two. I will present some significant chunks of the original text that were particularly challenging during the process and may provide insights into certain aspects of English into Italian translation. An analysis of my own translation will follow, taking also into account the theories described in Chapter One.

3.1 The Process

First of all, it is important to note that it is advisable for translators to work in their native language when translating, because, as Hervey et al (2000:2) explain, "translator training normally focuses on translation into the mother tongue, because higher quality is achieved in that direction than in translating into a foreign language" (2000: 2). The point of this sentence is that the level that the learnt language has reached will never be as high as that of the native language. However, it was observed by Gałajda et al. (2016:6) that "Communication in the foreign language, in addition to the possibilities offered by communication in the mother tongue, involves the ability to negotiate meanings, to mediate, and to develop intercultural understanding" that is to say all those very skills and qualities that are essential in a translator's work. As a consequence, not only do translators need to have mastery of their native language, but they also need o be able to handle all those subtle meanings in second language communication (Leppihalme,1996:203).

Newmark (1991:49) highlights that, apart from excellent writing skills and a sensitivity to language, translators should also have a good knowledge of their own cultural background. In fact, translating is not only a matter of grammar, syntax, morphological and lexical correctness, but also includes knowledge of the source culture, for instance, cultural references, proverbs, idiomatic expressions and so on. All those features will be dealt with later on in this chapter. As Nida (1964:145) points out, if:

the translator is to produce an acceptable translation he must have an excellent background in the source language and at the same time must have control over the resources into which he is translating. He cannot simply match words from a dictionary; he must in a real sense create a new linguistic form to carry the concept expressed in the source language.

Thus, Nida, like Bassnett (2002), makes it clear that not only should translators have a "complete control of the receptor language" (Nida, 1964:150) but also "a whole set of extra- linguistic criteria" (Bassnett, 2002:21).

As highlighted in the first chapter, the book *Refugee Boy* uses plain language to talk about important, complex issues. However, this should not be considered to be an easy translation only because of the presence of simple language, because it also hides some issues in translation. In the novel, indeed, there are some of those culturally bound words that will become a challenge for the translator. Not only is translation problematic because of the cultural references problems, but also the style. As was stated in Chapter One, the language used in this novel stands out for its simplicity and directness, in spite of the fact that it is addressed to young adults and adults. Thus, translator should be careful when choosing the appropriate translation, in order to try to keep this original style, sticking to what has been said in the first chapter.

After having read the text and understood the content and the book's genre - a step that has been already dealt with in the first chapter- a general idea of what the process will require and some of the most frequent translation problems should be set out in the translator's mind. What is more, in order to ease the work, while reading it can be useful to spot and highlight any difficult word or any translation challenge that will be faced later on in the effective process. Finally, the translator should have a preliminary idea of the final text and of the most evident translation solutions.

Bassnett (2002:6) highlights that translation "is not just the transfer of a text from one language into another, it is now rightly seen as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures, a process during which all kinds of transactions take place mediated by the figure of the translator". Thus, in the process it will be obvious that something will be lost and something added in the target text that was not considered in the source text. As a result, the main concern of a translator should not be the loss itself

but the reduction of the problem, since the loss of any cultural or idiomatic meaning is often almost inevitable. It is for this reason that Hervey et al. (2000) suggest questioning the text, deciding which feature should be keep in the translation and deciding what to sacrifice in the process, always bearing in mind the main features of the text (Hervey et al, 2000:21).

As concerns my work, I always tried to obtain a general literal translation at first, because as Newmark (1991:1) states "the more important the language of a text, the more closely it should be translated" and since in this text language is simple but important I wanted to stick to the author's style. However, as was predictable, sometimes the literal equivalence was acceptable but in some other parts that was not possible, because of all the natural differences in the two languages, especially in grammar, and because, despite the closeness between English and Italian, there are two different sets of cultural habits. That is why, in the end, I clearly had to adapt the text to Italian semantics and grammar, but I always tried to keep it as plain as possible according to the text. It is for this reason that I tried to combine respect for the original text and the comprehension of the intended readers.

Last but not least, before starting translating it is important to decide how to proceed as concerns the cultural aspects of the translation, for example idiomatic expressions or the translation of units of measurement and so on. These are only two of the several cultural problems that this text proposes. Finally, it is also important for the translators to decide which strategy will be leading the translation process and keep it for the entire process. For instance, if they choose one of the strategies already mentioned in Chapter One, for example domestication, they should be consistent with their choice for the entire work (Venuti,1995). On the other hand, one can consider Venuti's (1995) two strategies as a continuum and decide to create a text that becomes a mediation between the two sides of domestication and foreignisation, as I did.

In the analysis I took into account that the audience was either conceived to be adolescents or adults, and for this reason many times I would stop and think of a specification of a term, if necessary, or of an adequate register and style for that specific part of the text. Generally speaking, I tried to keep the formal foreign features of the

text, such as the setting, but I will also take into account other options inspired by the theories in Chapter One as well, still focusing on what I thought was the most suitable for me in the text and what became my final translation.

3.2 Cultural Aspects of The Translation

This first part of the analysis will give a general outline of the issues that I found challenging from a cultural point of view. They were mainly linked to the cultural distance between source and target cultures and the comprehension of the text and that is why it was so difficult to deal with them.

3.2.1 The Title

Before moving to the core of the translation, a premise should be made about the title of the novel itself. First of all, the simple title *Refugee Boy* actually contains two important words that describe the nature of the book. *Refugee* represents the condition of young Alem and is also what the text is about, a sort of statement defending refugees in the UK; and the second one is also important because it signifies the young age of the character. Unfortunately, the translation of the very first word can cause some problems because of the connotation that the Italian version gives and different shades of the definition elaborated to define the status of someone seeking asylum.

This subject is part of current affairs in Italy, as it is worldwide, and one cannot avoid meeting the terms used to refer to refugee conditions, for example *extracomunitatio/ profugo/ immigrato/ migrante/ clandestino*[23]. In this field, even though the media have not agreed on definitions, and these latter are also even not used properly in their newspapers' articles, where they are given a negative connotation (Di Luzio, 2011).

Galesi and Mangano (2010: 21) specify that:

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[23] There are many newspapers that tried to deal with the different connotations of those terms, see for example the online newspapers La Repubblica "Attenzione alle parole" http://boldrini.blogautore.repubblica.it/2011/03/attenzione-alle-parole/?refresh_ce ; Il Giornale "Se anche chiamarli migranti diventa offensivo" found in http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/commento-2-1167389.html or the debate in associazione Carta di Roma's website "La parola "clandestino" va cancellata dal linguaggio giornalistico": https://www.cartadiroma.org/editoriale/la-parola-clandestino-va-cancellata-dal-linguaggio-giornalistico/. These are just some of the many examples that can be found online on the use of the legal terms listed above and their connotation in Italy.

> il senso comune sugli immigrati è stato costruito in maniera scientifica e strumentale per favorire l'ascesa politica di gruppi xenofobi, poi diventati partiti di governo. I media hanno assecondato questo processo, imponendo luoghi comuni tanto diffusi quanto falsi. La realtà è completamente diversa.

This means that the negative perceptions that surround this topic have been based to a large extent on the use of the terms in order to create a certain political climate of fear and anger. In fact, all those terms are not synonyms: their meaning reflects a certain status and legal implications which are not often considered when people use them[24]. It is only in recent years that the need for a regulation was felt more than ever. Therefore, an association called *Carta di Roma* was created in order to limit and regulate the use of terms and the description of facts by the media; in particular newspapers, about the migrants' rights[25], in other words, journalists are asked to be more politically correct towards them.

In addition, also the field of law has become aware of this topic and thus, the EU and consequently the Italian law, have elaborated and settled the correct use of the terms. To be precise, the European Migration Network created a document about the right terminology for newcomers, called *Glossary of Terms Relating to Asylum and Migration/ Glossario Asilo e Immigrazione* - for the Italian publication- whose aim is to create a sensitive community of users of those terms. This *Glossary* is constantly updated[26] and it is also a benchmark for all the other official documents and institutions, for example the Carta di Roma itself. For example, the use of *clandestino* is not even conceived as a legal term, since the EU does not even consider it when creating its *Glossario 6.0 sull'asilo e sulla migrazione* (EMN, 2018) and thus its use is strongly disapproved by the Carta di Roma[27]. The same happens for the ambiguous term *extra comunitario*, negatively referring only to black people coming from outside the EU, but not for a Swiss or US citizens, for instance.

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[24] https://www.cartadiroma.org/cosa-e-la-carta-di-roma/codice-deontologico/
[25] https://www.cartadiroma.org/chi-siamo/
[26] The last one dates back May 2018, it is called *Glossario 6.0 aull' AsiloeE sull' Immigrazione, uno Strumento Utile per un Approccio Comparato*,
[27] https://www.cartadiroma.org/editoriale/la-parola-clandestino-va-cancellata-dal-linguaggio-giornalistico

The most neutral terms seem to be *migrante/ immigrate/ emigrate*; they refer to someone who has moved from his/her home country to another one. This concept is not generally applied to Europeans moving among the European barriers. even though it should be useful to specify which status they are, for example, "migrante altamente qualificato", "migrante forzato" (EMS, 2018: 202-210) and so on.

When looking at the history of the definition of "refugee", the latter appears to be more politically bounded that the others– see for example Geneva Refugee Convention and Protocol in 1951 whose definition of refugee was taken as an example for the law 1954/ 722 in Italy. Both the expressions *rifugiato* and *richiedente asilo* refer to people who are waiting for their application for international protection to be accepted, which is why it is considered a more bureaucratic term whose use is linked to many other expressions, for instance *rifugiato de facto, rifugiato prima facie, rifugiato sur place* and so on (EMS, 2018: 336- 344).

Since I recognized such a delicacy in the translation of those two simple words, I thought of two solutions: the translator could either keep the title in its original language, a procedure that is often accepted for books and film titles that are released today, or a solution could be *Il Rifugiato* a simple word that respects and describes Alem's situation in the text. In the world of publishing such solutions would be discussed with an editor.

3.2.2 Nationalities

Source text	Target text
He sat and watched two small boys, one black African and one European, colouring a book (p 146)	Si sedette e guardò i due bambini, uno era africano e l'altro europeo, che stavano colorando un libro
They're Polish Romani people (p 147)	Sono nomadi che vengono dalla Polonia

Two women came to help me. I had a good look at them, one was Black and one was Asian as well" (p.195)	Due donne vennero ad aiutarmi. Le ho guardate bene, una era nera e l'altra era asiatica.
"All different kind of boys – big, small, black and white" (p.50)	"Tanti tipi di ragazzi diversi, grandi, piccoli, neri e bianchi"

Also connected to what has been hinted at the previous section is the translation of what is culturally connected to the different nationalities and ethnic groups. In the book of course there are different mention to them since Alem himself is African, from Ethiopia and Eritrea, and he lived in a multicultural children's house and environment. It is where these three passages are taken from.

As regards the translation of "black" Italian translation may have some problems. This is due to the fact that in Italian the use of "black" has a different connotation and translation compared to English and it also varies according to different meaning that are given to the words. The "matter" is quite recent, because it dates back to the early '90s and it has been brought back in recent years due to the election of Obama:

> Nel 2008 il dubbio che 'negro' o 'di colore' fossero parole problematiche per riferirsi a un uomo evidentemente colto, ricco e soprattutto importante, il quale era in procinto di diventare il futuro presidente di una delle nazioni più potenti del mondo, è comparso anche in giornali e trasmissioni televisive dove non si era mostrata un'analoga attenzione al linguaggio quando si parlava di immigrati dall'Africa. (Scacchi, 2012: 274)

In this passage Scacchi (2012) highlights the fact the use and connotation of *nero*, black person, gained visibility when referring to a person as important as the US president. Moreover, nowadays in Italy the use of *nero / negro* is often connected to negative utterances, such as those addressed to black football player Balotelli and his other black collegues[28]. That is why, for instance, the use of a word as *negro* in a formal text is now avoided, since it sounds insulting and vulgar. Despite the similar pronunciation of Niggar and the Italian *negro*, those two words have a very different historical and social

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[28] https://www.avvenire.it/agora/pagine/razzismo-nel-calcio-e-nel-calcio-giovanile

background, because the Italian word, in more cultures, evokes an unfortunate image of a slave, or inferior person, as Baroncelli (1996:85) highlights.

Scacchi (2012) claims that this attitude towards those who are black is linked to the early 19th century racist domination, because, she states are "in Europa la post-razzialità è un'emanazione dell'amnesia verso la razza legata al crollo del colonialismo e al conseguente processo di rimozione del passato imperiale, in particolare in per paesi come la Francia e l'Italia" (Scacchi, 2012:96). This means that the debate around the definition of coloured people in Italy is still difficult due to its recent relevance. This includes not only the debate of being politically correct with colored people[29], but also with other matters, such as disability, chauvinism and ambiguity, but in general all the terms that may give offence to a certain group of people in society (Taylor, 1998:86). It is also for these reasons that translating the following parts was difficult and deserved deeper thought. These parts are of relevant concern because of the presence of other words that need more thought from the translator. The translation of "black" and "European" when referring to Romani people can be challenging because in Italian the translation of the words "black" and "Romani", *negro* and *zingaro* respectively, have gained an extremely offensive connotation, as Scacchi (2012) and Santoriello (2011) respectively underline.

"Romani" is also another word whose translation requires a politically correct Italian translation because, as Piasere (2009) investigated, there are many communities of roms all around Europe and the world, whose traditions and culture is very outstanding, and even inside their groups they have different terms to define either themselves and those belonging to their communities. As a consequence, the solutions adopted in Italian for those delicate cultural terms, should not be underestimated. Fortunately, Italy can also count on an institution called UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali- the national institution that fights any racial discrimination) that signals and gives help to those groups of people that suffer from any form of discrimination, including migrants and Romani people. UNAR still underlines that "a raccontare il pregiudizio,

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[29] See for example the clarification asked to one of the most important Italian language references Accademia della Crusca:
http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/lingua-italiana/consulenza-linguistica/domande-risposte/nero-negro-colore

più che le singole parole, troviamo delle vere e proprie formule stereotipate: nero incivile che puzza, immigrato povero e brutto, donne col velo che fanno paura" [30].

This also means that words require careful thought before using them in a published work. For this reason, for my solutions, I tried to take into account all the options. For instance, for the translation of the term "Romani" *Gitani* is to be excluded since, as Piasere (2009) specifies, it only refers to the Spanish communities. As a consequence, all the terms used to define the Romani communities in Italy- *nomadi, rom, Sinti, caminanti, zingari*[31] -, if taken specifically, are not just synonyms; they distinguish heterogeneous and more complex identity of Romani communities, and they do not take into account all those differences between the communities themselves, as stated above (Piasere, 2009). It is not only a matter of using one word rather than another one, it is also a matter of defining who are the subjects of the discourse. However, in this book there is no need for such a specification since they are only named once and not so well defined. For this reason I decided to stick to Italian law, whose use is the most neutral one, and so the most politically correct terms should be *rom* or *nomadi*.

As far as the translation of "black" is concerned, and taking into account what has been previously said about Italian history and cultural background, the sole word *africano*, that is to say the provenance of that person, would be enough to define it. On the other hand, if there is no hint in the book about the provenance of the person, as in the second and third example, I opted for the use of the word *nero*, because it is not an offense, if used correctly (Elamè, 2007:31-32). The same author discourages the use of the locution *persona di colore* because, apart from the fact that it seems to be a calque from the English "coloured- person", it embodies all the stereotypes of white people, since the latter do not recognize that they are coloured as well (Elamè, 2007:103-107).

Nationalities, not only are a central theme in the book, because it is the main reason for the fight in Alem's home country, but also represent a controversial issue in the English

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[30] UNAR, quoted online from the document called *Studio sui Fenomeni di Discriminazione e dei Relativi Stereotipi nei Vari Ambiti del Sistema Educativo, del Mercato del Lavoro, della Vita Sociale e Culturale, in Merito alle Differenze Etniche, di Abilita' Fisica e Psichica, di Orientamento Sessuale E di Identita' di Genere, di Eta' e Comunicazione Sociale a Contrasto delle Discriminazioni*, pag. 27, published online

[31] Piasere (2009)

to Italian translation due to the cultural connotation given to the words in the target text. This main issue is not only a problem related to Italian culture, but also, as Scacchi (2012) points out, to the modification that translations make to the original products, especially multimedia products, such as movies and television series.

3.2.3 Idioms and Play on Word

The novel Refugee Boy is set in Britain and revolves around the routine of an average English family: for this reason it is common to meet some informal expressions and the use of colloquial language. Some of those that I met in the book are the following:

Source text	Target text
Court in action	Sotto la lente del giudice OR L'udienza
Keep it for a rainy day	Mettere da parte

The difficulty in these cases was to understand the pun and try to detect a suitable expression that had the same "semantic and pragmatic effect" (Delabastita, 1996a: 128) in Italian. Furthermore, the difficulty is also linked to the natural structural differences between the language, as Delabastita (2004) highlights: the more target and source language are structurally different, the harder it will to find a linguistic translation of the puns. Of course there may be some puns or idioms that have almost the same meaning both in Italian and English, but in this case I wanted to analyse how I worked to solve translation problems with them. The expression "court in action" is a play on words of the idiom "caught in action/ caught in the act" because of the homophony of the two words "court" and "caught". The expression "caught in the act" is often used negatively when talking about someone caught in the middle of something, whereas the expression "caught in action" is mainly used in photography. For this reason I liked this association and thought that the title for that chapter could be "Sotto la lente del giudice" or simply "L'udienza" since all the chapter is focused on Alem's first trial, but this latter would miss the original figurative meaning. Another perhaps more effective play on words of

which I took advantage of is the title in the chapter "Meet the lads". Since this chapter is about the difficulties that Alem meets and the fight that he has with a bully, I thought it could be a good moment to insert another play on words, as is the trend for all the book. The result is "Incontro tra rivali" where *incontro* is the connection with the word "meet" and it has also a double meaning of meeting but also fight in Italian, something that can happen in translation when a non-pun becomes a pun in the target text because the translator decides it can fit (Delabastita, 1996b). Indeed, the use of play on words in the title can be one of the textual features that can help with the translation. Perhaps the author preferred to use wordplays mainly in that position because of their shortness as well as directness, and, since they are so in evidence, they can strike the reader more effectively. This can be an advantage for the translator because since wordplays are decontextualised their translation is easier because it is sufficient to create a new association.

There is also one part that presented a real translation challenge. During chapter 11 a joke is made on Alem because of his naivety in front of his class and it is based on the double meaning of "debate" at school and "mass debate"- a homophone of mastrubate. As may be predictable, there is no such a joke in Italian since there is no similar hompphone in Italian of "mass", but there are many common words that can have a sexual double meaning. This part of the chapter is about a group work task on religion and the state. Alem was told to say in front of the class that he was happy to hear about this "interesting mass debate" (Zephaniah,2001: 133). The solution that I thought was to fill the sentence with double meanings, for example "eccitato /excited" "fare" means the sexual act and so on. Unfortunately, it does not have the same effect as in the original but the sexual double meaning is kept. As a consequence, also the part before and the following one need to be adjusted to the prank. For example, before the prank the joker should ask if he knows what *oralmente* means and in the following one the word "wanker" will be replaced by another similar colloquial word in Italian, such as *finocchio* or *segaiolo*.

As a result the passage could be translated as follows.

Source text	Target text
When the time had come for the main discussion to start, Christopher Stone, a regular joker, moved in.	Quando fu ora di iniziare la discussione in classe, Christopher Stone, il tipico burlone, si avvicinò.
"Hey Alem" he said quite seriously, "everyone is saying how good the debates have been."	"Hey Alem" disse abbastanza serio "tutti son contenti di come sta andando il dibattito."
"That's great," Alem said moving into his position in front of the class. "We should have a very good discussion then."	"Ottimo" rispose Alem spostandosi davanti a tutta la classe "avremo una bella discussione allora."
"Yes" said Christopher, sounding excited, "I chaired one of these once and the teacher likes if you thank everybody for taking part in the debates and making them so interesting. And let them know that you are looking forward to the larger debate, we call it a mass debate, you know what "mass" means, don't you?	"certo" disse Christopher, in tono eccitato "anch'io ho mediato uno di questi dibattiti una volta e il professore è contento se ringrazi tutti, hai presente, per aver discusso in gruppo e averlo reso interessante. E digli che non vedi l'ora di sapere come se la cavano all'interrogazione, noi diciamo all'orale. Sai cosa vuol dire "orale", no?
"I think so," Alem said, wondering why he was so concerned about his performance.	"Credo di sì," rispose Alem, chiedendosi perché si fosse così interessato alla sua performance davanti a tutti.
"A mass is a large group of people."	"Orale è una cosa detta a voce".
"Yes," Alem replied, "I understand."	"Sì," rispose Alem, "ho capito."
Alem stood in front of the class. The teacher nodded his head signaling that he could now begin. Alem was nervous. He swallowed hard and began.	Alem si posizionò davanti alla classe. Il professore gli annuì, indicandogli che poteva iniziare. Il ragazzo era nervoso, deglutì e incominciò.
"The motion we are debating today is the church and state. Is religion political or personal? You have all had the chance to debate the issue in your various groups, I am now looking forward to what should be a very interesting mass debate."	"Il tema del dibattito di oggi riguarda chiesa e stato. La religione è politica o personale? Avete discusso la cosa in gruppi, ora sono eccitato di sapere come lo fate oralmente."

The class burst into laughter, even the teacher had a smile on his face. It was a trick that had been played before on others but it never failed to get the crowd going. Alem wasn't sure about what he had said wrong. He looked towards Christopher for help.	La classe scoppiò a ridere, perfino il professore stava sorridendo. Era uno scherzo che era già stato provato varie volte ma riusciva sempre a far impazzire tutti in questo modo. Alem non sapeva cos' avesse sbagliato. Guardò Christopher in cerca di aiuto.
Christopher whispered loudly to him, "say you're sorry, you're just a wanker"	Christopher gli suggerì : "dì che ti dispiace, sei un finocchio."
Alem repeated immediately. "I'm sorry, I'm just a wanker"	Alem ripeté all'istante : "mi spiace, sono proprio un finocchio."

If the translator decides to keep the joke, as in this case, it implies some changes in the whole part of the chapter in order to prepare the reader for the joke as Alem's friend did in the original text. The other solution that would completely avoid the problem would be to delete it, but I believe it would be a drastic solution as it also means deleting part of the text. As a result, since in many cases there is no perfect correspondence for English to Italian idioms, such as the case of "play it safe" (p. 65) and *andare sul sicuro*, translators can take advantage of anything that can be useful for the solution of a translation problem, as in the part above, of the context and any ambiguity between the words. What is more, this book is seen from Alem's point of view and that is why his misunderstanding of the idioms or of the play on words can lead to a comic situation, such as the above, or the question of a clarification when he is given money to "keep for a rainy day". Many of those comic situations are effective because of fact that the main character is still learning English and thus he does not understand many of the idiomatic expressions and cultural references that the other characters make. As a consequence, all the metalanguage that Alem uses could actually be seen as a help for the translator, who could also take advantage of the misunderstanding and curiosity of the character to make the reader understand some idiomatic expressions. For example, translators can give an explanation of the pun, play with double meanings of words, as happens in the extract above, or add a footnote in the text. The second example that I chose also refers to that type of situations: an expression used informally, "keep something for a rainy

day", is not understood by Alem, who asks directly what that means. In this case I decided not to use an idiomatic expression, I chose the simple expression *mettere da parte*. Even though in Italian the idiomatic feature is lost, this seemed a good compromise because it has a figurative meaning that is not immediate for a non native speaker, that also means that there is some place for any questioning as Alem does in the original text.

The last expression that I took as an example is part of the translated chapter and it is "it doesn't rock", an informal way of saying that something is wrong and does not fit the context. In this case, Alem asks for an explanation again and I took advantage of this part to add another colloquial expression *non è stiloso* to describe the fact that he has dressed inappropriately for the occasion, and added the clarification later as was formally present in the original.

Source text	Target text
Ruth shook her head." No, Alem, get real, it doesn't rock."	Ruth scosse la testa, « eh no Alem, sii realista, non è stiloso!»
He searched for more from Ruth. "It doesn't rock?" he said. "It doesn't rock what?"	Cercò di capire cosa pensava Ruth «non è stiloso?» disse il ragazzo «non è stiloso cosa?»
"It don't go, it doesn't match," she said.	« Non ci sta, non stanno bene assieme» rispose lei.

As Katan highlights "il significato di un testo non dipende più solamente dalle parole, ma da un alto grado di cooperazione da parte del lettore per colmare reciprocamente ciò che è implicito nella comunicazione" (Katan, 1997:36) meaning that not only must the translator make a coherent and relevant word choice, but the reader can also make inferences that create the complete meaning. For example when Alem is thanked with a "cheers" (p 68) that I decided to translate with "bella", a younger reader would perfectly

understand that it is a way of speaking of youngsters. The other form is also "bella lì" It can be a greeting, or it can also mean "ok thank you" " that is impressive" depending on the context. It was more frequent some years ago, so I thought that maybe it could suit the context of the book. I also chose this expression because I see that for a foreigner it appears to be a nonsensical answer, so it can arouse some questions as Alem asks after that bizarre answer.

In conclusion, idioms are considered to be some of the most difficult features to translate, that is why Delabastita (1996b) proposes several ways of dealing with them. He also adds that it would almost be impossible to stick to the original, due to the natural differences between languages and different cultural backgrounds, he says that "the only way to be faithful to the original text is paradoxically to be unfaithful to it" (Delabastita, 1996b: 135).

3.2.4 Food and Habits

Food is often a cultural item that can be difficult to translate, especially if the two cultures are quite distant and some cultures are not familiar with certain types of food. For this reason, sometimes, as Baker (1998) points out, there can be no equivalence at word level.

Source text	Target text
Meat and two veg	Carne e due contorni
Ethiopian food (fairsolia beans, doro wot sauce on injera)	Keep them as in the original OR a footnote
Spaghetti	spaghetti

The first example is the expression used to describe a traditional English way of eating, a habit that is very different from that in Italy, and for this reason there is no

corresponding for that expression. In the end I opted for a literal translation, that is to say *carne e due contorni* in order to be clear and direct. The second example from the text is the presence in the novel of traditional Ethiopian food. In the book the names are not adapted but explained to the audience, and that is also what I decided to do. Translators can either keep the original version by means of borrowing and possibly add a footnote to explain what they are in order not to interrupt the narration. Another term present in the text is "Gursha", which means feeding one another with one's hands; this is also explained in the source text, or it can also be explained in a footnote.

Moving from what the audience might not know, to what it should be familiar with: spaghetti is very important because Alem loves it. this food reminds him of his home country and he wants to have genuine Italian spaghetti. Clearly the term is already a borrowing from Italian and, therefore, requires no translation.

Another interesting cultural issue is the constant presence of tea anytime a guest arrives at the Fitzgeralds' home. Tea is the most popular hot beverage in Britain as coffe is in Italy. As a consequence, if the translation were domesticated, one could substitute tea with coffee. This is a case of "equal communicative value" and "adequacy" in the target culture as House (2013:33) explains.

The last interesting habit mentioned in the source text is the so called "art of queuing" which characterises Northern European cultures. It would be strange for an Italian to read that "only three children at any one time" are allowed in the candy shop Alem wants to enter, and it could be of value for the target text to keep this feature; that is why I often tried not to domesticate anything and keep the original cultural features of the text.

3.2.5 Geographical Setting and Metric System

Another feature connected to the cultural system is the use of measurement systems which are different from those used in Italy. For instance, there is the issue of the metric systems, since in the UK miles is the system with which they measure distance and pounds is what they use to weightings. In order to keep the foreign features of the text they could be translated literally into *miglia* or *libbra* and everyone would understand

that the author is talking about distance and weight respectively. However an Italian audience might not know the real value of the term. Moreover, in a modern Italian text, that is to say set in a contemporary time, it would sound too old- fashioned and inappropriate for the type of text.

The best solution, especially for a young audience, might be to convert the terms into kilometers or to add a footnote in which the translator explains the measurement. The solution that I chose is to translate the term into the metric system but since this measurement is not relevant for the comprehension of the text it could also be possible to leave the term in the English metric system. In fact, measurements are used only a few times in the source text and even if *miglia* is kept the comprehension of the target text would not be undermined. The same happens for pounds and so on.

Moreover, in the book there are parts in which the main character is going through the city and tells of what he sees, and this also includes street names, for example. If translators wanted to create a domesticated translation they could move the action of the book to Italy and maybe give new names to those streets in order to make them more familiar to an Italian audience, for example the streets named after famous English artists such as Wordsworth and Shakespeare (p. 137) could become *Via Dante* or *Via Manzoni* for instance. On the other hand, if they wanted to follow the foreignisation technique the result would be different: the street names would be left the same. This is what I decided would be preferable in this case. The presence of names that are not so well known in Italy maybe requires a footnote to clarify who those people are and help the reader to understand the sense of their mention. In this case, streets named after Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Shelley, Byron and Ruskin are kept as in the original and explained in the target text that those are names of famous writers.

In conclusion, the cultural differences between English and Italian measurement systems can be avoided unless their adaptation changes the overall meaning of the text. As far as streets and places are concerned, in this case my choice was to keep the original proper namens of the text, and thus the Italian audience will become acquainted with some places in London.

3.2.6 Equivalence

Precision is not only necessary in the translation of specific terminology but also in the search for the equivalence of those terms that already have a translation in Italian, for example the name of London's districts and landmarks, for example Forest Gate, Manor Park, Beckton or Seven Sisters station, which are cited in the book, but also book titles as well as movie titles and so on. In order to do so, translators should check carefully the appropriate equivalence between the two items, since a previous Italian translation probably already exists. The translation of book titles is mainly the same situation as the translation of places; they are fixed and well known, and this means that they should not be translated literally as if they were a part of the text but translated according to the official name they are given. For example the books that Alem reads are Nineteen Eighty- four, the well known bestseller by George Orwell translated into *1984*, or the "Lord of the Flies" which in Italian is *Il Signore Delle Mosche* (p.136).

These are just some of the examples that can be found in the book, and every time that I met them I was aware that an official translation was already present in Italian culture, and so it was inappropriate to translate them literally because the audience would not have recognized the reference otherwise.

3.2.7 Colloquial Language and Accents

In the book the main characters are young students in Britain and for this reason the use of colloquial and informal language is frequent. Firstly, the presence of young characters and their colloquial way of speaking can vary for example from simple puns, colloquial idioms to the use of vulgar language and swearwords. For this reason, the adolescents' language might be subjected to a sort of cultural censorship made by the translator because of the final destination of the book. If, for instance, this book were intended for a 9-12 year old audience, perhaps the editor could choose to avoid the use of strong words in order not to offend the young reader. Then, sometimes the translator might decide to change their use, frequency and intensity. As stressed by Alvstad, "stylistic elements frequently manipulated for similar reasons include swear words and informal speech" (Alvstad,2010: 23) and that is what usually happens that in translated books, especially for children and young adults, where the use of some swear words

might be omitted because of the belief in their "innocence" (see chapter one and especially Picherle, 2005). Thus the translator can choose to omit or soften the effect of the swearword.

However, this type of manipulation may also affect the overall stylistic component of the text, because, as highlighted by Picherle, words like "bullshit" (p 161), "bastard" (p.61), the use of varieties or accents can give a sense of realism and characterization of characters (Picherle, 2005: 261). Indeed, many characters are defined through their way of speaking, for example Sweeney, the bully who swears while talking, or Mustafa, the Moroccan boy that talks with an East London accent. In translation those features should be kept if they are useful to that characterization; what is more, as described in Chapter Two, their way of speaking is characterised by the use of a dialect of a recent rise, called multicultural London English. As has been described above, its presence signals a new variety that is being studied by scholars (Kerswill et al, 2007), who are trying to define the social implications in young people living in London. Since its development is profoundly linked to some factors that are typical of that part of the country, it represents a cultural challenge in translation that cannot be underestimated. Indeed, this London accent is distinguished by the use of "man", "innit" and "aint", and the deviation from English standard norms, such as in the conjugation of verbs ("They gone", "I is an Ethiopian"), or pronouns (this is I house")" or the abbreviations that are not only shown in the speech, but also graphically ("dat guy", "yu don't mess with me").

All these features are impossible to translate into Italian, due to their cultural link to the city. Furthermore, if, for instance, one thought about domesticating this problem by finding some similar correspondence to an Italian dialect, the research would be almost vain, because of the different sociolinguistc contexts. The option that I chose was to adapt this cultural quality of the character by using one of the strategies elaborated to compensate for the cultural gap between the languages, that is to say, to imitate the way young people speak today, using as many colloquial expressions as I could, by adding intentional grammatical deviations from Italian standard language in order to simulate the way youngsters tend to talk and general idioms in Italian. For example colloquial language (the *bella* used to thank Alem; *mica*), emphasis with some expressions

(*strano forte*; repetitions of *cioè*), the use of an indicative tense where a subjunctive is needed (*voglio che mi dai; se gli educatori non venivano*), and the colloquial idiom (*stai in campana* to mean "to watch out"), the use of the verb *avere* with the so called "ci attualizzante"[32] (*c'ha provato*), the constant use of deixis to refer to people and contexts (lo vedi quello?), pleonasm (m*e li dai a me*) and many other colloquialisms that could make this imitation realistic.

All in all, the colloquial language is a typical feature of this novel, and for this reason I attempted to keep its different shades in the translation, but also I took into account the cultural and social differences between the British and the Italian contexts.

3.2.8 Vocabulary

As previously mentioned, the language in this novel appears to be plain and direct, but there are some parts in which it can also become specialized, for example when describing buildings or using legal terms. The latter will be dealt later in the chapter, but the former demanded knowledge of this specific terminology. For this reason, I tried to find the exact equivalent in Italian. On the other hand, there were some specific terms whose role was not so influential in the text and that is why I simplified their meaning following the Katan's theory of chunking (Katan, 1999: 147). For instance:

Source text	Target text
Sweeney struck him with his fist in the **solar plexus**.	Sweeney lo colpì con un pugno allo **stomaco**
All I want you to do is give me your **cod** and chips	Quello che voglio è che tu mi dai il tuo **pesce** con le patatine
The first thing he did was to make sure he	La prima cosa che fece fu controllare se

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[32]http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/en/italian-language/language-consulting/questions-answers/ancora-sulluso-attualizzante-verbo-avere

still had **his photo**.	avesse ancora **la foto della sua famiglia**.

The first example is used during a fight, when Alem specifies that the bully hit him in his "solar plexus", a term that could not be familiar to a young Italian audience, that is why I decided to set up the translation to a more general level (Katan, 1999: 148). The second example is taken from the blackmail made by the bully to Alem, where the first specifies that they are having "cod", broccoli and chips for dinner and Alem has to give him all his fish and chips. I believe that, in such a context, the specification of the type of fish is inappropriate, because of who is telling it, a bully, and the context, a threat. For this reason. I decided to chunk down (Katan, 1997) the meaning of the term and I chose a general category to translate it, *pesce*.

In the text I also felt the need to add some more information in order to make the text clearer for the audience (Taylor, 1998: 55). For example at the beginning, when they arrive at Heathrow, I added that it is an Airport, because maybe not all the young readers would know that it is one of the main airports in London. Then at the beginning of the sixth chapter where Alem wakes up thinking about the picture, maybe it is better to explain an important detail, that is to say that the picture is so important to him because it is the only record he has of his family. That is why I added *la foto della sua famiglia* to the translation of only "the picture".

Another feature of the book is the time of the narration, that is to say the 1990s. This implies that it names people or objects that were famous at that time, but that maybe a younger audience may not know now. For this reason sometimes an explanation provided in a footnote by the translator can be a help for a reader, because the use of the footnote can be a compromising solution between borrowing and adaptation. The examples that I would like to present are as follows:

Source text terms	**Footnotes in the target text**
"Dieu et mon droit"	"Dio e il mio diritto" motto del sovrano di

	Inghilterra.
Newstalk South East	Canale di notizie riguardo il sud est di Londra
Walkman, Gameboy, racer game, Streetfighter, portable television, phone card	Breve descrizione della funzione dell'oggetto
Member of the IRA, Pinochet, Mick Jagger, Curt Kobain, Bob Marley, John Lennon	Breve descrizione degli eventi salienti della vita delle persone citate.

Since all these terms may be unfamiliar to a younger audience, I thought it could be useful to add some footnotes or a brief explanation for them, in order to make the text clearer. For example the translation of the French sentence that is the motto of the UK, appears in the translation in italics and in its original language, whose meaning and literal translation is provided in the footnote. The same applies for the Gameboy for example, I kept it in the original in the target text and explained that it is a famous Nineties game console. The same for the famous people mentioned, if IRA is mentioned I explain in the note that it is a paramilitary organization for the independence of Ireland. This method of adding information to explain a certain term in the target text is called by translation scholars paraphrase (Newmark, 1988: 90) or amplification (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995).

All in all, when thinking about translation it is also necessary to think about the potential final audience and adapt the use of certain words according to this. The simplification of certain words is only due to the fact that any specification would be unnecessary in that context and the explanation of certain terms in a footnotes is intended for the part of the audience that is not familiar with those objects and people.

3.2.9 Institutions and Legal Issues

While a literary translation clearly requires precision, when talking about translations for professional purposes, equivalence may be even more important since there is terminology that must be respected for each specific category. In the case of *Refugee Boy*, specialised legal language is used. As Musacchio (2002) underlines, it is important to know all the "tecnicismi collaterali" in both languages to produce an effective translation. "Tecnicismi collaterali" are terms that, if used in a different context from their usual one, become items of specialised language occurring in certain types of specialised texts. Among these expressions there are Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) collocations and LSP phraseology (Musacchio, 2002). In the case of *Refugee Boy*, some examples of "*tecnicismi collaterali*" could be said to be "appear in a courtroom" or "adjourn the hearing".

Source text	Target text
Case Number C651438, Appellant- Alem Kelo. Respondent- the Secretary of State.	Causa numero C651438, attore – Alem Kelo, convenuto – rappresentante dello Stato.
"This is the office of EAST," he said pressing the bell.	"Questi sono gli uffici dell' EAST, l'associazione che offre supporto agli africani che vivono a Londra" disse suonando il campanello.
Barrister	Avvocato

This translation is also challenging because the novel has some scenes set in court. The Italian and English legal systems are quite different and so are the people involved in a trial (Alcaraz Varó and Hughes, 2002: 4). From a translator's point of view, this means that terminology must be precise and that the exact equivalence between terms should

be sought. As mentioned by Šarčević it is a matter of "transcoding legal terms from one legal language into another" (Šarčević, 2000: 12), if possible. In Britain the trial described in the book is different from an Italian trial partly because of the actors involved.

The trial described in the book, through which Alem can appeal against the refusal of his application, is very different from one that an asylum seeker that arrives in Italy has to deal with. In more specific terms, an asylum seeker in Italy needs to apply to the nearest *"Questura"* which passes on the application to the competent Territorial Commission which, of course, varies from region to region. It is then the Territorial Commission itself that decides whether it should be accepted or not and if not the asylum seeker can appeal. In the trial it is either the Territorial Commission that is the respondent or the *Avvocatura dello Stato* that represents it. Although principles that lead the two judicial systems are similar, the differences between British and Italian systems of common and civil law respectively imply that the procedures and the people that have a role in it are different. Indeed, for this type of trial in Britain the presence of the Secretary of State is needed, whereas these applications are dealt by regions in Italy. This also implies that the institution of the Secretary of State will not be translated literally as Ministro degli interni, rather transferred in the Italian judicial system with an institution that works regionally, the Commissione Territoriale.

The second problem is the translation of the EAST organisation where Alem's father works. The acronym stands for East African Solidarity Trust and its aim, says the book, is to unify the various tribes of the region (Zephaniah, 2001: 117). In order to deal with the translation of such an institution, Taylor (1998:105) suggests keeping such types of definition general, for example omitting the acronym and just adding an explanation or finding the equivalent in the target culture if possible. However, there are no types of organisations that work in this field but that are not comparable to what EAST does in London. Moreover, this organization is only a fictional one, purposefully invented for the plot, since there is no correspondence for an organization with that acronym in London. This is why I decided to keep its original acronym and explain in the text that in the novel it refers to an organization that supports all East African immigrants in London.

English legal language, is often much redundant and emphatic and so on (Taylor, 1998: 126), the typical features that characterise an official document for example. However, this is not what appears in this novel. Indeed, the language is quite plain, in line with the general style of the narration; it avoids any use of formal structures and yet it is still precise in the use of the lexis. Perhaps it was a stylistic choice or perhaps it was a deliberate choice to help the audience, and that is why I decided to follow this lead and I tried to give the language a sound of redundancy but still keeping it comprehensible also for a non professional audience. Among the technical terms used in the novel there is "barrister". This is significant because I translated it with the generic Italian term *avvocato* even though the original term implies different duties from the Italian figure. As highlighted above the two legal systems are very different and therefore also the people involved in the trial. As a result, also in this case I necessarily had to chunk (Katan,1997) the term "barrister" into *avvocato* but not because the comprehension was mined here, but because there is not the same equivalent term in Italian to describe a person that has the same duties and role as a professional working in the legal field in the UK. In fact, English has many specific terms to refer to this type of different professional figures, for this reason, you may have "barrister", "attorney", "solicitor", "legal representative" or "lawyer", that are often translated with one term in Italian even though each English term indicates different roles. For the other specific terms such as "report", "appeal hearing" or "clerk" the translation was quite easy since, despite the fact that there are two different legal systems, there was always an equivalent in Italian, that are *rapporto* ,*giudizio di appello* and *dattilografo* respectively (Mastellone,1980).

In conclusion, the difficulty in the translation of the parts that talked about legal issues and the institutions involved were dealt with a deep research in the Italian legal system and the official correspondence to that institutions because precision in translation is fundamental.

3.3 Formal Aspects of the Translation

Even though my original aim was to be as faithful to the text as I could, due to the difference in the two structures of the language, this was not always possible. To be

precise I had to adapt the original syntax of the sentences and sometimes I had also to change the original style.

3.3.1 The Passive Voice

The bike was used regularly over the next few days as Alem began to expand his knowledge of the area	Nei giorni successivi Alem usò spesso la bici per esplorare la zona

This is one significant example of the passive voice use of English in the novel. At first I tried to translate literally, because since this text had a simple language both the source and the target language on many occasions had a very close equivalence and I also wanted to try to keep the author's style. This sentence is an example of how the use of the passive voice in English sounds natural whereas in Italian, where the active voice is privileged, the use of passive voice seems unnatural, too formal, or even, dated. The reason for this is that "the rigid theme/ rheme organisation of English requires the logical object of a clause very often to be thematised and therefore placed in subject position" (Taylor: 1998:63).

This, therefore, poses many questions every time the Italian translator faces the occurrence of a passive structure. Morini (2016:27) suggests avoiding the passive voice in Italian and changing it into an active or reflexive form in Italian. Taylor (1998) lists all the possible solutions suggested to the translator. He or she can maintain the passive voice also in the target text, bearing in mind that in Italian it is not so common. He or she can also reorder the sentence by creating an impersonal construction or an active from using verbs with impersonal agents whose identity never appears. Another solution is the use of the *si* that implies an impersonal construction.

If I had tried to translate literally as I did at first the sentence would be : *la bicicletta veniva usata regolarmente nei pochi giorni successivi mano a mano che Alem iniziava ad ampliare la sua conoscenza della zona* a sentence that, although it may seem

grammatically correct, does not sound natural for an Italian. Secondly, it may sometimes be advisable to avoid the translation of adverbs in ending in –ly with those that end in –mente, because they sound like calques from English. It is often better to use other options (Morini, 2016: 18).

In conclusion, while working of this sentence I realized that I could maintain my original aim of respect for the text. The alternative that I applied here was to change the subject of the sentence, and make Alem into the grammatical subject. Moreover, I changed the order of the sentence in order to make it sound more fluent.

3.3.2 Style and Cohesion

Not only sometimes it was necessary to reorder the sentence, but also to coordinate sentences created out of many shorter ones or to reduce the amount of repetitions. English and Italian have different syntactical and morphological rules, some of the most divergent ones that were also noticeable in this novel are how the two languages deal with repetitions, the composition of the sentence and their rhythm.

Source text	Target text
Alem just wasn't prepared. All he could do at that moment was cling on to **Sweeney's** legs. **Sweeney** was unable to kick but he rained down a whole heap of punches over **Alem's** head and back. **Alem** could hear other boys cheering **Sweeney** on.	Alem era stato colto di sorpresa **e** tutto ciò che poteva fare in quel momento era aggrapparsi alle gambe di **Sweeney**, **così questi** non poteva più calciare ma si scatenò lo stesso in una furia di pugni sulla testa e sulla schiena del **ragazzo**. **Alem** sentiva gli altri che incoraggiavano **il bullo**.
Alem was told not to use **violence** to overcome **violence**, but to report all **violent** acts to a member of staff.	Ad Alem fu chiesto di non usare la **violenza** contro altra **violenza**, bensì di riportare **tutto** agli adulti.

Alem looked up; the teacher towered above him like a giant. He leaned down and stretched out a helping hand	Alem guardò in alto, e vi trovò il professore, il quale si stagliava su di lui come un gigante. Questi si piegò e gli tese una mano per aiutarlo a rialzasi.

First of all, English usually does not need to find a synonym to avoid redundant information. On the contrary, in an Italian discourse there appears to be a greater tendency to avoid repetitions since the repetition of a word in the same line seems unnatural and superfluous (De Benedetti, 2009) . Moreover, repeating is also considered to be a sign of non knowledge of Italian lexis (De Benedetti, 2009). That is why Italians are always looking for the most creative synonym in a text. For example the wizard Harry Potter in some journal articles where he has been names already twice, he becomes *il maghetto* [33]. For this reason, when I met a sentence like the examples in the table above, I tried to change the redoundancy of the same term in the paragraph. The first one is an example of the repetition of the same name in a few lines. The context helped me to substitute "Sweeney" into *questi* and *bullo* respectively, solving the problem of his name repeated for three times. The second example is the repetition of violence- violent in just three lines. While the first repetition is considered to be acceptable, because of how it is formulated- similar to a reminder- the third repetition could be considered awkward for an Italian audience. For this reason I substituted it the pronoun "tutto".

In addition, in the book, as mentioned above, the use of the language is very simple. This leads to the presence of short direct sentences, which do not sound fluent in Italian. For this reason I tried to make longer a sentence out of two or more shorter sentences to create a cohesive Italian text.

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[33]https://www.fanpage.it/cultura/harry-potter-torna-il-maghetto-di-hogwarts-j-k-rowling-pubblichera-quattro-ebook/

In conclusion, those were only some of the many examples of manipulation of the text that I had to face while working on the cohesion of the target text. Not only had I to think about the appropriate solution for the translation, but also sometimes I needed to work on the original text style in order to make it more appealing and readable for the intended audience.

3.3.3 Register

Register is another issue to consider when translating, starting from the fact that English does not distinguish between the informal "tu/ you" and the Italian more formal pronouns *lei/voi/loro*, which correspond to "you". As a consequence, the translator needs to separate the two situations since in Italian there is a convention in social relationships that needs to be respected. According to Ulrych (1992:83) the register is "related to the use to which language is put in a particular social context and is determined by the nature of the activity in which the language is functioning". Indeed, in Italian, pronouns are used not only to indicate the formal distance needed when talking to strangers but also to authorities or people that are in a higher social level. The pronouns *lei/voi* not only show distance, but also respect on those occasions, such as, for instance, the situation of a trial similar to the one described in the novel. However it is dealt in two different ways in the two languages.

Source text	Target text
"What I am going to do is adjourn this hearing so that reports can be prepared. Do you understand?" Alem was nervous, his reply barely audible. " yes, I understand."	« La seguente seduta verrà aggiornata in seguito affinché siano preparati i dovuti rapporti, capisce ciò che sto dicendo, Signor Kelo? » Alem era nervoso, la sua risposta si sentiva a malapena, « Sì, Vostro Onore.»

In English people could address a judge with "you", whereas in Italian using a *lei* or even *Vostro onore* would be used. Due to the ambiguity of "you"- *tu/voi* there may be two options for the translation of this part of the text. The first one could be to shorten the distance between the actors in the dialogue. As a result, if I let the judge use you- *tu* when talking to Alem, the tone becomes almost informal. This can be possible because the main character is a young boy and an adult can use *tu* to address people younger than him or her. Furthermore, this will imply that also the rest of the text, that is to say the use of specialised language in the dialogue between adjudicator and barrister, will be easier compared to the context, as it is in the original text. This way of translating will also make the tone of the book easier and maybe more appropriate for young readers.

On the other hand, my second option is based on you- *voi* and therefore, it achieves a higher level of formality. This meant using a more specific professional language to imitate the formulae used in trials, starting from the use of a marker that is not present in the original text - *Vostro Onore*- to address to the judge, to the inclusion of professional legal language in the speech, for instance:

Source text	Target text
"My client believes that **he has much to fear** in he were to return home at this time."	« il mio cliente ritiene che **la sua incolumità sarebbe violata** se ritornasse nel suo paese d'origine adesso. »
"The state believes that the appellant **faces** no personal threat."	« Lo Stato ritiene che l'imputato non **incorra** in alcuna minaccia personale. »

In this translated sentence I decided to use a more specialised language (*incolumità*; *violare*) than the one used in the original text ("much to fear"), because I thought that it could be suitable for the barrister's speech to imitate a professional language. For this reason I looked for a more complex, but still understandable, translation of some terms in order to make them more specific for the context. On the other hand, register was also

involved when talking about informal situations, since, as already mentioned above, the use of colloquial language is a characterization of the main characters and in this case the informal tone needed to be respected.

In conclusion, register was another feature that had to be considered when translating the important part of the trial in *Refugee Boy*. Everything depends on the register that translators decide to give to the text. However, it is important to adapt all of it to the chosen tone. However, as seen in the example of the you- tu register for the distance between adjudicator and Alem, any change of register also implies a change in language, it is for this reason that one should respect the same register as the original text (Munday, 2009).

Conclusion

The aim of this work was to explore how I dealt with the translation of an example of e young adult fiction whose features, as largely examined, posed many difficulties. As I was reading the text and organising the work it was clear that some parts hid a translation challenge, due to the complexity of defining a clear audience that could be the reference point for the translator.

One important feature that characterized this book was the topic, considered stimulating for a young audience. In fact, as has been discussed before, the author's main aim was to inform the audience about the plight of refugees. Indeed, the difficulty for a translator was not only that of the correct adaptation of the text, but also to fit the text to the intended audience, which is so wide that a translator should be careful when dealing with certain words or concepts, because a younger audience may be sensible to certain vulgar or too specialized language or may lack the familiarity with some topics, such as politics or institutions. On the other hand, an adult audience may think that the topic is treated in too a simple way, and thus maybe trivialize the real aim of the book. What I tried to do was to balance any explanation of concepts that could be misunderstood by a young audience and try not to make the topic banal by documenting before choosing any word that could suit the particular context of migration and legal issues. For this reason, since the audience was so wide, I took into account that maybe the younger ones might not be familiar with, for instance, some concepts related to the past or the specialised language used in trials, and I also took into account the adult audience by trying to capture some of the complex legal language and guaranteeing equivalence for the official translation of specific terms, which were important for the theme of the book.

Then, a great influence in the translation process was determined by the particular genre itself, since as explained in the first chapter it apparently seems like a children's book but its author intended it to have a wider scope. The main consequence of this is that translators need to take into account both the features of a book intended for children and those intended for adults. More difficulty is added by the fact that scholars do not agree on a definition of children's literature and young adult.

It is for this reason that translators not only need to respect the audience but also the aim of the text. This implies that both the simplicity and complexity of the language used should be respected with mediation when taking into account that also children may be reading the book. As a consequence, this means that translators for instance, should think about keeping the use of vulgar and explicit language in the dialogues between adolescents and also reducing the difficulty in some parts of the text where legal language is used, but also keeping it professional and specific.

Furthermore, as far as language is concerned, another important feature of the book should not be underestimated, that is to say the use of a particular variety of English that is specific to the eastern part of the city of London, called multilingual English. It is mainly characterised by the mixture of standard English and the variation introduced by the people from different ethnic background that live there. Clearly, as with other varieties, Multilingual London English (MLE), cannot be translated as there is no equivalent in Italy. At first I thought that maybe choosing an Italian dialect could be a solution. However, this would have implied introducing a totally different sociolinguistic context.. It is for this reason that I just decided to keep an informal register by using colloquial language and idioms when the adolescent characters were speaking.

Another important feature of this novel was the possibility of domesticating the text. This is not a choice that I decided to follow to a great extent because I wanted to respect the cultural references of the text. From places, to food, to all the little details for example money and measurements, translators could consider transferring the story to a more familiar setting for the intended audience, their home country. For instance, the streets named after the most famous poets and writers in Britain could be domesticated into Italian with some other names of famous Italian artists, such as Dante, Boccaccio, Verga, which would imply moving the action to an Italian context.

On the other hand, this translation strategy, as discussed in the first chapter, totally empties the orginal work of its cultural references and features to promote a better comprehension for the target audience. Of course, some mediation between foreignisation and domestication is needed because comprehension is important, that is

why some adaptation was made to solve some translation problems, for instance the correspondence of the Secretary of State, a role that does not exist in Italy, in the trial.

There are many details that I could find in the text to analyse, but, unfortunately, due to obvious limitations of time and space, not all the individual parts of it were discussed in this thesis. The more one looks at the translated text and the more one finds many problems and different shades of translation. Indeed, this also means that it could be amplified with new contributions and analyse of this book, if necessary, and it also means that working on a translation is an ongoing process that actually never ends.

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Riassunto in Italiano:

Questa tesi si è principalmente focalizzata sull' analisi e sulla traduzione dall'inglese all'italiano di un libro per ragazzi. Il testo si intitola *Refugee Boy*, scritto da Benjamin Zephaniah e non è mai stato tradotto in italiano. Il percorso che ho deciso di seguire è quello di introdurre il lavoro in un contesto di teorie della traduzione e di introduzione all'opera e all'autore. Infine la vera tesi sarà incentrata sulla mia personale analisi del mio lavoro.

Il primo capitolo voleva essere una piccola sintesi delle principali teorie di traduzione che hanno caratterizzato gli ultimi decenni in Gran Bretagna e che sono state prese come esempio per realizzare la traduzione effettiva. Si va dalle teorie di Jakobson (1959), Nida e Taber (1964) fino alle più moderne di Baker (1992)e House (2013).

Le principali teorie in ambito anglosassone che hanno segnato la storia della traduzione sono quelle dell'equivalenza elaborate per la prima volta da Jakobson (1959) e Nida (1964). Il primo sostiene che, nell'ambito della traduzione interlinguistica, cioè quella del traduttore, non sempre è possibile raggiungere l'equivalenza a livello di unità di codice, bensì a livello del messaggio, dato che difficilmente esistono due parole nelle due lingue che coprono lo stesso campo semantico. Poco tempo dopo, Nida (1964) elabora le due definizioni di equivalenza, quella formale e quella dinamica in cui la prima indica l'attenzione alla parte formale del messaggio, la forma, la grammatica e il lessico, mentre la seconda mira a riprodurre nella lingua di arrivo il corrispondente più vicino dal punto di vista semantico. È quest'ultima la caratteristica che Nida valuta più importante in una traduzione, perché lo scopo dovrebbe essere quello di riprodurre nel lettore del testo di arrivo lo stesso effetto del lettore originale.

Anche Catford (1995) si è occupato di equivalenza distinguendo due tipi di traduzione, quella formale, detta anche corrispondenza o sostituzione in base a livelli formali del testo quali la fonetica o la grammatica, mentre la seconda è più legata al contesto del testo di partenza.

Continuando il discorso di Catford, anche Koller (1995) prende ad esempio la distinzione fatta da Saussure (1971) e la sua distinzione tra langue e parole, Koller

studia i parametri che potrebbero influire sulla traduzione, come il contenuto extralinguistico di un testo, le scelte linguistiche e lessicali, la funzione del testo o alla sua estetica.

Tutti gli studiosa sopracitati fanno parte dell'approccio cosiddetto prescrittivo dell'equivalenza, cioè quello che fa riferimento in special modo al testo di origine e le sue caratteristiche linguistiche. La seconda scuola di pensiero è quella invece legato allo studio del testo di arrivo e il contesto socio-culturale che potrebbe influenzarlo. Rappresentati da Toury (1995) questi studiosi affermano che si deve partire dal testo tradotto per evincere le strategie e norme che determinano quel risultato nella traduzione. Il risultato sarà un testo le cui norme varieranno in base al contesto e al tempo in cui sono state scritte, dimostrando la teoria di Toury (1995). Nonostante questi due siano i due approcci più accreditati per la definizione dell'equivalenza, negli anni molti altri studiosi hanno cercato di dare la loro definizione, tra cui Newmark (1988), Baker (1992), House (2013), Pym (2014).

Inoltre, in particolare, si devono anche considerare le teorie di straniamento e addomesticamento riassunte da Venuti (1998), le quali sono importanti per creare una traduzione che tenda più verso il lettore o l'autore, rispettando certe regole che devono essere usate dall'inizio alla fine per creare una traduzione coerente e comprensibile. Se, per esempio una traduzione vuole essere addomesticata si dovranno allora adattare certi aspetti del testo alla lingua del lettore, come per esempio l'ambientazione, la parlata dei personaggi, e così via. Se invece si vuole tenere estraniante, si rispetteranno quegli stessi aspetti tipici del testo d'origine. Venuti preferisce sempre quest'ultima opzione per non perdere informazioni dal testo di appartenenza, e creare l'impressione di invisibilità del traduttore a cui ogni testo dovrebbe aspirare.

Un altro concetto importante nella traduzione è quello degli universali. Alcuni studiosi a partire da Baker, (1993), Toury (2004) e Chesterman (2000) hanno individuato, tramite un lavoro su corpus, che nei testi tradotti vi sono delle leggi ricorrenti che li distinguono da quelli non provenienti da una traduzione,tra cui per esempio la semplificazione, l'esplicitazione, eliminazione di parti ridondanti e ripetizioni e così via. Alcuni studiosi però, sono contrari alla nozione di "universale della traduzione" in quanto è impossibile

raccogliere e di conseguenza analizzare, tutte le produzioni fatte nella storia della traduzione.

Infine, l'aspetto che più dovrebbe importare al lettore è il rapporto tra traduzione e cultura di arrivo. Infatti molti testi non solo necessitano di una traduzione del testo, ma anche un adattamento culturale dei contenuti, aspetto che è stato studiato soltanto negli ultimi anni, forse proprio a causa dell'incrementare del concetto di globalizzazione. In questo senso, il traduttore di oggi è visto quindi non solo come il ponte tra due lingue ma anche il mediatore tra le due culture diverse (Karan, 1992). Questo principio pone diversi problemi con la traduzione la quale potrebbe venire perfino manipolata o censurata per venire incontro alle esigenze del pubblico di arrivo.

Una delle conseguenze principali della globalizzazione che non va trascurato è proprio l'incontro che poi diventa fusione tra culture. Un traduttore dovrebbe tenere conto anche di quello che succede a causa di questo incontro, come ad esempio il formarsi di un dialetto particolare. Questi nuovi modi di parlare si formano per particolari e uniche condizioni culturali che non sono ripetibili in altri contesti o luoghi o in altre epoche. Uno di questi dialetti formatisi proprio a Londra, in questi ultimi decenni e in un contesto di mescolanza tra comunità diverse è il Multilingual London English, chiamato anche MLE. In questo libro infatti molti personaggi che provengono proprio da quel contesto particolare lo parlano. Questo aspetto culturale non può venire sottovalutato nella traduzione in quanto è una peculiarità del libro stesso. Anche questo quindi diventa una sfida quando si tratta di risolvere problemi di traduzione in questo libro.

Risulta quindi chiaro che è l'aspetto di adattamento culturale quello che può porre più problemi durante la traduzione. L'adattamento non si limita soltanto nel trasporre un concetto dalla lingua di partenza alla cultura d'arrivo ma anche nel rispetto di quest'ultima, perché non è detto che lo stesso concetto sia accettato culturalmente e percepito allo stesso modo nelle due culture in oggetto di discussione. Un esempio banale potrebbe essere un testo satirico e umoristico nel quale sono presenti molti giochi di parole e battute che fanno riferimento a fatti, modi di dire o personaggi famosi nella cultura di partenza potrebbe non venire capito se tradotto letteralmente nella cultura di arrivo. Siccome uno degli scopi del lavoro del traduttore è quello di produrre un testo

che abbia le stesse caratteristiche del testo di partenza tra cui lo stesso effetto nel lettore (Newmark, 1981), allora se il riferimento culturale in un gioco di parole non è reso efficacemente nella lingua di arrivo, è necessario manipolare il testo per mantenere l'umorismo richiesto nel testo di partenza.

Per quanto riguarda il genere, questo libro è un po' particolare in quanto di norma categorizzato come libro per ragazzi ha in realtà uno scopo più ampio. Infatti per la semplicità del testo, i temi trattati e lo scopo del libro stesso quasi didattico questo testo può essere adatto anche a un pubblico adulto. Questo complica le aspettative della traduzione perché, oltre al fatto che non vi è una vera e propria distinzione tra libro per ragazzi di diverse età, le caratteristiche richieste per la traduzione di un libro per ragazzi è diversa rispetto a quella per adulti.

Infatti, non vi è concordanza negli studiosi sulla definizione stessa di letteratura per ragazzi, nello specifico l'età in cui si presume si possa collocare, e dunque non vi è nemmeno chiarezza su come approcciarsi alla traduzione di un libro di quel genere. In particolare se si considerano anche le età più tenere come ragazzi (8-10 anni) allora un' ulteriore accortezza andrà presa, in quanto per i bambini bisogna tenere conto che non si può usare un certo genere di linguaggio o certi termini troppo specifici ad esempio. Per questo motivo non si riesce a definire nello specifico il genere e di conseguenza il pubblico destinatario del testo.

Dal punto di vista della traduzione è facile intuire che questa distinzione fondamentale mancante potrebbe causare diversi problemi. Il compito del traduttore è quello di saper gestire il testo cercando anche di tenere conto di ciò e delle future implicazioni. Inoltre, il testo è particolare perché,come già anticipato, il suo linguaggio è piuttosto semplice e diretto, il che a prima vista lo potrebbe far sembrare un libro semplice per ragazzi, ma in realtà, mano a mano che si prosegue con la lettura si scopre che la profondità e delicatezza dei temi trattati crea un alone didattico- informativo che lo rende anche adatto ad adulti.

Infatti gli scrittori stranieri per bambini tendono ad usare proprio la lingua come veicolo di insegnamento e di sensibilizzazione (Bista, 2012), il loro modo di scrivere semplice è in realtà un modo per far concentrare di più i lettori sul contenuto e non riempire il testo

di parole complicate e non intuitive che non permettono la comprensione lineare. Un altro fatto da non sottostimare è lo scopo che l'autore ha destinato a questo libro. Nello specifico, egli voleva che dalla lettura del libro si evincesse il trattamento a cui gli immigrati devono sottostare per poter ricevere asilo in Gran Bretagna, anche se si tratta di minori, e la sensibilizzazione su un tema poco conosciuto quale la guerra tra Etiopia ed Eritrea nei primi anni 2000. L'autore, infatti non l'ha personalmente vissuta ma ha voluto lo stesso informare su quella guerra che formalmente era terminata nel 2000 ma moralmente solo in tempi recenti, cioè nel 2018.

L'autore, poco conosciuto in Italia, si chiama Benjamin Zephaniah, è nato nel 1958 da genitori immigrati in Gran Bretagna, nel dettaglio la madre era Giamaicana e il padre originario delle Barbados. Sebbene non abbia avuto un'infanzia semplice, infatti fu arrestato per scasso, subì episodi di razzismo e così via, l'autore fin da giovane ha dimostrato grande forza d'animo, nonostante tutte le critiche e gli insuccessi, si è sempre battuto per i diritti degli individui in cui credeva davvero, per esempio le donne e gli omosessuali.

La sua prima formazione artistica non è stata incentrata nei romanzi, bensì si è focalizzata prevalentemente sulla poesia. Infatti, dapprima messe in moto la sua immaginazione per la creazione di poemi, soprattutto per l'infanzia, in cui ha potuto sperimentare, in special modo in questa forma d'arte dove l'uso e scelta delle parole è davvero rilevante, la sua creatività e abilità con il linguaggio.

Sebbene le opere in prosa scritte durante la carriera fossero in numero molto più limitato, hanno avuto molto successo in Gran Bretagna, come il best seller Face (1999) conosciuto in Italia come *Al di là del volto* e *Refugee Boy* (2001) con il quale vince il premio Portsmouth Book Award nel 2002 nella categoria Longer Novel.

In particolare, la mia traduzione e la conseguente analisi si sono concentrate su quest'ultima opera, in quanto la mia traduzione sarebbe stata inedita perché mai pubblicata in italiano e quindi adatta per un'analisi personale. Inoltre, il testo proponeva diversi spunti di riflessione sulla traduzione, specialmente dal punto di vista della diversità culturale, che si sono rivelati molto fruttuosi da un punto di vista teorico e pratico.

La trama è semplice e lineare, come solitamente sono i libri per ragazzi. Il libro tratta delle vicissitudini che il quattordicenne Alem Kelo vive dopo che suo padre lo lascia solo a Londra per proteggerlo dalla guerra che è scoppiata nel loro paese natale. Infatti la famiglia di Alem proviene da una zona contesa tra Etiopia ed Eritrea. Inoltre Alem essendo per metà di origine etiope, dal padre, ed eritreo, dalla madre, in qualsiasi stato si trovi verrebbe considerato il nemico e quindi perseguitato. Dopo l'abbandono viene poi consegnato a una famiglia affidataria con la quale riesce a instaurare un rapporto particolare nonostante la lotta per vedere riconosciuto il suo diritto di asilo. Lo stesso romanzo è stato anche adattato in un' opera teatrale che nel 2013 ha debuttato al teatro di Leeds, il West Yorkshire Playhouse.

La particolarità di questo libro nella sua lingua originale è proprio l'uso nel dialogo di una lingua viva e recente, in costante evoluzione e quindi labile, il Multicultural London English (MLE). Questo cosiddetto "dialetto", è definito in realtà una vera e propria lingua creata dal convivere di diverse etnie in un ambiente come i quartieri ad est di Londra, si caratterizza per un uso un po' particolare della grammatica inglese e per la pronuncia, effetto reso sia nel parlato che, in questo caso, nello scritto.

Questa tipologia di lingua non ha effettivamente una corrispondente in italiano, in quanto è ovvio che il contesto socio culturale di partenza sia diverso. Sebbene sia evidentemente complicato, un traduttore dovrebbe cercare in ogni caso di rendere in qualche modo questo effetto nel testo di arrivo vista l'importanza della presenza del MLE, cercando qualche corrispondenza. Si potrebbe istintivamente pensare magari a un uso di qualche parola dialettale, come viene considerato il MLE, ma quale dialetto, vista la vasta varietà di dialetti in Italia e il fatto che non tutti da nord a sud riescono a capire delle parole di questi dialetti? Inoltre, come rendere anche la differenza allo scritto?

La soluzione che ho pensato io è quella di lasciare la traduzione neutra, in quanto l'uso di dialetti, come è facilmente deducibile, potrebbe essere compromettente per la comprensione, ma, siccome il MLE è una varietà dell'inglese molto recente (è nato circa 50 anni fa) questo implica anche che viene usato per lo più da giovani, allora ho cercato di trasporre questo aspetto alla traduzione cercando di includere molti colloquialismi e linguaggio giovanile. Per esempio, nella riproduzione di questo topo di

linguaggio ho estremizzato certi aspetti dell'italiano standard, come la ripetizione di certe locuzioni, "tipo", "cioè", alcune deviazioni dall' italiano standard come l'uso dell'indicativo quando è richiesto un congiuntivo e così via. Sebbene in un contesto socioculturale diverso, l'uso del linguaggio informale giovane avrebbe aiutato il lettore a posizionarsi in un contesto simile a quello ricreato dall'autore.

Un altro problema culturale era la presenza nel testo di parole che nell'uso corrente in inglese hanno connotazione neutra, ma se tradotte in italiano potrebbero avere senso spregiativo. Sto parlando di quelle parole come *refugee*, incluso proprio nel titolo, o *black*, *Romani* tutte parole attuali in Italia e la cui traduzione potrebbe essere poco *politically correct*. Per esempio, la traduzione del primo termine rimanda a tutta l'attualità su migranti, immigrati, clandestini, tutti termini che in italiano si sentono tutti i giorni e che spesso vengono usati da giornalisti e politici come sinonimi. Al contrario, bisogna specificare che non hanno lo stesso significato, ogni termine ha la propria classificazione e va utilizzato in modo appropriato. La soluzione che ho ritenuto più opportuna è stata quella di cercare proprio nella terminologia ufficiale usata dall'unione europea stessa il termine più adatto e meno offensivo per una certa categoria di persone. Infatti, da un'analisi dei documenti ufficiali dell' UNHCR, in particolare lo stesso glossario (EMN, 2018) elaborato e costantemente aggiornato, si può concludere come il termine più neutro utilizzato dalla stessa UE sia migrante, mentre clandestino non è nemmeno contemplato, ad esempio. Infine, il termine rifugiato è considerato con un significato più legale, in quanto richiama al procedimento necessario per ottenere il diritto di asilo per un migrante.

Per quanto riguarda gli altri termini di complicata traduzione, la ricerca va sempre fatta su libri e sulla letteratura ufficiale. Il termine Romani, tendenzialmente utilizzato per indicare un gruppo di persone accomunate dalla stesse tradizioni e che veicola tutta una sere di valori e di cultura specifici, potrebbe essere tradotto con "rom" oppure "nomadi" se si vuole stare generici e non accennare all' origine storica e culturale del gruppo, mentre *black*, per non essere dispregiativi, potrebbe essere tradotto con l'effettiva origine della persona, ad esempio "africano", oppure "nero". È meglio evitare la traduzione "di colore" perché questo implicherebbe che esista anche un "non colore", il

bianco, che spesso non ha bisogno di essere specificato e per questo motivo non dovrebbe essere un problema farlo nemmeno per il nero.

Un altro problema di traduzione era dato dall'uso di giochi di parole e colloquialismi che spesso, avendo riferimenti culturali specifici, creavano ambiguità per quanto riguarda la loro comprensione. Questi sono difficili da tradurre in quanto sono radicati nella specifica lingua di partenza, per esempio possono giocare su assonanze o similarità tra parole, oppure fanno riferimento a episodi radicati e caratterizzanti della cultura di partenza. Per questo spesso non era necessario tradurre letteralmente, vista la difficoltà di rendere lo stesso tipo di gioco di parole, però la cosa che si può fare è rendere lo stesso effetto contenuto in quella parte del libro. Di conseguenza, se vi è la presenza di una battuta basata su doppi sensi nel libro, il compito del traduttore è quello di avvicinarsi il più possibile allo stile di quella battuta per continuare il senso del paragrafo. Se la traduzione è troppo difficile so potrebbe anche optare per un'omissione di quella parte, se non essenziale, però come dice Newmark (1988) il traduttore non può permettersi di dire che non può tradurre qualcosa.

Altre cose, però, possono essere non tradotte nel vero senso della parola ma adattate al contesto, per esempio il cibo, i sistemi di misura, mentre le vie, il nome di città o quello di opere letterarie va cercata l' equivalente esatto dato che esiste già una traduzione ufficiale.

Un aspetto del libro che ho ritenuto di modificare è stato ad esempio l'uso di lessico troppo specifico, ma solo in quelle situazioni in cui non era necessario. Per esempio lo specificare del bullo che domandava il suo "merluzzo" al protagonista, oppure specificare che il colpo ricevuto era indirizzato al "plesso solare". In quei casi, data la troppa specificità dato il contesto, mi sembrava strano leggere tanta particolarità in una minaccia e rissa da parte di un bullo. Ecco perché, in quei pochi casi, ho preferito restare generica, anche perché forse pochi avrebbero capito dove si trovava il "plesso solare", essendo termini poco conosciuti. Al contrario, la complessità di linguaggio secondo me andava mantenuta nel caso di contenuti legati all'attività giudiziaria, al processo e alla burocrazia. Infatti, in quella parte del testo era richiesta dal contesto,

quindi ho cercato di imitare il più possibile il linguaggio giuridico italiano però tenendo sempre a mente che il pubblico poteva non essere un esperto del settore.

Al contrario, quando si trattava di linguaggio specifico legale in un contesto appropriato ho optato per una traduzione che ricercasse la maggior equivalenza possibile tra le due lingue. Tuttavia, non andava trascurato un dettaglio importante, ossia che Italia e Regno Unito hanno due sistemi giuridici differenti. Infatti, la procedura di ricorso per la richiesta di asilo come quella presente in questo testo, viene gestita diversamente dai due paesi e questo ha implicato delle difficoltà di traduzione nel trovare un corrispondente per le istituzioni facenti parte a un processo.

Un altro punto in cui ho ritenuto necessario intervenire è quando il testo faceva riferimento al tempo in cui è stato scritto, cioè i primi anni 90. Se il libro è dedicato e indirizzato agli adolescenti di oggi allora non tutti potrebbero essere avvezzi alla presenza di oggetti che oramai sono caduti in disuso, ad esempio la scheda telefonica per poter chiamare dalla cabina, il Game Boy, la televisione portatile. Non solo oggetti ma anche personaggi celebri del secolo scorso sono menzionati, Pinochet, John Lennon, Curt Kobain, nomi e oggetti che potrebbero risultare familiari a un pubblico più maturo ma che forse necessitano di una piccola spiegazione in nota per chi in quegli anni non c'era.

In altri casi, il traduttore ha anche bisogno di amplificare la traduzione rispetto all'originale per poter aiutare la comprensione di certi termini. Questo è visibile, in questo testo, quando per esempio è necessario aggiungere qualche parola in più per aiutare i lettori a ricollegare meglio le informazioni tra capitoli, oppure per spiegare qualche termine che ho scelto di non tradurre, come ad esempio il cibo Etiope, oppure la spiegazione della sigla dell'associazione, EAST, in cui lavora il padre di Alem. Al contrario, altre volte era necessario riassumere certe parti.

Infine, date le differenze non solo culturali e lessicali, ma anche grammaticali e sintattiche, il traduttore a volte necessita di modificare il testo per adattarlo alla lingua di arrivo e renderlo più scorrevole e leggibile. Per esempio, una delle differenze tra la lingua inglese e l'italiano è l'uso della forma passiva. In inglese infatti la costruzione della frase spesso è organizzata con l'agente usato come soggetto, struttura che in

italiano appare come corretta sì, ma molto formale in quanto appesantisce il discorso e viene utilizzata in discorsi come ad esempio le arringhe in tribunale. Di conseguenza, in italiano si cerca di usarla il meno possibile in un contesto letterario e quindi risulta necessario per il traduttore manipolare la frase per renderla diretta e meno formale nella narrazione. Una frase che tradotta risulta come "la bicicletta veniva usata regolarmente nei pochi giorni successivi mano a mano che Alem iniziava ad ampliare la sua conoscenza della zona" non risulta scorrevole e corretta per un madrelingua italiano. Per questo motivo, ho scelto di modificare l'ordine della frase per renderla leggibile: "nei giorni successivi Alem usò spesso la bici per esplorare la zona", frase più diretta e sintetica.

Un'altra differenza tra la lingua inglese e l'italiano riguarda l'uso delle ripetizioni nel periodo. Ripetere una parola in una frase viene considerato in linea generale come un segno di poca cultura lessicale e non creatività linguistica, in quanto per un italiano è necessario evitare di usare la medesima parola in un paragrafo e quindi cercare il sinonimo più creativo adatto, mentre per gli inglesi la ripetizione nelle stesse righe di parole uguali non crea disturbo nella linearità della frase. Per questo motivo, anch'io, quando possibile, cercavo di sostituire un termine già usato nella stessa frase con qualche sinonimo. Per esempio nei dialoghi in cui si alternavano i nomi delle due persone coinvolte, quando possibile utilizzavo sinonimi per Alem chiamandolo, ad esempio, "il ragazzo", "il giovane". Infine, alcune volte la sintesi di certi passaggi si rendeva necessaria quando vi era una sequenza di frasi brevi ravvicinate. In quel caso dunque, per non creare un ritmo troppo spezzettato, ho preferito unire con congiunzioni o relative le due o più frasi per creare uniformità.

In conclusione, la traduzione di questo testo non solo presentava problemi dal punto di vista culturale e sociolinguistico, ma anche di genere in quanto la mancanza di una definizione concordata dagli studiosi non rende chiaro chi siano i destinatari del testo e quindi rende incerta la traduzione di alcune parti. Altre sfide erano rappresentate dalla traduzione del linguaggio specializzato legale sia colloquiale.