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Taboo language and humour: the challenges of translating the “War and Peas” comics

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INTRODUCTION

I would have liked to start the introduction with a quote about humour, a definition of what is funny, or a consideration on the relationship between humans and humour. But I noticed that every definition, every opinion on humour by famous writers or comedians was unique and gave a different representation of the concept. For some, humour is the medicine for the bitterness of life or a mirror through which a person can see their faults, it is a defense, an unwanted truth, a different form of seriousness, a consolation and the list just goes on. In the end, this attempt helped me with my goal to demonstrate how the concept of humour is multifaceted and, above all, undefinable. As a translator student, it challenges me to think that something that is part of everyday life such as humour, something that everyone uses or hears in any conversation, could be such a complex matter to define, let alone to translate.

Another interesting topic related to my “translator’s curiosity” are comics. Reading manga (Japanese comics) and graphic novels has always been a hobby for me. Some years ago, I started to read “Peanuts” by Charles M. Schulz and I found a special interest in short, funny comic strips that, in a bunch of panels, are able to tell a whole story and to make the reader genuinely enjoy their content, sometimes bursting into laughter. Since then, I have started to follow many artists that created that kind of comic strips, including Elizabeth Pinch and Jonathan Kunz, creators of the *War and Peas* comics. What struck me about their work was the uncanny humour that characterizes their comic strips: together with an interesting use of wordplay, they were often full of references about death, sexual allusions, swear words and rude comments that I sometimes was ashamed to laugh at. It happened to me to wonder how such a culturally complex comic could be translated and imported into Italy. When it was announced that a collection of their comics was about to be translated into languages other than English, I was let down by the fact that the Italian translation was not an option.

My personal curiosity, together with the challenges offered by the characteristic feature of comics of the interplay of image and text – that cannot be intended as separate objects during the translation process - made me decide to investigate the specific topic of comics translation and the literature about humour in translation, with a focus on dark humour and taboo words, something that I had never studied before during my educational career in languages and translation.

The aim of the present dissertation is to investigate the translation process of comics when working with humour and taboo language. The characteristic trait of multimedia texts, such as comics, is that the message is delivered through the interaction of the verbal and visual channels, making particularly hard the job of the translator, who can only modify the verbal part of the message. For this reason, cultural items, punning, sayings, different types and forms of humour are added in the comics translator's list of challenges.

Unfortunately, although Zabalbeascoa (1996) proposed one, there is no guide to help the translator with the linguistic and cultural transfer of jokes, and there is not an official "blacklist" of taboo words and references for every language; therefore the translator can only be led by her/his own common sense and should often research a culture and society's customs to avoid producing a disrespectful translation and to make, at least, informed translation choices.

Chapter 1 opens with an overview of the discussion of different scholars about equivalence and culture in translation, to focus then on the specific challenges of comics translation such as their structure, the verbal message, the visual channel and their content. Jokes and the use of humour in general are the essence of comics, making them products which are extremely difficult to translate and to render successfully in the target culture and language. In fact, the second part of Chapter 1 is about humour and its tools. In particular, there are still few studies into dark humour and its translation in the field of Translation Studies, and therefore it was not easy to find many papers about it, but I found enough material to analyse the main translation strategies proposed to translate taboo terms in relation with this particular kind of humour.

In Chapter 2, I present the eighteen comic strips that I selected from the work of *War and Peas* and that I translated, because I found them particularly characteristic and interesting to translate, supported by the theoretical knowledge gained through the writing of Chapter 1.

Lastly, in Chapter 3 I analyse my translation process with each one of the eighteen comic strips, discussing the scholars' theories that led me to some translation choices, together with other versions of my translations that I decided not to present for various reasons.

My hope is that at the end of this dissertation the status of comics in the field of translation will be a little clearer and that after my studies on the literature about the translation of humour and taboo language, I have been able to carry out successfully the translation of War and Peas comics in the most respectful way towards the original work and the target readership.

Since it was not possible for me to open the introduction with a quote, I would like to end it with a note by John Ciardi in his English translation of *Inferno* by Dante Alighieri. I think it summarises the condition of the translator, doomed to produce something that can never be the exact copy of the original piece, but that can and should always aim to reproduce, with her/his different instrument (language) and by respecting its own self-logic, the same music and air:

When the violin repeats what the piano has just played, it cannot make the same sounds and it can only approximate the same chords. It can, however, make recognizably the same “music,” the same air. But it can do so only when it is as faithful to the self-logic of the violin as it is to the self-logic of the piano. (Ciardi 2001)

CHAPTER 1 - THE ACT OF TRANSLATION: BETWEEN CULTURE, HUMOUR AND TABOO LANGUAGE

1.1 OVERVIEW OF EQUIVALENCE

As my dissertation involves the translation of the comics of *War and Peas*, this first chapter will provide an overview of the main aspects of the translation of comics, with a focus on culture, humour and taboo language used with dark humour, all related to the fact that comics, as multimedia texts, require specific translation techniques.

It is crucial for the final purpose of this text, which aims to study the specific difficulties related to the translation of comics, to focus on and to discuss, first of all, what the challenges of translation itself are. We are far from the concept of translation as a simple conversion word-for-word from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). In such a translation process, all the shades, the goals, the reactions, the heritage of the original text cannot be guaranteed.

It might be said, regarding the pivotal problem of translation, intrinsic to its own essence, that “all the arguments against translation can be summed up in one: it is not the original” (Mounin 1994: 13). Loss sometimes is unavoidable, but satisfactory attempts to reduce it can be achieved if the concept of equivalence is better understood. As Chtatou (2021) points out, it was only in the 1950s that the first definitions of equivalence appeared. He continues that “equivalence was first seen as a functionalist concept: a text snippet has the same function in the source text and the target text” (Chtatou 2021). Different voices helped to develop the theory of equivalence in the translation process. The main protagonists that can be named are Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), Nida and Taber (1982), Jakobson (1959), House (2015), Newmark (1981), Pym (2010) and Baker (1992).

Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) suggested considering equivalence as the ideal method to address the translation of idioms, onomatopoeia and proverbs, because they perceived equivalence-oriented translation as a process that “replicates the same situation as in the original, whilst using completely different wording” (1958: 342). They concluded that the translator can only try “to look for a solution” (1958: 255) in the context of the source text (ST). Moreover, in their study, they identified two translation procedures, each one with different translation strategies: direct translation, or literal translation, with borrowing, calque, and literal translation strategies and oblique

translation, or free translation, with transposition, modulation, adaptation, and equivalence. In this picture, equivalence is intended as a particular translation situation or task that requires one to use structural and stylistic methods that are completely distant and different, so as to create the same impression of the ST audience for the TT audience (Beddari 2021).

Nida, with the collaboration of Taber, identifies two types of equivalence, formal equivalence (later, formal correspondence) and dynamic equivalence. The former aims to convey the message, preserving the content and the form (Nida 1964). The focus is on the ST and on its respect, risking however difficulties in the understanding by the target audience (Fawcett 1997). The latter is reader-oriented and tries to render the text accessible to the target audience, “meeting their linguistics needs and cultural expectations” (Beddari 2021: 52). The translator will try to trigger the same reaction of the original readers to the ST in the target readers. Nida and Taber argue that with dynamic equivalence:

The form of the original text is changed; but as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language, of contextual consistency in the transfer, and of transformation in the receptor language, the message is preserved and the translation is faithful. (1982:200)

Jakobson identifies three types of translation: intralingual (within the same language), interlingual (between two different languages) and intersemiotic (between sign systems). His famous statement is “equivalence in difference” because translation “involves two equivalent messages in two different codes” (1959:233). It is the translator’s task to find a way to re-code the message and transmit it to the TL.

House instead argues that “a translation text has a function equivalent to that of its source text” (2015: 23), and hence the original text and the final text should match each other in function. She proposes two types of translation: overt translation, in which it is evident that the TT is a translation, full of cultural reminders of the source culture (SC), and covert translation, where the final text is adapted for the target audience and it is “functionally equivalent in relation to the ST” (Beddari 2021: 53). House suggests that during the translation process the translator should use a “cultural filter” in order to see “the ST through the eyes of a target culture member” (2015:54).

Starting from Nida’s definitions of equivalence, Newmark (1981) suggests semantic translation and communicative translation. The former aims to “render, as

closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original”, while the latter tries to “produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original” (Newmark 1981: 185). It can be said that semantic translation gives more value to the author of the ST, while communicative translation focuses on the message in relation to the target audience.

Another definition can be what Baker (1992) proposed, when he decided to explore the definitions of equivalence at different levels, distinguishing between:

1. Equivalence at word level and above.

The translator while analyzing the ST should consider words as single unit and find a direct equivalent for each unit in the target language (TL).

2. Grammatical equivalence.

The different grammatical structures in the source and target languages can change the way the message is transmitted, and therefore the translator needs to find a way around the differences of the two grammatical systems.

3. Textual equivalence, regarding cohesion and information between the ST and TT.

The translator has to consider the purpose of the translation, the text type and the target audience as factors to produce a coherent and cohesive text.

4. Pragmatic equivalence, in relation to implicature.

It is the task of the translator to understand and convey in the TT, and often in the target culture, the implied meanings.

In addition, Pym states that “equivalence does not say that languages are the same; it just says that values can be the same” (2010: 7), so equivalence is to seek the same value in form, function and reference between the two texts. He distinguishes between natural equivalence, where equivalents are intended as existing prior to the translation process and are discovered by the translator (Beddari 2021) and directional equivalence, that allows the translator of more freedom choosing a translation approach, without being limited by the ST. From this discussion, we come to understand that equivalence, being the essence of translation, is a controversial matter in the field and the difficulties in defining equivalence ultimately result in “the impossibility of having a universal approach to this notion” (Leonardi 2000).

1.2 CULTURE IN TRANSLATION

Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere were the advocates of the cultural turn in Translation Studies, because they suggest looking past the linguistic aspects of the translation process and highlight the importance of culture and its interaction with translation (Ranzato 2010). In particular, Lefevere (1992) claims that a translation is an “act of rewriting” of a text in the language and the culture of the target audience. Such understanding comes from the evident fact, shown by history, that culture and language have evolved together and are “intrinsically dependent on each other” (Wang 2014: 2423).

If language is soaked in culture, how can the translator attempt to carry out a translation of a text not only in a different language, but especially created in a different culture? This concept is summarized in the term “cultural embeddedness” of a text (Ranzato 2010: 36), which has been created in a specific space-time context (the source culture), where it can be understood to the maximum – that is why Pym, in regard to this matter, said “text belongs” (2010). Thereby, we come to understand that the language is not the only obstacle between the translator and the TT s/he has to create, but most of the non-linguistic elements, which are cultural items: historical period, geographic setting, dress code, currency, proper names etc. The transfer of the cultural specificity of the original text in another cultural context can be facilitated by loosening the “bonds of belonging” (Pym 2010: 145) to the source culture and by creating new bonds, in order to root the text in the target culture. Such a translation strategy is represented by the domestication, or target-oriented, approach and its counterpart approach, the foreignization, or source-oriented translation.

The two notions above were first proposed by Venuti, who says that such translation strategy happens on two levels: the macrolevel, when the texts to translate are chosen, and the microlevel, in other words the translation approaches applied to the chosen texts (Venuti 1998: 240). In the domestication approach, items with cultural-specific content are changed into more familiar ones for the TC, in order to make feel at home the reader and let s/he think the text was originally written in her/his language. The style is fluent, to minimize the “foreignness” of the original text (Schuttleworth and Cowies 1997). On the other hand, foreignization keeps the cultural items in the TT and, to use the same words of Schleiermacher who Venuti quotes, the translation “brings the reader to the author”, while the domestication “leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and

moves the author towards him” (Venuti 1995: 19-20). The domestication approach is criticized by Venuti himself, because he sees it as an imperialistic act toward the source text and culture, while foreignization permits the text to resist the “ethnocentric violence of translation” (1995: 20).

A similar dichotomy is proposed by Toury (1980), who identifies source-oriented and target-oriented translations, which we can consider synonyms of Venuti’s pair. However, Toury (1980) also proposes two principles related to the two translation approaches: acceptability and adequacy. A translation is considered acceptable if it abides by the structures and culture of the target language, whereas an adequate translation stays true to the source text and culture.

It is not the aim of this work to judge what is right and what is wrong, whether Venuti’s disapproval of domestication in favor of foreignization is the best solution or if it is better to translate a text in such a way as to make the reader feel at home, as if the text had been created in her/his own culture and language. To quote Wang, “translation is an art of choosing” (2014: 2426). The translator will have to cope with choices about translation strategies for every text, but what is important is not to have the “one and only solution”, a translation approach that is always right, but to keep in mind all these issues related with the translation process, not only strictly related to language as the above-mentioned arguments shown.

1.3 CHALLENGES OF COMICS TRANSLATION

I have discussed the difficulties related to the translation process, but only in reference to texts themselves, alone. What can complicate such delicate procedure even more is the presence of other channels, in addition to the verbal channel, which limit and constrain the text and its translation. For television series, movie, cartoons, illustrated book and, of course, comics, the visual channel co-occurs hand in hand with the verbal channel. Therefore, other difficulties have to be taken into account.

Comics translation and audiovisual translation are two fields that share the above-mentioned characteristics and that are relatively new to the investigation. Although the term audiovisual translation is nowadays known worldwide (Díaz Cintas, Remael 2007: 11-12), in its early days the new discipline was named in different ways: audiovisual language transfer (Luyken et al 1991), transadaptation (Gambier 2003: 178), film and

television translation (Delabastita 1989) and screen translation, which aimed to be more inclusive. As already said, the main feature that characterizes both fields is the coexistence of different channels and codes that forms a very “articulated multimedia text” (Pavesi 2005: 9), because the translator has to deal with an editable part (the text) and an – almost – unchangeable one, because, although some minor alterations can be done to the image, it is impossible to change the whole situation depicted. Of course, audiovisual translation can be considered more complex than comics translation, because there is also the sound channel and the translation has to with the labial movements, synchronism, to ensure the naturalness of the dialogues (Herbst 1994). It is interesting to point out that the limits of this kind of translation have contributed to it being considered an entertainment form rather than an official translation and that is why it was ignored as a field for such a long time (Díaz Cintas, Remael 2007: 9).

1.3.1 THE STRUCTURE OF COMICS

It is now time to focus on the specific challenges of translating comics, starting from the misconception about comics status as a minor form of literature. In fact, as Zanettin (2008) states, generally there is an “often assumed status of comics as para- or sub-literature, as opposed to ‘serious’, high-brow cultural products which supposedly appear only in written form”. The common idea about comics is that they are just “popular literature for poorly educated readers” (Zanettin 2008: 7). But the reality of comics is far from such definitions. As declared Zanettin (2008), in an attempt to show the complexity of this form of literature:

Comics production ranges in fact from ‘low-brow’ to ‘hi-brow’ and, as Restaino (2004: 26) convincingly argues, some comics have the same complexity and require the same reading effort (and offer the same reading reward) as works by ‘serious’ prose writers such as James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Marcel Proust and Virginia Woolf. (Zanettin 2008: 7)

During the translation process of comics, there actually are different challenges, related to the content and also created by the structure of comics themselves. A key aspect of comics structure, which differentiates this form of visual communication from others, is the juxtaposition of two or more panels, with or without words. Between these panels, the narration continues in the gap between the pictures and it’s the reader’s duty to “fill in that gap with expectations and world knowledge” (Zanettin 2008: 13), drawn from “his own experience” (Eisner 1985: 140).

Starting from the difficulties related to the structure, the relationship between images and texts in a comic, as Barbieri (1995) says, is crucial not only for the story, but also for the graphics, because the text is often framed in balloons. What is a classic problem in the translation of comics is keeping the translation inside the graphic limits of the balloon. In the debate on comics in translation, the presence of balloons has always been seen as a restraint to the translator's freedom, at the same level as lip synchronization limits the translation in the dubbing process. Such type of limitation is so crucial for some media in translation that a concept was specifically created to address it, that is constrained translation. One of its definitions says:

We here define constrained translations as translations that are, for practical or commercial reasons, spatially limited, such as, for instance, advertisements with brief and catchy slogans, cartoons, comics and subtitles [...] They (comics) are limited spatially in that translations must fit into balloons or panels, and in that they have a specific objective. (Grun and Dollerup 2003: 198)

Rota (2008, in Zanettin) calls the complex structure of comics, formed by the interplay of pictures and text, "texture".

It is interesting to point out that the dialogue in comics is "a piece of verbal text included in an image [...] and it is an effective part of the image, it doesn't make sense to consider text and image as separated objects" (Barbieri 1995: 248). In other words, during the translation process it is impossible to separate the text to translate from the image. It is fundamental to understand that the text has a duration: it lasts for a certain time – this time being represented by the picture. Hence, "the image lasts at least as much as the words included in it" (Barbieri 1995: 248).

Related once again to the verbal part of comics, the translator has to keep in mind that the words may be translatable, but the pictures around the text remain the same, and therefore a translation cannot be undertaken efficiently if in the target language (TL) the meaning is too far from the original message conveyed by the combination of text and picture. This issue is shared, as previously discussed, by audiovisual translation, where the oral message is often bound to what is visually happening on the screen. The connection between image and text in comics is so deep that not only is the verbal part of the text bound to the picture, but the graphic part is too. In comics, "words have graphic substance, forms, colours or layouts which make them 'part of the picture'" (Zanettin

2008: 13). To say it differently, the text can serve the story and “functions as an extension of the imagery” (Eisner 1985: 10). In fact, the distinction between pictures and text can be misleading and Rota (2008, in Zanettin) suggests treating the written text as a “graphic element of the page”, understanding comics as a “complex structure resulting from the interweaving of texts and pictures”. In fact, Celotti (2008, in Zanettin) defines comics as a “narrative space where both pictures and words convey meaning and jointly create the story”, often with the primacy of images over text; as Groensteen stated, they are “narrative[s] with a visual dominant” (1999: 14).

Nevertheless, Zanettin cannot avoid pointing out that “comics are primarily visual text” (2008: 12) and language is “only one of the systems [...] involved in the translation”. In fact, when translating a comic into the TL, it is primarily translated into another visual culture. Gottlieb defines comics, and films, polysemiotic texts as opposed to monosemiotic texts as written books (1998), and thus the translation of polysemiotic texts could be more problematic. In fact, comics translation is constrained, and it is complicated by visual limitations which include not only the space of captions and balloons but also the interplay of the two main systems, verbal and visual. Celotti (2008, in Zanettin), on the other hand, argues that, instead of considering the visual elements as a constraint to the verbal message, translators should read the pictures together with the verbal message and interpret them together – a misreading of the visual language could result in an alteration of meaning in the final translation (Groensteen 1999). If we start to see comics as a form of sequential art, where the overlapping of the verbal and visual languages creates the diegesis (Celotti 2008, in Zanettin), it could be a way to distance the comics translation from the constrained approach, to stop understanding the visual message as a “tyranny” (Cary 1986: 54) and to start reading the image together with the text and grasp the totality of the message.

In the same way, after the translation is done, the reader “is required to exercise both visual and verbal interpretive skills” (Eisner 1985: 7-8) because the visual language has a cultural content too - there is no universality of the image. To believe in such universality would be, as Kaindl (2004a: 183) suggests, like believing in the existence of a visual Esperanto. Since any picture is polysemic, the verbal component in comics can have two functions, as Barthes (1982) notes. The verbal message can either anchor or relay the visual counterpart (Barthes 1964). Anchoring directs the interpretation of the

picture and helps the reader avoiding other meanings (hence, misunderstanding). The verbal message anchors the image to the one intended meaning. Relaying is even more characteristic for comics, while anchoring can be more generally referred to images, and it regards situations where the message is conveyed by an interplay of the two components, one filling the gap that the other cannot and vice versa. It can even be a three feature interaction, when the picture is accompanied by a balloon text and an onomatopoeia, the maximum understanding and enjoyability of the panel achieved only if the three elements are combined, forming a trilogy (Celotti 2008, in Zanettin). Relay is often used to create humour, making the translation process more complicated.

It is of course possible to translate the visual components as well: these can sometimes be modified (removed or redrawn) for particular comics conventions in a country (Zanettin (2008) reports the tendency in early 20th century Italy to remove the balloons in American comics), for censorship (Kaindl 1999) and for promotional or cultural agendas (D’Arcangelo 2008, in Zanettin). Though the removal or redraw of pictures in comics is quite rare. It has to be said that the production of the translation of comics has evolved thanks to new technologies. In the traditional way, the translator would hand over to the publisher the written translation, later on revised and then the letterer would scratch away the original text in the films with a razor blade and write by hand the translation. Today it is much less demanding: the translation is a text file, and lettering and graphic adaptations are made with graphic programs (Valero Garcès 2008, in Zanettin).

1.3.2 THE TRANSLATION OF THE VERBAL MESSAGE IN COMICS

Having established the relationship between verbal and visual languages and the importance to read and understand them together before translating, it is time to focus on the difficulties related to the translation of the verbal messages alone. The translator should translate all verbal messages, but often some of them remain untranslated, because they were not noticed or considered messages to translate. To avoid missing any verbal, therefore translatable, text, Celotti (2008, in Zanettin) identifies four loci of translation, four areas of verbal message.

1. Balloon

It is considered the main place where the spoken (dialogue) language can be found. It has to be translated.

2. Caption

It is the text at the bottom or top of the panel, where the narration is granted a literary dimension (Groensteen 1999: 30) and it is usually in the third person. Commentaries (such as voice off) on the image or changes in time and space can be found here. It has to be translated.

3. Title

Translating a title is a complicated issue, because one of its main functions is to be attractive but it is often linked with the verbal content of the comics or with the visual message. Often the title is changed from one country to another, and sometimes it is maintained in its original language just to give an exotic touch to the product (foreignization).

4. The linguistic paratext

This is the totality of the verbal signs inside the drawing: newspapers, road signs, onomatopoeia or shop signs. The paratext can have visual and/or verbal functions, and therefore its translation depends on what the translator decides to give priority to. If the paratext plays a pivotal part in the narrative, it must be translated. Other times, shop signs or newspaper can have an ironic use or tell us more about the cultural, social context. In these cases, there are a variety of strategies the translator can choose from.

Celotti (2008, in Zanettin) also suggests different strategies of translation for the paratext, since it is the only locus which not always requires a translation. Depending on the context and on its main function, the verbal message in a paratext can be:

1. translated;
2. translated with a footnote;
3. culturally adapted;
4. left untranslated;
5. removed;
6. a mix of the previous strategies.

It is important to understand that the decision does not only depend on the paratext's function but sometimes, for example, the text can be embedded in the picture

in such a way that the footnote is the only option, or the message is so iconic worldwide that the translation would be intrusive. Clearly, it is always a risk to decide to adapt or delete, wherever the first strategy is not possible, but keeping a paratext untranslated could even upset the plot. Hence, a conscious choice has to be made every time the translator deals with paratext, always keeping in mind the interaction between the visual and the verbal languages.

It is necessary to say a few more words about one of the elements of the paratext: onomatopoeia. Even though Celotti (2008, in Zanettin) includes it in the linguistic paratext *loci*, often it is quite difficult to classify and it lacks a conventional and clear graphic representation; sometimes it even requires new creations. Moreover, it is mainly used in genres such as cartoons and comics, which are considered not serious enough to be studied in academic research. These are some of the reasons why this element has not been subject of many studies yet. Its translation is often constrained by the graphic limits, because often onomatopoeic words are outside the balloons and part of the image; in fact Carreras et al. (2008: 12-13) state that they can merge with the picture (being stretched, distorted, magnified etc.) and this characteristic has an expressive importance, making it “very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to render the message [...] even in situations where this would be possible from a linguistic point of view” (Rabadán 1991: 155). To make things even more complicated, the representation of sounds is not universal: for instance a dog says “bau-bau” in Italian, “wan-wan” in Japanese and “guau-guau” in Spanish. Often the SL form is preserved, because it has become a convention (e.g. “splash” or “ouch”). The English language is advantaged in this matter; not for nothing the majority of worldwide conventional onomatopoeia are in English, as Kelly and Mayoral (1984: 154), Valero Garcés (2000: 84), Gasca and Gubern (2008: 8) and Gubern (1974: 153-154) point out English has an interesting ability “to reproduce inarticulate sounds and to create onomatopoeias, as well as its richness in phonosymbolic forms” (Igareda 2017: 345), something that is less natural for Romanic languages. Martínez Fuentes (2003) claims that:

[d]ue to the technical difficulties that graphic changes entail, coloured onomatopoeic words tend to remain the same in the target text, provided that the meaning can be easily understood through the context. If the meaning of the source onomatopoeia cannot be understood or if no further explanations exist in the same comic strip, translation is likely to occur. However, these are only exceptions to the rule, because the norm appears to be

to translate only those onomatopoeic expressions that do not require excessive expenses.
(Martínez Fuentes 2003)

Gubern's definition of onomatopoeia (1972: 151) states that it can be considered either "as phonemes with graphic value that acoustically suggest the sound of an action or an animal to the reader, or as a phonetic writing representation of noises or sounds produced by animals" as Igareda (2017) reports. Her taxonomy of onomatopoeic words is based on the works of Gasca and Gubern (2008), Kaindl (2004a) and Liberman (2004) and distinguishes between:

1. Sounds not made by humans at all (like things falling, machines working, punches landing).
2. Biologically constrained human sounds (like sneezes, cries of pain, laughter, and breathing).
3. Sounds made by animals (barking, moo, roar).
4. Sounds made by nature (wind, thunder, earthquake).
5. Sounds made by the interaction between a human being and an object (knock, shot).
6. Filled pauses and other hesitation sounds (like English uh, um, er).
7. Non-lexical vocal gestures (like clucking the tongue or English sh+ or aw+).
8. The wider class of conventionalized interjections (like English whoa or oh).
9. Non-phonological onomatopoeic sounds, whether imitations of natural sounds or non-representative evocative noises.
10. Ideophonic words and systems of ideophonic vocabulary fully embedded in a language's phonological system. (Igareda 2017: 346-347)

Kaindl (2004b), Inose (2009), Valero Garcés (1995) and Mayoral (1984; 1992) all propose similar translation strategies for onomatopoeia but, as Igareda (2017) points out, Young's proposal (2008) can be particularly relevant, primarily because he distinguished different translation approaches for onomatopoeic words in the balloons and in the background/picture. In the first situation, he suggests three strategies:

1. Onomatopoeia is translated into corresponding onomatopoeia.
2. Onomatopoeia is translated into non-onomatopoeic expressions.
3. Onomatopoeic words are translated into created onomatopoeic words.

In the second situation, the three translation strategies proposed are:

1. Onomatopoeia is translated into corresponding onomatopoeia.
2. Mimetic words are translated into non-mimetic words with lively images.
3. Onomatopoeias are translated into words with greater force to represent the same effect (Young 2008).

Even the format of publication, highlighted Rota (2008, in Zanettin), is subject to a kind of translation. In fact, when the comic is released, it can be: adapted to the local format; kept in the original format; presented in a new format.

This is because geographical areas are characterized by different formats of publication. It is interesting to notice how a change in the format can even lead to different translation approaches and target audience (Zanettin 2008). When the first option is applied, there is the first evident cultural adaptation the TL reader has experience with. Cultural adaptation is closely tied to the translation process. That is because, as previously said, every text is created in its cultural context where it can be understood the most – “cultural embeddedness” (Ranzato 2010: 36) – and when a text is imported into another context, culture, language, then it might be not understood and could create a sense of confusion and estrangement in the target reader. The cultural issue is one of the main difficulties for the translation and the matter is even more relevant for comics translation, since comics are a text type where culture-specific items are very common, humour being one of them.

1.3.4 THE PRESENCE OF CULTURE AND CULTURE-BOUND ITEMS IN COMICS TRANSLATION

Toury’s definition of the translation process as a “kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions” (1978: 200) reflects the translator’s inevitable destiny to have to deal with the issue of how to handle the cultural items implicit in the ST and to decide every time which is the best approach to convey them in the TL. However, Newmark’s take on culture (1988: 94) and its relationship with the language can be controversial, in comparison with the opinion of the majority, because he states that culture is “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” but he does not intend language as a feature of culture. Instead Vermeer asserts that “language is a part of culture” (1989: 222), remaining loyal to the general consensus that the notion of culture and language are inseparable (James 2002). In fact, both scholars Lotman (1978) and Bassnett (1991) support the latter conception of these two notions, a vision of deep connection: “no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre, the structure of natural language” (Lotman 1978). When translating what has to be considered is not only the lexical impact

on the TL reader, but also the cultural aspects, how they could be perceived when moving from the SC to the TC and finding the correct translation approach to convey them, remembering that language is “the heart within the body of culture” (Bassnett 1991). Nida (1964: 130) considers as a reason to “more severe complication” the difference between cultures rather than the difference in the structure of languages, because even similar languages, if we can dare to define as similar two languages. The binding of texts and culture makes the inevitability of translation loss a hand-in-hand partner of every translator. Some of the main translation strategies suggested to deal with the cultural implications in texts are Nida’s formal and dynamic equivalence (1964), which is not far from Newmark’s transference and componential analysis (1988), the former of each couple giving more space to the “local colour”, by keeping the SC elements unchanged at the expense of a potential limited comprehension of the reader, the latter highlighting the message and the reactions to trigger, by preferring the understanding of the original message in a different form over the preservation of the original form.

To help with the selection of the translation strategy to adopt, it could be helpful for the translator to ask her/himself to whom the ST was destined, to understand if the TL readership may correspond to the original reader. Coulthard (1992) defines these two subjects as the ST ideal reader and the TT ideal reader. By identifying the ideal reader of the source language, the translator can better understand what “knowledge of certain facts, memory of certain experiences [...] plus certain opinions, preferences and prejudices and a certain level of linguistic competence” the author attributed to the reader, and s/he will have to construct a new ideal reader with inevitably different cultural knowledge and textual expectations (Coulthard 1992).

If translation is considered a form of intercultural communication (Leppihalme, 1997), the translator will have to deal with identifying culture-bound items from the SC in the ST and finding a way to transmit them to the TT with its TC. The problems that arise during face-to-face intercultural communication were defined by Archer (1986) as culture bumps: “a culture bump occurs when an individual finds himself or herself in a different, strange or uncomfortable situation when interacting with persons of a different culture”. When the clash between cultures is even more overwhelming for the person concerned, the right term is culture shock. Leppihalme extends the use of the first term to translation, to address the situations where the TT reader has a problem understanding a

culture-bound element from the ST. In particular, Leppihalme focused her study on allusions in translation. An allusion, as Meyer (1968, quoted in Leppihalme 1996) explains, refers to a range of uses of a “preformed linguistic material”, in a modified or in its original form, concealing an implicit meaning. In other words, allusions are hypertextual references to other texts (movies, books etc.) made in a more or less explicit way. They can be categorized as key-phrase allusion (to pee or not to pee; it seems like all taxis turn into pumpkins at midnight); proper-name allusions (I felt like Beyoncé; don’t get cocky, you are not Sherlock).

It is expected that the reader will participate in the allusion, because it only gives a clue, the meaning can be understood if the reader connects the clue with the object of its reference. An important characteristic of allusions is their ability to create new literature from old literature, as Johnson states (1976). A high degree of biculturalism is required to understand an allusion across cultural barriers, which is why some scholars suggest that a translator should be not just bilingual but also bicultural to understand the ST in its entirety and to be able to convey it to the TL reader (Straight 1981: 41; Reiss & Vermeer 1984: 26). But is it right to expect readers to be bicultural? Or are allusions inevitably culture bumps in translation? These are the questions posed by Leppihalme. If the reader can connect the dots and understand the allusion, Wilss (1989), who considers the main function of an allusion to be making the text more attractive, states that the reader will achieve intellectual joy, especially when s/he is dealing with a creative allusion, not a stereotyped reference because its use has not been abused (Leppihalme 1997).

It is useful to study the definitions of what a culture-bound item is, because it can help the translator identifying them, in order to categorize them and select the best translation strategy. However, problems arise in the attempt to find a definition because, as Aixelá (1996) points out, everything in a language is “culturally produced”, starting from the language itself. We will take into consideration Aixelá, Mailhac, Ranzato and Pedersen’s definitions of cultural items. Aixelá (1996: 58) said that they are:

Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the non-existence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text. (Aixelá 1996: 58)

Not far from the above-mentioned definition, Mailhac's contribution (1996: 133-134) was:

By cultural reference we mean any reference to a cultural entity which, due to its distance from the target culture, is characterized by a sufficient degree of opacity for the target reader to constitute a problem. (Mailhac 1996: 133-134)

Instead Ranzato (2010) defines cultural items, which can be also called culture-bound elements or realia, as items in a text with a cultural, and not linguistic, content. She claims that those elements convey the "colour" of the original texts and characterize their style (2010: 39). Pedersen gives his contribution by suggesting a classification of realia, which he calls Extralinguistic Culture-bound Reference (ECR), applying the parameter of Transculturality. First of all, he defined ECR as:

Reference that is attempted by means of any culture-bound linguistic expression, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process, and which is assumed to have a discourse referent that is identifiable to a relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopedic knowledge of this audience. (Pedersen 2005)

The notion of Transculturality, presented by Welsch, investigates how, in the modern world, cultures "are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other" (1994: 198). Thus, ECRs that were once part of one culture, are now less culture-bound and they can be recognized by members of other cultures. The Transculturality parameter is applied to ECR by Pedersen to determine, by its degree, how familiar an ECR is to both the ST and TT readers. There are three levels determined by Pedersen, which are Transcultural ECR, Monocultural ECR and Microcultural ECR. The following scheme is proposed by Pedersen (2005):

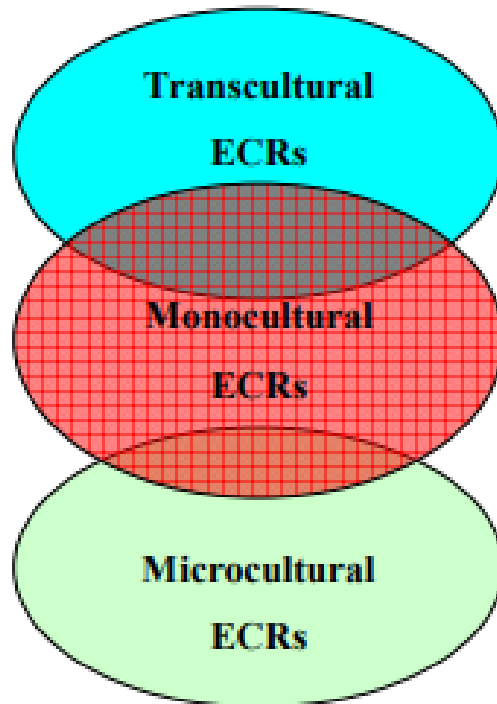


Figure 1: Transcultural, Monocultural and Microcultural ECRs
(Pedersen 2005)

A Transcultural ECR is an element that is not bound to the SC and it is often part of common encyclopedic knowledge of both readers, of the ST and TT, being common to both cultures or because it belongs to a third common-known culture. A Monocultural ECR is what is usually intended as a culture-specific element, because it causes a “translation crisis point” (Pedersen 2005) as its referent is not as relevant to the TT reader as it is to the ST reader, who have differences in their encyclopedic knowledge. A Microcultural ECR is closely bound to the SC but it might not be retrievable from either the ST or TT encyclopedic knowledge, due to the fact that it is too local or too specialized to be part of the knowledge of the majority of the ST readers.

Another parameter used by Pedersen is Extratextuality, which determines if an ECR exists in a culture outside the text: if it is a Text Internal ECR, it means that it has been created specifically for that text (like Hogwarts in the Harry Potter saga), while is a Text External ECR, if it has a meaning and a life outside its original text. As Pedersen (2005) explains:

An originally Text Internal ECR may become a Transcultural ECR through the process of intertextuality, if it is very successful. An example of this would be ‘James Bond’

which is Text Internal when he introduces himself in Goldfinger (11.31), but Text External (and Transcultural) when a character compares himself to Bond in Notting Hill (1.45.41). This shows that Text External ECRs may very well be fictional, as long as they do not have existence in the text at hand. (Pedersen 2005)

It has to be said that all above-mentioned and other definitions of realia can often be interchangeable (Vlahov, Florin 1969: 432). Another classification of culture-bound elements is proposed by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007: 201) and reported by Ranzato (2010): geographical references (objects from physical geography: savannah, mistral, tornado; geographical objects: Plaza Mayor, Downs; endemic species of animals and plants: zebra, sequoia); ethnographic references (objects of everyday life: tapas, igloo, trattoria; job references: farmer, ranch, gaucho, machete; references to arts and culture: Thanksgiving Day, blues, Romeo and Juliet, Hannukah; references to nationality or place of birth: gringo, Parisian, Cockney; measurement: inch, euro, pint, pound); socio-political references (references to administrative or territorial units: county, State, bidonville; references to institutions and roles: Reichstag, Congress, sheriff; references to socio-cultural life: prohibition, Ku Klux Klan, landed gentry; references to institutions and military items: Feldwebel, Smith & Wesson, marines).

There are different classifications of translation strategies, like those proposed by Gottlieb (1992), Kovačič (1996), Ivarsson (1992), Lomheim (1999) for culture-bound elements, which, even though they were originally elaborated for the translation of subtitles, can be applied in general when dealing with these items and in comics translation. In particular, Ranzato (2010) selects the classification offered by Díaz Cintas (2003) and Santamaria Guinot (2001) (in Díaz Cintas, Remael 2007: 202-207):

1. Borrowing.

The original element is kept from the ST to the TT.

2. Calque or literal translation.

3. Explication.

The text is made more accessible to the TT reader with specification or generalization techniques.

1. Substitution.

The ECR is replaced with another one.

2. Transposition.

The cultural concept from the SC is translated into another cultural concept of the TC. Transposition is considered the most respectful form of substitution, by replacing the original ECR with a more local reference.

6. Neologism.

7. Compensation.

A loss is compensated with an addition.

8. Omission.

9. Addition.

Ranzato (2010) points out that culture-bound elements are characterized by a subjective, relative and dynamic nature, because they intertwine culture and specific associations. The translator too will interpret such associations from a subjective point of view, also given the fact that this intertwining of culture and associations is changing and dynamic. Therefore, despite the fact that all translations risk growing old, the translation of culture often does not keep up with the times: there are no firm points the translator can hold on, s/he always has to reflect and consider which path to take for each situation. An important type of culture-specific element which is very recurrent in comics is humour.

1.4 HUMOUR IN TRANSLATION

Humour is a key element of everyday communication and it is deeply rooted in a specific linguistic and cultural context, as Spanakaki (2007) states. Thus, what can be funny in a language, might not make the receiver laugh at all. In fact, it is known to be a challenge for translators and it is often associated with the concept of untranslatability: “when it comes to translating humour, the operation proves to be as desperate as that of translating poetry” (Diot 1989: 84). This untranslatability of humour is related to its link to culture and language.

As Vandaele (2010: 147) comments, at first glance, it may seem easy to define humour, which he describes as “what causes amusement, mirth, a spontaneous smile and laughter”; yet at the same time he states that it is not just laughter, which is only one of the physiological effects after an humouristic event and we cannot reduce its definition to this. Spanakaki gives a similar definition, by indicating as humour “whatever is intended to be funny, even if it might not always be perceived or interpreted as such” (2007). In

general, it could be said that humour happens when there is an expectation that is later not confirmed, breaking a rule, and a new and unexpected situation is displayed, resolving the incongruity created by the broken rule (Vandaele 2010: 149). The problem when it comes to translation is that what is intended as the expectations and the rules is culture specific. What is a cultural issue for the translator may also become a political and ethical one: his/her perception of what is adequate or inadequate as humour might not coincide with what an institution or a regime approves of.

Some other definitions of humour will be listed below, to show how wide this field of knowledge can be. Defining it is particularly complicated, to the extent that as Vandaele states, some “desperate scholars” gave up “on any attempt at defining humour” (2002: 153).

Stephen Butler Leacock defines humour as “the kindly contemplation of the incongruities of life, and the artistic expression thereof. I think this is the best because I wrote it myself” (2002, in Kaufman); Arthur Dudden (1987: 7) said that it is a “culturally shaped individual cognitive experience, culturally determined because the sociological factors are the primary mechanisms leading to its occurrence”, while Walter Nash tried to define it by examining three principles that constitute humour (Nash 2014):

- a) A “genus” or derivation in culture, institutions, attitudes, beliefs, typical practises, characteristic artefacts etc.
- b) A characteristic design, presentation, or verbal packaging by virtue of which the humorous intention is indicated and is recognized.
- c) A locus in language, some word or phrase that is indispensable to the joke. (Nash 2014)

Humour can be used with different functions and intentions. It may function as escapist entertainment, moralizing intention, pedagogical device, social criticism and not just to make people genuinely, and ingenuously, laugh. Sometimes humour can be labelled as provocative, or bitter, cynical, offensive etc. because it is used to show the speaker’s opinion and views (Zabalbeascoa 1996). The first broad distinction is made between harmless jokes and jokes that may offend someone. The latter is interconnected with how dark humour (that will be discussed later on) usually works. There are more specific distinctions to classify jokes and will focus on Whitman-Linsen, Zabalbeascoa and Raphaelson-West’s classifications. Starting from Zabalbeascoa (1996: 251-254), he categorized jokes using as a parameter the level of difficulty to translate them. The first

category is that of the International Joke. The comic effect does not depend on cultural or linguistic differences. The joke can be easily transferred to the TC. Zabalbeascoa (1996) wants to stress that a joke that is international for one culture might not be for another culture. Thus, he suggests that it would be more correct to talk about language pairs and binational jokes. Instead, with the Nation-culture-and-institution Joke, the cultural, nation-related and institution-related references need to be adapted to the TC, or otherwise only a small part of the target audience would understand those references. In the case of the National-sense-of-humour Joke, Zabalbeascoa (1996) supposes that some typologies of jokes are more appreciated by certain cultural communities. To make it simpler, some communities like jokes that make fun of their own customs and traditions, while others prefer jokes at the expense of other cultures. It is hard to trace back the origins of these preferences, because it can be for political, religious, historical or cultural reasons. The translator has to put her/himself in the target audience's shoes and work out if they would understand and appreciate that type of humour. About the Language-dependent Joke, Zabalbeascoa (1996) says that this kind of joke works with the natural features of language, such as homophony, words/sentences with the same pronunciation; polysemy, a word/sentence with more than one meaning and zeugma, "a use of language in which a word that has more than one meaning is used with one meaning in one part of a sentence and with a different meaning in another part of the sentence, usually in order to produce a humorous effect" (online Cambridge Dictionary). The translator has to find a creative solution, or alternatively the most common approach is to translate in literally, losing the humorous effect. A Visual Joke can depend either on a picture or on the interplay between text and image; the latter is a mix of this type of joke with a language-dependent one. If the joke is only based on the image, the translator can do little, while the second option is the last type of joke identified by Zabalbeascoa (1996). The last type is the Complex Joke, which is a combination of two or more above-mentioned jokes. It is usually the most complicated joke to translate.

Whitman-Linsen (1992) focuses on visual and language-dependent jokes and identifies three gags of humour, from the easiest to the most complicated for translators: Visual Humour.

Humour relies on the visual channel alone and the translator cannot modify it;

Verbal Humour.

The humorous effect comes from the text, which can be modified during the translation process and adapted to the target culture and language. The translation could lead away the final text from the original text, to obtain the same amused reaction from a different audience.

Verbal and not verbal Humour.

The joke is based on the interplay of what it is communicated by the verbal and visual channels. Idiomatic phrases and sayings can have different levels of meanings when combined with the visual channel and, as Pavesi (2005) suggests, they can make the job of the translator more complicated. Even if many sayings have the same meaning in different languages, when they also have a visual representation, they can become a new obstacle for the translation. Pavesi offered as an example the saying “to be in somebody’s shoes”, the translation of which into Italian is “mettersi nei panni di qualcuno”. But if the text is supported by a visual portrayal of someone who is trying to fit in somebody else’s shoes, the translation cannot be carried out easily.

The last classification is the one proposed by Raphaelson-West (1989: 130): the Universal/Bicultural Jokes, which are very similar to the one proposed by Zabalbeascoa. It is the easiest humour to convey between different cultures because it is based on shared knowledge and it is easily understandable. Of course, it is more correct to call it bicultural and not universal because it is impossible to expect all cultures to share all the same general knowledge. The Cultural Jokes, that relate to a type of humour based on what a culture appreciates, but another may not. Even if a different culture could understand part of the joke, if the target reader does not share the same set of values and experience of the SC, s/he would probably not understand the joke in its entirety. As Raphaelson-West says: “there are many jokes which may mean the same thing semantically, but in terms of pragmatics and culture, there is something sorely missing which makes the joke untranslatable” (1989: 132). The Linguistic Jokes are what it is commonly called a pun or wordplay, because the humorous effect comes from the characteristics of the language. Raphaelson-West (1989) claims that this is the hardest typology of joke to translate and provides the following translation strategy:

In order to translate the joke it would be necessary to have an idiomatic expression about humor which contained a word which rhymed with a word which means something about puns or language. This word which means something linguistic would have to be [...] [semantically] similar to the word it rhymes with, and its presence would have to add a little meaning to the sentence. (Raphaelson-West 1989)

The example provided by Raphaelson-West is the alteration of the idiom “funny as hell” into “punny as hell”.

All the above-mentioned classifications help one untangle the difficulties on the path for the translation of humour. At this point, it is clear that this field of translation is particularly resistant to the transfer into another language and culture. It is no coincidence that Vandaele (2002) describes the translation of humour as “qualitatively different from other types of translation and, consequently, one cannot write about humor translation in the same way one writes about other types of translation”. According to him, the translator has to be ready to deal with the intended effect of humour and, of course, with the possible failure of conveying it. He points out four main elements (Vandaele 2002: 150): firstly, all laughter is the exteriorized manifestation of the intended effect of humour, which can be quite hard to replicate during translation. quite difficult to render. Then, there are two different skills related to humour: its comprehension and appreciation and its production. The humorous effect can be noticed and appreciated by the translator, but s/he could still not be able to reproduce it. Thus, humour could be considered as Spanakaki (2007) suggests, a talent-related skill, not teachable nor learnable for the translator. Vandaele affirms that “the appreciation of humor varies individually” (2002), therefore the sense of humour of the translator affects its work. He concludes that “the rhetorical effect of humor on translators may be so overwhelming that it blurs the specifics of its creation; strong emotions may hinder analytic rationalization” (Vandaele 2002).

The translator must remember that often in this complex type of translation, it is more relevant to keep the comic effect during the linguistic and cultural transfer of the text, rather than remain literally faithful. If the result is as funny as the original, the translation is to be considered carried out in the best possible way, even if the joke of the TT has replaced the untranslatable source joke, changing it to its core. Unfortunately, the translator is often afraid to distance the target text from the original one, to the detriment of humour itself (Chiaro 1992: 85).

Spanakaki (2007) identifies three main tools for the translation of humour: wordplay/punning, allusions and verbal humour. The first of them is wordplay or punning. Delabastita gave two interesting definitions of punning:

Wordplay is the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) are used are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings. (Delabastita 1996: 128)

Moreover, “the pun contrasts linguistic structures with different meanings on the basis of their formal similarity” (Delabastita 1996: 128). He suggests that, basing the classification on the typology and degree of similarity, puns can be either: homonymy (sounds and spelling are the same); homography (spelling is the same but with different sounds); homophony (same sounds but with different spelling); paronymy (both sounds and spelling are slightly different).

As Pavesi (2005) notices, it is rare for these semantic ambiguities to have a direct translantant from one language into another. The translation strategies for wordplay are listed in the following table “Translation Method of Puns” by Delabastita (1993; 1996), reported by Spanakaki (2007):

PUN ⇒ PUN (pun rendered as pun)
the ST pun is translated by a TL pun.
PUN ⇒ NON PUN (pun rendered as non-pun)
a non-punning phrase which may retain all the initial senses (non-selective non-pun), or a non-punning phrase which renders only one of the pertinent senses (selective non-pun), or diffuse paraphrase or a combination of the above.
PUN ⇒ RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE
pun rendered with another rhetorical device, or punoid (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox etc), which aims to recapture the effect of the ST pun.
PUN ⇒ ZERO (pun rendered with zero pun)
the pun is simply omitted.
PUN ST = PUN TT
ST pun copied as TT pun, without being translated.

NON PUN ⇒ PUN (a new pun introduced)
a compensatory pun is inserted, where there was none in the ST, possibly making up for ST puns lost elsewhere (strategy 4 where no other solution was found), or for any other reason.
ZERO ⇒ PUN (addition of a new pun)
totally new textual material is added, containing a wordplay as a compensatory device.
EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES
explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments in translator's forewords, 'anthological' presentation of different, complementary solutions etc.

Table 1: Translation Method of Puns (Delabastita 1993; 1996)

It is interesting to notice that for a long time the notion of the untranslatability of puns has prevailed among humour translation scholars. Yet, it is a generalization that comes from the incontestable fact that punning has the tendency to resist some types of translation.

The second element are allusions. In this dissertation, the theme of allusions has already been investigated with the work of Leppihalme, in the discussion of culture bumps in translation. Allusions are not only a cultural element in a text, but also a tool of humour. In her research, Leppihalme describes allusions as elements that involve “some modification of a frame” (1996: 200), where frames could be sayings, idioms and references to different sources that can be modified, situationally or linguistically, to create humour. She further divides allusions into three categories based on their functions (Leppihalme 1997): function to create humour; function to delineate a character and function to carry themes.

The main difficulties concerning their translation are that, firstly, allusions are culture-bound items, and therefore their intelligibility across language and cultural barriers ranges widely. Since allusions are drawn from different sources such as films, history, books and so on, they are often easier to be recognized by the members of the SC of the reference and by a small part of another culture’s audience. Secondly, if the allusion is simplified during the translator process, the TT reader could feel offended. There is not a preferred approach to translation for this element, and therefore what a translator can do before translating an allusion is ask her/himself what culture the reference of the

allusion is from and put her/himself in the average TT reader's place to consider if such a reader could understand the reference. After these considerations, s/he can decide to either keep the original allusion, delete it from the TT or create a new allusion that can be understood by the target audience.

The last tool for the translation of humour identified by Spanakaki (2007) is verbal irony. As already mentioned, it is a hard task to define humour. The same can be said when it comes to defining irony, which can generally be described as when by saying one thing another thing is meant. Nevertheless, Spanakaki (2007) stresses that it is not possible to identify verbal irony in specific sets of stylistic and linguistic traits, because one cannot recognize an ironic style or an ironic tone. Mateo (1995: 172) claims that "irony depends on context, since it springs from the relationships of a word, expression or action with the whole text or situation". Rather than on the content of the ironic sentence, it is on the relationship between its different interpretations that irony focuses on, as Tanaka assumes (1973, in Mateo 1995: 172). It is important to notice that what differentiates sarcasm from irony is that the latter "mal-codes" and "misrepresents the real content of the message so that the contradiction must be assumed as normal, whereas a sarcastic statement is ostensibly sincere and provokes no feeling of contradiction at all" (Nash 1985, in Mateo 1995: 172). As for humour, it is up to the translator to identify and understand verbal irony, because it is not immediately recognizable and sometimes it can even not be grasped.

Mateo (1995) proposes the following approach as possible translation strategies when it comes to irony, which can be applied to comics translation.

ST irony becomes TT irony with literal translation
ST irony becomes TT irony with 'equivalent effect' translation
ST irony becomes TT irony by means of different effects from those used in ST (including the replacement of paralinguistic elements by other ironic cues)
ST irony is enhanced in TT with some word / expression
ST ironic innuendo becomes more restricted and explicit in TT
ST irony becomes TT sarcasm (i.e. more overt criticism)
The hidden meaning of ST irony comes to the surface in TT (no irony in TT)

ST ironic ambiguity has only one of the two meanings translated in TT (there is no double-entendre or ambiguity in TT therefore)
ST irony is replaced by a 'synonym' in TT with no two possible interpretations
ST irony is explained in footnote in TT
ST irony has literal translation with no irony in TT
Ironic ST is completely deleted in TT
No irony in ST becomes irony in TT.

Table 2: Translation of Irony (Mateo 1995)

At the end of this discussion, we can take into consideration the recommendations given by Zabalbeascoa (1996) to help translators with humour translation. He suggests creating a database or reference book, full of practical examples from previous translators' experiences with humour. The translator could use this to reduce the translating time and to find inspiration for creative performances. Moreover, the translator should remember to regard the text as the main unit of translation and never fix her/himself on only one approach, because different kinds of jokes need different translation strategies. To go further into humour translation, it is time to address a particular type of humour: dark humour.

1.4.1 DARK HUMOUR IN TRANSLATION

It appears that when approaching this field there is a "lack of univocal definition" (Bucaria 2008) and more research about what black humour is not has been done than on what it is. In fact, even if the translation of humour has been taken into consideration more and more in the last few years (it is sufficient to look at the works of Chiaro 2005; Delabastita 1996, 1997; Zabalbeascoa 1994, 1996), the same cannot be said of the translation of humour that deals with sensitive subjects.

Dark humour could be generally defined as a kind of humour that enjoys making fun of society-important and sacred beliefs. Dictionaries define dark humour in a rather vague way: it is a type of humour "marked by the use of usually morbid, ironic, grotesquely comic episodes" (online Merriam-Webster Dictionary), that looks at or treats "something perceived as sad or serious in a humorous way" (online Cambridge Dictionary). To be exact, what is used more often is the term black humour, rather than dark humour, but the former can lead to misunderstanding and incorrectly refer to black

people's humour – therefore in this dissertation the concept will be always referred to as dark humour.

According to Bucaria's definition (2008), dark humour is described as a:

More or less explicit and sacrilegious representation of humour that has as its aim that of making fun of situations usually regarded as tragic, such as death, sickness, disability, and extreme violence, or of the people involved or subject to them. (Bucaria 2008: 218)

Despite the limited research on this subject, the origins of dark humour can be traced back to the Greek comedies, but also more "recent" authors included it in their writing, such as Mark Twain, Jonathan Swift, Vladimir Nabokov and Joseph Heller.

Over the last few years, the popularity of this derogatory humour appears to have increased in the English-speaking communities, as if they had become more tolerant toward disrespectful jokes about disease, sex and death. The same cannot be said of Italian culture, which it could be said to be still largely affected by superstitious and religious influences. Thus, it is a pivotal issue to understand how this type of humor travels from a more accepting culture to a more superstitious culture. For example, it appears that Italy favours family-oriented entertainment for television programmes (Pavesi, Malinverno 2000).

A set of translation strategies was elaborated by Bucaria (2007) to deal with disturbing elements in television series adaptations and it can be used as a guide for the translation of dark humour in general.

Complete Omission

The element related to dark humour is deleted, and sometimes it is substituted with a neutral comment;

Weakening

The strong reference is made harmless, usually less vulgar or offensive;

Close Rendering

What is conveyed in the ST is as rendered successfully in the TT, without losing the dark humorous effect;

Increased Effect

The disturbed reference of the ST is proposed even more enhanced in the TT, either for compensation or for a misinterpretation of the translator;

What characterizes the style of dark humour to its core is the use of offensive words typical of swearing, including taboo words.

Defining swearing words it is not an easy task, because we are moving in a very complex area (Ljung 2011). Some scholars have made an attempt at it, such as Adam and Richard (2002), who define them as words which are considered an improper and rude form of language, including taboo words, regarded as the most unpleasant words. Society generally associates the act of swearing to a vulgar and disrespectful type of linguistic behaviour. Ljung (2011) names four criteria typical of swearing: the use of taboo words, which add emphasis to the message but, at the same time, their use violates many cultural rules; taboo words used in swearing which do not carry much weight; for phrasal, lexical and syntactic constraints, swearing is regarded as a type of formulaic language; swearing is also a type of reflective language, which shows the feelings and attitudes of the speaker, and thus it could also be considered emotive language.

There are many are the functions of swearing and they are not limited to emotions such as offence, aggravation and anger, but swearing words are also used in everyday vocabulary to convey sociability and solidarity (Holmes 2013). Even if it is generally avoided, swearing can become a speech habit: the use of desemantized filler words gives greater expressiveness to the dialogue. It is, in fact, very common to find the desemanticization of swear words. Their uses and functions are listed by Andersson and Trudgill (1992), who categorize swearing words as expletive, abusive, humorous and auxiliary swearing. Expletive Swearing refers to emotions and personal feelings like surprise or anger, which are not directed at other people. Examples in both English and Italian could be screaming “Shit!/Merda!” when the speaker is not able to find a free parking spot and s/he is late to an appointment. Abusive Swearing, unlike the previous category, is aimed at other people and it is usually offensive. To use the same example as before, if the speaker has finally found a free parking spot and another driver takes that spot, the speaker will scream “Fuck you bastard!/Fanculo bastardo!”, using cursing and name calling. Humorous Swearing is always addressed to other people, but without the aim to be offensive to them. It could be said that it gives a sense of playfulness. An example could be “get your ass in gear/muovi il culo” when waiting for a friend to be ready. Instead Auxiliary Swearing, like expletive swearing, is not aimed at other people,

but it is just a way of speaking. It is also referred to as lazy swearing. English speakers often use “fucking”, that in Italian is stereotypically translated with “fottuto” (Pavesi, Malinverno 2000), while it would actually be more common for an Italian-speaker to say “cazzo di...”.

Pinker (2007: 78) identifies five types of swearing words:

1. Dysphemistic swear word
This is the opposite of a euphemism and it is usually used to convey anger.
2. Abusive swear word
It is used to intimidate or insult other people.
3. Idiomatic swear word
A type of swearing without referring directly to the issue.
4. Emphatic swear word
Its use is to emphasize something.
5. Cathartic swear word
The type of swearing used when something unexpected and displeasing, like coffee spilling, happens.

Swear words are considered offensive when they refer to an offensive subject: as Jay (2000: 153) says, “words referring to offensive concepts become offensive words”.

The last categorization of swearing, proposed by Ljung (2011), is based on functions and themes. Starting from the former, swear words can have a stand-alone function, which does not need other words to function, and a slot-filler function, which happens when swearing is used to make other words longer, by adding it to adjectives or verbs. The slot-filler functions are divided into adjectival/adverbial intensifier, emphasis, adjectives of dislike, anaphoric use of epithets, modal adverbial and noun supports. The themes are the most common areas touched by swear words. Ljung (2011) identifies five major themes from which swearing vocabularies are drawn by most languages. In order of frequency, they are: religion, scatological, sex organ, sexual activities and the mother.

1.4.2 TABOO WORDS

The key element of swearing, as previously discussed, are taboo words. As explained in the online Treccani Encyclopedia, the term taboo comes from the Polynesian word “tabu”, which means “sacred, prohibited”, and it was used to address prohibited objects or people

during rituals. Its use has been borrowed by other languages to refer to prohibited elements in general. Therefore, a linguistic taboo is the prohibition or restriction of the use of certain words, that refer to banned referents, due to social and cultural constraints. Taboo words are used either to express how ignoble something is, to provoke an emotional reaction in the listener (Pinker 2007), to vent the speaker's dissatisfaction or to make a comment on what is happening; in this last case taboo words are not crucial to the advancement of the plot, and therefore their translation does not have to be particularly faithful to the original text (Luyken et al. 1995).

The main taboo areas are the five themes studied by Ljung (2011) and what is particularly interesting about taboo words is that often there is a specific word which is banned and whose pronunciation triggers scandalized and irrational reactions, while its synonyms that convey the exact same meaning are accepted (Risch 1987: 353). The offended reactions to taboo words are caused by religious fear, dread, embarrassment or decency (Galli de' Paratesi 1964). The difference between the banned word and its accepted synonyms is that the former is dysphemistic, which means that it "calls to mind the most disagreeable aspects of the referent, rather than just pointing to it" (Pinker 2007). That is why people prefer to talk using euphemisms or softer synonyms to address unpleasant or embarrassing things. There are situations where the phenomenon of linguistic taboo regresses (Radtke 1993) and the use of those words it is restored to normal and not offensive or rude – this happens especially in the youth language, as Coveri (1988) and Radtke (1993) noticed, but it is also occurring in some social groups and subgroups.

Needless to say, swear words are cultural terms, because what is not accepted in one culture might be in another and vice versa; this is due to the differences in beliefs, social manners and expectations (Davoodi 2009). Therefore, the target culture of a translated text could consider a specific word or concept insulting, labelled as taboo, while in the original text it was not considered offensive at all. Hence, the translator should be familiar with both cultures when translating a taboo. Taking into consideration British, American and Italian cultures, it could be said that swearing about deity and the devil/hell is more accepted in Italy rather than in the other two. As Pavesi and Malinverno claim (2000), in the American and British cultures, the religious sphere is much more linguistically limited; instead, the Italian vocabulary is rich of blasphemies, while they are quite rare in English. That is why literal translations of swearing expressions like

“goddamn” and “bloody hell” into “maledetto” and “che diavolo” sound weak and less aggressive.

According to Davoodi (2009), there are three possible situations the translator can find her/himself into: (A) the taboo word in the ST is not considered a taboo in the TC, therefore the translator can translate it directly; (B) the taboo word in the ST is prohibited in the TC too and (C) a term that in the ST is not a taboo, it is considered one in the TC.

In situations B and C, the translator can resort to some translation strategies that will be analysed later in the text.

Davoodi (2009) studied the different functions that taboo words play in filmic dialogue, and such categorization can also be easily applied to comics language because it reflects the actual use of the speakers. All functions express intense states of mind and feelings (not necessarily aggressive) and share a strong emotional charge. The first functions identified by Davoodi (2009) is the descriptive function, in this case the insult is addressed to someone and it is used to add a description of the object. For instance, “that asshole over there”, “what you are saying is bullshit”. The second is the vocative function, when the taboo word is used to call and address someone, like “run, you idiot!” and the last one is the interjection function, and it refers to a situation when the insulting term is not for a person, but it is used with regard to a situation. Ameka (1992) explains it better by claiming that, in this situation, the speaker is suffering or complaining about something.

Putting the focus on the translation of taboo terms, first of all it as to be said that often their translation risks ending up in omissions or translations that mitigate, and therefore change, the original text (Pavesi, Malinverno 2000). The translator has to find a way between repetition (translations clichés) and innovation (unusual expressions far from the everyday vocabulary). The “doppiaggese”, dubbing language, is full of expressions through which the target audience can see the original language underneath: “sei un fottuto bastardo” is clearly from “you are a fucking bastard”, because, as an Italian-speaker myself, I suppose a native speaker would hardly say it. In the last few years, the automatic translation of the adjective “fucking” into “fottuto” grew old and nowadays new translations are being applied. The translation choice depends not only by the presence or lack of the translator’s creativity, but it is influenced by other factors, such

as the media limitations (as already discussed for comics), the freedom of the translator and the semantic and functional correspondence between source and target languages. Regarding the latter, it is a complex issue, because even if there are many “obvious equivalences” (Pavesi, Malinverno 2000) between English and Italian, like “son of a bitch/figlio di puttana”, “shit/merda”, other times literal translation is not possible and it is necessary to look for a translantant in a wider semantic area. For instance, “goddamn” cannot be translated into the literal “che Dio maledica”, but even with a more generic “maledizione”, it will fall into a translation cliché.

It has been noticed that Italian translations tend to reduce the number of swear words and their original aggressiveness (Leech 1981). In this regard it has been supposed by some scholars that the Italian language saturates faster, in other words fewer taboo terms are necessary to express anger or strong emotions, rather than English (Pavesi, Malinverno 2000). Italian has less freedom in the syntactic organization: while English uses “hell”, “bullshit” and “bitch” as nouns, noun phrases and adverbs, Italian has a more restricted use and cannot, for example, translate “hell” as “diavolo” except when paired with interrogative words (“che diavolo, dove diavolo”). The most problematic is “fucking”, which in English is poly-functional and can cover many different role in a sentence, while in Italian there is not a semantic and functional correspondence, so the translator has to find different way to convey its emotional charge and it often ends up being omitted, as Pavesi and Malinverno claim (2000).

Returning to Davoodi’s situations B and C when translating taboo terms, he developed four translation strategies (2009). The first approach is censorship. This is, of course, the simplest way to deal with the unpleasant situation of finding a way to convey what is prohibited in another language, and culture. However, it is not an acceptable way, because the taboo word could be crucial in the ST and omitting it could lead to a distortion of the final text. The second strategy is substitution. This could be seen as a “milder” kind of censorship because it does not leave a “hole” in the text, even though the message could still be misrepresented and the most educated readers could notice the stretch. Another possible approach is taboo for taboo. This strategy is the most faithful to the ST, as it does not deprive the reader of the original experience, but it could cause embarrassment to the target audience. It is important for the translator to understand how relevant the presence of swearing or taboo words to the text is and translate accordingly.

The last strategy is euphemism, which is the substitution of the offensive expression with a more agreeable expression, through synonyms, paraphrases or metaphors. In this way, the banned element is addressed in the proper way without offending the reader. Linfoot-ham (2005: 228) states that “the need of euphemism is both social and emotional as it allows discussion of ‘touchy’ or taboo subjects without upsetting other people”, but it should be kept in mind that by using a euphemism the original colour of the text could be corrupted and with it, the feelings and the emotional strength that the author wanted to convey.

Finally, when translating taboo terms, it is necessary to observe both cultures involved in the translation and, after considering all above-mention factors, the translation should always be done considering the context of the ST (Davoodi 2009).

To better analyse the notion of euphemism, the word comes from Greek words “well” (eu) and “speech” (phēmos) (online Merriam-Webster Dictionary). As previously said, it is one of the ways to translate taboo words, by toning down the original aggressivity or the profanity and, by replacing it, the reader is protected from a possible offence (Linfoot-ham 2005). The same message from the SL is conveyed without being inappropriate in the TT. An interesting feature of euphemisms is that they depend on the context, and therefore, ‘to urinate’ is a technical term in a medical context, while in another context, like a family conversation, the same act will be addressed with the euphemistic expression ‘to go to the bathroom’.

The euphemism is defined in a general way as a linguistic phenomenon in which there is a replacement of words that are to be avoided with milder terms (Galli de’ Paratesi 1969). When there is the necessity to address an unpleasing referent, instead of using taboo words, which, due to cultural and social conventions, are prohibited (Beccaria 2004), it is possible to use a softer expression, a euphemism, to express “what cannot be called with its own name” (Garavelli 2010: 40).

When a taboo or swear word is replaced with a euphemism, the translated text will lack the original communicative force. For instance, “è una cavolo di giungla” is linguistically weaker than the original “it is a goddamn jungle”. Reutner (2014) identifies four reasons for the origins of euphemism:

1. Dread and fear

Everything that can cause fear (such as the name of God, of the devil, as death and serious illnesses) can be expressed with a euphemism, by using a paraphrase.

2. Decency and tact

This category can be divided into three distinct factors that lead to the use of a euphemism. The first factor concerns good manners and respect for oneself and others. The second one is about decency, such as the avoidance of words regarding genitalia, women's period, pregnancy etc. The third one regards physiological functions. Under this category is also included the area of one's sexual life.

3. Politically correctness

For this ideological orientation that is taking more and more ground, opinions must appear free of racial, religious, gender, sexual orientations and disability prejudice (Fresu 2011). With this connotation, euphemisms are often used to valorise occupations (like "bidello" that nowadays in Italian is substituted with "collaboratore scolastico").

4. Personal gain

This type of euphemism is used to conceal the speaker's truth. Reutner (2014) explains that its aim is to conceal the reality for opportunism and to deceive and manipulate the interlocutor. It is characteristic of political and economic language.

The theme of death is particularly relevant in the use of euphemisms, because it is an ancestral fear and every language is full of different terms to address it indirectly. They can be generic terms ("he left us/ci ha lasciati", "she is no longer with us/lei non è più con noi") or religious terms ("she is with God now/lei ora è con Dio", "he came back to his father/ora è di nuovo con suo padre"). Galli de' Paratesi (1969) noticed that the above-mentioned euphemisms are a kind of transfiguration to dematerialize death in the expectation of an afterlife. The phenomenon of euphemism has to be treated with attention both when the translator reads it in the ST and when s/he wants to transfer it in the TT because it is a mirror of one community's culture and mindset.

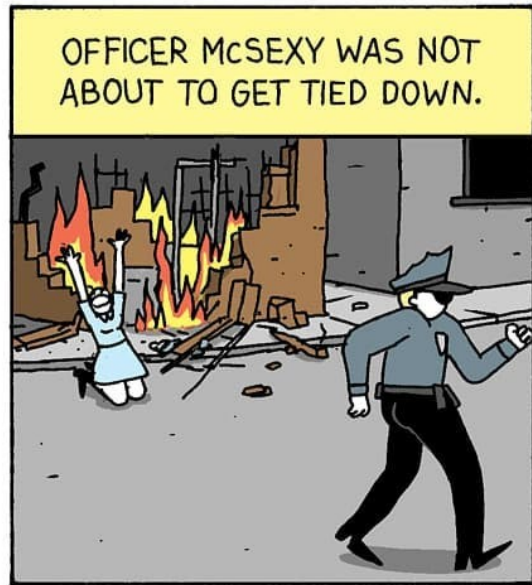
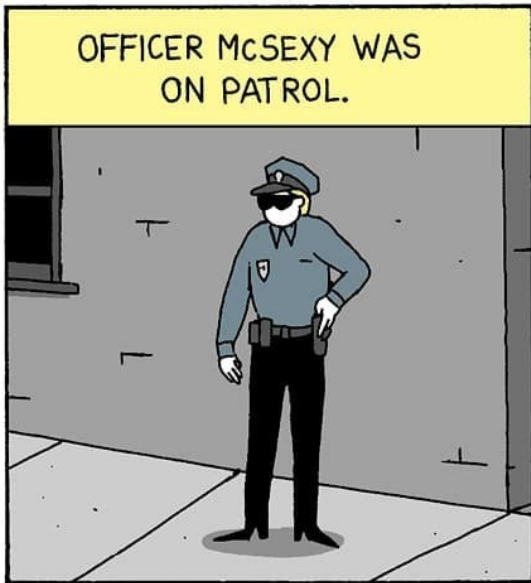
The translation of comics is, as discussed in this Chapter, a complex field of Translation Studies. As well as equivalence and culture-specific items, the features of comics represent difficult challenges for the translator. From the paratext, to punning and to the interplay of the verbal and visual channels, comics translation cannot be considered

an easy task. Moreover, humour, as one of the most characteristic traits of comics, is the quintessential cultural element. Investigating the work of different scholars as Venuti (1995; 1998), Delabastita (1996; 1997), Zabalbeascoa (1996), Ranzato (2010), Davoodi (2009) and many more was necessary to better understand how to translate the comics of *War and Peas*, characterized not only by typical comics challenges, but also by dark humour and by the use of taboo words.

CHAPTER 2 – THE TRANSLATION OF “WAR AN PEAS” COMICS

In the following chapter, the translations that I proposed of *War and Peas* comics will be displayed together with the original strips. *War and Peas* is a webcomic created by Elizabeth Pinch and Jonathan Kunz. They have published online their comics, in strip format and usually four panels long, since 2011 and in 2020 they have also published a physical collection, “War and Peas: Funny Comics for Dirty Lovers”, which has been translated and published in German, Spanish and French, but not in Italian. The fact that their work is unedited in Italy, together with the fact that their comic strips are characterized by a strong dark sense of humour, made me wonder how it would have been to translate them into not only our language, but especially in our culture, where the reception of taboo words and dark humour is a delicate issue.

COMIC STRIP 1 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 1 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 2 - ST



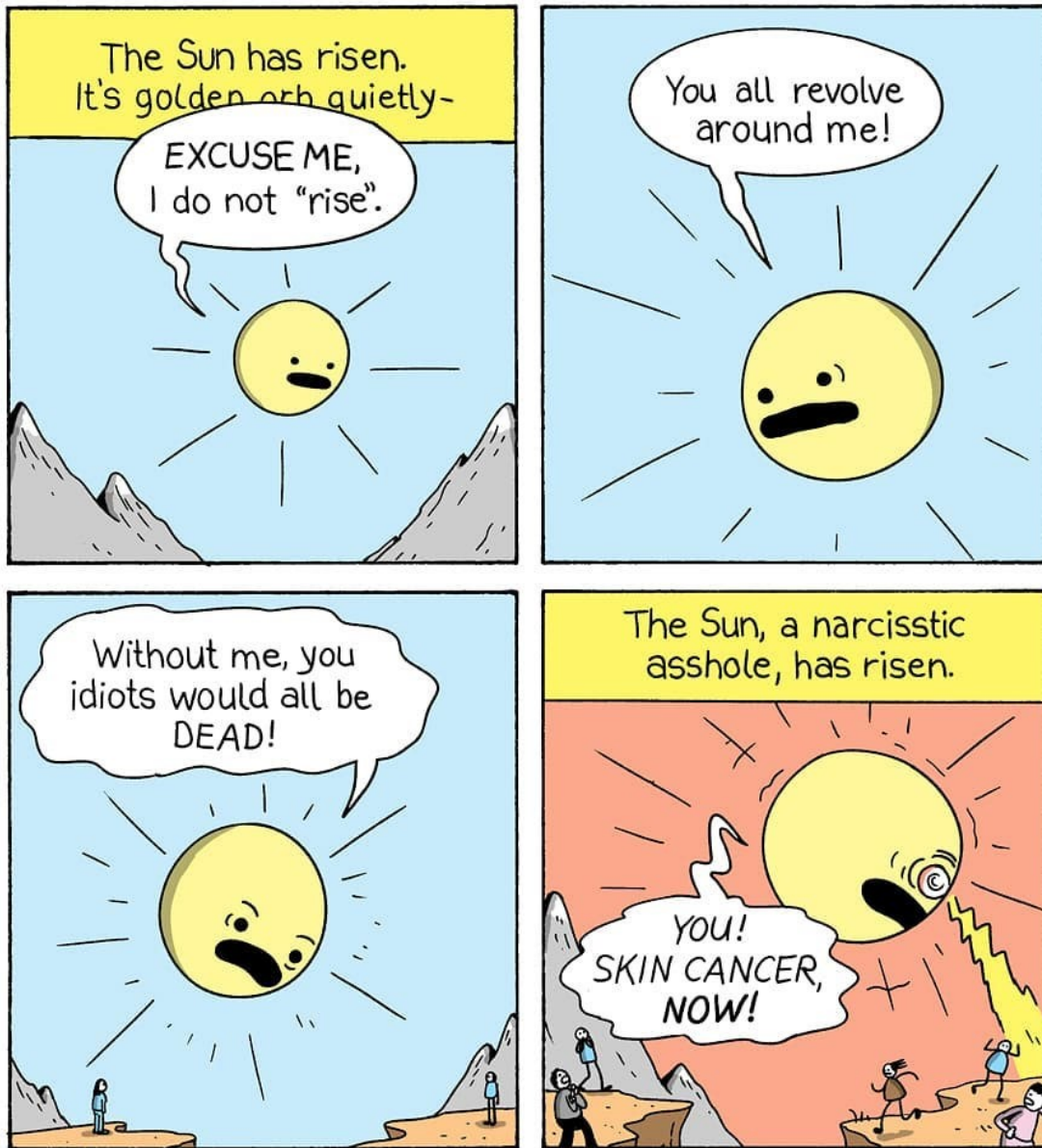
War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 2 - TT



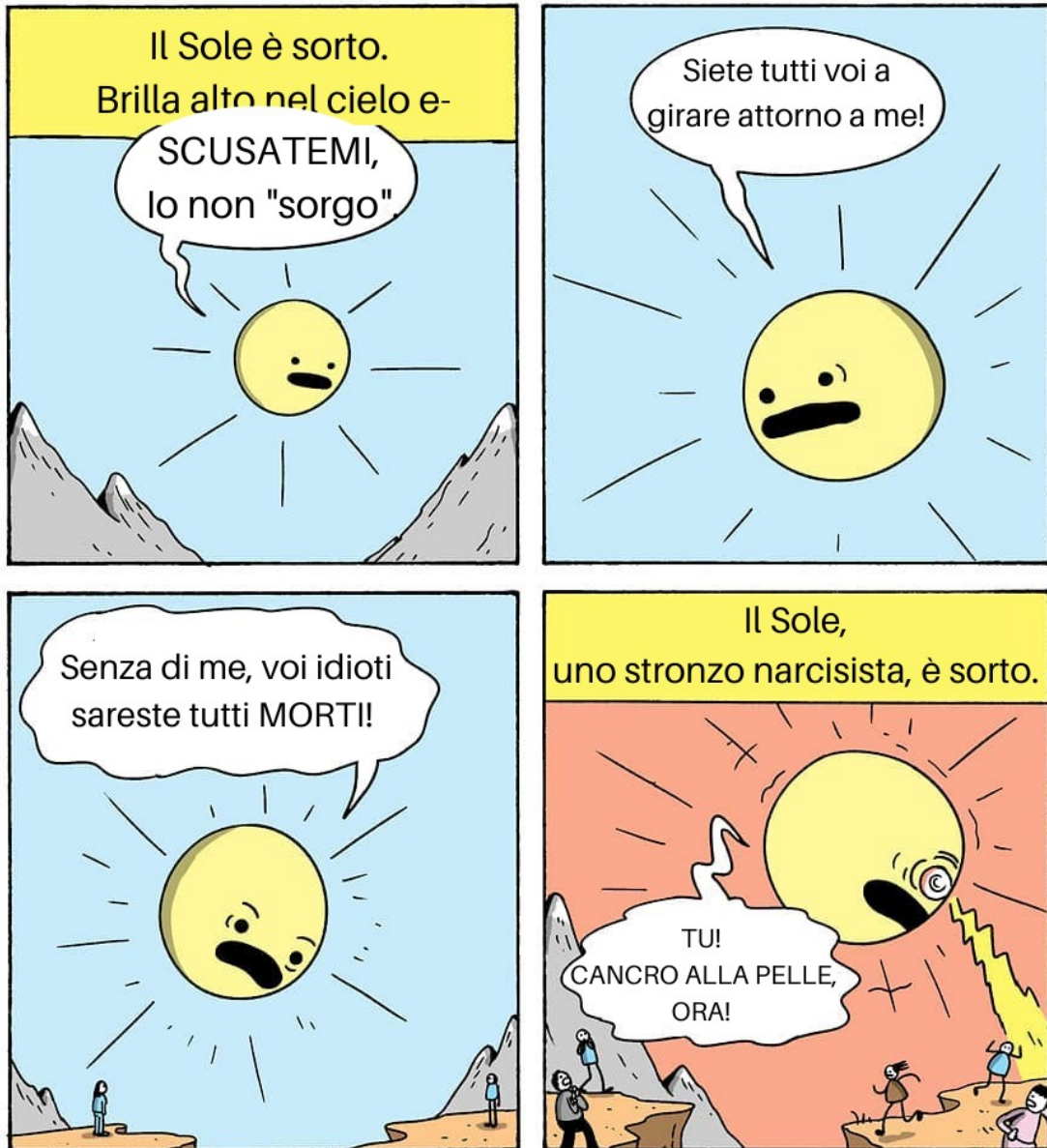
War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 3 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 3 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 4 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 4 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 5 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 5 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 6 - ST



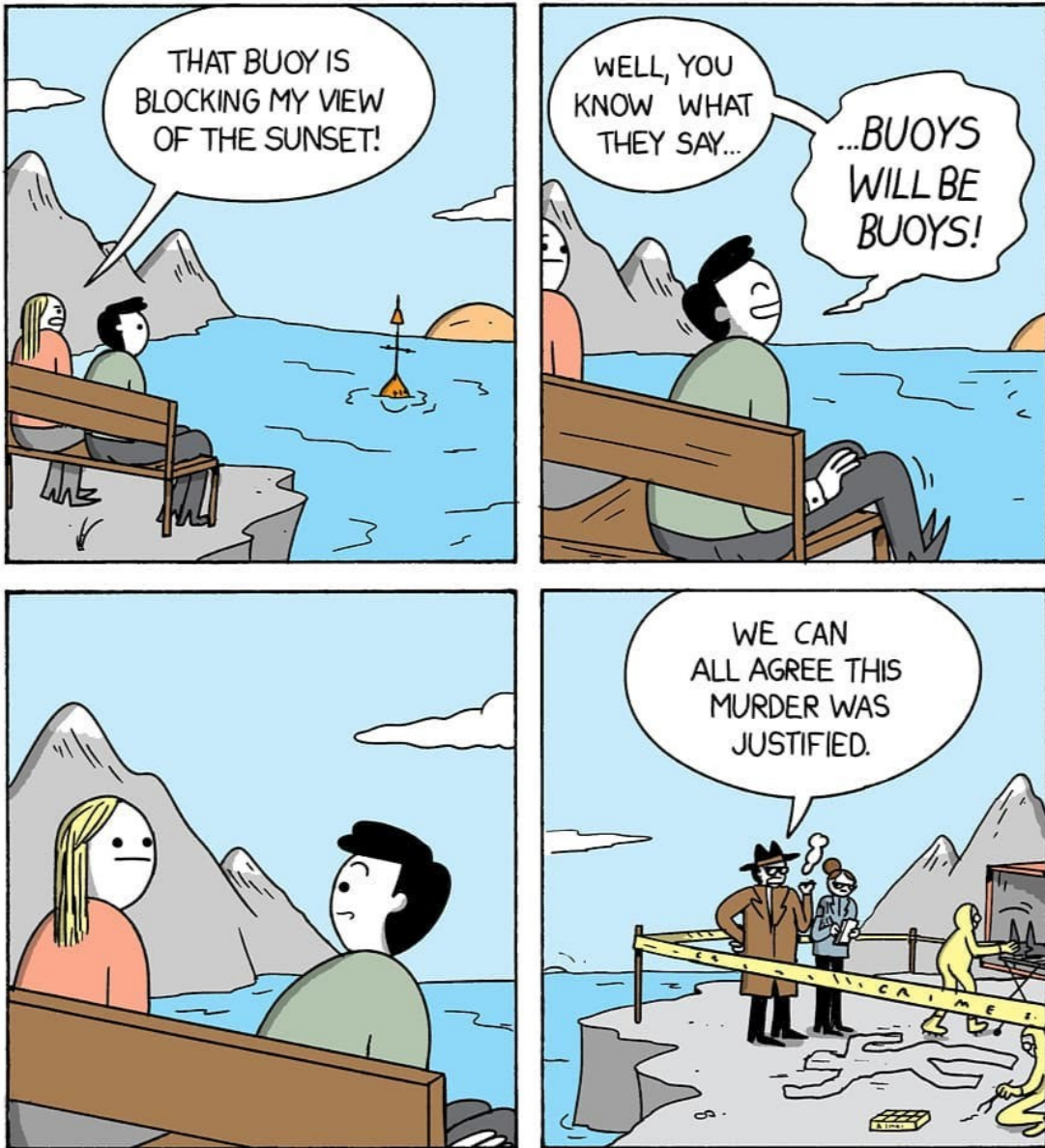
War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 6 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 7 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 7 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 8 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 8 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 9 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 9 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 10 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 10 - TT



War and Peas



War and Peas



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 12 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 12 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 13 - ST



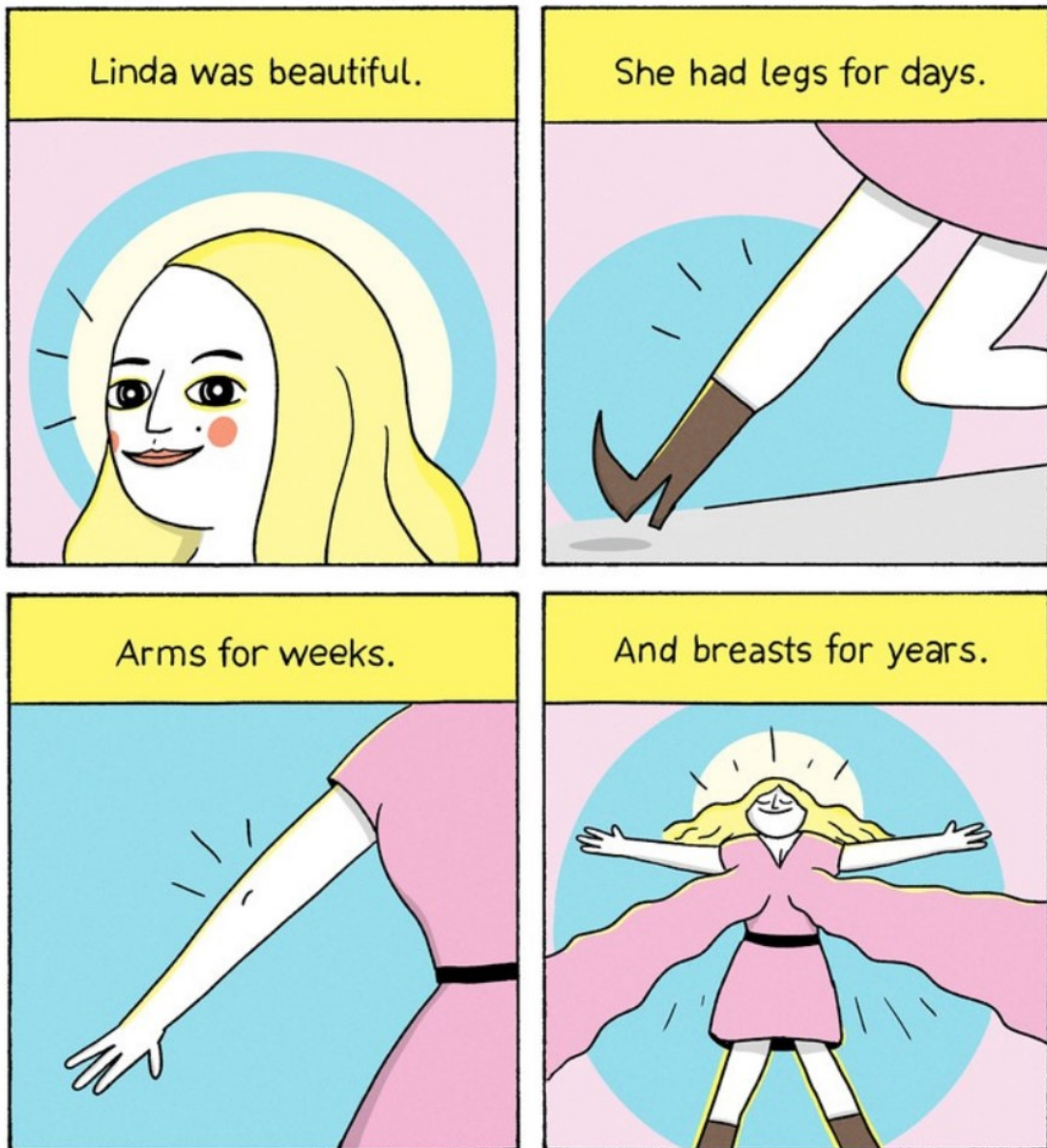
War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 13 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 14 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 14 - TT



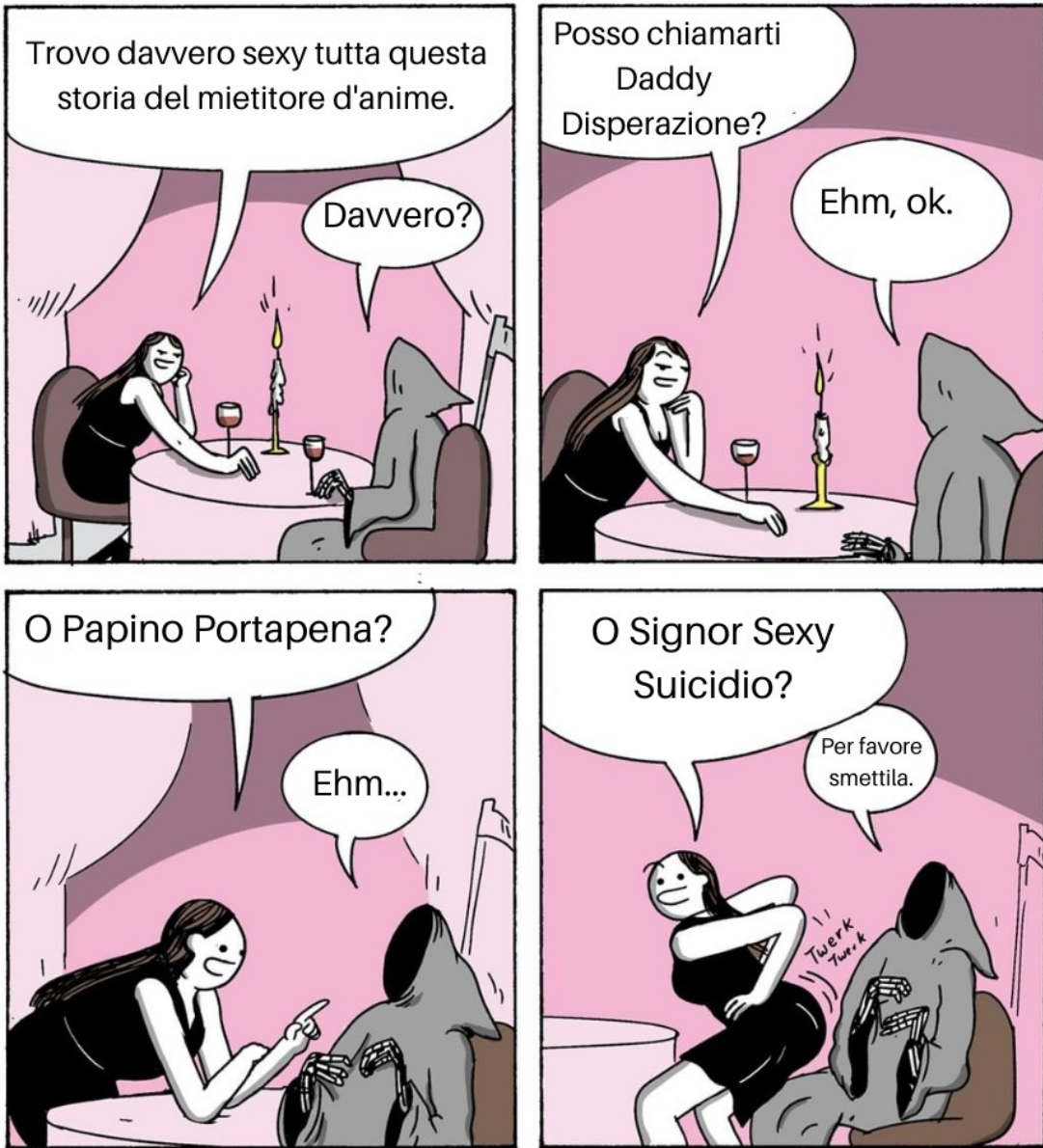
War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 15 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 15 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 16 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 16 - TT



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 17 - ST



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 17 - TT



War and Peas



War and Peas

COMIC STRIP 18 - TT



War and Peas

CHAPTER 3 – ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION

In this last chapter, the translations proposed in Chapter 2 will be analysed with the support of the theoretical knowledge from Chapter 1. My translation process will be investigated, focusing on the difficulties typical of the translation of humour and on those related to dark humour. It was my first experience with comics translation: I have found it particularly entertaining, mind-stimulating, yet it was difficult to deal with taboo words and with moral and ethical issues.

3.1 TRANSLATION CHALLENGES OF *WAR AND PEAS* COMICS

The introduction to equivalence at the start of Chapter 1 served as guidelines for the translation process of the comic strips that I selected and can also be of help for the analysis of the above-mentioned process. House's words (2015: 23) are pivotal in this matter, because she argues that "a translation text has a function equivalent to that of its source text". According to this statement, it is important to determine for each comic what is the function and to keep it in the translated text. It is a fact that in these comic strips the aim is to create an entertaining moment, but what differs each time is the means through which humour is conveyed. The main challenges that arose during the translation of the comics were cases of wordplay, sayings and the presence of taboo terms or taboo concepts used in dark humour.

Wordplay could be considered as the number one tool of humour (Spanakaki 2007); in fact the interesting linguistic use of the structural features of the languages, to play with words with different meanings and similarities, is a source of comic effect. The lack of correspondence between languages as concerns semantic ambiguities provide many difficulties in every translation project (Pavesi 2005). Moreover, when the linguistic joke is paired with a visual joke, the translation process becomes more complex. In fact, Whitman-Linsen (1992) considers the verbal and not verbal humour as the most difficult type of humour to translate, due to its characteristic interplay of the visual and verbal channels.

The same can be said about the translation of sayings, that are often culture-specific or have different forms for each language. Pavesi (2005) notices that sayings and idiomatic phrases can have different levels of meaning when paired with a picture, and

they complicate the job of the translator. In particular, when the saying has a different form in the target language, but it is bound to the visual channel, the translation choices are limited and constrained by the image. The different classifications offered by scholars such as Raphaelson-West (1989), Whitman-Linsen (1992), Zabalbeascoa (1996) and many more can help alert the translator and help her/him identify the various types of jokes, but actual indications on how to translate them are not possible, because each case is different. During the translation of the eighteen comic strips that I selected, the strip that I have found as the most difficult to translate was Comic Strip 7 - ST because the mix of punning, sayings and visual jokes made the translation process particularly difficult for me. At the same time, by being the most challenging comic strip, it was mind-stimulating and the final result Comic Strip 7 - TT was satisfying, because it was not easy to find an Italian saying to replace the English one and to create a new pun that still contained the reference to the “buoy” (see pages 58-59).

The presence of dark humour was more of a constant in the background, because the themes of the strips or the subject of the jokes concern situations related to death, violence, sexual activities or any theme that involves unpleasing or disrespectful subjects, from a cultural and social point of view (Bucaria 2008). The pivotal issue related to the translation of dark humour is that what can be seen as problematic by one culture, could be interpreted as harmless by another and vice versa; that is because dark humour is, as is humour in general, a cultural item (Spanakaki 2007). In the situations proposed by the comics analysed, I would argue that the source culture and the target culture share as scandalous or offensive the same themes depicted in the strips; what may change is the reception and reactions of the readers, but it is possible only to estimate their reaction, due to the personal and individual trait of each person’s sense of humour.

The use of taboo words was another challenging aspect of the translation process, because, by referring to offensive subjects, they have become offensive themselves (Jay 2000) and their presence often upset readers. As Pinker (2007) explains, taboo words recall the most unpleasant feature of the referent, triggering scandalized reactions in the receivers. Those reactions are usually moved by embarrassment, dread, decency or religious fear (Galli de’ Paratesi 1964). When dealing with their translation, I based my choices on the translation strategies proposed by Davoodi (2009): censorship, substitution, taboo for taboo and euphemism.

Another interesting feature of comics translation that arose during this project was the paratext. As studied by Celotti (2008, in Zanettin), there are various strategies to translate the paratext, which is the totality of the verbal signs inside the picture and they can be more or less embedded to the drawing. Unfortunately, beside the function and the translatability of the paratext, sometimes its translation is possible only with a footnote, because the text is too embedded in the image. There were cases, in my translation project, where the above-mentioned situation happened and I had to opt for the footnote approach.

I deem these to be the main challenges that arose during the translation process of the comics strips of *War and Peas*. I will now investigate the specific difficulties posed by each translation.

3.2 ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION CHOICES

As anticipated, the following analysis of the comic strips are the result of a translation process based on the strategies and theory discussed in Chapter 1, together with the application of my personal experience with translation.

3.2.1 Comic Strip 1 (see pages 46-47)

Comic Strip 1 - ST	Comic Strip 1 - TT
Officer McSexy was on patrol.	Agente McSexy era di pattuglia.
Help, Officer! My baby is trapped under a burning-	Agente, mi aiuti! C'è un incendio e mio figlio è rimasto-
Whoa, lady! Isn't it a little early to be talking about babies?	Piano, signorina! Non le sembra un po' troppo presto per parlare di bambini?
Officer McSexy was not about to get tied down.	Agente McSexy non si sarebbe certo fatto fregare.

The linguistic features of this strip were not problematic. It was, however, strange to translate a comic depicting, between the lines, the tragic event of a child in a fire. The target reader might not appreciate such disrespectful behaviour, but it is impossible to censor or to mitigate the situation, because there is not a specific taboo word to avoid; it is the context itself that portrays a taboo concept. Relying on Bucaria's set of translation strategies (2007) for disturbing elements in translation, the approach of complete omission is inapplicable because the whole story of the comic should be changed in order to omit the element of dark humour. Although the weakening approach could have been possible, I thought that it would have been a strong distortion of the comic itself, and therefore I opted for the close rendering approach, at the risk of upsetting the sensitivity of the reader, since the theme of death is a taboo area in all the main cultures in the world, including the Italian one. As Galli de' Paratesi (1969) notices, death is often communicated through the use of euphemism that would mitigate the culturally strong content.

3.2.2 Comic Strip 2 (see pages 48-49)

Comic Strip 2 - ST	Comic Strip 2 - TT
I've been expecting you.	Ti stavo aspettando.
I knew you'd come to take me.	Sapevo che saresti venuto a prendermi.
Come on! Take me already!	Su, che aspetti! Prendimi!
Take me, Dark Stranger!	Prendimi, Sconosciuto Misterioso!

This strip is the representation of what is humour for Vandaele (2010), as previously seen in Chapter 1: there is an expectation (in this case, the old man waiting for The Grim Reaper to take him) that it is not confirmed and it is replaced with an unexpected situation (the old man wants The Grim Reaper to take him sexually); this gap between expectations and resolutions creates a humorous event. The joke is linguistically granted thanks to the correspondence between English and Italian of the verb “to take somebody”, which can mean either to bring one person somewhere or to ask for sexual intercourse. In situations such as the one depicted in the comic strip, the translator could refer to the table “Translation Method of Puns” elaborated by Delabastita (1993; 1996), because as Pavesi (2005) claims, it is very rare between two languages and cultures to have the same semantic ambiguities used in punning. In this specific case, fortunately, the English verb “to take someone” and the Italian one “prendere qualcuno” share the double meaning of taking somebody somewhere and of asking for a sexual intercourse, hence it is possible to apply the first strategy proposed by Delabastita of pun rendered as pun from the ST to the TT.

Once the linguistic challenge of the pun has been solved, its cultural features remain problematic. The most culturally interdicted areas are, as Ljung (2011) listed, religion, scatological, sex organ, sexual activities and the mother. In this strip, the theme of sexual activities is central and its translation cannot be avoided without changing most of the content of the comic. Due to the religious influence in Italy, such explicit content might be considered problematic. Moreover, even if the text is changed, the picture remains not modifiable: not by chance Eisner (1985: 10) describes the function of the text “as an extension of the imagery”. Verbal and visual features of the comic work together in the development of the message and remain one of the main challenges of comics

translation. In this case, the message of the strip remains sexual and there is little the translator can do about omitting or substituting it.

3.2.3 Comic Strip 3 (see pages 50-51)

Comic Strip 3 - ST	Comic Strip 3 – TT
The Sun has risen. It's golden orb quietly-	Il Sole è sorto. Brilla alto nel cielo e-
EXCUSE ME, I do not "rise".	SCUSATEMI, io non "sorgo".
You all revolve around me!	Siete tutti voi a girare attorno a me!
Without me, you idiots would all be DEAD!	Senza di me, voi idioti sareste tutti MORTI!
The Sun, a narcissistic asshole, has risen.	Il Sole, uno stronzo narcisista, è sorto.
YOU! SKIN CANCER, NOW!	TU! CANCRO ALLA PELLE, ORA!

This is the first example of a comic containing taboo words, such as "asshole", and, even if it is less offensive, "idiot". Wishing for a lethal disease, like skin cancer, could be considered another taboo. The above-mentioned swear words are used for abusive swearing, following the categorization of swear words based on the uses and functions created by Andersson and Trudgill (1992). This type of swearing is aimed at someone, with the purpose of being offensive, it is characterized by the use of name calling and cursing. "Asshole" and "idiot" are used in this context as abusive and dysphemistic words: these are two of the five types of swear words identified by Pinker (2007).

In this case, it is possible to apply the substitution strategy proposed by Davoodi (2009) for the translation of taboo terms and, for instance, to replace the last panel translation with a milder one, like: "Il Sole, un brutto antipatico, è sorto" and "tu, prenditi un'insolazione!", maintaining the humorous effect. The choice between using my translation proposal and this substitution approach depends on a range of factors, first of all the ideal target readership: if the strip has to go in children's magazine, the substitution approach is the better option; if the ideal readership is an adult audience, my translation proposal is more faithful to the original piece. The identification of the ideal reader is proposed by Coulthard (1992), who was the first to define the two subjects, the ST ideal reader and the TT ideal reader. By identifying the original ideal reader of the ST, it is

easier for the translator to understand the expectations of the author in terms of knowledge, preferences or prejudices and accordingly s/he will have to work on the text keeping in mind the difference in knowledge and expectations of the ideal reader of the TT. To use the substitution approach is to apply the weakening strategy elaborated by Bucaria (2007): the strong reference is, in fact, weakened and results as less offensive or vulgar.

3.2.4 Comic Strip 4 (see pages 52-53)

Comic Strip 4 - ST	Comic Strip 4 - TT
Who's a good boy?	Chi è un bel cucciolino?
I wish he'd stop calling me a boy.	Vorrei che smettesse di chiamarmi cucciolino.
I've wandered this godless Earth for 49 dog years.	Ho vagato per questa Terra senza dio per 49 anni canini.
I've seen the darkest pits of despair.	Ho visto profondissimi abissi di pura disperazione.
Who wants a treat?	Chi vuole un biscottino?
A treat, however, could change my outlook on life entirely.	Un biscottino, comunque, potrebbe cambiare totalmente la mia visione della vita.

The translation of this comic strip was simple and there is no black humour to obstacle the process; however there is a cultural item, the pet-name “good boy”, which is often used in English to refer to dogs and cute animals in general. The question “who's a good boy?” is a typical expression in modern-day slang, which could be considered, at least, as a Bicultural ECR, according to Pedersen's classification of cultural items (2005). The familiarity of a concept to a second culture is determined by applying the parameter of Transculturality by Welsch (1994), but its precision is approximate, in fact, this term is probably bicultural for the Italian young audience, but not for the whole readership. In Italian there is not a direct correspondence of “good boy”, but a range of similar nicknames like “bel cucciolotto”, “cucciolino”, “bel cagnolino”, that can be used in this

context. However, a target reader with a basic notion of English will see through this translation and easily understand what the original text was.

3.2.5 Comic Strip 5 (see pages 54-55)

Comic Strip 5 - ST	Comic Strip 5 - TT
Dis is the police. Give yor Dog more treatz or you'll be arrested!!	Cuesta è la polisia. Dai al tuo Cane più biscottini o sarai arestato!!
Hehe, that'll show him.	Eheh, vedremo adesso.
Oh God! I'm a fugitive now!	Oh Dio! Sono un fuggitivo ora!
Well, that backfired.	Beh, mi si è ritorsa contro.

In this comic strip, the humour lies in the ungrammatical text message sent by the dog and the unexpected reaction of its owner, who still believed it was the real police. What the translator can do here is to keep the same meaning as the text message and to create new grammatical mistakes in the Italian version of the text. Of course, it is not possible to replicate the same errors in the target language, so I opted for errors that a child, learning how to write, might make (mistaking the Q letter with the C letter or the Z with the S; writing a double consonant with just one consonant).

3.2.6 Comic Strip 6 (see pages 56-57)

Comic Strip 6 - ST	Comic Strip 6 - TT
Now, remember son: sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can never hurt you.	Ricordati figliolo: pietre e bastoni potranno anche romperti le ossa, ma le parole non ti feriranno mai.
Hey! Check out the loser!	Ehi! Ecco lo sfigato!
Sticks and stones may break my bo-	Pietre e bastoni potranno anche rompermi le os-
Yeah, whatever.	Già, vabbè.

A particular case of translation concerns sayings. Often the saying is shared between the two languages, while at other times the meaning is the same but the form is slightly different, but as many times there is no correspondence, because the saying is a monocultural ECR. In this specific situation, there is no correspondence in Italian and the translator is bound to the visual message (literally the sticks and stones that broke the boy's bones). Relying on Whitman-Linsen's classification of gags of humour (1992), this comic contains an example of verbal and non-verbal humour, because it is based on the interplay of the two main channels, verbal and visual. Sayings and idiomatic phrases often have different level of meanings, when paired with the visual channel, and can represent difficult challenges for the translator, as Pavesi (2005) states.

My translation choice was to keep the translation literal, risking however making the reader raise an eyebrow because s/he will probably notice that the saying is not from the Italian culture, but that is a mere translation from English.

3.2.7 Comic Strip 7 (see pages 58-59)

Comic Strip 7 - ST	Comic Strip 7 – TT
That buoy is blocking my view of the sunset!	Quella boa sta rovinando il panorama!
Well, you know what they say...	Eh, ma lo sai com'è...
... buoys will be buoys!	...non puoi avere la boa piena e la moglie ubriaca!
We can all agree this murder was justified.	Siamo tutti d'accordo sul fatto che se lo meritasse.

The wordplay in this comic strip, as mentioned above, was particularly hard for me to translate. In the original piece, the joke works with a homophony which is, as previously studied in Chapter 1, when words have the same sound when pronounced but different spelling. Moreover, the homophony is in a saying that is typical of the English language. In Italian, the saying does not have an exact translation, if not “sono ragazzi”. However, in this context it would not make sense and the humorous effect would be lost. I tried to find a way to give a funny meaning to the interaction in Italian, keeping in mind that the

buoy was an integral part of it. In Italian I did not find any homophony with the word “boa”, but I could at least look for a paronymy (words that have slightly different sound and spelling), while also trying to find another saying to use. I came up with this final translation, which I consider acceptable because it makes sense with the context and the joke, despite being different from the English one, and is close to the original structure. It was a case of a complex joke, from Zabalbeascoa’s classification of jokes (1996), because it is a mix of a language-dependent joke, because of the presence of the homophony, and of a visual joke, because the joke is based on the interplay between picture and text. This type of joke is, in his view, the most difficult kind to translate, because the translator has to deal with the differences of the languages and with the unchanging nature of the image.

3.2.8 Comic Strip 8 (see pages 60-61)

Comic Strip 8 - ST	Comic Strip 8 – TT
Come quick! The whales are communicating again!	Corri subito! Le balene stanno di nuovo comunicando!
Wow, it’s beautiful!	Wow, è bellissimo!
I bet it’s something really romantic!	Scommetto che si tratta di qualcosa davvero romantico!
I said put it in the arse, Nigel!	Sei proprio un coglione, Nigel!

This is another example of humour coming from an expected situation that ends with an unforeseen resolution, with a linguistically strong content. In this case, it could be possible to translate the offensive message with a milder translation, using Davoodi’s translation approach of substitution (2009), or to use the taboo for taboo technique and translate it literally, since there are not linguistic barriers to obstacle the transfer of the message. The translator should question whether the presence of the taboo is relevant to the text or if it can be censored or substituted when it comes to particularly disrespectful themes. Even though I could have opted to translate it with the corresponding taboo words in Italian, in this case I preferred to apply a substitution with another taboo, an insult, to censor the original message without completely losing its colour.

It is interesting to consider that by referring to an unpleasant or disrespectful concept, the words used start to be considered offensive too (Jay 2000). Both the dialogues between the whales in the original and translated comics contain taboo terms, the difference is that the ST refers to a concept that is, in my opinion, far more scandalous and ignoble for the Italian culture rather than the swear word used in the TT. What remains relevant in the cultural impact of what is considered a taboo and to what degree this can make the job of the translator particularly complex. This goes alongside the issues posed by different scholars (Straight 1981; Reiss & Vermeer 1984) about the required biculturalism of translators in order to understand the ST and to be able to convey it to the TL reader.

3.2.9 Comic Strip 9 (see pages 62-63)

Comic Strip 9 - ST	Comic Strip 9 – TT
No! No! No! Not fucking <u>in</u> cars!	No! No! No! Non sesso <u>nelle</u> macchine!
I want <u>fucking</u> cars!	Io voglio sesso <u>fra</u> macchine!
That's the stuff.	Sì, così si fa.

The differences in the syntactical structures of English and Italian make the translation of this comic a little forced. The misunderstanding in the online research of the original strip makes sense for an English speaker, because the nominal and participial forms of “fucking” can be mistaken. In Italian, it is necessary to use distinct prepositions to underline the two different meaning of the online research, making the original misunderstanding less natural. It happens that something gets lost with language-dependent jokes (Zabalbeascoa 1996), which are clearly one of the most widely used jokes in comics, because the reader is entertained by the clever game with the natural features of languages, but at the same time the correspondence of such ambiguities between different languages is very rare and represents a creative challenge during the translation process. In this comic strip, there is also the presence of onomatopoeia as paratext. The majority of examples of onomatopoeia are used worldwide and English uses are known, because they have become a convention: “honk” and “vroom” can be

understood by an Italian reader, without having to edit the image or to add a footnote with an explanation.

3.2.10 Comic Strip 10 (see pages 64-65)

Comic Strip 10 - ST	Comic Strip 10 – TT
I'm sorry, I won't make it tonight. I have a deadline.	Mi dispiace per stasera, ma ho una scadenza. Sono pure stanco morto...
Hehe. Yeah, you do.	Eheh, hai detto bene.
Ok, I like puns.	Già, mi piacciono i giochi di parole.
Sue me.	Fammi causa.

The wordplay of the strip cannot be replicated in Italian, because the translation “scadenza” does not contain the word death and its implication to the domain of passing is too weak. I had to add some new information to the text to make the pun work in the final translation, even if slightly different from the original. Fortunately, the balloon did not constrain the text and I was able to add the new phrase. However, adding a new part to the text is complicated and risky, because the target reader could notice that the text has been modified and simplified a little to reach her/him.

Delabastita (1993; 1996) suggests various strategies to translate puns. In this case, I applied two different strategies: pun->zero, because the funny effect with “deadline” could not be maintained in the translation with “scadenza” and zero->pun, because the added part about being “stanco morto” in the TT functions as a compensatory device to make up for the loss of the original wordplay.

3.2.11 Comic Strip 11 (see pages 66-67)

Comic Strip 11 - ST	Comic Strip 11 – TT
“Fuck the police”	“Che la polizia si fotta”
Freeze!	Fermati!
Hey... wait up!	Ehi... aspetta!
I thought you wanted to fuck!	Pensavo volessi fottere!

Here we find a clear example of paratext that is crucial to the understanding of the comic, but that is too embedded in the picture to be translated. In this case, the best translation strategy, proposed by Celotti (2008, in Zanettin), would be to translate the paratext with a footnote, leaving the original text on the strip. I tried to translate it directly to show the impossibility of it: the action in the strip, with the presence of the characters in front of the wall, makes it impossible, and therefore the appropriate way to translate it is with a footnote at the bottom of the comic. Culturally speaking, in Italian it would be more natural to say, or write, “fanculo la polizia”, rather than the over-articulated “che la polizia si fotta” with the uncommon use of the subjunctive. However, to keep the original joke on the misunderstanding of the policeman, it was a necessary translation.

3.2.12 Comic Strip 12 (see pages 68-69)

Comic Strip 12 - ST	Comic Strip 12 – TT
Attack!	All’attacco!
My’lady! They’re approaching! What shall we do?	Mia Signora! Stanno arrivando! Cosa facciamo?
Show the red flags, sister!	Mostra il segnale d’allarme, sorella!
Retreat!	Ritirata!

A red flag is commonly used to signal a danger, but in the language of the youth has taken on the additional meaning of a way to address a toxic and/or unhealthy behaviour of someone in a relationship (online Urban Dictionary). For example, if a partner is too jealous, s/he could be addressed as a red flag. This is what the strip is trying to depict: instead of using the white flag to surrender, the queen decides to scare the male invaders with the red flag, playing on the literal meaning of the symbol and with its linguistic use in relationships. Unfortunately, in Italian there is not the same correspondence between the red signal of danger and the second meaning for toxic behaviours. Of course, part of the Italian population, the youngest members, who are more connected to social media and the English-speaking community, might understand if in the translation the queen said “mostra le bandiere rosse”, but the rest of the audience would be left out. So, I thought

it would have been clearer to replace the culture-bound item “red flags” with a more general “segnale d’allarme”; the reader would then realise that the queen is referring to the red flags flown outside the castle, even though s/he probably would not understand that she is actually referring to toxic behaviours in a relationship. I suppose this is one of those situations where the translator has to come to terms with the untranslatability of a text – it is necessary to give up on part of the meaning to carry out the final translation.

The generalization technique (often indicated as the explicitation technique) that I applied in this comic is one of the most used translation strategies for cultural items, because it makes the text more accessible to the target reader, by specifying or generalizing the reference. The classification proposed by Díaz Cintas (2003) and Santamaria Guinot (2001) (Díaz Cintas, Remael 2007) can be a real support for translators, because it offers a basic guide to deal with culture-specific elements in translation.

3.2.13 Comic Strip 13 (see pages 70-71)

Comic Strip 13 - ST	Comic Strip 13 – TT
In life, it is important to stand for something.	Nella vita è importante sostenere qualcosa.
Like women’s rights.	Come i diritti delle donne.
And if you can’t do that, it’s important to stand on something.	E se non ci riuscite, allora è importante farsi sostenere da qualcosa.
Like women.	Come dalle donne.

The wordplay in the strip plays with the minimum difference between the phrasal verbs “to stand for something” (sostenere, supportare qualcosa) and “to stand on something” (stare in piedi su qualcosa), depending on the preposition. The text is clearly bound to the image of the man literally standing on a woman. In Italian, I found a way to replicate the pun by using the verb “sostenere” as a transitive or a reflexive verb. However, it is up to the individual understanding to grasp the criticism of the joke about the unfair treatment in today’s society of women’s rights and not to mistake the humour in the comic as just a bad joke. Often dark humour is used to criticize and create a space for self-reflection, because by making fun of society’s most sacred beliefs, it also exposes many of society’s

contradictions and injustice; this is possible thanks to its sacrilegious and explicit language.

It is clear how much wordplay is central in comics language, and how often a creative performance is required to translate it. Sense of humour cannot be taught to translators, nor can creative imagination, but the guide suggested by Zabalbeascoa (1996) with a collection of previous translation experiences with humour could speed up the time of the translation process and help with the inspiration for creative performances.

3.2.14 Comic Strip 14 (see pages 72-73)

Comic Strip 14 - ST	Comic Strip 14 – TT
Linda was beautiful.	Linda era stupenda.
She had legs for days.	Aveva gambe lunghissime.
Arms for weeks.	Braccia chilometriche.
And breasts for years.	E tette infinite.

“Legs for days” is a figure of speech to talk about a person, usually a woman, with very long legs, based on the use of “for days” to indicate a great deal of something, in this case “a lot of legs” means “long legs”. The comic jokes on this use of “for days” and adds a bigger and bigger amount of time for different parts of the character’s body. In Italian, there is no correspondence with the use of the expression “for days” to make the wordplay stand, so in the translation I replaced all the references to time with references to length. The term “breasts” can be seen as a taboo word because it refers to an intimate part of a woman’s body and it could have been also translated with a more technical, medical synonym like “seno”. As previously said, the use of euphemism has a social and emotional function (Linfoot-ham 2005), because it protects the reader from upsetting themes by using synonyms or more agreeable expressions to refer to it. The profanity of taboo terms is toned down (Linfoot-ham 2005) and the message of the ST is conveyed in the TT without being inappropriate; however, what is lost by using euphemism is the original colour of the text. Based on the four reasons at the origin of euphemism identified by Reutner (2014), the translation choice of “seno” instead of “tette” would be motivated

by the second group, decency and fear, which includes the avoidance of terms related to people's private parts.

3.2.15 Comic Strip 15 (see pages 74-75)

Comic Strip 15 – ST	Comic Strip 15 - TT
I think it's really sexy all that soul-reaping stuff.	Trovo davvero sexy tutta questa storia del mietitore d'anime.
You do?	Davvero?
Can I call you Daddy Death?	Posso chiamarti Daddy Disperazione?
Um, sure.	Ehm, ok.
Or Papa Painbringer?	O Papino Portapena?
Um...	Ehm...
Or Lord Lethal McLuscious?	O Signor Sexy Suicidio?
Please stop.	Per favore smettila.

Wordplay and dark humour often work together, the first based on the second. In this case, the woman finds the character of The Grim Reaper attractive and starts to call him by more and more inappropriate pet-names. Those pet-names are characterized, apart from the questionable dark taste, by anaphora, in other words they start with the same letter. I needed to distance the translation a little from the original names, because I considered it more relevant to maintain the names joke funny with new correspondences in Italian rather than translating the English names and losing the humorous side completely. In the translation of humour, Chiaro (1992) stresses how much keeping the comic effect during the translation process is far more relevant than remaining faithful to the original text's joke. As long as the final result is as funny as the original version, the translation has to be considered successful, even if the ST joke has been replaced and changed completely. However, it has been reported by Chiaro (1992) that translators are often afraid to distance the TT from the ST.

3.2.16 Comic Strip 16 (see pages 76-77)

Comic Strip 16 - ST	Comic Strip 16 – TT
When he told her ‘my way or the highway’...	Quando lui le ha detto “o stai alle mie regole o ti ritrovi per strada” ...
She chose the highway.	Lei ha scelto la strada.
The highway respected her.	La strada la rispettava.
You relax, honey.	Rilassati, tesoro.
I’ll do the dishes.	Ci penso io ai piatti.

“My way or the highway” is an English expression used by someone who will only accept their way of doing something. In Italian, it could be said as “o così o niente” or a little more articulated “a modo mio, altrimenti quella è la porta”. Of course, the translation cannot be carried out that easily, because the image binds the verbal message once again: the woman literally chooses the second option and goes to live with the highway. Hence, the highway cannot be ignored using the above-mentioned translations and I had to come up with a different solution, using phrases that are still familiar to the Italian-speaker, without sounding too forced. As Zanettin (2008: 12) states, “comics are primarily visual text” and language is “only one of the systems [...] involved in the translation”. What the text says cannot be translated alone, regardless of the picture. This is one of the main and most challenging difficulties of comics translation; in fact some scholars address this type of translation as “constrained translation” (Grun and Dollerup 2003), due to limitations of the graphics over the text. However, it would be more correct, as Celotti (2008, in Zanettin) suggests, to stop understanding the visual aspect of comics as a limitation, or tyranny (Cary 1986), and to start reading the text together with the picture, in order to fully understand the totality of the message and carry out a complete translation.

3.2.17 Comic Strip 17 (see pages 78-79)

Comic Strip 17 - ST	Comic Strip 17 – TT
If no one’s there to hug you.	Se non c’è nessuno ad abbracciarti.
Hug yourself.	Abbracciati da solo.
You’ll look like a fucking idiot.	Sembrerai uno sfigato.
But that’s ok.	Ma va bene così.

Although this strip does not contain particularly difficult elements to translate, it was interesting to discuss the function of “fucking” in the English language and about its translation in Italian. As previously mentioned, in English this term is poly-functional and it is used almost everywhere in a sentence. In this situation, “fucking” does not add anything in terms of meaning to the message, it is just used to give more emotional charge to the sentence. Its translation “fottuto” in Italian has grown old, also due to the fact that an Italian-speaker immediately recognizes the calque from the English language, since as a term it is rarely used in everyday language. Moreover, it was claimed by Leech (1981) that Italian translations have the tendency to reduce the original number of swearing and the aggressiveness of the message in general. So, there is no need to use a swear word as an adjective to the insult. I opted to translate “fucking idiot” with “sfigato”, even though the direct translation of “sfigato” would be “loser”. In my opinion, given the context, it was a better choice in Italian. My personal decision could, however, face criticism if I had to submit it to a publisher or editor, because the freedom of the translator is often limited and directed by one of these professional figures.

3.2.18 Comic Strip 18 (see pages 80-81)

Comic Strip 18 - ST	Comic Strip 18 - TT
Hey mom, having fun riding my bf's giant cock.	Ehi mamma. Mi sto divertendo a cavalcare l'uccellone del mio ragazzo.
How nice! Say hi to Bob from me!	Che bello! Saluta Bob da parte mia!
“Bob's Giant Cock Ranch”	“La Fattoria degli uccelloni di Bob”

Words with same spelling and sound, but different meaning (homonyms) are one of the best tools for punning. It is entirely arbitrary that some words with totally different meanings are homonyms and this arbitrariness can often result in funny moments of misunderstanding. In this comic strip, the wordplay is with the term “cock” that can either refer to the bird, the rooster, or the male member, representing a taboo term. The situation is even more absurd because the girl is referring to it as “giant”, making it unlikely that she is referring to an actual giant bird (and creating in this way the comic, and scandalous,

effect). The arbitrariness of homonyms makes it almost impossible to have the same couple of words and meanings from one language to another (Pavesi 2005). In fact, in Italian “gallo” cannot be used to refer to the bird and to the male member, but only to the animal. However, by remaining in the same semantic area, it was possible for me to replace “giant cock” with “uccellone”, where in Italian “uccello” is a homonymy with the same double meaning of the original term, one referring to an animal and the other representing a taboo word. It is interesting to use this example to notice how a word is not always a taboo, like in this case “cock” or “uccello”, unless it is clearly referred to the taboo concept: in fact, as Jay said (2000), “words referring to offensive concepts become offensive words”.

My translation choices are based, as previously mentioned, on the totality of my translation experience and theoretical knowledge gained during my academic studies and the writing of this dissertation. There is no doubt that, under the directions of an editor, many of my decisions would have been different. Therefore, I tried to best explain the reasoning and the theory behind each one of my choices, free from the limitations of a publisher.

CONCLUSION

At the end of this work, I think it served first of all as a reflection on the complexity of the process of translation: simplifying it to linguistic transfer could not be more wrong. Nevertheless, when it comes to translation, factors such as culture, individual perception, punning, the message underneath the concrete words and so on are all challenges that the translator has to try to overcome, by drawing from the theoretical work of many scholars and by applying the most suitable translation strategy for every situation.

It has been brought to light that some fields of translation might need more attention, because research on them started quite recently: this is the case of comics, which until some decades ago were considered poor literature for children and uneducated readers, when in reality their content can reach the same level of complexity of a novel. Moreover, sometimes their structure makes the job of the translator particularly hard, to the point that s/he has to give up translating some piece of text, when it is too embedded in the picture. There are other times when the text, even though it is modifiable from the graphic point of view, is bound to the image and its translation is therefore bound too, putting the translator in an uncomfortable situation. These are some of the reasons why the translation of comics, and multimedia texts as a genre, should obtain more attention from the scholars' world.

What also became clear was the undeniable presence of culture in every message of a language; a culture that is hard to classify and to attribute to one community or to another, often because some elements are common between the cultural knowledge of different communities, while others are specific to one only group. That is why humour is known to be particularly resistant to translation, not only because everyone has their own sense of humour, but mostly due to its cultural and social implication: what one community may find funny, could even be perceived as offensive by another one. Not for nothing, taboo words are cultural items themselves: it could happen that in a ST there is a word which addresses a topic perceived as disrespectful by the target audience but not by the ST audience, or at least with a different degree of acceptance. Studying and investigating this specific field of cultural items was intriguing, probably because it is a topic that is hardly ever discussed in classes and during one's educational career on languages and translation.

The translation of the comics of *War and Peas* was interesting and challenging for me. Although the text is not very long, every comic strip came with a different difficulty: either the message was the combination of image and text, or the comic effect was delivered through wordplay or swear words that are not easily transferrable to the TT. The short format of the *War and Peas* comics let me enjoy the translation process without falling into the boredom that could occur while translating a longer text, such as a novel, and every strip was a new topic with new “obstacles” that required a different approach to be overcome.

I found it interesting to work on these comics because, as a process, it constantly challenged me, even putting myself in uncomfortable situations when dealing with dark humour and taboo language, something that I had never experienced before while translating. I understood the complexity of comics translation and it sparked in me a curious interest to continue to investigate this field, maybe as a full-time job.

Through this dissertation, the limits of the translator were not only taken into consideration, but were also the cardinal point of my motivation: although the translator cannot claim to be able to transfer every message from the ST in the TT faithfully, I think this is actually the motivation to work harder and to keep trying to find new ways, new translation strategies, new approaches to create not the perfect translation, but a final text that the target reader will have the *possibility* to enjoy as the original reader did.

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RIASSUNTO

Questa tesi ha come obiettivo principale lo studio delle teorie traduttive dello humour e del linguaggio tabu, per ottenere i mezzi teorici necessari per la traduzione dei fumetti inediti in Italia di *War and Peas* e per fare una successiva analisi con cognizione di causa delle mie scelte traduttive. La motivazione alla base di questo progetto nasce da un personale interesse per il mondo della narrazione a fumetti, unito alla ricerca, in quanto studentessa di lingue e traduzione, di nuovi campi da esplorare, come il complesso campo della traduzione dell'umorismo e la discussione, solitamente evitata durante il percorso accademico, sull'interdizione linguistica e il suo rapporto con la traduzione. La sfida rappresentata dalla caratteristica compresenza di diversi canali di comunicazione, quali quello visivo e verbale, del linguaggio dei fumetti non poteva che attirare la mia attenzione, personale e accademica.

I testi multimediali, ovvero testi il cui messaggio non passa per il solo canale verbale, rendono il lavoro del traduttore tanto più complesso quanto interessante. Nonostante ciò, e anzi proprio per questo aspetto, i fumetti sono stati a lungo ritenuti un tipo di letteratura di livello inferiore, indirizzata a bambini e lettori di basso livello, portando di conseguenza a una carenza di studi e ricerche sulla loro traduzione fino a qualche decennio fa. In realtà, infatti, i fumetti possono avere lo stesso grado di complessità e il relativo sforzo di lettura che richiedono lavori in prosa di scrittori come Joyce e Proust, come afferma Zanettin (2008).

Il presente elaborato si articola in tre capitoli, con una parte iniziale più teorica, per concentrarsi poi sul pratico con le mie proposte traduttive e un'analisi delle stesse.

Il Capitolo 1 si apre con una panoramica sulla nozione di equivalenza da parte dei principali studiosi della disciplina della traduzione, per poi analizzare il ruolo della cultura nei testi e le strategie traduttive inerenti come l'addomesticamento e lo straniamento. L'attenzione viene poi spostata sulla teoria dedicata alle specifiche dei fumetti: la loro struttura, la caratteristica unione del linguaggio visivo e di quello verbale per la formazione di un unico messaggio, e il loro contenuto. Quest'ultimo infatti è caratterizzato dall'umorismo e dalla presenza di elementi culturali, la cui analisi e classificazione sono state necessarie per comprendere come meglio trasportarli nel nuovo contesto linguistico e culturale del testo di arrivo. La questione dello humour in

traduzione è strettamente legata alla cultura, in quanto ciò che può far ridere un popolo, può non essere divertente, o persino risultare offensivo per un altro. Spesso lo humour è connesso al concetto di intraducibilità e, per facilitare quanto più possibile il lavoro del traduttore, sono state elaborate diverse classificazioni dei tipi di battute e degli strumenti dell'umorismo, per poi proporre differenti approcci alla traduzione. Nonostante la carenza di materiale accademico sulla materia, ho recuperato quanto necessario per comprendere un particolare tipo di umorismo, il dark humour, per poter successivamente aprire una discussione sulle parole tabu, sulla loro difficile ricezione e sulle tecniche traduttive da applicare in loro presenza.

Il Capitolo 2 contiene le versioni originali di diciotto fumetti selezionati dalla raccolta di *War and Peas*, affiancate dalle mie proposte traduttive. Mi sono avvalsa di un programma di grafica per applicare le mie traduzioni sulle immagini, poiché ritengo sia necessario vedere se il testo tradotto rientri nei balloon e cosa del testo sia possibile modificare e cosa sia invece necessario lasciare in originale per motivi grafici, per poter ritenere una traduzione non solo corretta ma anche realisticamente applicabile al fumetto.

Il Capitolo 3 infine è l'analisi delle mie scelte traduttive, avvalendomi delle nozioni teoriche e delle strategie traduttive discusse nel Capitolo 1.

Quando si parla di traduzione è inevitabile parlare di equivalenza, concetto cardine della teoria traduttiva. Nonostante la sua rilevanza, fu solo dagli anni Cinquanta che gli studiosi iniziarono a parlarne, dando ognuno la propria interpretazione, sebbene da un'analisi generale si possa cogliere come in sostanza vengano sempre proposti gli stessi due approcci: uno più fedele al testo di partenza nella forma e nello stile, e l'altro che invece valorizza il messaggio piuttosto che una scelta fedele alle parole originali.

Vinay e Darbelnet (1958) proposero una traduzione orientata all'equivalenza come metodo traduttivo ideale per le onomatopee, le frasi idiomatiche e i modi di dire, in modo tale da riproporre la stessa situazione rappresentata nel testo originale, ma con una formulazione totalmente diversa. Le loro strategie traduttive sono la traduzione diretta (o letterale), con l'uso di calchi e prestiti, e la traduzione obliqua (o libera) con tecniche di trasposizione, adattamento ed equivalenza.

Nida (1964) con la collaborazione di Taber (1982), parla invece di equivalenza formale ed equivalenza dinamica, laddove la prima rappresenta un maggior rispetto del

testo originale, a discapito talvolta della comprensione del lettore finale, mentre la seconda è una traduzione orientata al lettore, che punta a rendere il testo accessibile in modo tale che l'utilizzatore finale possa avere le stesse reazioni dell'utilizzatore originale durante la lettura del testo.

House (2015) parla di funzione di un testo, ponendo come obiettivo dell'equivalenza il replicare la medesima funzione del testo di partenza in quello di arrivo, utilizzando la traduzione overt, che punta a mantenere la traduzione vicina al testo originale, e la traduzione covert, che adatta il testo finale al lettore di arrivo, rimanendo funzionalmente equivalente al testo di partenza. Il punto, nella discussione sull'equivalenza, è che le lingue pur non essendo uguali, possono esprimere gli stessi valori ed è questo che si deve cercare di fare durante una traduzione: ricercare gli stessi valori fra i due testi (Pym 2010).

Ostacolo principale del processo traduttivo è l'intrinseca relazione fra cultura e linguaggio: Ranzato (2010) usa il termine "cultural embeddedness" per indicare il fatto che ogni testo ha uno specifico contesto spazio-temporale (la cultura di partenza) in cui può essere compreso al massimo. Quello che si può e si deve fare, su suggerimento di Pym (2010), è allentare i legami di appartenenza di un testo alla sua cultura di origine e creare nuovi legami, per radicarlo nella cultura di arrivo. Questo processo di sradicamento e radicamento del testo è rappresentato dall'approccio dell'addomesticamento, il cui fine è infatti quello di avvicinare il testo al lettore della cultura di arrivo, modificandolo (e snaturandolo) in modo tale da non sembrare una traduzione, bensì un prodotto della lingua e cultura d'arrivo. L'approccio opposto è lo straniamento, in cui invece è il lettore a essere avvicinato al testo, che rimane fedele alle sue origini e mantiene i riferimenti culturali che lo caratterizzano. È stato Venuti (1998) a proporre queste strategie dicotomiche, che però si è sempre avvocato alla correttezza dello straniamento, in opposizione all'addomesticamento, da lui visto come la rappresentazione della violenza etnocentrica della traduzione. Una simile bipartizione viene suggerita da Toury (1980), che identifica le traduzioni source-oriented e target-oriented.

Le sopra citate difficoltà durante il processo traduttivo fanno riferimento ai testi in generale, ma ci sono ben altri elementi che rendono questa procedura ancora più

complessa andando nello specifico della traduzione dei fumetti. Come già detto infatti, il fumetto è un testo multimediale come i film, le serie tv, i cartoni etc. ed è caratterizzato dalla compresenza di più canali di comunicazione che collaborano fra loro nella formazione del messaggio. Tale complicità, se così si può chiamare, ha assurdamente contribuito a far considerare per anni questo tipo di testi una forma di intrattenimento, posticipando a lungo l'interesse degli accademici e lo studio di questo ambito.

Tra le prime difficoltà annoverabili relative alla traduzione dei fumetti c'è la presenza dei balloon, limite grafico alla libertà del traduttore, che porta alla coniazione del termine *constrained translation* (traduzione vincolata), a indicare proprio quel tipo di traduzione che per questioni di spazio viene limitata. La componente verbale del fumetto, all'interno dei balloon e non, deve essere intesa come un'estensione dell'immagine (Eisner 1985) e non come un'unità a sé stante: la storia del fumetto viene creata dall'unione di parola e disegno. Non esistendo un'universalità dell'immagine, il traduttore dovrà trovare il modo di tradurre la parte verbale in modo tale che ciò che viene trasmesso dall'immagine venga compreso anche dal lettore del testo di arrivo. Poiché le modifiche alla parte illustrata sono rare e limitate, gli studi si sono concentrati sulla traduzione della parte verbale dei fumetti. Celotti (2008) ha individuato quattro luoghi della traduzione dove risiede il messaggio verbale: i balloon, le didascalie, il titolo e il paratesto. Quest'ultima categoria è la più problematica per il traduttore, poiché include i messaggi verbali inseriti nel disegno come i segnali stradali, i giornali, le onomatopee, le insegne dei negozi e in questi casi la loro traduzione dipende dal ruolo che investono nella narrazione. Indipendentemente dalla funzione del paratesto, talvolta purtroppo questi è talmente integrato nell'immagine che la sua traduzione è possibile soltanto tramite una nota a piè di pagina. Fra i vari elementi del paratesto, le onomatopee sono spesso l'elemento verbale più unito all'illustrazione, vengono deformate, allungate, ingrandite e così, anche quando da un punto di vista linguistico sarebbe possibile tradurle (poiché la rappresentazione dei suoni non è universale e un'onomatopea inglese potrebbe non essere riconoscibile da un lettore francese), devono rimanere senza traduzione per via della loro rilevanza grafica. C'è una tendenza, in questo ambito, a mantenere le onomatopee di origine inglese, poiché ormai sono diventate delle convenzioni e perché l'inglese possiede un ricco vocabolario di onomatopee. È interessante notare come anche il formato di stampa di un fumetto sia soggetto a un processo di traduzione, poiché esso può rimanere

nel formato originale, essere trasportato nel formato locale di arrivo o presentato in un terzo nuovo formato, e come questi possa andare a incidere sugli approcci traduttivi al testo e sul pubblico di arrivo.

Oltre alla struttura stessa dei fumetti in quanto difficoltà traduttiva, è il loro contenuto a rappresentare l'ostacolo più ostico per il traduttore. Infatti, ogni testo è culturalmente prodotto (Ranzato 2010), pertanto la presenza di elementi culturo-specifici è inevitabile e l'umorismo, tipico dei fumetti, è l'elemento culturale per eccellenza. Una serie di classificazioni è stata stilata per entrambi, per meglio riconoscere quali sono gli elementi culturali e le battute che possono fare parte di un bagaglio di conoscenze più ampio e quali invece sono specifici di una comunità o persino di una parte soltanto di essa. Sebbene sembri scontato che la scelta migliore sia mantenere i riferimenti originali presenti nel testo, si deve tener conto che il lettore del testo di arrivo davanti a un elemento culturale sconosciuto potrebbe subire un *culture bump* (Archer 1986; Leppihalme 1996), ovvero vivere un momento di confusione nato dall'interazione con una cultura diversa. La definizione e categorizzazione dei riferimenti culturali può essere d'aiuto al traduttore nella loro individuazione e nella selezione della strategia traduttiva più adatta. È utile fare riferimento almeno a una delle definizioni elaborate dagli studiosi, sebbene si possano tutte facilmente ritenere interscambiabili fra loro. Mailhac (1996) ha definito un riferimento culturale nel seguente modo:

By cultural reference we mean any reference to a cultural entity which, due to its distance from the target culture, is characterized by a sufficient degree of opacity for the target reader to constitute a problem. (Mailhac 1996: 133-134)

La categorizzazione di Pedersen (2005) diviene molto utile in quanto utilizza la nozione di Transculturalità di Welsch (1994) come parametro per individuare tre tipi di riferimenti culturali (ECR), ovvero gli ECR transculturali, ECR monoculturali ed ECR microculturali; i primi includono quei riferimenti che non sono tipici di una sola cultura ma si possono quantomeno intendere come biculturali, arrivando agli ultimi che sono specifici di una minoranza di una comunità socioculturale. Questo ragionamento serve al traduttore per distinguere i riferimenti che potrebbero essere riconosciuti dal pubblico target, e quindi mantenerli nella traduzione, da quelli così specifici che, se lasciati non modificati nel testo, potrebbero comportare una totale incomprensione dello stesso. Le

principali strategie traduttive degli elementi culturo-specifici (Díaz Cintas, Remael 2007) sono state pensate per il doppiaggio, ma si applicano facilmente anche alla traduzione dei fumetti. Ovviamente, è da intendersi che tali riferimenti sono il colore e l'essenza di un testo, pertanto sarebbe più corretto valutare di riferimenti in riferimento se optare per una strategia straniante o addomesticante.

Come già anticipato, un importante tipo di elemento culturo-specifico, tipico dei fumetti, è l'umorismo. Il suo grado di difficoltà in ambito traduttivo viene comparato a quello della traduzione delle poesie. Spanakaki (2007) lo definisce come "qualsiasi cosa intesa per essere divertente, anche se non percepita o interpretata come tale" (mia traduzione). Sono tante altre le definizioni che gli studiosi hanno cercato di dare al concetto di humour, ma si potrebbe più generalmente intendere come ciò che avviene quando si crea la base per una certa aspettativa e questa viene ribaltata, infrangendo una regola non scritta, e la situazione viene poi risolta in maniera inaspettata. Il problema per quanto riguarda la traduzione dell'umorismo è che le aspettative e le regole sopracitate sono culturalmente date. A questa problematica si aggiungono le questioni etiche e politiche: ciò che il traduttore ritiene adeguato o meno come contenuto di una battuta potrebbe non coincidere con quanto approvato da un governo o da un popolo. Al pari dei riferimenti culturali sopracitati, anche per lo humour esistono una serie di classificazioni per aiutare il traduttore a identificare i tipi di battute e il loro grado di diffusione al di fuori della cultura di partenza. Le principali distinzioni sono quelle di Whitman-Linsen (1992), Zabalbeascoa (1996) e Raphaelson-West (1989), le quali mettono in luce come gli aspetti più complessi della traduzione delle battute umoristiche siano legati alla cultura, al rapporto fra testo e immagine e ai giochi di parole.

I giochi di parole, in particolare, sono uno dei principali strumenti dello humour, poiché sfruttano le somiglianze della lingua per creare un effetto comico. Le tipologie dei giochi di parole sono omonimia (stessi suoni e spelling), omografia (stesso spelling ma suoni diversi), omofonia (stessi suoni ma spelling diversi) e paronimia (sia spelling che suoni sono vagamente diversi). Come ha notato Pavesi (2005), raramente queste ambiguità semantiche hanno delle corrispondenze dirette fra lingue diverse, contribuendo allo status di elemento dello humour complicato da tradurre.

Zabalbeascoa (1996) ha suggerito la creazione di un database o di una guida che raccolga gli esempi pratici di traduzioni dello humour tratti dalle precedenti esperienze dei traduttori. Questo potrebbe ridurre i tempi di traduzione e fungere per lo meno da fonte di ispirazione per rese creative. Tale idea non è ancora stata messa in pratica, ma il suggerimento dello studioso resta valido.

Nel contesto della traduzione dello humour, il traduttore dovrebbe sempre tenere a mente come sia ben più importante mantenere l'effetto comico piuttosto che rimanere vicini al testo originale. Purtroppo, come ha evidenziato Chiaro (1992) c'è una certa ritrosia da parte del professionista ad allontanarsi dal testo di partenza.

Per andare nello specifico dei fumetti di *War and Peas*, è stato necessario investigare i concetti di dark humour e linguaggio tabu. Per quanto riguarda il primo ambito, purtroppo vi è una carenza di studi a riguardo, così come di una definizione univoca, come denuncia Bucaria (2008). In termini generici, può essere inteso come dark humour quel tipo di umorismo che ha come perno la presa in giro di determinate credenze della società, tramite un utilizzo di toni di scherno, offensivi e irrispettosi. Bucaria (2008) tenta di dare una definizione di black humour, descrivendolo nella seguente maniera:

More or less explicit and sacrilegious representation of humour that has as its aim that of making fun of situations usually regarded as tragic, such as death, sickness, disability, and extreme violence, or of the people involved or subject to them. (Bucaria 2008: 218)

Nonostante la scarsità di ricerche e studi sull'argomento, in realtà l'uso del dark humour si può far risalire fino alle commedie degli antichi greci, ma anche ad autori più recenti come Mark Twain o Vladimir Nabokov. Negli ultimi anni, nei paesi anglofoni si è verificato un aumento del grado di accettazione di questo genere di humour, ma sorge un problema quando si vuole esportare in una cultura diversa un prodotto con tale caratteristica. La cultura italiana, ad esempio, è ancora ampiamente influenzata dalle superstizioni religiose, rendendo difficilmente apprezzabile un testo ricco di riferimenti alla morte, al sesso o alle malattie (temi principali del dark humour). Bucaria (2007) ha proposto come strategia traduttiva degli elementi disturbanti tecniche di omissione, indebolimento, una resa vicina all'originale e rafforzamento.

Alla base del dark humour vi è un vasto uso di parolacce e tabu lessicali. Le parolacce non sono necessariamente sinonimo di rabbia e offesa, ma anzi vengono spesso

utilizzate nel vocabolario quotidiano come abitudine linguistica, totalmente desemantizzate per dare maggiore espressività al discorso. In particolare, per tabu si intende qualcosa che è proibito. Pertanto, un'interdizione linguistica è una parola che per via del significato a cui si riferisce viene ritenuta a sua volta vietata, un tabu. I casi di omonimia vengono spesso sfruttati nel dark humour per allusioni e per riferirsi a ciò che sarebbe vietato dire. Sebbene l'interdizione sia un derivato culturale, i temi principali e più comuni sono gli ambiti religioso, sessuale, scatologico e il tema della madre. La parola-tabu scaturisce nel lettore un senso di indignazione e offesa dato generalmente dall'imbarazzo, dalla decenza o dal timore religioso. È interessante come tramite l'uso di un eufemismo sia possibile parlare di un'area interdetta evitando di provocare malcontenti. Quindi, l'eufemismo può essere l'asso nella manica del traduttore talora trovasse nel testo originale un elemento tabuizzato che desidera mantenere nel testo di arrivo senza essere provocatorio, poiché talvolta può accadere che ciò che nella lingua di partenza non ha nessun valore offensivo, nella lingua di arrivo possa essere recepito come altamente irrispettoso. Inoltre, sembra ci sia una tendenza nelle traduzioni verso l'italiano a diminuire il numero originale di parolacce nel testo di arrivo (Leech 1981), come se l'italiano si saturasse più velocemente rispetto all'inglese, anche perché nella lingua inglese vengono spesso utilizzate tante interdizioni consecutivamente, collocazione poco naturale nell'italiano.

Ovviamente, va da sé che un testo caratterizzato da un uso non censurato di tabu e dark humour verrebbe snaturato se tradotto con una serie di omissioni ed eufemismi.

Per quanto concerne la traduzione dei fumetti di *War and Peas*, ho voluto tentare di trasporre nella nostra lingua e cultura un tipo di prodotto che è ancora poco diffuso in Italia, poiché sebbene la ricezione del dark humour sia alta fra i giovani, le generazioni successive storcono il naso davanti a questo tipo di umorismo tetro. Il format breve delle loro vignette mi ha permesso di confrontarmi con tante situazioni traduttive diverse, senza rischiare di cadere nella noia che potrebbe intercorrere durante la lunga traduzione di un unico testo. Elizabeth Pinch e Jonathan Kunz, creatori del fumetto, mischiano stereotipi, pregiudizi, dark humour e luoghi comuni andando spesso a denunciare alcuni costrutti sociali. Nell'approccio alla traduzione delle loro vignette mi sono affidata tanto alla teoria

analizzata nel Capitolo 1 quanto alle mie precedenti esperienze traduttive e alla mia creatività.

Questa tesi è stata un'esperienza che ritengo formativa, oltre che interessante, per la mia carriera traduttiva. Ciò che è nato da un interesse personale coltivato negli anni si è unito allo studio e alla curiosità da traduttore del mio percorso accademico, creando un elaborato che è stato non solo uno sforzo necessario, ma anche e soprattutto un lavoro creativo e interessato. Il campo teorico della traduzione del fumetto racchiude ancora tanto potenziale da esplorare e studiare, con l'obiettivo di elevare lo statuto di questo genere e accrescere le ricerche a riguardo. Il linguaggio tabù e il dark humour rimangono temi complicati da affrontare e la letteratura può solo fare da supporto al lavoro del traduttore, che si troverà sempre costretto a dover valutare situazione per situazione come trasferire questi delicati elementi in un nuovo contesto socioculturale. Lo stesso discorso vale per la traduzione dei riferimenti culturali, poiché non sempre essere fedeli al testo di partenza, nella paura di snaturarlo, può essere considerata una soluzione ottimale per il pubblico di arrivo. Il traduttore dovrà impegnarsi ogni volta, ripartendo da capo, ma facendo buon uso della letteratura e delle esperienze passate.

Per quanto riguarda la mia traduzione dei fumetti di *War and Peas*, non sono certa che un'eventuale traduzione ufficiale italiana farebbe le mie stesse scelte traduttive, poiché le influenze culturali e sociali potrebbero comportare rese più addomesticanti e "protettive" nei confronti del pubblico italiano. Mentre lavoravo sulle mie traduzioni, la motivazione è sempre stata la medesima: dare al lettore finale la possibilità di godere del prodotto originale al pari delle possibilità del lettore del testo di partenza, minimizzando le perdite e le semplificazioni.