

Refractions and Translator's Invisibility - George Saunders: "Victory Lap" and "Escape from Spiderhead"

Kapetanović, Andrija

Master's thesis / Diplomski rad

2019

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Zadar / Sveučilište u Zadru**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:162:355360>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-04-17**



Sveučilište u Zadru
Universitas Studiorum
Jadertina | 1396 | 2002 |

Repository / Repozitorij:

[University of Zadar Institutional Repository](#)



Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: znanstveni
(dvopredmetni)

Andrija Kapetanović

**Refractions and Translator's Invisibility – George
Saunders: “Victory Lap” and “Escape from
Spiderhead”**

Diplomski rad

Zadar, 2019.

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku

Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: znanstveni
(dvopredmetni)

Refractions and Translator's Invisibility – George Saunders: “Victory Lap” and “Escape from Spiderhead”

Diplomski rad

Student:

Andrija Kapetanović

Mentor:

doc. Tomislav Kuzmanović, MFA

Zadar, 2019.



Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Andrija Kapetanović**, ovime izjavljujem da je moj **diplomski** rad pod naslovom **Refractions and Translator's Invisibility – George Saunders: “Victory Lap” and “Escape from Spiderhead”** rezultat mog vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mog rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

Izjavljujem da ni jedan dio ovoga rada nije iskorišten u kojem drugom radu pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj, obrazovnoj ili inoj ustanovi.

Sadržaj mog rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 9. srpnja 2019.

Table of contents:

1. Introduction	1
2. Literary Translation	3
2.1. Fidelity and Transparency	6
3. Refractions	9
4. Translator's Invisibility.....	14
5. World Literature and Polysystem Theory.....	18
6. George Saunders.....	24
6.1. Tenth of December: Stories.....	25
6.2. George Saunders: Pobjednički krug	26
6.2.1. Analysis of the Translation of the Short Story "Victory Lap" by George Saunders	46
6.3. George Saunders: Bijeg iz Paukoglave.....	52
6.3.1. Analysis of the Translation of the Short Story "Escape From Spiderhead" by George Saunders.....	81
7. Conclusion	88
8. Works cited	91
9. Abstract.....	93
10. Sažetak	94

1. Introduction

When reading a translated work of a foreign writer in the target language, the emphasis is always put on the writer. The translator's contribution and his or her style are always put aside, and in most cases, the general opinion is that it should be repressed and kept under restraint. The translator is rarely praised, and on occasions when the translator's contribution is commented on, the commentary is at best general and succinct. In other words, with a good translation, the translator attempts to raise an invisibility cloak which draws and intensifies the attention to the writer. This is achieved by seamlessly bridging the gaps between languages and cultures through the means of interventions or refractions, a term coined by the Belgian translation theorist André Lefevere. These refractions are motivated by domestic poetics, ideology or even politics. At the same time, they signal the presence of the translator, but also make him or her obscure. By successfully implementing the refractions, the writer becomes more visible, receives most of the credit, and enters new circles of the international literary system. Fluency becomes the measure of a good translation. It then, in turn, opens the doors to world literature, and allows the work to enter the periphery of the polysystem, a theoretical approach to translation created by Itamar Even-Zohar. After entering the circulation of the polysystem, the work competes for the central position, and climbs the scale by acquiring literary capital. The writer's aim in this competition is to transcend national borders through translations and to enter the sphere of world literature. Entering the imaginary or realistic circles of world literature subsequently helps a work to gain additional literary capital.

The aim of this thesis is to translate the short stories "Victory Lap" and "Escape From Spiderhead" from the short story collection *Tenth of December: Stories* by George Saunders and by analyzing the translations to determine which kind of refractions and changes had to occur in order to achieve and retain the translator's invisibility, and what are the consequences of these changes for both the source text and the translation. Through the translations of these

short stories an attempt will be made to answer the following questions: What kind of refractions does the translator make? Does the translator keep in mind his visibility while translating? Can the translator break free from his or her role as the invisible mediator? To which extent do the translations help the writer's work to enter larger bodies of works, such as world literature?

The translator's position in the background of the literary work is almost always predetermined. Despite this, translators embrace their invisibility and consciously operate within its borders in order to promote and push a literary work and its writer in their domestic literary system. With such an intent, translators maintain the status quo for the sake of literature. Dipped into ideology, refractions shape and manipulate the literary work to accommodate the reader of the target text. As a person presumably knowledgeable in both languages and cultures, the translator aims to balance the influx of foreign elements and their substitution with domestic elements. Refractions and translator's invisibility are closely related and this vital connection enables the flow of literature. The role of the translator is often neglected, even more so the processes that occur behind the curtain. This thesis aims to unfold the invisible act behind the translation which is to a great extent accomplished through refractions.

2. Literary Translation

Before going into detail on the theoretical cornerstone of this thesis, it is necessary to provide a brief definition of literary translation and to shed a light on its importance for literature in general. Literary translation is actually responsible for the creation of an ‘imaginary’ body of works or the international literary sphere also known as world literature, a concept which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five. By producing faithful and fluent translations, literary translators accept the role of the silent and invisible mediators who pave the way for writers and create the junction which constitutes the body of prominent literary texts. Naturally, as a consequence, the role of the literary translators is often neglected or even ignored, and they receive insufficient credit or none at all for introducing a literary text to a larger audience. Literary translation opens up literary systems to the world and with this flowing exchange every culture, which takes part in it, is significantly enriched.

It is important to note that just like the defining translation in a broader sense, literary translation poses the same problem. The implementation of the term ‘literature’ causes obviously additional problems: “The search for a definition of literary translation leads nowhere. To students of literature this will not come as a surprise. They gave up trying to define literature some time ago. Today definitions of literature tend to be functional and contingent rather than formal or ontological” (Hermans 79). For the sake of simplicity and focusing on other aspects more important for this thesis, the notions of ‘translation’ and ‘literary translation’ will be provided in their broadest sense. Thus, from a broad perspective, translation refers to the interpretation of the meaning of a source text (ST), and the production of that same text, a target text (TT), in another language with the goal of achieving equivalence and fluency (Munday 4). Fidelity or faithfulness is here of secondary concern, since the reader is only able to measure it if he or she is comparing the ST and the TT side by side. Thus, it is an element which has a greater meaning to the translator. George Steiner, an American literary critic,

argues that the word ‘interpretation’ entails the act of thorough reading of a text: “Any thorough reading of a text out of the past of one’s own language and literature is a manifold act of interpretation. In the great majority of cases, this act is hardly performed or even consciously recognized. At best, the common reader will rely on what instant crutches footnotes or a glossary provide” (Steiner 18). However, it is important to emphasize that the interpretation occurs both in the source language, and in the target language: “a good translation should be a double interpretation, faithful both to the language/message of the original and to the message-orienting cast of its own language” (Philip E. Lewis 268). In the process of interpretation, the translator needs to take notice of every minute detail, and to question every decision and every step of the way. Furthermore, according to the American translator Clifford E. Landers, the translator goes a step further as opposed to the reader: “(...) the translator is a *very careful reader*; only through a close reading of the text is it apperceived beyond the superficial level of the casual reader” (Landers 32). Going back to the notion of translation, the British translator Jeremy Munday provides a simple, yet comprehensive definition: “The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL)” (Munday 5).

Literary translation, however, refers to the translation of literary texts. Besides the passive notion of interpreting, it can be seen as an active and creative process, and not a mere word-for-word transfer from the SL to the TL. It is necessary to emphasize that instead of a word-for-word approach, literary translation favors the thought-for-thought or sense-for-sense approach. Just as all the other branches of translation, such as technical translation, literary translation also represents a struggle between fidelity and transparency, although, an important

component which distinguishes it from the technical translation is style. According to the translator Clifford E. Landers this is closely connected to the notion of translator's invisibility:

In theory at least, 'style' in a translator is an oxymoron. Ideally, the translator strives to have no style at all and attempts to disappear into and become indistinguishable from the style of the SL author. The translator should adapt to the style of each author translated – now terse, now rambling, sometimes abstruse, but always faithful to the original as circumstances permit. (Landers 90)

In other words, the translator attempts to hide behind equivalence in order to appear in the guise of the author. The writer's style, which can be defined as a distinctive mode of expression, includes elements such as lexical choice, idiolect, punctuation marks etc., which shape and influence the translator's decisions. All these elements build up a certain rhythm and set the tone of the text. Despite these 'restraints' which maintain the translator's invisibility, the translators still have their own style. Even though he tends to repress it, it is still apparent in the translator's lexical choice. Such nuances, however, are often not caught by the ordinary reader. The translator's trace will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three.

Style is actually a difficult aspect to define, since it appears in different forms. This is one of the reasons why literary translation should not be analyzed within the framework of the prescriptive approach. Literary translation, or for that matter any other type of translation, is context-dependent, and an excellent solution in one situation may prove to be disastrous in another similar situation. Thus, it is quite difficult to establish a fixed recipe for successful translating which would enable almost anyone with the knowledge of two languages to strive in this profession or art form.

The notion of style also covers the terms such as *register* and *tone* which greatly influence the translator's approach and choice of words. Register is socially determined and can be seen as a "continuum, ranging from informal to formal, 'lowest' to 'highest'" (Landers 59).

The translator's task is to recognize the position of a certain utterance along the continuum, and detect the fine nuances of both the SL and the TL. The choice of words of the translator reflects the register and sets the tone in the TT. Tone can be defined as: "the overall feeling conveyed by an utterance, a passage, or an entire work, including both conscious and unconscious resonance" (Landers 68). The register and tone are both elements which will be discussed within the analyses.

Literary translation differs in great extent from any other type of translation, since it entails the concept of literature which is a broad term in its own right. In addition to the informative function which all other types of translation possess, literary translation has both an aesthetic and an artistic function. It enables the circulation of ideas and 'literariness', i.e. that which gives the work literary quality, across different literary systems.

2.1. Fidelity and Transparency

After dealing with the importance of style, tone and register, the idea of the struggle between the most prominent pair in translation, fidelity and transparency, will be discussed. In the process of translation, the balance between these two conflicting concepts enters the mind of any translator. The goal of the literary translators is to completely hide their efforts of translating, and to make the translation sound and feel as if it was not a translation at all. Unfortunately, this tends to be marked as one of the most important aspects of a 'good' translation (Landers 49). Fidelity or faithfulness to the source text appears to the translator as the inevitable path to take. This also means that the choice of words and the idiomatic expressions may be too close to the source language. On the other hand, transparency can be depicted as the opposite of fidelity. It is an essential component in order for the translation to be comprehensive and adapted to the readers of the target language, however, it changes the source text to some extent.

When it comes to writers and artists, infidelity in terms of adapting or changing a classical piece of work to accommodate one's own vision is not perceived as an act of betrayal of the 'original' as opposed to translators who are constantly targeted and even judged by the extent of their faithfulness to the source text. Fidelity thus plays a great role in translation, and it is a burden which the translators agree to bear as soon as they start translating. The notion of fidelity is deeply rooted in the notion of translation and the evidence can be found in the classical period when the Romans tended to be faithful to the form, however, in terms of content they did accommodate it to fit their own vision (Wechsler 60). When discussing fidelity, a distinction is to be made between the faithfulness to the form and the faithfulness to the content. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance translators were mainly concerned with content and information. Translators had more artistic freedom in the Renaissance, and their role almost equaled that of the author, thus translation was perceived as "a part of literature, a part of the passing of literary traditions and creations from language to language, and a part of the often conscious creation of modern vernacular languages that was central to the cause of the Reformation, religiously and politically" (Wechsler 61). Fidelity is certainly a key component of translation, but it is not what makes the translation successful per se. It should not be understood only as equivalence on a semantic level. Fidelity can also be, and often is, expressed through 'unfaithful' interventions or adaptations which paradoxically maintain or even intensify it.

The translator hides behind illusory curtains of fidelity and convinces the reader that what he or she is reading is actually a reflection of the source text or rather the source text itself. On the example of translating from other languages into English, the American translation theorist Lawrence Venuti provides a thorough depiction of the illusion which takes place during such adaptations:

By producing the illusion of transparency, a fluent translation masquerades as a true semantic equivalence when it in fact inscribes the foreign text with a partial interpretation, partial to English-language values, reducing if not simply excluding the very differences that translation is called on to convey. (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 16)

Transparency allows the readers to dive into the narrative without necessarily paying attention to the fact that they are actually reading a translation. Excessive fidelity might result in a *translationese* or a poorly written prose (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 4). This kind of negative representation might also have a negative effect on the source text, because it also might be depicted as poorly written. Fidelity can in such occasions prove to be abusive, and an example of this is 'resistance' which depicts resistance of the source language and culture to being adapted into the target language and culture. Followers of this theory are against transparency and usually seek out elements which represent the 'otherness' of the text (Landers 52). On the other hand, excessive introduction of new elements to accommodate the target culture might be seen as a violent and unfaithful act. In the conflict between fidelity and transparency, the translator resorts to different changes or interventions called refractions.

3. Refractions

The translator can make intentional changes to the source text, however, some stylistic ‘slips’ can also often occur. The visible changes of a more serious nature are called refractions. The stylistic mark on the literary work is achieved through means of notions of *inscription* and *remainder* developed by the American translation theorist Lawrence Venuti (Venuti, *Translation, Community, Utopia* 468). These refractions may appear unimportant or miniscule, but on a broader scale of introducing a work into the polysystem of the international literary sphere or even world literature, they may play a significant role for the author.

In the process of a work entering another literary system through translation, it is necessary for it to go through certain channels, i.e. refractions, which will allow an adequate reception in the home literature. This close connection between refractions and the literary system especially draws the Belgian translation theorist André Lefevere. According to Lefevere, it is necessary to stress out the artificial nature of the literary system:

It is a contrived system, i.e. it consists of both objects (texts) and people who write, refract, distribute, read those texts. It is a stochastic system, i.e. one that is relatively indeterminate and only admits of predictions that have a certain degree of probability, without being absolute. (Lefevere 235)

In this system, it is important to note the role of the patronage, i.e. support provided by patrons or regulatory bodies, such as different people and institutions that influence the system indirectly through critics. Refractions can be defined as “the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work” (Lefevere 235).

There are many ideological implications that may cause a translation to exhibit refractions or adaptations not present in the source text. Furthermore, the poetics and the cultural peculiarities of the language in which the text is being translated may be an additional

reason for the occurrence of refractions. Poetics can also be understood as a system, and according to Lefevere, it consists of two components: “one is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole” (Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* 26). The first component is often found inside of the literary work, while the latter component refers to the broader perspective in terms of selecting themes which have a relevant role in society. It gives direction to literature and determines what it should be like.

Poetics is also greatly influenced by ideological currents which means that the dominant poetics changes over the course of time along with the literary system. Ideological implications bring the literary work into the spotlight. In the process of translation, the target culture and language always leave their mark, in the sense that something can be gained in one instance, and lost in another. This brings into focus the notion of inscription, i.e. inscribing certain qualities to the source text, and according to Venuti “[t]he inscription begins with the very choice of a text for translation, always a very selective, densely motivated choice, and continues in the development of discursive strategies to translate it, always a choice of certain domestic discourses over others” (*Translation, Community, Utopia* 468). The selection of a text for translation may give the author the necessary push to break free from the national border, and enter a larger body of work. Beside the translator, the patrons may have a great influence on the inscription by deciding which works to provide patronage to and to which not. This tempering with the selection of works, or more broadly with the polysystem, proves to be an inevitable phenomenon, which is imposed by the target culture and different ideologies.

Moreover, the term domestication as a means of rewriting can also be introduced in this context, since elements of the home culture are being implemented in the source text.

Translation can thus also be understood as a rewriting which has a great impact on a literary system:

Rewritings, mainly translations, deeply affect the interpretation of literary systems, not just by projecting the image of one writer or work in another literature or by failing to do so . . . but also by into the inventory component of poetics and paving the way to changes in its functional component. (Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* 38)

The translator either consciously or unconsciously produces a translation in accordance with the dominant ideology, i.e. patronage, and poetics. Venuti argues that the process of translation entails the act of ethnocentric violence which occurs through domestication on every foreign text. Still, it is an inevitable and necessary act: “The ethnocentric violence of translation is inevitable: in the translation process, foreign languages, texts, and cultures always undergo some degree and form of exclusion, reduction, and inscription that reflect the cultural situation in the translating language” (Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* 267). The ‘violent’ act of translating allows for the target text to be more comprehensible to the target audience.

Furthermore, Venuti adds the notion of the community in the process, emphasizing the need of the translator to find or to build an adequate community for the reception of his translation (*Translation, Community, Utopia* 468). The translator’s perception of a gap in the literary system leads him or her to believe that the translation will fill it. Naturally, the translator will resort to domesticating solutions in order to appease the wishes of the receptor: “The ethically and politically motivated translator cannot fail to see the lack of an equal footing in the translation process, stimulated by an interest in the foreign, but inescapably leaning towards the receptor” (Venuti, *Translation, Community, Utopia* 469). The inscription acts as the translator’s fingerprint. The translator may mark his or her translation either covertly or overtly.

Nonetheless, it is a cultural mark and it is necessary in order to bridge the cultural gap between the source and the target text. Inscription also occurs as a domestication which “can only be formulated and practiced primarily in *domestic* terms, in domestic dialects, registers, discourses, and styles” (Venuti, *Translation, Community, Utopia* 469). It is important to note the idea that translation is simply not just a communicative act, since various adaptations need to be refracted through an appropriate spectrum into the text, in order for the text to function as closely as it possibly can to the original. In this way, the translator’s invisibility puts the spotlight on the author who receives the credit for the work’s literary quality, and consequently acquires literary capital. Something is always sacrificed in the process of translation.

However, the translator will resort to different stylistic means, such as dialects, jargons, and neologisms, in an effort to surpass the simple communicative act and achieve a similar effect in the target culture as it was achieved in the source culture. According to Jean-Jacques Lecercle these inscribed variations are called remainder “because they exceed communication of a univocal meaning and instead draw attention to the conditions of the communicative act, conditions that are in the first instance linguistic and cultural, but that ultimately embrace social and political factors” (qtd. in Venuti, *Translation, Community, Utopia* 471). The domestic remainder is especially present in the translation of literary texts in which the domestic dialect, register and styles take the work out of its original context, and put it in the context of the target culture. The remainder allows the translator to build a suitable environment for a community, since these types of inscriptions satisfy their linguistic and cultural needs. In a suitable environment the source text will be propelled through the means of translation, and again, be able to take another step towards the center of the polysystem.

Inscriptions and remainders are inevitable phenomena for each target community, and in every instance, it brings something new to the original text which seems to go unnoticed. The reason why it goes unnoticed is because it is specific to each literary system. Thus, this

novelty which expresses the literary quality is projected back towards the author. In this perspective, it is necessary to take into consideration the notion of world literary space, i.e. world literature. In her book *The World Republic of Letters*, The French literary critic Pascale Casanova explains the notion of world literature and concepts such as international literary space which are closely related to it. According to Casanova, writers strive to enter the international level, and they try to manipulate their way into it: “the writers who seek greater freedom for their work are those who know the laws of world literary space and who make use of them in trying to subvert the dominant norms of their respective national fields” (109). Writers or authors achieve this through the means of translation. A good translator will hold on to certain principles, such as the translator’s principle of invisibility, and the writer counts on this, since it will pave the way for his or her own visibility. Due to refractions that are present in particular literary systems, translations manage to echo the literary quality of a work. Through these refractions the literary quality of a work consequently resonates all the way to the international level. In this way, the work achieves international visibility and enters a larger body of works. Throughout all of this, the translator needs to preserve his invisibility.

4. Translator's Invisibility

It has often been considered a general rule that the translator should be invisible while translating, since he or she is 'merely' transferring the code of a literary work from the source language into the target language, however, much more is at stake in this 'simple' transfer. In situations, when a glimpse of the translator appears, he or she immediately gets rebuked, and the question of fidelity starts to emerge. Furthermore, this question goes much deeper than it seems; it reflects on the writer and the quality of his or her literary work. In reference to the conflict between fidelity and transparency, Norman Shapiro provides a suitable analogy for both translation and translator's invisibility:

I see translation as the attempt to produce a text so transparent that it does not seem to be translated. A good translation is like a pane of glass. You only notice that it's there when there are little imperfections – scratches, bubbles. Ideally, there shouldn't be any. It should never call attention to itself. (qtd. in Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 1)

This analogy is closely connected to the above-mentioned notions of inscription and remainder that represent the scratches and the bubbles, i.e. imperfections which are necessary to bridge the linguistic, cultural, and ideological gaps.

The translator's invisibility is almost always associated with the term fluency. Even though it is written from the perspective of British and American translations, Venuti constructs a twofold explanation of the invisibility phenomenon. It is applicable to almost any national or international context:

one is an illusionistic effect of discourse, of the translator's own manipulation of the translating language, English in this case; the other is the practice of reading and evaluating translations that has long prevailed in the United Kingdom and the United

States, among other cultures, both Anglophone and foreign-language. (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 1)

In other words, the first phenomenon refers to the translator's tendency to either consciously or subconsciously manipulate the text due to his or her own cultural and hereditary capital, and imprinted set of values and beliefs. The act of manipulating the text is achieved, again, through inscription and remainder. In the process of translation, the translator then, just as in any other creative act, cannot shut down or ignore the sophisticated orchestra of his or her own being. There is no absolute switching from the subjectivism to objectivism. Just like the author, the translator also leaves traces and parts of himself in the translated text. The second phenomenon refers to a mode of reading that the critics are more inclined to when evaluating translations. In the eyes of the critics, the translator's invisibility became a crucial factor in determining the quality of a translation. The invisibility through fluency, which is constantly referred to, is something to which the translator should strive, in order to pave the way for the visibility of the author: "The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text" (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 1). Only then does the translation build on the literary capital of the source text. The translation should appear as if it still is written in the source language, and as if no changes were ever made. This feeds the readers the illusion that they are experiencing the text in the source language without the need to know the source language, even though refractions have been made in this cultural and linguistic exchange. The fluency allows the readers to experience new unfamiliar cultural fragments in the comforts of the source language. The struggle between fidelity and accuracy becomes a secondary act, an act behind the stage, while fluency and transparency take over the main act. The process of domestication thrives, and significantly changes and adapts the source text to the target culture. Still, the translator's invisibility remains strong due to authorship which in every nation perceives the author or the

writer as the dominant side in the act of translation. In this way, the translator is always put in second place which results in associating him or her with negative aspects:

On the one hand, translation is defined as a second-order representation: the foreign text can be original, an authentic copy, true to the author's personality or intention, whereas the translation is derivative, fake, potentially a false copy. On the other hand, translation is required to efface its second-order status with the effect of transparency, producing the illusion of authorial presence whereby the translated text can be taken as the original.

(Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 6)

The importance of both the translator and the translation is undermined. The translator's authorship tends to be presented as an illusion, and thus, the notion of invisibility reaches its peak. Moreover, it is expected from the translators to embrace their invisibility: "Frequently, translators are obligated to find a perverse kind of satisfaction in being ignored; a good translation 'disappears' into the thoughts and style of the author, while a bad translation draws attention to itself even as it diminishes the artistic impact of the original" (Landers 23). The translators get significantly less attention than the writers, even though they have the ability to propel the work through the international literary space, and in some cases, all the way to the aspired sphere of world literature.

The translator's role can be compared to that of an actor. In the process of translation, the translator needs to suppress his or her own 'personality' in order to be able to mediate the author's personality in the target culture (*The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 7). However, the situation is not that idealistic and certain changes and interventions, i.e. refractions, are inevitable in order for the work to function in the target culture, and to consequently enter international literary circles. Ideally, when a literary work has been translated into several 'stronger' languages, i.e. languages that possess a substantial literary capital, and has been critically acclaimed, it may acquire the title of a 'modern classic' and enter

world literature. The many faces that the literary work gain in the process of translation into different languages belong to the same body that wanders through the polysystem waiting to be taken into another literary system through translation.

5. World Literature and Polysystem Theory

World literature is a widely used term, however, it is also a term that is difficult to define. In an attempt to define it, different approaches can be taken. According to the American literary historian David Damrosch, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's endorsement of the term *weltliteratur* started to spread the notion of a covert literary sphere (Damrosch, *World Literature in Theory* 4). It brought together an imagined body of works, which could be representative on a global scale. This body or even bodies of works manage to break with the national, cultural, and political borders, therefore succeeding in entering a global sphere primarily through the means of translation. Thus, world literature is unavoidably affected by political and ideological situations and shifts, both on a national and a global scale. It is necessary, however, to point out that Goethe's understanding of the term *weltliteratur* has a romantic notion to it, since literary quality may not be the decisive criterion of entering the space of world literature. The French literary critic Pascale Casanova shares to some extent this romantic notion of literary space and sees it as something that really has an effect beyond national borders:

This space is not an abstract and theoretical construction, but an actual – albeit unseen – world made up by lands of literature; a world in which what is judged worthy of being considered literary is brought into existence; a world in which the ways and means of literary art are argued over and decided. (Casanova 3)

According to Casanova, the concept of world literature is something which can be defined as a world on its own, in the sense that it is constructed by the lands of literature, which give meaning to its texts. She uses Henry James' metaphor of 'the complex figure on a carpet' as the secret layer of literature in order to emphasize the relationship between the writers who stand for the text and the critics who are focused on the context: "It is the global configuration, or composition, of the carpet – that is, the domain of letters, the totality of what I call world literary space – that alone is capable of giving meaning and coherence to the very form of individual

texts” (Casanova 3). Furthermore, the concept of world literature is also viewed as a means of situating writers in the vast territory of literary space in order to avoid being scrutinized by the critics only based on either the internal or the external frames of their works (Casanova 5). On a wider scale, going back to the political and ideological implications, the relationship between text and context can be discussed, since it goes without saying that it was, and in some instances still is, the usual practice to relate the literary texts of various authors to their national, and therefore also their political context. In some instances, translation of a text manages to set it free from the constraints of its national context and allows it to enter world literature.

On the other hand, according to Damrosch, world literature can be seen more as a network than a set of works. In this network, the works circulate outside of the boundaries of its origin: “I take world literature to encompass all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language...” (Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* 4). He also takes into account the effectiveness of the work, in the sense that it has an influence in the world literature. Damrosch brings the concepts of the canon and the corpus into the picture and argues that world literature should be depicted as a mode of reading: “My claim is that world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike” (*What is World Literature?* 5). Damrosch seems to be able to distance himself from the romantic notion of world literature and to perceive it as a mode of circulation of works, which have a certain influence outside of their borders or at least have the potential of reaching such heights. This corpus or canon of works is in a constant state of flux, i.e. the circulation never stops and the competition or the struggle for the center of the system is always present.

This allows the implementation of Itamar Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory in which the world literature can be perceived as the intricate relationship between various literary systems.

The literary system can be defined as “the network of relations that is hypothesized to obtain between a number of activities called ‘literary,’ and consequently these activities themselves observed via that network” or as “the complex of activities, or any section thereof, for which systemic relations can be hypothesized to support the option of considering them ‘literary’” (Even-Zohar 28). By perceiving a literary system as a circle, the corpus of works is in a constant struggle for the central position. The ones at the periphery want to move towards the center, while the ones at the center want to remain there as much as possible. This, naturally, due to the constant circulation, is impossible and if one of the works makes it to the center, another will have to leave it and take its place at the periphery. On a broader scale, the systems influence each other unevenly which means that certain literary systems in the center of the polysystem influence in greater extent those that are at the periphery of the polysystem.

In an effort to describe the violent nature of the literary competition, different theorists used the comparison of literature with economy, i.e. as the French poet, essayist and philosopher, Paul Valéry calls it “spiritual economy” (Casanova 10). It is necessary to understand the motions of the literary capitals that may have a separate driving force from the economic or the political sphere, even though they are all intertwined in the complex global space. By crossing the national boundaries as an idea, the international literary space began to form in the sixteenth century: “Literary authority and recognition – and, as a result, national rivalries – came into existence with the formation and development of the first European states” (Casanova 11). This allows the world literature to pave its own way in history, and once again, Goethe’s romantic notion of world literature quickly falls apart with the introduction of the element of rivalry or violence between literatures. The establishment of the international literary space allows different national literary spaces to overlap or come into contact. In other words, the national literary systems strive to spill over to the international literary polysystem, which is achieved through translation.

Going back to the notion of the central and peripheral position of Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, the translated literature may have a major influence on the whole literary polysystem: "To say that translated literature maintains a central position in the literary polysystem means that it participates actively in shaping the center of the polysystem. In such a situation it is by and large an integral part of innovatory forces" (Even-Zohar 46). The translation thus acts as a medium for implementing new elements from the foreign works into the home literature. This process has been active throughout the course of the literary history, since the beginning of translation. In relation to this, we can talk about 'strong' literatures, which dominate the polysystem and take their place in the center, and 'weak' literatures, which are at the periphery and are greatly influenced by the 'strong' literatures. Due to the dynamics of the polysystem, the interchange of the literary works from the peripheral to the central position and vice versa may create turning points in which the younger generation breaks off with the established models. This allows the translated literature to assume the central position (Even-Zohar 47).

In addition, the perspective needs to be shifted from the narrow national view to the international or global view. In the process of translation, the two cultures and literatures make contact through the translated text and the original work becomes a part of the target literary system: "All works cease to be exclusive products of their original culture once they are translated; all become works that only "began" in their original language" (Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* 22). Through the above-mentioned inscriptions, they enter the domestic canon of translated literature. At the same time, they are a clear domestic representation of the foreign culture and text. These domestic representations are of curious nature: "Translations can precipitate a disciplinary revision because the representations they construct are never seamless or perfectly consistent, but often contradictory, assembled from heterogeneous cultural materials, domestic and foreign, past and present" (Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*

70). The transition of works, which is realized through translations, creates new literary entities that find themselves at the crossroads between different cultures. This corresponds to Damrosch's understanding of the works of world literature: "[W]orks of world literature take on a new life as they move into the world at large, and to understand this new life we need to look closely at the ways the work becomes reframed in its translations and in its new cultural contexts" (*What is World Literature?* 24).

Going back to the notion of the center of the literary capital, the translation allows the target literary polysystem to acquire new literary power from the source text. This allows us to get closer to the notion of hegemony. Every literary system strives for hegemony, i.e. dominating in the center of the literary polysystem. The translators act as a medium of balance, and introduce new elements into their literary system. With this intervention, the translators increase the literary capital of their literary system. Furthermore, this also allows the circulation of the literary capital and the influence of both "major" and "minor" literatures. The literatures then begin to cross from the national into an international context. This also has an effect on the books themselves, the preference of the writing styles, and finally the production itself: "Even the freest countries in world literary space are therefore subject to power of international commerce, which, in transforming the conditions of production, modifies the form of books themselves" (Casanova 171).

This is the aim of world literature. The constant circulation of literary systems, brought about by means of translation, should enable a new life for the works of world literature and the freedom from their national restrictions and frameworks. The translator should not only be able to tap into the language of a literary text, but also into the culture in its background which will help broaden the horizon of the readers. The constant struggle inside the literary polysystem and the fight for the center is inevitable. Even though it might seem as an unrealistic fight for 'minor' literatures, they also contribute to the polysystem: they maintain and nourish it. Despite

them being depicted as ‘minor’ literatures, they have a major influence on the literary polysystem. The translators are the ones that keep the circulation of the world literature flowing.

6. George Saunders

George Saunders is an American writer of short stories, novels, children's books, essays and novellas. He was born on December 2, 1958, in Amarillo, Texas. Saunders works as a professor in the creative writing program at the Syracuse University in New York. He is known mainly as a short story writer. His most notable short-story collections are *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* (1996), *Pastoralia* (2000), both of which also include a novella, *In Persuasion Nation* (2006), and *Tenth of December: Stories* (2013). In 2017 his first novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* has been published. His stories have appeared in prominent literary magazines such as *The New Yorker*, *McSweeney's*, *Harper's*, and *GQ*. In 1994, 1996, 2000, and 2004 he won the National Magazine Award for fiction. Saunders was awarded both a Guggenheim Fellowship and a MacArthur Fellowship in 2006. The same year he received the World Fantasy Award for his short story "CommComm". He received an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2009. His short-story collection *Tenth of December: Stories* won him the Story Prize for short-story collections in 2013. In 2017, he received the Man Booker Prize for his novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* (*George Saunders Books*).

George Saunders' short stories are original, innovative and peculiar in terms of topics and characters he chooses to write about. This is a consequence of his odd background in the field of geophysics, a job which allowed him to devote himself extensively to books and literature (*George Saunders Books*). Besides this he also worked as "a doorman, a roofer, a convenience store clerk, and a slaughterhouse worker (a "knuckle-puller," to be exact), and all of this contributed to [his] understanding of capitalism as a benign-looking thing" (*George Saunders Books*). The writing style and tone of the stories allows the reader to develop a close and intimate relationship with the characters. The human aspect dominates his stories which in a witty and powerful way give the readers a brief, yet perceptive glimpse into their lives.

6.1. Tenth of December: Stories

George Saunders' *Tenth of December: Stories* is a collection of ten short stories: "Victory Lap," "Sticks," "Puppy," "Escape From Spiderhead," "Exhortation," "Al Roosten," "The Semplica Girl Diaries," "Home," "My Chivalric Fiasco," and "Tenth of December." These ten stories are written from different perspectives of different characters and destinies, however, as it is the case in "Victory Lap" the destinies of the three characters are intertwined. "Victory Lap" is a story of a teenage girl Alison being abducted by an unnamed rapist. Her teenage neighbor Kyle, who is in love with her, intervenes in order to prevent a tragedy. Throughout the narrative, the perspective is shifted between these three characters. "Escape From Spiderhead" is a story about a man named Jeff who instead of imprisonment has chosen to take part in an experimental drugs facility as a test subject. As the testing and the different drug trials advance, the protagonist Jeff starts to question his choice and the morality of the testing.

In reference to the inscription beginning with the very choice of the text, it is necessary to discuss the selection of these two texts for the main translations of this thesis. Besides the point that the short stories by themselves are stylistically captivating and exciting, the decision to translate George Saunders' short story collection *Tenth of December: Stories* may have been a coincidence, however, it is very unlikely that this is the case. As much as one would want to give an objective reason for choosing a story, it is often a matter of subjective selection. It is thus fairly impossible to exclude subjectivism from this process. With greater motivation and desire to translate a text one hopes that these components also help to improve the quality of the final form of the translated text. As a great admirer of the concise and complex form of short stories, and after translating other short stories by the Irish short story writer Kevin Barry, one often seeks new challenges, and then while searching for a short story online, I "stumbled upon" the short-story collection *Tenth of December: Stories* by George Saunders. The first story which

caught my attention and introduced me to this collection was “Victory Lap.” One of the patrons which allowed this connection between this short story collection and me to occur is the widely known American magazine *New Yorker*. As a prominent magazine it promotes quality in the literary texts it publishes, thus, this quality was also inscribed to the two short stories “Victory Lap” and “Escape From Spiderhead” which were chosen to be translated for this thesis.

From a broader perspective, these two short stories and the short-story collection *Tenth of December: Stories* as a whole may have been chosen over some other short stories that may have received the same attention. They may have taken their place, without the goal of coming across presumptuous, in a hypothetical entering of a new literary system.

6.2. George Saunders: Pobjednički krug

Tri dana prije svog petnaestog rođendana, Alison Pope zastane na vrhu stuba.

Recimo da je stubište mramorno. Recimo da se spustila i da su se sve glave okrenule. Gdje je {onaj posebni, onaj pravi}? Evo ga, prilazi, lagan naklon, uzvik, Kako toliko ljupkosti stane u tako malo pakovanje? Ups. Je li on to rekao *malo pakovanje*? I samo tako ostao stajati? Potpuno bezizražajnog širokog prinčevskog lica? Jadničak! Žao mi je, nema šanse, dalje, on definitivno nije {onaj pravi}.

A što je s onim tamo, iza gospodina Malo Pakovanje, onim koji stoji kraj kućnog kina? Onim seljačke šije, pak nježnih, punih usana koji, položivši ruku na donji dio njezinih leđa, šapne, Tako mi je žao što si morala doživjeti ono s malim pakovanjem. Hajdemo stati na mjesec. Ili, uh, pod mjesec. Na mjesečinu.

Je li on to zaista rekao, *Hajdemo stati na mjesec*? Ako jest, morala bi biti, ono, {obrve u zrak}. A ako ne slijedi kakvo sarkastično priznanje, reći će mu, ono, Uh, nisam baš odjevena za stajanje na mjesecu koji je, koliko ja znam, super hladan?

Dajte dečki, pa ne može u svojoj glavi zauvijek dražesno koračati po ovom mramornom stubištu! Ona draga stara sjedokosa gospođa s tijarom na glavi sva se, ono, *Zašto oni navodni prinčevi tjeraju tu dragu djevojku da do iznemoglosti maršira na mjestu?* Osim toga, večeras ima plesnu izvedbu i mora trknuti izvaditi tajice iz sušilice.

O, Bože! I dalje stoji na vrhu stubišta.

Napravi ono kad, pogled u daljinu, ruka na ogradi, poskakuješ niz stube, jednu po jednu, što u zadnje vrijeme postaje sve teže zato što su nečija stopala svakim danom očito sve duža.

Pas de chat, pas de chat.

Changement, changement.

Preskoči preko one tanke metalne stvarčice što odvaja pločice hodnika od tepiha dnevnog boravka.

Nakloni se samoj sebi u ogledalu kod ulaza.

Hajde mama, dođi. Ne želimo da nas gospođa Callow opet ukori u zakulisju.

Premda je zapravo voljela gospođu C. Baš stroga, stroga! Voljela je i cure iz razreda. I cure iz škole. *Obožavala ih.* Svi su bili tako dragi. I dečki iz škole. I učitelji iz škole. Svi su davali sve od sebe. Zapravo, voljela je cijeli svoj grad. Onog preslatkog trgovca koji prska salatu! Svećenicu Carol i njezinu veliku, komfornu guzu! Debeljuškastog poštara koji maše svojim podstavljenim omotnicama! Jednom je to bilo radničko naselje, s pilanom i drvosječama. Nije li to suludo? Što je to uopće značilo?

Voljela je i svoju kuću. S druge strane potoka stajala je ruska crkva. Baš etnično! Ta lukovičasta kupola nadvijala se nad njezinim prozorom još od dana kad je nosila pidžamicu s Winniejem Poohom. Voljela je i Gladsong Drive. Svaka kuća na Gladsongu bila je u stilu Corone del Mar. Nevjerojatno! Ako si imao prijatelja na Gladsongu, znao si gdje se što u njegovoj kući nalazi.

Jeté, jeté, rond de jambe.

Pas de bourrée.

Od sreće i iz hira, napravi kolut unaprijed, skoči na noge, poljubi sliku mame i tate uslikanu kod Penney još u kamenom dobu, kad si bila mala slatkica {poljubac} s mašnom za kosu većom od kuće.

Ponekad, kad je bila sretna kao sad, zamišljala je lane kako dršće u šumi.

Gdje ti je mama, maleni?

Ne znam, reče lane glasom Becce, Heatherine male sestre.

Bojiš li se? upitala je. Jesi gladan? Želiš li da te uzmem u naručje?

Može, reče lane.

Sad dolazi lovac i vuče lanetovu majku za rogove. Vidi joj se rasporena utroba. Oh, pa fino! Pokrije lanetu oči i lovcu kaže, ono, Nemate ništa pametnije, strašni lovče, doli ubiti majku lanetu ovom? Činite se kao dosta dobar čovjek.

Je li moja mama mrtva? reče lane Beccinim glasom.

Ne, ne, reče ona. Ovaj je gospodin baš na odlasku.

Lovac, očaran njezinom ljepotom, podigne ili skine kapu, spusti se na koljeno i reče, Kad bih srni ovoj život udahnuti uzmogao, to bih i učinio, u nadi da ljubnut ćeš ovo staro čelo.

Idite, reče ona. Ali, za pokoru vašu, pojesti je nemojte. Položite je na polje djeteline i ruže oko nje pospite. I dovedite zbor koji tiho će opjevati njezin nesretan kraj.

Položite koga? upita lane.

Nikoga, reče ona. Ne brini. Prestani zapitkivati.

Pas de chat, pas de chat.

Changement, changement.

Bila je puna nade da će {onaj pravi} doći iz dalekog kraja. Dečki iz mjesta imali su određeni je *ne sais quoi*, za kojim, da budemo iskreni, nije bila *très* luda, kao naprimjer: da su

zaista davali imena svojim mudima. Čula je to vlastitim ušima! I htjeli su pod svaku cijenu raditi za CountyPower jer su radne košulje bile tako kul, a osim toga i besplatne.

Znači, ništa od dečki iz mjesta. Posebno ništa od Matta Dreya, vlasnika najvećih usta u zemlji. Ljubiti se s njima na sinočnjem okupljanju bilo je kao da ljubiš podvožnjak. Užas! Ljubiti se s Mattom bilo je kao da na tebe navali krava u džemperu koja ne zna što znači ne, a njegova ogromna kravlja glava pliva u drogama koje utapaju i ono malo razuma što ga Matt ima.

Sviđalo joj se imati kontrolu. Nad svojim tijelom, svojim umom. Nad svojim mislima, karijerom, budućnošću.

To joj se sviđalo.

Pa neka.

Mogli bismo nešto lagano prigristi.

Un petit repas.

Je li ona posebna? Smatra li se posebnom? O, Bože, to je bilo teško reći. U povijesti svijeta mnoge su žene bile posebnije od nje. Helen Keller bila je super; Majka Terezija bila je nevjerojatna; gospođa Roosevelt bila je dražesna unatoč svom suprugu, koji je bio invalid, a usto je bila gej, s onim velikim zubima, davno prije nego što je uopće bilo zamislivo biti gej i prva dama. Ona, Alison, nema se šanse natjecati u kategoriji takvih dama. Barem ne još!

Bilo je još toliko toga što nije znala! Na primjer, kako promijeniti ulje. Ili kako uopće provjeriti ulje. Kako otvoriti haubu. Kako ispeći kolače. To je zapravo baš sramota, budući da je ona, ono, djevojka. I što je to hipoteka? Dolazi li to s kućom? Kada dojiš, trebaš li, ono, istisnuti mlijeko?

O, Bože! Tko je ovaj blijedi lik kojeg se može vidjeti kroz prozor kako kaska niz Gladsong Drive? Kyle Boot, najblijedi klinac u cijeloj zemlji? I dalje u onoj čudnoj odjeći za kros?

Jadničak. Izgleda kao kostur s fudbalerkom. Jesu li te hlačice za kros, ono, iz dana Charliejevih anđela ili *quoi*? Kako može tako dobro trčati kad nema mišića, doslovno? Svaki dan ovako trči doma, bez majice, s ruksakom na leđima, onda, kad stigne do Fungsovih, par kuća od svoje, stisne daljinski i utrči u garažu, a da ni ne izgubi korak.

Moraš se skoro diviti jadnom blesavcu.

Odrasli su skupa, igrali se još kao klinci u onom pješčaniku u kvartovskom parku dolje kod potoka. Nisu li se skupa kupali kad su bili mali ili takva neka glupost? Nadala se da se to nikad neće proćuti. Jer što se tiče prijateljstva, Kyle je u osnovi bio na razini Feddyja Slavka koji se prilikom hodanja previše naginjao unatrag i uvijek nešto čačkao po zubima pa bi na grčkom obznanio ono što je pronašao i ponovno to pojeo. Kyleova mama i tata nisu mu dopuštali da radi ama baš ništa. Morao je zvati doma ako je postojala mogućnost da na satu likovnog pokažu obnažene grudi. Svako jelo u njegovoj kutiji za užinu bilo je jasno označeno.

Pas de bourrée.

I naklon.

Uspi veliku količinu čipi-čipsa u plastični Tupperware.

Hvala, mama, hvala, tata. Kuhinja vam je *zakon*.

Protresi Tupperware naprijed-nazad kao da tragaš za zlatom, zatim ga otvori i ponudi imaginarnoj sirotinji koja se okupila.

Molim vas, uživajte. Mogu li još što učiniti za vas dobre ljude?

Već dovoljno učini, Alison, što ponizi se da sloviš s nama.

To uopće nije istina! Zar ne razumijete da svi ljudi zaslužuju poštovanje? Svatko je od nas duga.

Zar stvarno? Pogledaj ovu veliku, otvorenu ranu na jednom, usahlom mi boku.

Dozvolite mi da vam dohitim Vazelina.

Bila bih ti neizmjereno zahvalna. Ovo me baš ubija.

A što se tiče duge? Vjerovala je u tu ideju. Ljudi su bili super. Mama je bila super, tata je bio super, njezini su učitelji radili tako marljivo, a uz to su imali i svoju djecu, a neki su čak bili rastavljeni, kao gospođa Dees, ali su i dalje nalazili vremena za svoje učenike. Ono što joj je bilo posebno inspirativno kod gospođe Dees bilo je to što je gospođa Dees, iako je gospodin Dees varao gospođu Dees s gospođom koja je vodila kuglanu, i dalje držala najbolje predavanje iz etike, postavljajući pitanja poput: Može li dobrota pobijediti? Ili se dobre ljude uvijek nasamari, budući da je zlo nepromišljenije? Čini se da se zadnjim dijelom ciljalo na ženu iz kuglane. Ali ozbiljno! Je li život zabavan ili strašan? Jesu li ljudi dobri ili loši? S jedne strane imamo onaj isječak u kojem valjak gazi sablasno blijeda tijela dok debele Njemice samo promatraju i žvaču žvaku. S druge strane imamo ljude na selu koji ponekad ostaju budni do kasno u noć i pune vreće pijeska, iako su im farme na brdu.

U razrednoj anketi (koju je gospođa Dees provela u razredu) napisala je da su ljudi dobri i da je život zabavan, a gospođa Dees ju je pogledavala sa sažaljenjem dok je iskazivala svoje mišljenje: Da bi činio dobro, moraš samo odlučiti da činiš dobro. Moraš biti hrabar. Moraš se zauzeti za ono što je ispravno. Ovo zadnje natjeralo je gospođu Dees da duboko uzdahne. Što je bilo u redu. U životu gospođe Dees bilo je mnogo boli, pa ipak, bilo je, zanimljivo? Da i dalje očito pronalazi nešto zabavno u životu i dobrotu u ljudima, jer zašto inače ponekad ostajati budan do kasno u noć i ispravljati ispite i sljedeći dan doći u potpunosti iscrpljen, s naopačke obučenom bluzom koju si krivo zakopčala u ranojutarnjem mraku, ti dragi zbunjeni stvori?

Čulo se kucanje na vratima. Stražnjim vratima. Za-ni-mlji-vo. Tko li bi to mogao biti? Fra Dmitri preko puta? UPS? FedEx? S *un petit* čekom *pour papa*?

Jeté, jeté, rond de jambe.

Pas de bourrée.

Otvori vrata, i –

Ispred nje je stajao nepoznat muškarac. Velik tip u jednom od onih prsluka koje nose inkasatori.

Nešto joj je govorilo da odstupi i zalupi vratima. Ali to joj se činilo nepristojnim.

Umjesto toga se ukočila, nasmiješila, {obrve gore} kao da želi reći: Kako vam mogu pomoći?

Kyle Boot projuri kroz garažu u dnevnu sobu, gdje je veliki drveni pokazivač nalik satu namješten na Svi vani. Među drugim izborima bili su: Mama i tata vani; Mama vani; Tata vani; Kyle vani; Mama i Kyle vani; Tata i Kyle vani; i Svi unutra.

Zašto im je uopće trebao Svi unutra? Zar ne znaju kad su Svi unutra? Želi li to pitati tatu? Koji je, u svojoj izvrsnoj i potpuno tihoj radionici, dizajnirao i izradio Obiteljski pokazivač stanja?

Ha.

Ha ha.

Na kuhinjskom otoku stajala je obavijest o radu.

Vojniče: Nova geoda na palubi. Postavi u dvorište prema priloženim nacrtima.

Bez glupiranja. Prvo pograblaj područje, postavi najlon kako sam ti pokazao.

Onda postavi bijeli kamen. GEODA SKUPA. Pliz, shvati to ozbiljno. Nema razloga da ne bude gotovo dok se ne vratim doma. Ovo = pet (5) radnih bodova.

Ajme, tata, zar stvarno misliš da je fer što moram crnčiti u dvorištu do mraka nakon rigoroznog maratonskog treninga koji uključuje šesnaest puta 440, osam puta 880, milju na štopanje, milijardu sprinteva i indijansku štafetu od pet milja?

Skidaj tenisice, mladiću.

A joj, prekasno. Već je za TV-om. I ostavio je inkriminirajući trag mikro grumena blata. Strogo *verboten*. Mogu li se mikro grumeni blata pokupiti rukom? Iako, problem: ako bi mikro grumene blata išao pokupiti rukom, ostavio bi novi inkriminirajući trag mikro grumena.

Skine tenisice, stane i mentalno odigra malu predstavu koju je nazivao ŠTO AKO . . .
UPRAVO SADA?

ŠTO AKO bi UPRAVO SADA došli doma?

Smiješna je to priča, tata! Ušao sam bez razmišljanja! I tek sam onda shvatio što sam napravio! Mislim, kad malo razmislim o svemu, znaš što me veseli? To kako sam se brzo sam ispravio! Razlog zašto sam tako ušao bez razmišljanja je to što sam se odmah htio baciti na posao, tata, prema tvojim uputama!

Odjuri u čarapama do garaže, baci tenisice u garažu, trkne po usisivač, usisa mikro grumene, onda shvati, ti bokca, bacio je tenisice u garažu umjesto da ih stavi na prostirač za obuću kako se i tražilo, tako da su vršci cipela okrenuti od vrata kako bi ih u kasnijoj upotrebi lakše obuo.

Zakorači u garažu, stavi tenisice na prostirač za obuću i vrati se natrag unutra.

Vojniče, govorio je tata u njegovoj glavi, je li ti itko rekao da će čak i najodržavanija garaža imati malo ulja na podu, koje je sad na tvojim čarapama, kojima si ostavio tragove na žućkastosmeđem Berberu?

A joj, sad je nadrljao.

Ali ne – *celebrate good times, come on* – nema traga na tepihu.

Skine čarape. Bilo je u potpunosti *verboten* da bude bos u dnevnom boravku. Da mama i tata dođu doma i pronađu ga kako glumi Tarzana po kući kao neko bjelačko smeće ne bi jebote bilo nimalo –

Psuješ u sebi? Reče tata u njegovoj glavi. Hajde, Vojniče, budi muškarac. Ako želiš psovati, psuj naglas.

Ne želim psovati naglas.

Onda nemoj psovati ni u sebi.

Mamu i tatu bi uhvatio srčani kad bi samo mogli čuti kako ponekad psuje u sebi, psovke kao usrana pička, govno usrano, pizda ti materina, nabijem te na kurac. Zašto nije mogao to prestati raditi? Imali su tako visoko mišljenje o njemu, na tjednoj bazi slali hvalospjeve preko e-maila baki i djedu s obje strane, kao na primjer: Kyle je prezauzet učenjem i održavanjem dobrog prosjeka u školi, a uz to trči kros za prvu momčad iako je tek drugi razred, a osim toga svaki dan ostavi malo vremena kako bi izradio takva čuda kao što su pičkolizac, jebem te u guzicu –

Što nije u redu s njim? Zašto ne može biti zahvalan na svemu što su mama i tata učinili za njega, umjesto da –

Jebi pičku svoje matere.

Nabijem te na kurac.

Uvijek možeš razbistriti um jakim štipanjem vlastitih minimalnih jastučića na bokovima.

Au.

Ej, danas je utorak, dan za Veliku poslasticu. Pet (5) novih radnih bodova za postavljanje geode, i još dva (2) radna boda otprije jednako sedam (7) radnih bodova, uz osam (8) akumuliranih bodova za uobičajene kućanske poslove, sveukupno petnaest (15) bodova za poslasticu kojima je mogao kupiti Veliku poslasticu (na primjer, dvije šake grožđica

prekrivenih jogurtom) plus dvadeset minuta TV programa po izboru, iako se, kad bi došlo vrijeme da unovči bodove, za konkretnu emisiju trebalo pregovarati s tatom.

Jedno nećeš gledati, Vojniče, a to su *Najistaknutiji američki cross motoristi*.

Svejedno.

Svejedno, tata.

Je li, Vojniče? „Svejedno“? Hoće li ti biti „svejedno“ kad ti uzmem sve bodove za poslasticu i kad te natjeram da odustaneš od krosa kao što sam ti već nekoliko puta zaprijetio, ako ne osjetim malo veću dozu poslušnosti?

Ne, ne, ne. Ne želim odustati, tata. Molim te. Baš mi ide. Vidjet ćeš, na prvom natjecanju. Čak je i Matt Drey rekao –

Tko je Matt Drey? Neki majmun iz nogometne momčadi?

Da.

A njegova riječ je glavna?

Ne.

Što je rekao?

Mala pizda dobro trči.

Baš se lijepo izražavaš, Vojniče. K'o pravi majmun. Uglavnom, čini mi se da nećeš uspjeti doći na prvo natjecanje. Izgleda da ti se ego izlijeva iz korita. A zašto? Jer možeš trčati? Svatko može trčati. I zvijeri poljske mogu trčati.

Neću odustati! Šupačka kurčino, kretenu glupi, rektumski smrade! Molim te, preklinjem te, to je jedino u čemu sam dobar! Mama, ako me natjera da odustanem, kunem se Bogom da ću –

Drama ti ne pristaje, najdraži.

Ako želiš privilegiju natjecanja u timskom sportu, Vojniče, pokaži nam da možeš živjeti unutar našeg potpuno razumnog sustava direktiva koji je osmišljen kako bi tebi bio od koristi.

Halo.

Kombi se zaustavi na parkiralištu crkve Sv. Mihajla.

Kyle odšeta kontroliranim, gospodskim hodom do kuhinjskog stola. Na kuhinjskom se stolu nalazio Kyleov Zapisnik prometa koji je imao dvostruku svrhu (1) kao potpora tatinoj tvrdnji da bi fra Dimitri trebao izraditi zvučno izolirani potporni zid i (2) kao pohrana baze podataka potencijalnog projekta za sajam znanosti za njega, za Kylea, naslovljeno, od tate, „Međuovisnost obujma parkirališta crkve i dana u tjednu, uz popratno istraživanje nedjeljnog obujma na godišnjoj bazi“.

Sa zadovoljnim smiješkom kao da uživa u ispunjavanju Zapisnika, Kyle vrlo čitko upiše u Zapisnik:

Vozilo: KOMBI.

Boja: SIVA.

Model: CHEVROLET.

Godina: NEPOZNATA.

Tip iziđe iz kombija. Jedan od Moskalja. „Moskalj“ je bio dopušten žargon. I „miša mu.“ I „ti bokca.“ I „kenjara.“ Moskalj je nosio traper jaknu preko majice s kapuljačom što, prema Kyleovom iskustvu, nije bila neobična odjeća za crkvu za Moskalje koji su ponekad dolazili u radničkom kombinezonu ravno iz Jiffy Lubea.

Pod „Vozač“ napiše, VJEROJATNO ŽUPLJANIN.

To je bilo sranje. Odnosno, glupost. Budući da je lik bio neznanac, on, Kyle, morao je ostati unutra sve dok neznanac ne napusti susjedstvo. Što mu je u potpunosti zeznulo planove s geodom. Ostat će vani do ponoći. Kakva šteta!

Lik navuče na sebe reflektirajući prsluk. Aha, tip je inkasator.

Inkasator pogleda lijevo pa desno, preskoči potok, uđe u dvorište Popeovih, prođe između nogometnog gola i bazena, zatim pokuca na vrata Popeovih.

Dobar skok, Boris.

Vrata se otvore.

Alison.

Kyleovo srce zapjeva. Uvijek je mislio da je to samo izraz. Alison je bila poput nacionalnog blaga. U rječniku pod „ljepota“ trebala bi biti njena slika u toj traper suknji. Premda se u zadnje vrijeme činilo da joj se on ne sviđa.

Sad zakorači na trijem kako bi joj inkasator nešto pokazao. Nešto nije dobro sa strujom na krovu? Tip je nestrpljiv u namjeri da joj nešto pokaže. U stvari, drži je za zapešće. I nekako je povlači.

To je čudno. Zar ne? Dosad se u ovom kvartu ništa čudno nije događalo. Pa je vjerojatno sve u redu. Vjerojatno je lik u stvari novi inkasator?

Kyle nekako osjeti potrebu da izađe na trijem. I izađe. Lik se ukoči. Alisonine oči bile su kao u preplašenog konja. Lik se nakašlje, lagano se okrene kako bi Kyleu nešto pokazao.

Nož.

Inkasator ima nož.

Evo što ti napraviti, reče lik. Stajati točno tu sve dok ne odemo. Samo mrdni i nožem je u srce. Kunem se. Jasno?

Kyleova su usta bila toliko suha da je tek uspio usne izviti onako kako inače izgovara „Da“.

Sad prelaze dvorište. Alison se baci na pod. Tip je podigne. Ona se baci. On je podigne. Bilo je čudno vidjeti ga kako Alison baca kao lutku u utočištu savršenog dvorišta koji je njen tata napravio za nju. Ona se baci.

Tip nešto prosikće i ona ustane, odjednom poslušna.

U prsima Kyle je osjećao mnogo direktiva, Više i Niže, koje je trenutno kršio. Bio je na trijemu bosonog, na trijemu bez majice, vani dok je neznanc u blizini, stupio je u kontakt s neznancem.

Prošli je tjedan Sean Ball donio periku u školu kako bi što stvarnije dočarao način na koji Bev Mirren žvače kosu dok je živčana. Kyle je nakratko pomislio na interveniranje. Na Večernjem sastanku, mama je rekla da smatra da je Kyleova odluka da ne intervenira bila razborita. Tata je rekao, To te se nije ticalo. Mogao si gadno nastradati. Mama je rekla, Razmisli o svemu što smo uložili u tebe, najdraži. Tata je rekao, Znam da ti se ponekad činimo strogi, ali ti si nama doslovno sve.

Sad su već kod gola, ruka joj je svinuta iza leđa. Alison ispušta nizak ton poricanja, opet i opet, kao da pokušava izmisliti zvuk koji bi primjereno prenio osjećaj u trenutku kad je shvatila što će joj se dogoditi.

On je samo klinac. Ne može ništa napraviti. U prsima osjeti snažno oslobađanje pritiska koji bi uvijek nastupio nakon što bi se pokorio direktivi. Pred njegovim se nogama nalazi geoda. Trebao bi samo gledati u nju dok ne odu. Bila je to dobra geoda. Možda najbolja dosad. Kristali na njezinom procjepu bliještali su na suncu. Lijepo bi izgledala u dvorištu. Kad je postavi. Postavit će je nakon što odu. Tata bi bio zadivljen da se čak i nakon svega što se dogodilo sjetio postaviti geodu.

Tako treba, Vojniče.

Jako smo zadovoljni, najdraži.

Dobro obavljeno, Vojniče.

'Bemti. To je to. Stupa uz njega krotka kao ovca kakvom ju je i smatrao. Imao ju je na umu još od krštenja onog, kako mu je ono ime. Sergejev mali. U ruskoj crkvi. Stajala je u dvorištu, netko ju je fotografirao, njen stari ili tako netko.

On je rekao, ono, Opa, mala.

Kenny je rekao, ono, Brate, malo je premlada.

On je rekao, ono, Možda za tebe, djedice.

Kad si proučavao povijest, povijest kultura, vlastito si vrijeme vidio kao nešto što je beskompromisno. Postojale su razne teorije o pristanku. U vrijeme Biblije kralj je mogao jahati poljem i reći: Ona tamo. I doveli bi mu je. I uredno bi se zaručili i ako porodi mu sina, super, vadi barjake i zastave, to je ona prava. Je li joj se, tu prvu noć, sviđalo? Vjerojatno ne. Je li se tresla kao miš? Nevažno. Važno je bilo jedino potomstvo i širenje loze. A i veličanje kralja koje je dovelo do pravedne kraljevske moći.

Dodu do potoka.

Natjera je preko.

Točke u nastavku ostale su u matrici odluka: odvedi je do bočnih vrata kombija, uguraj je unutra, uđi za njom, ljepljivom trakom zaveži zapešća/začepi usta, priveži lancem, održi govor. Govor je znao naizust. Vježbao ga je i u sebi i na diktafonu: *Smiri se, mala, znam da se bojiš jer me još ne poznaješ i ovo danas nisi očekivala, ali pruži mi priliku i vidjet ćeš da ćemo biti u sedmom nebu. Vidi, stavit ću nož ovdje i nadam se da ga neću morati iskoristiti, dobro?*

Ako ne želi ući u kombi, jako je udari u trbuh. Zatim je podigni, odnesi do bočnih vrata kombija, ubaci je unutra, ljepljivom trakom zaveži zapešća/začepi usta, zakači za lanac, održi govor itd., itd.

Stani, stop, reče on.

Djevojka stane.

Jebemu mater. Bočna vrata su zaključana. Kako nedisciplinirano. Provjeriti da su vrata otključana jasno je naznačeno u predmisijskoj matrici. Melvin se pojavi u njegovu umu. Na Melvinovom licu nalazi se pogled pun razočaranja koji je uvijek prethodio gadnim batinama koje su uvijek prethodile onoj drugoj stvari. Podigni ruke, reče Melvin, brani se.

Istina, istina. Mala pogreška. Trebao sam dvaput provjeriti predmisijsku matricu.

Nema beda.

Nema straha, samo ljubav.

Melvin je mrtav već petnaest godina. Mama dvanaest.

Mala se kuja sad okrene, pogleda prema kući. Takva neposlušnost ne prolazi. To se mora sasjeći u korijenu. Trebao se sjetiti ranije joj nauditi, da uspostavi dobre temelje.

Jebem ti mater, okreni se, reče on.

Ona se okrene.

On otključa vrata, otvori ih širom. Trenutak istine. Ako uđe i dopusti mu da je zaveže ljepljivom trakom, na konju su. Izabrao je mjesto u Sackettu, ogromno kukuružište, zemljana cesta. Ako jebanje dobro prođe, samo se trebaju popeti na autocestu. U principu će ukrasti kombi. Bio je to Kennyjev kombi. Posudio ga je na jedan dan. Tko jebe Kennyja. Kenny ga je jednom nazvao budalom. Šteta, Kenny, taj te komentar sad košta kombija. Ako jebanje loše prođe, ako ga ne uzбудila kako spada, prekinut će operaciju, dekapitirati subjekt, izbaciti je van, očistiti kombi bude li potrebno, kupiti kukuruz, vratiti kombi Kennyju, reći mu, Hej, brate, evo ti pun kurac kukuruza, hvala na kombiju, nikad ne bih mogao kupiti takvu količinu kukuruza u svom autu. Onda će se malo pritajiti, gledati po novinama, ono, što je i kako napravio s onom nenapaljujućom crvenokosom u –

Treba mu uputi pogled preklinjanja, kao ono, Molim te, nemoj.

Sada? Da opali u trbuh, izbije malo zraka iz pluća?

Da, sada.

To i učini.

Geoda je prekrasna. Kakva prekrasna geoda. Što ju je činilo prekrasnom? Koje su bile glavne značajke prekrasne geode? Hajde, razmisli. Hajde, koncentriraj se.

Oporavit će se s vremenom, najdraži.

Nije to naša stvar, Vojniče.

Oduševljeni smo tvojom dobrom prosudbom, najdraži.

Na tren primijeti da je Alison primila udarac. S očima na geodi, čuo je mali *uf*.

Srce mu se stegne na pomisao svega što dopušta da se dogodi. Koristili su smoki kao zlatnike. Gradili su mostove od kamenja. Dolje kod potoka. Kao djeca. O, Bože. Nikad nije trebao izići van. Kad bi otišli, samo bi se vratio unutra, pravio bi se da nikad nije stupio van, napravio bi model gradića sa željeznicom i onda bi je i dalje radio kad se mama i tata vrate doma. A kad bi mu netko konačno rekao o tome? Namjestio bi izraz lica. Već je na licu osjećao izraz koji bi napravio, ono, Molim? Alison? Silovana? Ubijena? O, Bože. Silovana i ubijena dok sam ja nevino radio svoj gradić sa željeznicom, sjedio prekriženih nogu i nesvjestan na podu kao mala sitna –

Ne. Ne, ne, ne. Uskoro će otići. Onda bi mogao ući u kuću. Nazvati 112. Iako bi onda svi znali da nije ništa poduzeo. Njegov cijeli budući život bio bi užasan. Zauvijek bi bio onaj koji nije ništa poduzeo. Osim toga, poziv ne bi pomogao. Već bi odavno otišli. Autocesta je odmah nasuprot Featherstonea, s gotovo milijun arterija i čvorova ili kako god se zove to što izlazi iz nje. I tako bi to bilo. Ušao bi. Čim bi oni otišli. Odi, odi, odi, pomislio je, tako da mogu ući, zaboraviti da se ovo opće –

A sad trči. Preko dvorišta. O, Bože! Što to radi, što to radi? Isuse, jebote, sve te direktive koje krši! Trčanje u dvorištu (loše za travnjak); prenošenje geode bez zaštitnog omota; preskakivanje ograde što opterećuje ogradu koja je skupo koštala; napuštanje dvorišta; napuštanje dvorišta bosonog; ulaženje u potok bosonog (razbijeno staklo, opasni mikroorganizmi), i, ne samo to, o, Bože, odjednom je vidio što je njegova bunovna strana namjeravala, a to je bilo prekršiti tako veliku i apsolutnu direktivu da nije čak ni bila direktiva, budući da nisi trebao direktivu da znaš kako je skroz *verboten* –

Preskoči potok, tip se i dalje ne okreće, i baci mu geodu u glavu iz koje naizgled krene šikljati čudan mlaz krvi čak i prije nego što se lubanja vidljivo udubila i prije nego što je tip pao točno na guzicu.

To! Pogodak! Bilo je zabavno! Zabavno svladati odraslog čovjeka! Zabavno poput gazele koristiti najnevjerojatniju brzinu nogu ikad viđenu u povijesti čovječanstva i tako projuriti bezvučno prostorom i svladati tog velikog klipana, koji bi inače, u ovom trenutku –

Što da nije?

Bože, a što da nije?

Zamišljao je kako tip savija Alison napola kao torbu za odijela dok joj povlači kosu i grubo gura, dok on, Kyle, sjedi prestravljen i poslušan, sćućušni željeznički vijadukt stisnut u njegovoj jednoj djetinjoj –

Isuse! Doskoči i hitne geodu kroz vjetrobransko staklo kombija, koje implodira i saspe se u kišu krhotina koje proizvedu zvuk tisuća malih vjetrenih zvona od bambusa.

Uspeo se na haubu kombija i pokupio geodu.

Stvarno? Stvarno? Htio si uništiti njezin život, uništiti moj život, ti pičkasta kretenasta usrana životinjo? Tko sad kome šefuje? Šupačka, izjebana, usrana –

Nikad nije bio tako snažan/ljut/divlji. Tko je faca? Tko je sad glavni? Što još mora učiniti? Da bude siguran da životinja više nikome ne naudi. Još se mičeš, nakazo? Imaš kakav plan, pederčino? Želiš još jednu posjekotinu na lubanji, ha ljudino? Misliš da neću? Misliš da –

Polako, Vojniče, oteo si se kontroli.

Hajde malo ubaci u drugu, najdraži.

Tišina. Ja sam sam svoj gazda.

U PIČKU MATERINU!

Koji kurac? Što radi na podu? Je li se spotaknuo? Je li ga netko odalamio? Je li pala grana? Jebemu majku. Dodirne glavu. Pogleda ruku – krv.

Žgoljavi se klinac saginje. Nešto podiže. Kamen. Zašto se klinac spustio s trijema? Gdje je nož?

Gdje je treba?

Puže kao rak prema potoku.

Leti preko dvorišta.

Ulazi u svoju kuću.

Jebemti, sve se sjebalo. Put pod noge. A s čime, sa svojim dobrim izgledom? Ima, ono, jedva osam dolara.

A Isusa ti! Klinac mu je razbio vjetrobransko staklo! Kamenom! Kennyju se to neće svidjeti.

Pokuša se ustati, ali ne može. Krv samo curi. Neće ponovno u zatvor. Nema šanse. Prerezat će si žile. Gdje je nož? Probost će se u prsa. U tome ima nešto plemenito. Onda bi ljudi znali njegovo ime. Tko je od njih imao muda samurajski se probosti nožem u prsa?

Nema toga čovjeka.

Nitko.

Hajde, pičko. Učini to.

Ne. Kralj si ne oduzima život. Nadmoćni čovjek tiho prihvaća bezumni prijekor gomile. Čeka da ustane i ponovno se bori. Usto nema pojma gdje je nož. Pa, ni ne treba mu. Otpuzat će u šumu i tamo će ubiti nešto golim rukama. Ili napraviti zamku od trave. Uh. Hoće li povratiti? Eto, povrati. Točno sebi u krilo.

Logično da ćeš zeznuti najjednostavniju stvar, reče Melvin.

Melvine, Isuse Bože, zar ne vidiš da mi glava strašno krvari?

Klinac ti je to napravio. Ti si idiot. Sjebao te klinac.

Oh, sirene, odlično.

Pa, tužan je ovo dan za policajce. Spreman je boriti se s njima prsa o prsa. Sjedio bi do zadnjeg trenutka, gledao ih kako se približavaju, izrekao tihu ubojitu mantru koja bi prenijela svu njegovu životnu snagu u njegove šake.

Sjedi i razmišlja o svojim šakama. Vidi ih, ogromne granitne grdosije. Svaka od njih je pit bul. Pokuša se ustati. Nekako ga noge ne slušaju. Nada se da će murja ubrzo stići. Glava ga rastura. Kad bi dodirnuo gore, nešto se micalo. Bilo je kao da nosi kapu od zgrušane krvi. Trebat će dosta šavova. Nada se da neće previše boljeti. Iako vjerojatno hoće.

Gdje je žgoljavi klinac?

O, evo ga.

Stoji iznad njega, zaklanja sunce, drži kamen visoko u zraku, nešto više, ali zbog zvonjave u ušima ne razumije što.

Onda vidi da će klinac baciti kamen na njega. Zatvori oči i čeka i nije nimalo spokojan, već umjesto toga osjeća kako se u njemu skuplja golemi strah i ako taj strah nastavi rasti trenutnom brzinom, shvati munjevitom pronicljivošću da postoji naziv za mjesto u kojem će se onda naći, a to je Pakao.

Alison stoji pred kuhinjskim prozorom. Upiškila se. Što je u redu. Dogodi se. Kad se jako, baš ono jako prestrašiš. Primijetila je to dok je telefonirala. Ruke joj se strašno tresu. I dalje se tresu. Jedna noga joj radi neki pokret kao da je Lupkova. Bože, što joj je sve rekao. Udario ju je. Uštupnuo ju je. Imala je ogromnu modricu na ruci. Kako Kyle i dalje može biti tamo? Ali eno ga, u tim smiješnim hlačicama, tako samouvjeren u svom glupiranju, šake stisnute iznad glave kao da je boksač iz nekog slatkog alternativnog svemira u kojem tako mršavi klinac može pobijediti u borbi protiv tipa s nožem.

Čekaj.

Šake mu nisu stisnute. Drži kamen, nešto više dolje prema tipu koji kleči poput zatvorenika s povezom u onom videu koji su vidjeli na satu povijesti, kojeg je neki gizdelin sa šljemom krenuo ubiti mačem.

Kyle, nemoj, šapne.

Mjesecima nakon svega imala je noćne more u kojima Kyle baci kamen. Ona je na trijemu, pokušava vrisnuti njegovo ime, ali ništa joj ne izlazi iz usta. Kamen udari. I onda tip ostane bez glave. Udarac mu doslovno razori glavu. Onda mu se tijelo sruši i Kyle se okrene prema njoj, shrvanog pogleda, kao, Život mi je gotov. Ubio sam tipa.

Ponekad se pitala zašto u snovima ne možemo učiniti najjednostavniju stvar? Na primjer, uciviljeno štene stoji na razbijenom staklu, a ti ga želiš podići i stresti krhotine s njegovih šapa, ali ne možeš jer balansiraš loptu na glavi. Ili se voziš i tu je neki stari tip na štakama, i ti kažeš gospodinu Federu, svom instruktoru vožnje, Da ga zaobidem? A on kaže, ono, Hm, vjerojatno. Ali onda čuješ neki glasni prasak i Feder u svoju knjigu zapiše negativnu ocjenu.

Ponekad bi se probudila iz tog sna o Kyleu. Zadnji put su mama i tata već bili tamo, i rekli, Znaš da nije bilo tako. Sjećaš se, Allie? Kako je bilo? Reci. Reci naglas. Allie, možeš li reći mami i tati kako je bilo?

Istrčala sam, reče ona. Viknula sam.

Tako je, reče tata. Viknula si. Viknula kao heroj.

I što je Kyle napravio? upita mama.

Spustio je kamen, reče ona.

Djeco, ružna vam se stvar dogodila, reče tata. Ali moglo je biti gore.

Puno, puno gore, reče mama.

Ali zbog vas, djeco, reče tata, nije bilo.

Dobro si postupila, reče mama.

Odlično, reče tata.

6.2.1. Analysis of the Translation of the Short Story “Victory Lap” by George Saunders

The translators often base their decisions on a sense of duty to the source text. This duty entails the fidelity to the source text and the author. By operating only within this framework, the translators usually limit themselves to certain solutions which may not be appropriate or adequate to the target language and culture. Thus, certain interventions or refractions are necessary in order for the target text to function adequately. Such refractions will be the focus of this analysis. Firstly, specific lexical difficulties and differences between the source culture and the target culture will be discussed. Then, the narrative voice and the tone will be analyzed in greater detail.

With regards to different culture-specific items, a translator often battles with the notions of foreignization and domestication. While making a decision in favor of the first or the latter, the translator keeps in mind the reader and the comprehensibility of the text. Because of this, some decisions are made in favor of domestication. In other words, the reader may often be underestimated and the translator may attempt to ‘dumb down’ the target text. This is naturally a disservice to the source text and to its author. With this premise, I have frequently dwelt on certain cultural items and had the intention of leaving them in their ‘original’ form as a way of marking the ‘foreignness’ or indicating that the narration was taking place in another land or culture. However, this idea was gradually abandoned, since such interventions or lack thereof resulted in awkwardness and to some extent interrupted the flow of the narrative. An example of such a case is the following sentence: “Pour quantity of Cheez Doodles into compartmentalized old-school Tupperware dealie” (Saunders 8) which was translated as: “Uspi veliku količinu čipi-čipsa u plastični Tupperware.” The cheese puffs *Cheez Doodles* was initially meant to be left as it was, however, in the end, it was translated with the Croatian snack

čipi čips. This can be understood as an example of domestication. Furthermore, the adjectives *compartmentalized* and *old-school* which describe the noun *Tupperware* complicated the creation of a simple image, and they were thus omitted. Since *Tupperware* is a widely used home product also in Croatia, it was left in its original form.

The ballet steps in French such as *pas de bourrée*, *pas de chat*, etc. were also left as they were in the source text, since they indicate specific movements and steps in ballet which is either familiar to the reader or it may inevitably motivate him or her to research it. Another lexical particularity which was difficult to implement in the translation is the archaic exclamation *egads*: “Egads! One found oneself still standing at the top of the stairs” (Saunders 4). This was simply translated with *O, Bože*: “O, Bože! I dalje stoji na vrhu stubišta.” The archaic quality was undoubtedly lost in such sentences. Furthermore, as a part of Alison’s train of thought, the expression “special one” is often mentioned. Two solutions were possible: “onaj pravi” and “onaj posebni.” A more elegant solution would be “onaj pravi,” however, both solutions needed to be included when the expression was mentioned for the first time: “Say she descended and all heads turned. Where was {special one}?” (Saunders 3) which was translated as: “Recimo da se spustila i da su se sve glave okrenule. Gdje je {onaj posebni, onaj pravi}?” The reason for this decision is that later on, as part of her train of thoughts, Alison asks herself if she was special: “Was she special? Did she consider herself special? Oh, gosh, she didn’t know” (Saunders 7). These sentences were translated as follows: “Je li ona posebna? Smatra li se posebnom? O, Bože, to je bilo teško reći.” In this context, the more appropriate solution was “posebna” instead of “prava.”

With regards to Kyle’s narration, the endearments or nicknames Kyle’s parents used to address Kyle, particularly his father calling him “Scout,” posed quite a challenge. Initially, the loanword “skaut” was used, since it is culture-specific and it represented an immediate equivalent. However, the term “vojniki” i.e. “soldier” was more appropriate to the mannerism

and parenting with which his father approached him. His father's intention is to instill a sense of responsibility and value in the form of military discipline; the father's role is that of his commanding officer, and Kyle is a regular soldier who needs to obey his father's instructions and orders. Furthermore, as Kyle sees the unnamed kidnapper he addresses him with "Rooskie": "A guy got out of the van. One of the usual Rooskies" (Saunders 15). "Rooskie" is an informal term for a man or a woman of Russian origin. It was translated as "Moskalj" which is a synonym for Russian immigrants in Croatia: "Tip iziđe iz kombija. Jedan od Moskalja."

As it was already mentioned, the narrative is divided into three perspectives by three characters. This also includes three different narrative voices and challenges in trying to attune the voice of the characters, and at the same time striving to give them a discernible quality. In the frame of the stream of consciousness, it was important to capture and to make a distinction between the duality of the personas which occasionally surfaced in the minds of both teenage characters and the unnamed kidnapper. In the case of Alison Pope, this is expressed through her dreamy states in which she imagines to be a sort of a princess or even a generous patron. On the other hand, Kyle Boot's duality is expressed through violent outbursts of obscenities which almost border with the neurological disorder known as the Tourette syndrome. The third perspective, the voice of the unnamed kidnapper, is expressed in the form of a preplanned stream of consciousness, since he sees Alison's kidnapping as a mission which needs to be successfully accomplished. His duality is expressed through his psychological trauma in the form of his stepfather's voice who abused him as a child.

While capturing the teenage voice of the girl Alison, it was important to pay attention to the repetitive "like," and her tendency to over-exaggerate situations by adding the prefix "super" to some adjectives in her train of thoughts: "And if no wry acknowledgement was forthcoming, be like, Uh, I am not exactly dressed for standing on the moon, which, as I understand it, is super-cold?" (Saunders 4). The sentence was translated as follows: "A ako ne

slijedi kakvo sarkastično priznanje, reći će mu, ono, Uh, nisam baš odjevena za stajanje na mjesecu koji je, koliko ja znam, super hladan?”

Regarding the tone, within Alison’s stream of consciousness her thoughts often jump from reality to these fairytale-like fantasies. An adaptation was necessary in order to mark the transitions between reality and fantasy in the narrative. This intervention in the register and the style can be defined as a remainder. An example of such a situation follows:

The hunter, captivated by her beauty, toffed or doffed his cap, and, going down on one knee, said, If I could will life back into this fawn, I would do so, in hopes you might defer one tender kiss upon our elderly forehead. Go, she said. Only, for your task of penance, do not eat her. Lay her out in a field of clover, with roses strewn about her. And bestow a choir, to softly sing of her foul end (Saunders 6).

There is an obvious change in the register of these fairytale-like situations, and the choice of words becomes more archaic and solemn (*toffed, doffed, defer, penance, strewn, bestow*). To mirror the effect that this excerpt produces, inversion was used and the archaic quality was introduced primarily in verbs:

Lovac, očaran njezinom ljepotom, podigne ili skine kapu, spusti se na koljeno i reče, Kad bih srni ovoj život udahnuti uzmogao, to bih i učinio, u nadi da ljubnut ćeš ovo staro čelo. Idite, reče ona. Ali, za pokoru vašu, pojesti je nemojte. Položite je na polje djeteline i ruže oko nje pospite. I dovedite zbor koji tiho će opjevati njezin nesretan kraj.

Alison has a tendency to incorporate these fairytale-like thoughts which one cannot help to compare to *Bambi*. The translator generally needs to be alert of such intertextuality as it plays a great role and can be depicted as a strong motif in the narrative.

The second perspective is presented through the mind and eyes of the teenage boy Kyle. It was necessary to change the tone and voice of the narrator accordingly. The most challenging aspect of this part was Kyle's inclination towards obscenities which were generally sexual, unrelated and sporadic. The obscenities which he uses appear in the form of outbursts, thus, it was important to determine how this sequence of profanities should sound like in Croatian. These profanities sometimes needed to sound unrelated and it was not possible to translate them literally: "Mom and Dad would be heartsick if they could hear the swearing he sometimes did in his head, such as *crap-cunt shit-turd dick-in-the-ear butt-creamery*" (Saunders 13). The translation of the sentence follows: "Mamu i tatu bi uhvatio srčani kad bi samo mogli čuti kako ponekad psuje u sebi, psovke kao usrana pička, govno usrano, pizda ti materina, nabijem te na kurac." Different profanities were incorporated in order to follow the narrator's train of thought, however, they are not the same as in the source text, since it was difficult to achieve full equivalence.

Furthermore, Kyle's voice is constantly guided by his conscience or these moral interventions which are expressed through the voices of his parents. They represent possible talks or comments that his parents may have on his actions or thoughts. An example of such a situation is the following sentence: "Scout, Dad said in his head, has anyone ever told you that even the most neatly maintained garage is going to have some oil on its floor, which is now on your socks, being tracked all over the tan Berber?" (Saunders 12) which was translated as: "Vojniče, govorio je tata u njegovoj glavi, je li ti itko rekao da će čak i najodržavanija garaža imati malo ulja na podu, koje je sad na tvojim čarapama, kojima si ostavio tragove na žućkastosmeđem Berberu?"

The perspective of the third character, the unnamed kidnapper and attacker of presumably Russian origin, is the one whose thoughts are the least presented in the narrative. He only appears after Alison and Kyle are introduced. The most prominent feature of this

character's voice is that he has the tendency to narrate in the form of instructions, since he had planned different scenarios and outcomes that may occur in the course of the kidnapping. In fact, he has planned Alison's kidnapping and has even made a "pre-mission matrix" (Saunders 19). As the kidnapping is taking place his stream of consciousness comes into effect, and he starts to fantasize about the future and his vile intentions: "The following bullet points remained in the decision matrix: take to side van door, shove in, follow in, tape wrists/mouth, hook to chain, make speech. He had the speech down cold" (Saunders 19). These sentences were translated as follows: "Točke u nastavku ostale su u matrici odluka: odvedi je do bočnih vrata kombija, uguraj je unutra, uđi za njom, ljepljivom trakom zaveži zapešća/začepi usta, priveži lancem, održi govor. Govor je znao naizust." His narration is a mixture of set directives and traumas. The traumatic experiences were caused by his late stepfather Melvin, whose voice appears in his thoughts as a means of expressing self-reproach: "Melvin appeared in his mind. On Melvin's face was the look of hot disappointment that had always preceded an ass whooping, which had always preceded the other thing" (Saunders 19). The two sentences were translated as follows: "Melvin se pojavi u njegovu umu. Na Melvinovom licu nalazi se pogled pun razočaranja koji je uvijek prethodio gadnim batinama koje su uvijek prethodile onoj drugoj stvari."

As it can be seen from these various examples, refractions have played a great role in shaping the final form of this translation. They appear as small segments through the change of register, however, they play a major role in setting the tone of the narrative. The greatest challenge of the translation was to maintain the dynamic flow of the narrative, and to make a clear distinction between the voices of the three characters. The stream of consciousness can be a chaotic narrative mode, and for a translator it is important to follow the stream with great attention in order to perceive narrative order.

6.3. George Saunders: Bijeg iz Paukoglave

I

„Spreman za infuziju?“ upita Abnesti preko razglasa.

„Što je u njoj?“ upitam.

„Jako smiješno“, reče on.

„Potvrдно“, kažem.

Abnesti pritisne dugme na daljinskom upravljaču. Moj MobiPak™ zazuji. Uskoro je Unutarnji vrt izgledao lijepo. Sve se činilo preprečisto.

Naglas sam govorio, kao što sam i trebao, ono što osjećam.

„Vrt izgleda lijepo“, kažem. „Preprečisto.“

Abnesti reče, „Jeff, što kažeš da malo podignemo te jezične centre?“

„Može“, kažem.

„Spreman za infuziju?“ upita.

„Potvrдно“, kažem.

Dodao je malo Verboleta™ u infuziju i ubrzo sam osjećao iste stvari, ali sam ih bolje opisivao. Vrt je i dalje izgledao lijepo. Činilo se kao da se sve grmlje zbilo i zbog sunca se sve isticalo? Činilo se kao da će svaki trenutak ušetati viktorijanska gospoda sa svojim šalicama čaja. Činilo se kao da je vrt postao utjelovljenje domaćinskih snova zauvijek ukorijenjenih u ljudskoj svijesti. Činilo se kao da odjednom mogu razaznati, u ovoj suvremenoj vinjeti, drevni korolar kojim su Platon i neki od njegovih suvremenika koračali; proniknuti, čutio sam vječnost u efemernosti.

Sjedio sam, s užitkom udubljen u ove misli dok Verbolet™ nije počeo popuštati. U tom trenutku vrt je ponovno izgledao samo lijepo. Nešto u vezi grmlja i što li ono već? Htio si samo ležati tamo, upijati zrake i misliti o lijepim stvarima. Ako me kužiš.

Onda je, štogod je još bilo u infuziji, počelo popuštati i o vrtu više nisam imao neko posebno mišljenje. Međutim, usta su mi bila suha, a u trbuhu mi je bio osjećaj post-Verboleta™.

„Koja je fora s ovim?“ reče Abnesti. „Kad, recimo, tip mora dokasno biti na straži. Ili kad pred školom čeka svog klinca i dosadno mu je. A u blizini je priroda? Ili recimo čuvar parka mora odraditi duplu smjenu?“

„To će biti fora“, kažem.

„To je ED763“, reče on. „Mislili smo ga nazvati NatuLet. Ili možda ZemljoKras.“

„Oba su dobra“, kažem.

„Hvala ti na pomoći, Jeffe“, reče on.

To je uvijek govorio.

„Još samo milijun godina“, kažem.

To sam ja uvijek govorio.

Onda reče, „Sad napusti Unutarnji vrt, Jeffe, i kreni prema Maloj radnoj prostoriji br.

2.“

II

U Malu radnu prostoriju br. 2 poslali su neku visoku blijedu curu.

„Što misliš?“ upita Abnesti preko razglasa.

„Ja?“ upitam. „Ili ona?“

„Oboje“, reče Abnesti.

„Dosta dobra“, kažem.

„A ono, dobar“, kaže ona. „Normalan.“

Abnesti nam naloži da se mjerljivo ocijenimo, po ljepoti, po seksipilu.

Ispalo je da se prosječno sviđamo jedno drugome, odnosno, nema velike privlačnosti ili odbojnosti ni s jedne strane.

Abnesti reče, „Spreman za infuziju?“

„Potvrдно“, kažem.

„Heather, spremna za infuziju?“ reče on.

„Potvrдно“, reče Heather.

Onda smo pogledali jedno drugo kao, Dobro, i što sad?

I što sad? Sad je Heather izgledala preprezgodna. I mogao sam vidjeti da i ona isto misli o meni. Odjednom nam je sinulo i počeli smo se, ono, smijati. Kako to da to dosad nismo vidjeli, kako smo si privlačni? Sva sreća u Radnoj prostoriji nalazio se kauč. Činilo se da naša infuzija ima, uz štogod da se testiralo, malo ED556 u sebi što spusti razinu srama na, ono, nulu. Jer ubrzo, tamo na kauču, navalili smo jedno na drugo. Stvari su postale preprevrće. I ne samo na pohotan način. Vruće, da, ali skroz kako treba. Kao da cijeli svoj život sanjaš o nekoj djevojci i odjednom ona je tu, u tvojoj Domeni.

„Jeff“, reče Abnesti. „Treba mi tvoje dopuštenje da ti podignem jezične centre.“

„Samo naprijed“, kažem, sad već pod njom.

„Spreman za infuziju?“ upita on.

„Potvrдно“, kažem ja.

„I ja?“ upita Heather.

„Svakako“, reče Abnesti sa smiješkom. „Spremna za infuziju?“

„Potvrдно“, reče ona sva zadihana.

Ubrzo smo iskusili dobrobiti Verboleta™ u našim infuzijama, ne samo da smo se jako dobro jebali, već smo i poprilično dobro govorili. Na primjer, umjesto da govorimo uobičajene

stvari koje smo dosad govorili u seksu (kao što je „ah“ i „o, Bože“ i „o, da“ itd.), počeli smo slobodnim stilom improvizirati naše doživljaje i osjećaje, u uzvišenoj dikciji s vokabularom povišenim za osamdeset posto, a naše su se jasno izražene misli snimale za daljnju analizu.

Osjećaj je bio, otprilike ovakav: zapanjenost uslijed polaganog shvaćanja da se ova žena stvara u stvarnom vremenu, izravno iz mog uma, sasvim u skladu s mojim najdubljim čežnjama. Napokon, nakon svih ovih godina (pomislih), pronašao sam točan omjer tijela/lica/uma koji utjelovljuje sve što je poželjno. Okus njezinih usta, izgled te aureole plavkaste kose rasute oko njezinog kerubinskog no naizgled nestašnog lica (sad je bila poda mnom, njezine noge visoko u zraku), čak i (da ne budem grub ili da ne obeščastim uzvišen osjećaj koji me obuzimao) osjet njezine vagine na mom pulsirajućem penisu bio je upravo ono za čime sam oduvijek žudio, iako nikad nisam, do tog trenutka, shvatio da tako silno čeznem za njim.

Odnosno: javila bi se želja i, istodobno, javilo bi se zadovoljenje te želje. Bilo je to kao da (a) žudim za određenim (dosad neutaživim) okusom dok (b) spomenuta žudnja ne postane gotovo nepodnošljivom, ali u tom trenutku (c) u ustima pronalazim komadić hrane baš tog okusa koji savršeno zadovoljava moju žudnju.

Svaki izraz, svaka prilagodba položaja ukazivala je na istu stvar: znali smo se cijelu vječnost, bili smo srodne duše, sreli smo se i voljeli u brojnim prošlim životima, a sreli bi se i voljeli u mnogim potonjim životima, uvijek s istim transcendentno zapanjujućim ishodima.

Zatim je uslijedilo padanje u teško opisiv niz sekvencijalnih snatrenja, koja su se doimala tako stvarnima, a najbolje bi ih bilo opisati kao vrstu nenarativnih umnih prizora, tj. niz nejasnih mentalnih slika mjesta u kojima nikad nisam bio (neka udolina puna borova u visokim bijelim planinama, drvena kućica u slijepoj ulici s dvorištem zaraslim širokim, niskim Seussovskim stablima), od kojih je svaka izazivala duboku sentimentalnu žudnju, žudnje koje su se sjedinjavale u, i ubrzo se svodile na, jednu središnju žudnju, tj. snažnu žudnju za Heather i samo Heather.

Ovaj fenomen umnih prizora bio je najintenzivniji tijekom naše treće (!) runde vođenja ljubavi. (Navodno je Abnesti dodao i malo Pipikruta™ u moju infuziju.)

Nakon toga, naši izljevi ljubavi izlili su se istovremeno, jezično kompleksni i puni metafora: Usudim se reći da postadosmo pjesnici. Pustili su nas da ležimo, sjedinjenih udova, gotovo sat vremena. Bilo je to blaženstvo. Bilo je to savršenstvo. Bilo je to ona nemoguća stvar: sreća koja ne vene kako bi otkrila mladicu neke nove želje koja se uzdiže iznutra.

Mazili smo se žestinom/usredotočenošću koja je konkurirala žestini/usredotočenosti kojom smo se jebali. Maženje nije bilo ništa *manje* u odnosu na jebanje, to želim reći.

Plazili smo jedno po drugome na preprijateljski način kao dva psića ili supružnika prilikom prvog sastanka nakon što je jedno od njih doživjelo bliski susret sa smrću. Sve se činilo vlažnim, propusnim, *izrecivim*.

Onda je nešto u infuziji počelo slabjeti. Mislim da je Abnesti ugasio Verbolet™? A i smanjivač srama? U osnovi, sve je počelo nestajati. Odjednom smo osjećali sram. Ali i dalje zaljubljenost. Započeli smo proces razgovora nakon Verboleta™: uvijek neugodan.

No i dalje sam u njezinim očima mogao vidjeti ljubav koju osjeća prema meni.

A i ja sam definitivno osjećao ljubav prema njoj.

Pa, zašto ne? Upravo smo se jebali tri puta! Što misliš zašto to zovu „vođenje ljubavi“? Upravo smo to sada vodili tri puta: ljubav.

Onda Abnesti reče, „Spremni za infuziju?“

Nekako smo zaboravili da je uopće tamo, iza jednostranog ogledala.

Upitao sam, „Moramo li? Stvarno nam se ovo sviđa.“

„Samo ćemo vas pokušati vratiti u prvobitno stanje“, reče on. „Imamo još posla danas.“

„Sranje“, kažem ja.

„K vragu“, reče ona.

„Spremni za infuziju?“ upita on.

„Potvrдно“, kažemo mi.

Uskoro se nešto počelo mijenjati. Mislim, bila je O.K. Zgodna bljedunjava cura. Ali ništa posebno. A mogao sam vidjeti da i ona osjeća isto prema meni, tj. čemu sva ona frka od maloprije?

Zašto nismo obučeni? Brže-bolje smo se obukli.

Malo sramotno.

Jesam li je volio? Je li ona mene voljela?

Ha.

Ne.

Onda je došlo vrijeme da ode. Rukovali smo se.

Izišla je.

Došao je ručak. Na pladnju. Špageti s komadićima pileline.

Čovječe, baš sam bio gladan.

Cijeli sam ručak proveo u razmišljanju. Bilo je čudno. Sjećao sam se jebanja s Heather, sjećao sam se osjećaja koje sam osjećao prema njoj, sjećao sam se da sam rekao sve one stvari koje sam joj rekao. Grlo mi je bridjelo od svega što sam rekao i koliko sam se brzo osjećao primoranim da to kažem. A što se tiče osjećaja? Ostalo je jedno veliko ništa.

Samo zažareno lice i sram što sam se jebao tri puta ispred Abnestija.

III

Nakon ručka uđe druga djevojka.

Jednako tako-tako. Crnokosa. Prosječne građe. Ništa posebno, baš kao što ni, prilikom prvog ulaska, Heather nije bila ništa posebno.

„Ovo je Rachel“, reče Abnesti preko razglasa. „Ovo je Jeff.“

„Bok, Rachel“, kažem ja.

„Bok, Jeff“, reče ona.

„Spremni za infuziju?“ upita Abnesti.

Potvrdili smo.

Način na koji sam se sad počeo osjećati učinio se vrlo poznatim. Odjednom je Rachel izgledala prepredobro. Abnesti je zatražio dopuštenje da nam podigne jezične centre Verboletom™. Potvrdili smo. Uskoro smo se i mi jebali kao zečevi. Uskoro smo i mi pričali o našoj ljubavi poput elokventnih manijaka. Opet su se javile određene senzacije kako bi utažile moju glad baš za tim istim senzacijama. Uskoro je moje sjećanje savršenog okusa Heatherinih usta prebrisano trenutnim okusom Rachelinih usta, bio je to sad sve više taj okus za kojim sam žudio. Osjećao sam emocije bez presedana, iako su te emocije bez presedana bile (razaznao sam negdje u svijesti) iste one emocije koje samo osjećao prije, za tom lađom koja se činila nedostojnom, imena Heather. Rachel je, želim reći, bila ona prava. Njezin gibak struk, njezin glas, njezina gladna usta, njezine gladne ruke/genitalije – sve je to bilo *ono pravo*.

Tako sam volio Rachel.

Onda su uslijedila sekvencijalna geografska sanjarenja (vidi gore): ista udolina puna borova, ista planinska kućica popraćena onom istom žudnjom za mjestom koja se pretvarala u žudnju za (ovaj put) Rachel. Dok smo nastavljali unositi razinu seksualnog napora koja je izazivala ono što bih opisao kao postupno stezanje, u području prsa, rastezljive trake slatkoće s ciljem da nas poveže i natjera nas naprijed, šaptali smo grozničavo (precizno, pjesnički) koliko smo dugo osjećali da se znamo, tj. oduvijek.

Ponovno je ukupni broj vođenja ljubavi bio tri.

A onda, kao i prije, došlo je iščeznuće. Naš je govor postajao sve manje izvrstan. Riječi je bilo sve manje, naše rečenice bile su sve kraće. Ipak, i dalje sam je volio. Volio sam Rachel.

Sve u vezi nje činilo se *savršenim*: madež na obrazu, crna kosa, blago izvijanje guze koje kao da želi reći, Mmm-mmm, kako li je to bilo dobro.

„Spremni za infuziju?“ upita Abnesti. „Pokušat ćemo vas oboje vratiti u prvobitno stanje.“

„Potvrdno“, reče ona.

„Ma, samo malo“, kažem.

„Jeff“, reče Abnesti, razdražen, kao da me pokušava podsjetiti da nisam ovdje vlastitim izborom, nego zato što sam počinio zločin i služim kaznu.

„Potvrdno“, kažem. I uputim Rachel zadnji pogled ljubavi, znajući (budući da ona još ne zna) da će ovo biti zadnji pogled ljubavi koji ću joj uputiti.

Uskoro mi je bila samo O.K. i ja njoj samo O.K. Gledala je, kao što je i Heather, posramljeno, kao da želi reći, Što je to sad bilo? Zašto sam tako pretjerala ovdje s gospodinom Prosječnim?

Jesam li je volio? Ili ona mene?

Ne.

Kad je došlo vrijeme da ode, rukovali smo se.

Mjesto na kojem mi je MobiPak™ kirurški spojen za donji dio leđa upalilo se od svih pozicija koje smo isprobali. I bio sam baš umoran. I osjećao sam veliku tugu. Zašto tugu? Zar nisam bio faca? Zar nisam upravo pojebao dvije različite cure, sveukupno šest puta, u jednom danu?

Ipak, najiskrenije, osjećao sam tugu veću od same tuge.

Izgleda da sam bio tužan jer ljubav nije stvarna? Ili pak ne baš toliko stvarna? Izgleda da sam bio tužan što se ljubav može činiti tako stvarnom, a idućeg trenutka može potpuno nestati i sve to zbog nečega što je Abnesti radio.

IV

Nakon užine Abnesti me pozvao u Upravljačku prostoriju. Upravljačka prostorija bila je glava pauka. A mnoge njezine noge činile su Radne prostorije. Ponekad su nas zvali da radimo uz Abnestija u glavi pauka. Ili, kako smo je mi zvali: Paukoglava.

„Sjedni“, reče on. „Pogledaj u Veliku radnu prostoriju br. 1.“

U Velikoj radnoj prostoriji br. 1 bile su Heather i Rachel, jedna do druge.

„Prepoznaješ ih?“ upitao je.

„Ha“, kažem.

„Sad“, reče Abnesti. „Dat ću ti izbor, Jeff. Evo u čemu je fora. Vidiš ovaj daljinski? Recimo da stisneš *ovu* tipku i Rachel dobije malo Pomračuma™. Ili možeš stisnuti *ovu* tipku i Heather dobije Pomračuma™. Vidiš? Ti izaberi.”

„Imaju Pomračum™ u MobiPakovima™?“ upitao sam.

„Svi imate Pomračum™ u MobiPakovima™, blento“, reče Abnesti srdačno. „Verlaine ga je stavio u srijedu. Baš u svrhu ovog istraživanja.“

Pa, to me uznemirilo.

Zamisli nešto najgore što si ikad osjetio, puta deset. To nije ni blizu koliko se loše osjećaš na Pomračumu™. Onaj put kad su nam ga dali na Orijentacijskom praktikumu, nakratko, u demonstracijske svrhe, na trećinu doze koja je sad bila podešena na Abnestijevom daljinskom upravljaču? Nikad se nisam osjećao gore. Svi smo samo jaukali, pognutih glava, kao da mislimo, Kako smo ikad mogli misliti da je život vrijedan življenja?

Čak ne volim ni razmišljati o tom događaju.

„Što si odlučio, Jeff?“ upita Abnesti. „Dobiva li Rachel Pomračum™? Ili Heather?“

„Ne mogu odlučiti“, kažem.

„Moraš“, reče on.

„Ne mogu“, kažem. „Bilo bi nasumično.“

„Imaš osjećaj da bi odluka bila nasumična“, reče on.

„Da“, kažem.

I to je bila istina. Stvarno me nije bilo briga. To je bilo kao da ja stavim *tebe* u Paukoglavu i dam ti izbor: koje od ovih dvoje neznanaca želiš poslati u dolinu smrti?

„Deset sekundi“, Abnesti reče. „Sad ispitujemo rezidualnu privrženost.“

Nije da su mi se obje sviđale. Da budem savršeno iskren, prema objema sam bio potpuno ravnodušan. Kao da ih nisam nikad ni vidio, a kamoli jebao. (Ono što u biti želim reći je da su me uspjeli vratiti u prvobitno stanje.)

Ali, budući da su mi već jednom dali Pomračum™, nisam to nikome htio učiniti. Čak i da mi se nije sviđala neka osoba, čak i da sam mrzio tu osobu, i dalje to ne bih htio učiniti.

„Pet sekundi“, reče Abnesti.

„Ne mogu odlučiti“, kažem. „Nasumično je. O.K. dat ću Pomračum™ Heather.“

Samo sam sjedio.

„Ne, zapravo“, reče on. „Dat ću ga Rachel.“

I dalje sam samo sjedio.

„Jeff“, reče on. „Uvjerio si me. Bilo bi to, za tebe, potpuno nasumično. Uistinu ne iskazuješ sklonost. Vidim to. I stoga to ne moram napraviti. Vidiš što smo sad napravili? Uz tvoju pomoć? Po prvi put? Uz pomoć ED289/290? Ono što smo danas testirali? Moraš priznati: bio si zaljubljen. Dva puta. Zar ne?

„Da“, kažem.

„Ludo zaljubljen“, reče. „Dva puta.“

„Rekao sam da“, kažem.

„Ali sad nisi pokazao nikakvu sklonost“, reče on. „Sukladno tome, od tih ljubavi nije ostalo ni traga. U potpunosti si pročišćen. Ponijeli smo te u visine, spustili na zemlju i eto te,

sad tu sjediš, istog emotivnog stanja kakav si bio i prije testiranja. To je moćno. To je ubojito. Otključali smo misterioznu vječnu tajnu. Kakve li fantastične prekretnice! Recimo da netko ne može voljeti? Sad može. Možemo ga natjerati. Recimo da netko previše voli? Ili voli nekoga koga njihov skrbnik smatra neprikladnim? Jebote, možemo to samo tako smanjiti. Recimo da je netko depresivan zbog prave ljubavi? Mi uskočimo, ili njihov skrbnik: nema više depresije. Što se tiče emocionalne upravljivosti, više nismo brodovi koji besciljno plutaju. Više nitko nije. Vidimo brod koji besciljno luta, ukrcamo se i ugradimo kormilo. Usmjerimo ga prema ljubavi. Ili od nje. Kažeš, „Sve što ti treba je ljubav?“ Gle, evo dolazi ED289/290. Možemo li zaustaviti rat? Sasvim sigurno ga možemo usporiti! Odjednom se vojnici na obje strane počnu jebati. Ili, u niskim dozama, osjećaju superprivrženost. Ili recimo da imamo dva smrtno zavađena suparnička diktatora. Pod pretpostavkom da se ED289/290 lijepo razvije u obliku tableta, dozvoli mi da svakom diktatoru ubacim po jednu u piće. Uskoro jedan drugome duboko guraju jezike u grlo i golubice mira im kakaju po epoletama. Ili, ovisno o dozi, možda se samo grle. I tko nam je pomogao u svemu tome? Ti.“

Sve ovo vrijeme, Rachel i Heather sjedile su ondje u Velikoj radnoj prostoriji br. 1.

„To je to, cure, hvala“, reče Abnesti u mikrofona.

I odu, a da nijedna od njih ne zna koliko je bila blizu da dobije popriličnu dozu Pomračuma™, dovoljno da joj izađe na uši.

Verlaine ih je izveo na stražnji izlaz, tj. ne kroz Paukoglavu, nego kroz Stražnju ulicu. Što nije u biti ulica, nego samo tapecirani hodnik koji vodi do naše Skupine domena.

„Zamisli, Jeff“, reče Abnesti. „Zamisli da si one svoje sudbonosne večeri imao pomoć ED289/290.“

Da budem iskren, bilo mi je već slabo od njegovog vječnog govora o mojoj sudbonosnoj večeri.

Pokajao sam se tog istog trenutka i otad sam se još više kajao, a sad sam se toliko kajao da mi njegovo predbacivanje nije izazivalo nimalo pokajanja, samo me natjeralo da ga smatram popriličnim šupkom.

„Mogu sad u krevet?“ upitam.

„Ne još“, reče Abnesti. „Ima još nekoliko sati prije spavanja.“

Onda me poslao u Malu radnu prostoriju br. 3 gdje je sjedio neki tip kojeg nisam poznavao.

V

„Rogan“, reče tip.

„Jeff“, kažem ja.

„Šta ima?“ upita on.

„A ništa“, kažem ja.

Napeto smo sjedili duže vrijeme, a da nismo razmijenili ni riječi. Možda je prošlo deset minuta.

Imamo ovdje i grubljih mušterija. Primjetio sam da Rogan ima tetovažu štakora na vratu, štakor koji je uboden nožem i plače. Ali unatoč njegovim suzama ubadao je nožem manjeg štakora koji je samo izgledao iznenađen.

Napokon se Abnesti javi preko razglasa.

„To bi bilo to, momci, hvala“, reče on.

„Ma koji je ovo kurac bio?“ reče Rogan.

Dobro pitanje, Rogan, pomislim. Zašto su nas samo pustili da sjedimo ovdje? Na isti način kako su Heather i Rachel samo sjedile tamo? A onda mi je sinulo. Kako bi potvrdio to što mi je sinulo, naglo sam otvorio vrata Paukoglave. Koju je Abnesti ostavljao otključanom i time nam uvijek davao do znanja koliko nam zapravo vjeruje i koliko nas se ne boji.

I pogodi tko je bio gore?

„Ej, Jeff“, reče Heather.

„Jeff, izlazi“, reče Abnesti.

„Heather, je li te gospodin Abnesti tjerao da odlučiš kome ćeš, meni ili Roganu, dati Pomračuma™?“ upitao sam.

„Da“, reče Heather. Mora da je bila na PunoGovoru™, budući da je govorila istinu unatoč Abnestijevom prijekornom pogledu kojim ju je htio ušutkati.

„Jesi li se nedavno jebala s Roganom, Heather?“ upitam. „Osim mene? I zaljubila si se u njega, kao i u mene?“

„Da“, reče ona.

„Heather, ozbiljno“, reče Abnesti. „Začepi gubicu.“

Heather je tražila po prostoriji čime da začepi gubicu, posljedica PunoGovora™ koji je čovjeka tjerao da razmišlja doslovno.

Kad sam se vratio u Domenu, malo sam računao: Heather se jebala sa mnom tri puta. Heather se vjerojatno i s Roganom jebala tri puta, budući da bi, u ime dosljednosti, Abnesti dao Roganu i meni jednaku razmjernu dozu Pipikruta™.

A ipak, kad smo već kod dosljednosti, još se nešto trebalo dogoditi, ako dobro poznajem Abnestija, koji je uvijek sitničario po pitanju simetrije podataka: ne bi li Abnesti isto trebao natjerati Rachel da odluči kome će dati Pomračuma™, tj. meni ili Roganu?

Nakon kratke stanke, moje su sumnje potvrđene: ponovno sam se našao kako sjedim u Maloj radnoj prostoriji br. 3 s Roganom!

Ponovno smo sjedili duže vrijeme, a da nismo razmijenili ni riječi. Većinu vremena čeprkao je po manjem štakoru, a ja sam ga pokušavao promatrati, a da on to ne primijeti.

Onda, kao i prije, Abnesti se javi preko razglasa i rekao, „To bi bilo to, momci, hvala.“

„Da pogodim“, rekao sam. „Rachel je s tobom unutra.“

„Jeff, ako ne prestaneš to raditi, kunem ti se“, reče Abnesti.

„A ona je odbila dati Pomračum™ i meni i Roganu?“

„Hej, Jeff!“ reče Rachel. „Hej, Rogan!“

„Rogan“, kažem. „Jesi li se kojim slučajem danas jebao s Rachel?“

„Aha“, reče Rogan.

Mozak mi se, ono, izbezumio. Rachel se jebala sa mnom, ali i s Roganom? Heather se jebala sa mnom, ali i s Roganom? I svatko tko se jebao s bilo kim se zaljubio u tu osobu, a onda odljubio? Kakva li je ovo sjebana Projektna grupa?

Mislim, dosad sam već bio u prilično sjebanim Projektnim grupama, kao što je bila ona gdje je infuzija sadržavala nešto što je slušanje glazbe činilo izvanrednim i zbog toga bi se činilo, kad se puštalo Šostakoviča na razglas, da stvarni šišmiši kruže mojom Domenom ili ona kod koje su mi noge u potpunosti utrnule, ali sam ipak shvatio da mogu stajati na mjestu punih petnaest sati za lažnom blagajnom i odjednom u glavi čudesno rješavati iznimno teške zadatke dijeljenja višeznamenkastih brojeva.

Ali od svih mojih sjebanih Projektnih grupa ova je bila najsjebanija.

Nisam mogao, a da se ne zapitam što će tek donijeti sutrašnji dan.

VI

Samo što današnji dan još nije bio gotov.

Ponovno sam bio pozvan u Malu radnu prostoriju br. 3. I tamo sam samo sjedio dok nije došao neki nepoznati tip.

„Ja sam Keith“, reče on, u žurbi da se rukuje sa mnom.

Bio je to visok i zgodan južnjački tip, blještavih zuba i kovrčave kose.

„Jeff“, kažem ja.

„Drago mi je!“ reče on.

Onda smo sjedili, a da nismo razmijenili ni riječi. Kad god bih pogledao prema Keithu, zabljescuo bi me svojim zubima i odmahivao glavom sav ironičan kao da želi reći, „Čudnog li posla, zar ne?“

„Keith“, kažem. „Poznaješ li kojim slučajem dvije trebe, Rachel i Heather?“

„Nego šta, nego poznam“, reče Keith. I odjednom su mu zubi izgledali puni požude.

„Jesi li se kojim slučajem danas seksao i s Rachel i s Heather, sa svakom tri puta?“ upitam.

„Ma šta si ti čovječe, jebeni vidovnjak?“ reče Keith. „Bogme si me izbezumio!“

„Jeff, skroz nam sjebavaš cijeli planirani integritet eksperimenta“, reče Abnesti.

„Znači ili Rachel ili Heather sad sjedi u Paukoglavi“, kažem. „Pokušava odlučiti.“

„Odlučiti što?“ upita Keith.

„Kome će od nas dvojice dati Pomračum™“, kažem.

„Jao“, reče Keith. A sad su mu zubi izgledali puni straha.

„Ne brini“, kažem. „Neće to učiniti.“

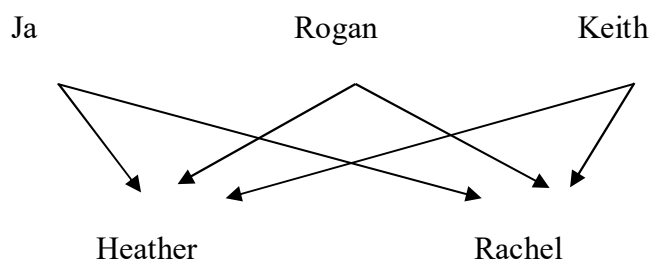
„Tko neće?“ upita Keith.

„Tkogod da je unutra“, kažem.

„To bi bilo to, momci, hvala“, reče Abnesti.

Onda, nakon kratke stanke, Keith i ja ponovno smo dovedeni u Malu radnju prostoriju br. 3 gdje smo još jednom čekali, ovaj put je Heather odbila dati Pomračum™ obojici.

Kad sam se vratio u Domenu, sastavio sam grafikon o tome tko je koga jebao koji je izgledao otprilike ovako:



Abnesti uđe.

„Unatoč svim tvojim smicalicama“, reče on. „Rogan i Keith imali su potpuno jednake reakcije kao i ti. Kao i Rachel i Heather. Nitko od vas, u kritičnom trenutku, nije mogao odlučiti kome dati Pomračum™. Što je super. Što to znači? Zašto je super? To znači da je ED289/290 prava stvar. Može stvoriti ljubav, može oduzeti ljubav. Gotovo sam spreman započeti s imenovanjem procesa.“

„Svaka od tih cura danas se ševila devet puta?“ upitao sam.

„MirSvima“, reče on. „LjubaSklon. Činiš se nadržkan. Jesi nadržkan?“

„Pa, ono, osjećam se malo izmanipuliranim“, kažem.

„Osjećaš li se izmanipuliranim zato što i dalje gajiš osjećaje prema jednoj od onih cura?“ upita. „To bi se trebalo zabilježiti. Ljutnja? Posesivnost? Rezidualna seksualna požuda?“

„Ne“, kažem.

„Zaista ne osjećaš gnjev zbog toga što su curu u koju si se zaljubio drmnula druga dva tipa, i, ne samo to, nego je i ona osjetila istu kakvoću/količinu ljubavi prema tim tipove kao što je osjetila prema tebi, ili je, kao što je bio slučaj s Rachel, trebala osjetiti prema tebi, u trenutku kad se drmnula s Roganom? Mislim da je bio Rogan. Možda se prvo drmnula s Keithom. Onda s tobom, predzadnjim. Maglovit mi je cijeli taj raspored operacije. Mogu provjeriti. Ali dobro promisli o ovome.“

Dobro promislim o tome.

„Ništa“, kažem.

„Pa, ima puno toga što treba promisliti“, reče on. „Srećom, noć je. Dan je gotov. Želiš li još o čemu razgovarati? Osjećaš li još nešto?“

„Penis mi je natečen“, kažem.

„Pa, nije ni čudo“, reče on. „Zamisli kako je tek curama. Poslat ću Verlainea s malo kreme.“

Ubrzo je Verlaine došao s kremom.

„Bok, Verlaine“, kažem.

„Bok, Jeff“, reče on. „Želiš ovo sam namazati ili da ti ja?“

„Sam ću“, kažem.

„Kul“, reče on.

I vidjelo se da stvarno to misli.

„Izgleda bolno“, reče on.

„Stvarno je“, kažem.

„Ali mora da je u tom trenutku bilo predobro, zar ne?“ upita on.

Njegove riječi govorile su da je zavidan, ali mogao sam mu vidjeti u očima, dok su bile usmjerene prema mom penisu, da nije bio nimalo zavidan.

Onda sam zaspao kao mrtav.

Kako se to inače kaže.

VII

Sljedećeg sam jutra i dalje spavao kad je Abnesti progovorio na razglas.

„Sjećaš li se jučerašnjeg dana?“ upita.

„Da“, kažem.

„Kad sam pitao koju bi curu htio vidjeti na Pomračumu™?“ upita. „A ti si rekao nijednu?“

„Da“, kažem.

„Pa, meni je to bilo sasvim dovoljno“, reče on. „Ali očito ne dovoljno za Protokolni komitet. Nedovoljno za Tri šupačka jahača. Uđi. Počnimo – morat ćemo napraviti nekakvu vrstu Potvrdnog testa. Uf, ovo će biti gadno.“

Uđem u Paukoglavu.

U Maloj radnoj prostoriji br. 2 sjedi Heather.

„Znači ovaj put“, reče Abnesti, „prema uputama Protokolnog komiteta, umjesto da te pitam kojoj ćemo curi dati Pomračum™, što je ProtKom smatrao presubjektivnim, dat ćemo ovoj curi Pomračum™ bez obzira na to što ćeš ti reći. Pa ćemo vidjeti što ćeš reći. Kao i jučer, stavit ćemo ti infuziju – Verlaine? Verlaine? Gdje si? Jesi tu? Kako je ono bilo? Imaš li raspored projekta?“

„Verbolet™, PunoGovor™, BrbljoLak™“, reče Verlaine preko razglasa.

„Tako je“, reče Abnesti. „A jesi li obnovio zalihe MobiPaka™? Jesu mu zalihe dobre?“

„Jesam“, reče Verlaine. „Jesam, dok je spavao. Osim toga, već sam ti rekao da jesam.“

„A što je s njom?“ upita Abnesti. „Jesi njoj obnovio zalihe MobiPaka™? Jesu joj zalihe dobre?“

„Bio si pokraj mene i gledao, Ray“, reče Verlaine.

„Jeff, oprost“, kaže mi Abnesti. „Danas nam ovdje vlada neka napetost. Pred nama i nije baš tako lak dan.“

„Ne želim da Pomračum™ date Heather“, kažem.

„Zanimljivo“, reče on. „Zato što je voliš?“

„Ne“, kažem. „Ne želim da ikome date Pomračum™.“

„Razumijem što želiš reći“, reče on. „Baš slatko. Ali opet: radi li se u ovom Potvrdnom testu o tome što ti želiš? I ne baš. Ovdje se radi samo o tome da ćemo snimiti ono što ćeš reći dok promatraš kako Heather dobiva Pomračum™. Punih pet minuta. Test od pet minuta. Krećemo. Spreman za infuziju?“

Ne kažem „potvrдно.“

„Trebaš se osjećati počašćenim“, reče Abnesti. „Jesmo li odabrali Rogana? Keitha? Ne. Smatramo tvoju razinu govora primjerenijom našim potrebama za podacima.“

I dalje ne kažem „potvrдно.“

„Zašto se ponašaš tako zaštitnički prema Heather?“ reče Abnesti. „Netko bi pomislio da je voliš.“

„Ne“, kažem.

„Znaš li joj uopće prošlost?“ upita on. „Ne znaš. Zakonski ni ne smiješ znati. Radi li se o viskiju, bandama, čedoumorstvu? Ne mogu ti reći. Mogu li ti natuknuti, onako površno, da njezina prošlost, nasilna i gnusna, ne uključuje psa imena Lassie i puno obiteljskih razgovora o Bibliji dok baka plete makrame i namješta se pred vatrom iz starinskog kamina koja tako lijepo pucketa? Mogu li te uputiti na to da, kad bi znao ono što ja znam o Heatherinoj prošlosti, nakratko uzrokovati Heather tugu, mučninu, i/ili prestravljenost ne bi se činila kao najgora ideja na svijetu? Ne, ne mogu.“

„U redu, u redu“, kažem.

„Poznajesh me“, reče on. „Koliko djece imam?“

„Petero“, kažem.

„Kako se zovu?“ upita on.

„Mick, Todd, Karen, Lisa, Phoebe“, kažem.

„Jesam li ja čudovište?“ upita on. „Sjetim li se vaših rođendana? Kad je određeni pojedinac dobio osip na preponama jedne nedjelje, nije li se drugi određeni pojedinac odvezao do dežurne ljekarne i uzeo lijek i platio ga vlastitim novcem?“

To je bila stvarno lijepa gesta, ali sad se činilo nekako neprofesionalno što to spominje.

„Jeff“, reče Abnesti. „Što želiš da ti kažem? Želiš li da ti kažem da bi mogao izgubiti petke? Mogu ti to bez problema reći.“

Nizak udarac. Petci su mi puno značili, a on je to znao. Petkom sam razgovarao s mamom preko Skypea.

„Koliko ti dajemo?“ upita Abnesti.

„Pet minuta“, kažem.

„Što kažeš na deset?“ upita Abnesti.

Mama je uvijek izgledala utučena kad bi nam vrijeme isteklo. Moje ju je uhićenje gotovo ubilo. Suđenje ju je gotovo ubilo. Potrošila je svu svoju ušteđevinu kako bi me izbavila iz pravog zatvora i dovela ovamo. Kad sam bio klinac, imala je dugu smeđu kosu, ispod struka. Tijekom suđenja ju je skratila. A onda je posijedjela. Sad je od nje ostalo samo bijeli smotuljak kose poput kape.

„Spreman za infuziju?“ upita Abnesti.

„Potvrdno“, kažem.

„O.K., da podignemo jezične centre?“ upita on.

„U redu“, kažem.

„Heather, bok?“ reče on.

„Dobro jutro!“ reče Heather.

„Spremna za infuziju?“ upita on.

„Potvrdno“, reče Heather.

Abnesti stisne daljinski upravljač.

Pomračum™ počne teći. Ubrzo Heather tiho zaplače. Pa ustane i počne koračati. Pa silovito zaplače. Čak malo i histerično.

„Ne sviđa mi se ovo“, reče ona drhtavog glasa.

Pa povrati u koš za smeće.

„Govori, Jeff“, reče mi Abnesti. „Govori puno, govori detaljno. Izvucimo nešto korisno iz ovoga, može?“

Sve u mojoj infuziji činilo se prvoklasnim. Odjednom je počela navirati poetičnost. Navirala je poetičnost u vezi onoga što je Heather radila i navirala je poetičnost u vezi mojih osjećaja o onome što je Heather radila.

Načelno sam osjećao ovo: Svaki čovjek stvoren je od muškarca i žene. Svakog čovjeka, rođenjem, voli, ili barem ima potencijal voljeti, njegova majka ili njegov otac. Stoga je svaki čovjek dostojan ljubavi. Dok sam gledao Heather kako pati, iznimna mi je nježnost prožela tijelo, nježnost koju je bilo teško razaznati od ogromne egzistencijalne mučnine; to jest, zašto tako prekrasna i voljena tijela robuju tolikoj boli? Heather je predstavljala svežanj receptora za bol. Heatherin um bio je fluidan i moglo ga se uništiti (boli, tugom). Zašto? Zašto je tako stvorena? Zašto tako krhka?

Jadno dijete, pomislih, jadna djevojko. Tko te volio? Tko te voli?

„Drži se, Jeff“, reče Abnesti. „Verlaine! Što misliš? Ima li kakvih tragova romantične ljubavi u Verbalnim komentarima?“

„Rekao bih da nema“, reče Verlaine preko razglasa. „To je više-manje sve bazični ljudski osjećaj.“

„Odlično“, reče Abnesti. „Koliko još?“

„Dvije minute“, reče Verlaine.

Ono što se dalje dogodilo bilo je teško gledati. Pod utjecajem Verboleta™, PunoGovora™ i BrbljoLaka™ bilo mi je gotovo nemoguće o tome ne pripovijedati.

U svakoj Radnoj prostoriji nalazili su se kauč, stol i stolac, svi, tako osmišljeni da ih je bilo nemoguće rastaviti. Heather je sad počela rastavljati stolac koji je bilo nemoguće rastaviti. Njezino je lice postalo maska bijesa. Udarala je glavom o zid. Poput gnjevne nemani, Heather, koju je netko volio, uspjela je, u svom neizmjernom bijesu kojeg je pogonila tuga, rastaviti stolac a da ni u jednom trenutku nije prestala udarati glavom o zid.

„Isuse“, reče Verlaine.

„Verlaine, saberi se“, reče Abnesti. „Jeff, prestani plakati. Možda to ne misliš, ali iz plakanja se ne može izvući previše podataka. Koristi riječi. Nemoj da ovo bude uzalud.“

Koristio sam riječi. Govorio sam naširoko, bio sam precizan. Opisivao sam i ponovno opisivao što osjećam dok sam gledao Heather kako radi ono što je sad radila, s namjerom, gotovo prekrasno, svom licu/svojoj glavi jednom od nogu stolca.

U njegovu obranu, ni sam Abnesti nije bio u najboljem stanju: teško je disao, obraza rumenih kao jabuka, i neprestano je kuckao po zaslonu svog iMac računala, nešto što je radio kad je bio pod stresom.

„Gotovo“, napokon reče i prekine daljinskim upravljačem dovod Pomračuma™. „U kurac. Ulazi, Verlaine. Leti.“

Verlaine uleti u Malu radnu prostoriju br. 2.

„Govori, Sammy“, reče Abnesti.

Verlaine opipa Heatherin puls, zatim podigne ruke, dlanovima prema gore, tako da izgleda poput Isusa, osim što je bio šokiran umjesto blažen, a usto je imao i naočale na glavi.

„Ma jel' me *zezaš*?“ reče Abnesti.

„Što sad?“ upita Verlaine. „Što da—?“

„Ma jel' me *jebes*?“ reče Abnesti.

Abnesti skoči iz svog stolca, gurne me s puta, proleti kroz vrata u Malu radnu prostoriju br. 2.

VIII

Vratio sam se u svoju Domenu.

U tri, Verlaine se javio na razglas.

„Jeff“, reče on. „Vrati se, molim te, u Paukoglavu.“

Vratim se u Paukoglavu.

„Žao nam je što si to morao vidjeti, Jeff“, reče Abnesti.

„To je bilo neočekivano“, reče Verlaine.

„Neočekivano i tragično“, reče Abnesti. „I oprostite što sam te gurnuo.“

„Je li mrtva?“ upitam.

„Pa, nije joj baš najbolje“, reče Verlaine.

„Gle, Jeff, dogodi se“, reče Abnesti. „Ovo je znanost. U znanosti istražujemo nepoznato.

Bilo je nepoznato što bi pet minuta na Pomračumu™ napravilo Heather. Sad znamo. Druga stvar koju znamo je da, prema Verlaineovoj procjeni tvojih komentara, stvarno, zasigurno, ne gajiš nikakve rezidualne romantične osjećaje prema Heather. Velika je to stvar, Jeff. Tračak nade za sve u ovakvim tužnim vremenima. Čak i dok je Heather, takoreći, tonula sa svojim brodom, ostao si potpuno nepokolebljiv u nepokazivanju nikakvih romantičnih osjećaja prema njoj. Pretpostavljam da će ProtKom biti, ono, 'Opa, Utica stvarno prednjači u pružanju novih nevjerojatnih podataka o ED289/290.'“

Bilo je tiho u Paukoglavi.

„Verlaine, iziđi“, reče Abnesti. „Odradi svoj dio. Pripremi sve.“

Verlaine iziđe.

„Misliš da se meni ono svidjelo?“ upita Abnesti.

„Činilo se da nije“, kažem.

„Pa, nije“, reče Abnesti. „Gadilo mi se. Pa i ja sam čovjek. Imam osjećaje. Ipak, na stranu osobna tuga, dobro je prošlo. Bio si, sve u svemu, sjajan. Svi smo bili sjajni. Heather je pogotovo bila sjajna. Poštujem je. Hajmo samo – hajmo ovo privesti kraju, može? Odradimo to. Odradi sljedeći dio našeg Potvrdnog testa.“

U Malu radnu prostoriju br. 4 uđe Rachel.

IX

„Hoćemo li sad Pomračum™ dati Rachel?“ upitao sam.

„Razmisli, Jeff“, reče Abnesti. „Kako možemo znati da ne voliš ni Rachel ni Heather ako imamo podatke vezane samo uz tvoju reakciju na to što se upravo sad dogodilo Heather? Mučni glavom. Nisi znanstvenik, ali bogami radiš sa znanstvenicima po cijele dane. Spreman za infuziju?“

Ne kažem „Potvrдно.“

„U čemu je problem, Jeff?“ upita Abnesti.

„Ne želim ubiti Rachel“, kažem.

„Pa, tko bi želio?“ upita Abnesti. „Ja? Ti, Verlaine?“

„Ne“, reče Verlaine preko razglasa.

„Jeff, možda malo previše razmišljaš“, reče Abnesti. „Postoji li mogućnost da će Pomračum™ ubiti Rachel? Naravno. Imamo Heather kao presedan. S druge strane, Rachel je možda snažnija. Čini se malo veća.“

„U biti je malo manja“, reče Verlaine.

„Dobro, možda je žilavija“, reče Abnesti.

„Prilagodit ćemo dozu njezinoj težini“, reče Verlaine. „Pa eto.“

„Hvala, Verlaine“, reče Abnesti. „Hvala što si to razjasnio.“

„A možda da mu pokažeš dosje“, reče Verlaine.

Abnesti mi pruži Rachelin dosje.

Verlaine ponovno uđe.

„Čitaj i plači“, reče on.

Prema Rachelinom dosjeu, ukrala je majci nakit, ocu automobil, sestri gotovinu, kipiće iz njihove crkve. Bila je u zatvoru zbog droge. Nakon četiri puta u zatvoru zbog droge otišla je na odvikavanje od droge, onda na odvikavanje od prostitucije, a onda na ono što zovu obnova odvikavanja, za ljude koji su toliko puta bili na odvikavanju da u biti postanu imuni. Ali mora da je bila imuna i na obnovu odvikavanja jer je nakon toga uslijedio onaj najveći zločin: trostruko ubojstvo – diler, dilerova sestra, dečko dilerove sestre.

Dok sam to čitao malo sam se čudno osjećao zbog toga što smo se jebali i što sam je volio.

Ali je i dalje nisam htio ubiti.

„Jeff“, reče Abnesti. „Znam da si već puno razgovarao o ovome s gospođom Lacey. O ubijanju i tako dalje. Ali ovo nisi ti. Ovo smo mi.“

„Čak nismo ni mi“, reče Verlaine. „Nego znanost.“

„Ovlasti znanosti“, reče Abnesti. „A i direktive.“

„Ponekad je znanost sranje“, reče Verlaine.

„U jednu ruku, Jeff“, reče Abnesti, „nekoliko minuta nelagode za Heather –“

„Rachel“, reče Verlaine.

„Nekoliko minuta nelagode za Rachel“, reče Abnesti, „godine predaha za doslovno desetke tisuća nevoljenih ili previše voljenih ljudi.“

„Sam izračunaj, Jeff“, reče Verlaine.

„Biti dobar na male načine je lako“, reče Abnesti. „Raditi velike dobre stvari, to je teže.“

„Spreman za infuziju?“ upita Verlaine. „Jeff?“

Ne kažem „potvrдно.“

„Jebemti, sad je dosta“, reče Abnesti. „Verlaine, kako se zove ona? Ona kad mu dam naredbu, a on posluša?“

„Posluhol™“, reče Verlaine.

„Ima li Posluhola™ u njegovom MobiPaku™?“ upita Abnesti.

„Posluhola™ ima u svakom MobiPaku™“, reče Verlaine.

„Mora li reći ‚Potvrдно‘?“ upita Abnesti.

„Posluhol™ je kategorija C, tako da –“ reče Verlaine.

„Vidiš, to ti po meni nema apsolutno nikakvog smisla“, reče Abnesti. „Kakve je koristi lijek za poslušnost ako nam treba njegov pristanak da ga koristimo?“

„Treba nam samo odobrenje“, reče Verlaine.

„Koliko traje ta pizdarija?“ Abnesti upita.

„Faksiramo za Albany, oni nama faksiraju natrag“, reče Verlaine.

„Hajde, hajde, gibaj“, reče Abnesti, iziđu i ostave me samog u Paukoglavi.

X

Bilo je tužno. Osjećao sam se tužno i poraženo znajući da će se uskoro vratiti i dati mi Posluhol™ i da ću ja reći „Potvrдно“, smješkajući se poslušno kako se osoba inače smješka na Posluholu™ i onda će Pomračum™ proteći, u Rachel, i ja ću početi opisivati, onim brzim, robotskim načinom kojim čovjek opisuje na Verboletu™ / Punogovoru™ / BrbljoLaku™, stvari koje će Rachel, u tom trenutku, početi raditi sebi.

Bilo je kao da samo moram ostati ovdje, sjediti i čekati da ponovno postanem ubojica.

Što je bilo teško probaviti, nakon mog napretka s gospođom Lacey.

„Nasilje je završilo, gnjeva više nema“, tjerala me da govorim, stalno iznova. Onda bi me natjerala na Detaljno prisjećanje moje sudbonosne večeri.

Imao sam devetnaest godina. Mike Appel imao je sedamnaest. Obojica smo bili zgaženi. Cijelu me večer gnjavio. Bio je manji, mlađi, manje popularan. Onda smo se našli vani ispred Frizzyja, valjali smo se po podu. Bio je brz. Bio je opak. Ja sam gubio. Nisam mogao vjerovati. Bio sam veći, stariji, a ipak sam gubio? Oko su stajali i gledali gotovo svi koje smo znali. Onda se odjednom našao na meni. Netko se nasmijao. Netko je rekao, „Jebote, jadan Jeff.“ U blizini je bila cigla. Zgrabio sam je i njom mlatnuo Mikea u glavu. Onda sam se našao na njemu.

Mike se predao. To jest, na leđima, dok je krvario iz glave, predao se, tako da me prostrijelio očima, pogledom, kao ono, Stari, daj, zar smo stvarno tako ozbiljno u vezi ovog, ne?

Da, bili smo.

Ja sam bio.

Uopće ne znam zašto sam to napravio.

Bilo je kao da sam, uz sve to pijanstvo i činjenicu da sam klinac i da sam skoro izgubio, na infuziju koja se zove, kako ono, VučjaĆud ili tako nešto.

InstaBijes.

VitaRuina.

„Hej, momci, bok!“ reče Rachel. „Što danas radimo?“

Eno joj krhke glave, neoštećena lica, jedna joj je ruka dizala šaku da počese obraz, noge joj nervozno skaču, i seljačka suknja poskakuje, natečena stopala prekrižena ispod poruba.

Ubrzo će sve to biti samo jedna bezlična masa na podu.

Morao sam promisliti.

Zašto su htjeli Rachel dati Pomračum™? Kako bi mogli čuti kako to opisujem. Ako mene ne bi bilo da to opišem, ne bi to napravili. Kako postići da me nema? Mogao bih otići.

Kako bih otišao? Postojala su samo jedna vrata koja vode iz Paukoglave, koja su se automatski zaključavala, a na drugoj je strani ili Barry ili Hans, s onom električnom palicom zvanom DisciPalica™. Bih li mogao pričekati dok Abnesti ne uđe, mlatnuti ga, pokušati projuriti pokraj Barryja ili Hansa, zbrisati prema Glavnim vratima?

Ima li kakvog oružja u Paukoglavi? Ne, samo Abnestijeva rođendanska šalica, tenisice za trčanje, paketić pepermint, njegov daljinski?

Njegov daljinski?

Koji kreten. To mu u svim trenucima treba biti na remenu. Inače bi se netko od nas mogao poslužiti onim što nađemo, što god to bilo, u direktoriju zaliha, u našim MobiPakovima™: malo Vitabela™, možda, malo BlagoVremena™, malo UBrzAna™.

Malo Pomračuma™.

Isuse. To je bio jedan od načina da se napusti ovaj svijet.

Strašan bome.

Upravo tad, u Maloj radnoj prostoriji br. 4, Rachel, misleći valjda da je Paukoglava prazna, ustane i otpleše mali ples sreće, kao da je neka vesela farmerica koja je upravo izišla van i vidjela seljaka u kojeg se zaljubila kako dolazi putem s teletom u naručju ili štogod.

Zašto je plesala? Bez razloga.

Samo jer je živa, činilo se.

Malo je vremena.

Daljinski je bio dobro označen.

Dobri stari Verlaine.

Upotrijebim daljinski, bacim ga u otvor za ventilaciju, u slučaju da se predomislim i samo ostanem stajati, kao ono, ne mogu vjerovati da sam to napravio.

MobiPak™ mi zazuji.

Pomračum™ počne teći.

Onda uslijedi užas: gore nego što sam ikad mogao zamisliti. Ubrzo mi je ruka kilometar duboko u otvoru za ventilaciju. Onda teturam po Paukoglavi, u potrazi za nečim, bilo čim. Na kraju, evo do čega je došlo: iskoristio sam rub stola.

Kakva je smrt?

Nakratko si beskrajan.

Izletim kroz krov.

I lebdim iznad njega, gledam dolje. Tamo je Rogan, provjerava svoj vrat u ogledalu. Tamo je Keith, radi čučnjeve u donjem rublju. Tamo je Ned Riley, tamo je B. Troper, tamo je Gail Orley, Stefan DeWitt, svi ubojice, svi loši, pretpostavljam, iako, u ovom trenutku, drukčije vidim stvari. Pri rođenju im je Bog povjerio odgovornost da odrastu u potpune probisvijete. Jesu li oni ovo izabrali? Je li to bila njihova krivnja dok su izlazili iz majčine utrobe? Jesu li stremili, prekriveni placentalnom krvlju, da postanu nasilnici, zle sile, okončavači života? U tom prvom svetom trenutku udaha/svijesti (sićušne ručice koje se stežu i opuštaju), jesu li se ono stvarno iskreno nadali da će ožalostiti (pištoljem, nožem ili ciglom) neku nedužnu obitelj. Ne; no ipak su njihove pokvarene sudbe snile u njima, sjemenje koje je čekalo da voda i svjetlo porode najnasilnije cvjetove otrovne za život, dok je spomenuta voda, spomenuto svjetlo, u stvari neophodna kombinacija neurološke tendencije i ekološkog pobuđivanja koja bi ih preobrazila (nas preobrazila!) u zemaljski otpad, ubojice, i okaljala nas konačnim, neizbrisivim zlodjelom.

Čovječe, pomislim, je li bilo malo Verboleta™ u toj infuziji ili što?

Ali ne.

Ovo sam sve sad ja.

Sav razderan zapeo sam u odvodu ustanove i čučao tamo kao vodoriga u visini. Bio sam tamo, ali u isto vrijeme i svugdje. Sve sam mogao vidjeti: gomilu lišća u odvodu ispod mog prozirnog stopala; mamu, jednu mamu, doma u Rochesteru, kako riba tuš dok se pokušava

razveseliti tihim pjevušenjem punim nade; jelen pokraj kontejnera, odjednom na oprezu zbog moje avetinjske prisutnosti; mama Mikea Appela, isto u Rochesteru, koščata, rastrojena kvačica koja zauzima tanku prugu na Mikeovom krevetu; Rachel dolje u Maloj radnoj prostoriji br. 4, koju zvukovi moje smrti vuku prema jednosmjernom ogledalu; Abnesti i Verlaine ulijeću u Paukoglavu; Verlaine klekne kako bi započeo oživljavanje.

Noć pada. Ptice pjevaju. Ptice, padne mi na pamet da kažem, provode pomamno slavlje kraja dana. Ukazale su se kao svijetli završeci živaca zemlje, sunčev ih je pad pozivao na djelovanje, pojedinačno ih je ispunjavao životnim nektarom, a životni se nektar onda dalje prenosio u svijet, iz svakog kljuna, u obliku pjesme svojstvene toj ptici, koja je pak bila slučajnost oblika kljuna, oblika grla, prsne građe, kemije mozga: neke ptice blagoslovljene pjevom, dok druge proklete; neke kreštave, druge uznesene.

Odnekud, nešto dobro mi uputi pitanje, *Želiš li se vratiti? U potpunosti ovisi o tebi. Izgleda da ti se tijelo može spasiti.*

Ne, pomislim, ne, hvala. Dosta mi je.

Jedina se kajem zbog mame. Nadam se da ću joj jednom, na nekom boljem mjestu, imati priliku objasniti i možda bude ponosna na mene, zadnji put, nakon svih ovih godina.

S druge strane šume, kao u zajedničkoj suglasnosti, ptice odlete sa stabala i jurnu uvis. Ja im se pridružim, letim među njima, nisu me prepoznale kao nešto različito od njih i bio sam sretan, tako sretan, jer po prvi put nakon mnogo godina, odsad pa zauvijek, ne ubijam niti ću ikad više ubiti.

6.3.1. Analysis of the Translation of the Short Story “Escape From Spiderhead” by George Saunders

In this short story, creativity is required in terms of translating different names of the drugs, the device which administers these drugs, and different rooms of the facility where the

narrative is taking place. The readers are thrown into the narrative, and into this fictional world where one can choose to replace the regular form of incarceration with taking part in an experimental facility, an alternative form of imprisonment. Just like in the case of “Victory Lap”, this short story is also a first-person narrative told from the perspective of the protagonist Jeff. Furthermore, “Escape From Spiderhead” also makes use of the narrative mode called stream of consciousness. In this analysis, the focus will be put on two segments: lexical issues, which are to some extent related to refractions, and refractions which occurred in making up different names of the drugs and facility rooms, and the change of register when the protagonist Jeff receives the drug called “Verbaluce.”

A good starting point in the analysis of different names is the title of the short story “Escape From Spiderhead.” It was necessary to create a blend word, i.e. the word “Paukoglava” was formed by combining the word “pauk” or “spider” with the word “glava” or “head” infix ‘o’. This decision supports the dystopian setting, and in case that the words were divided and the title “Bijeg iz Paukove Glave” was chosen, it would not have the same effect. This may seem like a minor refraction, however, the weight that the infix ‘o’ carries is significant, since with its addition the word becomes marked with ideology. As it can be seen immediately from the title, names play a great role in this narrative. It is important to note that the refractions which took place in the names of the drugs are closely connected to the effect the experimental drug has on the prisoner. A general characteristic of the names of the drugs is that they are formed as a blend of two words. They are basically neologisms. This element can be compared to that of George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The beginning of two words are combined, thus, when translating, the meaning of the two words was analyzed as a means of producing the most suitable solution.

Another characteristic of all of the names is that they all have the trademark symbol (™) at the end. This symbol refers to an unregistered trademark and it plays a great symbolic role in

the narrative. It symbolizes the corporate United States, and it is a criticism of the pharmaceutical industry which has largely pervaded the lives of the contemporary citizens of the United States.

Before going into greater detail about the names of different drugs, it is important to discuss the device that administers these drugs. It is called a “MobiPak™” which is surgically joined to the prisoner’s lower back (Saunders 54). It is obvious that “MobiPak™” is a blend of two words: “Mobi” which denotes “mobility,” since the prisoners are able to receive the drug at any time and be mobile at the same time, and “Pak” which denotes the shape of the device and its function to store the drugs as a “pack” or a small container. This was left as it is in the source text, since it is also clear in Croatian and can be associated with the words “mobilnost” and “paket.”

The first drug that is mentioned is called “Verbaluce™” (Saunders 46). It plays an important part in the narrative, since it is responsible for the shift in register which will be discussed in greater detail later on. The interpretation is that its name consists of the Latin word “verbum,” i.e. “word,” and “luce,” a distorted phonetic alteration of the word “loose.” Simply put, after this drug is administered one feels that one’s mouth or lips are loose. Since the prefix “verba” is familiar in Croatian, it was left in the same form, however, “luce” was changed to “let” or “flight” in English. Thus, “Verbolet™” was used as the final solution. This decision was made because an equivalent or even a similar image needed to be achieved, and the “flying” or the “flapping” of the tongue as a person speaks rapidly seemed an appropriate one. Furthermore, it also refers to the register of the person reaching certain verbal heights that were previously not possible.

With the drug “Vivistif™” (Saunders 50) which is as its name suggests used to prolong erection, it was possible to achieve a full equivalence with “Pipikrut™.” The name of the fatal drug “Darkenfloxx™” (Saunders 55) posed quite a challenge to translate. The best way of

explaining its effect is to divide the two words that have been blended: “darken” and “flox.” The word “darken” is self-explanatory, however, the term “flox” represents a peculiar informal way of referring to the space inside one’s ear. Inside one’s ear, i.e. the space between one’s ears is where the brain and the mind reside. Following this analogy, this drug darkens the mind, thus the translation “Pomračum™” came into being.

Similar drugs to “Verbaluce™” which eases or improves talking are “VeriTalk™” and “ChatEase™” (Saunders 68). The names of these two drugs are self-explanatory. They were translated as “PunoGovor™” and “BrbljoLak™.” These drugs sound odd in their source form, and it is obvious that this oddity was kept in the target text. The drug “Docilryde™” is responsible for the person’s state of being docile or submissive, therefore, “PosluhoI™” was used. By the end of the short story, the protagonist realizes the absurdity and the nature of these names, and even implements it to explain his violent behavior: “It was like, with the drinking and the being a kid and the nearly losing, I’d been put on a drip called, like, TemperBerst or something. InstaRaje. LifeRooser” (Saunders 77). This segment was translated as follows: “Bilo je kao da sam bio, uz svo to pijanstvo i činjenicu da sam bio klinac i to što sam skoro izgubio, na infuziju zvanoj, ono, VučjaĆud ili tako nešto. InstaBijes. VitaRuina.”

The hypothetical name that requires the most explaining is “VučjaĆud” or “TemperBerst.” It was difficult to find a suitable translation for “burst of temper.” Thus, some distance from the narrow sense of the words was needed. “Vučja ćud” (literal translation “wolf’s temper”) is an expression which denotes a person driven by bloodlust or an uncontrollable urge to kill someone. This expression was chosen because of this close connection in meaning. Some other examples of names include “DisciStick™” translated as “DisciPalica,” “Bonviv™” as “Vitabela™,” “BlissTyme™” as “BlagoVrijeme™,” and “SpeedErUp™” as “UBrzAn™”.

The second issue is related to the change of register which the character experiences in his narration after he receives the drug called “Verbaluce™”. The example of first such case in the narrative follows:

He added some Verbaluce™ to the drip, and soon I was feeling the same things but saying them better. The garden still looked nice. It was like the bushes were so tight-seeming and the sun made everything stand out? It was like any moment you expected some Victorians to wander in with their cups of tea. It was as if the garden had become a sort of embodiment of the domestic dreams forever intrinsic to human consciousness. It was as if I could suddenly discern, in this contemporary vignette, the ancient corollary through which Plato and some of his contemporaries might have strolled; to wit, I was sensing the eternal in the ephemeral (Saunders 46).

As it can be seen from the example, the register becomes much higher, the protagonist Jeff begins to narrate in a more expressive and poetic manner. With each sentence, the register gradually rises from casual or informal to expressive or poetic register. When Jeff receives the drug, his vocabulary and thoughts become exalted. The translation of the extract above follows:

Dodao je malo Verboleta™ u infuziju i ubrzo sam osjećao iste stvari, ali sam ih bolje opisivao. Vrt je i dalje izgledao lijepo. Činilo se kao da se sve grmlje zbilo i zbog sunca se sve isticalo? Činilo se kao da će svaki trenutak ušetati viktorijanska gospoda sa svojim šalicama čaja. Činilo se kao da je vrt postao utjelovljenje domaćinskih snova zauvijek ukorijenjenih u ljudskoj svijesti. Činilo se kao da odjednom mogu razaznati, u ovoj suvremenoj vinjeti, drevni korolar kojim su Platon i neki od njegovih suvremenika koračali; proniknuti, ćutio sam vječnost u efemernosti.

Some minor issues are related to different short sentences which occur frequently in the narrative, such as “Drip on?” This question is always posed to the prisoner before the drug is administered, and by replying “Acknowledge,” the prisoner accepts or consents to being

drugged (Saunders 55). It was necessary to achieve the same coldness and detachment of these two sentences, thus, it was finally decided to use “Spreman za infuziju?” and “Potvrdno.” By means of literal translation, it can be translated as “Ready for the infusion?” and “Affirmative.”

Moreover, all of the rooms in the facility are written in capital letters. It was decided that, according to the Croatian orthographic rule about writing certain institutions in capital letters, only the first letter of the room’s first word was written in capital. In the narrative, the protagonist describes the layout of the rooms in the facility, and the reason why it is associated with a spider: “After Snack Abnesti called me into Control. Control being like the head of a spider. With its various legs being our Workrooms. Sometimes we were called upon to work alongside Abnesti in the head of the spider. Or, as we termed it: the Spiderhead. “Sit,” he said. “Look into Large Workroom 1” (Saunders 55). There are several issues to be discussed in the translation of this extract: “Nakon užine Abnesti me pozvao u Upravljačku prostoriju. Upravljačka prostorija bila je glava pauka. A mnoge njezine noge činile su Radne prostorije. Ponekad su nas zvali da radimo uz Abnestija u glavi pauka. Ili, kako smo je mi zvali: Paukoglava. „Sjedni“, reče on. „Pogledaj u Veliku radnu prostoriju br. 1.” As it can be seen from this excerpt, the noun “Snack” has been written in capital letters, however, in the translation “užina” was written in small letters. It seems that different events and rooms have a fixed role, and they represent a strict schedule which needs to be followed in order for the experiments to be as closely observed as possible. In the translation of “The Large Workroom 1” only the first letter was written in capital: “Velika radna prostorija br. 1.” Furthermore, in every such instance in which the room is numbered, “br.” or “number” was added in the translation, due to the fact that it is a common thing to say when numbering rooms of a certain building in Croatian. The “Spiderhead” or “Paukoglava” was written in capital letters, because it represents the central control room of the facility.

With this short story it was imperative to transfer the mood and the tone of the narrative. The dark tone and the tension that is built achieve its climax with the death of the protagonist Jeff. It was necessary to carry over these elements from the source text into the target text. The greatest challenge represented translating the blends which intensify the dystopian atmosphere of the short story. Some of the translated names of the drugs are conditioned by the pharmaceutical industry of the target culture and language. The names, such as “Verbolet™” and “Posluhol™”, were constructed by keeping in mind the suffixes (-et, -ol) as markers of the domestic drug nomenclature. Besides this, the changing of the register under the influence of “Verbaluce™” necessitated nuanced and fine-tuned changes in the character’s choice of words.

7. Conclusion

Behind the invisible role, the literary translator frequently makes visible changes to the source text which are necessary and inevitable for the target text to function in the target literary system. Many images which are created through domestic cultural items and references may not carry the same weight in the target culture, and because of this, refractions pose the ideal solution for bridging such gaps.

The literary translator strives to produce a good translation. As a means of achieving this, the translator's invisibility is an essential component in pushing the narrative in the foreground. However, in terms of the translator's image and the recognition he receives, this is where the translator needs to insist on visibility. Since translation is always perceived as a derivation, and not a creation, it is obvious that the translator cannot break free from his role of the invisible mediator. Due to this fact, the concept of the translator's invisibility should by all means be understood as a cultural critique, and a way of putting a spotlight on the translator (Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 13). It is surely a great satisfaction for the translator that the literary work and its writer gain literary capital or achieve success in another literary system, despite the translator being in the background of the process. Translator's invisibility is a necessary 'evil' and a sacrifice which the translator is ready to make for the sake of the literary work and literature in general. The tool for achieving this are certainly refractions, i.e. adaptations which the translator implements for the sake of the narrative, and as a means of retaining the illusion that the reader of the target text is experiencing the narrative as if he or she was the reader of the source text. Refractions and the translator's invisibility are thus intertwined. If the translator implements the refractions successfully, they will be accompanied by his own invisibility. It is important to note that refractions are not always fixed and overt. This may pose a difficulty in recognizing whether a decision of the translator is consciously or subconsciously driven, and whether ideological, poetological or political factors

influenced the implementation of a refraction. Besides larger elements such as style, tone and register, even some ‘smaller’ lexical choices can indicate the involvement of refractions. When entering a new literary system through translation, “[w]riters and their work are always understood and conceived against a certain background or, if you will, are refracted through a certain spectrum” (Lefevere 234). Languages and individual words are abundant with ideological, poetological or even political nuances. In the process of translation, smaller decisions also greatly influence the adaptation of a work to a different audience.

In the process of translating the short stories included in this master’s thesis, the notion of translator’s invisibility did not occur overtly, but rather subconsciously through adequate and good solutions which brought the narrative into focus. Misinterpretations and mistakes are perceived as betrayals and dead giveaways that someone is meddling with the source text. In such instances, the narrative is shattered, and the reader experiences betrayal. It was crucial to keep all of this in mind when translating the two short stories written by George Saunders.

During the analyses of the short stories, different issues of refractions, and consequently translator’s invisibility started to surface. The analyses of the translations mirror the translation itself. The flow of the narrative of the first short story “Victory Lap” is dynamic. It is also chaotic and erratic in shifting between the thoughts from one character to another. It was important to make a clear distinction between the voices of the three characters. Refractions played a great role in adapting their voices and register to make them sound true in Croatian. In “Escape From Spiderhead” the emphasis is put on a dark vision of the future. It posed a different kind of challenge that appeared in the form of blends which represent an important dystopian motif for this narrative. Different events, and substances that entered the protagonist’s body dictated the change of register, i.e. the nuancing and fine-tuning the protagonist’s choice of words.

A translator can only hope that the writer's work may enter larger bodies of works, such as world literature. Larger forces are in play in ensuring that a work enters the sphere of larger literary bodies. The translator's best chance to aid in this process is to guarantee that the translation matches the quality of the source text. More importantly, it needs to match the linguistic and cultural demands of the target audience which are met by implementing refractions into one's translation. These adaptations cannot be summed up in one example, since they represent fragments or tendons that enable the literary work to move into a new literary system. They gradually build up the whole narrative, transfer its essence and ensure the translator's invisibility. By refracting the literary work through the spectrum of the target language and culture, the reader's attention is caught by the element of familiarity which hides the presence of the translator. Because of this, the translator's invisibility surely improves the visibility of the literary work and its writer.

8. Works cited

- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Harvard University Press. 2004.
- Damrosch, David. *What is World Literature?* Princeton University Press. 2003.
- Damrosch, David. *World Literature in Theory*. John Wiley & Sons. 2014.
- Even-Zohar, Itamar. "Polysystem Studies". *Poetics Today, International Journal for Theory and Analysis of Literature and Communication*, vol. 11, no. 1. 1990.
- Hermans, Theo (1985). "Literary Translation." In: Kuhiwczak, Piotr. Littau, Karin. *A Companion To Translation Studies*. Multilingual Matters. 2007. 77-91.
- Kuhiwczak, Piotr. Littau, Karin, editors. *A Companion to Translation Studies*. Multilingual Matters, 2007.
- Landers, Clifford E. *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*. Multilingual Matters, 2001.
- Lefevere, André. (1982). "Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature." In: Venuti, Lawrence. *Translation Studies Reader*. Routledge. 2000. 233-249.
- Lefevere, André. *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. Routledge. 2016.
- Lewis, Philip E. (1985). "The Measure of Translation Effects." In: Venuti, Lawrence. *Translation Studies Reader*. Routledge. 2000. 264-283.
- Munday, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. Routledge, 2001.
- Saunders, George. "Escape From Spiderhead." *Tenth of December*. Random House. 2013.
- Saunders, George. "Victory Lap." *Tenth of December*. Random House. 2013.
- Saunders, George. "Biography." *George Saunders Books*, 4 June 2019, <http://www.georgesaundersbooks.com/about>.

- Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. Oxford University Press. 1998.
- Venuti, Lawrence. (2000). "Translation, Community, Utopia." In: Venuti, Lawrence. *Translation Studies Reader*. Routledge. 2000. 468-488.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation. Towards an Ethics of Difference*. Routledge. 1998.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (2nd edition). Routledge. 2008.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *Translation Studies Reader*. Routledge. 2000.
- Wechsler, Robert. *Performing Without a Stage: The Art of Literary Translation*. Catbird Press. 1998.

9. Abstract

Refractions and Translator's Invisibility – George Saunders: “Victory Lap” and “Escape From Spiderhead”

Translation is always a derivation, never a creation. The translator's position in the background of the literary work is almost always predetermined. His or her role is to remain in the shadow i.e. invisible, and to pave the way for the writer in the target literary system. This is often achieved through obvious and necessary refractions or interventions which at the same time signal the presence of the translator, but make him or her obscure. The aim of this thesis is to translate the short stories “Victory Lap” and “Escape From Spiderhead” from the short story collection *Tenth of December: Stories* (2013) by George Saunders and by analyzing the translations to determine which kind of refractions and changes had to occur in order to achieve and retain the translator's invisibility, and what are the consequences of these changes for both the source text and the translation. André Lefevere's notion of “refractions” and Lawrence Venuti's notions of “inscription” and “remainder” are used as a starting point in exploring the translator's invisibility in the analyses of the translations of the two short stories. Language and cultural differences are the main reason for applying refractions. As a result of this, refractions can be depicted as the translator's invisibility cloak. In turn, the translator's invisibility encourages the visibility of the literary work and its writer.

Key words: literary translation, refractions, translator's invisibility, George Saunders, Victory Lap, Escape From Spiderhead

10. Sažetak

Refrakcije i prevodilačka nevidljivost – George Saunders: „Pobjednički krug“ i „Bijeg iz Paukoglave“

Prijevod je uvijek derivacija, nikad kreacija. Prevoditeljev položaj u pozadini književnog djela gotovo je uvijek predodređen. Uloga je prevoditelja ostati u sjeni prijevoda, odnosno ostati nevidljiv i utrti put za pisca u književnom sustavu kulture primateljice. To se najčešće postiže očitim i neophodnim refrakcijama ili intervencijama koje u isto vrijeme upozoravaju na prisutnost prevoditelja, ali ga čine i neprimjetnim. Cilj je ovog diplomskog rada prevesti kratke priče „Pobjednički krug“ i „Bijeg iz Paukoglave“ iz zbirke kratkih priča Deseti prosinca (2013.) Georgea Saundersa te kroz analizu odrediti koje su se refrakcije i promjene morale dogoditi kako bi se održala prevoditeljska nevidljivost te koje su posljedice tih promjena kako po izvorNIK tako i po prijevod. Pojam „refrakcije“ Andréa Lefevere te „inskripcije“ i tzv. „ostatak“ Lawrencea Venutija koriste se kao polazišne točke u istraživanju prevoditeljske nevidljivosti u analizama prijevoda dviju kratkih priča. Jezične i kulturne razlike glavni su razlozi za primjenu refrakcija. Iz tog su razloga refrakcije mogu smatrati nevidljivim plaštom prevoditelja. Prevodilačka nevidljivost pak potiče vidljivost književnog djela i njezinog pisca.

Ključne riječi: književno prevođenje, refrakcije, prevodilačka nevidljivost, George Saunders, Pobjednički krug, Bijeg iz Paukoglave