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The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories: translations by Nico Orengo of the Burtonesque world

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Introduction

Movie director Tim Burton's *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories*, published in 1997, contains twenty-three poems written and illustrated by Burton himself. The unhappy protagonists of the collection are highlighted for their freakishness during their everyday life or part of it and because of their deformities, all the characters are tragic heroes destined for grievous events. The narrative poems induce in the audience a strong sense of disquiet and ambiguity because of the hilarious tone revealing the monsters' physical, imaginary, and non-comic traits. There is the result of the unholy union between a woman and a blender in the poem *Robot Boy*, the prodigious ability of a girl who stares for hours, days, weeks, and the catastrophic thoughts of Melonhead that will cause his death.

This thesis focuses on Nicola Orengo's translation of Tim Burton's poetry book *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* into Italian. The analysis examines the translations considering the difficulties that the poetry always entails, and the translation strategies applied by Orengo rather than merely judging his work. Furthermore, it will be proposed an alternative translation of the most challenging stanzas of the poem *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy.*

The thesis contains four chapters. Starting with an outline of some of the most significant concepts of Translation Studies such as untranslatability, equivalence, loss and gain, cultural influences, and the presentation of mainstays translation theorists such as Susan Bassnett, Umberto Eco, and Lawrence Venuti. I will proceed by focusing solely on the applicability of translation theories in poetry, I will concentrate especially on the translation by Nico Orengo of the collection of poems by Tim Burton and the tricky challenges the translator had to face to achieve an excellent outcome of the literary and artistic expression of the multifaced American author. Finally, I will recapitulate the selection of terms and approaches of the translator to explain his style both in the writing and in the translation of a niche literary product.

The research explores the relationship between the Source Text and the Target Text, the attention dedicated to the audience and the consequential source-orientation or the target-orientation, and the translation strategies used to convey the cultural-specific references and the other textual and linguistic items. The purpose of the survey is to notice and debate the relevance and implications of the changes in the text, especially when such modifications have an impact on the text's meaning. The textual analysis of *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* and the Italian translations indicate how the translator deals with the book's style and the problem of the source text's dual readership, in fact, the target audience can be both young and adult readers. At the heart of the textual study is a close reading of the translations of the poems that look at a variety of linguistic choices made by the translator. The chosen features are significant because of their cultural and poetic role. Moreover, the items are first discussed in detail for each translation before being observed from a comparative perspective.

Nowadays the most successful literary genre is the novel, on the contrary, poetry is still a niche market. Beginning with a presentation of each poem and an analysis of the fundamental elements of the text, the examination includes a critical investigation of the translation depending on Nico Orengo's style and approaches. The comparison considers a series of elements: the style of each writer, the hierarchy of translation values that influences Orengo, the cultural background, the audience expectations, and the differences in literary selection of terms and grammar structure

between Italian and English. The translation is evaluated by considering how the translator has effectively communicated the poem's meaning and has rendered it readable and comprehensible for the target audience, how much he has followed the source language system or if he has followed the target language grammar, the use of measurements and addresses' systems in both languages, how much he adheres to an appropriate register since Burton has a particular way of expressing his art.

Moreover, Burton is a poet and an animator, his drawings are essential to appreciate fully the stories the author is telling, this peculiarity permits him to shift between two dimensions: literary and visual.

It is necessary to use materials of different kinds to understand the multifaceted personality of the English author. The primary supports for a translator are obviously the glossaries and the terminology databases, these tools improve a better correspondence between English and Italian. The dictionaries used in the examination are monolingual and bilingual (Vocabolario Treccani, Cambridge Dictionary, Oxford Dictionary, Urban Dictionary, rhyming dictionary, and dictionary of idioms (The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms), moreover, the Italian encyclopedia used is the Enciclopedia Treccani, regarding the English encyclopedia it has been used the Oxford Research Encyclopedias. Considering the importance of the graphic images that are combined with the text it has been fundamental to make research about Tim Burton's style both in his movies and in his animation. Great support is Tim Burton's official website where can be found interesting interviews, exhibitions, film projects, and above all information about his collaborations with his translators. In the end, it is reported an interview by Andrea Rota to explain Orengo's translation challenges, choices, and strategies. It is also offered an analysis of the interview.

1. The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy and Translation Studies
1.1 Literature and nonsense writers

«Sono figure struggenti, disegnate con grafite e parole in neogotico, piccoli E.T. spaesati e fiabeschi che emanano ad ogni parola, ad ogni gesto un alone di meraviglioso, di incantesimo, subito frustrato dagli adulti, genitori, medici o "normali" che siano».[1]

-Nico Orengo

Over the last few decades, the interest in translation has increased exponentially, this is due to a greater and spontaneous openness of the individual to distinct cultures other than the one of origin, to the direct or indirect exposure to stimuli from foreign countries, and to the effects of globalization with consequences on the financial, cultural, and social developments. Translation has thus incorporated into its field of influence diversified areas, and it has evolved by adapting to the contemporary needs of the audience to which it is addressed. In the sphere of influence of the translation, this has meant the inclusion of texts such as novels, poetry, opera, theatrical writings, essays, cinematographic works, and much more over time. The quote of the translator marks the beginning of a close collaboration between one of the most famous Italian translators and an eclectic American author of indisputable fame, Tim Burton, this is how Nico Orengo presents for the first time in Italy one of the best-selling poetics works precisely because of its bizarre character.

With the famous translation of Tim Burton's *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* Nico Orengo offers a look at American nonsense literature showing the complicated mechanisms of composition and the facets that make these literary productions so peculiar. *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* is a collection of twenty-three illustrated stories of varying lengths written in verse. Its aim is to convey the anguish and pain of the adolescent outsider in a manner that is both comic and mildly macabre. Most of the characters in Tim Burton's works are young men and women, boys and girls who are just facing for the first time the brutality of society. This important lifetime is fundamental for the characters' development and in some cases their deaths. Here is a quote by McGillis to better understand the importance of this period:

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[1] Burton, T., (2006), *Morte malinconica del bambino Ostrica e altre storie*, trad. it. Nico Orengo, Einaudi, Torino.

Gothic fictions keep reminding us that we are haunted beings, (…). Adolescents are, perhaps, as intensely haunted or even more haunted than the rest of us. Their bodies as well as their social milieu are in flux, changing as they – both body and social group – morph (or should I say grow?) into maturity. The pressures both within and without on the early adolescent bring trepidation and confusion. The body begins to manifest its thirst for satisfaction in ways that test social decorum, and the social group likewise begins to manifest its thirst for pleasure and control. Peer pressure and biological urgency haunt the growing person, even in the light of common day.[2]

The expression '*nonsense*' refers to the literary genre born in the nineteenth century in England when the publication of poems with enigmatic and twisted meaning, paradoxical characters, and bizarre and intricate plots often accompanied by gruesome and horrible images began to be more frequent.

The excessive manipulation of the word stimulates curiosity and interest in the reader to spur him/her to continue reading to understand how far the absurdity of the plot can move.

Sense is the recognition, adjustment, and maintenance of the proper and fitting relations of the affairs of ordinary life. It is a constitutional tact, a keeping touch with all around it, rather than a conscious and deliberate action of the intellect. It almost seems the mental outcome and expression of our five senses. (…) In contradiction to the relations and harmonies of life, nonsense sets itself to discover and bring forward the incongruities of all things within and without us.

-Strachey Edward[3]

Unlike many other authors and translators of the same genre, Orengo does not address only a young audience, but also an adult audience that can grasp and appreciate the plot and it is this inclination to lead him/her to the selection of the famous collection of poems by the writer Tim Burton.

Nicola Orengo, known more by the nickname Nico than by his first name, was born in Turin on February 24th, 1944. In the same hometown, he attended the first elementary classes and then

[2] Jackson, McGillis, Coats, (2008), *The Night Side of Nature: Gothic Spaces, Fearful Time, The Gothic in Children's Literature: Haunting the Borders*, New York, Routledge, pp.227-241, p.231

[3] Strachey, Edward, (1888), *Nonsense as a Fine Art*, in *Little's Living Age*. Fifth Series, Vol. LXIV, pp.515-531 (reprint from Quarterly Review, 167, 1888, pp.335-365), p. 515.

moved to the place that would become the main setting of his works, Liguria. In his villa in La Mortola, he was surrounded by a natural and rural atmosphere, and it is precisely in this place that he developed an interest in literary, theatrical, and cinematographic art that will characterise his entire life making him abandon only 22 years of age the occupation of secretary to enter the world of publishing as a discoverer of new talents at the beginning of his career and then as a poet. His debut in the literary world took place with the collection *Motivi per canzoni popolari* in 1964 and it was with the birth of his son Simone, four years after this publication, that his interest in poetry for children grew until the publication of *A-ulì-ulé* in collaboration with the illustrator Bruno Munari. This last collection of 150 nursery rhymes, counts, and lullabies marked the beginning of a poetic period characterized in particular by the use of the limerick: a popular form of short, a humorous verse that is often nonsensical and frequently ribald. It consists of five lines, rhyming aabba, and the dominant meter is anapaestic, with two metrical feet in the third and fourth lines and three feet in the others.[4] Nico Orengo's career as a writer officially began with *Miramare*, it continued as a poet with *Collier per Margherita* (Rome, 1977), *Cartoline di mare* (Turin, 1984), and *Dogana d'amore* (Milan, 1986; Turin, 1996), it proceeded as a cultural journalist at the newspaper *La Stampa* and it followed as a translator of international successful works. Nico Orengo became the official translator of Jacques Prévert's *Paroles*, Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince* in 2000, and two of the most famous works by the American writer Tim Burton: *The Melancholic Death of the Child Oyster and Other Stories* (Turin, 1998) and *The Corpse Bride* (Turin, 2006).[5]

Timothy Walter Burton, at almost ten thousand kilometres, was born in 1958 in Burbank, California. Tim Burton was not raised by his parents with warmth and interest, in fact, they were emotionally distant. He grew up between bullying in school and his passion for the classic horror movies of the director Roger Corman. He began working as an animator for Walt Disney Studios after his graduation from the California Institute of Arts, he stayed there until 1982 when he decided to strike out on his own. Today Tim Burton is known as a director, producer, screenwriter, and animator of images that perfectly mix fantasy and horror.[6]

The bases of Nonsense in the history of literature can be found in the ancient Greek culture where the classic artworks were mostly oral, these pieces of work were the result of the authors' efforts

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[4] https://www.britannica.com/art/limerick-poetic-form

[5] https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nicola-orengo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/

[6] https://www.biography.com/filmmaker/tim-burton#:~:text=Tim%20Burton%20was%20born%20Timothy,quintessential%20screen%20villain%20Vincent%20Price.

who composed nonsense poetry to entertain the public during the festivities. The evolution of this genre proposes proof of its uses through the Medieval Period when it was celebrated what we call the Feast of Fools or Festival of Fools. This celebration began in Southern France, and it spread quickly through all of Europe. However, the wise evolution of the genre reached the highest point during the Victorian Ages that characterized the nineteenth century. Lewis Carroll was well known in this literary field; however, it was Edward Lear who was considered the father of Literary Nonsense.[7] Edward Lear's notable works are *The Book of Nonsense*, first published in 1846 in the greatest period of nonsense circulation, and *The Owl and the Pussycat*, first published in 1871 as part of his book *Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany, and Alphabets*. Lewis Carroll's works are most famous nowadays than Edwar Lear's ones, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its sequel *Through the Looking-Glass* have been translated into almost 100 different languages and more than one hundred million copies have been sold. As it can be seen Nonsense always existed. Furthermore, Nonsense traditionally is recognized as the combination of two artistic sources. On one hand, there is the oral folk tradition whose particularities are the songs and the rhymes, and on the other hand, there is the court poetry whose peculiarities are exaggerated satire and parody, these singularities of both the genres have been inherited through the centuries. The manipulation of the language to create an entirely new world, the perfect balance between what is illogical but maintains the logical thread in the plot, the visual experiences proposed to the reader, and the musicality of the verses are just some of the singularities transmitted to the modern writers by their predecessors. What Ben Jonson, an English playwriter and literary critic of the seventeenth century, defines a <<Spoken or written words which make no sense or convey absurd ideas>> is the perfect conjunction of paradox, exaggeration, destruction of the norms, defiance of the structure, what today we call *nonsense*.

> The laws of nature must be suspended, replaced by new laws which the author decrees. The result is a new world extremely systematic and, in its goofy way, eminently reasonable. Such a new world comes with its own animals, birds, insects, and plants; and in this department the inventiveness of nonsense poets is wonderful to behold
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> -Joseph Charles Kennedy[8]

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[7] Lewis Carroll (1832-1898) is the pseudonym of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson; Edward Lear (1812-1888).
[8] Kennedy, X.J., *Strict and Loose Nonsense: Two Worlds of Children's Verse*.

Nicola Orengo attaches great importance to the exercise of creativity both regarding his works as an author and in his translations characterized by the intimate collaboration with the authors and in particular with the Californian writer Tim Burton.[9] The latter is known for his characters often placed on the margins of society and many times characterized by macabre and gothic traits. The culture of the outsider, the death, and very often the monstrosity inherent in man distinguish his style from that of many of his contemporary colleagues. <<I always felt an empathy with monsters>>, he said, <<In those early films, the monsters were the most emotive characters. The people were the scariest ones with monsters it was often a case of, 'Let's try and kill this thing that we don't understand.>>[10]

The collection of poems *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* by Tim Burton, was published in Italy in 1998 by Einaudi. A year after the first publication by *William Morrow and Company*, Nico Orengo had already masterfully translated what is now recognized as the only official version in Italian of the poems.

1.2 Analysis of the collection of poems and methodology

The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories collects 23 poems that tell the stories of monstrous children who are half animals and half humans, who turn into objects or are not human beings at all. The illustrations for each poem are absolutely aligned to the texts creating the perfect example of the visual and verbal artistic expression of Tim Burton. It is the same author who affirms in *Burton on Burton*, published in 2006, that the collection is the result of many years of work and efforts.

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[9] https://www.biography.com/filmmaker/tim-burton#:~:text=Burton%20also%20developed%20a%20penchant,strike%20out%20on%20his%20own.
[10] https://parade.com/509732/willlawrence/the-peculiar-world-of-tim-burton/

Picture 1: *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories*' characters (T. Burton,1997)

The collection tells the story of twenty marvellous characters, and between them Stain Boy who became in 2000 the main protagonist of the animated serie *The World of Stainboy* by Tim Burton. In each episode, Sergeant Dale instructs the local superhero Stain Boy to hunt down oddball villains harnessing bizarre powers or to check the weird characters from the same collection of poems. The shift from the textual dimension to the visual one creates some limitations to the translation because of the features that each character has. For instance, one of Stain Boy's peculiarities is his cape with a big *S* on it, the initial letter of his name. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, ''stain'' means ''a dirty mark on something that is difficult to remove'' and it can be translated into Italian as ''macchia'', but Nico Orengo prefers to use the prefix ''super'' to maintain the peculiarity of the superhero's cape avoiding the necessity to change the graphic illustration to correct it with a big *M* on the cape (''Il bambino Macchia'').

Picture 2: Stain Boy (T. Burton, 1997)

This masterful trick by the translator is just one example of translation solutions applied to the text, many others are presented in the following poems.

In *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories*, there are two different categories of titles, the first typology is composed of a characteristic of the character and the words ''boy'' or ''girl'', for instance, *Robot Boy, Stain Boy, Junk Girl, Staring Girl*. On the other hand, in the second category, it is possible to find titles composed of an entire phrase that refers to an event that occurred during the character's life or his/her peculiarity, for example, *The Girl with Many Eyes, The Girl Who Turned into a Bed, The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy*.

All the protagonists are characterized by physical disfigurement and consequently, they are destined to be marginalized by society to live in loneliness or a constant situation of rejection. Boys and girls experience the parents' repudiation and the exclusion by same-age characters, in some extreme cases it leads to physical and violent solutions.

To conclude, the polyhedric collection is published as a reading for a young audience but only an adult reader can deeply appreciate the plots described in the very few lines and the typical black humor of the writer. It is possible to affirm that Burton's literary work focuses on the psychology of its characters through a detailed analysis of the everyday events of the children and a grotesque portrait of their lives through the author's drawings.

1.3 The concept of translation

An unequivocal and precise definition of the concept of translation has been the subject of debates and conferences, discussions and congresses, and seminars for centuries. It would be utopian to think of a univocal answer, especially if we consider that translation has a thousand details that render it a multifaceted subject of study. First, it is possible to distinguish two macro-categories: written translation and oral translation. It should be specified that these two rich categories frequently intersect one other sharing common characteristics such as knowledge of languages, bidirectional movement from one language to another, and full proficiency in the necessary translation strategies. The Associazione Nazionale Italiana Traduttori e Interpreti (A.N.I.T.I.), founded in Milan in 1972 is an organization composed of Italian professional translators and interpreters, distinguishes four other subcategories, among which we find: literary/editorial translation; the technical-scientific translation which includes the financial translation;

administrative translation; the adaptation of audio-visual works and the localization of software products and web content.[11]

The variety of texts and areas in which the translation is inserted make it difficult to define clear connotations. The writer and translator Umberto Eco analyses the meaning of the translation act in many of his works, especially in *Dire quasi la stessa cosa*, a collection of essays regarding the author's experiences and his knowledge in the translation field.[12] According to Eco, the immediate answer to the question of what it means to translate is: to say the same thing in another language (<<dire la stessa cosa in un'altra lingua>>). It is precisely in this definition that Eco emphasizes the first objections; in fact, what does it mean to ''say the same thing''? What is meant by the *same*? What is the *thing* we come up with in a text to be translated? And finally, what is meant by *say*?

As specified by Amparo Hurtado Albir,[13] the translation is <<Un proceso interpretativo y comunicativo consistente en la reformulación de un texto con los medios de otra lengua que se desarrolla en un contexto social y con una finalidad determinada>>.[14] Observing the practical communicative purpose, the translation is considered a dynamic and not a static process, as an interpretation and discovery of the hidden meaning more than mere reproduction, and social activity that exists in the oral or written text in which the context is fundamental because it is impossible to consider the words as isolated units. The idea of translation as a communicative act is related to what George Steiner suggests in *After Babel*. The translation is considered an implicit mechanism of communication, every speaker must decipher and interpret the text in different languages but also in their own language. According to Ilide Carmignani[15] <<Translating means bringing together two realities, two ways of looking at and feeling the world>> (<<Tradurre significa far incontrare due realtà, due modi di guardare e sentire il mondo>>), and it is with this goal that the translator has fought so that the translators themselves come out of the shadow of their profession to create bridges not only between author and reader but also between author and

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[11] https://www.aniti.it/tipologie-di-traduttore-quanti-tipi-di-traduttori-esistono/
[12] Eco, U., (2003), *Dire quasi la stessa cosa – Esperienze di traduzione*, Milano, Bompiani
[13] Amparo Hurtado Albir (1954) is currently a professor of Traductology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and she is considered an essential reference for Translation Theory.
[14] Amparo Hurtado Albir, (2001), *Traducción y Traductología*, Madrid, Cátedra.
[15] Ilide Carmignoli (Lucca, 9th of November 1960) is an Italian translator who contributed to the spread of the Venuti's theory about domestication and foreignization strategies in translation.

translator and above all between translator and reader.[16] According to Giorgio Amitrano[17], the outstanding translator of the books by Murakami Haruki and Yoshimoto Banana, translating consists of reporting the entire information contained in the source text, without modifying any of them by rewriting the text.[18] As stated by the translator Franca Cavagnoli, the translation can also be understood as the result of a collaboration between professional figures of Italian publishing figures such as editors, authors, translators, and reviewers. In an interview with *Nota del traduttore* (*N.d.T.*, an online magazine of literary translation) she says that collaboration between different generations is fundamental so that transversal knowledge and acquired knowledge are transmitted to new future translators, without precluding the possibility of innovative and fresh thoughts. There is therefore no mere limitation to the text understood as such, but an expansion of the spheres involved during the evolution of a translation and therefore of the act of translating itself.[19]

It is possible to grasp the difficulty of a precise definition that can bring together all translators and linguists who enrich the analysis of the subject through always different and equally valid points of view. The translation is still an art, the art of reconciling and spreading, the art of understanding an almost imperceptible trait and transmitting it. During his/her professional training, the translator acquires data on translation strategies, information on the culture of the people whose language he/she studies, and historical notions about his/her predecessors, but the real challenge takes place in the field: the text.

1.4 Untranslatability and equivalence

One immediately understands the reason for the disorientation caused to the translator when he/she is faced with such complicated questions about the precise definition of his/her work. The many facets of the translation act have been the subject of analysis of various writings on translation theory that arise in courses and departments for translators and interpreters whose work has influenced the modern and globalized society in which the individual is constantly exposed to

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[16] https://www.treccani.it/magazine/lingua_italiana/articoli/percorsi/percorsi_349.html

[17] Giorgio Amitrano (Jesi, October 31, 1957) is an Italian academic, essayist, orientalist and translator expert in Japanese language and literature. Among his publishing collaborations it is possible to include publishing houses such as Feltrinelli, Einaudi, Adelphi, Mondadori and Misuzu shobo.

[18] amitrano_intervista_5set16_amitrano_intervista 03/10/2016

[19] Franca Cavagnoli teaches Theory and practices of translation at the University of Milan and she works as an intense translator and proofreader for Adelphi, Einaudi and Feltrinelli.
Franca Cavagnoli, (2012), *La voce del testo. L'arte e il mestiere di tradurre*, Milano, Feltrinelli.
https://lanotadeltraduttore.it/it/articoli/focus/l-intervista/intervista-a-franca-cavagnoli-traduttrice-editoriale-dall-inglese#:~:text=Franca%20Cavagnoli%20insegna%20Teoria%20e,per%20Adelphi%2C%20Einaudi%20e%20Feltrinelli.

international external stimuli. In addition, the risk of the impossibility of a faithful translation proposed at the very beginning of the XX century has caused an increasing interest in the analytical study of the meeting points between the source text and the translated text. If we want to date the first and most salient moment of the discussion on the possibility or impossibility of translating poetic texts, we will certainly refer to 1902, the year of the publication of *Aesthetics as a science of expression and general linguistics. Theory and History* of Benedetto Croce. In the first edition of the work, the author states:

> Ogni traduzione [...] o sminuisce e guasta, ovvero crea una nuova espressione, rimettendola prima nel crogiuolo e mescolandola con le impressioni personali di colui che si chiama traduttore. Nel primo caso l'espressione resta sempre una, quella dell'originale, essendo l'altra più o meno deficiente, cioè non propriamente espressione: nell'altro saranno sì due, ma di due contenuti diversi.

According to the literary critic, the search for a total equivalent in the target language is an impossible task, any known or future translation can only be considered as a superficial copy of the original message of the text. The author refers to different literary genres, in the case of poetry the lack of an equivalent in the two languages defines the decisive loss of the inherent meaning of the source text. Moreover, the concept of untranslatability is immediately associated with the name of Catford which distinguishes two macro-categories: linguistic untranslatability and cultural untranslatability. The first typology places the translator in front of a visible reality immediately, the formal and structural characteristics of the source language (Source Language = SL) are absent in the target language (Target Language = TL), and the only applicable solution is the replacement of the textual material in one language by an equivalent textual material in another language.[20] Cultural untranslatability, on the other hand, is a much more complicated obstacle to stem as the present elements in the culture of departure could be totally absent in the culture of arrival or take on different meanings. Here is an example proposed by the linguist:

«The Finnish sauna and English bathroom may be their own accuracy equivalents, but sauna may be a room in a house, hotel, or ship, or even a separate building, in these cases, English equivalent bathroom would be evaluated by a translator as inappropriate » (Catford 1978:98,99)

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[20] Catford, J.C., (1965), *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

The total translatability of the term 'sauna' is lacking, we realize that this term does not find a full equivalence in the English world where it is the context that guides the linguistic choices of the translator so that the concept expressed can get as close as possible to the image depicted in the ST.

However, it should be emphasized that there is not a total untranslatability, but rather a balancing act between losses and acquisitions that dot the TT.[21]

The first criterion that is considered to judge the value of a translation is equivalence. It becomes fundamental in this precise context to make a brief excursus on the concept of equivalence to fully understand how much Nico Orengo's translations can be defined as equivalent to the poetic texts of Tim Burton. The translator Andrea Rota defines the translation of the poems <<traduzione bella molto infedele>> as Orengo proposes infantile rhymes and sounds in Italian modifying the stories and the meanings to bring them culturally closer to Italian readers.

The idea of equivalence has always been at the center of debates in Translation Studies and the ever-changing opinions: some theorists argue that translation is based on a game of equivalences, others that equivalence is impossible to achieve, and others still do not take a clear position but share aspects with both parties. Mona Baker, for example, uses the notion of equivalence <<for the sake of convenience – because most translators are used to it rather than because it has any theoretical status>> (1992: 5-6). The analysis generally focuses on two main factors: the degree (word, phrase, text) and the type of meaning (denotative, connotative, pragmatic, etc.). Depending on the theory and linguists it is possible to identify several types of equivalence, Koller argues for equivalence on several levels:

• *Referential equivalence* or *Denotative equivalence*: it is believed that the source text and the target text refer to the same physical reality.

• *Connotative equivalence*: the same mental associations arise from the source text and the target text.

• *Text-normative equivalence*: the source text and the target text are used in the same context.

• *Pragmatic equivalence* or *Dynamic equivalence* (Nida, 1964): The reading of the source text and the target text has the same effect on the reader.

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[21] Abbrev. Source Text: ST; Target text: TT.

• *Formal equivalence*: the words of the two texts are orthographically or phonologically similar.

To this classification, Mona Baker added in 1992 the *Textual equivalence* which includes the similarity in the cohesion and presentation of information between the two texts, while Newman annexed the *Functional equivalence* in 1994 arguing that the translator must make functional decisions based on the text in front of him and for this reason the priority given to the individual elements may vary.

The reflections of two theorists who have worked and profoundly marked the evolution of Translation Studies, or the interdisciplinary sphere that examines the theory, description, and use of translation, localization, and interpretation, will be proposed below. It is precisely because of its multidisciplinary character that Translation Studies embrace areas such as terminology, philology, comparative literature, and history.

Pillars of the translation and the concept of equivalence between the source text and target text are John Catford who made his theory known in 1969 and Eugene Nida who on a double occasion (1964, 1969) disclosed the conclusions of his studies on equivalence.

Catford identifies two types of equivalences: *formal correspondence* and *textual equivalence*. The systemic relationship between a source language and a target language element out of the context is considered formal, this is made difficult by the rigid structures of each language. The equivalence of a text is instead more flexible than the previous one, it is the relationship that is established in a given communicative situation between two units of text and it can include different types of systems and not only the linguistic code.[22] It is essential to remember that Catford theorizes these concepts when Translation Studies are not taking into account the context officially.

An exact 1:1 match is almost totally impossible in different languages, the only cases in which an application of this type is possible are those of elementary textual structures in which the form and content may correspond, but even in this case, the correspondence is never one hundred percent effective. For instance, the noun father, among the synonyms proposed by Vocabolario Treccani we find: babbo, papà, paparino, and papi.[23] The possible translations into the most common foreign languages are father, dad, daddy, père, отец (otets), vater, and so on. The terms may seem equivalent to each other in a 1:1 correspondence but it is necessary to distinguish, to avoid

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[22] J. C., Catford, (1965), *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
[23] https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/padre_%28Sinonimi-e-Contrari%29/#:~:text=babbo%2C%20(fam.),papi%2C%20(fam.)

misunderstandings, the *referential equivalence* from the *connotative equivalence*, that is, from what concerns the process that is triggered in the listener or reader listening or reading noun and the mental and emotional associations that derive from it.

Connected to the concept of equivalence is also the term *shift* used by Catford for the first time in the field of Translation Studies. The theorist pointed out that the shifts are occasional changes in grammar or structure or world-class in translating source text into the target text.[24]

Eugene Nida also identifies two types of equivalences that it calls: *formal equivalence* and *dynamic equivalence*.[25] The first is obtained by using the linguistic element as close as possible to that of the source language, the second instead is obtained by producing a message that has on the target audience the same effect it had on the readers to which it was originally addressed. The dynamic equivalence of Nida can be considered more flexible and adaptable to the reader's needs than the utopian 1:1 correspondence between two languages, having as its objective the communicability of the message allows syntactic and structural changes in the transition from SL to TL. According to Nida, there are three main phases in the translation: to decode the ST, to codify the TT, and to re-elaborate the TT. The first phase aims to find the meaning of the ST and reduce it to its simplest structure, the second step consists of codifying the message into the TT, and the last stage includes the stylistic and semantic re-elaboration of the TT. When Nida elaborates on his theories, he is referring to religious texts mainly, he is a translator of the Bible, and for this reason, the message he tries to transmit must be the same in the different languages. Nevertheless, his method can be applied also to Nico Orengo's translation, as we will see the Italian translator follows the same three steps and in addition, he creates a hierarchical structure of importance of the elements to the reader.

 Summing up, equivalence is not a univocally defined concept but depends on varied linguistic and extralinguistic factors and situations that can be found during the translation process.

An illustrative example of the linguistic and extralinguistic factors involved in translation is:

Анна идет на работу пешком.

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[24] Imperato, C., (2011), Analisi contrastiva delle modalità di traduzione (…), Helsinki, University of Helsinki, p.21.;.Herawati, P.S., (2016), *An analysis of shifts in the translation of English*, Gunadarma University.
[25] Eugene Nida (1914-2011) was an American linguist and translator; Nida, E., Towards a Science of Translating, 1969, pp.483-498

Anna si sta recando a lavoro a piedi.

Anna is walking to work.

The three languages express the same concept, and the result is the same, the reader will understand where Anna is going and how. However, the Russian verb Идет, from the verb идти, indicates a one-way movement on foot and characterizes an action that is taking place at the very moment in which it is enunciated. This nuance of meaning cannot be fully grasped in a translation into Italian or English. Looking better at the verbs used it is possible to notice the contemporaneity of the action concerning the moment in which the sentence is enunciated but not the uniqueness of a one-way shift without any stop, a fundamental quality in the choice of the verb of movement in the Russian language. The Russian verbs of movement represent one of the most difficult obstacles for young translators of this language who in their choice must consider the direction, frequency, and contemporaneity of the movement. There is no precise and applicable equivalence in every situation, but the translator must evaluate the dynamic context of the text and change the approach whenever it is necessary. Terminology becomes changeable, expressions transient, and contextual decisions variable.

1.5 The cultural aspect, between Christmas and Halloween

The concatenation of the different theories on translation causes with the advance of the analysis of the texts a domino effect such as including more authors and theorists. To completely understand Nico Orengo's first translation proposal, it is essential to present two other significant scholars of Translation Studies: Friedrich Schleiermacher and Lawrence Venuti. The conclusions reached by the two philosophers are closely linked to each other since both do not focus only on the transition from one language to another but underline the importance of a much broader and more significant context, the cultural one. The transition from one culture to another and the translation choices that derive from it represent the fundamental elements for the success of a translation. Is it advisable to adopt strategies that respect and re-propose the morpho-syntactic, lexical, and stylistic structures of the source text or is it preferable to modify them to make them closer to the reader of the target text? According to the German philosopher Schleiermacher the strategies that can be adopted are reduced to a single initial choice that the translator must make and respect for the entire text, the theologian argued that either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him, or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him. Schleiermacher already at a conference in the early nineteenth

century had expressed his preference for the first of the two possibilities.[26] The preference for the need to bring the reader closer to the writer is not simply by the philosopher's desire to arouse in the audience of the target culture the same emotions felt by the public of the culture of the original text, but also a nationalist inclination due to purely historical issues for which the French cultural domination risked to oppress the German literature of the nineteenth century. In the 1990s Schleiermacher's theory was taken up and modernized by the American philosopher Lawrence Venuti who, following in the footsteps of his predecessor, distinguished two approaches to which the translator can refer in his/her translation choices and he coined the two terms: *domestication* and *foreignization*. Lawrence Venuti fathoms the issue in his books The Translator's Invisibility (1995) and The Scandals of Translation (1998). Also, in this case, the choice of one or the other approach determines the strategies adopted during the transition from one culture to another, in particular in the case of foreignization the reader is exposed to stimuli and cultural aspects ''of others'' since these are not normalized and flattened within elements closer to the culture of the reader but explicitly manifested. Regarding this strategy, Venuti says that foreignization << entails choosing a foreign text and developing a translation method along lines that are excluded by dominant cultural values in the target language>>.[27] In the case of a domesticating translation, on the other hand, there is a greater adherence to the literary and linguistic conventions of the target culture so that it is precisely the translated text that approaches the reader avoiding that he/she feels alien to the proposed writing, Venuti affirms that this phenomenon << involves an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target–language cultural values>>.[28] Lawrence Venuti proposes an analysis of the British and American translation culture, in this case, the most used approach is domestication. He describes the domesticating tendency as ''ethnocentric violence'' and ''ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values'' (Venuti 1995:50). Obviously, strategies of domesticating or foreignizing a TT vary among translators, the aim of the text, genre, and purpose.

It is impossible not to mention in this context the 'Cultural turn', a movement created at the end of the XX century among humanists and scholars of the social sciences university to make culture the focus of the contemporary debates. This cultural approach is often known as associated with the

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[26] Schleiermacher, F., (1813), *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens (Sui diversi metodi del tradurre*; cfr. Morini 2007: 43), Berlin, De Gruyter Mouton.
[27] (Venuti, 1995, cited in Munday, 2008:145)
[28] (Venuti, 1995, cited in Munday, 2008: 144)

works of Lawrence Venuti, André Lefevere[29], and Susan Bassnett[30] about the theoretical and methodological shift in Translation Studies. Previously Gideon Toury dealt with the issue of the importance of culture in translation, as stated, the translator is influenced by his/her acquired culture so every text must be interpreted as the results of these influences to be understood. On the other hand, the 'cultural turn' focuses its attention on the observer than only on the translator. For Bassnett and Lefevere the translation is not the mere combination of linguistic units, but it also includes historical, educative, humane, and artistic aspects, this consideration forces the scholars to take a step back and think about one of the most powerful possibilities of the translation: the manipulation. In *Translation, History, and Culture*, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere show how the ideology of a country and the image of an author you want to show is also characterized by the dominant identity of the country.

<<Now the questions have changed, the object of study has been redefined, and what is studied is the text, embedded within its network of both source and target cultural signs in this way Translation Studies has been able to utilize the linguistic approach and move out beyond it.>>

(Bassnett & Lefevere 1990: 12)

An example of translation as a cultural re-writing to construct the images of authors, texts, and entire historical periods is *The Diary of Anne Frank* by the Jewish girl born in Frankfurt and refugeed in Amsterdam during the Nazi persecution. The analysis of the German translation shows that the tones down and Anne's account of the violence of the Jews are eliminated, and the words against the Germans are censored. This translation can be considered a re-writing of the book to fit with Germany in the fifties, a powerful process if we consider the attempt of Germany during that period to escape its Nazi past. The issue is no longer how to define the process but how much culture interferes with translation. Another mentioned factor is the 'dominant poetics', regarding this Lefevere states:

<<Two factors determine the image of a work of literature as projected by a translation. These two factors are, in order of importance, the translator's ideology (whether he/she willingly embraces it, or whether it is imposed on him/her as a constraint by some form of patronage) and the poetics dominant in the receiving literature at the time of the translation.>>

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[29] André Lefevere (1945 – 1996) was a Belgic translation theorist.
[30] Susan Bassnett is a Professor of Comparative Literature in the Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Warwick, which she founded in the 1980s.

From external influences, the translator receives and, consequently, the influences on the literature and the other fields that shape the culture well up naturally questions about the ethics of the translation and the position of the translator in the creation of the rational thought of the individual. Lawrence Venuti considers the translator the cardinal character of a conflict, what he calls 'the violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation' and for this reason, he denounces the 'invisibility' of this vital player in the social context where he/she hasn't an adequate recognition.

An example of a culture-influenced translation by Nico Orengo from the anthology of poems *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* by Tim Burton, it will be proposed below to understand more easily some of the bases of translation theory. The poem shows how from only two verses, 10 words, an in-depth linguistic and cultural analysis can arise in its translated version.

Oyster Boy Steps Out

For Halloween,

Oyster Boy decided to go as a human.

-Tim Burton

Il bambino Ostrica va in giro

Per Natale,

il Bambino Ostrica decise di travestirsi da umano.

-Nico Orengo

Referring to the previous theories it is possible to distinguish two distinct types of translation: domestication or target-oriented translation and foreignization or source-oriented translation. In the case of the poem quoted it is possible to see how Orengo preferred an approach that aims more

at the language and culture of the reader of the translated text. The most obvious departure from the original text is found in the modification of the mentioned holiday. In the English text the holiday mentioned is Halloween which in the Italian text is replaced by Christmas. The equivalence between the two holidays, in this case, is neither verbal nor pragmatic, in this case, the focus is not on the proximity between the two languages but on the parallelism between two texts in different languages. To better understand the meaning of Tim Burton's text we must take a step back and look at the characters that the American writer proposes both in his texts and in his scripts.

> Ragazze solforose, bambini ostrica e bambine con molti occhi: come sono inquietanti i piccoli personaggi di Tim Burton, innervati di nevrosi e malattie metropolitane. Non cresceranno mai e mai rimarranno come Peter Pan, perché l'arco della loro vita è breve e accidentato. Sono figure struggenti, disegnate con grafite e parole in neogotico, piccoli E.T. spaesati o fiabeschi che emanano ad ogni parola, ad ogni gesto, un alone di meraviglioso, di incantesimo, subito frustrato dagli adulti, genitori, medici o "normali" che siano. Per dar voce ai tanti personaggi di Tim Burton ho preso la via della filastrocca, della rima infantile, cercando una lettura che credo comune a quella di Edward Lear.[31]

''Burtonian'' characters are often gruesome, monstrous, and marginalized. The deep meaning of the poem is that the Oyster Child, already scary by his nature, decides to disguise himself as a human on the scariest night of the entire year according to tradition. In the Italian tradition, however, Halloween is not celebrated as in England for religious reasons, 31st of October is much better known as the eve of Ognissanti, the same applies to countries such as Spain, Poland, and Hungary. The Anglo-Saxon tradition provides that children disguise as frightening creatures knock on the doors of the neighbourhood in which they live to look for sweets, it is known as tick-or-treating. Halloween does not have in Italian culture the same resonance as in English culture, so it is replaced by Christmas, a holiday equally known, but this change causes the total loss of meaning of the text. The image of a monstrous child who disguises himself as a human, no longer characterized by a gruesome and deformed appearance, during the Christmas holidays loses the strong social denunciation of the author, that is, that it is man the most frightful creature. This cultural domestication represents only one of the examples in which a known and familiar context has been created for the reader of the translated text damaging the basic message of the foreign text.

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[31]Orengo, N., (1998), *Morte malinconica del bambino Ostrica e altre storie*, Torino, Einaudi.

After the publication of *Morte Malinconica Del Bambino Ostrica* many translators argued about Orengo's choices, in particular about his decision to approach the domestication strategy against a faithful foreignization. Some of the authors, poets, translators, and interpreters who read the Italian translation disagreed with the selection of ''Natale'' as a possible translation for ''Halloween'', among the proposals there was ''Carnevale''. This last festivity has in common with the original one the possibility to dress oneself up, but Nico Orengo questioned:

<<Halloween e il Natale hanno luce e buio, paura e speranza e dolcetti in comune, molto di più, credo, che se avessi usato il carnevale, e quale carnevale poi? Venezia, Viareggio, Torino?>>

(Nico Orengo, 2006)

1.6 Loss and gain: a surprise for James

The binary concept of *loss* and *gain* can refer to many different levels of the text and it represents another main problem of the translation process, for this reason, it is considered a significant issue in Translation Studies. Any culture-specific item contains the major cultural information expressed through the selected words of a text, which means that the cultural background knowledge is at the same time an essential feature of the language and a great challenge for the translator who must take into account the impact it had on the source reader and the effect it has to have on the target reader. For better comprehension and to avoid the repetition of terms, from here on the term *culture-specific item* will be substituted by the abbreviation *CSI*. We observe several classes in the categorization of the CSIs, domains such as work, food, politics, law, flora, and fauna among others. As we noticed in the previous example, the celebration of Halloween is a CSI that is characterized mostly by the tradition of countries such as England, Canada, the United States, and Ireland. It must be contemplated that the level of the gain or loss that CSIs will experience as they are translated is determined by the distance and variances between two different cultures. Susan Bassnett emphasizes the importance of the skills of a translator and his/her creativity pointing out:

<<The translator can at the same time enrich or clarify the source language text as a direct result of the translation process. Moreover, what is often seen 'as lost' from the source language context may be replaced in the target language context>>

It is at this point that we analyse the issue of the concepts of *gain* and *loss* in translation. As the translation is not the mere substitution of the grammatical and lexical components of a text but also

and more specifically of the cultural constituents, the extralinguistic factors are involved in the translation strategies applied and influence the translator's choices.

Loss in translation means the existence of a term or concept of meaning contained in the SL (Bassnett-M-Guire, 1991:30). Loss is the disappearance of certain features in the target text which are present in the source text. The translator usually cannot establish equivalence and therefore resorts to compensatory strategies. Gain, on the other hand, is the clarification of the source text. In 2006 Susan Bassnett describes it as <<the enrichment or clarification of the source language text in the process of translation>>. A theory shared by many translators and linguists who consider the gain as the result of the effective use of translation tools to help the reader to comprehend the specifics of a language. The translators 'have to learn the rules of the game' to achieve the best outcome and the first of them is that every language is dynamic, it does not exist as a static language, so creativity and adaptability are the bases of a good translation. Each time the translator must analyse the relationship between a language, the social context in which it is used, and the purpose of the author. Gain allows us to believe that sometimes a translator can produce target texts that are far better than the source text by making it clearer and more legible to the readers. Concerning the translation of CSIs, scholars have offered several repertoires of translation strategies to recompense the lack of equivalence.[32]

Although the concept of cultural-specific vocabulary has been extensively elaborated, the lack of terminology and the complexities of analysing the notion imply the necessity of a clarification of the used terms and their meanings. Different theorists have expressed their opinion regarding the difficult translation of cultural-specific texts full of items of a specific language that represent a way of thinking and acting, many of them have provided classifications and translation guides to solve the various problems the translator will face at a certain point of the process. Different terms have been coined in Translation Studies. One of the first theorists, Nida, in 1945 speaks about *cultural foreign words*. From the 50s up to now the terms used are: *realia* (Vlahov and Florín), *cultural terms* (Newmark, 1991), *culture-specific concepts* (Baker, 1992, 1995), *cultural bumps* (Leppihalme, 1995), *cultural-specific items* (Franco Aixelà, 1996), *culturally marked segments* (Mayoral and Muñoz, 1997; Nedergaard-Larsen, 2003; Ceramella, 2008; Valdéon García, 2009). However, it should be mentioned separately Foreman, who in 1992 talked about *cultural references*, a term that includes

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[32] Cómitre Narváez, I. and Valverde Zambrana, J.M., (2014), *How to translate culture-specific items*, The Journal of Specialised Translation.

not only the cultural lexicon itself but also other symbols, representations, or signals in general. Furthermore, Pedersen named them *Extralinguistic Cultural References* (*ECR*s), an interesting definition considering that, as a translator, the professor works mostly with audio-visual text and subtitles. Jan Pedersen shifts the focus from the mere translation to the spectator reaction, in fact, he designates the reference horizon for the reception of realia. For this reason, the target audience becomes the protagonist of the translation.

Although the innovator point of view of Foreman who includes in his theory different aspects of the communication or the creative results of the studies by Pedersen, among the most the term 'realia' is longer used. After much conspicuous research Sergej Vlahov and Sider Florin gave ''realia'' a definition:

> In every language there are words that, without standing in any way out of the original verbal co-text, nevertheless are not prone to be transferred in another language with the usual means and that require a special attitude from the translator: some of these words pass in the text of the translation in unchanged form (they are transcribed), others may partly keep their morphological and phonetic structure in translation, and others must be replaced at times with lexical units of entirely different value or even 'composed.' Among these words, one can find names of elements of daily life, history, culture, etc., of a people, a country, a place that does not exist among other peoples, countries, and places. These very words in translation theory have received the name of realia.[33]

The goal of Translation Studies is to provide a sophisticated and comprehensive model for investigating cultural translation problems and solving them. Once the term was defined it was also easier to outline the strategies to be applied.

For the translation of the realia, in 1970 Vlahov and Florín proposed six methods:

- Transcription: a technique used to write an exact copy of what is said in the source text.
- Calque: it is also known as a loan translation; it is a word-for-word translation from one language to another.

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[33] Vlahov and Florin in Osimo 2004: 63

- Formation of a new word: a newly coined expression, term, word, or phrase, it is also known as ''neologism''.

- Assimilation: it is the process of adapting a text to the culture of the target language, which may lead as a result to the loss of the cultural items from the original text.

- Approximative translation: it is a not perfectly accurate translation, but it is very close.

- Descriptive Translation: rather than simply and directly translating a term or a phrase from the source text, it is used the description.

According to Newmark (1988/1992:145), there are many procedures such as:

- Loan translation or calque

- Transference: the process of transferring a word from the source language into the translated text in the target language. The transference also incorporates transliteration, which is linked to the different alphabets.

- Cultural equivalent: ''replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item which does not have the same propositional meaning'' (Baker, 1992: 30).

- Neutralisation: this technique can be used to explain an idea from a source text, it can be used through the particularization (from a general concept to a more specific one) or the generalization (from a specific concept to a general one).

- Literal translation: this is a word-for-word translation; it means that the words of the ST are translated separately within a sentence, and they are considered as independent units.

- Recognised translation: it happens when the translator '' normally uses the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term'' (Newmark, 1988b:89)

- Addition: while translating, the translator adds a few words to the target text that are not present in the source text to substitute idioms, phrases, or expressions that could create problems in the comprehension of the target audience.

- Deletion: this technique includes the possibility to omit a part of the SL text, as a result, the idea and the meanings expressed in ST are lost in the TL text.

Moreover, Franco Aixelà (1996) ordered translation procedures on a scale of degree from conservation (repetition: the act of saying the same thing; orthographic adaptation: the act of replace the SL orthography by the TL orthography; linguistic (non-cultural) translation; extratextual gloss: a technique used as a secondary strategy, it is used to give more information in brackets, using a particular font, footnote, etc.; intertextual gloss: the act of relating the TT with other texts about

the same topic) to substitution (synonymy: the act of using a term or expression that has the same or almost an equivalent meaning of the SL as another word in the TL; limited universalisation: as in the generalisation, a specific term in the SL text is substituted by a more general one in the TL text; absolute universalisation: this happens when a translator cannot achieve to find a CSI of the source language and he/she prefers to use a neutral reference deleting any kind of foreign denotation; naturalisation, and deletion)

As an example of compensation of loss by one of the mentioned strategies previously can be analysed in the poem *James* collected in *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* by Tim Burton. In this specific case, a cultural term used by the author has been replaced by Orengo by a more general term in the target text.

James

Unwisely, Santa offered a teddy bear to James, unaware that

he had been mauled by a grizzly earlier that year.

James

Un incauto Babbo Natale volle regalare un orsacchiotto

a James colpito da poco da un grande orso incazzato.

As it can be seen, in the Italian translation of the poem the word ''grizzly'' has been translated as ''grande orso incazzato''. The Italian version of Tim Burton's poem is characterized by some important features that can be analysed through translation strategies. Nico Orengo makes two significant changes, the first in the distance created from the peculiarity of the used terms and the second in the tone of the poem. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the ''grizzly bear'' or simply ''the grizzly'' is a very large, greyish-brown bear. The mammalian predator only lives in North America, in Italy the word grizzly is used as an adjective (orso grizzly) or it is translated as ''grigio'' (orso grigio), according to the Vocabolario Treccani. Nico Orengo in his translation decides to avoid the use of the American word to a most common and familiar term to the target reader and, consequently, his decision causes the total loss of the peculiar feature of the animal which lives in America. It is possible to hypothesize that the source reader associates the American term with some images which the target reader can associate only thinking to a big bear. The cultural

substitution does not have the same exact meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader, so the replacement is justified by the necessity to create a more familiar reference to the target audience. Another change made by the translator is the change of tone in the last line. Tim Burton maintains a neutral tone in the original poem, he does not refer to the reader directly nor uses a particular type of vocabulary. On the other hand, Orengo decides to use the swear word ''incazzato'' to describe better to the target reader the context of the story.

In summary, the multitude of opinions on the possible strategies of translation of cultural elements is equal to their importance in Translation Studies. As Ramière points out <<scholars do not agree on the number of procedures available to translators, or on to label them>>.

1.7 Untranslatability of poetry

As has been anticipated, there are four main types of translation: literary translation, technical-scientific translation, administrative translation, an adaptation of audio-visual works, and the localization of software products and web content. In this paper, the focus will be on literary and editorial translation, in particular on the literary genre of poetry. The link that is established between poetry and translation has been at the centre of several discussions especially at the beginning of the twentieth century when the literary critic Benedetto Croce decided to openly take a position against the translatability of poetry. The first meeting of considerable importance between Benedetto Croce and translation took place in the philosophical field when the philosopher decided to translate the Hegelian work *Enciclopedia delle Scienze filosofiche in compendio*. Although the famous German writing already had an Italian translation by Alessandro Novelli, much better known is the version by Benedetto Croce who in the Preface to the translator states:

> Il traduttore manifestava saggi propositi di fedeltà; e in un'avvertenza osservava: «Se ogni filosofia non può formolarsi altrimenti che nella lingua da cui sgorga, l'idealismo del cattedratico di Berlino, mal contenuto nello stesso tedesco idioma, dee naturalmente trovarsi compresso in una lingua spirante per ogni sillaba i pregiudicati concetti di epoche passate da molto. (Croce 1907, XII).

And about Novelli's translation:

> La presente traduzione è quasi letterale, essendomi studiato di conservare non solo il significato astratto, ma anche la lettera e l'impronta dell'originale; e perciò non ho usato neppur di quella libertà di sostituzioni terminologiche e di parafrasi interpretative, che ha

adoperato il traduttore inglese. Più che un ritratto, questa mia traduzione è, dunque, ed ha voluto essere, un ''calco''. So bene che cosa si può addurre contro un tal metodo; ma ogni metodo di traduzione è difettoso. (Croce 1907, XX).[34]

Within the list of Italian literary critics who have affirmed the untranslatability of poetry, the name of Benedetto Croce is certainly one of the most authoritarian. The thought affirmed in the Preface clearly shows how Croce maintains the impossibility of expressing any concept in a language other than the one from which it was born and this, consequently, leads him to prefer a calque of the structure of the source text. The issue of untranslatability faced by the scholar, however, does not stop with the publication of the Preface but continues with another work*: L'intraducibilità della rievocazione*. It is in this writing that the author states that the essence of a poem lies in its creation, and it is impossible for a translation to fully grasp its intrinsic substance. Moreover, it is through a metaphor that Pirandello offers his explanation of what it means to translate and does so in an essay, *Illustratori, attore e traduttori*, contained in the volume *Arte e Scienza* and published in 1908. The author proposes the clear image of the translator as the one who has the purpose of transplanting "a tree", a symbol of vitality and prosperity, from one land to another that is not its own:

Sotto il nuovo clima perderà il suo verde e i suoi fiori; per il verde, per le foglie intendiamo le parole native e per fiori quelle grazie particolari della lingua, quell'armonia essenziale di essa, inimitabili. [...] Avremo dunque, sì, trapiantato l'albero, ma costringendolo a vestirsi d'altre foglie, a fiorir d'altri fiori; foglie e fiori che brilleranno e stormiranno altrimenti perché mossi da altra aura ideale: e l'albero nel miglior dei casi, non sarà più quello: nel peggiore, cioè se più ci sforziamo di fargli ritenere del primo rigóglio, più esso apparirà misero e stento.

 The fate envisaged by the writer is not positive, at best the text will be disseminated with some incomprehensible terms and references and at worst it will be the work itself to perish under the blows of a useless attempt to transfer it from one culture to another. Nevertheless, Pirandello through his essay focuses on cultural translations, rather than linguistics, studying the discipline starting from cultural differences in anthropology, through this dedication and desire to investigate the issue we grasp an ambiguous hope that translating can also be possible according to the author. To the list of authors who consider poetry untranslatable is added Giovanni Gentile[35] at the

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[34] https://rivistatradurre.it/benedetto-croce-ancora-lui/
[35] Giovanni Gentile (Castelvetrano, 1875 – Firenze, 1944)

beginning of the twenties when, with the publication of *Il torto e il diritto delle traduzioni* in the "Rivista di Cultura", he took the side of Croce and he reiterated the untranslatability of poetic texts. According to the Italian academic, the work done by the translator is that of the mediator who moves between two languages in transporting the text from one shore to another, the result corresponds to an approximation of the source text that maintains the same meaning but loses its aesthetics. However, Gentile celebrates the translator by stating: <<Chi traduce comincia a pensare in un modo, al quale non si arresta; ma lo trasforma, continuando a svolgere, a chiarificare, a rendere sempre più intimo e soggettivo quello che ha cominciato a pensare: e in questo passaggio da un momento all'altro del proprio pensiero, nella sua unica lingua, ha luogo quello che, empiricamente considerando, si dice tradurre, come un passare da una lingua ad un'altra>>. Considering this it is possible to say that according to Gentile the correspondence translator-mediator is almost total. In *La lealtà del traduttore di poesia* by Franco Buffoni the translator decides to face the issue of literary translation head-on and its difficulties. The interest in the pure theory of translation is accompanied by greater attention to practice and the important steps already taken directly in the literary field. The author argues that there are two ways of approaching the poetic text for a good translation: the first consists of the most widespread practice among poetry translators who seek a high and poetic language without personal involvement, this is the case of excellent authors such as Bo, Macrì, Baldi, Poggioli, Traverso; the second method consists not in reporting the text ''anonymously'' but in reliving by the translator the creative act and process experienced by the original author, this second therefore provides for greater involvement of the subject.

On the other hand, there are translators who fight against the theoretical idea of translation as a secondary product of the literature. In Emilio Mattioli's opinion, the interrogations about the possibility or impossibility to translate the poetry are absurd. In *Il problema del traduttore*, a collection of theories and examinations of the translator published in 1965, Mattioli begins his explanation presenting Croce's theories about the unreachable transability of the poetry to let the reader and the theories reflect on the direct proof of its transability, he simply claims that proofs of the possible translations are all around the audience in different forms, not necessarily only in the literature field.

To conclude, the translator Nico Orengo's opinion is very clear about the possibility to translate the poetry. He stands in between the two opinions and he granted an interview in 2006 in which he states:

<<Anch'io penso che la poesia sia intraducibile e che lo si possa fare solo, cercando di avvicinarsi il più possibile ad un universo geografico-culturale. L'unica scusante che ci si può dare, traducendo una poesia, è che lo si sta facendo perché in proprio si fanno dei versi…c'è, chiamiamola così, una fratellanza di suoni, rime, versi che accomuna chi ha scritto quel testo e chi lo gira in altro respiro, in altra lingua.>>

2. The author's style and the translation strategies

2.1 Faithfulness to the source text: Robot Boy's life

> In ogni testo che capisco di voler 'tradurre' cerco di individuare l'elemento prevalente, quello irrinunciabile: può consistere nell'intarsio ritmico-melodico, o nel pensiero nitidamente formulato, oppure nell'illuminazione, nell'epifania: quel guizzo, che da solo costituisce il senso profondo del testo. In tal modo, so dove posso eventualmente compiere un sacrificio. […] Mia ferma convinzione è che non di 'fedeltà' si dovrebbe parlare bensì di 'lealtà'. Il termine fedeltà connota guanciali, lenzuola e sotterfugi; il termine lealtà due occhi che fissando altri occhi dichiarano amore ammettendo un momentaneo 'tradimento'.[36]
>
> -Franco Buffoni

The rapid development of global communication technology has created a powerful necessity for translation from one language to another or from one language to more than one. The extensive materials that the translator can use to achieve his/her goals can be at the same time a risky tool or a dreamy White Rabbit, for this reason, the translator must create his/her own ''ethic code'' about his/her approach to the text through adequate knowledge, experience, and acquired practical skills. The idea of faithfulness can be inserted in the ''ethics'' that every professional creates for himself, in the present quote Buffoni suggests the very slight difference between faithfulness to the text and betrayal to this. As stated by the translator is more precise to talk about faithfulness referring to a situation with a partner, a situation in which you fail in supporting and sharing feelings towards someone. It is more adequate to talk about temporary betrayal regarding the translation. The Translation Studies always focus their attention on the issue of faithfulness because of its importance in the transmission of a translated text that can be a delightful example of the ST, however, unfaithful to it. *Belles infidèles* is an expression associated with a mistranslation or an imprecise translation, beautiful in the style and the form in the target language but far from its source, the original text.

Faithfulness can influence different levels of the source text: grammar, structure, meaning, context, lexicon, etc. Commonly, the more the translation re-proposes these elements and the more it is faithful. Historically, the general discussion about a ''faithful translation'' began in France during the

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[36] https://www.treccani.it/magazine/lingua_italiana/speciali/Traduzione/Buffoni.html

XVII century when the history of translation heard for the first time what the French translators called *belle infidèles*, a term coined by the philologist Gilles Ménage.[37] Furthermore, in France was founded in 1635 by the cardinal Richelieu the Académie française, it is considered today as one of the most notable institutions representing the importance of French and an adaptation to contemporary history. During the XVII century, the French government decided to affirm its supremacy from a politically, economically, and especially, linguistically point of view, these phenomena spread quickly also in other countries. The linguists talked about ''linguistic purism'', a theory that explains the belief of the existence of a pure language in a 'hank' of secondary languages in which are included the dialects. The Académie française portrays the goal of the total identification of the citizen to the Country through the language, and in consequence of that, the selection of the texts and the translation choices are influenced. With the meaning of "rejection of any foreign influence" the word *purism* entered the linguistic field and contributed to the creation of the idea of all the nations as we know them today. As a result, French translators proposed a linguistic and extralinguistic adaptation of the classics, an adaptation to say 'quite the same' for the art's sake to reach the reader and expand the accessibility of the iconic pieces of human culture. Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt states:

<< I don't always try to reproduce words [of the author], not even his thoughts. My purpose is instead to achieve the same effect that the author had in mind and then adapt it according to the taste of our time>>.[38]

It is during this period that England support a no literal approach, for this reason in the translation by Dryden of the *Epistolas* by Ovidio the author expresses an open criticism of two used methods of translation: the metaphrase, translating word by word; the imitation, translating changing the words and the meaning; and he defends the paraphrase, translating maintaining the meaning. The affirmation led to an unsolved question: the fidelity of any literary translation. The main problem lies in the impossibility to find a structure that is totally equivalent to the source one, any translator chooses to sacrifice something and compensate for it in another part of the text or to change it completely because he/she considers it expendable to a bigger purpose: transmit the meaning of the text.

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[37] Amparo Hurtado Albir, La notion de fidélité en traduction. Paris, Didier Érudition, 1990, p. 2317
[38] Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt (1606-1664) was a member of the Académie française

Another crucial Italian expression in the translation history is ''traduttore, traditore'' which literally translated in English means ''translator, traitor''. The saying appeared for the first time in the 19th century when the writer Giuseppe Giusti collected different Tuscan proverbs. The expression was used only in an oral context there are no literary antecedents, but it became common in the translation context very quickly. Originally, the adage was referred to Latin, the most translated language at that time, and used in varying contexts such as the religious or the political ones.

Historically, priests, lawyers, and doctors were among those who utilised Latin in professions. The concept, as the idea of belles infidèles, refers to the impossibility of the translation to fully convey the depth of meaning, setting, and passion as the source text intended. The voluntary or involuntary produced gap leads to a change in the meaning between the source text and the target text, it can be caused by a lack in the lexicon in the target text, the absence of an expression, or a deliberate change by the translator who decides to adjust parts of the text. Translating does not mean rendering one word in a language to another word in another language, the background is much more complex than that, one of the obstacles the translator faces is the difficulty to avoid a lack of fluency in the attempt to save all the grammar, syntactic, lexical elements of the source text. Of course, it is ironic, because translators see their job as the contrary to mystification: their goal is to make ideas, experiences, and perspectives stated in one language available to speakers of another language. And, by definition, this entails figuring out how to convey strange notions from an alien culture, thus the process is bound to be imperfect, including a series of compromises in the hunt for a TL equivalent. It's easy to understand how, in a literary translation, this might imply abandoning literal accuracy in favour of a truer rendition of the original's style or tone. To conclude, when translating, the translator is forced by the semantic and syntactic differences to face the raised discrepancies. The translator must decide whether save the literacy of the ST, which often means to lack of fluency in the TT or to communicate the author's meaning instead. The aspiration to the perfect translation is a dead-end street and the translator's choices are the cause of his/her label as a traitor.[39]

Poetry makes everything more difficult than other types of texts; it is characterized by the use of rhyme, meter, and stanzas. The first characteristic, the rhyme, consists of the combination of words that have the same sound. There are different types of rhymes: end rhymes, the rhyming of the final words of lines in a poem; internal rhymes, the rhyming of two words within the same line of poetry;

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[39] https://blog.oup.com/2012/09/traduttore-traditore-translator-traitor-translation/

slant rhymes, rhyme in which two words share just a vowel or a consonant sound; rich rhymes, rhymes using two different words that happen to sound the same; eye rhymes, rhyme on words that look the same but which are actually pronounced differently; identical rhymes, Simply using the same word twice. As we will see in his poems Tim Burton uses the end rhyme mostly, but before any kind of analysis of a specific poem, let us take a step back to fully understand the notoriety of the director. In the Urban Dictionary, a constantly updated dictionary about daily expressions, it exists an adjective ''used to describe people, objects, actions, or a kind of atmosphere/tone, which bare a resemblance in nature style to the films of acclaimed director Tim Burton'': Burtonesque[40]. Tim Burton's poems relieve his deep fears, abandonment, and being an outcast growing up, these are the inheritances of his growth and consequentially the main themes of his poems. *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* represents his best poetic work regarding the ''weird'' characters he focuses also on in his films. Through the lines and the rhymes, the adult reader can discover the deep dark meaning, a younger reader instead could only appreciate the superficial funny appearance of the poetic art of Tim Burton. A good way to describe Burton's work is 'gentle horror stories' and a very visible example is the following proposed poem.

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[40] https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Burtonesque

Robot Boy

Mr. and Mrs. Smith had a wonderful life.

They were a normal, happy husband and wife.

One day they got news that made Mr. Smith glad.

Mrs. Smith would be a mom

which would make him the dad!

But something was wrong with their bundle of joy.

It wasn't human at all,

it was a robot boy!

He wasn't warm and cuddly

and he didn't have skin.

Instead, there was a cold, thin layer of tin.

There were wires and tubes sticking out of his head.

He just lay there and stared,

not living or dead.

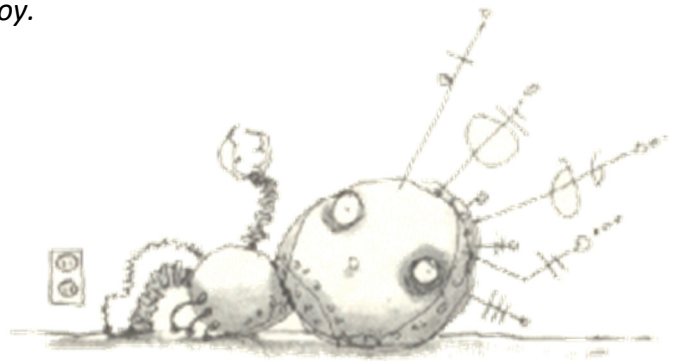*The only time he seemed alive at all*

was with a long extension cord
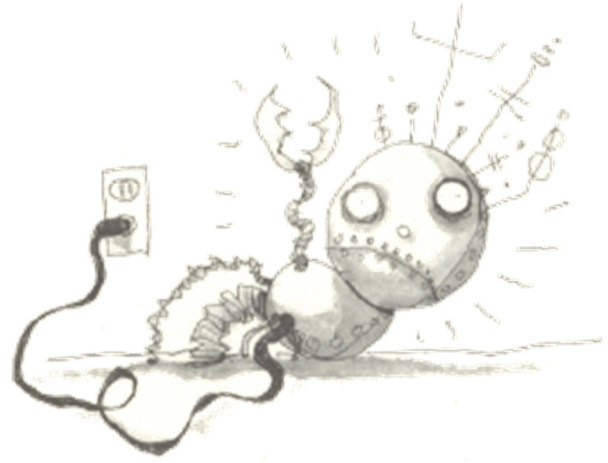
plugged into the wall.

Mr. Smith yelled at the doctor,

"What have you done to my boy?

He's not flesh and blood,

The doctor said gently,

"What I'm going to say

will sound pretty wild.

But you're not the father

of this strange looking child.

You see, there still is some question

about the child's gender,

but we think that its father

is a microwave blender."

The Smith's lives were now filled

with misery and strife.

Mrs. Smith hated her husband,

and he hated his wife.

He never forgave her unholy alliance:

a sexual encounter

with a kitchen appliance.

And Robot Boy

grew to be a young man.

Though he was often mistaken

for a garbage can.

Quel bidone di bambino

Il signore e la signora Ferroglio,

abitavano la vita come una goccia

d'olio. Congiunti grigi e felici,

fino a che un dí, alle dieci

scoprirono d'essere pa' e ma'.

Arrivò quel fagotto e fu

Un grumo senza gioia:

ohibò

quel bambino era

un robot.

A toccarlo non c'era pelle,

per lui nessuna buonasera

poteva scaldarne la lamiera.

Né vivo, né morto:

il suo sguardo spento

o assorto, dipendeva

da valvole e fili,

alla spina dove li attaccavo.

Poi, ci fu un lunedì

Che inserendo la prolunga

Ai suoi lunghi fili

Disse un sì, lungo una mattina,

fino a quando non staccarono la spina.

Il signor Ferroglio, stupito

Aveva guardato il dito

Del medico specialista:

-Cosa ha fatto- chiese.

-Questo non è un bambino

Ma un grumo di alluminio.

Poi, cautamente, al signor Ferroglio

aveva svelato la meraviglia

del bambino che molto

aveva a che fare

col nome di famiglia.

-Vede - disse - c'è un dubbino
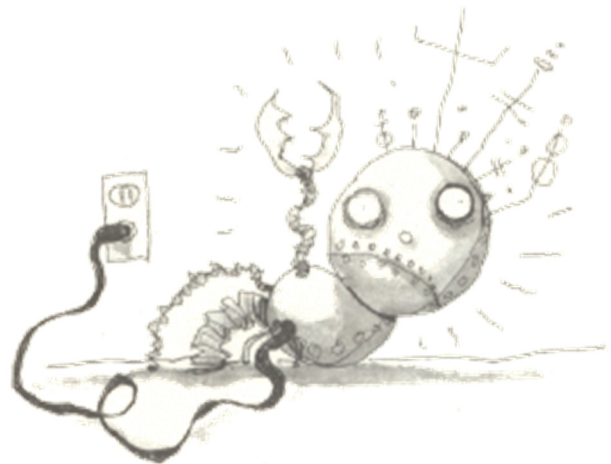
sul sesso di questo bambino.

Penso che il vero padre

sia da cercare non in città

ma qui in cucina fra un coltello

e una tazzina: sua moglie, per caso,

usa il micro-onde la mattina?

Pe i Ferroglio la vita

diventò un inverno,

senza più olio, piena

d'inferno.

La signora Ferroglio

odiava il marito e la famiglia,

mentre lui, da lei non avrebbe

voluto neppure una figlia:

temeva che l'avrebbe

fatta con una lavastoviglia.

Per conto suo il bambino

diventò un giovanottone

anche se troppo spesso

e a calci e sputi

lo prendevano per un Bidone,

di rifiuti.

A glance at the poem and a brief reading of the text is enough to notice the quite similar structure of the ST and the TT. Through forty lines, and seven stanzas, Tim Burton tells the crazy, funny, unbelievable, bizarre, and sad story of a boy whose only fault is to be the result of sexual intercourse between a human and an appliance. The same story is told by Nicola Orengo in the correspondent text *Quel bidone di un bambino* but in a different way. Nico Orengo, as a translator, faces many difficulties throughout the process. The main visible difficulty is the rhyme used in the poem.

Tim Burton gives particular attention to the rhyme, and it is quickly considered to be the most important element to be reproduced by the translator for this reason Orengo decided to change some traits of the original poem saving this peculiarity. The whole story is upside down, mutated, and shaped in line with the pattern of sounds used in the musical poetry that in the original text is like a song.

The story is told keeping the principal characters: Mr. and Mrs. Smith and Robot Boy, but with some tricks. In point of practice, the translator changes the name of the parents who become the Ferroglio, the original surname is the most common in America before Johnson and Williams, but it does not have any kind of boundary with the story told by Tim Burton. On the other hand, Ferroglio is not a common surname in Italy, but it is an excellent translation strategy used by Orengo to anticipate the main characteristic of the baby. The translator substitutes the American surname with one that is formed by the word 'Ferro', in English 'iron', which is one of the most used materials to create robots. The substitution makes the text more familiar and easier to understand for the target reader.

It also cannot be ignored that the title in the Italian version is *Quel Bidone di bambino*, which is a title that moves the focus from the peculiarity of the boy to his sad fate. In the translation, the boy loses all the human connotations he has in the original title and, as a consequence, the human feelings the reader can imagine he has. Ted Kooser says that the poem's title is the ''first exposure (a reader) has, and you want to make a good impression''.[41] Tim Burton's title tells the reader what the poem is about, and what they must expect from it revealing some information about what will follow. Most of the titles in the collection of poems usually don't reveal the whole plot but just one characteristic of the character, obviously *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy* is an exception because the reader immediately understands who the main character of the story is the writer is

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[41] Ted Kooser (Aimes, April 25, 1939) is well known for his attempts to capture a vanishing way of life through his poetry and essays.

going to tell and how it will end. Orengo makes changes to the way the parents discover the pregnancy, he adds some details about the day when Mr. and Mrs. Smith find out the news, their reactions, and the basic characteristics of the baby. Take a look at these modifications.

One day they got news that made Mr. Smith glad.	*Congiunti grigi e felici,*
Mrs. Smith would be a mom	*fino a che un dì, alle dieci*
which would make him the dad!	*Scoprirono d'essere pa' e ma'.*

Nico Orengo freely decides to give more information than the ones present in the source text about the specific time of the find out of pregnancy to the target text, he also describes the parents in a debatable way. Mr. and Mrs. Smith in the source text are described as a pleased happy family but in the target text, it is used a particular adjective ''grigi'' is obviously selected to rhyme with ''felici'' in the same line, but in Italian, the adjective is used to refer to a person who is gloomy or sulky. Stated that what distinguishes Tim Burton's style is the musicality of his texts, Nico Orengo preferred to change the connotations of the characters to save it.

But something was wrong with their bundle of joy.	*Arrivò quel fagotto e fu*
It wasn't human at all,	*un grumo senza gioia:*
it was a robot boy!	*ohibò quel bambino era un robot.*
He wasn't warm and cuddly	*A toccarlo non c'era pelle*
and he didn't have skin.	*per lui nessun buonasera*
Instead, there was a cold, thin layer of tin.	*Poteva scaldarne la lamiera.*

One of the difficulties of literary translation is the risk of not comprehending and making sure that the translation process does not affect the author's expression, tone, or writing style. Considering this risk, the translator must pay attention to the strategies he/she wants to apply to guarantee the accuracy of the analysis. The use of the passive or active tenses is an inherent difference between the two languages and Orengo reproposes perfectly the structure to the target reader's expectation. Moreover, the impact on the reader must be equal or, in the most difficult cases, similar. In the case of the source text, the parents are startled and shocked about the revelation of their child, but in the target text, Orengo uses the Italian expression ''ohibò'' that connotates another type of feeling. According to the Vocabolario Treccani, this interjection is to express outrage, nausea, contempt, disapproval, and emotions the parents will feel later as a consequence of being stunned. Moreover, in the following lines, the translator decides to cut the original expression ''he wasn't warm and

cuddly'', necessary to the rhyme, and he compensates for it by adding another line to ''per lui nessuna buonasera'' rhyming with the last line of the stanza. In the original text, Tim Burton emphasises the missing human traits, the absence of humanity, the warmth of the body, and the impossibility to cuddle him. In the Translation, Orengo focuses only on the lack of skin, obviously a fundamental element to the living being but he doesn't stress the other crucial characterizations as well.

The fourth Italian stanza is emblematic to understand Orengo's choices. After choosing the rhyme and the rhythm as the most significant features of the text, the translator's approach focuses only on the target reader to make him/her able to appreciate these traits. The Italian poem recites <<Poi, ci fu un lunedì / che inserendo la prolunga / ai suoi lunghi fili / disse un sì, lungo una mattina, / fino a quando non staccarono la spina>>. Nico Orengo adds the specific day of the week to rhyme with the ninth line of the stanza creating the assonance ''lunedì-sì''. Moreover, he adds the last two lines to the TT which are totally absent in the ST. This text expansion can be justified by the necessary rhyme of the previous line, this strategy occurs when the TL takes up more space than the source language.

In addition, another change made by the translator ''to domesticate'' the text for the target reader is the choice to change the adjective ''wild'' in the ST into the word ''meraviglia'' in the TT. The original lines are <<What I'm going to say will sound pretty wild>>, an English expression that means to sound fun, crazy, or sometimes exciting. On the contrary, the translated lines are <<Poi cautamente al Signor Ferroglio / aveva svelato la meraviglia>>, a substantive connotated by feelings of amazement and surprise. Both the expressions are common in the language they are used but a literal translation would have been characterized by a loss in style and fluency.

Focusing on the target audience, the translator's choices are influenced by the necessity to transmit the same style of the original text through strategies that can recreate a well-known context for the TR. In the fourth stanza, the doctor expresses his/her doubt about the baby's gender and the paternity of this little child insinuating possible intercourse between Mrs. Smith and the microwave, an appliance usually used in the kitchen. Orengo decides to recreate for the TR the same image of the appliance without losing the rhymes, it is possible only by adding some details and information to the translation. The translator creates the situation by mentioning objects used in the kitchen: a small cup and a knife, he also decides to modify the world ''microonde'' in ''micro-onde'', it is probably because the hyphen forces the reader to a short pause in the reading.

Furthermore, there is also a specific case in the ninth stanza in which the translator to achieve the rhyme ''figlia-lavastoviglia'' decides to modify the word just to rhyme it with the antecedent line the household appliance Is called ''lavastoviglie'', it is written with the final letter ''E''. To sum up, the strategies every translator decides to apply are dictated by a hierarchical structure where at the top there is the main element the translator decides to propose to the target reader as it was for the source reader, and at the bottom the negligible ones. In *The Melancholic Death of the Child Oyster and Other Stories,* Nico Orengo consider the rhymes at the top of the hierarchy and for this reason, he decides to scarify the accurate plot of the poem by adding or cutting features of it. The entire translation focuses on the target reader's point of view and the translator wants to create a familiar image of the story for him/her, it means that the whole poem is domesticated. The focus on the target audience makes acceptable the losses of information from the ST or the addition of specific details. On the other hand, the translator could have chosen to use the foreignization strategy, but this would have upset the hierarchy of importance of the translation by placing style and musicality at a lower level than Orengo decided.

2.2 Target orientation: the competition of Staring Girl

As already said, the translator decides in every situation how to solve the translation problems he/she faces. Depending on the hierarchy of importance, he/she elects source-oriented or target-oriented strategies. According to the Israeli scholar and professor of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies at Tel Aviv University, Gideon Toury, the translation operates in the first place in the target system. The famous translator is known for his works *Translational Norms and Literary Translation into Hebrew*, published in 1970 at Tel Aviv University, and for the journal *Literature* he wrote from 1970 to 1983 in collaboration with linguists such as Benjamin Harshav, Itamar Even-Zohar, and Menakhem Perry.[42] Gideon Toury is considered a pioneer of Descriptive Translation Studies, and the theories exposed in his 3 major books on the theme (*Translational Norms and Literary Translation into Hebrew*, *In Search of a Theory of Translation* and *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*) show his innovative perspective on Translation Studies.

Toury offers a significant contribution to Translation Studies in his essay *In Search of Theory of Translation*, published in 1980. He identifies two main translation strategies: source-oriented

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[42] Benjamin Harshav (1928-2015) was a literary theorist specialising in comparative literature; Itamar Even-Zohar was born in 1939, he is an Israeli culture researcher and professor at Tel Aviv University; Menakhem Perry is a professor of poetics and comparative literature at Tel Aviv University.

strategy and target-oriented strategy. An approach that is focused on replicating the forms and structures of the ST is defined as source-oriented, nevertheless, the different languages have different structures so the source-oriented strategy is very difficult to apply, especially in texts written in languages spoken in Countries far from each other. On the other hand, a target-oriented strategy tries to fit the text to the grammatical and cultural features of the TT. As a result, Gideon Toury establishes the two principles of *acceptability* and *adequacy*, which define the two methods of translation. An 'acceptable' translation must comply with the rules and the way of organizing the text of the target language. The main purpose is to effectively communicate the message of the original text while increasing the readability and adapting the texts to the receiving audience. On the contrary, the 'adequate' translation is faithful to the ST's structure. Regarding this last concept, Toury states that is impossible a total adequate translation because it ignores the demands of the target reader who is considered the last and most important part of the entire process. Furthermore, the theorist specifies that it cannot be chosen a strategy or another without some precise considerations, in fact, every decision depends on the typology of the text, its deep meaning, its purpose, and obviously its target audience. Gideon Toury is not the only theorist who considers the translator's choices importantly regulated by the target audience and culture, to the list of translators who agree with him it can be found Mona Baker and Daniel Simeoni.[43] The professor of translation studies Mona Baker on many occasions has pointed out the past tendency of translations to emphasize the ST than the TT, for this reason, she agrees with Toury's theories. As well as his predecessors, in the 1970s Daniel Simeoni considered fundamental the separation of the translation from the source text for the evolution of Translation Studies, in other words, it was ''the single most important act of emancipation for the discipline'' (Simeoni 1997, 4).

It is proposed as an example of an applied target-oriented strategy from the collection of poems *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* by Tim Burton.

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[43] Daniel Simeoni (1948-2007) specialized in linguistics at Université Paris VII before obtaining his doctorate degree from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. His works are testimonies of the relation between sociology, linguistics, and translation.

Staring Girl

I once knew a girl

Who would just stand there and stare.

At anyone or anything,

She seemed not to care

She'd stare at the ground,

She'd stare at the sky.

She'd stare at you for hours,

And you'd never know why.

But after winning the local staring contest,

She finally gave her eyes

a well-deserved rest.

La bambina che fissava

Una volta conobbi una bambina

Che se ne stava impalata

A fissare tutto e tutti

E nient'altro la impressionava.

Fissava la terra.

Fissava il cielo.

Ti fissava per ore

e non sapevi perché.

Ma dopo aver vinto una

gara locale per gente

che fissava tal quale

offrì ai suoi occhi

vacanze e balocchi.

Staring Girl is one of the poems written by Tim Burton and collected in *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories*. It is the unusual story of a girl who stares at anyone and anything all the time without a specific reason until she wins a competition with other staring girls and decides to give a rest to her exhausted eyes. As anticipated in the previous paragraphs about Toury's theory, the translator can choose two types of strategies, one is the source-oriented strategy and the other is the target-oriented strategy. In the Italian translation by Nico Orengo, it is interesting to notice the translation of the last line of the last stanza because of the connotation in Italian of the word ''balocchi'' which is a clear example of the target-oriented strategy related to the audience's cultural context.

Carlo Collodi, an Italian writer and journalist who was born in 1826, in his novel *Le avventure di Pinocchio. Storia di un burattino* describes an imaginary place where kids can rest and have fun each day of the week. As the author describes:

«Lì non vi sono scuole, lì non vi sono maestri, lì non vi sono libri. In quel paese benedetto non si studia mai. Il giovedì non si fa scuola, e ogni settimana è composta di sei giovedì e di una domenica.»[44]

In Italian culture this fictitious place is well-known, it appears in Disney movies' list in films as *Pinocchio* (1940), *Le straordinarie avventure di Pinocchio* (1996), and *Geppetto* (2000). Notwithstanding the immediately successful outcome in the cinema, it is mentioned also in the music by Edoardo Bennato and the pop-rock group Pooh. For its success in the collective imagination, it is also used as a literary expression by the writers and the translator Orengo.

In the Vocabolario Treccani, there are different definitions of the word *balocco*: it is a toy given to the kids, it is the imaginary place mentioned before, and a way to amuse oneself. The translation of the last lines (<<She finally gave her eyes a well-deserved rest>>) can be considered a masterful example of the focus on the target audience and its cultural background. Referring to the << vacanze e balocchi>>, Orengo emphasizes the break, calm, and carefree moments given to the girl's eyes and above all their pastime. The last lines could be translated using a literal translation strategy such as <<Finalmente diede ai suoi occhi un meritato riposo>> and the reader could perfectly understand the ending of the story, but Orengo's choice certainly gives the audience a poetic creative hint. The

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[44] Collodi, C., (1883), *Le avventure di Pinocchio. Storia di un burattino*, Firenze, Libreria Editrice Felice Paggi, p. 228.

introduction of the literary detail connotes the artistic use of the Italian literature to create in the target reader the perfect idea of relaxation the American author wants to transmit to the source reader previously. At the same time, it can be claimed that the Italian novel has been translated into English and titled *The Adventure of Pinocchio* and the 'Paese dei balocchi' was translated as the 'Land of Toys'. The reasons why Tim Burton decides not to use this literary reference cannot be discussed, the author decided to tell the story without establishing an external connection with other texts, but the decision made by the translator is the testimony of Orengo's creative ability and his open decision to focus on the target reader's demand.

2.3 Cautionary Tales: the wishes of Melonhead

Tim Burton's works are usually associated exclusively with nonsense poetry, nevertheless, some of them are considered part of a vast collection of cautionary tales. Some of his poems are in between the two genres for their weird and unusual characteristics. Having a look at the cautionary tales and comparing them with the author's works can explain their connection. Cautionary verses are tales whose aim is to warn their reader of a danger or a particular risk, they simply consist of an admonition, warning, or admonitory. The origin of the cautionary tales can be found in popular culture, where the legends were told to impose social rules and correct behaviours according to the community code of conduct. For this reason, generally, the audience was the children and the purpose was to spread morality, awareness, and consciousness. The protagonists of the stories are usually fated to an unlucky ending which is meticulously described by the writer in a grislier way, their fault is often to have misbehaved or to have thought of breaking a taboo. Since the purpose is to transmit the social moral code, conformity to society is fundamental. There are many examples of cautionary tales in the literature, in the German anthology can be found Heinrich Hoffmann's *Der Struwwelpeter* (1845), a collection of stories whose all the little protagonists are punished in one form or another, in the English literature Hilaire Belloc's *Matilda* is the exemplar case of cautionary tales, and John Warren Stewing's *King Midas* constitutes the most famous American tale of the genre.[45]

Tim Burton gives his audience examples of cautionary tales on different occasions, the cinematic example is his movie *Beware the White Rabbit* which is his version of Lewis Carroll's book, *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland*. In a gothic way of telling the story, the American director warns the little

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[45] Heinrich Hoffmann (1809-1894); Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953); John Warren Stewing (1937-)

girls of the dangers of wandering alone in a strange land. In the literature, Tim Burton's cautionary tale is collected in his work *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* and as in the many other tales previously mentioned he wants to give to the reader a moral example of behaving.

Melonhead

There once was a morose melonhead,

Who sat there all day

And wished he were dead.

But you should be careful

about the things that you wish.

Because the last thing he heard

Was a deafening squish.

Testa di Melone

C'era una volta una cupa testa di

Melone, se ne stava seduto tutto il

Giorno pensando a come togliersi di

Torno. E fu l'ultima cosa che pensò,

poi una grande suola lo schiacciò.

Melonhead, the imaginary protagonist of the story, is not just a bizarre creature that can exist only in a gothic reality, he is also a boy who cannot appreciate what he has, in this particular case the gift of life. The poem aims to teach the reader to appreciate what he/she has and to wish carefully what he/she wants to change in his/her life. To be careful what you wish for is a caution given to tell people to think twice before expressing a desire for something and to imply that they might not genuinely be interested in it or be consciously sure about it. Melonhead in his loneliness does not

consider any of the shapes of life or the possibility of joy so he wishes to be dead and in the end his wish comes true in a very little instant and in a grievous way. The reader, especially the young audience, is warned to pay attention to the many risks of their desires. This is a perfect example of a cautionary tale being used to move children away from a simple bad habit like acting up to obtain something without considering all the real consequences.

Tim Burton started his career as an illustrator and his movies are famous for stop motion animation, so his illustrations are the key to his creativity. As it is possible to see, the story of the protagonist of the poem *Melonhead* is told using not only words and lines but also images. This element is essential to understand the author's style and the translator's choices. The English text poses many difficulties, especially because of the rhyme of the last line in which there is an onomatopoeic word ''squish''. To the English word correspond the verb ''to squish'' which means ''to crush something that is soft'' in accordance to the Cambridge Dictionary.[46] According to the Vocabolario Treccani the closest Italian term is ''ciacche'' which means ''voce imitative dello sciacquio del mare, o del suono che si produce schiacciando qualche cosa o battendo su qualche cosa di molle'', it is usually used with the verb ''fare''.[47] The onomatopoeia is the result of the tragic death of Melonhead and his questionable thoughts during his miserable life, as he considered it. Considering the difficulty of translating the word and the importance that Tim Burton gives to the rhyme all around his poems, Nico Orengo decides to save the musicality of the text and sacrifice faith to the source text. One of the most important theorists of Translation Studies is Roman Osipovich Jakobson, a Russian-American linguist who revolutionize the way of thinking to the structure of the uistics.[48] Jakobson's *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* was published in 1959 by the Harvard University Press, it represents a pillar of Translation Studies. In his essay, Jakobson describes the translation and its typologies, he explains that there are three types of translation:

- *Intralingual translation:* also known as *rewording* (or reformulation), it involves the interpretation of a verbal sign by means of other signs of the same language.

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[46] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/squish
[47] https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/ciacche/#:~:text=(o%20ci%C3%A0cch%20%E3%80%88%C4%8Dak%E3%80%89),su%20qualche%20cosa%20di%20molle.
[48] Roman Osipovich Jakobson (1896-1982) was a linguist and literary theorist who examined the phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics of linguistics influencing his successor in the field of translation.

- *Interlingual translation:* it refers to the *translation proper* (or the classic translation) and consists in translating a verbal sign into signs of another language.

- *Intersemiotic translation:* also known as *transmutation.* (or transformation) refers to the conversion of a verbal sign into signs of another nonverbal sign system.

Taking into account Jakobson's theory and in particular the last of the three possible translations, Nico Orengo's translation of the cautionary tale *Melonhead* from *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* can be analysed. ''E fu l'ultima cosa che pensò/poi una grande suola lo schiacciò'' is the last line of the Italian translation of the English poem, in the source text there is not mention of a sole. The reader can assume that Melonhead was squished by a shoe while reading the text, but the only proof of his assumption is the illustration, on the other hand, Orengo decides to spoil the tragic death of the protagonist in the last stanza. The translation is the result of a series of shifts from the words to the pictures, and from the pictures to the words. Facing the rhyme problem, the translator masterfully uses an intersemiotic translation, the illustration is essential to achieve his goal and he exploits all the translation tools he has. ''The important variation in the substance of the expression'', Umberto Eco claims in 2001, ''is a decided step from purport to the purport of the expression, as happens when a poem is interpreted (by illustrating it) through a charcoal drawing, or when a novel is adapted in the comic-strip form''. Eco argues that ''the form of the linguistic expression cannot be mapped one to one onto another continuum'', there will always be and most of all a "transmutation of purport" in the shift from a poem to a drawing or from a novel to a movie. In the change from one way of expression, such the verbal language, to another, "there is a comparison between two forms of the expression whose 'equivalences' are not therefore determinable", leastways not in the way of the interlinguistic translation like that of two texts. Eco criticizes Jakobson's theory saying that ''there are forms of interpretation that are not wholly comparable to the translation between natural languages''.[49] Furthermore, Calabrese expresses scepticism about Jakobson's three-part division as well, he points out that "not all semiotic systems are equivalent" so in systems like illustrations, movies, and music there are crucial differences.[50]

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[49]Eco, U., (2003), *Dire quasi la stessa cosa. Esperienze di traduzione*, Milano, Bompiani.
[50] Calabrese, O., (2000), *Lo strano caso dell'equivalenza imperfetta (modeste osservazioni sulla traduzione intersemiotica)*, Milano, Bompiani. Versus 85–87. 101–120.

As we can see through the evolution of Translation Studies, different theories have been created regarding the relation between images and text, or separate communicative systems in general, in the context of translation.

1. **The role of illustration in translation: The Boy with Nails in his Eyes**

Up to this point, the graphic arrangement has been described as an aid for the translator, in fact, the poem is understandable according to the image in the previous example (*Melonhead*). Burton's texts rely on the verbal and the non-verbal codes which interact with each other to form a coherent text. Nico Orengo tries to maintain this coherence to facilitate the understanding of the text for the target reader, but in general, it is fundamental a strong previous cooperation between the writer and the illustrator, which is the same person in this case, during all the stages before the translation. An example of a literary genre that links image and verbal text is the Picture book, this type of book is usually targeted to a young audience but in some cases also to an adult one, for instance *What We'll Build: Plans For Our Together Future* by Oliver Jeffers and *This is Your Time* by Ruby Bridges.[51] The main characteristic is the presence of a lot of pictures to enrich and clarify the text, for this reason, these are considered one of the most complex and sophisticated art forms to be translated.

In 2002, Len Unsworth and Janer Wheeler discuss the narrative role of images in three prize-winning picture books: *The Rabbits* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan, *Joseph had a Little Overcoat* by Simms Taback, and *The House that Jack Built* by Gavin Bishop.[52] In the paper *Re-valuing the role of images in reviewing picture books* they affirm that <<If one were to read just the text and not the visuals in either of these books the available meanings would be greatly diminished>>.[53] As mentioned earlier, the two writers consider three books as examples of the importance of the illustrations and they also analyse the reviews about them, about Horn Book they affirm: <<The reviewer deals with the meaning of the illustrations and how that meaning can and does add to the text, contributing to the quality of the picture book and warranting recognition through the Caldecott award>>. Furthermore, Unsworth and Wheeler quote Perry Nodelman who claims:

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[51] Jeffers, O., (2020), *What We'll Build: Plans For Our Together Future*, United Kingdom, Philomel Books.
Bridges, R., (2020), *This is Your Time*, New York, Delacorte Press.
[52] Professor Len Unsworth is the Research Director of Educational Semiotics in English and Literacy Pedagogy at ILSTE; Janet Wheeler works in a hospital in Liverpool; John Marsden (1950) is an Australian writer; Shaun Tan (1973) is an Australian illustrator; Simms Taback (1932-2011) was an American writer and a graphic artist; Gavin John Bishop is an author and illustrator.
[53] Unsworth, L., Wheeler, J., (2002), *Re-valuing the role of images in reviewing picture books*, Reading Journal.

It is, unfortunately, true that the most discussion of children's picture books has either ignored their visual elements altogether or else treated the pictures as objects of a traditional sort of art appreciation…rather than narrative elements.

…the possibility of a system underlying visual communication that is something like grammar – something like the system of relationships and contexts that makes verbal communication possible.[54]

To summarize, what the two authors want to point out is that giving more consideration to the narrative functions of the illustrations in picture book reviews would encourage the debate on the role the images play and the autonomous system they create in storytelling.

Picture books became a topic that is frequently examined in Translation Studies. This is evident in many translation publications such as the new book by Riitta Oittinen, Anne Ketola, and Melissa Garavini*: Translating Picturebooks. Revoicing the Verbal, the Visual and the Aural for a Children Audience*.[55] The three authors published their work in 2018 examining the important and strong relationship between the pictures and the text in child literature in which the impact is fundamental to create solid lasting knowledge. As the publishers describe it:

The book draws on a wide range of picture books published and translated in a number of languages to demonstrate the myriad ways in which information and meaning is conveyed in the translation of multimodal material and in turn, the impact of these interactions on the readers' experiences of these books. (…) Highlighting the complex dynamics at work in the translation process of picture books and their implications for research on translation studies and multimodal material, this book is an indispensable resource for students and researchers in translation studies, multimodality, and children's literature.[56]

The role of illustration intended as a visual translation of the text is deeply rooted in literary investigation.

As revealed previously, in his well-known article *On Linguistic Aspect of Translation* Roman Jakobson divides translation into three categories: intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic. The

[54] Noderlman, P. (1988) *Words about pictures: the narrative art of children's picture books*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
[55] Oittinen, R., Ketola, A., Garavini, M., (2018) *Translating Picturebooks. Revoicing the Verbal, the Visual and the Aural for a Children Audience*, London,Routledge.
[56] https://www.routledge.com/Translating-Picturebooks-Revoicing-the-Verbal-the-Visual-and-the-Aural/Oittinen-Ketola-Garavini/p/book/9780367365868

intersemiotic type involves translation between different media, for instance, from the cinematographic medium to the verbal one or from the graphic medium to the musical one. In this analysis, the poetic illustrations by the animator Tim Burton are considered a direct translation of his own poems. Despite what someone can erroneously think the conversion from a verbal system to a non-verbal system is a complicated shift that involves the laws of each code implied, usually, the ST is the verbal text and the TT consists of the graphic piece of art. Since sometimes it is falsely believed that the TT is a secondary product, the illustrations are not considered authentic artworks but simply productions linked to the real primary product, the text. In Literature a famous writer, Charles Dickens, started his career as a novelist supplying stories for the drawings by Robert Seymour.[57] Describing the drawings, Dickens affirms:

> The interval has been so short between the production of each number in manuscript and its appearance in print, that the greater portion of the Illustrations have been executed by the artist from the author's mere verbal description of what he intended to write.[58]

Despite the many difficulties the illustrators and the translators must face, they use the same translation strategies. Addition, omission, condensation, or explication are the most common changes they have to make. In 1999 Maria Fleming Tymoczko, a contemporary scholar of comparative literature who has written about translation, pointed out that a conspicuous part of the work of the translator takes place in the metonymic sphere of influence. She states:

> Translators select some elements, some aspects, or some parts of the source text to highlight and preserve; translators prioritize and privilege some parameters and not others; and, thus, translators represent some aspects of the source text partially or fully and others not at all in a translation. (…) [C]ertain aspects or attributes of the source text come to represent the entire source text in translation. By definition, therefore, translation is metonymic: it is a form of representation in which parts or aspects of the source text come to stand for the whole[59]

In this sense, metonymy is the link between the pictures and the passage they represent, and therefore, the visual symbols are used to allude to the reality described by words in the verbal text. The most evident method of converting textual components into visual ones is probably literal

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[57] Charles Dickens (1812-1870); Robert Seymour (1798-1836).

[58] Charles Dickens, 1836, *The Pickwick Papers*, Chapman & Hall.

[59] Tymoczko, M. (1995). *The Metonymics of Translating Marginalized Texts. Comparative Literature*, 47(1), 11–24.

intersemiotic translation so an editor typically hires illustrators, he determines the intended audience, the number of illustrations, the size of the drawings, and every aspect that can influence the reader.

Tim Burton began his career as an animation artist for Disney movies, his works were undoubtedly remarkable from the very beginning, nevertheless, his style did not fit completely the classic representations of The Walt Disney Company. More than any other style, Burton's unique one is most reminiscent of German Expressionism. Throughout the 1920s, expressionism emerged as a modern art trend and soon spread to have an impact on art in all of Europe. A heedless observer might not be aware that some storytelling techniques in art, movies, and animation have effectively blended elements of expressionism. Tim Burton's style sharply exaggerates backgrounds and landscapes with strong colours, he usually and extensively relies on the use of shadows and silhouettes to heighten a sense of anxiety or dread. Another important component is set with angular edges and alternately rounded, tilted, or visually disconnected and disorganised spaces.

Tim Burton has always been involved with drawing. He said the art of creating illustrations was a need and a means of expressing his thoughts and feelings. As he said, he constantly draws everywhere and on everything he can get his hand on. In The Art of Tim Burton by Leah Gallo and Holly C. Kempf, his friends said that Burton has a compulsive urge to draw, and his partner Hele Bonham Carter confirms it. In *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* the monstrous characters inspire more sympathy than terror due to their tragedies. He portrays a life that is both terrible and hilarious, merciless, and cruel. The case study from the collection of poems that involves the text and a particular and interesting illustration is the poem *The Boy with Nails in his Eyes*.
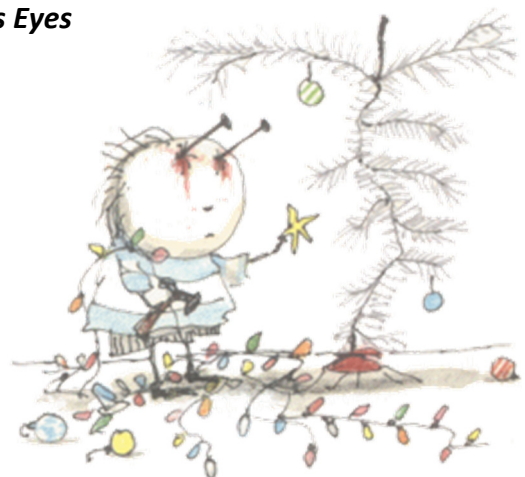
The Boy with Nails in his Eyes

The Boy with Nails in his Eyes

put up his aluminium tree.

It looked pretty strange

because he couldn't really see.

Il bambino con I chiodi negli occhi

Il bambino con I chiodi negli occhi

piantò il suo albarello d'alluminio.

Ma cresceva di sbieco

perché lui era cieco.

The analysis of the poem includes many different aspects, in fact, in just four lines the translator has to face numerous translation problems. A quick look at the poem shows that Nico Orengo, who has changed the titles of the majority of the poems revealing the tragic ending of the characters already in the title unlike the author, is not obliged to apply the same strategy in this poem. In fact, both the English and the Italian titles disclose the main trait of the boy immediately. A stylistic problem regards the two last lines, as it was noticed in the previous poems Nico Orengo prefers domestication to foreignization. He uses the same approach in this poem changing completely the told story. In the English text, the author explains the reason why the situation is weird (<<It looked pretty strange/ because he couldn't really see>>), on the other hand, in the Italian translation, Orengo decides to consider the most important element the rhyme than the accuracy of the story. The poem recites <<Ma cresceva di sbieco/ perchè lui era cieco>>, an immediate metrical analysis shows that the translation choices aim to save the musicality of the text rhyming ''sbieco-cieco''. Another translation problem related to the intersemiotic translation and the metonym is Tim Burton's illustration. In *Melonhead* the drawings helped the translator to find out a way to achieve his goal, the image of the shoe crushing the protagonist helped Orengo in the translation of the last lines. The shift from the picture to the words made represented the key element of the creative result. In *The Boy with Nails in his Eyes,* the illustration represents an obstacle for the translator because it limits the possible solutions to the translation problems. The illustration obliges Orengo to use the word ''chiodo'' and it limits his freedom in the translation. Without the picture of a boy with a hammer in his hand the translator could have used different terms to rhyme with the second line: bulletta, spillo, ago, pungolo.

To conclude, the shift from one system of communication to another is a common procedure nowadays, it is used in many artistic fields such as the cinema where it is called ''localisation'' or in commercial advertisements. In some cases, it is useful to the translator to reach the reader and help

him in his comprehension of the offered target text, in other cases it represents an obligatory medium. In both cases, the intersemiotic translation use is growing rapidly in modern publications.

3. The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy

The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy is the story of unusual birth. A child who, due to an oyster-shaped head, appears unacceptable to the visual expectations of his parents, he is gradually rejected by society and ends up being eaten by his father in search of aphrodisiac remedies to his sexual problems. Oyster Boy represents the most important and famous character of the entire collection becoming the symbol of Tim Burton's literature. The author challenges again the translator with its cultural selection of the terms, its rhymes, and its tone. All specificities of the text cause the inevitable ''rewriting'' of the poem to maintain the uniqueness of this nursery rhyme. The analysis aspires to examine the challenging features that the translation of poetry implies and to consider the translation strategies followed by Nicola Orengo. Moreover, some possible translations are proposed and critically analysed.

The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy
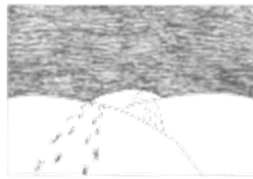
He proposed in the dunes,

they were wed by the sea,

Their nine-day-long honeymoon

was on the isle of Capri.

For their supper they had one spectacular dish-

a simmering strew of mollusks and fish.

And while he savored the broth,

her bride's heart made a wish.

That wish did come true – she gave birth to a baby.

But was this little one human?

Well,

maybe.

Ten fingers, ten toes,

he had plumbing and sight.

He could hear, he could feel,

but normal?

Not quite.

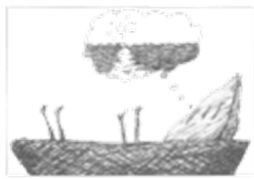*This unnatural birth, this canker, this blight,*

was the start and the end and the sum of their plight.

She railed at the doctor:

''He cannot be mine.

He smells of the ocean, of seaweed and brine.''

''You should count yourself lucky, for only last week,

I treated a girl with three ears and a beak.

That your son is half oyster

you cannot blame me.

…have you considered, by chance,

a small home by the sea?''

Not knowing what to name him,

they just called him Sam,

or, sometimes,

''that thing that looks like a clam.''

Everyone wondered, but no one could tell,

When would young Oyster Boy come out of his shell?

When the Thompson quadruplets espied him one day,

they called him a bivalve and ran quickly away.

One spring afternoon,

Sam was left in the rain.

At the southwestern corner of Seaview and Main,

he watched the rain water as it swirled

down the drain.

His mom on the freeway

in the breakdown lane

was pounding the dashboard –

she couldn't contain

the ever-rising grief,

frustation

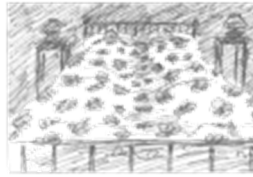*and pain.*

''Really, sweetheart,'' she said,

''I don't mean to make fun,

but something smells fishy

and I think it's our son.

I don't like to say this, but it must be said,

you're blaming our son for your problems in bed''.

He tried salves, he tried ointments,

that turned everything red.

He tried potions and lotions

and tincture of lead.

He ached and itched and he twitched and he bled

The doctor diagnosed,

''I can't be quite sure,

but the cause of the problem may also be the cure.

They say oysters improve your sexual powers.

Perhaps eating your son

would help you do it for hours!''

He came on tiptoe,

he came on the sly,

sweat on his forehead,

and on his lips – a lie.

''Son, are you happy? I don't mean to pry,

but do you dream of Heaven?

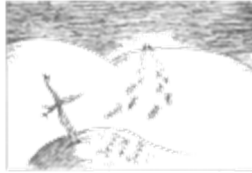*Have you wanted to die?''*

Sam blinked his eyes twice.

But made no reply.

Dad fingered his knife and loosened his tie.

As he picked up his son,

Sam dripped on this coat.

With the shell to his lips,

Sam slipped down his throat.

They buried him quickly in the sand by the sea

– sighed a prayer, wept a tear –

were back home by three.

A cross of gray driftwood marked Oyster Boy's grave.

Words writ in the sand

promised Jesus would save.

But his memory was lost with one high-tide wave.

Back home safe in bed,

he kissed her and said,

''Let's give it a whirl.''

''But this time,'' she whispered, ''we'll wish for a girl.''

Morte malinconica del bambino Ostrica

Si dichiarò tra le dune

si sposarono al mare,

stesi al sole per nove giorni

fecero a Capri la luna di miele.

Pranzarono con un piatto

prelibato: uno stufato di triglia

e cozza. E mentre lui beveva

il brodo dalla a tazza a lei

prese un nonsoché da sposa:

una voglia.

Quella voglia si gonfiò

e in un bebè scoppiò.

Ma era un bambino

Quel frugolino?

Sì, aveva ai piedi

dieci dita dieci.

Sì, aveva alle mani

dieci dita dieci,

ci sentiva e ci vedeva,

in bagno ci poteva andare,

ma bastava tutto questo per essere normale?

Non proprio.

Questa nascita fuor di natura

segnò la fine della loro vita

futura.

Lei se la prese col dottore:

– Non può essere mio figlio:

sa di mare, di alghe, di sale

a tutte le ore.

– Sia felice – disse il dottore – solo

una settimana fa ho curato una bambina con tre orecchie

e un becco. Che suo figlio

sia un'Ostrica a metà

non mi può incolpare,

pensate piuttosto a una casa

in riva al mare.

Non sapevano come chiamarlo,

lo chiamarono Carlo e qualche

volta con voce rozza: <<quella

cosa che pare una cozza>>.

La gente, in piedi sull'uscio

si chiedeva se un giorno

quel bambino sarebbe uscito dal guscio.

Lo videro un giorno i gemelli Isaia,

lo apostrofarono <<Bivalve>>

e corsero via.

Un pomeriggio di primavera

Carlo fu lasciato lungo una roggia

a prendersi la pioggia,

si sentiva solo e guardava

l'acqua andar via per lo scolo.

Intanto sull'Aurelia,

nella corsia d'emergenza,

sua madre prendeva coscienza:

fra frustrazioni e mugugni,

batteva il cruscotto coi pugni

per quella situazione di maternità e sposa.

E al marito disse: – Carlo, mi rincresce,

ma qualcosa fra di noi

sa di pesce. Credo sia, devo

dirlo, nostro figlio. E credo

anche, va detto, che per

colpa sua, tu hai problemi a letto.

Lui provò unguenti, provò pozioni,

larghe pennellate di tintura

e fredde abluzioni. Non c'era

ancora il Viagra, così gli andò

di magra. Diventò verde, poi

bianco e poi rosso, da forte

febbre fu scosso.

Il dottore diagnosticò:

– Non ne sono sicuro

ma la causa del problema

può esserne la cura.

Ora, si sa, l'ostrica

procura gran virilità.

Se lei mangia suo figlio

ne avrà per sempre voglia.

Lui ebbe un brivido

e un sudore di vergogna,

poi sparò subito la sua menzogna:

– Carlo, a me lo puoi dire

Vuoi vivere o preferisci morire?

Hai mai pensato al cielo?

Carlo, come dalle tenebre

batté le palpebre due volte,

e il suo papà, oplà,

prese il coltello e la cravatta snodò.

Mentre il figlio apriva

Carlo sulla giacca gli sgocciolava.

Poi, dopo aver posato

il guscio alle labbra

sentì che Carlo nella gola scivolava.

Moglie e marito, scavarono

nella sabbia la tomba con un dito;

lei disse una ave maria, lui fece

cadere una lacrima e la spinse

via, prima che scendesse la sera.

Una croce di bambù

rimase sull'arenile, laggiù

a ricordare, contro l'onda,

la tomba del bambino Ostrica

e una breve preghiera

scritta sulla sabbia a Gesù,

che l'avrebbe portata nel cielo,

lassù.

Ma un'onda d'alto mare,

veloce, asciugò la scritta

e si prese quella croce, né storta

né dritta.

Riparati in casa,

sdraiati a letto, lui

sussurra: – Te

lo faccio, lo prometto.

Poi, sopra le svolazza

e lei pensa: <<che sia, ti

prego, questa volta una Ragazza>>.

Oyster Boy is the main character of the collection *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* because his emblematic fate is the representation of the worst death it could be imagined, the animal-shaped boy is murdered by his own parents. Oyster Boy is the result of his parents' marriage who decide to conceive him during their honeymoon by the sea.

It can be immediately recognized the naturalisation of the name of the boy who is called Sam in the ST to rhyme with the harsh epithet his parents use to refer to him (<<Not knowing what to name him/ they just called him Sam, or, sometimes/ ''that thing that looks like a clam>>), the translator decides to change it to Carlo, a more common name in Italy, and compensates the loss of the rhyme with the personal name making another rhyme in the tenth stanza: *rozza-cozza* (<<Non sapevano come chiamarlo/ lo chiamarono Carlo e qualche/ volta con voce rozza: ''quella/ cosa che pare una cozza>>). In my opinion, a valuable translation of the stanza could be: <<Non sapevano come chiamarlo/ lo chiamarono Marcello/ o qualche volta/ ''quella cosa che sembra un canestrello''>>. In a hierarchy of importance, I consider the rhyme and the meaning of the poem the most important things as Nico Orengo did. The English name Sam can be translated in Italian as Samuele or Samuel, but it would not be an exact equivalence, for this reason, my proposal is to change completely the personal name and maintain the rhyme with the following lines. The Canestrello is a shellfish with two shells joined together and it is used as food, these peculiarities do not contradict the idea of Oyster Boy as a living being, as a bivalve as it is called by his peers, and last but not least his fate as an ''edible thing''. The rhyme *Sam-clam* can find a correspondence in Italian in the combination of *Marcello-canestrello*, both in musicality and in meaning.

Sam is not the only name mentioned by Burton, there is also another mention and, consequently, another naturalisation according to the translator's style. In the eleventh stanza, the poem tells: <<When the Thompson quadruplets espied him one day/ they called him a bivalve and ran quickly away>>; in the Italian version the quadruplets become twins and Thompson becomes Isaia (<<Lo videro un giorno I gemelli Isaia/ lo apostrofarono ''Bivalve''/ e corsero via>>). The selection is due to the translator's tendency to naturalised the text and maintain the rhyme *Isaia-via* as he did in the previous stanza using an Italian surname. The naturalisation can be explained by introducing the *Skopos Theory* which asserts that the translation is not just an act of linguistic transference but rather an application of purpose, it means that the effect proposed to the reader by the source text

writer is the goal the translator have to achieve. Related to this idea, Eco states <<*una traduzione (specie nel caso di testi a finalità estetica) deve produrre lo stesso effetto a cui mirava l'originale*>>.[60]

Oyster Boy's mum and dad spend their honeymoon in Capri, there they eat mollusks and fish and make a wish for a child, this specific time represents the moment in which their lives will change forever and the cause of the abnormality of their son. The decision made by Tim Burton to set this very first episode in Capri makes the translation easy for Nico Orengo, in fact, he does not change the setting and the context can be easily recreated without any modification. On the other hand, other spatial coordinates challenge the translator who decides to change these elements to fit with the target audience's necessities and expectations.

Orengo's approach tends to favor the entire Italian audience in general than to be faithful to the ST, however, there is a specific case in which he ''favors'' a restricted part of the target audience. Nico Orengo translates the twelfth stanza <<One spring afternoon, / Sam was left in the rain/ At the southwestern corner of Seaview and Main/ he watched the rain water as it swirled/ down the drain>> as << Un pomerigio di primavera/ Carlo fu lasciato lungo una roggia/ a prendersi la pioggia/ si sentiva solo e guardava /l'acqua andar via per lo scolo.>> (thirteenth stanza). The word ''roggia'', according to the Vocabolario Treccani is the name of the artificial canals built to supply water to mills, small power stations, and for irrigation, is mostly used in the North of Italy, more specifically the north-west of the country such as the Region of Piemonte where the author lived, so it is not used in every Italian region. The selection is justifiable by the necessity to rhyme with the word ''pioggia''. An alternative way to translate the stanza without twisting the meaning of the sentence can be: <<Un pomeriggio di primavera/ Carlo fu lasciato lungo un canale/ a prendersi un temporale/ si sentiva solo e guardava/ l'acqua andar via per lo scolo>>. The shift from ''pioggia'' to ''temporale'' makes possible the rhyming combination *canale-temporale*. Both the words are used in the official Italian, as it is possible to verify in the Vocabolario Treccani, so the problem of regionalism is solved. On the other hand, it can be said that there is a difference between rain and storm, but it can also be considered slight if we look at the thundery drawings by Tim Burton as part of the translation process.

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[60] Eco, U., (2003), *Dire quasi la stessa cosa. Esperienze di traduzione*, Milano, Bompiani.

Furthermore, in the same stanza there is another interesting expression. Burton says that Oyster Boy's mother is driving her car and she decides to leave her son <<at the southwestern corner of Seaview and Main>>. As we know in America there are two main types of ''roads'': street and avenue. With the word *street* the citizens refer to the road that usually runs East to West, with the word *avenue* they usually refer to the road that runs North to South. Moreover, when referring to an intersection the avenue is usually stated first, in this case, it would be Seaview Avenue and Main Street. The premise behind road-naming conventions represents a challenge for the Italian translator who must attend to the necessity of a reader who does not have this specific information.

Nico Orengo prefers to avoid the American naming and numbering system and translates it as ''Aurelia''. Aurelian Way is historically a Roman road in Italy constructed in 241 BC, however today the Strada Statale 1 Via Aurelia (SS 1) is one of the most important state highways in Italy. Moreover, the writer specifies that Oyster Boy's mother surrenders to her suffering feelings in the breakdown lane of the freeway, an area along the side of a highway where vehicles can stop for an emergency. In the TT it is said <<Intanto sull'Aurelia/ nella corsia d'emergenza/ sua madre prendeva coscienza>>, despite the perfect rhyme *emergenza-coscienza* the translator did not consider a detail, in the state highways there are not breakdown lanes. To sum up, Orengo favors again the rhyming than faithfulness to the plot and, in some cases, his selection of terms leads to a ''unsatisfactory outcome'' if we consider the logical and cultural target context.

Keeping in mind all the information listed above, in my translation proposal I prefer to maintain Orengo's structure of the stanzas, it means that the name of the street is in the twelfth stanza in the ST but for stylistic reason the translator mentions it in the thirteenth stanza. My personal choice will be to substitute the Aurelia with the ''Autostrada del Mediterraneo''. The selection is due to two main considerations: the translator in the TT does not rhyme the name of the freeway with the following lines so it can be substituted without additional changes; the cultural and logical aspect is fundamental. The Autostrada del Mediterraneo is the freeway that connects Salerno with Reggio Calabria, there is the breakdown lane mentioned by the author, and it is possible to refer to the sea as Burton did in the ST (<<Seaview and Main>>). Logically it is acceptable for a further reason, in the eighth stanza the doctor proposes to the couple to live near the sea to make Oyster Boy's life easier and comfortable (<<…have you consider, by chance, a small home by the sea?>>) and the Autostrada del Mediteranneo skirts the sea.

The final translation of the two stanzas could be:

Un pomeriggio di primavera

Marcello fu lasciato lungo un canale

a prendersi un temporale,

si sentiva solo e guardava

l'acqua andar via per lo scolo.

Intanto sull'Autostrada del Mediterraneo,

nella corsia d'emergenza,

sua madre prendeva coscienza:

fra frustrazioni e mugugni,

batteva il cruscotto coi pugni

per quella situazione dolorosa

di maternità e di sposa.

Moreover, to avoid to make the first line of the stanza excessively longer that the line in the source text the ''Autostrada del Mediterraneo'' can be substitute by the ''A2'' that is the technical name of the freeway (<<Intanto sull'A2/ nella corsia d'emergenza/ sua madre prendeva coscienza/ (…)>>).

The deformity of the Oyster Boy comes to deprive him of his identity, even his parents sometimes call him ''that thing that looks like a clam''. A name not unlike those that his ruthless peers reserve for him, insulting him from afar, before running away. To continue the analysis stanza by stanza, it can be noticed that in the source text the boy's parents never use an affectionate word referring to the baby, there is only an exception in the eighteenth stanza when his father is going to eat him and he calls him ''son''. It is worthy to mention the way the kid's parents refer to him from the discovery of his malformation till his tragic death the parents in fact never treat or refer to him as a human being. In the ST the author pays attention not to use human references, he calls him ''baby'' in the fifth stanza, and it is very interesting because the Cambridge Dictionary specifies that the term can be used to describe a very young child or a very young animal. On the other hand, the translator uses the term ''bebè'' that is described in the Vocabolario Treccani as <<Francesismo usato talvolta

come sinonimo vezzeggiativo di *bambino*>>. Therefore, a vague term in the source text is substituted in the Italian text by an affectionate expression incompatible with the parents' feelings. Linguistically a plausible translation that can preserve the logical meaning and as much as possible the way in which the meaning is built could be ''neonato'': <<Quel desiderio si avverò – ebbe un neonato/ Ma era un bambino?/ be'…se così può esser chiamato>>.

According to the Vocabolario Treccani the word ''neonato'' can be used referring to human beings and animals, in fact, it refers to a newborn so it does not specify in this context which species it is mentioning.[61] The proposed translation maintains the musicality of the verses presenting to the reader the rhyme *neonato-chiamato*, it is also true that the expression implies the use of an extra verb that is not present in the ST but it makes it possible to propose again the interjection used by the author: *well-be'*.

In addition, all the other stanzas are pointed by rough expressions such as <<This unnatural birth, this canker, this blight>> or <<sum of their plight>>. These are fundamental expressions to understand the rejection and the repulse the parents feel for their son, in fact, they are able to feel love for each other but not for the boy. For instance, the woman calls her husband ''sweetheart'', and he kisses her gently when they decide to attempt again to have a child (<<Let's give it a whirl>>). In Burton's stories the children are often the victims of their parents' feelings and actions, and the only way the Oyster Boy can make amends for his birth, his only fault, is to die. Despite the intense expressions used by the author to express the ferocity of the boy's mum and dad, Orengo decides to summarize the lines as <<Questa nascita fuor di natura/ segnò la fine della loro vita/ futura>>.

That Sam is more than ''just a clam'' can be proven in the ninth stanza through the following lines: <<Everyone wondered, but no one could tell/ When would young Oyster Boy come out his shell?>>. *To come out of one's shell* is an English figure of speech that can be literally intended in Oyster Boy's case, but it also has a metaphorical meaning. If you come out of your shell, you become more interested in other people and more willing to talk and take part in social activities, and if someone brings you out of your shell, they cause you to do this, and it corresponds in Italian to another idiom used by the translator: *uscire dal guscio*, which means to socialize.[62] The expression corresponds in the two languages almost perfectly in its cultural meaning, in this particular case the shyness and

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[61] https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/neonato/
[62] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/come-out-of-shell
https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/guscio_%28Sinonimi-e-Contrari%29/

the corporal abnormalities may be signs of unacceptable defects for the society who does not comprehend them and classify them as diseases. The meaning of both the expressions has a positive connotation in the cultural field that disappears in the reality of the plot because coming out of the shell will be fatal for the boy.

The Oyster Boy's drama degenerates into tragedy when the husband begins having sexual problems and the doctor determines that the best solution for the father is to eat his son, since the properties of oysters are well known. The man tries salves, ointments, and any possible medication, but nothing succeeds, and he goes back to the doctor to ask him what he must do to regain strength. In the ST the father uses creams, medicines, tincture of lead, and substances that made him red and itch. In the TT the man uses *unguenti*, *pozioni*, even *abluzioni* that are usually rituals of purification. The discussion about Orengo's translation strategies includes the Particularization Strategy, that as the opposite of the Generalization Strategy, tends to use more precise or concrete terms than the ones used in the ST. Nico Orengo applies the Particularization Strategy in the fifteenth stanza, when in the list of medications he includes Viagra. Viagra, also known as Sildenafil, is used to treat male sexual function problems (impotence or erectile dysfunction – ED). This drug was patented by Pfizer in 1998, but it was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) only in 1998, becoming the most sold product in the ED market globally. According to the pharmaceutical reports of 2020, Eu, USA, and Japan hold the strongest sales of the product in the international market. The Italian translator knows that as the second country with the most consumption of Viagra in Europe, an Italian reader could associate the product with the man's issue and take advantage of this knowledge to rhyme *Viagra* with the idiom *andare di magra* (<<Non c'era ancora il Viagra, così gli andò di magra>>). The Italian idiom describes the situation in which the husband is let down in his expectations and unsatisfied, with this meaning a back translation of the Italian text cannot surely be literal.

Furthermore, *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy* represents another example of the intersemiotic translation mentioned previously. In this case, the drawings by the author do not represent a support to the translator, on the contrary, they point out the differences between the ST and the TT's tones. Referring to the sixteenth picture, it is possible to see that Burton draws the father's mouth as big as his son's head that is no longer an infant as we can see in the other images.

Picture 3: Oyster Boy's father eating his son (T. Burton, 1997)

Choosing expressions and terms accurately to describe the horror situation in which Sam is involved, the author tells <<He came on tiptoe/ he came on the sly/ sweat on his forehead/ and on his lips – a lie>>. The scene described shows the father entering the room quietly, crustily but firmly intentioned to get what he wants: to eat his son. He does not have second thoughts nor wait for his son's answer (<<Sam blinked his eyes twice/ But made no reply>>), he just wants to solve his sexual problems and save his marriage. In the Italian translation the atmosphere is different: <<Lui ebbe un brivido/ e sudore di vergogna/ poi sparò subito la sua menzogna>>. Orengo changes the father's mood that feels guilty for what is going to do so, unlike the ST which fits absolutely with the representation of the man's monstrosity, the TT is not in accordance with it. Oyster Boy's dad is shown by Burton as a monster who stop at nothing, and as a man who knows that what is going to do is immoral but has to do it by the translator. This is an example of invalidity between the text and the image.

In conclusion, both the structures' poems are composed of 24 stanzas despite the different lengths of the verses, in fact, the English text's lines are shorter than the verses in the Italian translation. In the ST the most used type of rhyme is the rhyming couplet, but there is also a great use of the assonance: <<For their supper they had one spectacular dish/ a simmering stew of mollusks and fish/ And while he savored the broth, her bride's heart made a wish>>. In the TT the translator tries to maintain the musicality of the poem, but he does not always respect the rhyming couplet, despite his effort to maintain the assonance all through the stanzas: <<Pranzarono con un piatto/ prelibato: uno stufato di triglia/ e di cozza. E mentre lui beveva il brodo dalla tazza a lei/ prese un nonsoché da sposa:/ una voglia>>. Nico Orengo shows another time his interest in the target audience than in the faithfulness of the ST. His selections are not always focused on a literal translation of the text, there are mostly changes directed to maintain the meaning of the poem, however, in general the plot is quite identical. The TR, as the SR, can appreciate the atmosphere the author creates with his main poem of the collection which seems to be one of tragic and miserable acceptance, and it is

possible thanks to the tone of the storytelling. The linguistic selection of terms is Nico Orengo's distinguishing mark, his use of regional saying and idiom is a distinctive feature of his style as a poet and as a translator. On the surface, the poem seems to be about a hybrid kid's death, but it is the story of his entire life of suffering and torment that concludes in unpunished infanticide.

To conclude the analysis of the translation, it is interesting to notice how this poem's beginning and conclusion bear a striking resemblance to one another: Sam is buried in the sand; his parents were married by the sea. The sea fruits are a central thread, his parents ate mollusks and fish while wishing for a baby and they eat Oyster Boy while wishing to leave their sexual issues behind. Last but not least, the cross depicted on the church tower during the parent's marriage is the opposite of Sam's grave's one that collapses quite immediately owing to a wave.

4. Interview to the translator

Unfortunately, Nico Orengo died in 2009 in Turin, the readers inherited his poetry, his novels, and his translations. His great collaboration with Burton made him the official translator of the writer's works, for this reason in 2006 he also translated *Tim Burton's Corpse Bride* (*La sposa cadavere. Siete invitati alle nozze*). Unlike what most people believe a translator never works alone; he collaborates with other professional translators and proof-readers, and they work together with the author. It will be utopian to affirm that the translation process is always carried on by a tight-knit team, but it can be affirmed that Orengo and Burton created a solid relationship throughout the entire translation process.

During his career, Nico Orengo has been willing to take part in debates and meetings about translation to compare his style with the other translators, to give them advice and to receive constructive criticism. On the 9th of May 2006 the interviewer Andrea Rota asked him for a brief interview about his translation of *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories*, in a few answers the translator achieved to summarize the most important steps of his work, beginning from his relationship with the foreign languages to the most decisive moments of the translation of the collection. Here will be reported the interview published by Rota:[63]

> *Rota*: Gent.mo Orengo, inizio con una domanda "generale", inerente alla traduzione come genere testuale tout court. Molti intellettuali (un nome noto è senza dubbio B. Croce), rifacendosi soprattutto alla nozione di equivalenza hanno sostenuto/sostengono che tradurre poesia sia impossibile. Mi immagino che Lei sia contrario a tale asserzione e al relativo principio, prova ne è la Sua versione dei testi di Tim Burton. Crede comunque che vi possano essere dei limiti a priori nel tradurre poesia? A chi afferma che un rifacimento o un adattamento "poetici" non possano essere considerati "traduzioni" in quanto "belle infedeli" e troppo distanti dal testo di partenza, che risponderebbe?
>
> *Orengo*: anch'io penso che la poesia sia intraducibile e che lo si possa fare solo, cercando di avvicinarsi il più possibile ad un universo geografico-culturale. L'unica scusante che ci si può dare, traducendo una poesia, è che lo si sta facendo perché in proprio si fanno dei versi…c'è,

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[63] A. Rota,"*Bambino ostrica" o "Oyster Boy"? Nico Orengo traduce Tim Burton Commento alla traduzione italiana di*", inTRAlinea Vol. 9., 2007.

chiamiamola così, una fratellanza di suoni, rime, versi che accomuna chi ha scritto quel testo e chi lo gira in altro respiro, in altra lingua.

Rota: passo ora a qualche breve quesito che, pur riferito specificamente alla sua traduzione di Burton, si riallaccia probabilmente alla domanda precedente. Prima di iniziare a tradurre le poesie/filastrocche, immagino Lei si sia posto degli obiettivi da perseguire nella versione italiana. Potrebbe indicare quali siano state le priorità che hanno maggiormente segnato il Suo lavoro sui testi della raccolta? E le maggiori difficoltà nel restar fedele agli obiettivi posti?

Orengo: mi piaceva il mondo di Burton, le sue immagini, le sue ossessioni, i suoi personaggi, la sua cultura; sentivo che, in parte, era anche mia. Affinità? Sì. Temi comuni? Sì. Questo è il dato che mi ha permesso di provarci…

Rota: le Sue traduzioni ricorrono frequentemente ad "allontanamenti" dal testo originale, i quali paiono evidentemente frutto di scelte ponderate. Mi riferisco, ad esempio, a soluzioni metriche e a combinazioni dei versi (cfr. poesia James, di soli due versi nell'originale e di sei nella Sua), oppure a scelte che, privilegiando aspetti fonetici (in primis, la rima), introducono lemmi - e conseguenti connotazioni testuali - assenti dall'originale (cfr. il Suo uso del sostantivo "Viagra", in Morte Malinconica del Bambino Ostrica). Potrebbe commentare questi due esempi e/o altri casi di "allontanamento" per Lei significativi?

Orengo: ci si allontana per avvicinarsi, una volta che si traduce in una lingua è il lettore di quella lingua che si vuol toccare, che sia sciogliendo e moltiplicando, per obbligo linguistico, due versi o ricorrendo ad una parola che immediatamente dice la sua realtà, il suo contenuto.

Rota: quando si traducono testi appartenenti a culture e/o lingue molto lontane nello spazio (ad esempio, quelle orientali) e/o nel tempo, è facile comprendere che il traduttore debba

operare scelte con cui superare le evidenti barriere culturali, affinché il lettore della traduzione giudichi quest'ultima fruibile e quanto più godibile. Tradurre le poesie di Tim Burton L'ha messa di fronte a difficoltà di tipo "culturale"? In altri termini: in che modo il contatto di lingue (inglese->italiano) appartenenti a tradizioni culturali simili, ma non esattamente coincidenti, ha influito sulla Sua versione dei testi? È nell'ambito della diversità culturale di lingua/cultura inglese vs. lingua/cultura italiana che va ricondotta, ad esempio, la traduzione del lemma "Halloween" - festività tipicamente anglosassone - con "Natale", nella poesia Il bambino Ostrica va in giro? Perché non ha tradotto, ad esempio, "Carnevale"? Avrebbe esempi o commenti da fare in merito alla distanza culturale dei testi originali rispetto a quelli da Lei prodotti?

Orengo: l'inglese è pragmatico, conciso, veloce ma sul terreno delle filastrocche, la loro tradizione e la nostra può, con tutte le differenze, intendersi, trovare ansie e paure e colori comuni. Halloween e il Natale hanno luce e buio, paura e speranza e dolcetti in comune, molto di più, credo, che se avessi usato il carnevale, e quale carnevale poi? Venezia, Viareggio, Torino? E poi, la libertà, la rilettura, si può prendere quando esistono i disegni e il testo a fronte. Non crede?

The interviewer Andrea Rota through his questions resumes Nico Orengo's idea of poetry from the basic possibility, or impossibility, of translation of poems, keeping on the way the translator chooses the texts he wants to work on and ending up proposing practical examples of the poems from Tim Burton's collection.

The answer to the first question caught me off guard. A poet, writer, and translator who affirm that it is impossible to translate poems is very unusual, especially if he is talking about a poems' translation he published a few time before the interview. Orengo explains that the cultural and stylistic approach is possible, but no one will ever reach the perfect equivalence to the original text, this theory is applicable to any kind of text, but it is particularly and strongly related to the poetry as the mentioned theorist Benedetto Croce affirmed in the nineteenth century. Faithfulness to the text is considered less important than the possibility to reach the target audience using any kind of translation strategy and poetic change. Moreover, the necessary changes are dictated by the cultural and stylistic distance that can exist between two languages, luckily this is not the specific

case of English and Italian as the author says. The two languages are different in everyday use, English is more concise than Italian, but the poetry is quite similar.

Furthermore, the author focuses on the specific decision to translate the bizarre poems by the American director, Orengo declares that the only justification for his selection is the shared inclination to prefer strange characters and themes.

To conclude, the interviewer refers to two poems that are noteworthy and have been analysed previously in this thesis, *James* and *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy*, as domestication examples.

Conclusion

Nico Orengo explained his decision to translate *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* on a personal taste base, the same that pushed me to try to analyse the collection and propose different solutions to the challenging lines. The main difficulties I faced are related to the poor availability of documents both in English and in Italian, but it also became a challenge for me to comment on the source text and the target text critically and personally.

As far as I assumed, Nico Orengo generally follows two poetic principles: the style and the target audience. Orengo begins his professional career as a writer and a poet, so he is inclined to maintain more the rhyme respecting the author's style and the meaning of the poem than the literary faithfulness to the original text. Therefore, the changes he makes to the story, to the terms, to the references of the poems are considered more important than a literal equivalence to respect the poetical coherency and above all necessary as he affirms. Obviously, shifting between two different languages means that the grammar, structure, and length of the lines are different, but the translator masterfully solves the distance between them. Orengo prefers to apply a target-oriented strategy to recreate the same or similar meaning of the poem to the target reader who will simply appreciate the musicality if we consider a young audience or the musicality and the accurate selection of terms if we consider an adult audience to describe the bizarre and weird context and characters. However, the target audience is divided into two different groups, on one hand, there are the readers who love the masterful translation despite the necessary changes to the plot to defend the writer's style, on the other hand, there are the readers who appreciate the translation of some poems but consider some changes too excessive. Among the reviews, one caught my eye: a reader wrote to appreciate most of the translations, but some made him desire to ''tear his hair out''. After a demanding analysis, I believe that Orengo's translations can be considered scientific artwork but it is also true that there are no alternative translations to compare them with so it cannot be affirmed that the domesticating practices are the unique and best possible solution. A series of annotations and comments on some crucial passages offers a starting point for a discussion on the shift from English to Italian. Since I consider the possibility to propose alternative verbal modifications to a text as a way of developing critical thinking, I attended the discussion personally proposing a series of possible translations for the trickier passages using all the supports I could: dictionaries, glossaries, encyclopedias. After a careful examination of the text, I decided to propose

alternate options for the Italian translation, these modifications are specially gathered in the poem which gives the title to the entire collection: *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy*.

Furthermore, since Tim Burton begins his career as an animator the drawings used to enrich each poem are considered part of the success of the collection, they can also be contemplated as pieces of art by themselves. Orengo succeeds to use them to his advantage also when they could be considered an obstacle to the verbal text because there is not a perfect equivalence between what is said and what is shown. This additional translation difficulty demonstrates the translator's ability to always find a solution.

In conclusion, Tim Burton and Nico Orengo's collaboration was the key to all the problems and for this reason, the Italian translator has been the only official translator of the American director's works until he passed away. Tim Burton accepts the quite invisible modifications the translator makes to his poems since he realizes that domestication is necessary to go places with the Italian target audience as it happened.

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Abbreviation

CSI= Cultural Specific Item

ETC= Et cetera

SL= Source Language

ST= Source Text

TG= Target Language

TT= Target Text

SR= Source Reader

TR= Target Reader