

THE TREACLE TRIPLETS: A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO THE TRANSLATION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the mechanics behind the translation of children's literature through a practical translation from Dutch into English and an introspective commentary thereof. It also examines the cultural disparity and Anglo-American dominance within (translated) children's literature.

Through this translation and study, this thesis would like to contribute to the one-sided literary traffic and point out the cultural consequences this imbalance in trade will hold. Not only for a world library of children's literature, but also for English speaking children who are increasingly oblivious of foreign literature. This thesis especially addresses the British reluctance towards translated foreign children's literature due to the strong position of English as a language and the quality of the British national children's literature. Furthermore, it challenges translation studies to consider the different needs and strategies for the translation of children's literature.

The approach this translator proposed for the translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* was a functional dialogic approach. This thesis therefore touches upon the developments that have led to the rise and wide applicability of functionalism in the practice of translation. Some of the most salient theorists in translation of children's literature will also be discussed, specifically focusing on Riitta Oittinen's ideas on Bakhtinian dialogue and carnivalism in relation to the translation of children's literature.

A functional dialogic approach to the practical translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* has led to an overall naturalised and domesticated translation in which the source text was adapted to a British target text cultural setting. This strategy was chosen to guarantee positive reception of the translation in the target text culture. A small-scale empirical reception survey has asserted this positive reception and reinforced some of this thesis' presuppositions, among others that English-speaking children have no access to and no knowledge of foreign literature.

Through the success of the practical translation and the positive reception of the target text this study has emphasised the importance and cultural necessity of translating foreign children's literature into English.

OPSOMMING

In hierdie studie word ondersoek ingestel na die meganismes vir die vertaling van kinderliteratuur, deur middel van 'n praktiese vertaling uit Nederlands in Engels en introspektiewe kommentaar daarop. Die kulturele wanverhoudinge asook Anglo-Amerikaanse dominansie binne (vertaalde) kinderliteratuur word ook ondersoek.

Deur middel van hierdie vertaling en studie poog hierdie tesis om by te dra tot die eensydige literêre verkeer van vertaalde werke uit Engels en benadruk die kulturele gevolge wat hierdie wanbalans sal inhou. Dit is nie slegs vir 'n wêreldbiblioteek van kinderliteratuur nie, maar ook vir Engelssprekende kinders, wat toenemend meer onbewus raak van vertaalde letterkunde. In hierdie tesis word die Britse teensinnigheid vir vertaalde vreemde kinderliteratuur, as gevolg van die sterk posisie van die Engelse taal en die hoë gehalte van Britse nasionale kinderliteratuur, in die besonder, bespreek. Verder word die vertaalwetenskap uitgedaag om die behoefte aan en strategieë vir die vertaling van kinderliteratuur in aanmerking te neem.

Hierdie vertaler het besluit om 'n funksionalisties dialogiese benadering tot die vertaling van *De zusjes Kriegel* te volg. Daarom word die ontwikkelings wat gelei het tot die ontstaan en wye toepassing van die funksionalisme in die vertaalpraktyk, bespreek. Verder word van die mees prominente teoretici binne die veld van kinderliteratuurvertaling bespreek en daar word spesifiek gefokus op Riitta Oittinen se idees oor die Bakhtiniaanse dialoog en karnavalisme met betrekking tot die vertaling van kinderliteratuur.

'n Funksionalisties dialogiese benadering tot die praktiese vertaling van *De zusjes Kriegel* het gelei tot 'n oorwegend geneutraliseerde en gedomestikeerde vertaling waarin die bronteks vir 'n Britse doeltekskultuurkonteks aangepas is. Hierdie strategie is gekies om te verseker dat die doelteksleser die vertaling positief in sy/haar doeltekskultuur sal ontvang. 'n Kleinskaalse empiriese resepsie-ondersoek het hierdie positiewe resepsie, asook van die tesis se voorveronderstellings bevestig. Dit is onder andere dat Engelssprekende kinders nie toegang tot en kennis van 'n vreemde letterkunde het nie.

Deur die geslaagdheid van die praktiese vertaling en die positiewe resepsie van die doelteks beklemtoon hierdie tesis die belangrikheid van, asook kulturele noodsaaklikheid vir die vertaling van kinderliteratuur in Engels.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Once upon a time

The story of this thesis is about a children's book from a minority-Dutch language community called Flanders that wanted to become an English book.

Children's literature has a rich history of translation. In fact, most of everyone's childhood heroes have become famous through translation. Today, however, we notice a change and imbalance in the translation traditions of the Western countries, which could have serious cultural implications for the translation of children's literature and literary translation in general. Through a practical translation and an introspective commentary on the translation process this thesis wishes to shed light on translating children's literature and wants to work against the current stream of translation practices.

1.2 Source Text Selection

De zusjes Kriegel is a Belgian children's book written in Dutch by Flemish author Marc de Bel. The triplets were born in 1992, and have successfully stayed naughty and demonic, with a series of books, comic strips, a movie and a musical until today.

Clearly, Marc de Bel has found some sort of success formula, because he is the darling of Flemish children's literature and every single book he has published, was turned into a bestseller. The author himself declares he is a twelve-year old boy stuck in an adult man's body. As strange as that may sound, Marc de Bel and his young readers seem to be on the same page. He speaks their language and tells their jokes and since children's language is mostly free from nationality and often has unrestricted geographical potential, it is about time some of Marc de Bel's famous characters learn to speak English.

Belgium has a rich history in comic book celebrities who have managed to capture the hearts of people outside the Belgian borders. Reporter Tintin, Lucky Luke and the Daltons or Spike and Suzy (*Suske en Wiske*) are all fictional characters with a Belgian passport. However, there are other potentially interesting literary exports that have remained local products for far too

long. *Lien, Sien* and *Fien Kriegel* also known as *De zusjes Kriegel* are three little rascals whose tricks and frolic could easily make an audience of any tongue chuckle and blush.

1.3 Problem Statement

1.3.1 Problem Statement 1: “British insularity” (Gardner, 2009)

It is important for children to be exposed to different cultures from a young age and to have their world knowledge broadened by stories and characters from all over the world. Deborah Hallford (2005: 4), in her foreword to *Outside In, Children’s books in Translation*, claims that “translated children’s literature is able to break down barriers of geography, language and race and that learning about other cultures is an enriching experience that opens up new horizons and stimulates new ideas”. Translators should therefore diligently translate foreign children’s literature, thereby making different cultures available and accessible for the child and encourage a tolerant outlook on the world and its cultural kaleidoscope. Anthony Gardner (2009) touches upon the diplomatic importance of translating children’s literature.

Characters from Tintin and the Snow Queen to Pippi Longstocking and Babar the Elephant, have done more to break down barriers between nations than the most seasoned diplomat could ever hope to - as the Dalai Lama recognised when he recently gave his ‘Truth of Light’-award to the Hergé Foundation for Tintin in Tibet (Gardner, 2009)

European children’s literature has a long-standing tradition of translated classics, but unfortunately the same tradition of literary exchange is not true for Great Britain (Hallford 2005: 22-23).

Throughout history, translations have played an important role in the canonisation process of children’s literature. Translations have greatly improved the status of children’s literature and have encouraged new initiatives: “By confronting authors with the best from elsewhere, they stimulated the production of literature in the national language” (Ghesquiere, 2006: 25).

Even though most children’s ‘classics’ are available in translation all over the world, the present situation shows “that a power struggle is at play in the field of children’s literature where the export of books and translations is not always based on intrinsic literary value of

the texts concerned; they are more often the result of cultural dominance and of the concentration of power at the level of the publishing houses” (Ghesquiere, 2006: 20).

The shelves of European libraries and bookstores are filled with an abundance of translated children’s books and youth novels. However, there is one powerful market that seems oblivious to the stream of foreign children’s books. Philip Pullman (2005: 5-7) refers to the disgracefully and shamefully few number of children’s books available in English translation: “Only 3 percent of the books on the UK market are translations compared to about 23 percent in France” (Pullman, 2005: 6).

There are several possible ‘excuses’ for the English-language market’s lack of interest in translated children’s literature. First of all, the strong position of English as the *lingua franca* of the world, means that a lot of the foreign books ranging from the USA, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the Caribbean and Africa are written in English to begin with (Pullman, 2005: 6). On the surface, the British market seems to have an extensive international library available, so what is the problem? The scenario would turn out quite differently should English be a minority-language according to Nicholas Tucker (2005: 10-11) who claims the built-in advantage British books have vis-à-vis foreign books, is the British unwillingness to look abroad for inspiration: “But buoyed up by centuries of uninvaded independence, the British have long been prone to think that foreigners are more likely to learn something from them rather than the other way round” (Tucker, 2005: 10).

Pullman (2005: 7) also refers to the paradoxical influence globalisation has on translated children’s literature. One would assume that in today’s globalised community the literature from all over the world would be easily available. But there are two sides to every question, and perhaps it is exactly globalisation as “a phenomenon that’s driven by money and business, not by culture and curiosity” that needs to be blamed. For most publishers, the financial and intellectual effort to make more foreign children’s literature available compromises any ideological benefits.

Another important consideration is the strong national children’s literature of Great Britain. Could the limelight be shared with extremely popular British authors such as J.K. Rowling, Enid Blyton and Jacqueline Wilson? Only one European author, Cornelia Funke with her

Tintenherz books, translated from German into English, has recently successfully entered the English-language market (Gardner, 2009).

After the success of the Harry Potter books, the chances of publishing a successful translation have actually diminished, according to Ann Fine, Britain's former Children's Laureate (in Gardner 2009): "Before J.K. Rowling, publishers never gave children's books a marketing budget, so they were all competing on an equal basis and the cream could rise to the top. Now it's all to do with marketing: as with adult books, publishers decide which ones they're going to promote before the first 60 pages have been written - and it's unlikely that they'll choose a foreign author". The Harry Potter books have turned the publishing of children's literature into an industrial territory for marketing geniuses. This invariably means that a children's author who wants to compete with the likes of J.K. Rowling will need a first-rate marketing plan. This increases the costs of producing children's literature, which is especially adverse for translated books:

And it costs money to translate books, because it's a demanding intellectual activity and there aren't many people who can do it well, and publishers are reluctant to spend money on producing books that booksellers won't sell, and booksellers are reluctant to give space to books that readers don't want, and readers don't want books they have never seen reviewed, and literary editors won't review books if the publishers won't spend money on advertising because...And it all goes round in a circle (Pullman, 2005: 7)

Foreign authors – already disadvantaged – will need an even bigger publishing and marketing budget to get their books on the shelves next to Britain's local authors who are right at every publisher's disposal for book tours and signings.

The British reluctance to publish translated children's books is not solely a case of conflicting interests. It is a combination of the powerful position of the English language, the quality of local English children's literature and the costly efforts of translation.

However, attention has been called to British culture's lack of interest in children's literature from around the world. For this purpose, the 'Marsh Award' for children's literature in translation was installed. The award is given biannually to "an outstanding work of fiction for

young readers introduced into the English language through translation and published by a British publishing house”.¹ The goal of the Marsh Award is to encourage the translation of children’s literature into English.

Another important attempt was the catalogue *Outside In* by Deborah Hallford and Edgardo Zaghini (2005). The intention of their publication is “to celebrate and actively promote an interest in the rich tradition and culture of children’s literature from around the world” (Hallford, 2005: 4). Furthermore, it is a useful resource containing information about what books are currently available in translation and it comprises biographical details of authors, illustrators and translators. Both the ‘Marsh Award’ and *Outside In* are significant endeavours that will hopefully fill some of the cultural gaps in English children’s literature. The mantra for a translation movement could be copied from Philip Pullman’s theorem: “You will never know what sets a child’s imagination on fire, but if we DON’T offer children the experience of literature from other languages, we’re starving them. It’s as simple as that ” (Pullman, 2005: 9).

1.3.2 Problem Statement 2: “Translating for children differs from translating for adults” (Lathey, 2006)

Gillian Lathey (2006) in the introduction to the *Children’s Literature in Translation Reader* indicates that critical interest in translation of children’s literature has developed at an accelerating pace over the last thirty years.

Research into children’s literature itself only gained academic credibility in the seventies. The lower status of children’s literature could be the explanation for this academic late bloomer. Eithne O’Connel (2006) ironically calls children’s literature “the Cinderella of literary studies because it remains largely uncanonical and culturally marginalised”. Consequently, it does not come as a surprise that the status of the translation of children’s literature holds an even lower position in scholarly research. In studies on children’s literature, translation was rarely touched upon (Lathey, 2006: 1). This is peculiar because children’s literature unlike adult literature is more universal as Bamberger (1976: 19) states: “The realm of children’s books

¹ ESU, “The Marsh Award for Children’s Literature in Translation: Announcement of the 2009 Winner”. ESU, the English Speaking Union. Available on <http://www.esu.org/page.asp?p=1835> (2009, July 10).

knows no frontiers. Children do not care where books come from, they do not read them *because* they are foreign books, as adults often do, but regard them as stories of adventure, fantasies and so on ”.

Gillian Lathey (2006: 4) relates the lack of academic interest to the social position of children, which results in a low status of their literature. On top of that, there are the “developmental aspects of children’s literature that determine the unique qualities of successful writing for children and that make translating an imaginative, challenging and frequently underestimated task” (Lathey, 2006: 4).

The translation of children’s books fundamentally differs from the translation of adult’s literature. Children are generally not aware they are reading a foreign book; this has an impact on translation ‘techniques’ and strategies. A children’s story should read as if it was originally written in the child’s own language (Bamberger, 1976: 19).

Another issue Lathey (2006: 4-5) puts forward is the unequal relationship between the adult writer or translator and the child audience. Even though every adult is a former child, adults are too far removed from childhood to fully understand a child’s perspective. Adult presence is an important consideration for translators and writers of children’s books, because adults in the form of parents, teachers and publishers decide which books are made available for reading and which are banned.

There is also a difference in perspective between children and adults. Adults generally encourage reading to improve the child’s literacy, education and values. They prefer to see morally instructive texts translated and tend to censor differing cultural expectations, “especially when it comes to violence and scathological humour in which particularly children take great delight” (Lathey, 2006: 6).

The translator has to pay attention to certain aspects of childhood and qualities of children’s literature. First of all, there is the limitation of the child’s world knowledge. Young readers cannot be expected to be familiar with foreign cultures, languages and geography the way adults are. In order for the child not to feel alienated, a translation will require more adaptation than translations for an adult readership. Extensive annotated translations are not desirable for children’s books nor is a highly ‘foreignised’ translation. There is no doubt that

foreign names and exotic places could appeal to children, but as Anthea Bell, an awarded English translator for children's literature argues: "An impenetrable-looking set of foreign names on the first pages of a book might alienate young readers, so that the translator has to gauge the precise degree of foreignness and how far it is acceptable and can be preserved" (in Lathey, 2006: 9).

Children's literature differs from adult literature in what Hollindale (in Lathey, 2006: 9) calls the 'childness' of children's texts: "The quality of being a child – dynamic, imaginative, interactive and unstable". Translators need to captivate that 'childness' of a text and the fresh and crispy speech inherent to children's language or as Gillian Lathey (2006: 9) puts it: "A translator has to make a transition to the child's mindset through the medium of the original writer's style".

1.4 Research Methodology

1.4.1 Theoretical Research

The translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* can be labelled a literary functional dialogic translation. This means that the translation was made with a clear purpose (*skopos*) in mind and that translation decisions were made according to that purpose. It is important to discuss what functionalism is and why translators started working and thinking in a functional framework. Since the translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* is a literary translation 'creativity' has been considered more important than issues of faithfulness and equivalence. Dialogic, therefore, refers to the dialogue between the translator of *De zusjes Kriegel* and the author of the text, the text, the 'childness' of the text, Flemish children, English children, the universal child and the translator's memories of childhood in order to 'create' a target text that appeals maximally to the target audience.

This thesis will explore the realms of functionalism and *skopos* theory and highlight its benefits for literary translation. With regards to theory on translating children's literature, the literature review will comprise the works of Göte Klingberg, Zohar Shavit and Riitta Oittinen. And finally, for research on domestication and foreignisation this thesis will have a look at Schleiermacher, Berman and Venuti's theories.

1.4.2 Practical Research

When it comes to the academic research on children's literature, translation studies still has some very important research gaps to fill. Göte Klingberg indicates two potential fields for research into the translation of children's literature namely, studies on how children's books are actually being translated and a definition of the problems the translators encounter when translating such books (Klingberg, 1986: 9).

For the actual translation I have selected the first fifty-five pages of the Flemish children's book: *De zusjes Kriegel*. In order to gain more insight into the translation process of children's literature and the problems that accompany such translation endeavours an annotative chapter will be added. In the annotation, the theory of Christiane Nord on recurrent translation problems was used. Nord has made up four categories for translation problems namely, pragmatic, intercultural, interlingual and text-specific complications. Nord's guidelines have helped undermining or enhancing some of the theoretical ideas on translating and translating for children.

Another method that will strengthen the elected translation strategies and techniques is an empirical reception study. A small target group of 19 children between the ages of eight to twelve was presented with an excerpt of the translation accompanied by a questionnaire. The results of these questionnaires and of the interviews the researcher conducted, give an idea as to how English children feel about foreign literature and as to how much 'foreignness' a child aged eight to twelve can handle. The most important goal of this empirical study is to determine whether an English translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* would in fact be considered acceptable in English.

1.5 Arrangement of Chapters

The following chapter will consist of an analysis of the source text and will have a look at which aspects children find important in books. This is necessary to determine the

translation design and decide which important source text features and characteristics should remain in the translation and which will have to be adapted.

The third chapter will be an account of all the relevant theoretical research for this translation study. Even though some of the ideas will be questioned or abandoned, they form an interesting base to build the argument for a strategy of ‘domesticated foreign’ translations for children (Oittinen and Paloposki 2001).

The fourth chapter contains the actual translation, which is a translation of the first fifty-five pages of *De zusjes Kriegel*. The fifth chapter is devoted to the annotation to this translation and will give examples of possible translation hurdles when dealing with translated children’s literature from Dutch to English. Finally, a sixth chapter will reveal the results of the empirical study on the target text reception and some concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2: SOURCE TEXT ANALYSIS

2.1 Introduction

When can a book be considered translation-worthy? A thorough source text analysis can reveal whether the translation task will be feasible. An analysis of the source text involves an examination of the text's extra and intratextual factors.

In what follows, information about the sender, the addressees and the subject matter will be examined. This information, when compared to the function of the target text, helps the translator anticipate translation problems. It also allows the translator to think about possible solutions to those translation problems and appropriate translation strategies. With the information of the source text and the function of the target text in mind, the translator has a constant paradigm to which he can refer when faced with any translation difficulties. On top of that, he will be able to justify any of his translation choices in relation to the source text analysis and the target text function.

First of all, the extratextual factors will be discussed. This requires biographical information on the author and information about the source text's function and situation. Intratextual factors involve questions on the subject matter of *De zusjes Kriegel*. An outline of the story and a discussion of the author's style will give information about the content of the source text. Finally, some interesting research into the mechanics of children's literature done by Jan van Coillie (2001) in his book *Leesbeesten en Boekenfeesten: Hoe werken (met) kinder-en jeugdliteratuur* will be elicited and related to the characteristics of *De zusjes Kriegel*. His thoughts on humour and adventure and the likes and dislikes of the child reader should serve as an explanation for the immense popularity of *De zusjes Kriegel*.

2.2 Extratextual factors

Extratextual factors are analysed by enquiring about the author or the sender of the text, the addressees, the medium, time of text production and text reception and the motive for communication (Nord, 1997a: 36). This results in a list of WH-questions:

Who transmits?

To whom?

What for?

By which medium?

Where?

When?

Why?

With what function? (Nord, 1997a: 36)

2.2.1 “Who the Hell is Marc de Bel?”²

The author, Marc de Bel, was born in Kruishoutem in 1954, a typical Flemish countryside village. He became a writer after a career of twenty years as a teacher. As a primary school teacher he used to tell his pupils a story in instalments every Friday afternoon. One afternoon, just before the school summer holiday started, one of his stories did not reach its ending. Not wanting to disappoint his pupils he decided to write the rest of the story down and hand it out as a summer holiday read. And so, Marc de Bel’s first children’s book *Het ei van Oom Trotter* and his literary career were born in 1987. *Het ei van Oom Trotter* was soon awarded the prize of the *Vlaamse Kinder-en Jeugdjury*, which is a prize given by a Flemish jury of children to their favourite author and book.

² A title derived from his own website. Marc de Bel, “Who the hell is Marc de Bel” (Online) Available: <http://www.marcdebel.be/mezelf>. (2010, May 10).

Due to immense popularity and Marc de Bel's never-ending productive inspiration, he regretfully had to give up teaching to devote himself entirely to his writing career. He has published as many as 103 books since and has even started his own publishing house *Tingel*.

Marc de Bel is a slightly eccentric environmentalist with the amazing ability to capture children with his stories. Marc de Bel himself claims he prefers talking to children to talking to adults. He describes himself as an eleven-year old child trapped in a fifty-something body. According to De Bel, this condition was caused by a fall from his tree house when he was eleven, which stopped his mind from growing older. De Bel loves children and children love him. He is funny, unconventional and every child's partner in crime.

2.2.2 Addressee, Purpose, Medium, Time, Place and Function

The cover of *De zusjes Kriegel* recommends the book to children from age eleven. However, an inquiry with a primary school teacher in Belgium revealed that the book is read by children from the age of eight until the age of twelve. The Flemish libraries also store the book in the section for children between eight and twelve years old.

De zusjes Kriegel is a fictional story written in the Dutch language that seeks to be comical and diverting. The book has 160 pages and was first released in 1992 in Louvain, Belgium.

2.3 Intratextual factors

Unlike extratextual factors, intratextual factors can only be determined by reading the source text. Intratextual factors give information about language, style, tone and content and these factors can also be diagnosed by a WH-question check-list:

On what subject matter?

What? (What not?)
In what order?
Using which non-verbal elements
In which words
In what kind of sentences
In which tone
To what effect (Nord, 1997a: 36)

2.3.1 *De zusjes Kriegel*: Story Line

De zusjes Kriegel are three little sisters and on top of that they are identical triplets, who leave a trail of mischief wherever they go. The triplets are slightly monstrous, demonic little bullies who are feared by everyone regardless of sex or age. They show no respect for animals and have an attitude of zero-tolerance towards any human being. The only person that makes them feel uneasy at times is their baby brother *Joel*. Even though the bullying practices of the three brazen little hussies are horrible, one cannot help but admire their bravery and spunk.

De zusjes Kriegel do not have the best pedigree. In fact, the only reason they weren't given up for adoption was the child allowance which, for three babies, was significantly higher than father *Kriegel's* salary. The triplets' parents are useless, lazy alcoholics who starve and neglect their children and spend their nights in the pub gambling and drinking beer. Young readers can easily relate the deviant behaviour of the triplets to their loveless and uncared-for upbringing.

The book starts with the birth of *De zusjes Kriegel* and continues telling the story of their first days at school and their special talent to drive every teacher towards insanity or at least towards a nervous breakdown. On Christmas Eve, their baby brother *Joel* is born and this invokes the sudden appearance of their grandmother of whom they never knew the existence. From the moment they meet their grandmother things become a little eerie. One Christmas Eve, when *Lien*, *Sien* and *Fien* are left alone with their baby brother she,

once again, appears on their doorstep. That same night, their house burns down under suspicious circumstances. The triplets and their brother only just manage to escape. Since they lost their house and all their belongings in the fire, they find themselves forced to move to the poor side of the village into a ramshackle house. The triplets' daily nutrition consists of the stale bread pudding the village baker brings them every day for their dog *Katsjoe* or any other edible leftovers they manage to scrape together from the mountains of empty tins and cans in their kitchen.

The three girls have a fondness for the dark and spend most of their nights running around the graveyard torturing animals and neighbours, instead of sleeping in their beds. Since the triplets' nocturnal escapades force them to catch up on their lack of sleep during the day, their outings are much appreciated by the staff and pupils of their school. When they do have an early night, they are unruly in class during the day. After killing an innocent bird and managing to slip it into one of their classmates' soup, they are no longer allowed to go on the school zoo trip and the theme park visit. The triplets' decide they cannot miss out and cunningly manipulate Miss Anne, their teacher, and the head of the school to withdraw their severe punishment and they are allowed to come along after all.

In the zoo, they try to serve one of the pupils as a snack to the lions and now officially get expelled from school. Since their punishment couldn't get much worse, the triplets no longer care and decide to cross the boundaries of malice even further. At the next stop, the theme park, they decide to spice up the boring attraction of the Devil's Fortress which leads to many injured pupils and a multiply fractured teacher.

Back in school, the principal announces that a replacement for Miss *Anne* will arrive the next day. Before he has even finished his sentence, a very robust-looking woman barges into the classroom declaring she is Miss *Lucy*, the replacement-teacher. The sturdy Miss Lucy seems to be the only one capable of handling *de zusjes Kriegel*. When she reveals her passion for bats, the triplets know just the place where they can go. And so, they leave on a nightly mission for the 'Haunted Mill'. However, shortly after their arrival,

Miss *Lucy* reveals her true identity, she turns out to be a man and no other than Lucifer's 'black druid', their grandmother's archenemy. Lucifer's accomplice only pretended to be the triplets' teacher so he could make a human sacrifice for Lucifer. The triplets were the elected sacrifice as they represented the three 'women of fire'. Luckily, *Joel* and their grandmother, representing the symbol of water, came to the rescue. Lucifer's black druid spectacularly comes to his end and everything returns to normal.

2.3.2 Language, tone, style, theme and motive

The language in *De zusjes Kriegel* is adjusted to the reading level of an eight to twelve year old child. It is easy and straightforward, because it does not contain any technical terms, jargon, slang or difficult vocabulary. The sentences are short and each chapter is no longer than five pages. De Bel uses a lot of humouristic devices to liven up his writing style such as funny collocations, swear words and abusive language. The author does not shy away from taboo words and crass language. He has a very honest writing style, which is particularly appreciated by children.

De zusjes Kriegel is about three very naughty girls whose mischief is absurdly evil. *De zusjes Kriegel* also shows traits of the gothic novel, because the scenes involve graveyards, deserted windmills, dark magic and mystery figures.

De zusjes Kriegel will definitely not inspire children to rebel against their parents and teachers, because one of the motives of the book is that children need loving parents. The triplets have useless parents who do not give their children any love, warmth or guidance and their behaviour stems from the neglect of their parents.

2.4 What Children Find Important in Books

In his book, Jan van Coillie (2001) publishes a striking letter of the Children's Jury of Schagen to the Jury of the *Gouden Griffel*, a prestigious award for children's literature in the Low Countries.

Geachte juryleden,

De kinderjury van Schagen heeft er bezwaar tegen dat grote mensen oordelen over kinderboeken. Want kinderen kunnen best zelf oordelen over hun boeken. Ze zijn toch voor ons geschreven! Wij hebben zelf samen met 20 kinderen boeken gelezen en zijn het niet eens met uw beoordeling. Kon Hesi Baka en Wim stonden ook op het lijstje van acht boeken die wij moesten lezen. Deze boeken heeft u bekroond, maar daar zijn wij het totaalaal niet mee eens. U bekroonde Kon Hesi Baka waarschijnlijk omdat u het een leerzaam boek vindt. Maar wij houden helemaal niet van boeken die alleen maar leerzaam zijn. Het boek Wim (bekroond met de Zilveren Griffel) vonden we hééél slecht. We vonden het een slecht onderwerp, en raar geschreven. Wij kozen het boek Geef me de ruimte van Thea Beckman, omdat het mooi, spannend, goed geschreven, avontuurlijk en toch ook een beetje leerzaam is. Wij hopen dat u in het vervolg een beetje rekening met onze wensen wilt houden. Anders kunnen we voortaan beter soep van grote mensen koken (Van Coillie, 2001: 64).

This letter provokes an interesting debate on the question of quality in children's literature. It shows that children's ideas about the quality of a book differ from those of adults. Prestigious awards for children's literature are given by adults who assess quality according to their own standards. Children realise that this difference of opinion is problematic for them, because adults give prizes to books children clearly do not like; they would even go as far as to 'make soup' of the judges if they don't take their children's verdict into account. Adults prefer to see their offspring read informative and original books. The fact they can learn something from a book is not as important for

children as it is for adults. For children a book is a success when it is funny and exciting and 'maybe a little informative'.

This difference in quality assessment can also be related to Marc de Bel who has been given many accolades by children's juries, but almost none by adult juries. Marc de Bel has a very particular style of writing. Children love his writing because he breaks taboos and is not afraid to use 'forbidden' words. Even though the educational value of Marc de Bel's writing may not be immediately obvious, it would be wrong to say they do not learn anything from his books. Marc de Bel does not instruct his readers on history or foreign cultures, but he does teach children the values of friendship and strongly promotes nature and animal preservation.

Children under the age of twelve find suspense and adventure very important in books. Van Coillie indicates that children pick up a book to relax and to unperturbedly drown in the fantasy world of the story (Van Coillie, 2001: 64). Another important criterion for a children's book is: humour. Children enjoy humour because it makes them feel safe and at ease. Van Coillie (2001: 65) asserts that this is precisely why most children prefer a happy ending. The criteria of humour, suspense and a happy ending become less important for children over 12 years of age or advanced readers who can find an open or 'unhappy' ending intriguing as it is part of life (Van Coillie, 2001: 64-65).

For children under the age of 12, a book has to be accessible and transparent. They appreciate a story if it reads easily and if it is not difficult to follow, this means that a story cannot have too many characters, a very complex plot line or complicated vocabulary. Van Coillie (2001: 67) refers to children's preference for over-simplified black-and-white characters that are often depicted in an ugly or distorted manner.

Children's and adult's opinions often clash on this basis. Children like suspense and humour; to learn something from a book is an interesting but irrelevant perk. Children prefer a recognisable, accessible and exciting story whereas adults find originality, openness and depth important. To adults, the instructive and enlightening values of a

book overrule the slapstick humour children appreciate so much. A children's book should also leave an open space for the child's own interpretation and should evoke an active and critical reading attitude instead of a mere escapist one (Van Coillie, 2001: 69). Adults generally disapprove stereotypical children's books written in an easy-reading children's lingo and consider more progressive, complex books that offer the child interesting and new perspectives worthy of recognition.

Children take delight in light fiction with a straightforward and predictable plot and recognisable characters. These 'format' books often come in series such as Enid Blyton's popular books on the exciting and funny adventures of the *Famous Five*, the *Babysitters-club* books or the *Harry Potter* series. Van Coillie (2001: 88-89) argues that such popular light fiction responds to the needs and expectations of the child. Children feel safe when they know the story will end well and they won't be confronted with heavy social or psychological issues (Van Coillie, 2001: 88). It also responds to their need of reassurance: 'good' will win over 'evil' and 'evil' will be punished, that is why children find it comical when the bad guy comes to an end in the most atrocious and spectacular way.

2.4.1 Suspense

A good deal of suspense is definitely in store for children reading *De zusjes Kriegel*. The sudden appearance of the triplets' grandmother is the catalyst for a series of uncanny events. Their grandmother, who according to their parents died three years ago, mysteriously reappears in their lives. She uses magic spells and is involved in a dark battle between good and evil. The triplets wander around at night in graveyards and are fascinated by the fact that their grandmother might be a witch. These elements of mild horror make the book suspenseful for children. In the end, good resides over evil and this makes children feel comfortable and safe again.

2.4.2 Humour

Van Coillie (2001: 95) asserts that humour is an important element in children's literature because it vents children's tension and pressure. It keeps their fears and problems under control and has the ability to break taboos. Laughter not only frees children from their fear, but also from the inhibitions and limitations of daily life. Through humour, children push out the boundaries of the permissible. They find reversed authority extremely amusing and it is often the little anarchists such as *Pipi Longstocking* or *De zusjes Kriegel* that turn out to be the most popular heroes (Van Coillie, 2001: 96). Playful aggression breaks taboos (Van Coillie, 2001: 97). That is the reason why children chuckle when they read 'forbidden' words or abusive language.

Adults and children have a different sense of humour and adults often find children's humour second-rate. Children enjoy slapstick-humour, abusive language and exaggerations. Children under the age of twelve do not really comprehend other humouristic devices such as irony and equivocality yet (Van Coillie, 2001: 97).

Van Coillie (2001: 101) mentions that children in the age category of nine to twelve find caricatured offences against authoritarian figures very funny. This can be related to their desire, at that age, to break free from their parents in search of their own identity. It also explains the popular theme of crazy families, ugly, sturdy teachers or clumsy overweight policemen. Children find characters such as *De zusjes Kriegel* amusing, because they like reading about the tomfoolery they would never dare to get up to. Resourceful, quick-witted rascals such as *De zusjes Kriegel* or *Pipi Longstocking* shake things up a little.

Marc de Bel's books fulfil children's expectations of a 'funny' book. *De zusjes Kriegel* are full of mischief and run rings around every adult. The adults in *De zusjes Kriegel* are not very respectable. They are depicted in a caricatured way: The headmaster has a stinky, garlic breath and their schoolteacher is an overstrained nervous wreck that resembles a pineapple. No good word can be said about the triplets' parents either. Their

mother is overweight from binging on cakes and tartlets and when their father is not drinking, he is sleeping off his hangover.

Another alluring characteristic of the Marc de Bel books and *De zusjes Kriegel* in particular, is the breaking of taboos and the blue jokes. The triplets urinate in the headmaster's vase when he does not allow them to go to the bathroom, for example. And to shock their poor cleaning lady, the hussies write ROSA LOVES SEX on her car. They also do not hesitate to replace the fillings of chocolate bars with bird poo before handing them over to some toddlers on the playground and so on.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

The purpose of the translation compared to the analysis of the source text show that source and target text situation are very similar. A translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* would then have to perform a similar function to the original source text. *De zusjes Kriegel's* main function is a text that is funny and easy to read for children between eight and twelve years of age.

A source text analysis reveals that Marc de Bel stands out in his writing style. His language is accessible and he makes use of a typical children's lingo; there is a nice catchy rhythm and melody to his language. De Bel's background as a teacher may be the secret behind his ability to speak to children. He seems to know exactly what keeps them sitting at the edge of their seat and makes them turn another page. *De zusjes Kriegel* is light fiction with mild horror, humour and reversed authority; the key to a successful book according to Van Collie.

However, adults and children have very different opinions about what is funny and what is funny language. The translator will have to use the same honest language in English and will have to resist her adult tendencies to 'prettify' the target text for children's ears by cleaning up the swear words and abusive language and lower the overall bold tone of the text.

A close look at the source text's extra and intratextual factors reveals that no major translation problems will arise. The translator will need creative alternatives to transfer De Bel's melodic language and humour in English, but will be able to leave most of the source text intact thanks to the universality of the story and the setting.

With the English market in mind, the translator should consider removing any Dutch or Flemish residue to give the book a chance to pass the tough English border patrol. A domesticating or naturalising strategy can best guarantee the likely success of *De zusjes Kriegel* in English.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This third chapter will discuss some of the theoretical literature this translator used to justify some of the translation tactics used to tackle the translation of *De zusjes Kriegel*. One of the first important considerations for the practical translation of *De zusjes Kriegel*, was whether to keep the Flemish culture of the book or to adjust the translation to the English target culture.

When translating foreign literature, there are two macro strategies that can be applied to a text. Either the translator opts to keep the ‘foreignness’ of a text and presents it as an obvious translation of another foreign text by leaving some of the foreign elements intact or he decides to create a target text that reads as if it was written in the original language, more commonly known as a domesticating strategy. Lawrence Venuti’s treatise *The Translator’s Invisibility* (1995) discusses the domineering Anglo-American translation culture and the tradition around domesticating and foreignising translation strategies.

A second approach that will be discussed is that of functionalism, its rise and wide applicability and its relevance to literary translation. To understand the increasing interest in functional theories, it is important to outline a brief history of translation studies. How it shifted its perspective from bottom-up to top-down, and how an increasing awareness of culture, and more specifically of target text culture, resulted in the obsolescence of the term ‘equivalence’, the shibboleth of its first researchers, the linguistic school.

Finally, it is important to have a look at what translation studies have to offer in the specific field of children’s literature. Scholars such as Klingberg and Shavit have approached the translation of children’s literature from a pedagogic angle, whereas Oittinen contributed to the research on translated children’s literature with a very refreshing and innovative way of thinking that is based on Bakhtin’s ideas of dialogism and carnivalism.

3.2. Domestication or Foreignisation?

3.2.1 Introduction

For some people an educational motivation for translation is stronger than an aesthetic-escapist one and this may have implications for the preferred translation methods. In what follows, Schleiermacher, Berman and Venuti, who have all proposed a foreignising translation method, will be discussed. As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, Schleiermacher (in Venuti, 1991: 128-131) considered a translation bearing the traces of the foreign peculiarities more suitable than a naturalised translation. Berman (2004: 284-297) praised Schleiermacher for his early radical critique and also contends the practice of ethnocentric translations. Finally, Venuti (1995) blames domesticating translation strategies for the invisibility of the translator.

One is more likely to find pro-foreignisation and anti-domestication ideas than the other way around. Even though, the translator of *De zusjes Kriegel* has opted for an overall domesticating strategy, it is still important to consider these ideas, because it is in their pitfalls that this translator has found the legitimation of her strategy.

3.2.2 Schleiermacher: “Toward foreign likeness bent”

Friedrich Schleiermacher was one of the early and first scholars to reflect on foreignising translation methods. In his lecture given in 1813: *Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens* (in Venuti, 1991: 128-131) he proposes to retain some of the discursive peculiarities of the foreign text in the target text.

The real translator is the writer who wants to bring those two completely separated persons, his author and his reader, truly together, and who would like to bring the latter to an understanding and enjoyment of the former as correct and

complete as possible without inviting him to leave the sphere of his mother tongue.

According to Schleiermacher (in Venuti, 1991: 129) this goal can be obtained with a choice of the following *modi operandi*:

Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the author towards him.

Schleiermacher supports the first method and encourages translators to take their readers abroad instead of leaving them at home in their familiar surroundings. Berman (in Venuti, 1991: 129) sees this as a radical and avant-garde critique against ethnocentric translation methods, but Venuti (1991: 129-130) argues that Schleiermacher's distinctions were based on a social, rather than an ethical credo. Schleiermacher's radical appreciation of foreignising translations should be read in light of his "bourgeois cultural elitism and Prussian nationalism" (Venuti, 1991: 128). Schleiermacher's 'likeness' towards foreignisation can definitely be seen in an academic elitist context. However, it seems highly unlikely that Schleiermacher's preference for foreignisation can be labelled nationalistic, since the core sympathy of 'foreignisation' is directed towards the foreign text and not the national literature.

[...] the translator must therefore take as his aim to give his reader the same image and the same delight which the reading of the work in the original language would afford any reader educated in such a way that we call him, in the better sense of the word, the lover and the expert ["Leibhaber und Kenner/amateur et connaisseur" (*TL9* pp. 306-307)], the type of reader who is familiar with the foreign language while it yet always remains foreign to him: he no longer has to think every single part in his mother tongue, as schoolboys do, before he can grasp the whole, but he is still conscious of the difference between that language

and his mother tongue, even where he enjoys the beauty of the foreign work in total peace (Schleiermacher in Venuti, 1991: 130)

This ‘consciousness of a difference’ means that “the translator aims to preserve the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, but only as it is perceived in the translation by a limited readership, an educated elite” (Venuti, 1991: 130)

A translation will always be ethnocentric, because it is always entrenched in the cultural values of the target language even when the translation is “zu einer fremden Ähnlichkeit hinübergebogen” (Schleiermacher in Venuti, 1991: 130). Venuti demonstrates how these values “mediate every move in translation and every target language reader’s response to it, including the perception of what is domestic and foreign” (Venuti 1991: 130) by giving the translation of Schleiermacher’s German term. “André Lefevere’s English version – ‘bent toward a foreign likeness’ – domesticates Schleiermacher’s German by submitting its syntax to the dominant fluent strategy, whereas ‘toward a foreign likeness bent’, a discursive peculiarity that resists fluency by marking the English translation as archaic for the contemporary Anglo-American reader, foreignises the English by bending it toward the German syntax” (Venuti, 1991: 130).

3.2.3 Antoine Berman: Translation and the Trials of the Foreign

In his essay “The Trials of the Foreign” (2004: 284-297) Berman regretfully observes that translations far from being the trials of the foreign turn out to be “a negation, an acclimation and a naturalization” thereof (2004: 285). He, therefore, deems it necessary to reflect on the ethical aims of translations and proposes a translation analysis that should expose the “textual deformation that operates in every translation and prevents it from being a trial of the foreign” (Berman in Venuti, 2004: 286).

These deformations according to Berman, mainly occur in the translation of literary prose. Unlike poetry, prose uses different modes of style and language in one text: “the novel is characterized by a certain shapelessness, which results from the enormous brew

of languages and linguistic systems that operate in the work” (Berman, 2004: 287). This intrinsic characteristic of prose leads to two major translation problems.

“If one of the principal problems in poetic translation is to respect the polysemy of the poem, then the principal problem of translating the novel is to respect its shapeless polylogic and avoid arbitrary homogenization” (Berman, 2004: 287).

The ‘shapelessness’ of the novel tempts the translator into making a translation that is more uniform in style, logic and phrasing than the original. A second problem for the translation of prose is that due to its shapelessness and plurivocality, it is considered “a lower form of literature than poetry” (Berman, 2004: 287). As a consequence, it is easier for a translator of prose to chop, change or adjust where he deems necessary. The translation of a poem, on the other hand, will be placed under more scrutiny.

Deformations of translation are more accepted in prose, when they do not pass unperceived. For they operate on points that do not immediately reveal themselves. It is easy to detect how a poem by Hölderlin has been massacred. It isn’t so easy to see what was done to a novel by Kafka or Faulkner, especially if the translation seems “good” (Berman, 2004: 287).

A thorough analysis of translation is a necessity to unveil the levels on which these deformations present themselves, because the translator, according to Berman, is not consciously aware of these ‘forces’: “It is by yielding to the ‘controls’ (in the psychoanalytic sense) that translators can hope to free themselves from the system of deformation that burdens their practice” (Berman, 2004: 286).

One of the typical distortions brought about by the translation of prose is, for example, ‘expansion’. Translations tend to be longer than their original source texts. This is especially true for prose, due to its often chaotic nature the translator tends to ‘explain’ and hence expand things more, also called ‘overtranslation’ by Berman (2004: 290): “Explications may render the text ‘more clear’, but they actually obscure its own mode

of clarity. The expansion is, moreover, a stretching, a slackening, which impairs the rhythmic flow of the work”.

Another pitfall for the translation of prose, is the tendency to produce more elegant sentences using the “raw material” of the source text, which Berman (2004: 290-291) refers to as “ennoblement” and “rethorization”: “Thus the ennoblement is only a ‘stylistic exercise’ based on – and at the expense of – the original (...) it produces texts that are ‘readable’, ‘brilliant’, rid of their original clumsiness and complexity so as to enhance the meaning”.

Translation also brings about qualitative and quantitative impoverishment (Berman, 2004: 291-292). The latter refers to the lexical loss of signifiers and signifying chains that run through the work of prose. Qualitative impoverishment refers to “the replacement of terms, expressions and figures in the original with terms, expressions and figures that lack their sonorous richness or, correspondingly, their signifying iconic richness” (Berman, 2004: 291). The qualitative and quantitative impoverishment leads to the destruction of rhythm, underlying networks of signification, linguistic patterings, the destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization and finally, to the destruction of expressions and idioms (Berman, 2004: 291-294).

According to Berman (2004: 292) a novel is not less rhythmic than poetry and the rhythm of a novel can even be disrupted by something as seemingly insignificant as “an arbitrary revision of punctuation” (Berman, 2004: 292). With the destruction of underlying networks of signification Berman refers to the underlying text and semantic chains that link up a novel. Such semantic networks are easily identifiable in a poem, but a novel’s semantic dimension is more veiled and more difficult to retrieve and will most likely be destroyed in translation (Berman, 2004: 292-293).

The use of time, sentence construction or recurrent use of a certain kind of subordination, for example, all have to do with the linguistic patterning of prose. This systematic nature of a work can be destroyed in translation, usually because of ‘expansion’ and ‘overtranslation’ leaving the text deceptively clearer and more coherent: “When the

translated text is more ‘homogenous’ than the original (possessing more ‘style’ in the ordinary sense), it is equally more incoherent, and in a certain kind of way, more heterogenous, more inconsistent” (Berman, 2004: 293).

Translators will usually resort to two solutions, either they will ‘efface the vernacular elements’ or ‘exoticise’ them. According to Berman (2004: 294) such effacement “causes serious injury to the textuality of prose works”.

It may be a question of effacing diminutives in Spanish, Portuguese, German or Russian; or it may involve replacing verbs by nominal constructions, verbs of action by substantives (the Peruvian “alagunarse”, s’enlaguner, becomes the flat-footed ‘se transformer en lagune’, ‘to be transformed into a lagoon’). Vernacular signifiers may be transposed, like ‘porteno’, which becomes ‘inhabitant of Buenos Aires (Berman, 2004: 294).

Exoticisation, on the other hand, tries to preserve the foreignness by isolating the vernacular through italics or replacing it with a local vernacular. In South African literature, for example, words such as *veld*, *stoep* or *braai* frequently pop up in texts. Even though those words have an Afrikaans heritage they are commonly used in South African English and even in the African languages. This is problematic for any translator of South African literature. Does one translate *veld* by a more general word such as ‘meadow’, risking the loss of the typical South African landscape that the word *veld* carries with it or does one keep the word *veld*, indicating its foreignness with the use of italics?

For Berman (2004: 294) exoticisation by replacing a foreign vernacular with a local one “using Parisian slang to translate the *lunfardo* of Buenos Aires; or the Normandy dialect to translate the language of the Andes or Abruzzese” is ridiculing the original (Berman, 2004 294).

Finally, Berman raises the topic of the “destruction of expressions and idioms”. Literature is packed with iconic and imaginary language usage. The translation of expressions and idioms, is therefore a very relevant point of discussion in the translation of literary works. An image such as: ‘The little boy sang so beautifully; it gave me *goose bumps*’ invites the following Dutch translation: ‘Het jongetje zong zo mooi, ik kreeg er *kippenvet* van’. Even though, the translation of ‘goose bumps’ seems to have a direct equivalent in Dutch in *kippenvet* (literally: chicken-like skin) according to Berman (2004: 295) it is still an ethnocentrism and “to play with equivalence is to attack the discourse of the foreign work (...) to translate is not to search for equivalences. The desire to replace ignores, furthermore, the existence in us of a ‘proverb consciousness’ which immediately detects, in a new proverb, the brother of an authentic one: the world of our proverbs is thus augmented and enriched” (Berman, 2004: 295). A good foreign translation could perhaps introduce the image of *ganzenhobbeltjes* or *ganzenpukkeltjes* into the Dutch language as an alternative for *kippenvet*.

With his analytic of translation Berman tries to defy the common held idea of translation as the ‘restitution of meaning’. A literal translation does not only keep the signifying networks intact, but also modifies the translating language.

Literal here means attached to the letter (of works). Labor on the letter is more originary than restitution of meaning. It is through this labor that translation, on the one hand, restores the particular signifying process of works, and on the other hand, transforms the translating language. Translation stimulated the fashioning and refashioning of the great western languages only because it labored on the letter and profoundly modified the translating language. As simple restitution of meaning, translation could never have played this formative role (Berman, 2004: 297).

Even though such an innovative way of translating could enrich the national language a translation strategy that ‘labours on the letter’ is not always feasible or desirable as it could lead to incomprehensible or ludicrous translations as in the ‘goose bumps’ example.

3.2.4 Lawrence Venuti: The Translator’s Invisibility

Venuti builds on the ideas of Schleiermacher and Berman and also argues in favour of a foreignising translation method. He refers to the invisibility of the translator in the contemporary context of the Anglo-American cultural hegemony. It is the translator’s vocation, albeit influenced by publishing houses, editors and the global market, to manipulate translations in such a way that the discourse bears no trace of any translational activity. The translator, in other words, has to remain invisible in order not to suppress the original author’s ideas and work.

A text is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer’s personality or intention or essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the “original” (Venuti, 1995: 1).

Transparency is commensurate to invisibility. The more transparent the translation, the more invisible the translator, which creates the illusion that the original writer and the original text were faithfully transposed into another language (Venuti, 1995: 1-2). The visibility of the original writer is created by the occurrence of a fluent and transparent form of discourse. The demand for fluency and transparency mainly relates to translations into the English language and other forms of writing in English. According to Venuti (1995: 5) a fluent English translation possesses the following qualities:

It is written in English that is current (“modern”) instead of archaic, that is widely used instead of specialised (“jargonisation”), and that is standard instead of colloquial (“slangy”). Foreign words (“pidgin”) are avoided, as are Britishisms in American translations and Americanisms in British translations. Fluency also depends on syntax that is not so “faithful” to the foreign text as to be “not quite idiomatic,” that unfolds continuously and easily (not “doughy”) to insure semantic “precision” with some rhythmic definition, a sense of closure (not a “dull thud”). A fluent translation is immediately recognizable and intelligible, “familiarised,” domesticated, not “disconcertingly” foreign, capable of giving the reader unobstructed access to great thoughts, to what is “present in the original.” Under the regime of “invisible”, producing the illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems “natural” i.e., not translated.

The guiding principle behind the invisibility of the translator and the radical erasure of the foreignness of a text is the demand for a target text written in a fluent and transparent English discourse. Venuti (1995: 6) relates the “authority of plain styles” to the influence of science teaching “and the growing importance attached to accuracy”.

The use of a fluent discourse results in an “effacement” of the power of translations and the status of the translator leading to the translator’s marginal position and economic exploitation (Venuti, 1995: 1-2)

Another factor that leaves the translator inconspicuously in the background is the “individualistic conception of authorship that continues to prevail in Anglo-American culture” (Venuti, 1995: 6). *Imitatio et aemulatio* may have been well-respected rhetoric operations in classical times and the Renaissance, but for the last two hundred years originality has prevailed. Authors can be held liable for plagiarism and copyright laws prevent intellectual theft. A translator, therefore, has the moral obligation to render an author’s words faithfully without adding or deleting as he or she sees fit. Venuti points

out that the view of authorship as the individual expression and self-representation of the author carries two disadvantageous implications for the translator (Venuti, 1995: 6).

On the one hand, translation is defined as a second-order representation: only the foreign text can be original, an authentic copy, true to the author's personality or intention, whereas the translation is derivative, fake, potentially a false copy. On the other hand, translation is required to efface its second-order status with transparent discourse, producing the illusion of authorial presence whereby the translated text can be taken as the original (Venuti, 1995: 6-7).

The original writer's voice seems more prominent in transparent translations, and as a consequence the voice of the translator is liquidated. The translator's invisibility is a "weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and practicing translation that undoubtedly reinforces its marginal status in Anglo-American culture" Venuti (1995: 7).

Since the 1950's British and American book production has increased fourfold, yet the percentage of published translations has remained roughly the same (Venuti, 1995: 12). Other Western European countries show more positive translation percentages, albeit that the book market is mainly dominated by translations from English into the different European languages. American and British publishers are eager to sell translation rights of their books, but rarely purchase the rights to publish English translations of foreign books. Venuti (1995: 12) alerts us to the serious cultural ramifications this imbalance in trade will have:

The consequences of this trade imbalance are diverse and far-reaching. By routinely translating large numbers of the most varied English-language books, foreign publishers have exploited the global drift toward American political and economic hegemony in the post war-period actively supporting the international expansion of Anglo-American culture. This trend has been reinforced by English-language book imports: the range of foreign countries receiving these books and the various categories into which the books fall, show not only the worldwide

reach of English, but the depth of its presence in foreign cultures circulating through the school, the library, the bookstore, determining diverse areas, disciplines, and constituencies – academic, religious, literary and technical, elite and popular, adult and child.

Venuti rightfully criticises the prevalence of the Anglo-American culture, and he is vigilant for the cultural implications these translation patterns may hold. He blames domestication strategies adhering to a fluent language policy for supporting these cultural developments. Translators and publishers are driven by economic motives, fluent – hence highly readable – translations will perform economically better on the market than foreignising translations that resist a fluent English discourse and promote the foreignness of the text by retaining the distinct foreign character. Venuti (1995:17) relates the invisibility to the imperialistic and xenophobic attitude of the domineering Anglo-American culture.

Venuti distinguishes between a domesticating and a foreignising method. Domestication aims to bring back the ‘cultural other as the same’ (Venuti, 1995: 20), whereas foreignisation aims to leave the cultural other in peace and emphatically keeps it a cultural other, even though this strategy may compromise the target language.

Foreignizing translation signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language. In its effort to do right abroad, this translation method must do wrong at home, deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience – choosing to translate a foreign text excluded by domestic literary canons, for instance, or using a marginal discourse to translate it. (Venuti, 1995: 20)

3.2.5 Concluding Remarks

It is important to realise what impact a domesticating translation strategy can have. As stated by Schleiermacher as a translator you have two options: you can move your reader

towards the author or you can move the author towards your reader. The latter would lead to a naturalising or domesticating strategy and the first one – which bears Schleiermacher's preference – would be a 'trial of the foreign'.

Berman applauds Schleiermacher for his early endeavours to promote a foreignising more literal translation technique. However, as Venuti pointed out, Berman forgets Schleiermacher reasoned from a very elitist Prussian background (Venuti, 1991: 128). It is true, that languages have influenced and enriched each other through translations and specifically through literal translations. A word such as *wolkenkrabber* would never have entered the Dutch language if it hadn't borrowed it from its English Germanic brother who had 'skyscraper' as a word for a very tall multiple-storied building.

The fear that transparent discourse and naturalising translation techniques deny the act of translation and leave the translator in the dark is understandable, but the question then arises whether a good translation or a good translator can not become visible or receive credit through different ways than foreignising translations and alienating reading experiences?

The three scholars argue that domesticated translations are ethnocentric and populist, but one could also claim that Schleiermacher, Berman and Venuti hold elitist views in which they mainly have canonised literature and an educated target audience in mind.

In reality, it is often peripheral literature that is translated most. This can be related to the changing climate in book sales. These days, the marketing for 'krimi' books such as Dan Brown or Stieg Larsson novels is bigger than the marketing for any winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Dan Brown's books are accessible to a larger number of people, whereas a Nobel Prize winner is reserved for a more educated, but also smaller target group. As a consequence, peripheral literature receives more global attention, is more readily available and requires more translation. An anti-ethnocentric point of view or a radically foreignised translation is not relevant to the needs of a target audience which consists largely out of 'ordinary' people.

This study concentrates on the translation of children's literature, which is also regarded as peripheral literature. As indicated in 1.3.1, the dominance of Anglo-American publications and more specifically, the absence of foreign literature on the English children's book market is a well-known cultural issue.

Venuti's preference for a foreignising translation method correlates with the aim of this thesis, namely "a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of affairs, pitched against the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others" (Venuti, 1995: 20).

However, in his fight against the invisibility of the translator and what he refers to as the 'ethnocentric violence of translation' (Venuti, 1995: 20) Venuti does not distinguish between translations for adult readers and translations for younger readers for whom an alienating and foreignising translation method will not establish the democratic and geopolitical relations Venuti considers foreignising translations capable of. On the contrary, an alienating translation method is not desirable for a young readership that may lack the world and linguistic knowledge of adult readers.

A child is generally not consciously aware that it is reading a foreign text, let alone a translation. Children are oblivious of nationality and are also not concerned with enriching their vocabulary or world knowledge by reading books. Children read because they enjoy stories, the fact that they learn something does not play a conscious part in the reading experience. In order for the child to be engaged in the foreign story, the translator has to hold the young reader by the hand by slightly exposing him or her to what is foreign through what is familiar. A translation strategy that violates the target language in order to acquaint the reader with the foreignness of the cultural other could miss the diplomatic goals of translated children's literature.

3.3 Functionalism and Literary Translation

3.3.1 Introduction: What is Literary Translation?

Translation theory has proved useful for the ever-expanding global community and communication needs. Thanks to the Internet many texts are translated and stored on the World Wide Web, making automated translations more accurate than ever. Medical, legal or technical texts can easily be uploaded onto a specialized translation website such as ‘Google Translate’. With the help of editing skills – since automated translation of bigger chunks of text is never one hundred percent accurate – and tons of previously stored translated material, translation has become much easier and quicker than it used to be. When it comes to the translation of literature, however, algorithms and even theory do not seem to apply as smoothly.

Literature, and consequently literary translation, forms a separate category in the world of texts. It is easy to conclude that a translation of a legal document is different from a translation of a Shakespearean sonnet, but to pinpoint how and what exactly it is that makes them different seems a lot harder. “The standard view is that literary translation represents a distinctive kind of translating because it is concerned with a distinctive kind of text” (Hermans, 2007: 77).

According to Hermans, the search for a definition of literary translation leads nowhere (Hermans, 2007: 78). He discusses some attempts to shed light on what makes literary translation so special. From José Lambert (in Baker, 1998: 153-154) who assigns typical features to the (super-) genre of literature such as written base-form, canonicity, an affective/aesthetic rather than a transactional or informational function, no real-world truth-value i.e. fictional, poetic language use and heteroglossia (more than one voice) to Gideon Toury who makes a distinction between the ‘translation of literary texts’ and ‘literary translation’, the one being the translation of texts which are regarded as literary in the source culture, and the latter the translation of a text in such a way that the product is deemed acceptable in the target culture (Toury, G. 1995: 166-169). Lambert, Hermans

(2007: 78) argues, “considers the definition of ‘literary’ and the collocation ‘literary translation’ but does not reach conclusions. Toury’s distinction rests on his view, derived from Yury Lotman and, beyond him, Roman Jakobson and the Russian Formalists, that literature is characterized by the presence of a secondary, literary code superimposed on a stratum of unmarked language”.

It is because of those obscure definitions and outdated formalist ideas that functionalism has entered the study of literary translation. “Questions of definition and demarcation have given way to functionalist approaches that have been increasingly preoccupied with the roles assigned to and the uses made of translation by a variety of actors in varying contexts” (Hermans, 2007: 79). The ontology and the forms of literary translation have become superfluous questions. The interest has shifted from ontology to the historical, social, political, ideological and aesthetic function translation performs.

The translation of the *De zusjes Kriegel* can be labelled a functional translation. In what follows, functionalist ideas, which were relevant to the translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* will be described. First of all, it is important to explain how functionalism manifested itself. A brief illustration of some developments in translation studies will be given to indicate how translation studies emerged out of historical thinking about the practice of translation to a scientifically based academic discipline and how that academic theory then experienced a cultural turn in which a shift from prescriptivism to descriptivism took place.

Secondly, Vermeer’s *Skopos* theory, its benefits and pitfalls, and Nord’s compromising notion of loyalty will be discussed. Lastly, some fundamental functionalist methodology that has been applied to the practical translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* will be explained. Vermeer’s *skopos* and translation brief and Nord’s looping model, functional typology of translations, norms and conventions and categorisation of translation problems all contribute to a better understanding of the target text’s needs and the source text’s relevance. It will be argued that functionalism not only gave the target text a theoretical foundation, but also made the target text a better translation.

3.3.2 The Cultural Turn in Translation Studies

Translation is not exactly a modern practice that came to rise through globalisation. On the contrary, it has been around for centuries and is one of the oldest communicative necessities. Theoretical thinking about the practice of translation, also known as translation studies, on the other hand, is a relatively ‘young’ discipline. There is a lot of historical discourse on the act of translating in which translators reflect on their practice (Schäffner 2007), but these reflections are more experiential than theoretical or logical. “There is a long tradition of thought and an enormous body of opinion about translation. In the past, the views and/or doctrines expressed by translators were mainly comments on specific problems they had encountered, or philosophical reflections on translatability, but they were not based on an elaborate theory of translation” (Schäffner, 2007).

The study of translations was mainly carried out in the framework of comparative literature and applied linguistics (Schäffner 2007, Hermans 2007, Van Leuven-Zwart 1992). It was not until the 1960s that translation studies developed into an autonomous field. A first attempt to describe a theory of translation was made by linguistic scholars who were predominantly influenced by the theory of generative grammar (Schäffner 2007; Hermans 2007; Van Leuven-Zwart 1992). Hence, translation studies were shaped by the prestige the strictly scientific approach to linguistics had gained through the years. Early theorists of translation studies acted upon the aims and methods of structuralism and transformational linguistics (Van Leuven-Zwart, 1992: 52).

Generative grammar looked at the underlying universal principles of language. Generative grammarians believed that every sentence was the expression of an intuitively applied linguistic formula. The formalistic approach of generative grammar changed the perspective of linguistics from a behavioural to a cognitive point of view (Anderman, 2007: 49). More importantly, linguistics gained the status of a positive science with a systematic methodology. The application of generative grammar principles to translation

provided the scientific framework and the rationale it needed to become a recognised field of study.

Nida (1969) and Catford (1965) were among the first to apply the new linguistic theory to translation. For these linguistic theorists the concept of equivalence was of “paramount importance” (Anderman, 2007: 50). Catford’s shift-theory was a mathematical procedure of formal correspondence in which syntactic, lexical and even phonological and graphological elements of the source language had equivalents in the target language (Catford 1965).

While in English the sentence 'John loves Mary' may be sequentially described as subject, predicator and adjunct (SPA), in translation into Gaelic, it corresponds to the structure PSCA. 'Tha *gradh aig Iain air Mairi*' is 'love at John on Mary' where C stands for 'complement'. This in turn yields the translation equivalence: English: SPA, Gaelic: PSCA (Catford in Anderman, 2007: 50).

For Nida, translating was “the reproduction in the target language of the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” (Nida, 1969: 12). Formal equivalence came second to dynamic equivalence: “achieved if the impact of the translation produced the appropriate response from the receptor in the target language” (Anderman, 2007: 51). For example, even though ‘mentally distressed’ could be a natural equivalent in present-day English of ‘demon-possessed’ it is not the closest equivalent because it is a present-day cultural reinterpretation that does not take the culture of the biblical times into account (Nida, 1969:13).

In the linguistically based theory, equivalence was the aim of translation and its condition (Hermans, 1994: 3). The translator had to strive towards the highest degree of equivalence between source text and target text (aim). A translation could only be regarded successful when the highest degree of equivalence between source text and

target text was reached (condition). In this way equivalence both defined and delimited translation (Hermans, 1994: 3).

The drawback of the linguistic approach is that it disregarded the contextual aspects of translation by focussing on the systematic relations between units of the language systems (Schäffner, 2007). The English sentence structure SPA (subject, predicator, adjunct) may translate into the Gaelic sequence PSCA (predicator, subject, complement, adjunct) but it does not necessarily mean that it is the most appropriate target language form fulfilling the required communicative target language function. As a consequence, translation studies in the 1970s adopted the insights and approaches of textlinguistics (Schäffner, 2007).

TL-texts not only differ in their sentence structures, which are determined by the respective linguistic systems, but also in irregularities beyond the sentence boundaries. The syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions of texts are studied in their interrelationships, and more attention is devoted to the fact that translators are always dealing with a text in a situation and in a culture, where they (are meant to) fulfill a special function (Schäffner, 2007).

The idea of text genres and text typologies of textlinguistics was deemed relevant for translation studies. Certain types of texts fulfilled certain communicative functions and those text types or genres are culture-specific. One of the first scholars to point out the importance of text types for translation studies was Katharina Reiss (Schäffner, 2007: 5).

According to Reiss (in Venuti 2004: 166) the text type determines the general method of translating and the text variety also demands consideration for language and text structure conventions. Reiss distinguishes three basic communicative forms that have a corresponding text type and translation method (Schäffner, 2007; Reiss, 2004). For the informative text type (e.g. manual) the translation aim is invariance of content. In the expressive text type (e.g. a poem) the artistic form of the target text should resemble the source text closely. Finally, in the case of an operative or appellative text (e.g.

advertisement) it is important that the target text reader reacts in the same way as the source text reader did (Schäffner, 2007; Reiss, 2004). Reiss (2004: 164) stresses that these texts are not only realised in their pure form, mixed forms occur as well.

The establishment of the text variety is important to the translator “so that he may not endanger the functional equivalence of the TL text by naively adopting SL conventions” (Reiss in Venuti, 2007: 165). Even though the source text was still the most important yardstick and the concept of equivalence had not been completely abandoned yet, a cultural turn in translation studies had occurred. The notion of function and the realisation that a translator works with a text within a certain time, space and situation heralded the rise of functionalism (Van Leuven-Zwart 1992; Schäffner 2007).

German scholars Vermeer and Nord further established the idea of function and functionalism. Functionalism, similarly to the text linguistic approach was a top-down approach, but the top was no longer the text, but the cultural setting. Every text was regarded a product of its time, place and situation. A translation is a text and hence a product of the time, place and situation in which it has to function.

Textlinguistics, and functionalism changed the profile of translation studies, but the input from other disciplines such as cultural studies, psycholinguistic studies and corpus linguistics also set the trend for a more interpretative approach. No longer was translation seen as linguistic acrobatics, but as a centrifuge of social, pragmatic, cultural and linguistic aspects.

3.3.3 *Skopos*-theory

Vermeer's *skopos* theory is an extension of Holz-Mänttari's theory of translational action (Vermeer, 2004; Vermeer, 1998; Nord, 1997a). Translation is a translational action that is based on a source text. Building on the principles of action theory that every action has an aim, a purpose and that every action leads to a result, Vermeer concludes that translation, being an action, also has an aim and a result (Vermeer in Venuti, 2004: 220-231). "Translational action leads to a 'target text'; translation leads to a *translatum* (i.e. the resulting translated text), as a particular variety of target text" (Vermeer in Venuti, 2004: 220). The aim of a translation is not preordained and invariable; it is something that is established in negotiation with the client who commissions the action.

For Vermeer the starting point of any translation, first and foremost, was strictly functional. Nord (1997a: 29) argues that functionalism has solved 'the eternal dilemmas of free vs. literal translations, dynamic vs. formal equivalence, good interpreters vs. slavish translators and so on. Consider the following example as an illustration of the need of different approaches to a target text when the target text audience differs.

Homer's *Odysseia*, one of the world's most famous epics, has seen numerous translations. For students of classical languages, a philological translation showing the particularities of Greek vocabulary, grammar and syntax, would require an almost word-for-word translation. A translation of Odysseus's adventures for children, on the other hand, could use the story line and the dialogue of the source text, but would probably not stick to the convoluted sentences, rhythm and rhyme of the Greek text and adapt the language to the level of a child. A modern translation of the *Odysseia*, on the other hand, could want to render the poetic Greek hexameter into free verse, to amplify the poetic qualities of the epic. The choice of translation strategy depends on the purpose of the translation and on the target text audience.

Vermeer initiated a new way of looking at the practice of translation by introducing the Greek word *skopos* into translation studies (Vermeer 2004; Vermeer 1998; Nord 1997a).

Skopos literally means ‘purpose’ and this little Greek word’s main achievement is the “dethronement” of its Latin predecessor “equivalence”. The *skopos*-rule liberated translators of the ‘crux of equivalence’ (Nord 1997a: 1).

Every translation is an action and every action has a purpose. Reiss & Vermeer (1984: 101) give a rather Machiavellistic explanation of the *skopos*-rule:

Eine Handlung wird von ihrem Zweck bestimmt (ist eine Funktion ihres Zwecks). Mit andere Worten: Für Translation gilt, “Der Zweck heiligt die Mittel”. Es gibt eine Menge von Zwecken. Zwecke sind hierarchisch geordnet. Zwecke müssen begründbar (“sinnvoll”) sein.

For Reiss & Vermeer (1984) the purpose of the translation determines everything “Der Zweck heiligt die Mittel”. However, a translation can have multiple purposes and the different purposes of the translation have a pecking order.

The actual *skopos* of a translation is not immanent in the source text, but situationally-dependent and above all, determined by the translator. It is the translator’s responsibility to make sure that the *skopos* is meaningful and that he can “justify the rationale behind his choice of a particular *skopos* in a given translational situation” (Nord, 1997a: 29).

Reiss and Vermeer (1984: 101) formulate a subsequent sociological rule:

Der intendierte Rezipient (“Adressat”) kann als Sondersorte (Untermenge) des Skopos beschrieben werden. Die Durchführung einer Interaktion hängt von den Relationen zwischen den Interaktionspartnern mit ab (...) Der Skopos ist als rezipientenabhängige Variabel beschreibbar (soziologische Regel)

Nord (1997a: 29) stresses that this does not mean that a “translation should ipso facto conform or adapt to target culture behaviour or expectations”. *Skopos* theory does not

exclude literal or word-for-word translation. A literal translation could be a valid *skopos* in certain instances. Vermeer (in Nord, 1997a: 29-30) dilates on the *skopos* rule:

What the *skopos* states is that one must translate, consciously and consistently, in accordance with some principle respecting the target text. The theory does not state what the principle is: this must be decided separately in each specific case.

In light of this explanation, and to avoid misconception, it might indeed be wiser to speak of the *skopos* -principle, rather than the *skopos*-rule.

Drawing on Holz-Mänttari's action theory, Vermeer (1998: 54-55) also introduces the idea of the 'role of the commissioner'. "The commissioner's role is decisive for setting the *skopos*. A translator may also be his own commissioner. "The translator as the expert in 'transculturality' has to come to terms with the commissioner as to whether the *skopos* can be carried out and how this should be done optimally in view of the given circumstances, the target text culture in which the translation is meant to function and the circumstances under which the translator is to translate" (Vermeer, 1998: 55).

Apart from practical agreements such as remuneration, necessary research work, deadline, etc. the commissioner also needs to give as much information as possible about the translation, its aim and function, the target audience, time, place, occasion and medium (Vermeer 1998; Nord 1997a)

This information should be clarified in the translation brief: "The translation brief specifies what kind of translation is needed" (Nord, 1997a: 27). The translation brief does not spell out how exactly the translator should go about his job. It merely gives indications as to what some of the conditions are. It is the translator's responsibility, as an expert of communication, to infer from the translation brief what the suitable translation strategies and translation types are that could serve that specific text's *skopos* best (Nord, 1997a: 27)

The translator has the liberty (and duty) to decide which elements of the source text have to be transferred into the target text and which elements have to be adapted or even deleted (Vermeer 1998; Nord 1997a). As a result, Vermeer's *skopos* theory seems to give the translator more freedom. Notwithstanding, it is a 'freedom for' and not a 'freedom from'. *Skopos* theory was not introduced to suddenly give the translator freedom from the source text or its author's intention, it only gave the translator the freedom to prepare a target text capable of functioning optimally in a target culture for the intended purpose and recipients (Vermeer, 1998: 54).

Not everyone applauded Vermeer's *skopos* theory. The main concern was that *skopos* theory was a theory without restrictions; the only restriction was the serving of the purpose of the target text ("the end justifies the means"). A translation as an intercultural communicative act could therefore only be regarded successful when the intended purpose was interpreted by the intended reader in a way that is coherent with his cultural situation. A greater freedom also implied a greater responsibility and hence more work and thought. Another reservation was the question that if a translation could have an unlimited range of *skopoi*, was it still a translation?

3.3.4 Christiane Nord and Loyalty

Nord solved the ethical restraints translation scholars and translators may have had towards Vermeer's *skopos* theory, by introducing the notion of 'loyalty'. In an attempt to limit the unlimited range of authorised adaptations and to maintain working in a functionalist frame, Christiane Nord speaks of a required 'loyalty' from the translator towards the original author and source text. "Loyalty is *not* the old faithfulness or fidelity in new clothes. Faithfulness and fidelity refer to a relationship between the source and the target *texts* as linguistic entities" (Nord, 2001: 195). Unlike fidelity, loyalty was not an intertextual relation but an interpersonal one (Nord, 2001: 185).

For example, if the target culture expects a translation to be a literal reproduction of the original, the translator cannot simply translate in a non-literal way without telling the

target audience what he has done and why. It is the translator's task to mediate between cultures, and mediation cannot mean imposing one's culture-specific concept on members of another culture community (Nord, 1997a: 125).

Translators had to 'take into account' the intentions and expectations of all the communicative partners involved in the translation (Nord, 2001: 195). "To 'take into account' does not imply 'doing what the other expects you to do'. It means that translators have to consider the subjective theories of their partners and explain their translation purposes and methods if they behave in a way that may be contradictory to these theories" (Nord, 2001: 196). The function of the target text can be different from the function the source text intended, it can not, however, be contradictory or incompatible to the source text author's communicative intentions (Nord, 2001: 196). Translators didn't have to do exactly what the readers expected yet had an ethical responsibility not to change the intention of the source text author and a moral obligation towards the source text and towards the target reader to justify their translating strategies.

The loyalty-principle prevents radical functionalism. Loyalty should be evaluated in the triangular relationship of any translational act, that is the relationship between readers, translator and source text author (Nord, 1997a: 125). Loyalty entails that readers should be made aware of possible deviations of the source text. This should be done in a translator's note, or a foreword to the translation in which the 'how' and 'why' behind the translator's choices are illuminated.

Loyalty also builds a relationship of trust between the translator and the source text author. The source text author is not necessarily a translation expert and is most likely to insist on a faithful rendering of the text (Nord, 1997a: 125). However, if the author is assured of the translator's loyalty, he will more readily accept adaptations or slight alterations to the source text based on the translator's target text cultural expertise.

3.3.5 A Functional Methodology for Translations

The *skopos* model has given translation studies an all-encompassing model that is: a pragmatic, culture-oriented, consistent, comprehensive, anti-universalist, practical and expert model (Nord, 1997: 45-47). It is relevant for all forms of transcultural communication, allows for culture-specific needs and gives the translator the decision-making authority of a bilingual and bicultural expert. A translator is no longer a ‘submissive servant’ of the source text but a “fully responsible partner in a cooperative interaction between equals” (Nord 1997a: 45-47). In what follows, Nord’s functional terms and methodology that have proved very useful to the practical translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* will be explained. This translator followed the steps of the looping model that represents translation not as a linear but as a recursive process (Nord, 1991: 36) and that underlines the importance of source text analysis. Concepts such as instrumental and documentary translations help break down the rest of the translation assignment and give an idea about the necessary translation strategies. Lastly, the categorisation of translation problems is of great use for the annotative part of this thesis

3.3.5.1 The Looping Model

Christiane Nord (1991: 32-35) proposes a much more practical vision of professional translation with her looping model. Nord stresses the idea that a source text does not carry its function with it. On the contrary, a variety of source text versions can be distinguished each serving a different function.

The first step in the looping model is the establishment of the target text *skopos* and of those source text factors that are relevant to the realisation of that *skopos* (Nord, 1991: 33). Only after the analysis of the *skopos*, should the source text be examined.

Nord suggests the analysis of the source text should happen twofold:

In the first part of the analysis the translator only needs to get a general idea on whether the material provided by the source text is compatible with the requirements stated in the translating instructions, in the second part he has to proceed to a detailed and comprehensive analysis of all ranks of the text, focusing his attention on those text elements that according to the target text *skopos* are of particular importance for the production of the target text (Nord, 1991: 33).

After this analysis the translator can identify the relevant source text elements, which may or may not be adapted in order to fulfil the target text function (Nord, 1991: 33).

The final composition of the target text is the last step, which closes the circle. If the translator has succeeded in producing a functional text conforming to the initiator's needs, the target text will be congruent with the target text *skopos* (Nord, 1991: 33).

The translation process is 'circular', in the sense that "the process contains a number of smaller circular movements or 'loops' that keep recurring between ST situation and ST, between TT situation and TT, between the individual steps of analysis, and between ST analysis and TT synthesis" (Nord, 1991: 35). This means the translation process contains little steps that influence future steps and can be "confirmed or corrected by later findings" (Nord, 1991: 35)

3.3.5.2 Source Text Analysis

The second step in the looping model involves source text analysis. "Comparing the *skopos* with the ST functions, the translator will find out (a) whether the assignment can be fulfilled without violating the loyalty principle, and (b) which translation problems will arise in the process and what kind of transfer procedures will have to be used in order to solve them" (Nord, 1997a: 58).

For a thorough source text analysis, it is necessary to determine the communicative function of the source text (Nord, 1991: 35). The communicative function is represented by the factors of the communicative situation, also called 'extratextual' factors.

Extratextual factors are analysed by enquiring about the author or sender of the text (who?), the sender's intention (what for?), the addressee or recipient of the text is directed at (to whom?), the medium or channel the text is communicated by (by which medium?), the place (where?) and time (when?) of text production and text reception, and the motive (why?) for communication. The sum total of information obtained about these seven extratextual factors may provide an answer to the last question, which concerns the function the text can achieve (with what function?) (Nord, 1991: 35-36).

Extratextual factors can be analysed before even reading the actual source text. Typically, the analysis of the extratextual factors will influence the reading process of the actual text. If a book has Antjie Krog's name on the cover, the translator – if he or she is familiar with the author's work – will automatically have certain expectations about the text: theme (dealing with Apartheid), style (poetry or prose), language (Afrikaans or English), etc.

Intratextual factors are analysed by enquiring about the subject matter the text deals with (on what subject matter?), the information or content presented in the text (what?), the knowledge presuppositions made by the author (what not?), the composition or construction of the text (in what order?), the non-linguistic or paralinguistic elements accompanying the text (using which non-verbal elements?), the lexical characteristics (in which words?) and syntactic structures (in what kind of sentences?) found in the text, and the suprasegmental features of intonation and prosody (in which tone?) (Nord, 1991: 37)

These WH-questions give a lot of information about the source text situation and the source text itself. When the translator compares this analysis of the source text to the

target text *skopos*, he will be able to predict certain translation problems and consider possible solutions.

3.3.5.3 Documentary or Instrumental Translation

Nord has made a distinction between the function of the translation process and the function of the target text as a result of that process (Nord, 1991: 47). A translation can serve two different purposes in the target text culture. First of all, a translation can serve as a document of a communicative interaction between a source text sender and a source text audience. A translation could also serve as an instrument in the target text culture; this means that the translation is a new communicative interaction between a target text sender and a target text audience, using certain elements or the entirety of the source text as a model (Nord, 1991: 47).

Documentary translations are typically reminiscent of the source text, in the sense that the translations may not sound idiomatic, because the focus is more on making certain aspects of the source text intelligible for a target text audience. One can find such translations in comparative linguistics where word-for-word translations give information about syntactical or lexical constructional differences or similarities between the source and target text as in the literal translations of a politician's reported speech and philological translations of ancient texts such as the translations of the *Odyseia*, for example. Finally, a documentary translation can also be what Venuti (1995) has named a foreignising or exoticising translation. A translation in which the cultural distance is maintained to inform target text readers about the source text culture and broaden their cultural perspectives. Documentary translations have a metatextual function, they are texts about texts, and therefore serve a different purpose than the original text (Nord, 1991: 47-48).

If the *skopos* of the translation requires a similar function for the translation as the function of the source text, an instrumental translating process should be adhered to. Instrumental translations can be *equifunctional* to the source text (when source text and target text have the same functions as in the translation of instruction guidelines or a

manual), *heterofunctional* (when the target text has to achieve similar, but not necessarily equal functions, due to a temporal or cultural distance as in the translation of Robinson Crusoe for children) or *homologous* (when the translation is set out to obtain a similar effect as the source text, as with translations of poetry). Readers of instrumental translations are typically unaware they are reading a translation as opposed to documentary translations which have to provide factual records or reports of the source text (Nord, 1991: 47-51)

3.3.5.4 Genre Conventions

According to Nord, genre conventions come with the standardization of communication practices (Nord, 1991: 53). Communication is a general concept for an infinite area of possibilities; however, certain genre conventions can be determined because “certain kinds of text are used repeatedly in certain situations with more or less the same functions, these texts acquire conventional forms that are sometimes even raised to the status of social norms”. Such genre conventions are very culture-specific (Nord, 1991: 54); it is important for translators to be fully aware of these conventions as target readers may expect a certain conventional format belonging to a certain communicative function. If the conventional format is not properly used by the translator “the target text may not be accepted as representative for a target culture genre” (Nord, 1991:53). Nord uses the different convention in the use of syntactic structures for recipes between English and German as an example. An English recipe will typically use the imperative form of the verb (e.g. drain pasta) whereas a German recipe would use an infinitive-construction (*Nudeln abgießen*). This means that a translator when translating an English recipe in German will have to translate an English imperative with a German infinitive-construction.

A good understanding of the genre conventions of source and target text together with the evaluation of the *skopos* of the translation can determine which adjustments or adaptations might have to be made in order to create a suitable and acceptable target text.

Such adjustments can be minor such as conventions of measurement or address, but can also relate to macro-textual features such as conventions of style.

3.3.5.5 General style conventions

About general style conventions Nord (1991: 55) makes the following remark:

When there are similar structures available in the two languages compared, we often find there is a difference in usage due to different literary traditions and conventions as to what is considered good style. The analysis of parallel texts reveals that a particular grammatical function is expressed differently in source culture and target culture texts. The three important aspects of analysis are form, frequency and distribution.

Every language has its typical language patterns and syntactic structures. Even though similar structures may be available, as in the recipe example where English would use an imperative and German prefers an infinitive-clause, it does not necessarily mean they are distributed in the same way. Nord (1991: 55) uses another interesting example. English and German both know relative clauses. However, where English writers would use a relative clause, a German writer would probably use an alternative construction such as an indirect question, a time or prepositional phrase or a conditional clause. Even though, translators will know these distributional differences through translating experience or general language *fingerspitzengefühl*, Nord (1991: 56) argues that it is mostly comparative and corpus-linguistic research that can systematically and statistically found these intuitive assumptions.

Style guides can be helpful to solve language-specific style issues. For this thesis the book by Joy Burrough-Boenisch (2004), *Righting English that has gone Dutch* and *Wanted!* (2005) by Cumps and Vekeman were consulted. These style guides deal specifically with English writing for Dutch mother tongue speakers. The frequently made

mistakes that affect the English of Dutch speakers and the contrastive description of some interesting ‘Dunlish’ issues were to solve interlingual translation issues.

3.3.5.6 Conventions of Non-Verbal Behaviour

Conventions of non-verbal behaviour relate to the translation of gestures or paraverbal behaviour such as intonation or prosody (Nord, 1991: 56-57). Such conventions are once again deeply rooted in the literary culture of a source-or target language. In 1991, Nord conveyed a study on the paraverbal behaviour in *Alice in Wonderland*. In the English original of *Alice in Wonderland* most of the utterances were introduced by illocutionary verbs such as to say or to remark without reference to emotion or voice-quality (Nord, 1991: 56). The understated tone of *Alice in Wonderland* would make the text sound rather plain in a Dutch or German translation that tolerates more drama and sentiment.

Christiane Nord (1991: 57) calls upon “a more profound analysis and comparison of parallel texts, especially in the literary field, where one would have to consider the fact that literary texts have conventions of their own and do not simply imitate real-world behaviour”. The annotative part to the translation in this thesis offers such a contrastive analysis.

Finally, Nord (1991: 57) concludes her remarks on conventions in translation by stressing that a functional approach to translation does not postulate that conventions always have to be replaced by target culture counterparts. “Depending on the translation purpose and type, the translator may opt for reproduction or adaptation” (Nord 1991: 57).

3.3.5.7 Translation Conventions

During the course of the years, translation conventions have arisen. Some languages are known for their eager adaptations whereas other languages adopt a more foreign policy. English, for example, speaks of Homer and Vergil whereas Dutch still shows the origin of the names and keeps the Greek ‘*Homeros*’ and the Latin ‘*Vergilius*’. It is exactly those

Anglo-American domesticating strategies that Venuti (1995) renounces in *The Translator's Invisibility*. Translation conventions and the awareness of these conventions show that translation unlike some translators might think, is not simply a matter of intuition. Translation conventions are based on centuries of tradition and are very difficult to overturn or rebel against.

3.3.6 Concluding Remarks

With his *skopos* theory, Hans Vermeer released translations from all linguistic chains it was bound to before. He staged the translator at the centre of a translation rather than the relationship between source and target text. Vermeer's views on translation were prospective, in the sense that the target text and not the source text dictated the translation strategies and methods.

The point of view shifted from retrospective (the source text) to prospective (the target text). A successful translation could not be evaluated in comparison to its source text. On the contrary, if a translation did not make sense to a target text reader it had missed its point and may as well have remained 'untranslated'.

The perspective also changed from a 'bottom-up' approach in the linguistic model to a 'top-down' approach in the text linguistic and functionalist model. The quality of a translation was no longer defined by functional equivalence but by the *skopos*, the function of a translation in a target text culture. Both the text linguistic and functionalist models apply a top-down approach, but for the text linguistic approach that top is the text and for functionalism the top is the culture.

The translator was no longer a mere bilingual expert who performed linguistic acrobatics but also a bicultural expert whose responsibility it was to bridge a cultural gap. This bridging had to be done by an analysis of the function a translation had to serve in a target text culture for the intended reader. As soon as the *skopos* was defined, the translator could decide on applicable translation strategies.

Vermeer's *skopos* theory was met with criticism, because it seemed to expand the boundaries of translation a little too much and give the translator and the initiator too much power and freedom. Nord, therefore, introduced the concept of loyalty, which protected the source text author's intention, the target reader's expectation and the translator's professional reliability.

Nord's functional concepts (documentary versus instrumental translation) and looping model have made the practice of translating and the theory of translation more practical and more professional.

3.4. Translation Scholars on the Translation of Children's Literature

3.4.1 Introduction

Some of the most salient contributions and research endeavours in the translation of children's literature are the theories of Klingberg, Shavit and Oittinen. Similarly to translation studies, researchers of translated children's literature have engaged in the eternal dichotomy between adaptation (bad) and faithfulness (good). Adaptation and faithfulness have been contended and encouraged on educational or creative grounds. Klingberg and Zohar Shavit adopt a negative attitude towards adaptation. Klingberg's ideas are mainly based on educational concerns whereas Shavit blames adaptation for the low status of children's literature in the literary polysystem. Riitta Oittinen, on the other hand, embraced a refreshing and innovative manner for looking at adaptations in children's literature.

3.4.2 Klingberg and Cultural Context Adaptation

Göte Klingberg in *Children's fiction in the hands of translators* (1986) adopts a very prescriptive approach towards the translation of children's literature. According to Klingberg, the aim of translations for children is to make more literature available for the child. On that account, he advocates a close adherence to the source text and demands faithfulness as the ideal translation strategy: "Otherwise it is not the literary work as such, in its totality with its distinctive characteristics, that is presented to the readers in the target language" (Klingberg, 1986: 10).

Another aim of translated children's literature is to further the child's international outlook; a diplomatic cause which would lose its strength should the target text be adapted to the target culture: "The removal of peculiarities of the foreign culture will not further the reader's knowledge of and interest in the foreign culture" (Klingberg, 1986: 10).

On the other hand, Klingberg points out two pedagogical goals that would allow for a revision of the source text. First of all, the translator should adapt the source text when there is reason to believe the young reader may not understand the text, due to lack of knowledge of the foreign culture. Another legitimate adaptation strategy concerns the set of values: “When the translator (or the publisher) finds such values in the original that he does not think proper to pass on to the readers – and there may of course be different values in different countries – he may be of the opinion that he should delete or change” (Klingberg, 1986: 10).

Should the child’s comprehension be in jeopardy, the translator could resort to a strategy of ‘cultural context adaptation’. Should the set of values of the source text not be in correspondence to that of the target text, a strategy of ‘purification’ could be applied. A final mode of adaptation is what Klingberg calls ‘modernisation’: “A strategy which is used to replace stylistically old-fashioned language by more modern expressions, and for moving the time near to the present” (Klingberg, 1986: 12-13). Cultural context adaptation, purification and modernisation should help make the text more understandable or more interesting for the target audience.

The most radical way of bringing the source text closer to the target audience is ‘localisation’, this occurs when the translator domesticates the story in such a way every source text element is adapted – even the setting – to fit the target culture. Such localising translations can be a hard task “and if nothing else should be avoided for technical reasons” (Klingberg 1986: 16). Klingberg strongly abides by an anti-localising treatment of the source text; this ultimate form of domestication should be avoided.

In the case of most texts I think cultural context adaptation should be restricted to details. It is all too easy to find instances of a purely arbitrary cultural context adaptation. Even when there is some reason for it, it should not be tried when not absolutely necessary. In principle the source-text must have the priority, and cultural context adaptation ought to be the exception rather than the rule. At all

events it should always be borne in mind that the source text is to be manipulated as little as possible (Klingberg, 1986: 17)

Klingberg names specific categories where cultural context adaptation could be desirable in order to improve understanding and appreciation of the source text for the readers. Adjustments could be made in the following categories: literary references, foreign languages in the source text, references to mythology and popular belief, historical, religious and political background, building and home furnishings, food, customs and practices, play and games, flora and fauna, personal names, titles, names of domestic animals, names of objects, geographical names, weight and measures (Klingberg, 1986: 17-18). He also lists the following ways to effect cultural context adaptation: added explanation, rewording, explanatory translation, explanation outside the text, substitution of an equivalent in the culture of the target-language, substitution of an equivalent in the culture of the target-language, simplification, deletion, localisation. Due to Klingberg's clear anti-localisation stance, some methods are regarded more recommendable than others (Klingberg, 1986:18).

Even though Klingberg's extensive research has brought valuable insights into one of the byways of translation studies, his viewpoint on translated children's literature is predominantly pedagogical and prescriptive. His demand for faithfulness makes the translator a puppet master of the original text and seems to be based on the idea that children's literature is there to 'teach' the child something about a foreign culture. It is true that children's books contribute a lot to the child's education, the broadening of its world knowledge and its tolerance towards other cultures. However, as with adult literature, children's books can serve different functions. A child generally prefers reading a book for recreational purposes. The fact that the child may learn something from reading a book is merely an added bonus.

Klingberg seems to forget another important educational goal. A good children's book will entice the child to read more. The successful author is not necessarily the one who has taught the child a valuable life lesson, but the one who has made the child hungry for

more words. In order to stimulate further reading, the child cannot feel alienated due to the ‘foreignness’ of the source text. The importance of translation as a meeting-place for children from different cultures can not be denied, but it is sometimes more important to come face to face with those different cultures within the scope of the child’s familiar language and space. A low degree of adaptation to ‘further the child’s international outlook’ misses its point if it fails to engage the child reader. Klingberg’s normative methods of translation portray an adult point of view on children’s literature where the focus lies predominantly on education.

3.4.3 Zohar Shavit and Children’s Literature in the Polysystem

Zohar Shavit points out the difference in norms for translating children’s literature and translating adult books. “Unlike contemporary authors of adult books, the translator of children’s literature can permit himself great liberties regarding the text, as a result of the peripheral position of children’s literature within the literary polysystem” (Shavit, 1986: 112). Children’s fiction is on par with uncanonised literature, which has its implications for translations of children’s books.

Uncanonised literature is more likely to be adapted or abridged to suit the target audience’s needs or preferences. Translators of canonised literature on the other hand, are imposed with norms of ‘authenticity’ and ‘faithfulness’.

The translator of children’s literature is ‘permitted’ to change, enlarge or abridge a text through deletions or additions. Nevertheless, all these translational procedures are permitted only if conditioned by the translator’s adherence to the following two principles on which translation for children is based: an adjustment of the text to make it appropriate and useful to the child in accordance with what society regards (at a certain point in time) as educationally ‘good for the child’; an adjustment of plot, characterisation, and language to prevailing society’s perceptions of the child’s ability to read and comprehend. (Shavit, 1986: 112-113).

Children's literature carries the burden of systematic constraints that are more clearly exposed by the norms that govern a translation entering the children's system (Shavit, 1986: 112). Such translation norms are based on the translator and society's image of childhood and their ideas on the level of comprehension of the child. Shavit argues that translators will easily shorten or simplify texts based on the assumption that children are incapable of reading lengthy and complicated books (Shavit, 1986: 122). Scenes that violate taboos on sexual activity or excretions will also be 'edited' to affiliate the text to the children's system (Shavit 1986: 123). Finally, another systemic constraint is the stylistic norm of 'literariness'; whereas in adult literature 'literariness' is a symptom of 'high' style, in children's literature, 'literariness' is based on the educational concern to enrich a child's vocabulary.

Shavit holds the liberties of adaptations in children's literature responsible for the low status of children's fiction caused by prevailing didactic concepts.

3.4.4 Riitta Oittinen and the Dialogics of Translation

Unlike Venuti, Klingberg and Shavit, Oittinen does not regard adaptations as a necessarily negative thing: "If translation is understood as producing 'sameness', there definitely is a clear distinction between translations and adaptations. On the other hand, if all translating is considered to be rewriting, it is much more difficult to tell one from the other" (Oittinen and Paloposki, 2001: 380). The negative image of 'adaptation' of Shavit and Klingberg is in line with Venuti's ideas on foreignisation. Oittinen rejects such a generalised approach, since it is not applicable on every reading situation. Furthermore, in translated children's literature a foreignised approach either to educate the child (Klingberg) or to stimulate the canon of children's literature (Shavit) is not a reader-friendly view.

Oittinen and Paloposki (2001: 382) therefore propose a dialogic view on translation: "As communication between human beings, as an attempt to understand, we cannot accept

Venuti's views as he – intentionally or unintentionally – forgets future readers of texts. If we do not translate for our readers, then why translate at all?"

3.4.4.1 Dialogic Approach

Oittinen's approach is reader-oriented; her fidelity does not belong to the source text or the source text author but to the target text readers. For her ideas on dialogue, Oittinen draws on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism: "A reading experience is dialogic and consists not only of the text, but also of the different writers, readers, and contexts, and the past, present and future. The word is always born in a dialogue and forms a concept of the object in a dialogic way" (Bakhtin in Oittinen, 1993: 74).

Nothing exists on its own, everything in the world, every communication, every action, every word or sentence takes part in a greater whole, dependent on time, place, situation, and culture. "Every meaning has the potential to condition the other" (Bakhtin in Oittinen, 1993: 74). Dialogue can be seen as the context in which texts and human beings communicate with each other influenced by culture, language, time, place and situation.

The way Bakhtin sees it, dialogue takes place between people, but it may also take place between persons and things, with a human being involved: there is a human being reading the text, seeing the illustrations. In reading, for example, a dialogue occurs between reader and a book, and by extension, the author. As I see it, the dialogue may also take place within one person. For instance, when a translator translates for the child, she/he also reads, writes, and discusses with her/his present and former self. She/he also discusses with her/his audience, the listening and the reading child (Oittinen, 1993:74).

Oittinen (1993: 75) argues that every text, and therefore every translation, is directed towards its listeners and readers, and the listeners and readers are directed towards the text.

Translations can also be understood as words directed towards an answer, toward a new text and a new reader, and they cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that they anticipate: translations, different from their originals, always combine what is old and what is new. Thus, to succeed, a translator must make the partly alien words into words of his/her own; the word in a translation necessarily contains the translator's intentions and feelings, too (Oittinen, 1993: 75).

In other theories, the reader is often regarded as the passive receptor. In the dialogic situation, on the other hand, the reader has an active role, he is responsible for what, and how he reads and understands. The translator and the reader engage in a unique and private dialogic relationship: "A word written is not the same as a word rewritten. Everything that the poet sees, understands and thinks, he does through the eyes of a given language, in its inner forms" (Bakhtin in Oittinen 1993: 75-76).

Oittinen promotes a lively dialogic way of translating for children in line with the intrinsic qualities of children's literature and culture. Faithfulness to the source text is subordinate to the 'loyalty' towards the reader.

If the original remains an authoritarian word in a distanced zone it is so to speak the word of our fathers. Its authority was already acknowledged in the past. It is a prior discourse. It is not the question then of choosing the original from among other possible discourses that are equal in status. The original is a given, it is an authority. We are not to make it a word of our own. To do so is akin to taboo – you take the word, or text in vain (Bakhtin in Oittinen, 1993: 76).

What is more, the original author benefits from a dialogic approach: "To understand an author in the richest way, one must neither reduce him to an image of oneself, nor make oneself a version of him" (Bakhtin in Oittinen, 1993: 76).

3.4.4.2 Carnivalism

Oittinen also relates Bakhtin's ideas on carnivalism to the translation of children's literature. The importance of the *homo ludens* in children's literature distinguishes it from adult literature and the translation thereof. Her ideas on the carnivalesque children's culture are an interesting attempt to understand the dynamic of children's fiction and its translations. It also sheds light on the possible damage pedagogic views cause to the 'childness and the crispness of children's texts.

Adults are more experienced and comprehensive readers than children and therefore have always acted as the censors of children's literature: "As long as there have been children's books, they have been censored by adults, either at the publication stage, or when they are read aloud" (Oittinen, 1993: 28). Adults, albeit parents, writers, publishers or teachers feel they know what's best for the child and decide which books it should read and enjoy. But do adults really know better?

Adults perceive child behaviour from their own point of view. What adults deem inappropriate literature does not necessarily correspond to the child's opinion. As Marjatta Kurenniemi (in Oittinen, 1993: 23) points out: "A child is not a miniature grown-up, but a human being living in a magical world of talking animals". Children are easily swept away by fantastical stories; they wish to believe the story could be true. Adults, on the other hand, need more convincing, they are more sceptical and cynical and do not possess the vigorous imaginative power of the child.

Through translation, the translator communicates with his readers in a cross-cultural manner. However, in children's literature, cross-cultural communication does not merely refer to communication between a source text culture and a target text culture, but also to communication between an adult culture and a children's culture.

Oittinen (1993: 30) defines children's culture as "an underground culture outside the establishment" and relates it to Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas on carnivalism. Carnivalism is the unpretentious folk culture of humour. Bakhtin, in his introduction to *Rabelais and his World* (1984), states: "laughter and its forms represent the least scrutinised sphere of the people's creation" (Bakhtin, 1984: 4). Carnivalism and humour were considered a lower genre in literature "showing the life of private individuals and the inferior social levels" (Bakhtin, 1984: 67). The same harsh fate has befallen children's culture and consequently children's literature; it is considered a less appreciated form of writing and has therefore not been studied as extensively as other forms of writing.

Oittinen sees many other similarities between carnivalism and children's culture. Like carnivalism children's culture is "nonofficial, with no dogma or authoritarianism which does not exist to oppose adult culture as such, but rather lives on in spite of it" (Oittinen, 1993: 30). It is also an unpretentious and inclusive culture, everybody can join the carnival, and there are no outsiders.

Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people, they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no life outside of it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants (Bakhtin, 1984: 7).

The notion of a carnivalesque children's culture has consequences for children's literature and its translation. "Any new form of culture always evokes a new way of writing" (Oittinen, 1993: 31). As in carnivalism, there might be a discrepancy between what an adult finds pedagogically acceptable language and what actually makes children laugh. "The verbal forms of official and literary language prohibit all that is linked with fecundation, pregnancy and childbirth. There is a sharp line between familiar speech and 'correct' language" (Bakhtin, 1984: 320). Adults are more reserved and prudish in their

speech. Children's language, on the other hand, is more carnivalesque, in the sense that they find abusive and vulgar language particularly funny.

What harm has the genital act, so natural, so necessary, and so lawful, done to humanity that we dare not speak of it without shame, and exclude it from serious and orderly conversation? We boldly utter the words, *kill, rob, and betray*: and the others we only dare utter under our breath. (Montaigne in Bakhtin, 1984: 320)

The love for the grotesque image of the body is typical for carnivalism and children's culture. "In all languages there is a great number of expressions related to genital organs, the anus and buttocks, the belly, the mouth and nose" (Oittinen, 1993: 31). For children the mouth and belly are very important bodily parts, because eating and drinking is very important for them. This is indicated by the popularity of food and drinks in children's literature. Consider the banquets in the Harry Potter books, the picnics in the Enid Blyton books or Roald Dahl's enchanting children's book about a chocolate factory. Eating and drinking is magical for children and scenes in the above-mentioned books staging food and drinks are typically hyperbolised and described with a lot of detail (Oittinen, 1993: 31).

Oittinen links the popularity of eating and drinking in children's literature to the research of Finish scholar Kaj von Fienandt who discovered that a child has more taste-receptors in its mouth than an adult and the ability to taste sweet things greatly depends on the amount and function of taste receptors (Von Fienandt in Oittinen, 1993: 32)

Children are also drawn to the grotesque representation of anything bad or evil, which is a typical carnivalesque trope. "Rabelais' devils are funny fellows and even hell is a comical place" (Oittinen, 1993: 32). In children's stories, frightening figures (devils, ogres and witches) are often comically ugly or distorted. Giants have huge slimy bumped noses and witches have hairy warts on their faces. Oittinen points out that ridiculing these figures makes them less dangerous, what's more, most evil creatures usually come to a dramatic and spectacular unhappy end (Oittinen, 1993: 33).

For Oittinen, the comparison of children's culture to carnivalism is relevant in the sense that it "encourages adults to acknowledge the value of something other than adult phenomena: this unofficial culture might have something to offer us, as adults, and not just the other way around, as we are used to thinking" (Oittinen, 1993: 33). Children's language and children's culture often deviates from the beaten track and is – as life itself – free from abstract structures and rules (Oittinen, 1993: 33). The preference for the grotesque and the enjoyment children derive from scatological humour may not always strike the adult as didactically warranted, yet as Oittinen argues "maybe we as translators should join the children and dive in their carnivalism, not teaching them but learning from them" (Oittinen, 1993: 34).

3.5. Concluding remarks

This chapter has tried to illuminate that the practice of translation is not done in a vacuum, nor is it solely based on an intuitive awareness of the translator, on translation traditions or conventions and his language *fingerspitzengefühl*. There are plenty of theoretical frameworks that have advanced the thinking on translation and translation practice itself.

It doesn't matter how smart computer technology, machine translation and corpus linguistics may still become. Literary translation, because of its complexities and context and culture dependency can never be done without the help of a human translator who is an expert of the source text and target text.

Literary translation, despite its complexities, on the other hand, is also not above any type of theoretical model. In fact, analysing the target text and the source text within a theoretical framework will not only make the translation function better, it will give the translator the credibility and the confidence to make the best translation decisions and opt for the best translation strategies.

Theory around literary translation also offers insight and knowledge into this creative practice. Automated translations, for example, could never create a literary artefact, but machine translation and corpus linguistics could contribute to the subject of literary translation. Corpus linguistics works with large amounts of data and can trace certain patterns of linguistic or stylistic nature. For children's literature, for example, it could generate statistical data about how carnivalesque tropes and themes recur in texts for children. Or it could answer questions about sentence structures or stylistic design in children's literature or discover linguistic trends in translations of children's literature from Dutch to English.

This thesis is concerned with the translation of children's literature from Dutch to English and believes mainly in the theoretical benefits of functionalism and Oittinen's dialogic approach.

This chapter has tried to indicate that translation theory in general has undergone major changes since its inception as an academic discipline. Reiss and Vermeer did not one day wake up and decided to start a new theory based on a Greek word. On the contrary, *skopos* theory is the result of a development in translation studies where the focus shifted from the source text to the target culture and from a bottom-up to a top-down approach. A brief discussion of the history of theoretical translation studies has shown this cultural turn.

This chapter has also shown that the dichotomy between adaptation and faithfulness is not as relevant for children's literature. Berman and Venuti try to resist "the ethnocentric deformation of naturalising translation by a dogged attachment to the letter" (Hermans, 2007: 91). Foreignising translation tactics reshape and refashion target languages and require an effort from the reader. However, the alienating reading experience they propose does not take into account the child and can be labelled 'elitist'.

Lawrence Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995) addresses the Anglo-American power-problem that children's literature also suffers from, namely the fact that non-

English foreign literature is not highly desirable on the Anglo-American market. But for children's literature, an exoticising approach may even enforce this resistance to foreign literature. An English child will not choose a Swedish book with strange language patterns and alienating names when it has so many options to buy excellent and perfectly understandable local books.

It might, therefore, be a more interesting manoeuvre to mask a foreign book as an original i.e. to naturalise the foreign book, thereby tackling a trend that deprives English-speaking children from a variety of excellent foreign children's literature.

The final part of this chapter has considered some of the translation theorists that have devoted their attention to the translation of children's literature. The ideas of Klingberg and Shavit tend to be based on educational grounds, ignoring the idea that children read books for recreational purposes and that another less obvious educational goal of children's books is to entice children to read more, advance their reading skills and offer a form of unwinding escapism in the world of fiction.

Ritta Oittinen's refreshing looks on carnivalism and dialogics are innovative and inspiring. To Oittinen, the most important concern is the functional question: For whom are we translating? Children's literature has universal qualities that can be transferred in any language. Unlike foreignisation, carnivalism does not seek to alienate anyone. On the contrary, everyone is invited to join in. The translator of children's literature should 'dive' into the text, remembering the voice of his inner child. "When translating for children, we should listen to the child, the child in the neighbourhood and the child within ourselves. When reading and writing, authoring and illustrating, the translator is in a dialogic interaction with all these children" (Oittinen, 1993: 183).

CHAPTER 4: TRANSLATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the actual translation of the first fifty-five pages of *De zusjes Kriegel*. The target text was renamed *The Treacle Triplets* in English. The original source text can be found in Appendix C for reference.

4.2 Target Text

1. *The Birth of the Treacle Triplets*

The eyes of William Treacle nearly fell out of their sockets when, immediately after the birth of his first daughter, a second completely identical screamer appeared. When a third one followed, the brand-new father promptly passed out.

‘Emotions,’ the friendly nurse believed.

But it took more than half a bottle of seven-year-old, barrel-matured Scotch to set Father Treacle on his feet again. Meanwhile, Mother Treacle had her best friend on the phone. She had also recently given birth and had put her newborn – in her opinion far too freckled – child up for adoption. However, when Mother Treacle’s best friend mentioned the monthly child allowance, it turned out that the child benefit for three kids was significantly higher than the very unstable salary of her husband.

And so they quickly decided to keep the triplets after all. Father Treacle raised his bottle of whisky to the delightful news of his new triple source of income and finished it in one go.

‘Blast,’ Mother Treacle snarled. ‘Now we have to think of three names instead of one.’

And thinking was not exactly one of Mother Treacle’s strong points.

‘So what are we going to call these children, William?’ she asked her husband.

Father Treacle shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

‘It’s up to you,’ he said. ‘I still have to recover from the shock. Move that arse of yours a little, love.’ He curled up against his wife and dozed off immediately. It was at that

moment the triplets decided to open their hungry little mouths in harmony. Their bellowing pierced right through Father Treacle's woozy head. Frightened, he tumbled off the bed. Mother Treacle pushed her fingers deep into both ears and closed her eyes – so she could think better. A strong smell of medicine entered her nostrils. Startled, she looked up, and saw someone standing next to her bed.

'Oh, I didn't see you come in, doctor,' she said.

'Zoe, Chloe and Joey,' the tall, skeletal man spoke.

His voice resembled the cawing of a crow. He bent over the little beds and peered at the three infants. His dark shadow made the girls scream even louder.

'Now, why not?' Mother Treacle smiled. 'Zoe, Chloe and Joey . . . I think I kind of like that. What's your opinion, William?'

'Hmmm? What? Fine by me,' Father Treacle responded drowsily from under the bed.

A nurse came at the shrieking sounds of the triplets. She gave an irritated snort and opened the window. She nudged Father Treacle's shoulder warningly.

'You can't smoke in here, sir,' she said.

Disturbed, William Treacle got up. He bumped his head on the side of the bed.

'What?'

'I said you cannot smoke in here, sir,' the nurse repeated snappily.

'But I am not smoking,' William Treacle protested.

'Oh, really? Then where does this filthy smoke come from?' the nurse wondered sarcastically.

'Zoe, Chloe and Joey . . .' Mother Treacle pondered out loud.

'Have you decided on names for the girls, madam?' the nurse smiled again.

'Yes,' Mother Treacle said. 'The doctor here suggested them.'

Puzzled, the nurse checked the room.

'Doctor? Which doctor, madam?'

Only now did Mother Treacle notice that the tall, skinny figure had disappeared.

'Well, the one that was here a minute ago. The beanpole with the black moustache.'

'Beanpole with a black moustache?' the nurse echoed, surprised.

'Yes, he was standing here next to my bed when you came in.'

The nurse frowned and shook her head.

‘There was no one here when I came in, madam,’ she said. ‘Besides, there is no doctor with a moustache in this hospital.’

The unbearable screaming of the triplets drowned out her words.

‘Shhhhh . . . shhhhh . . .’ the nurse hushed. Soothingly she bent over the little beds in which the triplets carried on like banshees.

2. The Treacle Toddlers

The triplets weren't exactly little cherubs. In between their fits of weeping they would sometimes take little naps during the day. But as soon as the sun went down, they would cry without pause until the early hours of the morning.

'Those creatures are impossible to calm down,' Mother Treacle complained to her best friend. 'The only time they shut up, is when the nanny takes them in her arms and cuddles them. I don't have time for that! And to make matters worse, they have now learnt to undo the tape with which I gag their little mugs. And as soon as they taste the crushed sedatives in their porridge, they spit the junk right into my face. Monsters, that's what they are! I can't take it any longer . . .'

Father Treacle was at the end of his tether too. The bags under his eyes became larger by the day. As did the mountain of empty liquor bottles in the cellar.

Mother Treacle turned to bingeing on tons of sweets, mountains of pastries and boxes of cake for comfort. That way, she hoped to calm her overstrained nerves. All in vain. Hardly four months after the birth of the triplets, the desperate woman reached the two hundred and fifty pounds, and when the teething of the triplets escalated, the nocturnal yelling increased even more. Both parents realised the relationship with their children was not going to work out this way. And so they moved their bed to the basement and that of their offspring to the furthest corner of the attic. However, it was to become a lot worse when the sisters started crawling. At first, they moved awkwardly on their tummies, like newborn seals. Then, on hands and feet, like young turtles. And finally, fast and skillfully on their hands and knees, like rugged baby crocodiles, who indiscriminately tore everything to pieces with their brand-new, razor-sharp teeth.

First, it was the wooden box that perished under the ruthless biting urge of the triplets. Next, the Micky Mouse rug, the second-hand bunk bed, the kitchen table and pretty much everything else.

'It'll pass,' the babysitter said, right before she fell through the half-eaten chair and had to be admitted to hospital with severe concussion. After a while there was nothing in the house left to bite on. But every time something new was brought into the Treacle home,

the little sisters sank their teeth into it. The little grey poodle of a Jehovah's Witness did not even get a chance to bite back.

The situation went from really bad to possibly even worse when the triplets learnt to walk. Now they had their hands free too. Within the course of a single week, more than two bricklayers, three carpenters, four electricians, five plasterers and seventeen professional plumbers had to be called in. As well as one psychiatrist, Doctor Nuts, the best in the country.

After the highly acclaimed psychiatrist and his team of assistants had finished the thorough examination of the threesome, the triplets had them baffled threefold. The tests showed that the little Treacles couldn't distinguish between right or wrong and that they were incapable of innate feelings of respect for anything or anyone. Doctor Nuts extended his sympathies to Father and Mother Treacle and left the house, together with his ashen-faced team. For the local liquor store and the bakery of the neighbouring village, golden times had arrived.

It goes without saying that both parents felt a great relief the day their daughters turned two and a half and they could take them to nursery school. That morning Mother Treacle – whistling joyfully – dropped her three darlings at the school gate, instantly hurried home and threw her three hundred and ninety-seven pounds on the remains of the wilted floral sofa. Seven seconds later, she was sleeping like a baby.

For this festive occasion, Father Treacle had exchanged the Swiss watch he got for his twenty-first birthday for a bottle of cheap champagne, which he polished in less than two minutes. Savouring the sudden, long-awaited peace and quiet, he nestled in the cushion-soft arms of his snoring wife.

3. An Astounding Record in School History

To everyone's surprise, Miss Helen of the nursery class managed to cure the triplets of their annoying biting habit. Not without a lot of blood, sweat and tears and even more patience and plasters, though. Her method was very simple: While the other toddlers were playing with their toys, she took the little sisters on her lap and hugged them. She

let them bite the kid gloves she had used to handle the Treacle kittens on their first day of school.

The brave teacher was less successful in protecting the other pupils from the bullying trio. The little sisters found a wicked pleasure in hurting their peers in all sorts of ways. No one was left unharmed by their sadistic games. During play-time, even the older children were harassed. They absolutely adored pulling little boys into the bathrooms. Joey and Chloe shoved the head of the poor little victim in the toilet bowl, while Zoe flushed repeatedly. Only once did a bold older toddler offer resistance and managed to punch Zoe. In the fight that followed his bravery, the rash young lad lost seven milk teeth and a piece of his ear lobe. After that, nobody dared to invade the triplets' personal space. And so the Treacles had the whole playground, including the sandpit, the swings and the little park to themselves. Much to the teachers' annoyance. But punishment had no effect on the sisters anyway. On the contrary, it made them even more aggressive. During their first playground detention, they flooded the school, cut off all the sansevierias, emptied seventeen tubes of superglue on the windows and stuck Cleo, the goldfish, to the large birthday calendar with a pin through its tail. When Miss Helen entered the classroom, they had just finished shaving Jean, the class hamster. The nursery school teacher's hair turned grey instantly and her fit of nerves earned her three months' leave of absence. The Treacle sisters were expelled, only two years, six months and four days old. An astounding record in school history. But the triplets didn't mind at all. They no longer wished to attend school anyway. Not enough happened to their liking. And so they stayed at home for the next few years. To the great delight of the local liquor store and the bakery from the neighbouring village, who saw their daily turnover rise again.

4. Noel

Mother Treacle became bigger every day.

'It's the medication,' the doctor thought at first. In combination with the two dozen cupcakes she consumed daily, of course. But after careful examination there seemed to be another reason for her weight gain. Mother Treacle was expecting.

Father Treacle first choked on his beer and then just glassily stared into the distance for more than an hour.

‘Fun!’ the triplets beamed with joy. ‘Three baby brothers to mess around with!’

Father Treacle’s eyes now really tuned out. He fell flat on his back, hitting his head on a beer crate.

‘What?! Only one?!’ Zoe shouted, disappointed, when a couple of months later a nurse showed the triplets their newborn brother.

‘And such a small one too,’ Joey sniffed.

‘Do we really have to share that thing among the three of us?’ Chloe wondered out loud.

‘Look at that hair,’ Zoe pointed out in disgust.

‘Bleurgh! Blond and curly,’ Joey quivered.

‘And it has blue eyes!’ Chloe said, horrified. ‘It looks like an angel!’

‘Isn’t he precious?’ the nurse smiled. ‘A true baby Jesus! I am sure he will be a little gem.’

The triplets were on the verge of throwing the sickly-sweet nurse out of the window, when the door of the waiting room opened quietly. A sturdy old lady with a rosy, apple-cheeked face appeared in the doorway. She was wearing a wide cloak embroidered with butterflies and strange patterns. Her large green hat was covered with melting snowflakes, glistening like stars under the hospital lights. A pungent smell of lavender, incense and mouldy goat’s cheese overpowered the sterile hospital scent. The nurse had not noticed the door opening.

‘And what will your endearing little brother be called?’ she asked.

‘Noel.’

Frightened, the nurse turned round. The little Treacle bounced up in her arms.

‘Noel,’ the robust-looking woman repeated.

Carefully, she put her hand on the blond curls and made circular movements with her thumb above the baby’s fragile head. She looked deep into the little boy’s sea-blue eyes.

‘Noel,’ the warm voice said for the third time. Then a contented smile appeared on the old lady’s face. She put her leather shoulder bag on the floor and reached for the baby.

‘Could I hold him for a while, please?’ she asked.

The nurse hesitated.

‘You don’t have to worry,’ the weird lady assured her. ‘My name is Nana Diana. I’m the boy’s grandmother.’

5. Nana Diana

Zoe, Chloe and Joey never knew they had a grandmother. No one had ever even mentioned her. Obviously, they were quite surprised when they saw her dancing around the hospital waiting room with their brand-new brother. They didn’t lose sight of the whirling, softly humming figure for a second, until they suddenly saw her deep-blue eyes staring in their direction and were thrown completely off guard. Nana Diana handed their little brother over to the puzzled nurse.

‘He can go back to his mother now,’ she spoke softly and opened her arms invitingly in the triplets’ direction. ‘Well? Won’t you give your Nana Diana a kiss, girls?’

The Treacle triplets had never been kissed before. They sort of knew what it was, but the idea of actually having to give one of those, made them want to hurl. They looked at each other, feeling a little embarrassed, and it must have been the first time in their five-and-a-half-year-old lives that they were actually blushing.

Nana Diana came closer, wrapped her arms around her three granddaughters and held them very tightly. She gave each of the girls a peck on her forehead. The triplets drowned in her big cloak and were overwhelmed by an unfamiliar feeling. They were engulfed in the strong scent of her perfume and were carried away. Far away from everything . . .

‘I brought you a little gift,’ Nana whispered.

Her voice resembled the murmur of the sea. She broke off the embrace and conjured three necklaces out of her shoulder bag. She hummed softly while putting the necklaces around the girls’ necks. They had never received a present before either. The triplets had no idea what was happening to them. They stared at each other. It was as if they were looking into a mirror.

‘Nice!’ Nana beamed.

A sound of footsteps came from the corridor. Nana got up and threw her bag over her shoulder.

‘Unfortunately, I can’t stay any longer,’ she said. ‘But I’ll be back soon. You still owe me three kisses.’

She waved and disappeared. The door of the waiting room flew open.

‘Was that really our grandmother, Daddy?’ Zoe asked before Father Treacle could even enter the room.

‘Who? What grandmother?’

‘Yes, that old lady who left right before you came in.’

Father Treacle gave his daughters a wide-eyed look. ‘I didn’t see anyone leave,’ he said.

‘Besides, your grandmother has been dead for three years. Mommy is on the third floor, in room three. Why don’t you girls go so long. I’ll be right there.’

He left the triplets completely baffled. For a second they thought they had imagined everything. But the necklaces were still there.

6. Paradis Papillon

Zoe could not contain herself any longer.

‘Tell us about Nana Diana, Daddy,’ she said.

‘Yes, Daddy, please!’

‘Sshh, not so loud, Joey,’ Father Treacle whispered. ‘You’ll wake up Noel.’

The little boy was sleeping blissfully, his baby tummy moving up and down gently with every baby breath. ‘Please, Daddy,’ Chloe insisted.

William Treacle checked his wife’s expression. She pretended not to have heard the kids.

‘Well . . .’ Father Treacle started. ‘Your grandmother used to live in a little house near a big lake in the mountains of the South of France. She lived on her own, with only a couple of goats for company. She had a huge garden, filled with flowers and herbs. She was a little bit weird, your nana.’

‘A little bit?’ Mother mumbled.

‘She was into astrology and stuff. And she also had a sixth sense.’

‘Puh!’ Mother Treacle sniffed disdainfully.

‘What is a sixth sense, Daddy?’ Zoe asked.

‘It means you can sense certain things other people can’t. She said that she could see the future.’

‘Really?!’ the triplets shouted simultaneously.

‘Shhh!’ Father Treacle reprimanded them. But Noel slept like a baby.

‘The last time we saw her, she predicted that one day a grandson of hers would be born on Christmas Eve and that he would be called Noel . . .’

The triplets listened with bated breath.

‘As a joke, I promised her that if it ever came true, I would indeed name the baby Noel.’

Father Treacle kept silent and looked at his blond son in disbelief. Confused, he scratched his head.

‘Well, Mom,’ Joey snorted, awe-struck. ‘Hats off to Nana Diana!’

‘Oh, a lucky coincidence!’ Mother Treacle snapped. ‘You know what I think?’ She got all annoyed. ‘Your grandmother was a daft cow! That’s what I think! All because of those spooky books she used to read and because she lived with that sha . . . sha-shamoon, or what was that Joe’s name again, for a while.’

‘Shaman,’ William Treacle corrected his wife.

‘Right, that’s what I meant,’ Mother Treacle nodded.

‘What is a shaman, Daddy?’

‘You won’t understand, so there’s no point in explaining,’ Father Treacle tried to ignore them.

‘Yes, we will, Daddy. Come on, please tell us!’

Little Noel woke up. He opened his tiny peepers and stared straight into his sisters’ eyes.

‘A shaman is someone who possesses the power to restore things that have gone awry. A shaman can, for example, heal someone by using spells.’

‘Like a sort of doctor,’ Joey reasoned.

‘A wicked wizard, rather!’ Mother Treacle sneered.

‘Can Nana really work magic?’ Joey asked.

Father Treacle shrugged his shoulders.

‘Maybe Nana Diana’s a witch!’ Chloe hoped.

‘On the button,’ Mother Treacle approved, nodding energetically from her bed.

‘Well, I guess that’s what you could call her,’ Father Treacle admitted. ‘But only if by witch you don’t mean an evil person. Did you know that “witch” actually means “wise woman”?’

‘Wise?’ Mother Treacle scorned. ‘Raging lunatic, you mean.’

‘Whoa! It must have been so awesome for you, Daddy, to have a witch for a mother! Wasn’t it, Daddy?’ Zoe cried out.

Mother Treacle looked at her daughter, rolling her eyes.

‘When I was a young boy, she wasn’t like that yet,’ Father Treacle responded. ‘It only happened later.’

‘Are you not born as a witch, then?’ Joey inquired interestedly.

‘Aaaaum,’ Noel gurgled blissfully.

‘Some are, some aren’t,’ Father Treacle replied. ‘But I’m not an expert, and it’s such a long time ago too.’

Absent-mindedly he gazed in front of him, staring at his newborn son.

‘More than twenty years ago. Then suddenly, we received a letter from that farmer, Nana’s closest neighbour, saying that he hadn’t seen her in six months and that her house was falling into ruin. The neglected goats had headed for the mountains and the garden had become a real jungle, overrun by insects. “Un vrai paradis papillon,” he called it. A true paradise for butterflies . . .’

‘She probably died on one of her silly mountain hikes,’ Mother Treacle said.

‘But we saw her, Mommy! In the waiting room.’

‘Yes, we did! Look, she gave us these necklaces.’

Mother Treacle shook her head.

‘Oh, rubbish. Just admit you stole them from somewhere! You . . .’

‘Shhh, calm, honey,’ Father Treacle calmed her down.

‘Oh, this stupid witch business is getting on my nerves! And I’m extremely hungry, by the way. When are they bringing me something to chow?’

Noel smacked his little lips. Carefully Father Treacle put him in his mother’s arms. The little tyke immediately went looking for the amply stuffed breasts.

Father Treacle cleared his thirsty throat and got up.

‘I’m also getting a refill,’ he said.

‘Give me that newspaper, William,’ Mother Treacle ordered. ‘So I don’t get bored while I feed the baby.’

Father Treacle threw her the paper. It fell open on the bed.

Age of Aquarius is Old Wives’ Tale! it said in capital letters on the front page. No one spoke a word after Father Treacle had left the room. Only the suckling sounds of Noel filled the room. The triplets gazed in front of them, lost in thought. Eventually Zoe was the one to break the silence. ‘We should have given Nana a kiss after all,’ she whispered. ‘Maybe she’ll be back soon,’ Joey hoped.

‘And maybe she will teach us magic!’ Chloe wished.

Mother Treacle looked up from her newspaper and watched her daughters carefully from the corner of her eye.

‘What are you three muttering over there? You’re not getting sick, are you?’

‘No, Mommy. Why?’

‘Because you are looking so pale. As if you have seen a ghost or something. Hahaha . . . Aaah! Darn! Can’t they teach those useless nurses how to put a diaper on properly! Look at this mess!’

Not only had Noel drenched his mother in pee, but with his poorly-diapered mini-sprayer he had put out the flaming article about the Age of Aquarius. The little boy burped and promptly drifted off to sleep.

7. Back to School

Months passed. Little baby Noel grew fast.

‘Definitely a heavenly baby,’ Father and Mother Treacle thought.

The boy never cried, slept when he had to and drank and ate everything they served him. Even three-day-old, multiply-reheated mouldy porridge, the little boy gobbled down easily.

‘Sometimes I even forget he is there,’ Mother Treacle told her best friend.

Meanwhile, the Treacle triplets had relapsed into their old bullying habits. The first few days after Noel was born, they had kept themselves unusually quiet. But gradually, the memory of what had happened in the hospital waiting room faded. They continued with

their horrifying routines in which, with exception of Noel and his crib, they didn't spare anything or anyone. As soon as they reached school-going age, they strongly refused to go back behind the bars of a school. The threats and pleas of Father and Mother Treacle were to no avail. On the contrary, in protest against that silly law, they went on a hunger strike and locked themselves into the attic room.

The next day, they bombarded the headmaster through the attic window with all sorts of objects, and the following day the mailman and the police inspector were both at the receiving end of a pot of boiling water. The first one ended up in hospital with severe burns. The other one was left with burnt and hairless scalp, a shrivelled right ear and considerably shrunken woollen socks. The police were called in to assist and eventually the army as well. Only seconds before a special intervention team was going to storm the door of the triplets' attic room, Mother Treacle successfully lured the hungry sisters out and made them promise to go to school. In exchange for thirty packets of salt and vinegar chips and three times as many milk chocolate bars with nuts, of course.

The headmaster of the school – still with a bandaged head – and the teachers not only held their breath, but also kept a hefty cane in close proximity, when the notorious threesome walked into the grounds of the hastily vacated playground three days later with their third-hand school bags bulging with chips and chocolate.

The bandaged headmaster of the school rightly feared for his future. The poor man had been wondering for several nail-biting days – and nights – where he would shortly end up. Temporarily in a mental home? Or lifelong in prison for triple child-murder? However, what everyone had been fearing didn't happen. The triplets went back to their old routine. After Noel was born, they had abandoned their fondness for nocturnal, dark scenes. But that preference had surfaced once more. In the end, they didn't sleep at all at night. Instead of raising hell all the time, they recovered their sleep in class.

Obviously, this was much appreciated by the children, teachers and the head of the school. But the innocent citizens whom they startled out of their sleep were less impressed with the triplets' nightly wanderings.

As were the poor cats the little girls tortured for as long as it took the shrieking animals to wake up the entire neighbourhood.

When Father and Mother Treacle on a rare occasion did succeed to keep their daughters in their beds for the whole night, the rested triplets were completely unmanageable the next day.

The things they did to their fellow pupils on one of those days are past belief!

The painful, sickening mischief, the gory, sly digs and demonic torture the poor innocent boys and girls had to endure are beyond words . . . :

. . . the editor claimed at the time.

He thought that such explicitly described torture games, did not belong in a good children's book. *Chapter 8: The Treacle Games* was therefore unfortunately not included in the book. On Marc De Bel's request, though, the editor was beleaguered from all sides with thousands and thousands of protest letters from outraged readers.

'I want the Treacle Games!' it sounded from all over the world. And so, the notorious Chapter 8 was released after all, albeit with a warning, *Do not try this at home!* You can find it at the end of this book.

9. Noel's Third Birthday

On Noel's third birthday, Father and Mother Treacle went on a three-day bus trip to some quaint little village in Germany. Every year around the holidays, the priest organised a huge party at the expense of the local church.

They didn't arrange a baby-sitter, because they considered the triplets old enough to take care of themselves and their baby brother.

'After all, together you are twenty-five and a half,' Mother Treacle said when she left.

Zoe, Chloe and Joey didn't bat an eyelid about the fact that they were left alone.

On the contrary, they were happy. Now they had the whole house to themselves, and they could sleep in peace during the daytime. That was if Noel didn't make a racket and wake them up, of course.

But that was highly unlikely, since the boy always played very quiet games and barely made any noise.

On Christmas Eve, they put their baby brother extra early to bed. They had planned to make this Christmas night really special. As they were about to leave, the door bell rang. Astounded, they looked at each other.

'Now, who can that be?' Zoe wondered out loud.

'We never get any visitors,' Joey said, surprised. 'I didn't even know we had a door bell.'

'I did,' remembered Chloe. 'The last one to press it was that police officer with his burnt noodle.'

'Should we open the door or just pretend we're not home?'

Inside the house it was as dark as outside. The fuses had probably blown again. It happened often. Father Treacle refused to replace the old ones. Instead, he repaired them with a length of brass wire every time. This fiddling with pieces of brass wire of her husband's drove Mother Treacle insane. Not the triplets, of course. They loved being in the dark. They didn't experience the least bit of trouble, because their eyes had grown so used to it.

The door bell rang a second time. 'I'm opening the door,' Zoe decided. 'Maybe it's little boy scouts carolling for some good cause.'

‘That would be fantastic !’ Joey hoped.

‘Oh, yes!’ Chloe clapped her hands. ‘Where did we put that red paint again?’

They ran to the front door. Zoe peeked through the slit of the letter box.

‘And?’ Joey whispered.

‘How many are they?’ Chloe quivered excitedly.

Zoe froze.

‘Hey, Zoe? What . . . ?’

Suddenly a smell of incense, lavender and goat’s cheese entered their nostrils via the letter box and weaved its way into their brains and lit a little bulb in the darkness.

This time, Nana Diana wasn’t alone. Under the wide brim of her large green hat, as if it were a live mink resting on her neck, she wore a long-haired, snow-white cat. In the animal’s right ear a deep-blue stud glistened as if the creature had a third eye.

‘Hello!’ Nana Diana greeted them happily. ‘How you girls have grown! I’m not intruding, am I?’

‘Er . . . no, but our mother and father are . . . ?’

‘I know, my Zoe,’ Nana smiled.

The triplets exchanged a confused glance.

‘May I come in?’

‘Er . . . yes, of course!’

‘Oops, it’s so dark in here,’ Nana noticed.

‘The fuses blew again,’ Chloe said.

‘Oh, I see,’ Nana said. ‘Well, it’s not that bad. I think I should have a candle somewhere in my bag.’ As soon as she entered the living room, the cat took a graceful leap onto the shabby sofa. Nana put her bag down, rummaged around in it for a while and then pulled out a big, oddly shaped candle. There were little pieces of herb in the wax. Nana lit a match and let the little flame lick the taper. The flame went wild and produced a remarkable light. The triplets were intrigued by the fanciful, ghostlike shadows that were dancing menacingly on the walls and the ceiling.

‘Lak binam, Notus,’ Nana said.

‘What?’ Zoe asked.

‘I asked the flame to burn a little lower,’ Nana replied.

The triplets gave each other another puzzled look. The twinkling flame burnt lower and more calmly, wiggled back and forth a little and eventually burnt constantly and steadily. A pleasant herbal aroma filled the living room. Nana sat down on the sofa next to her cat. The animal nestled on her lap.

‘Noel,’ Nana spoke softly.

‘He’s slee –’

The door of the living room opened. Noel came in, beaming. ‘Nana!’ he yelled enthusiastically. He threw his arms round her neck and gave her a kiss on her forehead. Right on the small blue tattooed butterfly. He stroked the cat and looked deep into its eyes. ‘Hello, Iris,’ he said.

‘Miaooww,’ the cat said.

Nana Diana rested her hands on Noel’s shoulders.

‘Let me take a good look at you.’ She smiled proudly. ‘Asa onum, Notus.’

The candle flared up again. Noel’s long, blond curls resembled tinsel on a Christmas tree. His eyes were sparkling.

‘You look absolutely glorious on your birthday.’ The proud smile was still on her face.

‘And that’s how it should be.’

She gave him three kisses. Zoe, Joey and Chloe were standing there a little uncomfortably. ‘I believe you three still have something for me.’

The three sisters gave each other a shy glance. They didn’t know how to behave, played with their T-shirts and nervously chewed on their necklaces. It was not that they didn’t want to, but for some reason they couldn’t get their lips to kiss. They thought kissing was so extremely unusual. So entirely different from threading earthworms on barbed wire, for example. Or drowning rats, shaving hamsters, blowing up frogs or painting little boy scouts red.

Nana stared long and deeply into their eyes. But didn’t say a thing. Then she pulled a necklace from the pocket of her wide cloak and draped it around the birthday boy’s neck. Just as she had done with the triplets three years before.

‘Wonderful,’ Nana said and smiled her approval. ‘I have something else . . .’

She handed Noel a present. Little remained of the cute wrapping paper and the golden bow.

‘Oooh, a doll! A boy doll! Did you make it yourself, Nana?’ Noel asked.

Nana nodded. The flame of the candle was flickering in her eyes. And in the eyes of the boy doll. ‘Isn’t it pretty, Oey?’

Noel called each of his three big sisters, ‘Oey’. Not only was it easier for him, it also prevented misunderstandings. The girls nodded. Truth be told, they thought dolls were dull. Once they had snatched one from a girl in their class. One of those Barbie dolls. First, they had reshaped her small feet with a pencil sharpener, then burnt off her long hair, pierced her eyes with two pins and finally they had punctured their victim with the sharp point of a compass.

‘Acupuncture is good for you,’ Zoe had smirked.

But now they wouldn’t touch Nana’s doll with a ten-foot pole. No, this doll was a little eerie. It was as if they recognised something in the deep, ink-black, pearl eyes. ‘And this is for you girls,’ they heard Nana say.

My diary, it said in golden flourishes on the cover of each of the three notebooks. ‘You can write in them every day,’ Nana said. A wave of party music swept through the living room. The sound of roaring laughter. Nana listened with pricked-up ears.

‘What on earth is that?’ she asked.

‘A Christmas party at the neighbour’s,’ Zoe responded.

‘Yes,’ Joey nodded. ‘Every party it’s the same old song. As soon as that idiot is drunk, he has to show off.’

‘Then that macho dives into his swimming pool completely starkers. Even when it is freezing. He considers it his duty as chairman of the winter swimming club.’

‘I see,’ Nana said. The hubbub became even louder. Someone shouted something. Some women were howling with laughter.

‘Fortunately it’s not that cold tonight,’ Nana said.

‘I still hope he catches pneumonia,’ Zoe snarled.

Nana had her eyes wide open.

‘Me too,’ Joey agreed ardently. ‘When it was sweltering hot last summer, that fat polar bear didn’t allow us to take a dive in his pool.’

‘Only because one day we . . .’

‘A long time ago!’

‘ . . . threw a rotten egg . . . ’

‘Three, actually. . . ’

‘ . . . through his bedroom window.’ Joey started laughing. ‘Haha! Do you remember how we put the partly cut extension cord of his electric lawn mower in his swimming pool?’

‘You should have seen him go when we plugged it in! I bet that polar bear had never been so hot before!’

‘It’s a pity the fuses blew so quickly.’

‘Yes, I’m sure he would have had to stay in hospital longer than three weeks if they hadn’t.’

‘We could have been swimming in peace in that pool for the rest of the holidays.’

Nana Diana shook her head. Iris got off her lap. Noel immediately took its place, with his doll clasped firmly in his arms. The noise at the polar neighbour’s had faded away. Everything was quiet again in the empty living room.

‘Don’t you have a Christmas tree?’ Nana wondered, looking around.

‘No,’ Zoe replied. ‘Mom thinks it’s commercial and superstitious.’

‘That’s a pity,’ Nana sighed. ‘One of those Tree Spirits could definitely lighten up the place.’

‘Tree . . . spirits?’ the triplets asked simultaneously.

‘Definitely,’ Nana nodded. ‘And it keeps the Evil Forces out too.’

The triplets stood there, completely amazed.

‘Unfortunately, people don’t believe in tree spirits any more these days,’ Nana said, disappointed.

‘You believe in them, don’t you, Nana?’

‘Are you really psychic, Nana?’

‘Mommy and Daddy say you’re a witch.’

There was a deathly silence. Iris rearranged herself around Nana’s neck and started licking her snow-white fur indifferently.

‘Is that what they say?’ Nana smiled mysteriously. ‘Well, I am who I am.’

She looked the triplets straight in the face. Her big, mischievous, deep-blue eyes were sparkling.

‘Listen,’ she said, ‘let me tell you a story.’

‘Yippee!’ the birthday boy cheered.

‘But first I have a little surprise for the four of you.’ She pulled a large tin box out of her shoulder bag. ‘Watch out . . . One, two . . . three!’

She opened the lid. The delicious smell of cinnamon came out of the box. ‘Star cookies!’ Nana shouted. ‘Home-made! Help yourselves!’

‘What are those tiny silver dots on the cookies?’ Zoe asked.

‘Poppy seeds,’ Nana replied. ‘As soon as you fall asleep, they will pop and sparkle in your tummy.’

‘Really?’

‘Oh, yes,’ Nana assured them.

‘Cool!’

Not a single scrap was left in the entire tin box.

‘Great,’ Nana smiled, pleased.

‘And now the story, Nana!’ Noel gloated. He licked the remaining poppy seeds off his chin and snuggled up to her.

10. The Fire

Zoe, Joey and Chloe were swept away by Nana’s voice, they were swimming around in her story, softly drifting up and down, as if they were floating on an endless sea of clouds. Thousands of stars were twinkling all around them. Like sparkling poppy seeds. Just as Nana had said . . .

But suddenly, an enormous black shadow slid over the girls. A jet-black cloud blotted out the moon and the stars. It was pitch-dark. The darkness forced its way through the girls’ bodies. A stinging pain seized their throats . . . Frantically they gasped for breath. The room was filled with suffocating smoke. The three of them sprung to their feet at the exact same moment. Without hesitation they jumped out of their bed. When they opened the attic’s door, they saw towering flames blaze eagerly up the stairs. The entire ground floor was on fire. The heat was unbearable.

‘Go back!’ Zoe shouted. She locked the door again.

‘Watch out!’ Joey warned her just in time.

A piece of the roof came tumbling down.

‘Come here! Help me!’ Chloe shouted. ‘Open the window! Quickly!’

She pulled the mattress off the bed and heaved it to the attic window. It was very hard for them to push the weighty thing outside. A heavy rafter crashed down and smashed their bed.

‘Jump!’ Zoe commanded.

Not particularly elegantly, they landed on the mattress and rolled over the grass. Dazed, they stood up.

The flames were now bursting out of the windows. The girls tried to get as far away from the sheet of flames as possible. All of a sudden they stopped.

‘Noel and Nana!’ Zoe screamed. ‘We have to . . .’

But that was all she could utter before they heard a terrible explosion in the background. The girls were blown a couple of yards back. Fragments of the house whizzed past their ears. Walls fell over as if they were made of gingerbread. The whole roof collapsed with a bang. The triplets’ hands were tied. In the meantime, groups of morbidly curious people sprang up everywhere like mushrooms and hurried to the scene of the disaster.

‘Noel and Nana are still inside!’ Joey cried out.

But no one listened. Everybody was just standing there, paralysed, watching the greedy flames devour everything around them. The triplets ran into the streets, looking for help. They were nearly knocked down by the fire engine, which stopped right in front of them with screeching tyres and wailing sirens. Two nurses jumped out of the ambulance that followed. They immediately took care of the three girls.

‘Noel and Nana are still inside!’ the triplets tried to scream through the infernal noise.

‘Hush, now,’ the nurse tried to calm them.

‘But . . .’

Their words got caught up in their tongues. Suddenly it was quiet. Noel appeared, soaking wet, on the grass verge of the polar neighbour. The explosion must have thrown the little boy out of the window, through the elderberry bush and catapulted him into the neighbour’s swimming pool.

‘Noel!!!’ the triplets called his name with one voice.

But their brother didn't show any reaction. He was just standing there, staring in front of him with a dazed look on his face, holding the equally soaked rag doll tightly in his arms. The fire had singed the doll's woollen hair and left it with little black curls. Half of its face was badly burnt. The doll's mouth was twisted into a wicked grin. One of the black pearl eyes was missing. The other one had a dull look. A glaring contrast with the necklace around Noel's neck. It was sparkling in the bright light of the fire engine. Only then did the triplets notice that they had lost their necklaces. They stared at each other. All three of them had nasty red scars in their necks. As if someone had ripped the necklaces off by force. They swallowed and felt that stinging pain that had seized their throats right before they had woken up.

'Nana!' Chloe cried out. 'Someone has to get Nana out of there!'

'Shhh . . . don't worry,' the nurse tried to calm her down. 'They will take care of it. Come with me . . .'

She steered the traumatised girls through the curious crowd towards the ambulance, while one of the doctors carried Noel. Before the triplets had even realised what was happening, the ambulance had made its way through the masses and was heading towards the hospital.

'Nana! Nana! Nanaaaaaaaaaa!!!'

They were banging on the window like maniacs.

'Stop! Let us go!'

'The firemen will rescue your Nana,' the nurse comforted them. But the fire was inextinguishable. The firemen were powerless. The whole house burnt down. All that was left was a pile of coal-black bricks, a lot of dust and ash and the triplets' burnt diaries.

The cause of the fire became the subject of a heated debate. An insurance expert had found a melted fuse and brass wires among the smouldering remains and concluded that the ancient switchbox had caused a short circuit. Someone else had discovered traces of a candle and blamed the children for playing with fire. But they couldn't find sufficient evidence for any of the explanations. And so the cause of the fire was classified as 'unknown'.

‘In my twenty-three years with the fire department, I have never seen such a raging fire,’ the chief fire officer declared afterwards. ‘Whatever the cause, I still think it is a very curious case.’

Because the Treacles could no longer afford to rent a house, they moved to a vacated hovel on the poor side of the village. The local boy scouts organised a charity drive on behalf of the deeply afflicted family. Cheerily they collected a bunch of old furniture, threadbare clothes, dented pans, leaking kettles and some more useless rubbish from sympathetic villagers. The kind-hearted, child-friendly man of the toy shop donated a big box filled with board games, which the triplets instantly kicked around the house.

Ever since the fire, the triplets had been completely out of hand. Every day they became more violent. And very hot-tempered. The annoying scars in their necks didn’t want to heal. If things didn’t go their way, they became terribly angry. Then their eyes would shoot fire and everyone who ventured near them had to pay. Nothing and no one could calm them down.

Except for Noel. Every time he stared at them with those big blue eyes, his piercing look gave the triplets a funny feeling. And that wasn’t quite the whole story. Their little brother had not said a word since his infamous birthday night. The boy had stopped playing. All he did was sit quietly in a corner with glazed eyes and with the rag doll on his lap.

‘Give him three of these pills daily. Next please.’

‘Unusually aggressive behaviour is typical for eight to nine-year-olds,’ the fresh-out-of-university child psychologist stated. ‘And about the boy: I don’t see any problem there either. His behaviour is probably caused by the trauma. Both cases will resolve themselves in time.’

But nothing resolved itself in time. On the contrary, the triplets were at the height of their evil behaviour, and Noel slowly drifted further and further away.

‘He is grieving over Nana,’ Zoe said snappily.

But Doctor Nuts considered it utter nonsense when he found out the boy had never even known his grandmother.

‘He just needs time to deal with everything,’ the psychiatrist concluded. ‘He’ll be back to normal again.’

‘Normal? What do you mean?’ Mother Treacle asked. ‘He has never been normal.’

‘I mean, like before the fire, madam,’ the doctor clarified. ‘Just be patient. Everything will work itself out.’

Nothing worked itself out. Three and a half years later nothing had changed.

Part 2

1. Monday, June 19

Rrrringg . . . rrringg . . . rrrinngg . . .

The brand-new alarm clock Mother and Father Treacle had won at poker last night kept on ringing.

Rrringg . . . rrringg . . . Zoe turned around. Half asleep, she managed to dig up her catapult and a lost marble from under the bed. Rrringg . . .

She opened one eye, aimed at the infuriating noisemaker for about half a second and with a single shot smashed it to pieces.

‘Oohaah,’ Joey yawned. ‘Good shot, sister.’

‘I hate Mondays,’ Chloe groaned.

They yawned simultaneously. They had only just gone to bed. They had been hanging around the graveyard the whole night again.

‘I hate getting up in the mornings,’ Joey growled.

‘If I ever meet the piss bucket who invented school, I will make mincemeat out of him,’ Zoe said peevishly.

‘And I will personally serve him to the dog,’ Joey added.

‘Poor Catshoo,’ Chloe chuckled.

Catshoo was the old street dog Father Treacle had brought home a while ago. Or rather, the dog had followed him home and had stayed with them ever since. The animal was all skin and bones and was covered in fleas from head to tail. Especially his right side was severely infested. He couldn’t scratch his right side because of his crippled leg. Zoe had thrown him out of the roof gutter as the hostile parachutist, with only a broken umbrella wrapped around his tail the day they were playing war games.

‘What if we just stayed in bed today?’ Joey suggested temptingly. ‘For the whoooole day.’

Zoe shook her head. ‘No, Joey,’ she said. ‘You know we can’t do that. Miss Pine will inform the school inspector if we play truant one more day.’

‘And then they will take us to an institution for badly behaved children.’ Joey angrily kicked the back of the very narrow bed.

‘That’s true,’ she admitted. ‘And I don’t want to grant the Pineapple and the Hedgehog that favour!’

The surname of their teacher was Pine, hence the nickname. And also because of the striking resemblance between Miss Pine and the exotic fruit, probably caused by the bunch of hair she wore piled up on top of her head. The Hedgehog was the headmaster of the school.

‘Chin up, sisters!’ Zoe comforted them. ‘The summer holiday starts next week.’

She was the first one to jump out of bed and get dressed. Chloe followed her lead. Joey used the advantage of a vacated bed to have a good stretch.

‘Aaah.’ She curled up completely. ‘I want a bed for my birthday, just for me.’

‘Don’t get your hopes up,’ Zoe said. ‘Even if Mom and Dad do remember our birthday this year, the chance of our getting any gift at all, is still one in three billion.’

‘You’re right,’ Chloe agreed. ‘We don’t even have the money to pay the bills at the grocer’s.’

‘Oh, I know!’ Joey said snappily. ‘But I can dream about it, can’t I?’

‘No, not now, Joey,’ Zoe said. ‘You can dream about it later, in class. Come on, get out of bed! Or did you forget it’s Monday today?’

‘Which means it is your turn to make sandwiches,’ Chloe refreshed the late-riser’s memory.

‘Oh, noo . . .’ the victim moaned.

‘And hurry up a bit!’ Zoe poked her and gave her a firm smack on her behind.

‘Ouch, my bum!’ she screamed. She bobbed up and lay down on her back again, watching the mouldy ceiling.

‘It’s not fair,’ she grumbled with a disgruntled look on her face. ‘Some people have it all, and we don’t have so much as a brass farthing. We were born into the wrong family. I wish I had rich parents like Peter Pimple Pan’s. Apparently he has cupboards filled with toys and we don’t even get a sweetie on our birthday.’

‘Don’t despair, Joey,’ Chloe said. ‘Maybe we’ll win the Midsummer Birthday Competition.’

‘Midsummer Birthday Competition? Did you fill in one of those forms and sent our picture to the local newspaper?’ Zoe asked, surprised.

‘Yes,’ Chloe nodded. ‘You never know.’

‘Where did you get a picture of the three of us together?’ Joey asked.

‘Oh, I just cut us out of the class photo.’

‘Out of the class photo? Hahaha! Those idiots at the newspaper will give themselves a triple hernia laughing, when they see us pull those ugly faces!’

‘Come on, Joey! We’re going to be late!’

‘So what?’

‘So . . . institution!’

‘Blast . . . I hate Mondays!’

The super-small kitchen was – as usual after the weekend – choc-a-block with piles of dirty dishes, sticky pans, greasy cutlery and empty tins. The family help, who had imagined that her job would be a lot more pleasant when she first started out, probably also hated Mondays. Joey managed to scrape a couple of forgotten rashers of bacon and three whole eggs together. She took the least dirty pan out of the sink, fried her findings and made some sandwiches. The smell of the fried bacon woke up Catshoo. The old dog came out of his flea-infested basket, breathing heavily. He dragged his bony body to the kitchen with difficulty and drooled all over Joey’s foot.

‘Woof,’ the unfortunate skydiver begged.

‘Here! Catshoo, catch!’ Joey said.

She threw the hungry animal a boiling hot piece of bacon. The dog snapped at it and burnt his mouth. Squealing, he hopped to the bucket in which Father Treacle had had his three-monthly foot bath and drank like crazy from the black broth.

Then Joey saw a little kitten run across the garden path. In double-quick time, she looked for a saucer and milk. *Hee-hee, this could be entertaining*, she thought.

Thirty seconds later, the little kitten squirmed in vain in Joey’s hands.

‘Hey, where did that thing come from?’ Chloe asked, when Joey entered the kitchen with her catch of the day.

‘Let me see!’ Zoe shouted. ‘Ha, what a lucky coincidence! That’s the sleazeball that scratched me last week when I tied an empty tin around its tail. Get a nail clipper, Chloe. We should give this creature a little make-over.’

Frightened, the kitten started shrieking.

‘I can’t find a nail clipper,’ Chloe said. ‘But these wire-cutters should do the trick. You hold on to its paws, then I will cut . . .’

The door of the living room opened.

‘Er . . . hello, Noel,’ Zoe greeted him.

‘Good morning, little brother.’

Chloe didn’t say a thing, but quickly dropped the cutters in the stacked sink.

‘Miaow . . .’ the kitten complained.

‘Cute little thing, hey, Noel?’ Zoe grinned.

‘We were just making sure Catshoo didn’t run after the poor little sweetheart,’ Joey said. She gave the dog a nasty look while he rubbed himself indifferently against the table legs.

‘I fed it some milk outside. The little creature was starving.’ The kitten looked Noel straight in the eyes. The boy responded to the look by smiling and holding out his arms. Joey gave him the kitten.

‘I believe it is time to go to school,’ she said.

‘Goodness gracious, we’re going to be late!’

‘See you tonight, Noel!’

Joey quickly wrapped the sandwiches in an old paper bag and hurried after her sisters. Relieved, the kitten began to purr and nestled into Noel’s neck as if it had known the boy for years.

2. The Greenfinch

A nervous shiver ran down Miss Pine’s spine when she saw her three identical students enter the classroom. The girls had a clouded countenance. The triplets hated Mondays and they absolutely detested getting a scolding. And they felt as if they were given one every time Noel looked at them with that weird expression he had given them earlier. And they had absolutely no defence against it. To crown it all, on their way to school

they didn't get the chance to push a pupil into a ditch or into thorn bushes, trip someone up or bang a marble against someone's noodle. Accordingly, they were in a very foul mood.

'Sit down,' Miss Pine said.

Luckily, Zoe had managed to put a drawing pin on the seat of the boy in front of her.

'Aah!' the victim cried. 'Miss, it's the triplets again!'

The teacher fixed her gaze on Zoe. But she couldn't maintain it for very long.

'Miss, Joey spat in my neck!' a boy with a spotty face yelled.

'Keep your spotty mouth shut, Peter Pimple Pan,' Joey hissed.

'Miss! Miss!! Chloe emptied glue over my new trousers!' Upset, the boy pointed at his white tennis shorts.

'I didn't do it on purpose, Miss,' Chloe said with a wicked sneer. 'I actually aimed for his goaty legs.'

Miss Pine tried to stay calm. After all, that's what the doctor had told her to do. The man had refused to prescribe his edgy patient even stronger pills. In fact, she had been well over the allowed dose since Easter. The teacher knew perfectly well her chances of a heart attack were significantly higher if she didn't stay calm. And so, she pierced her nails deep into the wooden desk, pressed her lips together in a very fine line and took a deep breath.

'Listen.' She appeared undisturbed while she reminded herself that this horrible school year was nearly over. 'I am sick and tired of your bullying practices, Zoe, Joey and Chloe Treacle. I have often turned a blind eye this year . . .'

Zoe stretched an elastic band between her fingers and shot a U-shaped piece of metal in the direction of the telltale. She missed him by a hair's breadth. The projectile smashed the metric measuring cup and rebounded on the eye of the panda on the *Respect Animals* poster.

'Now, that's it!' Miss Pine continued. 'If you interrupt the class one more time, then . . .'

Joey carved *I hate school* into her desk with the tip of her pocketknife.

' . . . you are not joining us on the school trip to the zoo tomorrow! And I am serious!'

Chloe dropped the pencil with its razor-sharp point with which she had been prodding the class canary onto the floor. The triplets gave each other a surprised glance. Of course!

Tomorrow was the school trip! They had forgotten about it completely. To the zoo, of all places! Their dark little faces lightened up. The animals in the zoo were a lot more fun than kittens and canaries.

‘Did I make myself clear?!’ Miss Pine gritted her teeth. By now she bore more resemblance to a red pepper than a pineapple.

‘Are we just visiting the zoo, Miss?’ a girl with brown hair and cute freckles asked.

‘No, of course not, Hannah. Before lunch we will also go to the Ethnological Museum.’

‘Bleugh! A museum!’ Zoe said, revolted.

‘I am sure it will be a very interesting visit,’ Miss Pine assured them. ‘There is lots to see.’ She forced a smile in the direction of the triplets. ‘Among other things, there are some shrunken human heads and a couple of very rare musical instruments made from the intestines of children.’

‘Of children?’ the class shouted, horrified.

‘Phoo!’ Joey puffed. ‘The Pineapple is just making that up to please us.’

‘Are we also stopping at a theme park, Miss?’ a dapper little chap asked hopefully.

‘Yes, on the way back.’

‘Yippeeeee!’ the class cheered.

‘Theme parks are stupid,’ Zoe snarled.

‘But you have to remember, we travel to learn!’ Miss Pine calmed the exhilarated group.

‘On this piece of paper you will find some things you should pay attention to during the school trip. Peter, will you please pass these papers round?’

School trip of June 20: Ethnological Museum and Zoo, it said at the top of the paper.

‘Joey Treacle, will you read the first part?’

Joey pretended not to have heard, and indifferently pierced holes through all the o’s on the paper.

‘Can I read, Miss?’ a little boy with big glasses asked.

Suddenly a bird flew through the open window into the classroom. The little creature fluttered around a little dazedly and eventually landed on the terrestrial globe, much to the merriment of the pupils. Even Miss Pine was watching amusedly as the unexpected visitor hopped over the North Pole with its tiny feet. The yellow-green bird reminded her of Tweet, the budgie with whom she shared her modest but cosy little house. The tiny

feet of the greenfinch seemed to get too cold, because it jumped up, chirped nervously, skimmed over the giggling children's heads, only to land on the bookcase.

Wham! A marble hit the near-extinct little bird squarely on the head. Nearly everyone jumped out of their skins. The poor little creature tumbled to the floor, lifeless.

'There we go,' Zoe nodded, satisfied. 'He's a dead pigeon.' She put the catapult away in the back pocket of her jeans. Peter, the boy with the pimples, jumped up in fury.

'Murderer!' he called at the top of his voice. 'Why . . . ow!' Joey stuck the point of her pocketknife into her protesting schoolmate's bottom.

'Shall I pierce the "o" of your bottom too, Peter Pimple?' she hissed.

The boy sat down quickly. Miss Pine was shaking. She groped about in the top drawer of her desk, ignored all warnings of her doctor and took three red pills with little skulls on them. She took them all at once.

'Phhieuww,' Chloe whistled in admiration. 'And without water!'

'The creature was interrupting the class, Miss,' Zoe smoothed over the situation. 'Wasn't it?'

'Yes, it was,' Joey agreed.

'Weren't we talking about the school trip?' Chloe reminded the class.

The teacher's nostrils were as white as chalk. In a flash, she saw the Treacle triplets' heads hanging from a tree behind her closed eyelids.

'Come on, Alexander!' Zoe shouted. 'You wanted to read so badly, didn't you?'

The little boy gave the deathly pale teacher a questioning look. She nodded briefly.

'School Trip of June 20th: Ethnological Museum and Zoo. Things we have to keep in mind.'

'Chloe Treacle,' Miss Pine suddenly yelled uncontrollably, 'come out from under your desk!'

'I just dropped my pen, Miss,' Chloe lied.

She giggled secretively behind her right hand. In her left hand, she held the dead greenfinch.

'Continue, Alexander.'

But the bell announced the morning break.

3. On Kidnappers and Other Dangerous Animals

‘Things we have to keep in mind,’ Alexander resumed after the break.

‘Listen very carefully!’ Miss Pine stressed. ‘What follows is very important!’

‘We stay together in one group in the museum as well as in the zoo. No one wanders around on his own . . .’

‘How about groups of three?’ Chloe asked.

‘No! No groups of three either!’ Miss Pine snapped.

‘In the zoo we keep a proper distance from the cages,’ Alexander continued.

‘Why is that?!’ Zoe protested. ‘I’m sure those animals can handle us.’

‘We keep our distance, I say!’

‘Phoo,’ Joey hissed gloomily. ‘Now we won’t even get the chance to pet those sweet crows.’

‘In the museum we don’t touch anything.’

‘How stupid! So we can’t even play those amazing instruments!’ Chloe grunted.

‘In the theme park we do not carry out daredevil feats, we do not stuff ourselves with sweets and ice cream and we definitely do not talk to strangers!’

‘My mother never wants me to talk to strangers either,’ Peter said. ‘She thinks kidnappers are everywhere.’

‘My father thinks so too,’ a girl with big, sweet eyes said. ‘He always reads those stories in the newspaper. Apparently, a kidnapper tried to grab two girls yesterday. Luckily, they managed to escape. My mother says that all kidnappers are . . . er . . . zykopats. Or something like that.’

‘Psychopaths,’ Miss Pine corrected her.

‘What is a psychopath, Miss?’

‘Psychopaths are mentally ill people, lunatics.’

‘Brr,’ Hannah shivered. ‘Who kidnaps little children?’

‘Makers of musical instruments,’ Zoe sneered.

‘That is not funny at all, Zoe Treacle,’ Miss Pine reprimanded her. ‘You should be really careful for kidnappers, you know.’

‘Yes, in the big cities, maybe. But not here in this little town.’

‘Too bad,’ Joey said. ‘I wouldn’t mind running into one at night. At the graveyard, preferably.’ She pushed her pocketknife deep into the wooden school desk.

‘Ugh! How scary,’ Hannah shivered.

‘For that poor guy,’ the girl next to Hannah sniggered quietly. Sadly, just a little too loudly.

‘I heard that, Maggie Baker,’ Chloe said coldly. The girl froze instantly.

‘Quiet!’ Miss Pine shouted.

‘Finally, we make sure we reach the exit early enough, so we can go home on time.’

‘Well done, Alexander. Hannah, will you read the next part?’

‘As we learnt in the natural history classes, there are two types of animals: the vertebrate and the invertebrate animals. In the first group, we find mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians. In the group of the invertebrate animals . . .’

The triplets yawned at the same time. Their eyes closed. Softly they dozed off. Miss Pine could breathe easily again. She gestured for Hannah to read quietly. Two minutes later, the triplets fell asleep. They couldn’t give a rat’s ass whether a crocodile was a reptile or an amphibian. Or exactly how heavy a male gorilla was. Or how many tons of meat a lion devours in one meal. Those animals became interesting only when someone let them out of their cages. Or if one of the teacher’s pets accidentally fell into the lion’s den. Or if . . . The three girls gently drifted off and entered the Land of Dreams. There, they experienced the school trip of a lifetime, where all the kids in their class were chased by starving wild animals. And afterwards, they all fell into the hands of a kidnapper, who shrank their heads and converted them into softly ruffling drums.

4. Greenfinch Soup à la Treacle

The ringing bell announced the lunch break and woke the triplets up. Zoe had already grasped her catapult.

‘Hmmm . . . I had a wonderful dream,’ Joey groaned in an afterglow.

‘Me too,’ Chloe said. ‘Well, I’m definitely starving now.’

‘I hope the soup is edible for a change.’ Zoe pointed at the pictures on the blackboard. One of the pictures portrayed a wooden statue that was covered with hammered-in nails.

‘I hope we didn’t miss anything exciting,’ Chloe said.

‘Oh well, we’ll see everything tomorrow in the museum,’ Joey said.

The class emptied. Chloe couldn’t wait to get down to the canteen, which was very unusual for her. Joey took her lunchbox out of her school bag and was the last to leave the classroom and head for the canteen.

‘Ugh! The same tasteless gunge again,’ Zoe said, revolted, when they filled up her bowl.

‘Why were you in such a hurry, Chloe? Not because of this delightful soup, I presume?’

‘Oh, yes,’ Chloe smirked. ‘Wait and see.’ Her eyes were sparkling.

‘Come on, fill me in,’ Zoe whispered. Chloe looked sideways at Miss Pine, who supervised the canteen on Mondays. ‘I didn’t do anything special, really,’ she sniggered.

‘Just spiced up Maggie Baker’s soup a litt –’

‘Whaaaaa!’

The screech reverberated off the four bare walls of the canteen. A chair slammed against the floor. Everyone stuck out their necks to see who the hysterically screaming girl was. Maggie’s white T-shirt was covered in green soup. She had spat the entire contents of her mouth onto the floor and was staring in utter horror at the legs of the very dead greenfinch that seemed to wave at her from her soup bowl with a sneer.

‘Ugh! There’s a sparrow in Maggie’s soup!’ someone shouted.

‘A greenfinch,’ Chloe corrected.

The whole canteen let out a cry of revulsion. Two pupils, who had already finished their soup, dashed outside with ballooning cheeks and compressed lips. One of them managed to reach the dustbin just in time.

‘We think the soup is absolutely delicious today!’ the triplets shouted in unison. And to prove their point they emptied their bowls with relish in a single gulp, which caused another wave of revulsion and another four students to rush to the dustbins.

The triplets raised their bowls in triumph. ‘Fill us up!’ they cried out loudly.

Two tables further down, a real spitfire emptied his bird soup on the table in protest. His example was soon followed. Only three seconds later all the tables were dripping with soup.

‘Haha!’ Zoe gave the thumbs-up sign. ‘You’ve made a nice mess, Chloe.’

‘You can say that again, sister,’ Joey smirked. ‘Your pranks are always so tasteful!’

The three sisters rolled with laughter, while the other kids slowly but surely started tapping their bowls on the table. Going louder and faster.

‘Silence!’ Miss Pine shouted. ‘Silence!’

But no one listened. On the contrary. ‘We want soup with meatballs, not with birds!’ the little spitfire cried out.

‘Meatballs! Meatballs! Meatballs!’ everyone was chanting now.

Desperately, Miss Pine covered her ears with her hands. Her nerves, already challenged in the morning, gave up during lunchtime. Shaking over her entire body, the poor woman sank down into a chair. She was accustomed to a lot of mischief from the demonic Treacle sisters, but this time they had really touched a nerve. First, everything in front of her eyes turned green. Then, pitch-black.

5. Detention

‘I should send you straight to an institution!’ the headmaster was yelling. ‘Lifelong!’

The little hairs on his finely trimmed moustache bristled up alarmingly, as they always did when he got wound up. Infuriated, the man paced up and down the room. Most pupils usually trembled with fear when they were called onto the Hedgehog’s carpet. Not because he always barked at his victims from an unsafe distance, but because he had a terrible garlic breath.

The triplets, though, were sitting there quite reposed, with tightly pinched noses. The Hedgehog’s heated sermon left them completely unmoved. The stiff prickles on the headmaster’s upper lip only reminded them of the porcupine they had recently shoved into the mayor’s letterbox during one of their nightly escapades.

‘Do you realise Miss Pine has had the patience of a saint with the three of you all year! The poor woman is completely devastated. She . . . What are you laughing at?’

‘Ing amng notng laughinggg, sirng,’ Zoe responded with her nose still tightly pinched.

‘Ing amng strugglimggg to breathnnnggg.’ The Headmaster’s head came even closer now. His set of false teeth was chattering menacingly and his eyes were narrowed.

‘You will spend the whole afternoon in my office writing your punishment, sitting at that little table over there!’

In the meantime, Joey had casually picked the pellets out of her nose and flicked one of them against the window.

‘And tomorrow too!’

‘Tomorrow too?! But it’s the school trip tomorrow!’ The triplets jumped up at the same time.

‘Not for you!’ the headmaster barked back. ‘Miss Pine told me she had warned you about this.’

‘That is not fair!’ Joey protested strongly. She banged her fists on the mahogany desk. The vase with flowers fell over. Fortunately, there was hardly any water left in it.

‘Sit down!’ the headmaster shouted.

‘I am informing the school inspector!’ Chloe threatened.

The Hedgehog pressed his nose against hers. ‘The telephone is right there. I am sure the man will be very pleased to hear your squeaky voice in his shrivelled ear.’

Chloe had no comeback. She cringed back in her seat. The Hedgehog used the opportunity to shove a stack of blank papers into the triplets’ hands.

‘Come on!’ he ordered. ‘Each of you will write all the multiplication tables twenty-five times! And write them down neatly! If not . . . you’ll do it again!’

The telephone rang. ‘Hello. Headmaster Collins. Yes . . . right now? Okay, I’m on my way.’

‘May I please go to the bathroom first?’ Zoe asked. ‘It’s really urgent.’ She squeezed her knees together tightly and looked squint-eyed.

‘Yes, I have to go too,’ Joey said.

‘Me too . . .’

‘No, that is absolutely out of the question! You stay here. I know your little tricks.’ He grabbed his keys from the pocket of his raincoat, which was hanging on a hook by the door, and left his office.

‘But sir! I really have to go!’ Zoe tried again. The Hedgehog popped his head back in.

‘And don’t you get up to anything. I will be right back.’ He closed the door behind him.

Zoe threw the blank papers into the air and kicked the litter basket furiously. The plastic thing hit the raincoat at the door. A gilded fountain pen fell on the floor.

‘Do you think the Hog really means it?’ Joey wondered out loud.

‘I’m afraid so,’ Chloe nodded.

Zoe picked up the fountain pen, screwed off the lid and aimed the expensive dart at the headmaster’s leather chair. Joey took the pen out and planted it in the desk. Zoe removed the cartridge and squirted all the ink into the pocket of the raincoat before putting the ruined pen back where she had found it.

‘Who does the Hedgehog think he is?’ Zoe snorted. ‘We are going on the school trip, and that’s the end of it!’

‘I’m afraid we are going to have to change our strategy then,’ Joey sighed.

The triplets looked at each other. They sneered conspiratorially.

‘Well, then that’s what we will do,’ Chloe decided.

Ten minutes later Headmaster Collins opened the door to his office with an anxiously beating heart. He feared the worst. But surprisingly, he found the triplets diligently scribbling away. The man couldn’t believe his eyes.

‘Ahem . . .’ he coughed haughtily. ‘Very well.’

He took his seat behind his desk. *This is absolutely unbelievable!* he cheered to himself happily. He knotted his floral tie a little more firmly, gave the defaulters a stern look and rolled his chair back under his desk. *They have even straightened the vase with flowers. That takes the biscuit!* Very satisfied with himself, he leaned backwards.

‘Headmaster?’

‘Yes?’

‘We are really sorry about what happened in the canteen.’

‘We would like to make up for it.’

‘And apologise to Miss Pine.’

The headmaster was utterly flabbergasted. ‘Well . . . it’s a little too late for that,’ he said.

‘If we do, can we go on the school trip tomorrow?’

‘Can we?’ Joey sucked up.

‘Please, sir . . .’ Chloe said in the silkiest tones.

Headmaster Collins smoothed down the little hairs of his moustache and looked at the girls.

‘I will leave that decision up to Miss Pine,’ he said. ‘I will let you . . . on condition that you have finished writing your punishment.’

‘Yes, sir,’ Zoe promised him.

‘Absolutely, sir,’ Joey assured him.

Up your arse, silly Headgehog! Chloe thought. She gave the man her most sugary smile and got back to work. *Discipline . . .* the headmaster thought to himself, very pleased with his approach. *That is what these layabouts need. Iron discipline! Tough love! Maybe Miss Pine has treated them too nicely.* He opened a window, but the stale smell still lingered in his office. Zoe yawned. Joey looked drowsily in front of her. Chloe rubbed the sleep out of her eyes.

‘If I were you, I would continue with the work,’ the headmaster warned them, ‘otherwise you will never get it finished.’

‘Ooohaah,’ Zoe yawned with her mouth wide open. ‘Only for a while.’ She rested her head on the table.

Chloe followed her example. ‘We still have all night,’ she said.

Headmaster Collins waited until he heard the triplets snoring before he carefully dialled a number on the telephone. ‘Miss Pine, it’s the headmaster. And? How are you feeling? Good. Listen here. You won’t believe your ears!’

The triplets sneakily poked each other, gave each other a wink and then really fell into a deep sleep. At five past four the school bell woke them up.

‘Miss Pine is expecting you tonight,’ the headmaster said.

‘And I expect your punishment in my office tomorrow morning. Come on, off you go. Let this be a good lesson!’

‘Yes, sir,’ Zoe said.

‘See you tomorrow, sir,’ Joey greeted him.

‘Get syphilis and drop dead, sir!’ Chloe snarled between her teeth.

They left the office.

As meek as little lambs, the headmaster thought, pleased. He took a deep breath and let his breast swell with pride. *Bless my nose, where does that awful smell come from?* he wondered. Little did the man know that during his absence those meek little lambs – for once not out of mischief but out of desperation – had peed in the vase.

6. Bread Pudding with Ketchup

Rosa, the family help, hastily left the house. She always made sure she left before the triplets arrived home from school.

‘Hi, Rosa!’ Her heart missed a beat. The friendly greeting bode no good. An anxious feeling crept up her spine.

‘Er . . . hello, girls,’ she smiled faintly. She hurried to her car, fearing the worst. ROSA LOVES SEX they had written in capitals on the rear window. Luckily, the freshly applied lipstick could easily be wiped off. *Phew*, the woman sighed, relieved. *That was a close shave.*

But she hadn’t noticed the chewing gum on the door handle of her car yet. It took her seven minutes to get the sticky stuff off the car.

‘Byeee, Rosa!’ The triplets were waving while the family help tried to start her car, to no avail. The balloon on the exhaust pipe inflated with every attempt.

‘Bloody hell,’ the family help swore. She stepped on the gas like a maniac and threw spiteful looks at the three bullies, who by now had their fingers in their ears. The poor woman jumped out of her skin when the balloon finally exploded. But she had no time to recover, because in her attempts to start her car she had accidentally put it in reverse gear. The triplets jumped aside just in time. The traffic sign with the message DRIVE SAFELY CHILDREN PLAYING! was less lucky. The bang was extremely loud. The whole neighbourhood came out into the street. It had even woken up Mother Treacle.

‘Zoe, Chloe, Joey!’ she yelled. ‘Inside! Come on! It’s too dangerous in the streets!’

‘These drivers don’t have the least bit of respect for our children,’ an old lady moaned. She lifted an angry fist at the grey-faced driver and cursed her car. Or what was left of it.

Noel was sitting on the faded, worn carpet in the living room. He made the rag doll dance upside down in front of the cat, who dug her razor-sharp claws into the dangling head every time it came past. Chloe chucked her school bag into a corner and gave her baby brother an amazed look.

‘Never thought he would appreciate that sort of game as well.’

Noel stared at his sister and gave her an absent smile. Suddenly, the cat sank her teeth into the doll and tore a piece of stuffing from the already mutilated head.

‘Did you see that?’ Joey shouted, pointing. ‘It looks as if that animal has pulled out the doll’s brain.’

‘It’ll ruin the doll’s head entirely,’ Chloe said.

‘Good,’ Zoe thought out loud. ‘Then we no longer have to look at its monstrous mug.’

Admittedly, the doll’s face looked pretty horrific with its lopsided smirk, one dangling eye, a scalp burnt partly bald and a bulging woollen brain. Joey had recently used the monstrous doll to give a little boy who had happened to pass their house the fright of his life. The poor boy had wet his bed even worse than when he had seen that scary purple monster on TV for the first time. Any other child would have long thrown away the shabby troll. But Noel dragged around his little toy wherever he went. He didn’t take particularly good care of it. On the contrary, he mostly used the rag doll as a pillow. Or he used it to chase away annoying bugs, or to wipe the slime off his nose, or sometimes he used it as a cloth when he had spilt something. He never cuddled it.

‘There’s bread pudding in the fridge,’ Mother Treacle said. ‘Your daddy and I are . . .’

‘. . . going to play poker at The Blue Duck,’ Zoe completed the sentence.

‘Right,’ Mother Treacle nodded. She grabbed her handbag off the table and disappeared.

‘Say hello to Daddy!’ Chloe called after her.

But she had already left. The Blue Duck was the local pub, where Father and Mother Treacle went to play cards every night. And even though they could stand their ground at poker, they mostly won just enough to pay their tab.

Joey cut the bread pudding into four equal portions with her pocketknife. She pecked at her own piece. Lately, they ate loads of bread pudding. Really loads of bread pudding. Actually, only bread pudding. Father Treacle got it from his baker friend. The man had seen the skin-and-bones Catshoo lying in front of their door. Since then, the pet lover had been giving Father Treacle his unsold bread pudding instead of reusing it in the freshly baked batches.

‘Pudding,’ Chloe mumbled. It was as if the word left a bad, greasy taste in her mouth. ‘If I even so much as see another plate of pudding, I’m going to hurl!’

She shoved her piece between the cushions of the sofa. Zoe opened all the cupboard doors and managed to find a half empty bottle of tomato ketchup.

‘Bread pudding with ketchup?’ Joey thought out loud.

Zoe shrugged her shoulders and chucked a dollop of the mouldy gunge on the table. She dabbed a piece of her pudding in it and had a bite.

‘Noww at leasht thish dog food doeshhn’t tashte sho dry,’ she muttered with her mouth full. The Treacle triplets weren’t exactly connoisseurs. They would actually eat anything and thought that others should do so as well. They always gave away the chocolate bars fellow pupils handed out in class on their birthdays to the kids of the nursery class. Not without replacing the filling with sand, bird poo, dead spiders or other delicacies, though. Much to the entertainment of the triplets, the toddlers always rose to the bait.

‘Ugh!’ Joey said, filled with revulsion. ‘I couldn’t eat it to save my life. That pudding tastes revolting!’

‘Yes, like sand and bird poo,’ Chloe sneered sarcastically.

‘There we go!’ Joey snarled. ‘I don’t need that dog food any more!’

Catshoo, who was lying in a corner a bit further away, received the piece of pudding smack on his nose. No reaction.

‘Catshoo?’

The animal didn’t move a muscle.

‘He’s dead,’ Joey said. Which was true. He had quietly passed away. Gone out like a thin match. The piece of pudding he normally slobberingly hoped for was now lying within eating distance in front of his dry nose, which a shiny blowfly had just picked out as a landing strip. Zoe bent over the motionless body. She pulled open one of his eyes.

‘You’re right, Joey,’ she said. ‘Catshoo is dead. But his fleas are still alive.’ She took the bloodthirsty parasites from her hand and squashed them between her thumbs.

Noel sat on his knees next to Catshoo’s lifeless body and chased away the blowfly. He stroked the dog’s head gently. Not a single flea jumped onto his hand.

‘Blast!’ Zoe shouted, scratching. ‘I think one of those bloodsuckers has crawled under my T-shirt. I . . .’

She stopped talking when she heard the soft humming. It sounded like the purring of a cat, only louder. The triplets were gobsmacked. This was the first noise Noel had made since the fire. They turned as cold as Catshoo.

Noel laid the doll on the inanimate body. Then the humming stopped. The boy stood up and left the living room, dragging his flea-covered doll along behind him.

‘He is getting freakier by the day,’ Zoe whispered.

‘I wonder what will be next,’ Joey said.

‘Ouch!’ Zoe cried. She took off her shirt. ‘My back!’ she yelled. ‘There must be a giant flea there, or something!’

‘Indeed,’ Chloe confirmed. ‘It’s a whopping one. Wait a second . . . there we go.’

Zoe started scratching the spot ferociously, where Chloe had just eliminated the bug.

‘Hey, don’t do that!’ Joey warned her. ‘You will get pimples everywhere.’

‘Haha, maybe they have fleas at Peter Pimple Pan’s place too! Nice to know parasites also visit rich people’s houses.’

‘Peter Pimple,’ Zoe said, brooding. ‘That’s an idea!’ Little mean flames were dancing in her eyes. She dumped the remainder of the ketchup on the table and threw an evil grin at the dead dog. If Catshoo were still alive, that demonic look would have made him run for the curtains.

7. Respect Animals

It was Peter who opened the door. The little boy scared up three extra pimples when he saw the evil sisters standing in his doorway. ‘Hello, Peter Pimple Pan,’ Joey smiled.

‘What a desirable residence you have here.’

‘Nice garden too,’ Chloe said.

‘Will you look at these stunning roses!’

‘There was one of those long-haired furry things wandering around your recently manicured lawn. But don’t worry, I’m sure the creature will think twice in future before crushing those poor little grass blades.’

‘Haha, you should have seen that fleabag jump up when it got that rock right in its cake-hole!’

‘Suzuku!’ the boy shouted, horrified. ‘Filthy animal molesters! I’m going to tell my father straight away!’ He wanted to shut the door, but Joey and Chloe had already put their feet in the way. ‘Daddy! Daddyy!! Daadddyyy!!!’

‘Easy, Pimple Pan,’ Zoe hushed, ‘you’re only going to make it worse.’

The girls grabbed their fellow pupil and dragged him outside. The boy was squealing like a stuck pig. ‘Help! Mummyyy! Daddyyy!’

‘Don’t be silly, Pimples,’ Zoe said calmly. ‘We just saw your parents drive away. You don’t have to wail like this. You are all alone in your castle.’

The boy froze from head to foot. He turned as white as chalk. ‘Whawhawhawhat do you guguguyys want?’ He trembled with mortal fear. ‘I didn’t do it! It was Dean!’

Puzzled, the triplets looked at each other.

‘Dean?’

‘Yes, he gave you the nickname “Evil Sisters”. Not me!’

‘I see.’ Zoe gnashed her teeth. ‘Good to know. But that has nothing to do with our special visit.’

‘It hasn’t?’ The victim swallowed. ‘Why . . .?’

‘We have a little problem with our homework, you see.’

‘Homework? But Miss Pine didn’t give us any assignments today.’

‘Wrap it up and listen carefully, Pimples!’ Chloe nearly snapped his head off. Viciously she pulled the little hairs in Peter’s neck.

‘Ouch!’

‘Wrap it, I said!’

‘Ooo . . .’ the boy groaned in pain. His eyes filled with tears.

Zoe pulled out the blank papers. ‘Look,’ she said, ‘on these papers you will write the multiplication tables seventy-five times by tomorrow morning.’

‘And neatly! If not . . . you’ll do it again!’ Joey imitated the Hedgehog.

‘Seventy . . . seventy-five times? Bu . . . but . . .’

‘No buts, Pimples!’ Zoe barked. ‘Hold him tightly!’ Joey and Chloe had their male peer in a stranglehold. The boy nearly wet his pants.

‘Miss Pine taught us to respect animals,’ Zoe sniggered while she unscrewed the top of the ketchup bottle. ‘Well, these little animals will probably die from hunger now that their host has abandoned them.’ She shoved the bottle under Peter’s nose. ‘Unless these darlings find a new pimple buddy to nibble on.’

The fleas were jumping around like crazy in the bottle.

‘You have two options, Pimples . . .’

‘Either you obediently complete our punishment . . .’

‘Or we pay you a nocturnal visit one of these days . . .’

‘Tie you to your lovely bed . . .’

‘And rub your itchy pimple-infested skin with this delightful tickle-ketchup.’

‘O . . . okay! Okay!!’ the boy squeaked. ‘I’ll do it!’ His forehead was beaded with cold sweat.

‘Great,’ Zoe nodded contentedly.

‘Good, Pimples,’ Joey stroked him.

‘As a reward, we won’t feed you to the crocodiles tomorrow,’ Chloe promised.

‘We will give those sweet animals Dean as a treat.’ They let their poor victim go and shoved the blank papers into his arms. ‘Don’t you dare breathe a word to anyone,’ Joey warned him. ‘Because if you do . . .’ She pressed her pocketknife into one of the pimples on Peter’s chin.

The boy shook his head firmly. ‘No, no, I won’t tell! I won’t tell!’ he shouted.

Joey withdrew her little toy. ‘Well, see you tomorrow, Pimples!’ the triplets said with a friendly smile. Peter tottered backwards into the house with the papers in his hands and shut the heavy front door with a firm kick. As he peeked from behind the curtains, he saw Joey cut a big bunch of white roses before she disappeared behind the colourful rhododendrons with her sisters, humming happily. Then he collapsed and threw up on the pricey Tibetan tiger rug in the hallway.

8. *White Roses and Retribution*

‘Oh, that’s very kind of you,’ Miss Pine said, touched. ‘White roses . . . my favourites. And such a big bunch too!’ She looked at the triplets with a tender smile. They gave her their most angelic smiles and sat down on the sofa.

‘These must have cost you most of your pocket money.’

The triplets nodded together. ‘Down to the last penny,’ Zoe said, a little sadly.

‘But you really deserve it,’ Joey continued.

‘We wanted to make up for what happened in the canteen this afternoon.’

The right-hand corner of the teacher’s mouth started trembling nervously.

‘And thank you for this school year,’ Zoe said quickly. ‘Which is almost over . . .’

‘And in which you have had so much patience with us.’

Miss Pine had a lump in her throat. It took three sips of chamomile tea to flush it down. She felt a warm feeling inside. After all, she had never stopped believing there was something human inside the triplets. Even though the headmaster had always maintained the opposite. *No one is everything, no one is nothing, everyone is always something*, she had once read somewhere. And it was absolutely true, she thought. The triple evidence was sitting on her sofa and smelling lovely in the big vase on the coffee table.

‘Can I offer you a cup of chamomile tea?’ the deeply moved teacher asked.

‘No, thank you, Miss,’ the triplets shook their heads. They loathed floral teas.

‘Maybe a piece of home-made bread pudding?’

Chloe groaned just a little too loudly.

‘No no, really, Miss,’ Zoe responded swiftly. ‘No need to bother.’

‘A soft drink maybe?’

‘Ice-cold Coke?’ the three sisters asked hopefully.

‘Ice-cold Coke coming up,’ Miss Pine nodded.

‘Mmmm, lovely!’

She disappeared into the kitchen, humming softly. The unexpected visit had made her feel a lot better. Suddenly Tweet, the budgie that was never in its cage but always fluttered around the living room, landed on top of Zoe’s head.

‘Shoo! Ksssst! Clear out!’ Zoe hissed crossly.

The bird flew away and fled out of the living room, twittering. Zoe felt her hair on the spot where the budgie had just been sitting and curled her upper lip furiously.

‘Blast! That stupid bird has sh –’

‘What did you say?’ Miss Pine shouted from the kitchen.

‘Zoe thinks your bird is really cute!’ Joey said quickly. In the meantime, Chloe kicked the blabbermouth.

‘But that idiot pooped on my hair!’ Zoe hit back. ‘Where is my catapult? I . . .’

‘Yes,’ Miss Pine beamed, ‘Tweet is a great friend. We are very fond of each other. There you go, ice-cold Coca-Cola.’ She gave each triplet a big glass with a straw.

‘Thank you, Miss Pine,’ Chloe said.

‘We really like animals too,’ Joey smiled. But the spirit of the greenfinch suddenly flashed through her mind. ‘Er . . . birds not so much, though,’ she confessed. ‘But big animals all the more. Such as lions, tigers, leopards . . .’

‘Crocodiles, pythons . . .’

‘Piranhas . . .’

‘Unfortunately you never really get to see them . . .’

‘. . . here.’

‘But apparently in the zoo you can.’

It remained silent for a while. Chloe removed an imaginary piece of fluff from her T-shirt, Joey made herself comfortable and Zoe gave a friendly whistle at Tweet, while she subtly removed the bird droppings from her long hair. Miss Pine leaned backwards in her chair and closed her eyes, smiling gently.

Joey and Chloe gave each other a hopeful push. Zoe used the opportunity to wipe the bird-do off her fingers by rubbing it off on the embroidered tablecloth.

‘Okay,’ the forgiving teacher said. ‘You can go on the school trip tomorrow, on one condition . . .’

‘Oh, thank you, Miss Pine!’ Zoe yelled gratefully.

‘Oops!’ Chloe said, shocked. ‘Will you look at the time!’

‘We really have to go now,’ Joey apologised.

The triplets tossed down their drinks, jumped up and were already at the door.

‘You stay where you are, Miss Pine. We can let ourselves out.’

‘See you tomorrow, Miss!’

‘Byeee!’

Three seconds later, Miss Pine heard the door slam shut. She shook her head.

‘Ah well, they’re only kids,’ she told herself.

And when she looked outside and saw that it had already started to get dark, she thought it was for the best the triplets hadn’t stayed any longer. Even though – apart from a couple of speed fiends – it was relatively safe for children to walk outside alone, you never knew. Especially now that all these stories about kidnappers were going around.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANNOTATION

5.1. Introduction

Children have different expectations of literature and a translator should take their special needs into account when making up a target text *skopos* and translation brief. This chapter wishes to highlight the different treatment and care of translated children's literature through a practical report on the translation of *De zusjes Kriegel*.

Klingberg (1986) indicated that translation of children's literature needed more practical research; especially accounts of how translations for children are made and which problems translators of children's literature will most likely stumble upon. This annotation will reveal how and why *De zusjes Kriegel* became *The Treacle Triplets*; it sets out the target text *skopos* and the translation instructions of *De zusjes Kriegel* and gives an exposition of the translation problems this translator came across and how she decided to solve them. Every decision was made in congruence with the *skopos* of the translation, the source text analysis and relevant translation theory.

5.2 *De zusjes Kriegel: Skopos*

According to Nord (1997a), a translation can either be documentary or instrumental (cf. 3.3.5.3). The translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* is not a document of the source text culture, but rather acts as an instrument in the target text culture. The source text is the model, which the new sender (the translator) can use entirely or partially. The *skopos* of the translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* is thus an instrumental literary translation. In order to obtain a homologous effect, the target text should be composed in an idiomatic form of the target text language.

The target audience of *De zusjes Kriegel* in translation consists of British English-speaking children between the age of eight and twelve. Considering children's limited world knowledge and their general indifference towards nationality, the translation

should read and sound as if it was written in their mother tongue. Children should be able to identify with the cultural context. Consequently, foreign idiosyncrasies should not permeate in the target text. The goal of the translation is to compose an acceptable target text that could fill a gap in the English book market where children are barely exposed to foreign literature. The goal is not to educate children about a Flemish culture or Flemish children's literature.

A *skopos* that would require a tactic of foreignisation challenging the target text language with the peculiarities of the source text language, would not only vandalise the target text culture, but also the universal culture of the children's carnival.

5.3 *De zusjes Kriegel*: Translation Instructions

A comparison of the source text with the target text *skopos* led to the following translation instructions:

1. The content, theme and motive of the source text should be the same. This means that the target text should – as closely as possible – follow the story line of the source text. Considering the Western context of the source text and the lack of a recognisable Flemish setting, this strategy is in agreement with the target text *skopos*.
2. The source text author writes in the tradition of children's culture. This means that the target text should also portray the aural qualities of rhyme, rhythm and melody of the source text. The translator should not tone down abusive language and taboo words as it forms part of a carnivalesque children's culture.
3. Spelling of words should conform to the British English standard.
4. The translator will have to use a strategy of domestication and adapt the cultural context of *De zusjes Kriegel* to an English setting to bridge the cultural distance between

Belgium and England. Due to the subdued presence of elements of a Flemish culture, adaptations will be limited to details and will not change the story line.

5.4 Discussion of Translation Problems

Translation is a form of cross-cultural communication of which translators should be the experts. As bilingual and bicultural intermediaries they will most likely come across certain communication problems and will be expected to resolve them accordingly using the most suitable translation strategies. Not to achieve equivalence, but simply to arrive at the optimal translation.

In a game, different players will play different cards; similarly different translators will use different strategies. A mapping of some of these commonly used translation strategies will not only help the translator theoretically motivate some of his seemingly whimsical solutions, but will also guarantee more consistency in problem-solving techniques. The translation problems in this translation will be discussed according to Nord's categorisation of pragmatic, interlingual, intercultural and text-specific translation problems (Nord, 1997b: 64-68).

5.4.1 Pragmatic Translation Problems

Any translation between any source language and any target language will always face pragmatic translation problems, simply because the communicative situations of the source and target text differ (Nord, 1997b: 59). Pragmatic translation problems usually surface first, because they are related to the extratextual factors of the source and target text. A thorough analysis of the source text elements sets the tone for a general translation strategy and influences the draft of the target text *skopos*. The target text *skopos* then in turn becomes the yardstick to which the feasibility of different translation strategies can be measured.

The *skopos* of the target text clearly requires cultural context adaptation and an overall naturalising or domesticating translation strategy. This means, that names of characters will have to be changed to English names and that references to common animals, plants or types of food that may be unknown to the English reader will have to be changed to concepts coherent to an English situation. Instead of Jaques eating waffles in Brussels, Jack could be eating fish and chips in London, for example.

5.4.1.1 Translation of Proper Names

Nomen est Omen, the famous Latin proverb says, indicating that a name says it all. When a child is born and its parents name it, they choose a name that they find appealing for their child. Apart from any sentimental value, a proper name usually has a referential function only.

A proper name can tell us whether the referent is a female or male person (Alice-Bill), maybe even about their age (some people name their new-born after a pop star or a character of a film that happens to be *en vogue*) or their geographical origin within the same language community (e.g., surnames such as *McPherson* or *O'Connor*, a first name such as *Pat*) or from another country, a pet (there are typical names for dogs, cats, horses, canaries, etc. such as *Pussy* or *Fury*), a place (*Mount Everest*) (Nord, 2003: 183)

In fiction, a proper name often implicitly describes a character's personality or physical traits (e.g. Pinocchio which is Italian for pine nut). In children's fiction, the aural quality of a proper name is very important as well; especially young children find characters with easy, rhythmic, repetitive names delightful (Noddy, Moomins, Teletubbies, etc.)

In children's literature, translation or non-translation of proper names provides an interesting subject of debate. In general, it seems the original proper name – especially when it is a person's – possesses a sanctity that should not be violated by the translator. Preferably, the translator just copies the proper name to the target text albeit with minor

phonetic modifications. However, some translators (and publishers) fear that a high degree of foreignness will alienate the child reader and therefore prefer to translate characters' names to target text equivalents (in the case of exonyms or phonetic modification) or substitute them with new creative counterparts.

Another reason why the translator may opt to substitute or translate a proper name is pronunciation. Children should be able to pronounce the foreign name easily. Melody and aural quality could be compromised when children have difficulties reading and pronouncing a proper name or when difficult names have to be read-aloud. Anthea Bell, renowned translator of German and English children's books, explains it is necessary to 'anglicise' some of the names, because of the "the in-built English distrust of, and resistance to, anything foreign" (in Yamazaki, 2002: 57).

Generally, the question whether to translate or not, coincides with the translator's orientation towards the source text and the source text author or towards the target audience. Birgit Stolt (2006: 69) ascertains that the cardinal problem of faithfulness to the original takes a back seat when it comes to the translation of children's literature. Domesticated character names according to Stolt (2006: 71) reveal the translator's preconceived opinion about what children want to read, value and understand and this leads to a general underestimation of the child-reader. Stolt defends the idea of a faithful translation that is as equivalent as possible, not any different from a translation of an adult's book. Adaptation to facilitate the young reader's 'limited' reading competence and world-knowledge is considered disrespectful towards the child, the children's book and the author (Stolt, 2006: 82).

Stolt's views are reminiscent of Zohar Shavit's ideas on the peripheral status of children's literature in the literary polysystem (cf. 3.4.3). They both blame translators of children's literature of taking too many liberties resulting in a lack of disrespect for the child reader's reading ability on the one side, and the marginal position of children's literature on the other side.

Astrid Lindgren (in Stolt, 2006: 69), the famous author of the *Pippi Longstocking* books is also of the opinion that adults underestimate the ability of the child's imagination: "Children have a marvelous ability to re-experience the most alien and distant things and circumstances, if a good translator is there to help them, then I believe that their imagination continues to build where the translator can go no further".

Stolt gives an example of the positive Japanese reception of Astrid Lindgren's book about the Swedish children of Bullerby: "Children have been so fascinated by the thoroughly Swedish peasant children in the native Swedish milieu of Bullerby that they wrote letters to the author, asking whether there really was a Bullerby, where it was situated and whether one could move there and live there" (Stolt, 2006: 69).

Yamazaki (2002: 60) takes it even further by arguing that another underlying factor for the translation of proper names in children's books is a lack of respect for other cultures.

(...) This is what makes the rejection of foreign names seem trivial and in more extreme cases excuses the violation of the source text in the name of education. The concern of this educational intention is nothing but the reinforcement of a target culture, the inculcation of its values, and the obliteration of its taboos through alteration of the original text, and the accurate presentation of source culture is disregarded (...) The change of names creates a false impression of a homogenous world, only to discourage children from learning about other possibilities, enhancing the feeling of strangeness when children actually come across foreign names in real life. On the contrary, translated books that retain signs of their source cultures can provide children with excellent opportunities to realize the existence of other culture and to become familiar with them, experiencing them not as something foreign but as something that is part of the environment.

Again, the adult debate about adaptation (bad) and faithfulness (good) is based on the misconception that children's literature is there to teach the child something. A foreign

name such as Pinocchio – which sounds typically Italian, or Pippi – which has the connotation of ‘crazy’ in Swedish (Van Coillie, 2006: 124) have remained untranslated and have proven acceptable in their respective target texts, because they do not form immediate pronunciation difficulties. But what about difficult Polish names such as Vyacheslav Jaworowski or Indian and African names?

Helen W. Painter (in Stolt, 2006: 74-75) suggests comprehension notes, aids to pronunciation, explanations of important foreign words and terms and maps in the case of travelogues. She also advises to include information about the author, how to pronounce the author’s name and if needed an indication of the sex of the author (e.g. the mention that Tove Jansson and Gunnel Linde are women). However, glossaries and pronunciation aids could interrupt the ‘flow’ and the imagination of the story.

Van Coillie (2006: 131) mentions the importance of the prominence of the cultural context in a book as a reason to either translate the character names or not: “Names are invariably embedded in a cultural context. If the context is not developed to a substantial degree or is not essential to the central theme, the chances are that it (and the corresponding names) will be modified”.

The following list illustrates the translation strategies that were applied to adapt the Dutch source text names to English. The categorisation of translation strategies was made according to Van Coillie’s functional approach to the translation of proper names (Van Coillie, 2006: 123-139).

Strategy	Target Text	Source Text
Replaced by a name with different connotation	Treacle	Kriegel
Substitution	Zoe	Lien
	Chloe	Sien
	Joey	Fien
	Noel	Joel
	Peter	Joeri
	Collins	Kramers
	Maggie Baker	Evelien Martens
Exonym	William	Willy
	Hannah	Hanne
	Helen	Hilde
Non-translation	Alexander	Alexander
	Diana	Diana
	(Doctor) Nuts	(Dokter) Nuts
	Rosa	Rosa

The character names that were not translated involve those names that – apart from pronunciation – do not pose any reading difficulties in the target language and can therefore easily be copied.

Some popular first names or names of historical figures have counterparts in the target language (Van Coillie, 2006: 126-127). Often, simply an adjustment of the spelling (e.g. Hanne in Dutch vs. Hannah in English, Willy in Dutch vs. William in English) was adequate enough for a suitable target text character name. In the case of the psychiatrist's name, the source text author had already played with the English word 'nuts'. The name can remain untranslated (non-translation), which even makes the irony more obvious.

Other names required a more radical translation strategy such as 'substitution'. Substitution was applied when the character's name was typically Flemish, and would result in pronunciation difficulties for the English-speaking child. Adjustments were also made when the name had a particular connotation that needed to be translated.

Translations such as ‘*Joeri*’ into ‘Peter’, ‘*Evelien Martens*’ into ‘Maggie Baker’ and ‘*Kramers*’ who becomes ‘Collins’ do not require a lot of creativity from the translator’s part. Above mentioned names are of an arbitrary nature and were replaced by more ‘English-sounding’ equivalents.

The character names of the triplets and their surname were the most important changes. *Lien*, *Fien* and *Sien* are typical Dutch girl names. The spelling characters ‘ie’ would look confusing for an English child (or adult) who would not recognise the phonetic pronunciation pattern as | ē | immediately. If one wanted to preserve the original names, an option could have been to adjust the spelling to an English equivalent to obtain the correct pronunciation effect. This would lead to *Feen*, *Seen* and *Leen*, which the translator found an undesirable spelling image.

The triplets’ names are monosyllabic which not only makes the names easy to read for young children, but also gives them a very prominent ‘ring’. The translator wanted to retain the rhyming effect of the melodic trio. With that idea in mind the translator opted for ‘Zoe, Chloe and Joey’. These names are not monosyllabic but they are still very short in length (two syllables) and they rhyme which is probably the most important goal. Consequently, the baby brother’s name ‘*Joel*’ which is a biblical name and could have remained untranslated, had to be changed to Noel in order to avoid confusion with the first name of one of the triplets viz. ‘Joey’. Even though the biblical connotation is lost in Noel, there is still an association with Christmas (he was born on Christmas Eve). The name ‘Noel’ has something angelic, which suits his character traits perfectly and forms a sharp contrast with the personality of his sisters.

Finally, the translation of the surname was probably the most important decision, because their surname would be part of the title of the book. *Kriegel* literally means ‘prickly’ in Dutch, but is not a frequently used word. In fact, it may even be obsolete to most Dutch-speaking children. However, unlike adults, children do not necessarily need a dictionary. They often rely on their imagination to grasp the meaning of a word. *Kriegel* has a very nice resonance. The combination of ‘ie’, ‘g’ and ‘el’ in Dutch, in some way symbolises the tingling, irritable ‘prickly’ feeling of the word. A literal English translation such as ‘The Prickle Triplets’ or ‘The Sisters Prickle’ lacks that resonance and iconicity it has in Dutch. A non-translation in English would have challenged the young reader who is not used to seeing the combination of (ie) for | ē | the (g) as | χ | sound or the |k| in *anlaut* position.

The aural quality of the word *Kriegel* trumped the connotation and it was therefore decided to go with ‘Treacle’, which melodically adheres close to the original, but loses the meaning of ‘prickly’.

The Treacle Triplets offer a reverberating alternative because it alliterates nicely with ‘triplets’. Another bonus is the additional connotation the word ‘treacle’ carries with it for English readers. ‘Treacle’ is associated with treacle sugar and treacle tart and therefore with sweet things. Moreover, references to food reinforce the carnivalism of children’s literature. An extra element of irony is added because the triplets are anything. However, they would not trip anyone up without a sugary sweet ‘grin’.

5.4.1.2 Abusive Names

As argued in 2.4, children find humour in their literature very important. As part of the children’s carnival they particularly enjoy abusive names. Marc de Bel is well aware of that comedy ploy and makes his triplets use a lot of roguish language.

Abusive names in children’s literature names are usually a grotesque exaggeration of a characteristic feature. The triplets call their classmate ‘*Joeri Pukkelsmoel*’ because of his acne problem. *Joeri* is not a common boy’s name in English, ‘*smoel*’ is an informal and derogative word for ‘face’ and ‘*pukkels*’ are ‘spots’. Many creative solutions are possible: ranging from McSpotty Face to Spotmug, Acnetrap and Pimple Pirate. This translator chose ‘Peter Pimple Pan’ as his new English nickname, because it leads to a nice alliteration and alludes to the famous children’s book character Peter Pan.

The headmaster of the school, Collins, and their primary school teacher are also given a suiting epithet that magnifies their looks. The headmaster has a prickly moustache and is therefore referred to as ‘*de Stekelsnor*’. Unfortunately, the English translation for ‘snor’ is ‘moustache’ and a literal translation as in ‘Prickle Moustache’ is not nearly as terse and funny as the original cognomen. The translator decided to name the headmaster ‘the Hedgehog’ which is less explicit – because it is a metaphor that focuses more on the notion ‘prickly’ than on the notion ‘moustache’ – but adds an extra pun by referring to the prickly animal ‘hedgehog’. Young readers should recognise the pun as a reference to the headmaster’s prickly moustache since it is explicitly mentioned in the original text and in the translation.

The teacher's name in Dutch is 'Anne Nas' which made it easy for the triplets to rename her 'de Ananas' (pineapple), a rather obvious pun that refers to the teacher's hairstyle (she wears her hair piled up on top of her head). This translator literally translated the teacher's nickname into 'the Pineapple', but made the teacher's surname and first name a little more subtle by translating 'Anne Nas' to 'Anne Pine'.

5.4.1.3 Names of Fauna and Flora

Animals and nature are important in children's books. Stories are more likely to take place in forests than in cities. The fauna and flora of countries differ a lot and a moose found in the snow-covered forests of Sweden, for example, is not necessarily an animal a South African child could relate to. Names of indigenous animals and plants can form a problem for translations that adhere to a domesticating strategy. The duty rests upon the translator not to overlook these minor 'details'.

In the story of *De zusjes Kriegel* a 'groenvink' – literally a greenfinch in English – plays an important role in the story. The triplets kill the poor bird and then hide it in one of their classmate's soup. The greenfinch is a very colourful bird and was probably chosen by the author specifically for its green colour. Greenfinches are commonly found in Europe and North Africa³. The skopos clearly states that the setting is British English. A literal translation is therefore acceptable, but if the target text had been intended for an American-English audience, the translator would have had to substitute it with an American indigenous bird.

The story of *De zusjes Kriegel* is situated in the countryside. The setting is probably based on the Flemish town of *Kruishoutem*, where Marc de Bel situates most of his children's books. A reader who is not familiar with Marc de Bel's other books will probably not recognise the setting as a Flemish town, but rather classify it as a typical rural, suburban scenery. Descriptions of the scenery have therefore not led to pragmatic translation problems.

There are only four references in the source text to actual plant names, viz. *sanseveria*, *rododendron*, *vlierstruik* and *witte rozen*. These plants were translated by their literal English counterparts, because they are all common plants in the English flora. Despite the seemingly

³ [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](http://www.iucnredlist.org). 2006. *Carduelis chloris*. (Online). Available: www.iucnredlist.org. (2009, December 15).

problem free translation, there was one incoherency in the description of the rhododendron tree in Dutch. The source text uses the following sentence:

*Glurend van achter het gordijn zag hij hoe Sien eerst nog een enorme bos witte rozen afsneed voordat ze samen met haar zusjes vrolijk fluitend achter **de hoge rododendrons** verdween.*

A literal translation would result in ‘the tall rhododendrons’, but rhododendrons are actually not tall at all. A quick Google search and research on gardening forums reveals that rhododendrons are found in the Northern hemisphere, but the high variety is only found in East Asia⁴. The issue is more of a copy-editing nature, but it shows that the translator is also an editor who should be cautious for mistakes in the source text and not just slavishly copy anything. In the target text, the rhododendrons are simply referred to as ‘colourful’ and not as tall.

*As he peeked from behind the curtains, he saw Joey cut a big bunch of white roses before she disappeared behind **the colourful rhododendrons** with her sisters, humming happily.*

Animals are very traditional characters in children’s literature, as pets or as talking friends. Pet names are often universal, have onomatopoeic qualities or refer to famous animal characters. ‘Tweet’ for example is a typical bird’s name and Cleo is usually very popular amongst the goldfish thanks to Giopetto’s eponymous goldfish in the story of Pinocchio. The source text has up to six references to pets and pet names.

Translation Strategy	Source Text	Target Text	Species
Phonetic adaptation	Soesoeke	Suzuku	Dog
	Katsjoe	Catshoo	Dog
Non-translation	Iris	Iris	Cat
	Cleo	Cleo	Goldfish
Exonym	Twiet	Tweet	Bird
Exonym and deletion of	Jantje	Jean	Hamster

⁴ Gardenweb Forum. 2010. *How big does rhododendron get?* (Online). Available: <http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/load/azalea/msg1107103631822.html> (2010, June 10).

Better Homes and Garden. 2010. *Plant Encyclopedia*. (Online). Available: <http://www.bhg.com/app/plantencyclopedia> (2010, June 10).

diminutive ‘je’			
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The budgie’s name *Twiet* can be replaced by the English exonym ‘Tweet’. The hamster’s name is *Jantje*. Jan is a Dutch boy’s name and ‘tje’ is a diminutive. This translator decided to replace *Jan* by its French exonym *Jean*, which English readers should recognise and be able to pronounce without difficulty. On top of that, it gives the hamster a funny French flair.

The dog names ‘Soesoeke’ and ‘Katsjoe’ are not traditional dog names and are also non-sensical. They were merely adapted to English phonetics for a familiar spelling image and simplified pronunciation.

5.4.1.4 Geographical Names

Only two existing geographical places are mentioned in the source text in the following examples:

*Op Joels derde verjaardag vertrokken vader en moeder Kriegel voor drie dagen met een touringcar naar een pittoresk dorpje in **Duitsland**.*

*On Noel’s third birthday, Father and Mother Treacle went on a three-day bus trip to some quaint little village in **Germany**.*

*Jullie oma Diana woonde vroeger in een huisje bij een grote vijver ergens in de bergen van **Zuid-Frankrijk**.*

*Your Nana Diana used to live in a little house near a big lake in the mountains in the **South of France**.*

References to existing geographical places should be adapted to the target context, but in this case the translator decided that both references could be literally translated. If the target audience consisted of American children, the parents could have gone on a three-day trip to Mexico and their grandmother could have lived in Bolivia, for example, but for English children Germany and France are acceptable translations in this context.

5.4.2 Intercultural translation problems

The *skopos* demands the cultural distance to be bridged. Even though the source text does not have a distinct Belgian-Dutch culture, it is still written in the Dutch language and therefore inevitably entrenched in a different culture. The difference between pragmatic and intercultural translation problems is not always clear-cut, because intercultural differences often lead to pragmatic translation problems. This section will be limited to differences in cultural conventions. “Intercultural translation problems arise from the differences in conventions between the two cultures involved, such as measuring conventions, formal conventions, text-type conventions, conventional forms of address, etc.” (Nord, 1991: 59).

Cultural context adaptation can relate to details such as references to currency, religion or food and drinks (Klingberg, 1986), but can also involve cultural expectations around a genre or writing style such as the use of taboo in children’s literature.

5.4.2.1 Conventional Forms of Address

Conventional forms of address have a lot to do with showing respect to an older person or superior. For example, in Dutch, children refer to their pre-primary and primary school teachers with their first name, but in English pupils refer to their primary school teachers with their surnames. It is, however, common to refer to the teacher of the nursery class with his or her first name.

*Tot ieders verbazing slaagde juf **Hilde** van de eerste kleuterklas erin de zusjes hun vervelende bijtgewoonte af te leren.*

*To everyone’s surprise, Miss **Helen** of the nursery class managed to cure the triplets of their annoying biting habit.*

*Juffrouw **Anne** deed haar uiterste best om rustig te blijven.*

*Miss **Pine** tried to stay calm*

The grandmother of the triplets who is called ‘Oma Diana’ plays an important part in the story. This translator chose ‘nana’ even though ‘grandmother’ or ‘gran’ would have been correct as well. The advantage of ‘nana’ is that it rhymes with the grandmother’s first name ‘Diana’ and it is much shorter and easier to read than grandmother.

The use of ‘nana’ had to be justified in the target text, because the triplets never knew of their grandmother’s existence until the birth of their baby brother. The use of such an intimate address as ‘nana’ for a person who is actually a relative stranger is peculiar. The example below shows how the translator had to make the grandmother introduce herself as ‘Nana Diana’.

U hoeft niet bang te zijn’, stelde de vreemde vrouw haar gerust. ‘Mijn naam is Grousmans. Diana Grousmans. Ik ben zijn grootmoeder.’

‘You don’t have to worry’, the weird lady assured her. I’m Nana Diana, the boy’s grandmother.

In the source text the grandmother introduces herself with her name and surname. The grandmother’s surname, however, is only mentioned once, is not important for the rest of the story and does not carry a special connotation. Consequently, it can be deleted.

5.4.2.2 Religious References

In the following source text sentence a reference to the Roman Catholic tradition of the Holy Communion is made, which is a very important ceremony of the Catholic Church which children in Belgium celebrate when they turn twelve.

*Vader Kriegel had, voor deze heuglijke dag passend te vieren, zijn dure **plechtige communie-horloge** voor een fles goedkope champagne geruild.*

In Belgium, the Holy Communion is an important step in the child’s life that is celebrated with a ceremony and a special and often expensive gift. British children are probably not familiar with the catholic concept and especially not with the importance of it. Hence, the nuance ‘very pricey and very sentimental gift’ would be lost in a literal translation. In the following translation the religious reference is replaced by a reference to an important event in the life of an English young man and the modifier ‘Swiss’ is added to stress the steep price of the object:

*For this festive occasion, Father Treacle had exchanged the **Swiss watch** he got for **his twenty-first birthday** for a bottle of cheap champagne*

5.4.2.3 Weights and Measurements

Weights and measurements are increasingly internationalised to avoid confusion in global communication. The British culture is more resistant and still holds on to the traditional system of miles, yards, ounces and pounds. The source text makes mention of both ‘meters’ and ‘kilograms’. Even though they are familiar units of measurement in English, the traditional words would sound more idiomatic to English readers.

*De meisjes werden **meters** ver achteruit geblazen.*

*The girls were blown a couple of **yards** back.*

*Ze repte zich vervolgens naar huis en wierp haar **honderd vierenvijftig kilogram** in de stoffelijke resten van de verwelkte bloemensofa.*

*(That morning Mother Treacle – whistling joyfully – dropped her three darlings at the school gate,) instantly hurried home and threw her **two hundred and ninety-seven pounds** on the remains of the wilted floral sofa.*

Mother Treacle’s accurate weight in conversion should have been three hundred and eight pounds, but two hundred and ninety-seven has an extra number and therefore sounds more exaggerated and funnier to children.

5.4.2.4 References to Food

Food is a very important aspect in children’s literature as has been argued by Klingberg and Oittinen in chapter three (cf. 3.4.2 and 3.4.4.2). Food and beverages unfamiliar to the target text culture will have to be adapted to preserve the specific appeal for children.

An entire chapter is devoted to the triplets’ poor nutrition that consists of ‘pudding with ketchup’. Even in the Dutch text it is not entirely clear what the author has in mind when he uses the word ‘*pudding*’. In Belgium, bakers would typically use ‘*pudding*’ for custard buns and an appropriate translation would therefore be ‘custard’. However, custard buns are not an everyday British type of food and village bakeries are not as common either. English children would probably associate bakeries with cakes and breads, not with custard or custard buns. The translator therefore narrowed the term down to ‘bread pudding’, which can be found in

British and Belgian patisseries and bakeries and is also a very popular homemade type of food.

5.4.2.5 Style Conventions

Languages and cultures have different expectations when it comes to style as was indicated with Nord's recipe example (cf. 3.3.5.4). The degree of style anticipation has to be the same for source text readers as for target text readers.

The use of taboo and swear words is not always accepted in children's literature. Translators will be inclined to tone taboo down in the target text, especially in literature for younger children.

Marc de Bel's readers are familiar with his typical taboo-breaking style of writing. In fact, his honesty and 'blue' jokes make him such an admired author. Notwithstanding complaints of parents who thought Marc de Bel's writing was inappropriate, his proven popularity has silenced the censoring adults, rather than his books.

From a polysystemic point of view, one could argue that Marc de Bel's books have introduced a new type of uncensored writing for children. Since Marc de Bel's books are unknown in the target culture, some elements might have to be deleted or toned down. Zohar Shavit (1986: 28) argued that deletions and manipulations in translations for children concern those parts that are deemed inappropriate for the child and that go against the target text's cultural morals and values.

Translator's decisions about deletions of taboo or inappropriate language have been a controversial matter. Astrid Lindgren – whose *Pippi Longstocking* books have also been censored in translations in the past – disapproved the translator's 'prettyfying' and 'sentimentalisation' of the original text based on educational intentions. She thought translations of children's books should not be treated any different from translations of adult books: "At any rate I imagine that, for example, the translator of a novel can follow the original faithfully without being told, you mustn't say that, it's not good form!" (Lindgren in Stolt, 2006: 70-71)

Children use a lot of informal language in their speech and find swearing funny. It is in the interest of the children's culture not to automatically delete such language. The following example shows that the translator did not alter the degree of formality and informality in the target text:

*'En haast je' porde Lien aan. Ze gaf Sien een rake klap op haar **achterste (formal)**.*

*'Auw, mijn **kont (informal)**!' gilde ze.*

*'And hurry up a bit!' Zoe poked her and gave her a firm smack on her behind **(formal)**.*

*'Ouch, my **bum (informal)**!' she screamed*

*'Schuif 'ns wat op met die **kont (informal)** van je, schat.'*

*'Move that **arse (informal)** of yours a little, love.'*

Aan je hoela (informal), stomme Stekelsnor!

*Up your **arse (informal)**, silly Hodgehog! Chloe thought.*

In the following source text sentence the author used a Belgian-Dutch informal word for 'face', which was replaced by an informal word for face in English. However, the degree of informality is not as high in the target text as it is in the source text. The word 'bakkes' is considered vulgar language in Belgium. It is a rather harsh word for a mother to use to refer to the faces of her children. Even though Mother Treacle is a vulgar woman, the translator decided to tone the language down in the target text, by replacing it with the informal word 'mug' and adding the modifier 'little'.

*'En tot overmaat van ramp hebben ze ondertussen geleerd de pleister, waarmee ik hun **bakkes (informal-vulgar)** dichtplak, los te peuteren.'*

*'And to make matters worse, they have now learnt to undo the tape with which I gag their **little mugs (informal)**'*

The expression 'krijg de klere' is also considered vulgar; an equivalent translation would have been 'fuck you'. Considering, the taboo around 'fuck you' in the English language, the translator decided not to use the correct translation. In order not to lose the cheekiness and the humour of the triplets, she replaced it by a completely different sentence:

'Ja, meneer de directeur', zei Lien.

'Tot morgen, meneer de directeur,' groette Sien.

'Krijg de klere, Snor!' gromde Fien binnensmonds.

Yes, Sir,' Zoe said.

'See you tomorrow, Sir,' Joey greeted him.

'Get syphilis and drop dead, Sir!' Chloe snarled between her teeth.

Taboo subjects such as sex are usually avoided in literature for children under the age of twelve. Bakhtin (1984: 320) pointed out that official and literary language censor anything that is linked with fecundation, pregnancy and childbirth. Carnivalism, on the other hand, is not afraid to laugh with these subjects. Marc de Bel's triplets paint 'ROSA LOVES SEX' on the domestic worker's car, which the translator did not delete as it is part of the humour of carnivalism and of a children's culture. She did slightly alter the following idea in the source text:

'Ofwel schrijf je braafjes onze straf...'

'Ofwel brengen we je één van de volgende nachten een bezoekje...'

'Waarbij we je naakt op je bed vastbinden...'

'En je jeukerig pukkeltelletje van kop tot teen met deze kriebelketchup insmeren.'

'Either you obediently complete our punishment . . .'

'Or we pay you a nocturnal visit one of these days . . .'

'Tie you to your lovely bed . . .'

'And rub your itchy pimple-infested skin with this delightful tickle-ketchup.'

De zusjes Kriegel first came out in 1992, long before the notorious case of Belgian serial killer and paedophile Marc Dutroux who had chained two of his victims to a bed. Today, sexual abuse scandals of the Catholic Church are a hot topic and it could be argued that children between eight and twelve in 2010 would easier associate the fragment with rape and child abuse than children who were between eight and twelve in 1992 would. The translator therefore decided to leave out the notion of being 'naked'.

5.4.4 Interlingual translation problems

Even though English and Dutch belong to the same family of Germanic languages they have differing verbal norms. This can range from different grammatical conventions, to differences in vocabulary and non-verbal behaviour

A first interlingual problem presented itself in the sentence length. Children's literature has to be easy to read and therefore has shorter sentences than adult prose. However, translators from Dutch to English should be wary of the fact that well-constructed Dutch sentences are usually shorter than well-constructed English sentences. A common mistake for Dutch mother tongue speakers writing in English is to keep English sentences short as well. Joy Burrough makes the following remark:

Short sentences are generally easier to read than long, complicated rambling ones. But lots of short sentences one after another are likely to make a choppy text. So, if short sentences are shorter in Dutch than in English, then when Dutch people transfer their idea of short sentence length to English, they will produce sentences that seem very short to English native speakers. The result is a very choppy text (Burrough-Boenisch, 2004: 134).

The translator will have to merge some of the source text sentences by means of subordination or conjunction if he or she does not want the text to sound too 'choppy'.

Ze verloren de wervelende, zachtjes zingende verschijning geen seconde uit het oog. Ze raakten helemaal de kluts kwijt toen ze opens die grote, diepblauwe ogen op zich gericht voelden.

*They didn't lose sight of the whirling, softly humming figure for a second, **until (conjunction)** they suddenly saw her deep-blue eyes staring in their direction and they were thrown completely off.*

De laatste keer dat wij haar hebben gezien, voorspelde ze dat er ooit een kleinzoon van haar op Kerstmis zou worden geboren. En dat die Joel zou heten.

*The last time we saw her, she predicted that one day a grandson of hers would be born on Christmas Eve **and that (subordination)** he would be called Noel.*

In Dutch the noun can be preceded numerous modifiers:

Ondanks-het-stijgend-aantal-overvallen-toch-nog-altijd-veiliger, en beter betalend bankfiliaal.

The despite-increased-amount-of-robberies-still-safer, and better paid **banking sector.*

This ‘string-construction’ has a comical effect in Dutch and is typical for Marc de Bel’s style. For an English speaking person this sentence is overloaded in the front and incomprehensible, the translator decided to delete the sentence because it was not particularly funny and not important to the development of the story.

The following string-construction was also subdued in the target text by splitting up the adjuncts and making use of commas:

*Er was **meer dan een halve fles zeven-jaar-op-eiken-vaten-gerijpte, Schotse whisky** nodig om vader Kriegel weer op de wereld te helpen.*

But it took more than half a bottle of seven-year-old, barrel-matured Scotch to set Father Treacle on his feet again.

Some of the lexical problems translators have to be aware of are ‘false friends’ or an unevenly distributed meaning of a word. In the following source text sentence the author uses the word ‘fontanel’. Even though fontanel has a direct English translation viz. fontanel/fontanelle, the word is not as commonly used in English as it is in Dutch, especially not in children’s speech. The translator therefore decided to replace ‘fontanel’ by ‘baby tummy’ and ‘hartslag’ by ‘baby breath’.

*Het jongetje lag zalig te slapen. Zijn **grote fontanel ging bij elke hartslag zachtjes op en neer.***

*The little boy was sleeping blissfully, **his baby tummy moving up and down gently with every baby breath.***

Another tricky lexical problem is the translation of idioms. “English and Dutch share some idioms (*iemand onder de tafel drinken/ drink someone under the table*), but not all. The

idioms that are different can be divided into those that have equivalents and those that do not” (Burrough-Boenisch, 2004: 123). In the following sentences the Dutch idioms could be translated by English equivalents. Even though they may not be situated in the same cognitive field as in the second example (door de vingers zien/turn a blind eye), they are more or less analogous translations.

*Lien spande een elastiekje tussen haar vingers en mikte een u-vormig geplooid eindje metaaldraad naar het oor van de klikspaan van daarnet. Ze **miste op een haar**.*

*Zoe stretched an elastic band between her fingers and shot a U-shaped piece of metal in the direction of the telltale. She **missed him by a hair’s breath (equivalent)**.*

*Ik ben jullie pesterijen al lang beu, Lien, Sien en Fiend Kriegel. Ik heb dit schooljaar heel veel **door de vingers gezien**...*

*‘I am sick and tired of your bullying practices, Zoe, Joey and Chloe Treacle. I have often **turned a blind eye** this year . . .’*

If no similar idiom is available, the translator sometimes has to translate the sentence with the denotation of the idiom as in the examples below:

*Als vader en moeder Kriegel er bij hoge uitzondering toch in waren geslaagd hun drie dochters een nachtje in bed te houden, dan **viel** er de volgende dag op school **met** de uitgeslapen meisjes **geen land te bezeilen**.*

*When Father and Mother Treacle did succeed on rare occasions in keeping their daughters in their beds for a night, the rested triplets were completely **unmanageable (denotation)** the next day.*

*En tenslotte snel en behendig op handen en knieën, als **uit de kluiten gewassen** krokodilletjes, die met hun splinternieuwe, **vlijmscherpe** tandjes alles ‘maar dan ook alles’ in de prak beten. And finally, fast and skillfully on their hands and knees, like **rugged (synonym)** baby crocodiles, who tore everything to pieces indiscriminately with their brand-new, **razor-sharp (equivalent)** teeth*

*De kleine Joel **groeide als kool***

*Little baby Noel **grew fast (denotation)***

The Dutch idiom *'uit de kluiten gewassen'* literally means 'strapping'; it is usually said about boys as in 'a strapping young lad', meaning a strongly-built young man. In combination with baby crocodiles, however, it seems a bit strange and therefore a more suitable synonym 'rugged' was used.

The Dutch idiom *'groeien als kool'* – literally 'growing very fast' – could be replaced by an idiom of the same cognitive field of plants and vegetables, namely 'shooting up' as in 'he has shot up in the last year'. Even so, it is usually said of young boys in their teens who have a sudden growth spur, not really of babies.

Finally, another curious interlingual translation problem is the paraverbal behaviour of certain languages and text (cf.3.3.5.6). In her study, Nord noticed that the illocutionary verbs in the translations from *Alice in Wonderland* were more dramatic than the English source text (Nord, 1991: 56). In English stories characters may just 'say' something whereas their foreign colleagues may 'howl', 'bellow', 'gnarl', 'snarl' and 'sneer'. This means the translator had to contemplate whether she was going to use more understated illocutionary verbs and tone and tune the triplets down in general. The *skopos* states that the target text should be adjusted to target text norms, but this translator decided not to subdue the language of the story, simply because the triplets' yelping and the onomatopoeic writing style of Marc de Bel fitted the children's carnival perfectly.

5.4.5 Text-specific translation problems

Text-specific problems are unique to a specific source text and are not bound by rules of grammar or general cultural conventions as in the previous categories. Literary language frequently uses figurative language, which often results in text-specific problems when no immediate translation is available. There is no word play or metaphor dictionary so literary translation in general requires more imagination and creativity than technical translation, for example. Consider the following play on words:

Wat zijn die kleine, blauwe bolletjes, oma?' vroeg Lien. 'Maanzaadjes,' antwoordde oma. 'Die zorgen ervoor dat de koekjes in je buik beginnen te schitteren zodra je in slaap valt.'
'What are those tiny silver dots on the cookies?' Zoe asked. 'Poppy seeds,' Nana replied. 'As soon as you fall asleep they will pop and sparkle in your tummy.'

The correct translation of *'maanzaadjes'* is 'poppy seeds', but the source text author plays with the word 'maan' which means 'moon' as in seeds that shine like the moon. The association with the moon or anything that shines and sparkles is lost in 'poppy seeds'. To keep the pun and the idea of sparkling seeds the translator translated *'blauw'* (blue) with 'silver' and added 'pop' in the translation of *'schitteren'* (sparkle).

'Hij heeft gewoon wat tijd nodig om alles te verwerken,' stelde de psychiater vast. 'Over enkele weken is hij weer helemaal de oude.' *'...? De oude? ...Wat bedoelt u?'* vroeg moeder Kriegel. *'Het joch is pas drie.'* *'Ik bedoel zoals voor de brand, mevrouw'* verduidelijkte de dokter.

*He just needs time to deal with everything,' the psychiatrist concluded. 'He'll be **back to normal** soon.'* *'Normal? What do you mean?'* Mother Treacle asked. *'He has never been normal.'*

In the Dutch source text Mother Treacle's literal understanding of the psychiatrist's figurative sentence *'weer de oude worden'* leads to a word play when she replies: 'He is only three'. A literal translation does not make sense in English and the word play was therefore substituted by an alternative one, that still made Mother Treacle look like a foolish woman.

The translation of similes is easy because they can be found in bilingual dictionaries. Languages often use the same cognitive fields to phrase comparisons e.g. *zo rood als een kreeft* / as red as a lobster. A text-specific translation problem can arise when the comparison does not take place in the same cognitive field as in *slapen als een os* / sleeping like a log and when the source text has used the comparison in a figurative and a literal way as in the following sentence:

'Zo', knikte Lien tevreden. 'Zo dood als een mus.'

'There we go' Zoe nodded satisfied. 'As dead as a dodo'.

The Dutch simile and the English translation both compare the greenfinch to another dead bird, a sparrow and a dodo respectively. The English translation is more melodic thanks to the alliteration and funnier because 'as dead as a dodo' also means that something is no longer interesting.

The following sentence is a combination of different tropes:

*Ze liet het trio ondertussen op de **handleren handschoenen** sabbelen, waarmee ze de drie **Kriegelkatjes** de eerste dag **had aangepakt**.*

*She let them bite the **kid gloves** she had used to handle the **Treacle kittens** on their first day of school.*

The source text author plays with the Dutch idiom ‘*geen katje om zonder handschoenen aan te pakken*’ which is said about someone who is not easy to handle. He uses the idiom in a literal way, because the Treacles literally bite the teacher’s leather gloves she uses to manage them. The translation could have done away with the word play and just translated the source text sentence with: ‘she let the trio bite the leather gloves she had used to handle the Treacle kittens on their first day of school’. However, a play on the English idiom ‘to treat someone with kid-gloves’ still played with gloves even though there is a slight nuance in meaning.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

Translators benefit from a systematic and functional approach to translation. It gives them the liberty to make decisions and elect strategies and at the same time the validation of those choices towards the commissioner or the source text author, for example.

This chapter was an annotative commentary to the translation process of *De zusjes Kriegel*. Through an outline of the *skopos*, the translation instructions and an account of recurring translation problems, the translator hoped to contribute to the research into the translation of children’s literature.

Even though the list of translation problems is not exhaustive and many more examples could have been found in the source text, this chapter has shown that the age and limited knowledge of the target audience dominated most of the decisions. It has also shown that the translator during the translation process continually looped back to the target text *skopos*, which allowed for a consistent problem-solving strategy.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will conclude and evaluate the study of a dialogic approach to the translation of *De zusjes Kriegel*. Firstly, the results of the empirical research will be discussed; Klingberg (1986) in chapter three indicated that research into the translation of children's literature should also touch upon target text reception (cf.1.4.2). The results of the practical survey served to support the conclusion to this study. Secondly, the entire study will be briefly summarised and some suggestions for further research will be given.

6.2 Reception Research

The reception research aims to validate this translator's hypothesis that English-speaking children would appreciate an English translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* and also queries the status of foreign children's literature on the English market.

6.2.1 Methodology

The test was conducted at the International School of Hout Bay, in Cape Town and was given to nineteen children between the age of eight and eleven. Most of the children had lived in the UK and spoke only English at home. Two pupils came from a bilingual background with English as one of their first languages.

First, the researcher read three chapters of *The Treacle Triplets* out loud and then gave each of the children one chapter to read in silence. In this way, the target text was tested on read-aloud and independent reading potential. The advantage of a dramatic reading is the fact that this researcher could assess the reactions of the class while reading out loud. The second part of the test was kept considerably shorter in order to keep the children alert and engaged in the story.

Lastly, the children were asked to complete a questionnaire of seven questions: four multiple-choice and three open questions. For the multiple-choice questions, the children were given

four options (definitely, maybe, maybe not, definitely not). The questionnaire and the complete statistical results can be found in Appendix A and B respectively.

6.2.2 Results

6.2.2.1 Question 1: *Do you think this is an abstract from an English children's book?*

This question tried to discern whether children recognised the target text as originally written in a different language. They had the following options:

- a) Yes, it was definitely written in England.
- b) Yes, it was written in English, but it could have been written in the USA.
- c) No, it could have been written in a foreign language and then translated into English.
- d) No, it is definitely a translation.

None of the children chose option d and 79 % of the children thought the book was originally written in English. This means that the language of *The Treacle Triplets* is idiomatic and does not bare any trace of translational activity, which was one of the requirements set out by the *skopos* of the translation.

6.2.2.2 Question 2: *What is your favourite children's book?*

By posing this open question the translator was curious to see whether any of the children would pick a foreign book. Out of nineteen children not one child had a foreign book as its favourite; all the books were originally written in English. Most of the books that were mentioned were part of a series such as the Twilight Saga, Alex Rider, Cat in the Hat, Famous Five and the Jean Ure books.

6.2.2.3. Question 3: *Do you ever read foreign books? Choose one*

- a) No, the best books come from England and the USA.
- b) No, I don't really come across a lot of foreign translated books in libraries and bookstores.
- c) Yes, I like reading translated foreign books as much as I like reading English books.
- d) Yes, I prefer reading translated foreign books, because they tell me the stories of other children all over the world.

This question gave some interesting results. 20% of the children thought the best books came from England and the USA and another 30% said they enjoyed foreign literature as much as local literature. Almost half of the children said they didn't really know any foreign literature, which is exactly what this thesis presupposed.

6.2.2.4 Question 4: *Name a foreign children's book you liked reading*

Admittedly, for a child between the age of eight and twelve this is not an easy question, but the results do reinforce the problem statement. Eleven out of nineteen children answered they had not read any foreign books or were not sure if they ever had. Only two children actually knew of a title of a foreign book. One child mentioned *Mao's lost dancer* which is an Australian book written in English by an author from Chinese descent and another child gave an actual foreign title *Hexe Lilly* which is a German book. It is important to mention that this child came from a bilingual background where the mother spoke German and the father English. Two children referred to Arabic books and South African legends in general and three other children gave titles of English books they thought were foreign.

6.2.2.5 Question 5: *Would you like to know what happens in the rest of this book? Choose one?*

- a) Yes, the triplets sound like a lot of fun!
- b) Yes, maybe I would enjoy it.
- c) No, I'm not sure I would finish the entire book.
- d) No, I would definitely not like to continue reading this book.

Almost 50% of the children chose option a and another 40% chose b. This is a very positive result and shows that the target group enjoyed the story. Even though the children were only given a 'teaser' of the target text and the test was carried out on a small scale, it still gives an important indication of the possible positive reception of the target text.

6.2.2.6 Question 6: *If you were the author of the story how would you name the triplets?*
Choose one.

- a) I like the names **Zoe, Chloe** and **Joey Treacle** so I would stick to them
- b) I think **Lien, Sien** and **Fien Kriegel** would be cool
- c) I would change it to **Lien, Sien** and **Fien Prickle**
- d) I think **Zoe, Chloe,** and **Joey Prickle** would be cool

With this question this researcher wanted to query her strategy of domestication. Would children when given the option choose the source text names or would they automatically opt for the naturalised ones? 68% of the children liked the names the triplets were given in the translation and 26% opted for Zoe, Chloe and Joey Prickle. Only 5% of the children went for the original source text names.

These results do not prove that character names should always be replaced by target text equivalents or creative equivalents, but it does demonstrate that children are more likely to pick names they can read easily. In order to get a better idea as to why they picked a certain set of names, the researcher asked them to motivate their choice.

Most of the answers referred to the aural quality of the names. A lot of the children liked the fact that Zoe, Chloe and Joey rhymed. Others mentioned the ‘ring’ of the names. It was interesting to notice that the children who chose option d: ‘Zoe, Chloe and Joey Prickle’, all mentioned that it suited their character better, because it made them sound mean. One child thought the original source text names made them sound mean. The translator could then conclude that maybe a literal translation of ‘*Kriegel*’ would have been better for children between the age of eight and twelve who do not really pick up on the irony behind ‘treacle’ yet. However, one child wrote the following comment:

I like them because they rhyme well and the triplets aren't as sweet as treacle!

This is exactly the effect this translator wanted to create: rhyme and irony. Especially, because the illustrations in the book and on the front cover show the triplets with sugary sweet grins. In order not to interfere with the test, however, the researcher did not show the book cover as it would have revealed the original title viz. *De zusjes Kriegel*.

6.2.3 Concluding Remarks

This small-scale empirical test definitely confirmed the potential success of *The Treacle Triplets*. Afterwards, many of the children asked this researcher where they could purchase the actual book. During the dramatic reading the researcher also noticed that the children were enraptured by the adventures of the evil threesome and laughed out loud at some of the abusive language and horrific deeds. It shows that *The Treacle Triplets* responds to the universal culture of the child and that it contains the necessary qualities of a popular children's book.

Even though there is no irrefutable evidence that a strategy of domestication was the only key to success, this translator believes that the empirical research still endorsed her chosen strategy. Children who preferred the target text names commented on rhyme and sound and children who favoured 'Prickle' mentioned the meaning of 'prickly' and 'treacle'. Notwithstanding, the target names still got the majority of the votes.

This test has also enhanced the current problem of English children's literature. There is not enough foreign children's literature available in bookstores and libraries, which was demonstrated by the children's inability to name a foreign children's book they had read. Reception research into the translation of children's literature can show the validity and success of foreign books and entice the English market to commission more translations.

6.3 Summary of the Study

6.3.1 Introduction

One of the objectives of this study was to call attention to the one-sided literary traffic by translating a popular Dutch children's book into English. It has been argued that the source text has the capability of functioning in any other language, because of its inconspicuous Flemish culture. Moreover, the source text shows traits of a universal children's culture and literature.

Another aim of this study can be related to a second important problem in translated children's literature: translating for children differs from translating for adults. The translator

has to take the limited world knowledge of the child into account and has to keep in mind children's different expectations from books. Children are generally not concerned with education; they won't pick up a foreign book, because they want to learn about a different culture. "Children do not care where books come from, they do not read them *because* they are foreign books, as adults often do, but regard them as stories of adventure, fantasies and so on" (Bamberger, 1976: 19). Humour and suspense are therefore very important in children's books. Children want to laugh, because it makes them feel safe. They also find abusive language and taboo funny, whereas adults find such subjects inappropriate. This leads to conflicting ideas about the quality of children's books.

This thesis was centred on the practical translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* from Dutch into English. The translation was preceded by a thorough source text analysis and an account of relevant literature on translation theory. The translation was then followed by an annotation of recurrent translation problems and a small-scale empirical reception test.

6.3.2 Evaluation of the study

Translation studies has not yet sufficiently studied the different treatment of translations of children's literature. Klingberg and Shavit object to domesticating strategies in children's literature. Klingberg fears a naturalised translation won't further the international outlook of the child and Shavit holds adaptations and abridgements responsible for the low status of children's literature in the literary polysystem.

Even Venuti, Berman and Schleiermacher advocate foreignising translations on pedagogical grounds and thereby ignore peripheral forms of literature such as children's books that do not benefit from an alienating approach.

It has been argued that functionalism as the most tolerant and democratic of translation theories can be useful for the translation of children's literature and literary translation in general. The only goal of any translation is that it fulfils its purpose. According to functionalism the most important questions a translator should ask himself is: for whom and what for. The *skopos* and the translation brief give the translator a constant point of reference during the translation process and enable a consistent problem-solving design.

Finally, Riita Oittinen's ideas on carnivalism and dialogue have been of tremendous importance for this study. Oittinen does not consider translating as producing 'sameness' but as 'rewriting'. A target text is born out of dialogue: dialogue with children, with the translator's inner child, with writing for children in English, with worldwide classic children's literature, the British culture, the universal culture of the child, etc.

The acceptability of translations differs in cultures and the British translation culture is notoriously resilient. The successful translation and the results of the reception test confirm that the translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* benefited from a domesticating strategy. An analysis of the source text had already predicted that a naturalising translation strategy would not lead to major adaptation problems, because the Flemish culture is not prominent at all. The translation could therefore easily be disguised as an original English text.

6.3.3 Further Research Possibilities

Translation of children's literature has not received enough attention in translation studies yet. Hence, the research possibilities for translated children's literature are vast and diverse.

The xenophobic culture of Great Britain could be further challenged by translations and the assessment thereof. Children's literature has become an industry with marketing budgets, sales targets and powerful publishing houses. The effect of capitalism on the quality of children's literature that is increasingly overshadowed by epigones and unoriginal writing could be examined.

One could also have a look at the translation traditions and trends in different countries. Would a French translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* be more viable than an English translation, for example?

It would also be interesting to compare a domesticated translation of *De zusjes Kriegel* to a foreignised version and then examine their different reception.

6.3.4 Final Remarks

Children grow up with stories about distant countries, magical creatures, talking animals and young heroes and heroines. Translations of those stories have contributed to the process of

canonisation of children's literature and have turned many books into worldwide classics. Ghesquière (2006: 25) argued that by confronting authors with the best from elsewhere, they stimulated the production of literature in the national language.

Translations may have played their part too well. Presently, the English national children's literature has developed to such an extent that it does not seem to require any more translations. This creates a power struggle and an imbalance of exchange in the field of children's literature. English books, often chosen for their economic potential and not for their literary merit, dominate children's literature.

This implies a loss for the world library of children's literature, because "we never know what sets a child's imagination on fire but if we DON'T offer children the experience of literature from other languages, we're starving them. It's as simple as that" (Pullman, 2005: 9).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

1. *Do you think this is an abstract from an English children's book. Choose one.*

- Yes, it was definitely written in England
- Yes, it was written in English, but it could have been written in the USA
- No, it could have been written in a foreign language and then translated into English
- No, it is definitely a translation

2. *What is your favourite children's book?*

3. *Do you ever read foreign books? Choose one.*

- No, the best books come from England and the USA
- No, I don't really come across a lot of foreign translated books in libraries and book stores
- Yes, I like reading translated foreign books as much as I like reading English books
- Yes, I prefer reading translated foreign books, because they tell me the stories of other children all over the world.

4. *Name a foreign children's book you liked reading*

5. *Would you like to know what happens in the rest of this book? Choose one.*

- Yes, the triplets sound like a lot of fun!
- Yes, maybe I would enjoy it.

- No, I'm not sure I would finish the entire book.
- No, I would definitely not like to continue reading this book.

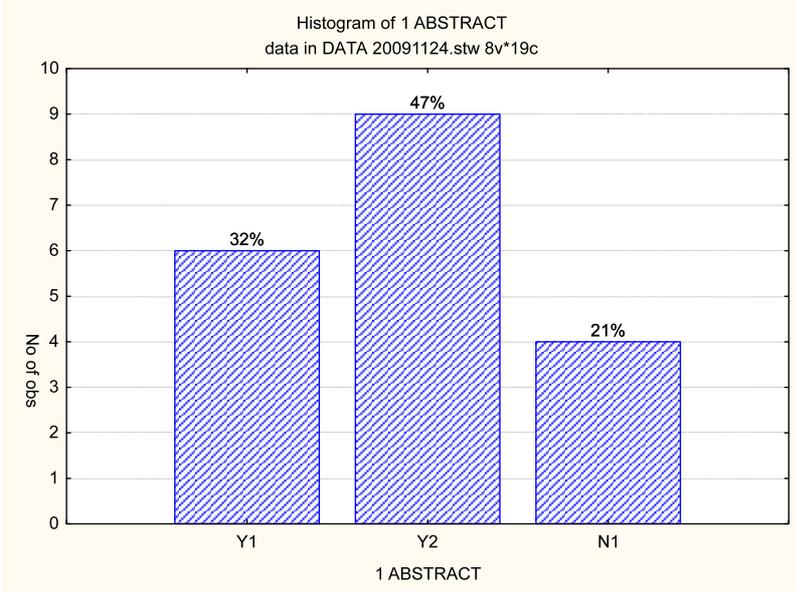
6. *If you were the author of the story how would you name the triplets? **Choose one.***

- I like the names **Zoe, Chloe and Joey Treacle** so I would stick to them
- I think **Lien, Sien and Fien Kriegel** would be cool
- I would change it to **Lien, Sien and Fien Prickle**
- I think **Zoe, Chloe, and Joey Prickle** would be cool

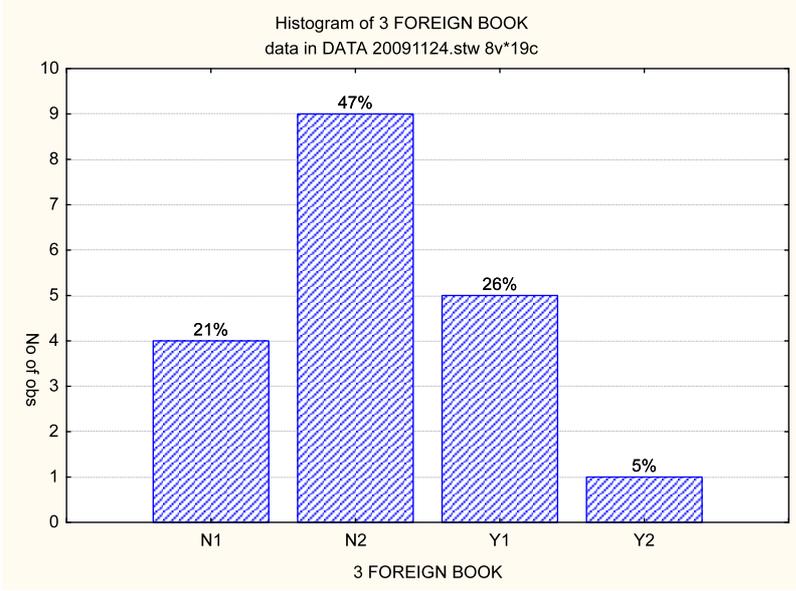
Can you please motivate your choice:

APPENDIX B: STATISTICAL RESULTS

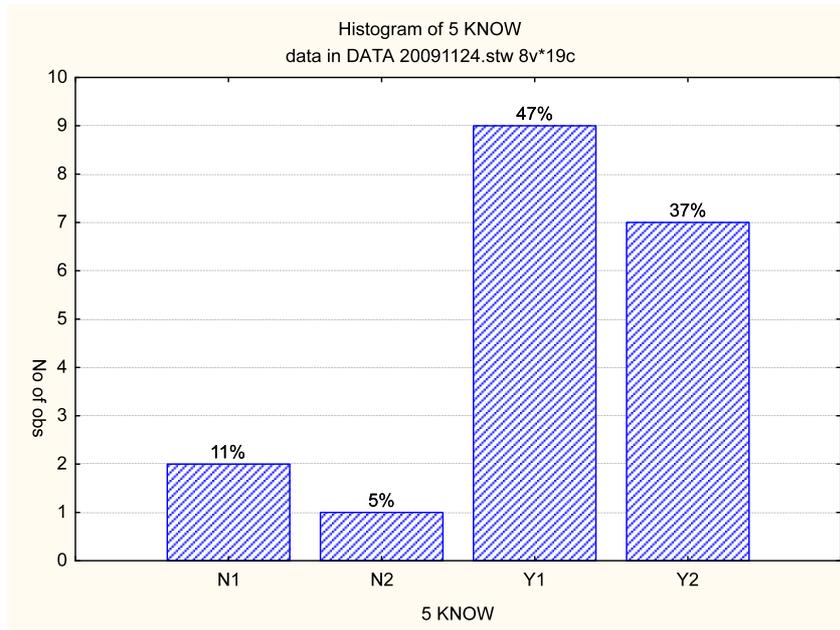
Histogram of “Do you think this is an abstract from an English children’s book?”



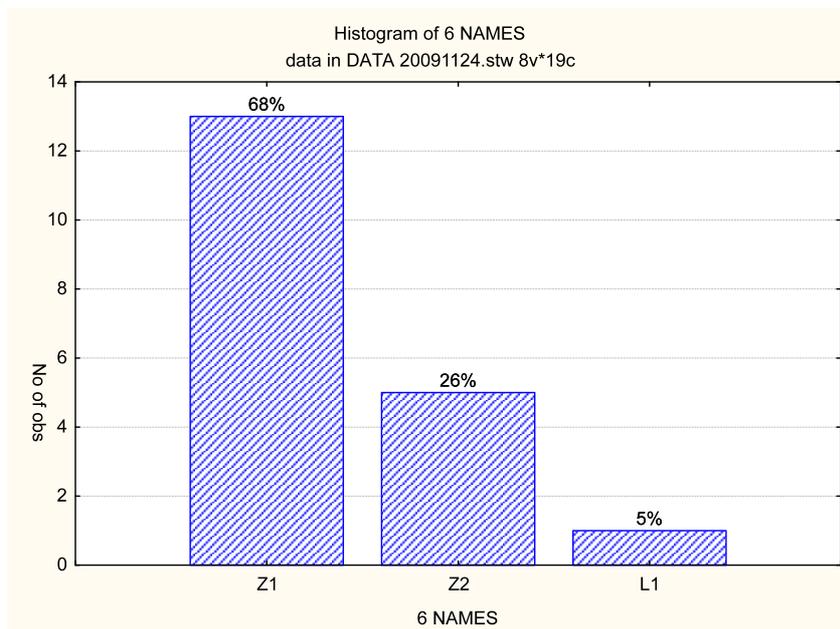
Histogram of “Do you ever read foreign books?”



Histogram of “Would you like to know what happens in the rest of this book?”



Histogram of “If you were the author of the story how would you name the triplets?”



Frequency table: “What is your favourite children’s book?”

Category	Frequency table: 2 FAVOURITE BOOK (data in DAT)			
	Count	Cumulative Count	Percent	Cumulative Percent
the hobbit	1	1	5.555556	5.5556
lord of the rings	1	2	5.555556	11.1111
Twilight	1	3	5.555556	16.6667
savvy	1	4	5.555556	22.2222
the worst in the world	1	5	5.555556	27.7778
cat in the hat	1	6	5.555556	33.3333
Alex vider scorpia	1	7	5.555556	38.8889
shakespeare	1	8	5.555556	44.4444
charlie hidgon	1	9	5.555556	50.0000
famous 5 collection	1	10	5.555556	55.5556
Jean Ure	1	11	5.555556	61.1111
black beauty	1	12	5.555556	66.6667
the secret diary of adrian mole	1	13	5.555556	72.2222
Eragon	1	14	5.555556	77.7778
the twits	1	15	5.555556	83.3333
charlie and the chocolate factory	1	16	5.555556	88.8889
the wishing chain	1	17	5.555556	94.4444
just henry	1	18	5.555556	100.0000

Frequency table: “Name a foreign children’s book you liked reading”

Category	Frequency table: 4 NAME FOREIGN BOOK (data in DAT)			
	Count	Cumulative Count	Percent	Cumulative Percent
don't think I read one	1	1	5.882353	5.8824
not sure	1	2	5.882353	11.7647
not remember	1	3	5.882353	17.6471
Winter, Hexe Lilly	1	4	5.882353	23.5294
arabic books	1	5	5.882353	29.4118
cat in the hat	1	6	5.882353	35.2941
do not know	1	7	5.882353	41.1765
upup and away	1	8	5.882353	47.0588
horrible science	1	9	5.882353	52.9412
I don't know of any that Ive read	1	10	5.882353	58.8235
Renswke's Kingdom	1	11	5.882353	64.7059
haven't read, I think	1	12	5.882353	70.5882
Mao's lost dancet	1	13	5.882353	76.4706
south african legends	1	14	5.882353	82.3529
haven't read any	1	15	5.882353	88.2353
I don't know of any	1	16	5.882353	94.1176
im not sure I know any	1	17	5.882353	100.0000

APPENDIX C: SOURCE TEXT

