

**MA-Thesis Translation studies**  
**English**



**AFRICAN AMERICAN IDENTITY AND  
TRANSLATION CHALLENGES IN TONI  
MORRISON'S *JAZZ***

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*“Pain. I seem to have an affection, a kind of sweettooth for it. Bolts of lightning,  
little rivulets of thunder.  
And I the eye of the storm.”*

— Toni Morrison, *Jazz*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The central theme of this thesis is to explore the effects of the African American cultural identity in the translation of literary prose texts. Due to the growing level of worldwide globalisation, identity has emerged as an important issue in public and political debate and the translation of literature plays an important role in transferring cultural heritage across boundaries. Identity in literature highlights differences between cultures, and authors deliberately emphasis on identity in their manner of writing. As a consequence, technical translation problems occur in terms of style in written literary texts.

The notion of style is a technical problem in itself that is found important enough to mention separately in the act of analysing a text, but at the same time it is a very abstract technical problem that needs a good and clear context to operate in. According to Koster, it is impossible to focus on “the style of a text”, as the text itself rarely holds a uniform style, but rather consists of what Koster calls “multiple stylistic effects” (4). This opposing approach takes the stylistic effects of the text as the basic assumption and all the separate stylistic effects together form the style of the text.

The important aspect of style in translation is that the author of a certain text has made specific expressional choices to achieve a certain linguistic or aesthetic effect (Koster 6). As Leech and Short mention, style “refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose, and so on” (9). Within the field of translation, it is customary to look at a text by focusing on the specific use of language in terms of stylistic effects and the possible options to transfer these effects into the target language by using the means that are made available to the translator in the target language. Evidently, thinking of style as ‘the linguistic characteristics of a particular text’ (Leech & Short 9) will be the most lucrative way of gaining a better understanding of a text and is the first step in the translation process.

Toni Morrison's novel *Jazz* extensively concentrates on the notion of identity of the African American culture. Morrison's use of specific characteristics effects help to strengthen the aesthetic effect of jazz literature in this African American novel by means of describing the situational development of this minority group. The aim of this thesis is to describe the specific effects of the most important stylistic aspects on the content novel, and also find out what the possible and most suitable solutions are to these problems. The following research question will hopefully bring all parts of this thesis together and form one cohesive piece of work:

*In what way do the stylistic effects in the novel contribute to the identity of African-Americans in Morrison's novel Jazz and how can these effects be best addressed by the translator in the process of translating the novel to Dutch?*

In this thesis the focus is particularly on three of the main stylistic effects used by Morrison in *Jazz*, which are the narrative discourse, the African American vernacular and the metaphors. The first chapter of this thesis, focuses on the contextual part and gives a more extensive view on Morrison's own background as well as how her personal story has contributed to her successful career as a writer of African American literature. This part also includes a brief summary of the novel *Jazz* that serves as an introduction to the novel and will contribute to the reader's understanding of the subsequent parts of this thesis. The next chapter is about the notion of the African American cultural identity and the role of the translator in the process of locating identity features during the translation process. The third chapter contains the actual translation relevant textual analysis which touches upon different translation problems that occur in *Jazz* and focuses on possible solutions to these problems. The most suitable solutions will be used in the fifth chapter, the translation of several selected passages from the novel. This thesis also includes a comparison with a published translation and finally the conclusion and bibliography.

## 2. CONTEXTUALISATION

### 2.1. The author

#### Personal life

Toni Morrison<sup>1</sup> was born Chloe Anthony Wofford on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio. The racial situation in America caused both her grandparents and her parents to migrate from the South to the Northern cities where they had to leave everything behind and build up an entirely new life. Passing on of the black cultural heritage to the next generation was something Morrison's grandparents and parents found extremely important and music played a vital role in it. Morrison's mother constantly sang while her grandfather played the violin, and the fact that her parents were very gifted story-tellers and used to teach their children about the family history and 'the vitality of their people's language' was an inspiration to Morrison's work of fiction. (Carmean 2). As she herself explained later in life during an interview: "Aural literature leans heavily on oral traditional ways", by which she meant to say that stories in many literary novels find their origins in history that has been passed on from mouth to mouth for generations (Denard 31).

#### Education

Morrison's grandparents shared the view that "the pursuit of education, if based on a strong sense of values and personal worth, was a key to a better life" (Carmean 2). When Morrison went to school in her early life, she could already read and over the years she developed a passion for reading English literature. In 1949 Morrison went to University to get a BA at Howard University and in 1953 she graduated for an MA at Cornell University, both in English Literature. Her father helped her pay her

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<sup>1</sup> The information in this chapter was found on: <<http://kunst-en-cultuur.infonu.nl/biografie/90509-toni-morrison-nobelprijswinnares.html>> and <[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1993/morrison-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1993/morrison-bio.html)>.

tuition fees by working three jobs at the same time. After her graduation she started her academic career as a teacher at several universities, worked as an editor, and she gave lectures which were mainly about African American literature. It was not until she joined a group of fiction writers that she started working on her first novel. The genre in each of her novels is the history of African American culture and the struggles of minority groups - mainly women - in life. As a result, people considered Morrison to be of major importance in the establishment of African Americans literature in America, and therefore she has been awarded with the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 and she was the first black female to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993.

### **Writing career**

Toni Morrison mentioned that before she started writing she felt that 'at some point she didn't belong in this world anymore' (Carmean 1). Being born and raised in America she felt trapped between two worlds, being the daughter of African American parents and raised in a predominantly white society. When she started working on her first novel *Song of Solomon* in 1970, she discovered that writing "was a way of knowing, a way of thinking" and from that moment on her entire life changed drastically (Carmean 1). She found that writing was not only pleasurable but also necessary for her, because it made her understand both her position as an individual within the American society as well as her position within the African American society (Carmean 1). With her writings Morrison's influence has reached readers with all sorts of different ethnical backgrounds and her novels form a bridge between different cultures across nations. Her sixth novel *Jazz* was first published in 1992 and forms the second part of the trilogy on African-American history, beginning with *Beloved* (1987) and ending with *Paradise* (1997).

## 2.2. A historical fiction in jazz literature

*Jazz* belongs to the genre of historical novels. A historical novel is a novel in which the story takes place during a specific historical period before the time of writing, and functions as a means to accurately imbed the novel in the customs and mentality of that period. The story of *Jazz* is set in the mid 1920's during the Harlem Renaissance when large groups of African Americans moved from the South to the Northern cities of America during the Great Migration in an attempt to escape slavery on the plantation fields. *Jazz* tells the story of two main characters named Violet and her husband Joe Trace who were among the African Americans that left the rural country side in the South and took the train to the 'promised land' of "the City", the place that promised forgetfulness and offered "the possibility of freedom from history", hoping for a better future (Morrison; Denard 83). Although the exact name of "the City" is never mentioned in the novel, the context gives away that this is the city of New York. The cruel and terrible inflictions of slavery on the plantation fields in the South and the effect it has on the characters' present day lives form the background of *Jazz* as they are still subject to division during this large historical conflict between ethnicities. A historical novel functions to help the reader gaining a better understanding on how other religions, cultures and societies form the basis of contemporary identities. This understanding shows readers how they can learn from actions in the past.

*Jazz* also belongs to the subgenre of "jazz literature". Jazz is not a solitary art and does not only reveal itself in the music. Instead, jazz finds its manifestations in many other forms of expression, such as in writings and modern art. Jazz literature is well-known for its powerful narratives who tell the story about the African American experience in a predominantly white society. Opposed to the general idea that the origins of jazz literature entirely originated in the African culture, it was actually influenced by the American culture. This subgenre focuses on the struggle of African American slaves and the formation of the African American identity that provides a

dissenting opinion towards negative perceptions. Many African American writers felt the urge to provide a voice for those whose voices were “beaten into submission”<sup>2</sup>.

### **2.3. The novel: *Jazz***

#### **The title**

Morrison’s choice to name this novel *Jazz* derived from her own interest in the general concept of “jazz” and what this all meant before it became redistributed as music throughout the world. Only the nature of improvisation is consistent in the debate about the subject. Morrison wanted to capture this quality in the lives of African American people. For African American people, jazz represented ownership of one’s own emotions and the determination to survive. Morrison used the term because it sums all this up and the fact that she could actually use the term *Jazz* as a title was pure luck (Morrison; Denard 51).

#### **The story**

*Jazz* describes the history of the African Americans from slavery onwards. The novel tells the story of the country people who moved to the city in the North of America hoping to start a new life and be able to forget about their terrible lives as slaves on the country side. *Jazz* captures “the phenomena of the city seen from the eyes of country folk”, full of opportunities, but instead the city turned out to be deceitful, because the past “has constituted disturbances and hungers that will not go away in the city, but that the city will augment in new ways” (Grewal 124-126). Morrison’s aim for writing *Jazz* was not to describe the “milestones that African Americans achieved in those years” (Tally 60). Instead, she focuses on the continuing struggle in the everyday lives of the African Americans. Despite their migration to the city they are haunted by memories of their past lives that paradoxically are of great

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.studentpulse.com/articles/542/jazz-writing-identity-and-multiculturalism-in-jazz-literature>

importance for the development of the present lives of the characters in the city (Tally 161).

In *Jazz*, the search for identity is examined through the story of Violet and her husband Joe Trace, who moved to the City to improve their standard of living. The story starts with a woman named Violet who is sitting in her apartment after she returned from a funeral where she has mutilated the dead girl's face with a knife. Violet's husband, middle-aged door-to-door salesman Joe Trace, had an affair with this eighteen-year old girl named Dorcas, but he shot her out of misguided love. Joe Trace has fallen in love with Dorcas during one of his work-related visits at the hair parlour. When he first meets Dorcas his relationship with Violet had reached rock bottom because Violet stopped putting effort in making their marriage work. Violet has lost all interest in herself, her marriage and life in general. She cannot find comfort or joy in anything. Joe meets Dorcas several times a week to sleep with her in a rented apartment. Dorcas lives with her aunt Alice Manfred who has taken up the responsibility of raising Dorcas after her father got killed by a mob and her mother burnt to death the same day during a riot. When Dorcas became a teenager, Alice started having difficulties teaching her moralities and Dorcas started acting out by dating a much older man (Tally 60). After Dorcas' funeral, Violet visits Alice Manfred because she wants to know everything about the girl her husband fell in love with. The two women seem to get along very well and develop a mutual respect towards each other. At the end of the novel Dorcas's best friend Felice visits Joe Trace at home because she wants to tell him that Dorcas does not blame him for having shot her and that he should stop worrying about being her murderer and start taking up life. During her visits Felice talks to Joe and Violet and in those conversations the reader learns that the characters are one step closer to the fulfilment of their self-identification. The conclusion of the novel is that Dorcas' death has led to the renewed relationship between Joe and Violet and newly developed connections between Felice, Joe and Violet and Violet and Alice.

According to Carmean (101), the shameful history of African-Americans affects all the characters in *Jazz*, even though it is not at all Morrison's intention to have the reader pity them, or as she put it herself: 'they are not available for the reader's pity' (Denard 58). The beauty of *Jazz* is the relation of the characters' individual past lives to their present-day actions. The third-person narrator takes the reader back to the time when Violet's grandmother True Belle worked for a young white girl named Vera Louise who got pregnant from an African American man who worked for her father. This man leaves Vera Louise because he fears for his life when her father finds out the truth. Shortly after, Vera Louise gives birth to a baby boy and she calls him Golden Gray. When Golden grows up, he leaves home to find his father. On his way over he sees a naked and pregnant black woman sitting in a tree next to the road, but when she tries to run she bumps her head and falls on to the ground. Golden takes her with him to his father's house where she gives birth to a baby boy. Her mental state makes her unable to take care of her baby and she leaves him behind and returns to the woods.

As a baby, Joe is taken in with Rhonda and Frank Williams. In his character's speech Joe speaks about the seven stages of transformation he went through during his life. When he is a young adult man, he is led to believe that he is the child of the wild woman who lived a timid existence in the woods and he makes three hunting expeditions in an attempt to find her, but he never does. Joe met Violet a few years later in the South and they got married before they moved to the City together. However, his longing to 'hunt' and find 'traces' does not stop and, thus, when Dorcas leaves him for a much younger guy, her disappearance reminds him so badly of the hunt for this wild woman that he starts hunting traces to find Dorcas in the city.

Violet's character is probably the most controversial of all characters in *Jazz*. The past take her back to her mother's suicide and the fact that she is not able to have children of her own. She has lost the grip on her own life and that causes her to become a very introvert woman over the years in the City. She earns good money

from her work as a freelance hairdresser, which makes the other hairdressers in the shop envy her. Her attack on the dead girl is the reason why the other women in the neighbourhood start calling her 'Violent'.

Although the development of the individual stories of the characters is such a tragic one, the conclusion of the story is that each character has undergone a personal transformation. Morrison explains that:

“what one does with one’s own life under the given situation, and how one comes to terms with one’s own life under the given situation is what is fascinating to me.” (Denard 18)

The story also tells about real life incidents, such as when Alice Manfred and Dorcas are present during the march on Fifth Avenue. This march was held in New York City in 1917, when ten thousand African Americans marched in a silent parade, protesting against the riots in East St. Louis. This riot was an outbreak of race-related violence against African American workers who arrived from the South and were excluded from work. Almost two hundred people died during this riot.

#### **2.4 The structure of the novel**

The novel has a rather complex narrative structure. The perspectives on the story come from two main narrative voices and two long character’s speeches by Joe Trace and Felice. Morrison’s choice for this fascinating narrative discourse structure derives from her belief that it is important not to have a totalizing view, a definite or authoritarian view from somebody speaking for us as though there is no singularity and no diversity but rather only one version (Morrison; Denard 86).

The first narrator in the novel is the anonymous first-person (internal) voice. This narrator subjectively tells about the lives of the characters and their feelings and emotions towards each other and about situations in both the present and past. French literary theorist Gérard Genette, author of *Narrative Discourse*, calls this an

“intradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator”, a narrative paradigm that terms a narrator “in the second degree who tells stories she is in the whole absent from” (248). Morrison explains that when she was thinking about who was going to tell the story, she was looking for a voice that would be one of assumed knowledge (Morrison; Denard 94). The sex, gender and age of this first-person narrator are not revealed. Normally, the first-person voice is an unreliable narrator because he or she is limited in his/her knowledge about the characters’ thoughts and the evolvement of the story. His or her task is to provide the reader with information and to let other voices speak. However, this voice becomes so much involved in the process of imagination that it takes on the role of an omniscient narrator and in doing so claiming dominant ownership of the story and the characters:

I know that woman (3) ... I know him so well (119) ... The sweater under his suit jacket would be buttoned all the way up, but I know his thoughts are not (119) ... He is avoiding her, I know (152) ... I know he is a hypocrite (154) ... I know better (154).

The extreme use of the word ‘know’ by this voice goes against the rules of the unreliable narrator and therefore the reader’s first reflex would be to doubt everything this narrator states. This should activate the reader’s mind to start improvising within the text. In one of her interviews Morrison said that she gave the reader hints about her characters instead of full descriptions so the reader has to fill in the gaps. Throughout the story, after having heard the other voices speak for themselves, this narrative adjusts its opinion and continues its story with more knowledge (Morrison; Denard 94). The narrator itself explains exactly this process near the end of the story when it says:

“I thought I knew them and wasn’t worried that they didn’t really know about me. Now it’s clear why they contradicted me at every turn: they knew

me all along. ... They knew how little I could be counted on; how poorly, how shabbily my know-it-all self covered helplessness. ... Now I know.”  
(Morrison 220)

Within the confined space of the first-person narrator two character’s speeches of Joe Trace and Felice are implemented. Character’s speeches consist of literal renderings of the words characters speak, indicated by the opening quotation marks at the beginning of each new paragraph. Since Joe and Felice are not talking to another character in the novel, we can assume that they directly address the implied reader. In *Jazz* the character’s speeches function as a means to refute preconceived ideas about characters and events formed earlier by the first-person narrator. For example, the first-person narrator emphasis on the age difference between Joe and Dorcas and makes Joe look like a dirty old man who is after much younger girls. But in fact, as we learn from Joe himself during his character’s speech, his past live has much more influence on his present day behaviour as he thought and he holds on to Dorcas as a compensation for the loss of a mother-figure. Moreover, Joe starts his character’s speech by telling the reader that he would not tell another man about his relationship with Dorcas; “it’s not a thing you tell another man”. With this confession Joe shows his respect towards Dorcas and the reader can conclude that Joe considered the relationship he had with her to be a serious one. This contradicts the idea the reader got from the first-person narrator, who portrayed Joe as a dirty old man:

“Makes me wonder about Joe. All the good things he gets from the Windemere, and he pays almost as much money for stale and sticky peppermint as he does for the room he rents to fuck in. ... Rat. No wonder it ended the way it did.” (Morrison 121)

The character's speeches also function in a way that the reader gets the information directly from the character and the reader will be able to complete his or her interpretation of this character based on the linguistic features that form his speech presentation. Both Joe's and Felice's speech contain flashbacks to their individual past lives and these flashbacks contribute to the formation of their own characters.

The second narrative voice is that of the third-person (external) narrator, which is the more "impersonal" style of narration where the references to itself are avoided (Leech & Short 213). For this second narrative voice Genette applied the term extradiegetic-heterodiegetic paradigm, "a narrator in the first degree who tells a story he is absent from" (248). However, this is not an omniscient narrative voice, because Morrison wanted to avoid having one voice that has all of the truth (Morrison; Denard 126). In the following example this narrator tells the story about Alice Manfred without referring to himself:

"Privately, Alice admired them, the coats and the women who wore them. She sewed linings into these coats, when she felt like working." (Morrison 55)

In *Jazz* the third-person narrator tells the story of three main characters, namely Violet, Joe Trace, and Alice Manfred. Throughout the novel the narrator switches between characters, connecting them with each other not only by the murder of Dorcas, but also by their individual past lives. Within the story told by this third-person narrator, the reader is taken further back into history where they learn about the past lives of the characters. These are what they refer to as "flashbacks" as the following example shows:

"Violet and Joe left Tyrell, a railway stop through Vesper County, in 1906, and boarded the colored section of the Southern Sky." (Morrison 30)

The different narrative voices, the character's speeches and the flashbacks together contribute to the completion of the characters. At the end of the story they turned into completed characters with a past, a present and a future.

### 3. THEORETICAL APPROACH TO IDENTITY

The question of identity has been the focus of a growing body of research in translation studies. Researchers and translators now draw their attention to language as a means of shaping experience by focusing on identity. This thesis concentrates on the notion of identity in relation to literature, moreover on the translation problems that develop when linguistic features are applied to emphasize the cultural identity of the characters and the story. These translation problems will be dealt with in the following chapter. The aim of this chapter is to explain the difficulties of determining one's identity and the theoretic approach of the translator towards identity in translation.

#### 3.1 The notion of identity

Before the aspect of identity through translation is being discussed, it is important to first explain the notion of identity in general. Defining the term "identity" adequately has proven to be very difficult, according to Steph Lawler, author of *Identity: Sociological Perspectives*. He mentions that it seems impossible to provide a single, overarching definition of the term since there are various ways of theorizing the concept, each of which develops different kinds of definitions (2). However, at this point it is useful to try and give a general definition.

The notion of identity hinges on a paradoxical combination of sameness and difference (Lawler 2). We create our individual identity by collecting features that apply to our inner and outer selves, such as skin colour, gender, profession, sexual preferences, religion, language, etc. The combination of these features then distinguishes us from other people. It is also possible for a group of people to collect features that distinguish them from other groups, and it is even possible for people to separate others by using their features against them, as happened during the Holocaust for example. Lawler captures the complex explanation of identity as follows:

“One important meaning of the term ... rests on the idea that not only are we identical with ourselves (that is, the same being from birth to death) but we are identical with others. That is, we *share* common identities - as humans, say, but also, within this, as ‘women’, ‘men’, ‘British’, ‘American’, ‘white’, ‘black’, etc. At the same time, however, there is another aspect of identity, which suggests people’s uniqueness, their *difference* from others.” (Lawler 2)

Burke and Stets, authors of *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory* explain that having a particular social identity means being like others in the group and seeing things from the group’s perspective (in-group), in comparison with another group (out-group) (226). Identities thus centre on the processes through which individuals and groups maintain or diminish social boundaries and in doing so marking themselves as the same and others as different in search for the answer to the question “who am I?” (Auer 31). The problem here in answering this - what seems to be - simple question is that identity is “located in the space between two poles”, namely on the one end the position where the individual places himself and on the other hand the position society places him (Gumperz & Gumperz; Auer 478). Both positions contribute to a person’s identity, but when these two poles do not coincide the consequences for the person’s self-image are devastating.

### **3.2 The African American experience of identity**

Postcolonialism in America tells the story of African American people during times of slavery in America when they were segregated by the majority which caused a huge identity crises among African Americans. Tunde Adeleke, author of the article *Who Are We? Africa and the Problem of Black American Identity*, mentions that the experience of dislocation and dehumanization that enslavement and transplantation entailed caused a long-run effect on the African Americans even long after the move to the Northern parts of the country. In order to make the institution of slavery work,

slaves were made to acknowledge “the poverty and nullity of their backgrounds” and “internalize a consciousness of helplessness and vulnerability that would render them totally dependent on the masters” (Adeleke 56). According to Adeleke, new developments of the democratic nation that strived to maintain equal rights and no racial discrimination led to more problems of self-definition among African Americans, since they could no longer make out whether they were American, Negro or maybe both (50). He also mentions that the absence of correspondence between the interests and values of African Americans and those of the larger society has been a defining character of African American history and has formed perceptions of African American identity (50). A fundamental challenge has been to determine whether African Americans are Americans who have shed every cultural habit of their African ancestry, or Africans who retained their African cultural habits but found residence in an alien environment (Adeleke 51). Knowing and affirming one’s identity was considered critical in the struggle for freedom, especially since enslavement entailed the destruction of the African identity. The acculturation of European values, enslavement and memories of African culture became the foundation for a new identity (Adeleke 55).

### **3.3 The notion of identity in Morrison’s work of fiction**

With her status as a African American female writer, Morrison tries to get through to people who still make a distinction between African and American and in doing so deny the multiculturalism in the United States and instead focus on the racial differences between people with a different ethnical background. With her work, Morrison considers literary language to be an instrument of national regeneration (Morrison; Nowlin 153). She committed herself to write in order to secure a place within the American literary culture for her work and the African American literary tradition, and putting the focus on the notion of cultural pluralism instead of racial difference (Nowlin 152). Therefore, she wanted the novel to be free of major white characters, and that confrontation between African Americans and white people

which destabilizes the narrative she wanted to tell, because she was more interested in the reality of African American people (Morrison; Nowlin 58). In writing her novel, she took responsibility for having minority voices heard among a large audience rather than having the entire story focused on the power relationship of slavery. Morrison's novels portray an amalgam of feelings, experiences and voices of people who are subject to racism in contemporary America (Albrecht-Crane 58).

*Jazz* belongs to the subgenre of jazz literature and thus the search for identity is the central theme in this novel. The personal experiences of the individual characters show how "the trauma of racism is a severe fragmentation of the self", of which Joe and Violet are both victims. Their past lives have a major effect on their present lives and the collision of these two opposites is the cause of their struggle to find their identity. At the same time, however, they are a vivid example of being conscious of racism, which is an essential means of achieving wholeness, completeness, and self-ownership (Morrison; Nowlin 159). This happens to both Joe and Violet near the end of the novel when Felice said that she believes that Joe still loves his wife and Violet tells her that she has lost herself along the way. The following example is a part of that conversation between Felice and Violet. Here Violet admits to the reader that she is not the crazy woman the other hairdressers think she is, but instead explains that her identity had been taken away from her:

"What's the world for if you can't make it up the way you want it?"

...

"What's the point? I can't change it."

"That's the point. If you don't, it will change you and it'll be your fault because you let it. I let it. And messed up my life."

"Messed it up how?"

"Forgot it."

"Forgot?"

“‘Forgot it was mine. My life. I just ran up and down the streets wishing I was somebody else.’

“‘Who? Who’d you want to be?’

“‘Not who so much as what. White. Light. Young again.’” (Morrison 208)

The conversation between Violet and Felice also shows the contrast between two generations of African Americans before and after the Great Migration, one being raised in the country and having had to live under the terrible conditions of slavery, while the other one was brought up in the City. The reader learns about Violet and Joe moving from the country to “the City”, where they were hoping to start over again, but instead they learn that the freedom they seek cannot be found in the City either. Violet and Joe moved to a new environment while the memories they carry within themselves keep haunting them. They go through the tragedy of choosing somebody, risking love and emotion and then losing it all (Morrison, Denard 83). Violet realizes during the conversation with Felice that love, “the space where one could negotiate freedom” cannot be found on a geographical location, but rather within the human heart, which in the case of African Americans was to be found both in their own hearts as well as in the hearts of their masters (Morrison, Denard 83). In the following example Felice reacts on Violet, who said she would rather not have moved to the City:

“‘I messed up my own life,’ she told me. ‘Before I came North I made sense and so did the world. We didn’t have nothing but we didn’t miss it.’

“‘Who ever heard of that? Living in the City was the best thing in the world. What can you do in the country? When I visited Tuxedo, back when I was a child, even then I was bored.’” (Morrison 207)

The character of Golden Grey is another example of a troubled individual who has difficulties in finding peace with his identity. Golden Grey is the son of a young

white girl and an African American man. His identity-crisis is very different from Violet's and Joe's in a sense that he grows up "learning to categorize the world by black and white" (Albrecht-Crane 61). As a young man, Golden Grey goes off to kill the man who is said to be his father, but he is "haunted" by the knowledge that even if he succeeds in killing the African American man who is father, "his whiteness will never be fully recovered" (Nowlin 162). He realizes that he will never be one or the other, but instead he finds himself caught between two colliding worlds.

Another stylistic feature that is often used in African American literature is the representation of identity through complex narrative structures. Authors of jazz literature often use the narrative to provide a voice for all the African American people whose voice was taken from them by masters who forced them into slavery. What strikes Morrison most about the African American culture is its variety and therefore she tried to give some credibility to all sorts of voices, each of which is profoundly different (Denard 86). Morrison's improvisation and alternation between the different (narrative) voices derives from her belief that it is important not to have one definite version that is considered to be the ultimate truth. This causes the narrative situation in *Jazz* to be indisputably linked to the subject of identity. Tally quoted Susan Lanser when she mentions that "narration entails social relationships and thus involves far more than the technical imperatives for getting a story told" (Tally 151). Morrison's choice for this fascinating narrative discourse structure derives from her belief that it is important not to have a "totalizing view" (Morrison; Denard 86). Despite the successful outcome of the narrative discourse she admits that getting the voices to form one story was a real challenge, because she wanted to represent the idea of having thought out the story completely and at the same time let it appear as if it were invented on the spot, like jazz, because "jazz predicts its own music" (Denard 85).

The English vernacular spoken in the novel is yet another stylistic feature used for the purpose of referring to the African-American culture. Gentler mentions that with the importation of multiple groups speaking different languages from a range

of social and economic backgrounds, indeed translated texts are already referring to at least two different sign systems and cultural traditions (2). In the case of jazz literature - to which *Jazz* belongs - these two different sign systems are the American sign system and the African-American sign system within the American culture. As Anderman, author of *Voices in Translation* said, "having the language of a people mirrored by characters in a novel can lead to a profound relationship of identity" (44). Many scholars believe that the African American Vernacular English, AAVE in short, arose from the Creole languages developed from the contacts between nonstandard varieties of colonial English and African languages during the trans-Atlantic slave trade that started in the sixteenth century and lasted until the late nineteenth century<sup>3</sup>. However, the exact languages that contributed to AAVE still remain subject of debate.

### 3.4 Identity in translation

In his review on Brodzki's *Can These Bones Live? Translation, Survival, and Cultural Memory* Michael Cronin said that the question of how we manage to behold anything cultural is all about how we manage to carry cultures and languages or experiences across boundaries (189). Michael Cronin uses the modern notion of "cosmopolitanism" to discuss the phenomenon of identity in relation to translation (7). Cronin applies multiple definitions to explain the concept of cosmopolitanism, but only two of these definitions apply to "cultural cosmopolitanism". The first one is that a person has the ability to engage with people in other cultures who speak different languages. The other definition beholds that humans have multiplicity of different ways in which they can be defined or described (2). This relates to the ideas of Steph Lawler:

"People might find themselves primarily defined ... by their age or their gender or their social class or their ethnicity, or by the neighbourhood in

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/blackhistory/article-9118204>

which they live, or by a combination of these different forms of belonging. In this view, cosmopolitanism is a way of thinking through the complexity of a polyidentity rather than accepting single, all-encompassing identities for human subjects based on one variable alone.” (Cohen 1992: 478-83, in Cronin 10)

Sherry Simon mentions in *Gender in Translation* that cultural studies help to understand the complexities of culture in translation. He mentions that translation of identity has to do with shifting boundaries of difference in language between local and global forms of expression that derive from cultural differences (136). According to Simon, a real translation can only come about when the translator understands the way in which a language is tied to local realities and changing identities (138). The passage from one location to another always involves changes and displacements in the relationship between both languages because there is no total equivalence between the cultural systems of the source and target text (136). Simon claims that translators must make decisions about the cultural meanings a language carries and evaluate the degree to which the source and target culture are equivalent. This process of meaning transfer often has more to do with reconstructing the value of meaning than finding the cultural inscription of a term (138). This relates to the idea of Spivak as Simon quoted:

“Real translation can only come about if the “jagged relationship between rhetoric and logic, condition and effect of knowing” are reconstructed in the other language.” (in Simon 143)

Cronin quoted David Held who said that it is “the ability to stand outside a singular location” and to “mediate traditions” that holds the basic principles of any translation process, as the translator has to move away from his familiar native language and culture and step into the other (12). Simon continues saying that in

order to maintain the notion of “fidelity”, translators are expected to be fully in possession of their native culture and language and is aware of the limitations, but nevertheless does not ignore “traces of difference” between the source text and target text (11). Without these differences, translation would never be considered to be a meaningful activity (Simon 12).

Translation has been viewed as a process of mapping conceptual structures of the source language into the target language. According to Sidiropoulou this involves considerations about the conceptualizations of the world that are relevant to the source and target cultures and in what way these conceptualisations are constrained (110). The translator’s perception of the source text determines how reality is projected into another language (110). Sidiropoulou claims that the process of translation starts with the translator who has to gain a proper understanding of the source culture in order to grasp the meaning of the text and the next step is to determine the differences between the source and target culture (148). Then the translator has to transfer the meaning of the source text into the target text by overcoming the linguistic differences between the two languages, “the purpose being survival of cultural and national identities” (Sidiropoulou 148). Carol Maier talks about the situation in which translators learn that certain categories with which people identify are constructed rather than universal and are often relative to the language and culture within which the terms are embedded (Maier, Gentler 32). For the act of communicating the foreign, the translator needs to be inventive in finding the right words to convey meaning, by using loan words, calque or renderings from existing translations. Sidiropoulou mentions, however, that the modifications in translations of a literary work that reflect a different orientation in the target text may be due with respect to the “norms” prevalent in the target language (6).

According to Lawrence Venuti, it is necessary in translation studies to take into account the sociocultural framework in which a text is embedded. Venuti discusses two types of translating strategies, which are domestication and foreignization (Munday 144). “Domestication” according to Venuti means “the

ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values (Munday 144). Schleiermacher describes this strategy as “moving the author towards the reader” (Munday 28), avoiding the implementation of foreign elements in the target text. “Foreignization”, on the other hand, means developing a translation method in which foreign elements from the source text are preserved in the target text. Venuti considers this method to be “an ethnodeviant pressure on [target-language cultural] values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text” (Munday 145). Venuti allies with Schleiermacher’s description of this strategy as “moving the reader towards the author” (Munday 28).

The importance of translating African American literature cannot be disassociated from the persistence of original languages and identities. The representation of their identity depends on their speech patterns, complex narrative structures and metaphorical use of language, as is the case in *Jazz*. Since the meaning of identity relies so much on the linguistic characteristics, foreignization of the translation seems the best solution. According to Simon, translation no longer serves as a bridge between already given cultural entities, but has turned into an activity of cultural creation and therefore the translation always contains signs of foreignization (152). Adejunmobi quoted Venuti when he says that “foreignization translation signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language” (169). In many cases this disruption will not have a negative effect on the reader, however, in some cases the translator has no choice but to choose domestication because the foreign elements disrupt the fluency of the translation. The next chapter discusses the different effects of the given solutions on specific linguistic characteristics of identity.

#### 4. TRANSLATION RELEVANT TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

This chapter is an analysis of the translation problems that occur in the translation of *Jazz* to Dutch. While the previous chapter concentrated primarily on the meaning of the characteristics in *Jazz* in relation to identity, this chapter focuses on the linguistic aspect of putting meaning into words, just like jazz musicians put meaning into music. This so-called “jazz aesthetic” is evident for its improvisation, dissonance, structures, and polyrhythms. The relation between form and content of words and phrases in literature may be interpreted differently by readers, because the cultural and historical meaning that lies behind the sign codes Morrison used in *Jazz* refer to the African American only and remains closed to other readers (Nowlin 155). Nowlin points out that even though creative use of language in terms of metaphors and narrative discourse is open to some people, at the same time it is inaccessible to others. Morrison makes the (white) reader the outsider who is invited to read the text but will most likely never fully submerge in the text and therefore consequently will overlook some important meanings. As a result a collision could take place because the “blackness” Morrison writes about may differ very much from the “blackness” familiar to the readers (Nowlin 156). According to Maier, the main goal of the translator becomes to understand not just what the sign codes mean, but what they mean within the culture of the other language (Gentler 32). From chapter three it became clear that the two major translation problems that are directly linked to the notion of identity are dialect and the narrative discourse. On a close reading of the text, however, there are many more issues that prove to be difficult in translation and not all of them are directly related to the notion of identity. I think that it is nevertheless important to analyse all the translation problems, as they will prove to be useful in the translation in chapter five as well. The objective of this chapter therefore, is to locate the problems in the source text and find possible solutions to these problems and eventually decide which solution is the most suitable.

## 4.1. Reflection of voices in *Jazz*

### 4.1.1. Narrative discourse in translation

The translator's visibility has been discussed in the previous chapter. From the previous chapter in this thesis can be concluded that in the contemporary Dutch culture translations are accepted when they read fluently. In *Narratology meets Translation Studies, or, The Voice of the Translator in Children's Literature*, Emer O'sullivan argues that the visibility of the translator might be identified in both 'foreignized' and 'domesticated' texts. According to O'sullivan, the translator's presence can be located on both the theoretical level of narrative communication and on the level of analysis of the text based on the strategies chosen for translation problems. He has created a model based on theoretic analysis which links narratology and translation studies that applies to all fictional literature (198).

A narrative is a means of communication and thus presupposes two parties, namely a sender and a receiver. The basic model presented by Chapman contains three basic steps that apply to the original, non-translated text and its reader (O'sullivan 199). On the sending end of this model is the real author who wrote the novel and on the receiving end the real reader who holds the novel in his hands. In between is the transmitted message, or narrative. When the real author is left out of the picture, the implied author remains. He is the idea presented by the author and caught by the real reader. The implied reader is the counterpart of the implied author, inscribed in the text. Lastly there are the narrative, the one which tells the story, and the narratee is the imagined person whom the narrator is assumed to be addressing in a given narrative, it is a notional figure within the 'space' of the text itself (O'sullivan 199).

This model, however, takes on a completely different form when the original text becomes subject to translation. As O'Sullivan explains, the translator becomes the real reader of the source text and the writer of the translation and therefore creates a second sender-reader relationship that overlaps the first. In the process of creating the target text, the translator creates an implied translator from which the

narrator of the target text evolves. This narrator tells the story to the narratee of the target text which is read by the implied target reader and eventually read by the real target reader (201). O'sullivan quotes Giuliana Schiavi when he says that "the translator does not produce a completely new message, but rather intercepts the communication and transmits it - re-processed to the new reader who will receive the message" (201). In translated texts therefore, the discursive presence of the translator can manifest itself in a voice that differs from the narrator of the source text. Both the voice of the narrator of the source text and the voice of the translator are present in the narrative discourse of the translation (201). O'sullivan mentions that the visibility of the translator in the narrative discourse structure is obvious in foreignized texts which are "nonstandard and heterogenous" as well as in domesticated texts which are "standard and homogenous" (198). The necessity for paratextual information such as prefaces and metalinguistic explanations such as footnotes or in-text explanations would be strong in domesticated texts. The decision to foreignize a text, however, might result in the loss of intertextual references. The following example is the part where the first-person narrator talks about the community of black women in the City and how they continue their lives in order to try and hide from the horrible memories of their past lives on the plantation fields. The beauty of this part is that the lack of information about what is exactly referred to actually emphasizes the burden of the past:

"They are all like that, these women. Waiting for the ease, the space that need to be filled with anything other than the drift of their own thoughts. But they wouldn't like it. They are busy and thinking of ways to be busier because such a space of nothing pressing to do would knock them down." (Morrison 16).

In the following translations I show that whether the translator foreignizes or domesticates this part, either way he/she intervenes the source text narrator:

Foreignizing:

“Al die vrouwen zijn hetzelfde. Ze wachten op de verlichting, de ruimte die opgevuld moet worden met alles behalve hun eigen vluchtige gedachten. Maar dat zouden ze niet leuk vinden. Ze zijn druk aan het nadenken over een manier om nog drukker te zijn omdat de leegte van het nietsdoen hen zou opbreken.”

Domesticating:

“Al die zwarte vrouwen zijn hetzelfde. Ze wachten op de verlichting, de ruimte de opgevuld moet worden met alles behalve hun eigen vluchtige gedachten aan hun verleden als slaaf. Maar dat zouden ze niet leuk vinden. Ze zijn druk met nadenken over een manier om nog drukker te zijn omdat de leegte van het nietsdoen hen zou opbreken.”

Although my preferences go to the part that was foreignized, there is a fair chance that the Dutch target reader will miss the emphasis on the past lives of the characters on the plantation fields. I think that the translator’s decision to foreignize a text depends on multiple paratextual factors, such as the target reader, age of the original, how much source and target culture differ, the translator’s ability to interpret the correct tone and meaning of the narrative, etc.

From the previous chapter it became clear that Morrison used a complex narrative structure in *Jazz* to dismiss the idea of a ‘totalizing view’ on the history of African Americans. The different narrative voices in *Jazz* have found their origins in the old tradition of sharing personal reconstructed stories with others through telling.

Stories can have multiple interpretations, depending on the reader. Needless to say that a African American reader will likely relate the events in *Jazz* to his own situation and share emotions with characters whereas a white reader will not. The

white translator will put focus on different aspects in the translation of *Jazz* as another translator will who has known slavery to be part of his own history.

#### **4.1.2. Character's speech**

Joe and Felice use the monologue to inform the reader about the often negative experiences they had in the past and how that has affected their presents. The monologues also contribute to the formation of Dorcas' character and their individual relationship with her. The linguistic characteristics used in these character's speeches give a fairly good impression of Joe's and Felice's personal experiences as an African American individual and it is important to locate them and translate them.

#### **Character's speech of Joe Trace**

Significant for Joe's speech are the long sentences that lack of proper punctuation. The effect is that the reader might get the idea that Joe is talking rather fast. Another effect of leaving out punctuation are the dismissal of natural pauses in a sentence. This means two things, namely that Joe does not expect his audience to reply and another reason is that he is in a state of confusion and not even aware of his audience at all. The information that is given to the reader by Joe in the following example is another sign of a confused, rattling man as the information is not of any relevance to the rest of the text. Here Joe talks about his and Violet's search for an apartment in the City right after they moved up North:

“Bad times had hit then, and landlords white and black fought over colored people for the high rents that was okay by us because we got to live in five rooms even if some of us rented out two.” (Morrison 127)

Joe's choice of words causes another translation problem. Some of the words he used belong to the African American terminology, which will be discussed more

extensively in chapter 4.4. Joe uses one word that deserves some special attention and that is the use of the word “crackers”, as in “Crackers in the South mad cause Negroes were leaving; crackers in the North mad cause they were coming.” (Morrison 128) This word was used in the days of slavery as an abusive term for Southern white people. It originally derived from “whipcracker”, which refers to a white man who used the whip to torture slaves. Morrison did not want any major white characters to make an appearance in *Jazz*, so every reference to white people had to be disguised. Because of this reason I would not use the word “blanken” in the translation, but instead I would try to find a word with the same offensive meaning, such as “slavendrijvers”.

Joe’s speech contains ungrammaticalities that belong to the notion of African American Vernacular English, which will be discussed in chapter 4.3. Nevertheless, a solution must be found for the translation of his specific use of language. The grammatical structures of Joe’s sentences are not always according to the English standard of subject-verb-object. He starts many of his sentences with the verb, as in “Surprised everybody when we left”, which does not sound ungrammatical in English. However the grammatical structure in Dutch is also subject-verb-object, leaving out the subject would make the sentence sound ungrammatical as in “Verraste iederen toen we vertrokken”. A different solution would be to abbreviate the subject to “’t”, which comes out as “’t verraste iedereen toen we vertrokken”. In general, the occurrence of ungrammaticalities in Joe’s speech is only incidental and therefore it would have an inadequate effect on the reader if there would be instances of illiterate sentences in the translation. Instead the most suitable solution would be to translate his ungrammatical use of language by avoiding the use of formal register.

### **Character’s speech of Felice**

In her character’s speech, Felice talks about her parents, who live and work in Tuxedo most of the year while she lives with her grandmother in the city. Felice only

sees her parents thirty-four days a year and even then her mother is too occupied with shopping for her boss while her father stays at home reading all the newspapers and magazines Felice and her grandmother saved for him. Felice also speaks about her friendship with Dorcas and how Dorcas viewed her relationship with Joe Trace. Felice talks very detailed about the relationship with her parents and the situation with Dorcas and how she felt about the relationship between Dorcas and Joe Trace. Some of her detailed explanations betray a strong emotion, as in the following situation where Felice counted the days on which she saw her parents. Behind her accurate calculation lies her frustration and anger about the situation:

“Forty-two days if you count the half days -...- plus two holidays makes forty-four days, but really only thirty-four because the half days shouldn’t count. Thirty-four days a year.” (Morrison 198)

This urge to provide the reader with the correct details is sometimes very strong, as the additional information between brackets shows. In the following example Felice speaks about the time her mother took her to Tiffany’s to pick up an order for her boss. Here Felice tells about the situation where she and her mother had to prove they had a real reason to visit such a fancy store:

“The salesgirl went to get the package my mother came to pick up. She showed the girl the note from her boss lady so they would give it to her (and even showed it at the door, so they would let her in).” (Morrison 202).

Felice’s speech does not show any ungrammatical sentence structures or mistakes that can be allocated to the African American vernacular English. Felice’s correct use of the English language is a characteristic that enlarges the difference between two generations, on the one hand the generation of Joe and Violet, who have known a hard life on the plantation fields with no future prospects before they moved to the

city, and on the other hand the generation of Felice and Dorcas, who were born and raised in a city full of opportunities.

## 4.2 Metaphors

### 4.2.1 Metaphors in translation

Metaphors play an important role in literature as they contribute to the human understanding of areas of experience in other terms. In her essay *Translating metaphor: problems and meanings*, Teresa Dobrzynska defines the term metaphor as a linguistic sign “used in the predicative function outside its normal usage as determined by the code” (595). A metaphor in fact allows to link new meanings to new forms which has no clearly defined boundaries (Leech & Short 97). However, Leech and Short point out that meanings are part of the code as each language has its own view on reality in terms of contrast and structures. According to Sidiropoulou, metaphors are relevant to the translation process in two ways. First of all, translation itself is seen as an instance of metaphorical mapping from one language domain to another. Secondly, metaphors are cultural specific because the domains of experience may differ from culture to culture and the translator has to calculate the level of equivalence between the varying domains of experience. A translator is expected to decide in what way possibilities for metaphoric constructions are open with respect to a particular metaphor and which correspondences will be allowed in the target text (Sidiropoulou 112-115). Dobrzyfiska mentioned that the interpretation of metaphors is strongly culturally conditioned and in most cases another language means another cultural background and another value system (595). It is vitally important in metaphorical communication that the mutual expectations of the writer and the reader are overlapping in their respective associating fields (597).

In his book on descriptive translation studies, Toury sets out six possible strategies to transfer the source-text metaphor to the target text. Most scholars tend to fall into only three strategies, of which the first one is that the translator can opt for an equivalent of the source language metaphor, the second option is to choose a different metaphor with the same meaning of the source language metaphor, and the third one is to replace the source language metaphor with a non-metaphor. Toury added a fourth strategy, which means that the metaphor is completely omitted in the

target text, the fifth option is to turn a non-metaphor into a metaphor and the last possibility is to use a metaphor in the place where there was none in the source language (83).

One example of a metaphor in *Jazz* is the part where Joe compares his relationship with Dorcas to the biblical story of Adam and Eve and the poisonous apple in the Garden of Eden. Joe is actually saying that although Dorcas (Eve) will eventually leave him, and the heavenly times between them are over (“when he left Eden”), he will always carry the taste of her and her love with him (“the taste of the first apple in the world in his mouth”):

“I told you again that you were the reason Adam ate the apple and its core. That when he left Eden, he left a rich man. Not only did he have Eve, but he had the taste of the first apple in the world in his mouth for the rest of his life.” (Morrison 133)

For the translation of this metaphor the translator has the possibility of using the same metaphors in the target text, as I did in the following translation:

“Ik vertelde je nogmaals dat jij de reden was dat Adam de appel met klokhuis en al had opgegeten. Dat hij als een rijk man vertrok uit Eden. Hij had niet alleen Eva gehad, maar hij had de smaak van de eerste appel ter wereld in zijn mond voor de rest van zijn leven.”

This extract also offers the possibility to change the source-text metaphor into a different metaphor. In the previous example “rich man” was translated with “rijk man”, the same metaphor. “rich man”, however, can also be translated into “de koning te rijk”, which results in my following translation of the example:

“Ik vertelde je nogmaals dat jij de redder was dat Adam de appel met klokhuis en al had opgegeten. Dat hij zich de koning te rijk voelde toen hij Eden verliet. Hij had niet alleen Eva gehad, maar hij had de smaak van de eerste appel ter wereld in zijn mond voor de rest van zijn leven.”

In my opinion the translation “de koning te rijk” puts a stronger emphasis on the man’s feeling and has a very neutral effect.

The most difficult task of the translator, however, will definitely be to find the metaphors and grasp their meaning before he applies one of Toury’s strategies. The following example from the text is from the part where Violet visits Alice Manfred. They are talking while Alice is ironing, but the conversation gets so heated that Alice forgot to take the iron off the cloth, which left a huge brown stain in the form of a ship:

“It took her a moment to notice that Violet was staring. Following her gaze Alice lifted the iron and saw what Violet saw: the black and smoking ship burned clear through the yoke.” (Morrison 113)

The “black burning ship” obviously refers to the ships in which the slaves were transported to America. Because of the underlying meaning the translator has no choice but to translate this metaphor with the same target language metaphor “schip”. This might be an example of a metaphor that will not be picked up by the white reader, but this is probably also the case in English. Since it completely depends on the reader whether he picks up the underlying meaning, the option of leaving out the metaphor in the translation or changing it into another metaphor is out of question, because that would definitely spoil the mystery of *Jazz*.

#### 4.2.2 Metaphorical dimension of names

The metaphorical dimension of names in *Jazz* is another significant feature that causes translation difficulties, because the names of some of the characters in the novel carry a certain meaning and connotations to the history of that particular character which is explained in the story. Joe's last name, "Trace", for example, is one of those names that bears thematic weight. In his character's speech he explains how he named himself when he was a little child:

"'You are just like my own.' That 'like' I guess it was made me ask her ... where my real parents were. She looked down at me ... and told me, O honey, they disappeared without a trace. The way I heard it I understood her to mean the 'trace' they disappeared without was me." (Morrison 124).

A second meaning that can be ascribed to Joe's last name has to do with his actions of tracing people. When he was a young man he went on a hunt for "wild woman", whom he believed to be his mother, and later on he went out to search Dorcas. In *Dangerous Freedom*, Philip Page refers to the well-known twentieth century philosopher Jacques Derrida, who said that the trace is "the play between the past and the present" (85) as well as the arche-phenomenon of 'memory'" (Page, *Of Grammatology* 71). Because of the meaning behind the name, translator's first reflex would be to find an equivalent in the target language in order to transfer the meanings to the target text. The most obvious choice for an equivalent in the Dutch language would be to translate "Trace" into "Spor". However, the common Dutch phrase for 'leaving without a trace' would be "ze vertrokken zonder een spoor achter te laten" and this causes a problem in itself, as this Dutch phrase implies exactly the opposite of what the English phrase does, namely that in fact they did take off without leaving anything behind. But they surely did leave something behind, and that was their son Joe. A different approach would be to keep the foreign name and use the phrase "ze vertrokken zonder een spoor achter te laten" as an explanation in

which the emphasis shifts from his last name to the leave taking of his parents. Another possibility is to change the phrase but keep the words, which results in something like “hun vertrek heeft een spoor achtergelaten” or “ze vertrokken zonder spoor”. This option has the same effect as in the source text, because Joe’s misinterpretation of the situation is preserved in the translation.

The name of “Violet” also causes difficulties in translation, because the other women in the neighbourhood started changing her name into “violent” after she mutilated the face of the dead girl at the funeral. The translation of “violent” would become “gewelddadig” in Dutch and this cannot be turned into a woman’s first name, so that means that the wordplay gets lost when the original name is used in the translation. Another reason to use the original name in the translation is because “Violet” originated from the Latin word “viola”, which is a stringed instrument of the violin family. This music instrument is often heard in jazz music. The fact that the first three letters of the word remind the Dutch reader of the instrument which is in Dutch called “viool”, is a reason to keep the original name.

Both the first name and last name of Golden Gray refer to the characteristics of this person. “Golden” refers to the boy’s golden hair. In Dutch people do refer to hair as “goudblond” sometimes, but just the word “goud” is less common. Moreover, “Golden” is also not an unusual boy’s name in English, but the same is not true for the Dutch “goudblond”. Therefore, I would ultimately choose to keep “Golden” in the translation with the consequence of losing the reference to his hair colour. The boy’s last name “Gray” is the American spelling of the Dutch word “grijs”. According to Page, this refers to the fact that he “enjoys life between and among ultimate dichotomous forces”, such as life/death, light/dark, self/other, humanity/nature, solitude/plenitude and presence/absence (166). These contradictions show that Golden Gray’s life is never about the ultimate of the two contradictories, but rather in the grey area between them. “Gray” also refers to his own skin colour, as his father was a black slave and his mother the daughter of a white man. There are, again, two possibilities for the translator to choose between.

The first option is to domesticate his last name to “Grijs”, which the reader will link to the boy’s background and skin colour. The second option is to use the foreign name and as a consequence lose the connotations. Since the names of Violet and Joe Trace are kept despite the fact that it loses its connotation to the meaning of the context, it would be unusual to have Golden Gray’s name changed into a Dutch name. Besides, it is not even certain that the English reader will link Golden’s last name to his mother and father and all other contradictions in his life. Therefore his foreign name is used in the translation as well.

### 4.3 Voices in dialect

*“For certain people with a certain kind of education, obviously the language would be nonstandard, but I try to blend colloquial vernacular and standard”*

*(Morrison; Denard 131)*

The linguistic phenomenon of the African-American vernacular in *Jazz* poses a different challenge for the translator. The aim of this section is to describe the notion of dialect as a variety of language that differs from standard language of English and to discuss possible solutions to translate the African American dialect in *Jazz*. The most suitable solution will later be used in chapter five in the translation of the passage in which dialect is the central problem.

#### 4.3.1 The notion of dialect defined

Before we continue on the subject of dialect, it is important to first point out the difference between language and dialect. Catford explains in *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* that a “total language” may be best described as a total inventory of features such as grammatical, phonological and lexical forms and statistic information on the frequency of these forms. When these substantial features correlate with particular socio-situational feature, a language variety is born (83-84).

Catford distinguishes two major classes of language varieties, namely the ones that are “permanent” for a given individual or groups, and the ones that are “transient” in that they change according to the immediate situation (84). A type of variety related to permanent features in *Jazz* is dialect. The term “dialect” has been used by linguistics for varieties of language that are marked off from other varieties by different geographical influences or divisions in class and society (Leech and Short 134). A dialect is thus a mixture of standard language with varieties of other languages used by a group of people, and thereby creating a new variety that becomes characteristic for that particular group. All varieties of language have a

common core of features as well as a variety of features or “markers” which serve as the formal criteria of that variety and these markers may be at any level (Catford 86). The following parts gives a description of the markers in African American English and the possible translation strategies for translating dialect.

#### **4.3.2 AAVE and translation strategies**

In *Jazz* the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is used in the dialogues to emphasize on the African American identity of its speakers. AAVE shows some striking similarities to the Southern American English. Wekker and Wekker discuss the notion of AAVE in their paper *Coming in from the cold: linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of the translation of Black English Vernacular literary texts into Surinamese Dutch*, and explain that it was especially after the abolition of slavery that African Americans mixed with white Americans, and their speech became influenced by white patterns (5). AAVE shares its fundamental sentence structure with other varieties of English, as the essential clause and phrase constituents of AAVE within a sentence are similar. The language registers of the AAVE differ from other English varieties in a way that they are much more informal (Martin and Wolfram 11). Wekker and Wekker emphasize on the general idea that the translator has a duty to first study the function of the source language variety in the source language culture, and then make an attempt at finding a translational equivalent in the target language (18). They also mention that the author deliberately chose to write the dialogues in AAVE. By doing so Morrison tried to evoke a particular response in her readers, emphasising the link between the language, life and culture of the African Americans (10). According to Wekker and Wekker, in order to accomplish the same kind of effect on the part of the Dutch reader, a suitable Dutch equivalent must be found in the target language (10).

First it is important to indicate which linguistic phenomena are typical for AAVE and present in the dialogues in *Jazz*. Among the most common features in the

AAVE are the use of double negation and the absence of certain auxiliaries, as the following examples show:

“Don’t you take up with no woman if her kids is little, Joe.” (Morrison 49)

“You know how funny she been since her Change.”

“Violet funny way before that.” (Morrison 46)

This example shows the use of the double negation “don’t” and “no”, but also the combination of the plural noun “kids” + singular verb “is”. According to Wekker and Wekker, the phenomenon of double negation is very rare in non-standard Dutch and therefore restricted to cases such as “nooit nie(t)” and “niemand nie(t)” (3). These two options can only be used as a solution in some cases where double negation occurs in the source text. Other features of AAVE found in *Jazz* are the omission of the copula “be”, as is “Nobody getting hurt” (47), omission of the auxiliary ‘do’ in questions, such as “Why you ask me?” (46), and also the omission of a subject such as “he” or “she” in “Did everything for him” (79). Many of these examples are not unique to AAVE but occur in other nonstandard varieties as well, however, it is the combination of features that is characteristic of this variety of language<sup>4</sup>.

The use of dialect is a common phenomenon in literary prose. According to Anderman, writers use dialect as a means of conveying information about the speakers when they engage in a dialogue, thus making it “a unique indicator of class and education” (6). But when the writer’s work becomes the subject of translation, a voice has to be found in the target language that closely resembles the voice of the source text and that the translator has to find the means of expression to convey the social and cultural background in which the speakers are rooted (6). In *De brug bij Bommel herbouwen*, James Holmes distinguishes two extremes that represent choices the translator has when shifting a text from one linguistic, literary inter-textual, socio-cultural situation to another. which means that language variety is replaced

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/blackhistory/article-9118204>

with a standard language. These two strategies are “exotisation” and “naturalisation”. The translator has to determine whether he is going to maintain the original context, even though they will have an estranged effect on the target reader or if he should replace the elements with a new element that is familiar in the target context (185). Levý argues that with the translation of dialect it is impossible to only use the strategy of “exoticism”, as the foreign language, which is commonplace in the source text environment, is normally unintelligible to readers of the translation, so according to her it is not possible to preserve it (97). However, there are many levels of naturalising dialect in the translation which are discussed here.

The first strategy that can be applied to the translation of dialect is a full “naturalisation”, which means that the language variety is replaced with a standard language. Using this strategy in the translation of *Jazz* means losing every feature of AAVE, probably the most important feature that underlines the character’s identity, and replace it with standard Dutch language. In the following example this effect of naturalisation is visible in the translation of the sentences from the novel which were used before:

“Begin nou niks met een vrouw als haar kinderen klein zijn, Joe.”

“Je weet hoe anders ze is sinds haar Verandering.”

“Violet was al ver daarvoor anders.” (My translation)

This translation reads very fluent and the translator’s invisibility remains, but the reference to African Americanism is completely lost here and the question is if any of the following possible strategies can keep this.

Another possibility for the translator is to find a target language variety that functions similar as the original dialect. There are two options for finding an equivalent target language dialect. The translator can choose a geographical dialect, which means that a dialect is selected on criteria of location. In case of *Jazz* this means that the target dialect of the southern parts of the Netherlands is chosen. The

problem with this strategy is that the African Americans end up with a “Brabants” accent. The other option is “human geography” of which the criteria are “human or social geographical” equivalence (Catford 88). Levý is not in favour of this solution as she thinks that it is not possible to identify an individual or group of people using particular means of the target language, because then the entire identity is replaced by another identity (98). This is impossible in *Jazz* if maintaining the setting is important to express African American identity. According to Levý the only way that the shift to a target language variety might work, is if the aspects of the target language dialect are unmarked features of the language, not associated with any region (98).

Wekker and Wekker claim that the use of a target language variety can only work if the two areas in question share a similar linguistic and socio-cultural heritage (10). They think that a possibility lies in the use of Surinamese Dutch (SD), since Suriname has known a history of slavery caused by the English and the Dutch. Wekker and Wekker quote Hill Collins when they say that “blacks everywhere have a common experience of oppression as a result of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, apartheid and other forms of racial domination” (12). Sharing this common experience of racial oppression, it is conceivable that there are common themes to the world views that Africans around the world have developed, and that makes SD a suitable translational equivalent for AAVE (Wekker and Wekker 12). In their study on SD, Wekker and Wekker have found some similarities between the two varieties, such as the intonation patterns, the tone of voice, the creaks and the pitch contours but these features are of course untranslatable (6). There are numerous lexical features of SD, all of which are words that do not occur in general Dutch language or only with a different meaning, such as the abbreviation of “fa’lik” for “gevaarlijk” (6). However, AAVE in *Jazz* does not show any lexical differences from standard English. Besides, the words would be difficult to understand for standard speakers and that is not the case in *Jazz*. The conclusion given by Wekker and Wekker is that all the areas of SD are still largely unexplored, but the examples they use show that they would

want the translator to compensate the features of AAVE in the translation. As the following example from the novel *The color purple* by Alice Walker shows, they compensate the AAVE features by leaving out the subject at the beginning of the sentence, replace the absence of the copula “be” in the original by using abbreviated forms of “een” and “haar”, and they leave out the possessive -’s where the original does too:

“She grinning with her foot up on somebody car.” (8)

“Met ‘n grote smile en d’r voet op iemand auto.” (Wekker and Wekker 7)

The following example of my own translation of a passage from *Jazz* clearly shows how unnatural this sounds to the Dutch reader, compared to how natural AAVE sounds to the English speaking reader:

“Begin nou niks met ‘n vrouw als haar kinderen klein is, Joe.”

“Weet hoe anders ze is sinds d’r Verandering.”

“Violet al ver daarvoor anders.”

In case of the absence of subject-auxiliary inversion in questions, Wekker and Wekker use the strategy of word-for-word translation, as the following example shows:

“How long you had your little girl? I ast.” (Walker 15)

“Hoe lang U heeft uw kleine meisje al?, vroeg ik.” (Wekker and Wekker 8)

“I say, real easy, What you call her?” (Walker 15)

“Ik zei heel kalm: Hoe U noemt haar?” (Wekker and Wekker 8)

The effect of word-for-word translation in Dutch has a very strange effect on the reader and gives a false impression about its speaker who seems to be illiterate and ungrammatical. Even though the same features exist in the original dialect, the English reader will directly refer this language to a group of people, whereas the Dutch reader will not.

Leech and Short also consider the phenomenon of “eye-dialect”, where the impression of rendering language variety by non-standard spelling has an illusionistic effect. The illiterate spelling of the standard pronunciation of words is used to create a manner of speech (135).

“Begin nouw niks met un vrouw als haar kinderu nog klijn zijn, Joo.”

“Ju weet hoe andurs zu is sins haar Veranduring.”

“Violet was al ver daarvoor andurs.” (My translation)

The advantage of this strategy is that it is a very creative solution that avoids the disadvantages of using an existing target language variety. Moreover, this strategy does not require a lot of creativity of the translator, although it is a time-consuming activity. The reason why I would not choose this strategy in *Jazz*, is because, just like using an existing target language dialect, there is no reference to the African-American language and thus does not contribute to the notion of identity.

Levý believes that the most satisfactory solution probably is to translate the sentences carrying significant semantic content into the standard target language and “flavouring” it with the foreign language by retaining features which are clear from the context such as brief responses and common greetings, or perhaps with the addition of an explanation such as “zei ze met een Afro-Amerikaans accent” (97). This strategy shows a combination of “naturalisation” and addition made by the translator:

“Je weet hoe anders ze is sinds haar Verandering,” zei Malvonne met een Afro-Amerikaans accent.”

“Violet was al ver daarvoor anders,” reageerde Joe met hetzelfde accent.”

(My translation)

I think that this strategy might be the most suitable one for the translation of the dialogues in *Jazz*, but it would be unnecessary to repeat the brief responses throughout the entire dialogue. Maybe it would suffice if it is used only in the beginning of the first dialogue and have a long-lasting effect for the dialogues to come. Adding information to a translation is highly unusual, but the advantage of this strategy is that it is the only solution that actually emphasizes the African-American speech without having to implement any ‘mistakes’ in the translation to compensate the use of AAVE in the source text.

Short dialogues also appear in the character’s speeches of Joe Trace and Felice and they also contain AAVE. These dialogues are between themselves and another character, and thus the addition of brief responses such as “zei hij met een Afro-Amerikaans accent” has a strange effect. These characters would never emphasize on their speech because for them it is perfectly normal to hear and talk in AAVE. In other words, AAVE sounds like standard language to them and thus the strategy of ‘naturalisation’ without brief responses here would suffice.

## 4.4 Other text specific translation problems

### 4.4.1 African American terminology

The use of African American terminology in *Jazz* poses another problem for the translator. *Jazz* consists of many slang constructions, such as “juke joints, “barrel hooch”, and “tonk house”. In the text these terms follow each other in a sentence and they are all adjectives belonging to the noun “music”:

“but it did not make her feel generous, this juke joint, barrel hooch, tonk house music.” (Morrison 59)

These are existing compounds and explanations are available online. A “juke joint” is a barrelhouse for plantation workers, a “barrel hooch” is a cheap drinking establishment and a “tonk house” is a cheap noisy bar. They pose a problem for the translator, because he has to choose among several options as there are no equivalent terms at hand in the target language. One solution might be that the translator decides to replace the terms by their full explanations. Javier Franco Aixelá, author of *Cultuurspecifieke elementen in vertalingen*, calls this strategy the “intratextual explanation” (201). In the translation of *Jazz* this solution might work well because all three terms have almost the same meaning. In the following example I replaced the three terms by one explanation:

“Maar deze muziek afkomstig van een goedkope luidruchtige bar voor de slaven op het land zorgde er niet voor dat ze zich grootmoedig voelde.”

The effect of this solution works out positively, because although the cultural specific terms got lost in this translation, the sentence is still fluent and the meaning is captured as well.

Another option is to try and grasp the meaning of the long explanation in a couple of words in the target language. Because they are adjectives, the first two should be followed by a hyphen and the third should be followed by ‘-achtige’, which results in the following translation:

“Maar deze zwarte mannenclub-, whiskyvaten- en danstentachtige muziek zorgde er niet voor dat ze zich grootmoedig voelde.” (My translation)

Here, the effect is that the short terms are kept and the sentence still reads fluent, the original meaning does not get through to the reader entirely. In my opinion this solution also shows the struggle of the translator in finding a proper solution and that in itself is a failure of the translator. Both of the above mentioned solutions are what Venuti calls “domestication”, because the foreign elements have vanished in the translation process. There are still two other solutions which are considered undesirable in the translation of prose. The first one is the “foreignization” of the text by using the American terms in the translation:

“Maar deze juke joint, barrel hooch, tonk house muziek zorgde er niet voor dat ze zich grootmoedig voelde.” (My translation)

The effect is that the reader will never know the meaning of the terms, and this in itself causes a reading obstruction. This solution does work well with other cultural specific elements, such as “Fifth Avenue”, “Edgecomb”, and “Panama”. The cultural specific element “Fifth Avenue” is the street located in a very posh shopping area where Alice Manfred and Dorcas are watching the march outside on the pavement. One option might be to translate “Fifth Avenue” with “P.C. Hoofstraat”. However, this strategy of bringing the story to the target culture setting does not work well for *Jazz*, because it is important for the preservation of African American identity that the setting remains in America. In this case the most obvious solution would be

to adopt the foreign element, even when that means the reader will probably never know the meaning of the location.

Another example of cultural specific elements are the names of newspapers and magazines that Felice talks about when she mentions the fact that she used to stack all the newspapers and magazines for her dad when she was a young girl: “*The Amsterdam, the Age, The Crisis, The Messenger, the Worker.*” (Morrison 199). Some of these newspapers or magazines were published especially for African American people (*The Crisis* is the official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP in short.) The translator has the option to translate the names to non-existing Dutch equivalents: “*De Amsterdammer, de Eeuw, De Crisis, De Boodschapper en de Werker*”. The problem is that these non-existing names might cause confusion with the reader as he is confronted with meaningless names. Another option is to translate the names into Dutch newspapers: “*De Volkskrant, De Telegraaf, het NRC, BN De Stem en het Parool*”. The problem here is that these newspapers do not have a connotation to African American history, in fact, this is just a list of all the major Dutch newspapers. The last and most preferable option is to keep the foreign names in the translation. Even though the original names may not transfer the meaning directly, it is a sign to the reader that the appearance of these names in the text behold an underlying meaning.

Aixelá mentions another approach for the translation of the African American terminology, which he calls “extratextual explanations”, such as the implementation of footnotes or endnotes, which provide the reader with the explanation of the meaning, but this is a highly unusual strategy in the translation of novels (201). The translator can also choose to omit any foreign cultural element, which results in the following translation:

“Maar deze muziek zorgde er niet voor dat ze zich grootmoedig voelde.”

(My translation)

This solution, however, leaves the reader with a plain sentence in which all the cultural specific information is lost, which should really be avoided as this makes the translator unfaithful towards the original.

For every African American term, the translator has to choose between the options discussed here. The choice for the most suitable solution completely depends on the purpose of the text within its target culture.

#### **4.4.2 Oral tradition and musical phrases in *Jazz***

Throughout *Jazz* there are musical phrases. The secret of these phrases is that they are a means to convey a message across. In African societies, oral tradition was the way to pass on history, stories, religious beliefs and folktales from generation to generation by means of spoken rather than written words. For centuries, African people depended upon spoken words to teach their offspring important values and morals. Music plays an important role in the African communication, because it also transmits knowledge and values. The melody and rhyme within a song are the true means to make sure that the receiver will always remember the message. Music and oral tradition together is the basis for the communication of a message<sup>5</sup>. In the following example, Joe Trace is listening to a couple of African American men standing on the street playing music. They are singing a song about them being African American and outsiders within the American society. The fact that they are outsiders makes them feel very sad and depressed. Joe Trace likes to believe the song is about him:

“Blues man. Black and bluesman. Blacktherefore blue man.  
Everybody knows your name.  
Where-did-she-go-and-why man. So-lonesome-I-could-die man.  
Everybody knows your name.” (Morrison 119)

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.blackandchristian.com/articles/academy/swilson-09-03.shtml>

The difficulty for the translator is the rhyme of the words 'why' and 'die', and the alliteration of the "bl" sound in "black", "blues" and "blue". The alliteration of the "bl" sound gets completely lost in the translation, as only "blues" can be preserved here. In English the term "blue" means "to be sad or depressed" and "blauw" does not have the same connotation in Dutch and thus remains meaningless if it is used in this phrase. Moreover, the English word "black" can only be translated into "zwart", as it refers to the skin colour of the African American man. These analysis leads to several translational options for the translation of this part of a song. The first one is to transfer the foreign phrase to the translation, without any interference from the translator. The translator can choose to mark this phrase by putting it into italics or place it between brackets. The problem with this solution, however, is that the entire underlying meaning gets lost, and for someone who does not know how to pronounce the words, the rhyme will get lost as well. A combination of foreign and Dutch elements is another approach as my following translation shows:

"Blues man. Black en bluesman. Blackdaarom blauw man.  
Iedereen kent jouw naam.  
Waar-is-ze-heen-gegaan man. Een-zeer-eenzaam-bestaan man.  
Iedereen kent jouw naam."

In this translation both rhyming sentences and the alliteration is preserved. The problem here is that "blauw" is no connotation of "triest" or "depressief" and therefore the meaning of the entire first sentence gets lost in translation. The word "black" will be known by most readers, but it would be strange to have one foreign word within a entirely domesticated phrase.

Another option is to domesticate the phrase by ignoring the original use of alliteration in the source text and replace the words "black" and "blue" by their one-syllable Dutch equivalents "zwart" and "triest", which results in the following translation:

“Blues man. Zwart en bluesman. Zwartdaarom triest man.  
Iedereen kent jouw naam.  
Waar-is-ze-heen-gegaan man. Een-zeer-eenzaam-bestaan man.  
Iedereen kent jouw naam.”

In this translation the entire meaning is transferred and can be linked to the sentence “Joe probably thinks that the song is about him” (Morrison 19), because it refers to Joe’s sad and lonely life and the fact that he lost his wife Violet and Dorcas. The rhyming words are replaced by Dutch rhyming words. This last approach might be the most effective for the translation of the passages from *Jazz*.

Another example of can be found in the passage where Violet fantasizes about having a daughter. Then they would sing together “violet taking the alto line, the girl a honeyed soprano” (108). The song is a shortened version from the English traditional children’s tale named *Babes in the wood*, first published and printed by Thomas Millington in 1595. The tale has been rewritten in many forms and categorizes as a *Mother Goose* nursery rhymes. Violet’s song goes as follows:

“Don’t you remember, a long time ago, two little babes their names I don’t know, carried away one bright summer’s day, lost in the woods I hear people say that the sun went down and the stars shone their light. Poor babes in the woods they laid down and died. When they were dead a robin so red put strawberry leaves over their heads.” (108)

Many of the poems and songs from *Mother Goose* nursery rhymes have been translated into Dutch, so a possible solution would be to use some phrases from the Dutch existing translation and adapt them by changing the words and phrases to Violet’s choice of words. If there is no existing Dutch translation, the translator can

choose to keep the English song in the translation. This solution might work since the content of the rhyme does not contribute to the context of the story. However, some translators might think this passage is too long to use as a foreign element in the translation. Another option is to translate the entire passage. Again, the translator has the option to translate both rhyming words and thereby trying to find equivalent Dutch words that rhyme, as my translation of the passage in the following example shows:

“Weet je het nog, heel lang geleden, wat twee kleine hummels op een dag deden, door hun speelse gedrag op een zomerse dag, verdwaald in het bos zo gaat de ronde dat toen de zon onderging en de sterren hoog stonden. De arme hummels in het bos in hun slaap zijn gestorven. Toen waren ze dood en een robin zo rood legde aardbeienblaadjes over hun hoofd.”

The translator can also choose to omit the rhyme scheme and have the freedom to choose Dutch words that are the equivalents of the English words, such as in the following translation:

“Weet je nog, dat heel lang geleden, twee kleine hummels hun namen ken ik niet, meevoeren op een zomerse dag, verdwaalden in de bossen zegt men dat de zon onder ging en de sterren schitterden. Arme hummels gingen liggen en stierven. Toen ze dood waren legde een robin zo rood aardbeienblaadjes over hun hoofden.”

The latter translation loses the most important feature of a song, which is the rhyme scheme, and therefore this translation does not fit into the context of the situation in which Violet actually speaks about “singing a song”. The best option here would be to translate the song to Dutch by trying to find equivalent words that rhyme as the first translation shows.

## 5. TRANSLATION IN PRACTICE

To support the previous chapters about identity and the translation relevant textual analysis, I have selected several passages from *Jazz* which, in my opinion, present different translation problems. Since the main theme of the novel is the identity of African Americans, I think that it is important to try and preserve as much of the foreign culture as possible and bring the notion of the African American identity across. At the same time I want to grasp both the meaning of the story in relation to the African American history of slave trade and use target culture equivalents when necessary to bring the meaning across. Therefore, I have chosen to combine the two strategies of “foreignization” and “domestication” for my translation. The most important rule for choosing between these strategies is that the translation may show no signs of interference from the translator. The different approaches to translation problems in *Jazz* such as the use of metaphors, dialect and African American terminology have been discussed in the previous chapter and the most suitable solutions are used here in the translation of the following passages.

### 5.1 Page 228-229

*This passage is the end of the novel when the first-person narrator reconsiders her/his point of view about Violet and Joe Trace and their love for each other. That is moment where the main story is finished and the narrator turns directly towards the reader for a last moment of awareness.*

Het is mooi als grote mensen<sup>6</sup> tegen elkaar fluisteren onder de dekens<sup>7</sup>. Hun vervoering is meer de wind onder de blaadjes dan geschal<sup>8</sup> en het lichaam is het

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<sup>6</sup> This is a problem regarding register. For the translation of “grown people” I used the compound noun “grote mensen” instead of the noun “volwassenen”. Normally, the use of “grote mensen” sounds a bit immature. However, English can also opt for “adults” and the less mature “grown people”. I think that this translation has relates more to the English term used in *Jazz*.

middel, niet het doel<sup>9</sup>. Grote mensen reiken uit naar iets daar voorbij, ver daar voorbij en ver, ver omlaag onder stof. Al fluisterend halen ze herinneringen op over kermispoppen die ze gewonnen hadden en de Baltimore boten waar ze nooit mee gevaren hadden. Ze lieten de peren hangen aan de tak want als zij ze zouden plukken, zouden ze daar weg zijn en wie zou dan nog de rijpheid kunnen zien als zij ze voor zichzelf mee zouden nemen? Hoe kon een willekeurige voorbijganger ze nu zien en zich voorstellen hoe ze zouden smaken<sup>10</sup>? Ze ademen en mompelen onder de dekens die ze beiden gewassen hebben en aan de lijn hebben gehangen om te drogen, in een bed dat ze samen uitgekozen hadden en samen gehouden hadden ondanks dat een poot ondersteund werd door een woordenboek uit 1916 en het matras, gebogen als de handpalm van een priester die getuigen oproept in Zijn naam<sup>11</sup>, dat hen iedere nacht weer omsloot en hun oude fluisterende liefde dempte. Ze liggen onder de dekens omdat ze niet meer naar zichzelf hoeven te kijken. Geen blik van een dekhengst of oogopslag van een hoer<sup>12</sup> om hen van hun stuk te brengen<sup>13</sup>. Van binnen zijn ze op de ander gericht, verbonden en vergezeld door kermispoppen en de stoomboten die uitvoeren van havens die ze nog nooit gezien hadden. Dat is wat er achter hun gefluister schuil gaat.

Maar er is iets heel anders dat niet zo geheimzinnig is. Waar vingers elkaar aanraken als de een het kopje en schoteltje doorgeeft aan de ander. Iets dat het

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<sup>7</sup> The following paragraph is part of the first-person narrative where the narrator does not use the first-person singular subject.

<sup>8</sup> I have chosen this translation because it the sounds refers to the sound of a trumpet “het geschal van een trompet”. The reference to jazz is made here and makes up for losses of references elsewhere in the translation.

<sup>9</sup> The English metaphors “vehicle” and “point” are replaced by two non-metaphors (Toury). However, the proverb is replaced by a proverb with the same meaning.

<sup>10</sup> Syntactic change from noun “the flavour” to a verb “smaken”.

<sup>11</sup> This is a problem regarding metaphor, which is translated by applying the strategy of using the equivalent metaphor in the translation (Toury) (See chapter 4.2.1).

<sup>12</sup> This is a problem regarding the use of African American terminology. The English “chippie” is slang for a female prostitute. The first synonym that comes to mind is “hoer”, since this is the only word that can be used instead of “prostitutuee” to refer to women who have sex for money.

<sup>13</sup> It does not become entirely clear from the context if “undo” means “getting rid of their clothes” or “seduce them”. Since it would be strange if they were lying in bed with their clothes on, I would go for the second option.

drukknopje in haar nek dichtdrukt wanneer ze staat te wachten op de tram. Dat pluksel van zijn blauwe kamgarenpak borstelt wanneer ze uit de bioscoop in het zonlicht stappen.

Ik<sup>14</sup> benijd hen om hun openlijke liefde. Zelf heb ik het alleen in het geheim gekend, in het geheim gedeeld en verlangd, o zo verlangd om het te tonen - om hardop te kunnen zeggen wat zij helemaal niet hoeven te zeggen: *Dat ik alleen van jou gehouden heb, mijzelf roekeloos alleen aan jou en niemand anders heb overgegeven. Dat ik wil dat je ook van mij zou houden en me dat zou laten zien. Dat ik hou van de manier waarop je me vasthoudt, hoe dichtbij je mij laat komen. Ik ben dol op je vingers die blijven tillen en draaien. Ik heb nu heel lang naar je gezicht gekeken en je ogen gemist toen je van me vandaan ging. Tegen je praten en je horen antwoorden - dat is de kick.*

Maar dat kan ik niet hardop zeggen, ik kan niemand vertellen dat ik hier mijn hele leven op heb gewacht en dat het feit dat ik gekozen ben om te wachten de reden is dat ik het kan. Als ik het kon zou ik het zeggen. Zeggen maak me, maak me overnieuw. Je bent vrij om het te doen en ik ben vrij om jou je gang te laten gaan, want kijk, kijk. Kijk waar je handen zijn. Nu.

## 5.2 Page 58-59

*In this passage the third-person narrator tells the story of Alice Manfred and the march on Fifth Avenue where African American men and women advertised their anger over two hundred dead in East St. Louis. Among the dead were Alice's sister and brother-in-law.*

Niets van dat alles was er geweest bij de mars op Fifth Avenue<sup>15</sup>. Alleen de trommels en de Gekleurde Padvinders<sup>16</sup> die toelichtende foldertjes uitdeelden aan blanke

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<sup>14</sup> From this point on the narrator uses the first-person singular subject to refer to himself/herself. (See chapter 4.1.1).

<sup>15</sup> This is a problem regarding cultural specific elements as mentioned in chapter 4.4.1. I preserved the English name for this geographical element in the translation, first of all to preserve the foreignization, but moreover because there is no Dutch equivalent that would suffice without a long explanation. The

mannen met strohoeden die moesten weten wat de bevroren gezichten al wisten. Alice had een foldertje opgeraapt dat op het trottoir was gedwarreld, de woorden gelezen en haar gewicht verplaatst naar de stoeprand. Ze las de woorden en keek naar Dorcas. Keek naar Dorcas en las de woorden nogmaals. Wat ze las leek absurd, wazig. Er viel een groot gat tussen de gedrukte tekst en het kind. Ze wierp vluchtige blikken van de een naar de ander en had moeite om het verband te zien, iets dat de afstand kon dichten tussen het zwijgende kind dat stond te staren en de absurde woorden<sup>17</sup>. Toen opeens, als een reddingslijn die werd uitgegooid, werd de afstand overbrugt door de trommels die hen allen samenbracht en verbond: Alice, Dorcas, haar zus en haar zwager, de Padvinders en de bevroren zwarte gezichten, de toeschouwers op het trottoir en degenen daarboven achter de ramen.

Alice droeg de reddingslijn die hen had samengebracht altijd met zich mee sinds die dag op Fifth Avenue en het grootste gedeelte van de tijd vond ze het vertrouwd veilig en stevig. Behalve wanneer de mannen op de vensterbanken de hoorns bespeelden met hun vingers en de vrouwen zich afvroegen "hoe lang". Dan brak de lijn, verstoorde het haar rust en werd ze zich bewust van het lichaam en iets dat zo ongedwongen was dat ze het bloed ervan kon ruiken. Het maakte haar bewust dat er leven zat onder de sjerp en de rode lippenrouge. Ze wist uit preken en krantenartikelen dat het geen echte muziek was - gewoon iets van gekleurde mensen: schadelijk, ongetwijfeld. Beschamend, natuurlijk. Maar niet echt, niet serieus.

Toch zwoer Alice Manfred dat ze er een woede in verstrengeld hoorde, iets vijandelijks dat zichzelf vermomde als een sierlijke en luidruchtige verleiding. Maar het meeste haatte ze zijn stille trek. Zijn verlangen naar de dreun, de scheur, een soort achteloze honger naar een gevecht of een dasspeld met een rode robijn voor op een stropdas - een van beide zou volstaan. Het deed alsof het gelukkig was, deed

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reader can pick up from the context that it is a specific location. By leaving it untranslated, however, the connotations to the area get lost. However, this street does not have any other relation to the text and an explanation or addition would obstruct the fluency of the text.

<sup>16</sup> Cultural specific element that has a Dutch equivalent which is used here.

<sup>17</sup> In this sentence the third-person narrator is clearly visible as he is the one telling about Alice's behaviour and feelings.

alsof het gastvrij was, maar het zorgde er niet voor dat ze zich grootmoedig voelde, Maar deze muziek afkomstig van goedkope luidruchtige barretjes voor de slaven op het land zorgde er niet voor dat ze zich grootmoedig voelde<sup>18</sup>. Het zorgde ervoor dat ze haar hand in de zak van haar schort hield om te voorkomen dat ze hem niet door een ruit zou gooien om met een graai de wereld in haar vuist te pakken en het leven eruit te knijpen voor wat het haar en iedereen die ze kende of waar ze ooit van had gehoord had aangedaan en aangedaan en aangedaan<sup>19</sup>. Het is beter om de ramen en luiken te sluiten, te zweten in de zomerse hitte van een stil appartement in Clifton Place dan een gebroken raam te riskeren of een huilbui waar wellicht geen eind aan komt.

Ik heb haar langs een café of een raam zonder gordijnen zien lopen toen een of andere uitdrukking als “Hit me but don’t quit me”<sup>20</sup> - naar buiten dreef en toekeek hoe ze één hand uitreikte naar de veilige reddingslijn die acht jaar geleden op Fifth Avenue naar haar toe was gegooid, en de andere hand in haar jaszak tot een vuist balde. Ik weet niet hoe ze het deed - zichzelf in evenwicht houden met twee verschillende handgebaren. Maar ze was niet de enige die het probeerde en ze was niet de enige die verloor. Het was onmogelijk om de drums op Fifth Avenue te onderscheiden van de vibrerende riem-gespmelodieën uit de piano’s die op iedere grammofoon draaiden. Onmogelijk. Sommige nachten zijn stil, nog geen motor van een auto binnen gehoorsafstand, geen dronkaards of rusteloze baby’s die huilen om hun moeders en Alice opent elk willekeurig raam dat ze wil en hoort helemaal niets.

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<sup>18</sup> This is a problem regarding African American terminology. The strategy I used here is called the “intratextual explanation” (Aixelá). Since there are no Dutch equivalents at hand, but only English explanations of the terms, I have chosen to replace the terms with an explanation. The three English terms all have the same meaning, which means that only the African American terminology gets lost in this translation. (See chapter 4.4.1).

<sup>19</sup> Normally it is not usual for a Dutch text to have a word repeated three times in a row. However, one of the features of African American writings is the repetition of words.

<sup>20</sup> This is the name of a song performed by George William and Bessie Brown between 1925 and 1930. Because it is the title of a song, I have chosen to use the English title in the translation, otherwise the reference to the song would get lost.

### 5.3 Page 108-109

*In this passage the third-person narrative tells the story of Violet and the reason why she has changed so much towards her husband Joe.*

Gaandeweg werd het verlangen naar seks zwaarder dan de seks zelf: het was een hunkerend, oncontroleerbaar verlangen. Ze was machteloos door haar zwakheid of onbuigzaam in een poging om het van zich af te zetten. Dat was het moment waarop ze een cadeau voor zichzelf kocht dat ze verstopte onder bed en het stiekem tevoorschijn haalde als ze echt niet anders kon. Ze stelde zich voor hoe oud het kind van haar laatste miskraam nu zou zijn geweest. Waarschijnlijk een meisje. Zeker een meisje. Op wie zou ze lijken<sup>21</sup>? Hoe zou haar stem klinken? Nadat ze haar borstvoeding had gegeven, zou Violet over het eten van het kleine meisje blazen om het af te laten koelen voor het gevoelige mondje. Later zouden ze samen zingen, Violet de altpartij en het kleine meisje de liefelijke sopraan. “Weet je het nog, heel lang geleden, wat twee kleine hummels op een dag deden, door hun speelse gedrag op een zomerse dag, verdwaald in het bos zo gaat de ronde dat toen de zon onderging en de sterren hoog stonden. De arme hummels in het bos in hun slaap zijn gestorven. Toen waren ze dood en een robin zo rood legde aardbeienblaadjes over hun hoofd.”<sup>22</sup> Och. Och. Later zou Violet haar haren doen zoals de meiden het tegenwoordig droegen: kort, een kaarsrechte pony boven de wenkbrauwen? Krullen langs de oren? Een scherpe scheiding aan de zijkant? Het haar dat met een watergolf voorzichtige golfbewegingen maakt?

Violet verdronk erin, diep in haar dromen. Precies op het moment dat haar borsten eindelijk plat genoeg waren en ze niet meer de banden om hoofde die de jonge meiden droegen om te pronken met een zachte jongensborst, precies op het

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<sup>21</sup> This is a problem regarding slang words. The regional expression: “to favour someone” is a Southern American way of saying that someone looks like his relative.

<sup>22</sup> In order to keep transfer the underlying meaning I had to translate this musical phrase. Since it is a song and songs belong to the African American oral tradition, I had to make the words rhyme with each other. Rhyming words are a means to have people remember the message or story. (See chapter 4.4.2).

moment dat haar tepels zacht waren, sloeg de nestdrang genadeloos toe. Sloeg haar knock-out. Toen ze wakker werd had haar man een jong meisje neergeschoten dat jong genoeg om die dochter te kunnen zijn die ze zo'n verpletterend kapsel had gegeven.

#### 5.4 Page 122-124

*This passage is part of Joe Trace's character's speech in which he speaks about how he met Dorcas. In this passage Joe also has a flashback in which he speaks about the time he lived with other people and he had to find himself a last name.*

“Ze keurde me geen blik waardig<sup>23</sup> en zei niets. Maar ik wist van elke minuut waar ze stond en hoe. Ze leunde met haar heup op de achterkant van een stoel in de salon<sup>24</sup>, terwijl de vrouwen uit de eetkamer stroomden om me op te lappen en te plagen. Toen riep iemand haar naam hardop. Dorcas. Ik hoorde verder weinig, maar ik bleef en liet hen glimlachend al mijn spullen zien, ik verkocht ze niet maar liet de spullen<sup>25</sup> zichzelf verkopen.

“Ik verkoop vertrouwen, ik maak de dingen gemakkelijk. Dat is de beste manier. Nooit aandringen. Net zoals bij de Windemere<sup>26</sup> waar ik werk als ober<sup>27</sup>. Ik ben er wel maar alleen als je me daar wil hebben. Of wanneer ik de kamers doe en de whisky verborgen als koffie naar boven breng. Alleen als je me nodig hebt en precies op het juiste moment. Je leert de vrouw kennen die vier glazen van iets willen hebben maar het niet vier keer willen vragen en dus wacht je tot haar glas voor tweederde leeg is en dan vul je weer bij. Op die manier drinkt zij een glas terwijl hij

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<sup>23</sup> Use of a Dutch proverb where English does not have one in the ST.

<sup>24</sup> English word “parlor” is used in the U.S. for a shop or business premises which provides a particular service. The parlor is used as a hairdresser’s shop, therefore “salon” is the correct use here as it refers to “kapsalon”.

<sup>25</sup> English “them” is made explicit.

<sup>26</sup> Cultural specific geographical element is kept as a foreign element in the translation. (See chapter 4.4.2).

<sup>27</sup> Action in the English phrase “wait tables” is replaced by the profession.

er voor vier betaalt. Zwart geld<sup>28</sup> fluistert tweemaal: eenmaal als het in mijn zak laat rollen en eenmaal als ik het laat rollen<sup>29</sup>.

“Ik was bereid om te wachten, om haar mij te laten negeren. Ik had geen plan en zou het niet hebben kunnen uitvoeren als het wel zo was. Ik voelde me duizelig en licht in mijn hoofd en ik dacht dat het kwam door de zware citroenlucht, de gezichtspoeder en dat licht-geurende vrouwenzweet. Zoutachtig. Niet bitter zoals dat van een man. Tot op de dag van vandaag weet ik niet waardoor ik tegen haar sprak op weg naar buiten.

“Ik kan me zo voorstellen wat de mensen zeggen. Dat ik Violet behandelde als een meubelstuk waar je dol op bent hoewel het iedere dag iets nodig heeft om het stabiel en recht overeind te houden. Ik weet het niet. Maar sinds Victory liet ik niemand meer dichtbij komen. Gistan en Stuck, wij zijn hecht<sup>30</sup>, maar niet zoals met iemand die jou kent vanaf je geboorte en waar je samen mee bent opgegroeid. Ik zou Victory verteld hebben hoe het zat. Gistan, Stuck, wat ik hen zou vertellen zou ongeveer overeenkomen, maar niet met hoe het echt zat. Ik kon met niemand praten behalve Dorcas en ik vertelde haar dingen die ik mezelf niet eens verteld had. Bij haar was ik als nieuw<sup>31</sup>. Voordat ik haar ontmoette was ik zeven keer eerder als nieuw veranderd. De eerste keer was toen ik mezelf een naam gaf, omdat niemand anders dat deed en omdat niemand wist wat het had kunnen of moeten zijn.

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<sup>28</sup> This is a problem regarding slang language. “Quiet money” is slang for “earning money secretly”. Dutch has the equivalent “zwart werken” and “zwart geld”. In the context of Jazz this phrase has a double meaning, because “zwart” can also refer to the person’s skin colour. Since this Dutch equivalent is a canonized phrase in Dutch, I assume the reader will not link “zwart” to the skin colour.

<sup>29</sup> The English “slide” is used twice in the same sentence and it might refer to the sliding of the trombone, a jazz instrument. In Dutch it would be unnatural to use “schuiven” in combination with “geld” and “glijden” can only be used in “in mijn zak laten glijden”, but you cannot say “als ik het laat glijden”. The best option here was to lose the connotation with the instrument and try and find a word that could be used twice. In this case “rollen” was the only option.

<sup>30</sup> This is a problem regarding the use of AAVE as discussed in chapter 4.3.2. In English Joe uses AAVE by omitting “are”. In the translation the “naturalisation” strategy is used.

<sup>31</sup> English has two different adjectives “fresh” and “new” which both mean “nieuw” in Dutch. Therefore, only one adjective returns in the translation.

“Ik ben in 1873 geboren en opgegroeid<sup>32</sup> in Vesper County, Virginia. In een klein plaatsje genaamd Vienna. Rhoda en Frank Williams namen me gelijk in huis en voedden me op samen met hun zes eigen kinderen. Haar laatste kind was drie maanden oud toen mevrouw<sup>33</sup> Rhoda mij in huis nam en hij en ik waren hechter dan vele andere broers die ik heb gezien. Victory was zijn naam. Victory Williams. Mevrouw Rhoda vernoemde mij naar haar vader Joseph, maar zowel zij als meneer Frank dachten er niet over na om mij een achternaam te geven. Ze deed nooit alsof ik haar eigen kind was. Wanneer ze karweitjes of presentjes uitdeelde zei ze altijd, ‘Het is net alsof je mijn eigen kind bent.’ Dat ‘net alsof’ was denk ik de reden dat ik haar vroeg - volgens mij was ik nog geen drie - waar mijn echte ouders waren. Ze keek me over haar schouder aan en gaf me een liefdevolle glimlach, die op de een of andere manier verdrietig was, en vertelde me, O lieverd, ze verdwenen zonder spoor<sup>34</sup>. Op de manier zoals ik het verstond dacht ik dat ze bedoelde dat ik het ‘spoor’ was waar ze zonder vertrokken waren.

“De eerste dag dat ik naar school ging moest ik twee namen hebben. Ik zei tegen de lerares<sup>35</sup> dat ik Joseph Trace<sup>36</sup> heette. Victory draaide zich helemaal om in zijn stoel.

“‘Waarom ze je dat tegen haar?’ vroeg hij me.

“‘Ik weet het niet,’ zei ik. ‘Gewoon.’

“‘Mama zal boos zijn. Pappie ook<sup>37</sup>.’

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<sup>32</sup> The Dutch proverb “geboren en getogen” would be the usual way to translate “born and raised”, but to avoid the use of difficult words in Joe’s speech, “opgegroeid” was chosen above “getogen” (see chapter 4.1.2).

<sup>33</sup> Domestication of the English title “Mrs.” into “mevrouw” to emphasize the level of respect Joe shows towards the woman who took him in when his parents left him.

<sup>34</sup> This sentence shows the problem regarding the metaphorical dimension of names. In this sentence Joe explains how he got his last name. The equivalent of the original sentence “leave without a trace” is “weggaan zonder een spoor achter te laten”, but this translation claims the opposite of what is said in the original. I had to adapt this sentence in order to leave out “achter te laten”. (See chapter 4.2.2).

<sup>35</sup> Specifying gender in Dutch, next sentence confirms the female gender of the teacher.

<sup>36</sup> I have chosen to have the name of “Joe Trace” foreignized in the translation, because I wanted to keep a certain degree of “exotism” in the text. His last name “Trace” refers to the his parents “who left without a trace”. (See chapter 4.2.2).

<sup>37</sup> The dialect here is translated according to the strategy of “naturalisation” and because the addition of “vroeg hij me in een Afro-Amerikaans accent” would be strange here since Joe is the one telling about the dialogue and he speaks in AAVE himself so he would probably not notice that he and

“We waren buiten op het schoolplein. Het was fijn, de grond was goed aangedrukt maar er lagen veel spijkers en andere dingen in. We liepen allebei op blote voeten. Ik probeerde met moeite een stuk glas uit de onderkant van mijn voet te halen, zodat ik hem niet aan hoefde te kijken. ‘Nee dat worden ze niet,’ zei ik. ‘Jouw mama is niet mijn mama.’

“‘Als zij dat niet is, wie is het dan?’

“‘Een andere mevrouw. Ze komt wel terug. Ze komt wel terug voor mij. Mijn papa ook.’ Dat was de eerste keer dat ik zeker wist dat ik dat dacht, of wenste.

“Victory zei, ‘Ze weten waar ze je hebben achtergelaten. Ze komen terug naar ons huis. Ze weten dat je bij het huis van Williams bent. Hij probeerde net als zijn zus hypermobiel te lopen. Zij was daar goed in en schepte er zo erg over op dat Victory zoveel oefende als hij kon. Ik herinner me nog hoe zijn schaduw voor mij langs schoot in de modder. ‘Ze weten dat je bij Williams thuis bent, je zou jezelf Williams moeten noemen.’

## 5.5 Page 198-200

*This passage is a part of Felice’s character’s speech in which she speaks about her mother and father who she rarely sees because they are mostly away to Tuxedo to work.*

“Mijn moeder en ook mijn vader woonden in Tuxedo. Ik zag hen bijna nooit. Ik woonde bij mijn oma die zei, ‘Felice, ze wonen niet in Tuxedo, ze werken daar en wonen bij ons.’ Alleen maar woorden: leven, werken. Ik zag hen eens in de drie weken twee en halve dag en met Kerstmis de hele dag en met de hele dag met Pasen. Ik telde. Tweeënveertig dagen als je de halve dagen meetelde - wat ik niet doe, want het merendeel daarvan bestond uit koffers pakken en de trein halen - plus twee vakantiedagen dat maakt vierenvieftig dagen, maar eigenlijk zijn dat er maar

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Victory are talking in AAVE. This is normal speech for Joe and thus naturalisation seems the best option.

drieënveertig want de halve dagen zouden niet mee moeten tellen. Drieënveertig dagen per jaar<sup>38</sup>.

“Wanneer ze thuiskwamen, kusten ze mij en gaven me dingen, zoals mijn opaalring, maar wat ze eigenlijk wilden doen was uitgaan om ergens te gaan dansen (mijn moeder) of slapen (mijn vader). Ze kwamen naar de kerk op zondag, maar mijn moeder is daar nog steeds treurig over omdat ze tegen alle dingen die ze had moeten doen voor de kerk - de avondmaaltijden, de vergaderingen, het klaarmaken van de kelder voor de feestjes van de zondagschool en de recepties na afloop van begrafenissen - nee had moeten zeggen, vanwege haar werk in Tuxedo. Dus het liefste wilde ze de roddels horen van de vrouwen van de Kringvereniging en ze wilde ook een beetje dansen en een potje rikken<sup>39</sup>.

“Mijn vader zat het liefst in zijn badjas en wilde voor de verandering eens bediend worden terwijl hij de stapels kranten las die mijn oma en ik voor hem bewaarden. De *Amsterdam*, de *Age*, *The Crisis*, *The Messenger* en de *Worker*<sup>40</sup>. Sommige nam hij mee terug naar Tuxedo omdat hij ze daar niet kon krijgen. Hij wil de kranten het liefst netjes opgevouwen hebben en geen eten of vingerafdrukken op de tijdschriften, dus ik lees ze niet veel. Mijn oma wel en past heel erg op dat ze ze niet kreukelt of vuil maakt. Niets maakt hem kwader dan het openen van een slecht opgevouwen krant. Hij gromt en kreunt terwijl hij leest en eens in de zoveel tijd lacht hij, maar hij zou het nooit opgeven ook al bezorgt als dat lezen hem enorme kopzorgen, zei mijn oma. Het leukste deel vindt hij om alles te lezen en te discussiëren over wat hij heeft gelezen met mijn moeder of oma en de vrienden waar ze mee kaarten.

“Ik had eens bedacht dat als ik de kranten zou lezen die we bewaard hadden, dat ik met hem kon discussiëren. Maar ik koos het verkeerde onderwerp. Ik las over de

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<sup>38</sup> This sentence clearly shows Felice's habit of wanting to provide the reader with all the correct details. The accuracy of details might be caused by Felice's grief for having been neglected badly by her parents. (See chapter 4.1.2)

<sup>39</sup> This is a Dutch variant to the English game of whist, which is a classic English trick-taking card game.

<sup>40</sup> The cultural specific elements are all translated by applying the strategy of "foreignization", which means that the original elements are kept in the translation. (See chapter 4.4.1).

blanke politieagenten die gearresteerd waren voor het vermoorden van enkele negers en zei dat ik blij was dat ze gearresteerd waren, dat het eens tijd werd.

“Hij keek me aan en schreeuwde, ‘dat verhaal kwam in de krant omdat het nieuws was meisje, nieuws!’

“Ik wist niet hoe ik daarop moest antwoorden en begon te huilen, dus mijn oma zei, ‘Sonny, ga maar ergens zitten,’ en mijn moeder zei, ‘Walter, houdt je mond tegen haar over dat soort zaken.’

“Ze legde me uit wat hij bedoelde: dat voor het dagelijks neerschieten van Afro-Amerikanen<sup>41</sup> door agenten, niemand werd gearresteerd. Ze nam me daarna mee uit winkelen voor een paar dingen die haar bazen in Tuxedo wilden hebben en ik vroeg haar niet waarom zij op haar vrije dagen voor hen naar de winkel moest, want dan had ze me niet meegenomen naar Tiffany’s op Thirty-seventh Street waar het stiller is dan wanneer Eerwaarde een minuut stilte vraagt om te bidden. Wanneer dat gebeurt kan ik voeten over de grond horen schrapen en sommige mensen hun neus horen snuiten. Maar in Tiffany’s snuit niemand een neus en de vloerbedekking voorkomt elk schoengeluid. Zoals Tuxedo.

“Jaren geleden toen ik nog klein was, voordat ik naar school ging, namen mijn ouders me daar mee naartoe. Ik moest de hele tijd stil zijn. Ze namen me twee keer mee en ik bleef de volledige drie weken. Toch hield dat op. Mijn vader en moeder spraken erover om te stoppen, maar dat deden ze niet. Ze namen mijn oma in huis om op mij te passen.

“Drieënveertig dagen. Ik ben nu zeventien en dat is opgeteld minder dan zeshonderd dagen. Minder dan twee van de zeventien jaar. Dorcas zei dat ik geluk had omdat ze tenminste ergens waren en als ik ziek was kon ik hen bellen of met de trein naar hen toe gaan. Haar beide ouders stierven op een hele nare manier en zij had hen gezien nadat ze waren overleden en ze werden opgelapt voor de begrafenis.

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<sup>41</sup> The word “Negroes” in the source text context is not used in an offensive way and the translation should have a similar effect on the reader. The most neutral Dutch word that is used to talk about a group of people in general without any offensive connotations is “Afro-Amerikanen.

Ze had een foto van hen waar ze onder een geschilderde palmboom zaten. Haar moeder stond rechtop met haar hand op haar vaders schouder. Hij zat en hield een boek vast. Ik vond ze er verdrietig uitzien, maar Dorcas hield er maar niet over op hoe knap ze er beiden uitzagen.

## 5.6 Page 109-113

*This passage is a part of the conversation Violet and Alice Manfred are having in Alice's kitchen.*

Ze hadden samen knus in de keuken kunnen zitten, terwijl Violet haar haren deed. "Een ander moment," zei ze tegen Alice Manfred met een Afro-Amerikaans accent<sup>42</sup>, "een ander moment had ik ook van haar gehouden. Net zoals jij deed. Net zoals Joe." Ze hield de revers van haar jas dicht, te beschaamd om haar gastvrouw haar jas op te laten hangen voor het geval ze de voering zou zien.

"Misschien," zei Alice met hetzelfde accent<sup>43</sup>. "Misschien. Dat zal je nu nooit meer te weten komen."

"Ik dacht dat ze knap zou zijn. Heel knap. Dat was ze niet."

"Knap genoeg, zou ik zeggen."

"Je bedoelt het haar. De huidskleur."

"Vertel me niet wat ik bedoel."

"Wat dan? Wat zag hij in haar<sup>44</sup>?"

"Schaam je. Een volwassen vrouw als jij die me dat vraagt."

"Ik moet het weten."

"Vraag het dan aan degene die het wel weet. Je ziet hem iedere dag."

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<sup>42</sup> I added a brief response here that is not present in the source text. The source text does not contain use of AAVE, but it would be strange to insert the brief response halfway the conversation. The effect of this response is that the reader will automatically copy the response to the following sentences without having the translator do that. (See chapter 4.3.2).

<sup>43</sup> Here another brief response is added to the text to let the reader know that Alice also speaks with an African American accent.

<sup>44</sup> Omission of the past form of the auxiliary "do" in the source text.

“Doe niet zo gek.”

“Doe ik wel als ik dat wil<sup>45</sup>.”

“Goed dan. Maar ik wil het niet aan hem vragen. Ik wil niet horen wat hij erover te zeggen heeft. Je weet waar ik om vraag.”

“Vergeving is waar je om vraagt en dat kan ik je niet geven. Dat ligt niet in mijn macht.”

“Nee, niet dat. Vergeving, dat is het niet.”

“Wat dan? Niet zielig doen hoor. Ik kan er niet tegen als je zielig gaat doen, hoor je me?”

“Wij zijn rond dezelfde tijd geboren<sup>46</sup>, jij en ik, “ zei Violet.

“Wij zijn vrouwen, jij en ik. Zeg nou eens echt wat. Zeg me niet dat ik volwassen ben en het hoor te weten. Ik weet het niet. Ik ben vijftig en ik weet helemaal niets. Hoe zit het? Moet ik bij hem blijven? Ik denk dat ik dat wel wil. Ik wil... nou ja, niet altijd...nu wil ik. Ik wil eens iets positiefs<sup>47</sup>.”

“Wordt toch wakker. Positief of negatief, je hebt er maar één. Daar moet je het mee doen.”

“Jij weet het ook niet, of wel?”

“Ik weet genoeg om te weten hoe ik me moet gedragen.”

“Is dat alles? Is dat echt alles?”

“Wat bedoel je met is dat alles?”

“O, verdorie! Waar zijn de volwassenen? Zijn wij dat?”

“O, mama.” Alice Manfred gooide het eruit en bedekte vervolgens haar mond.

Violet had dezelfde gedachte: Mama. Mama? Is dit het punt waarop je niet meer verder kon? De plek van schaduw zonder bomen waar je weet dat je niet en nooit

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<sup>45</sup> In the source text the subject is left out and the sentence starts with the verb “will”. In the translation I used the same strategy by leaving out “dat” and starting with “doe”.

<sup>46</sup> Omission of the copula ‘be’ in the source text. I left this out in the translation and instead made a grammatically correct sentence. Otherwise it would have turned into an illiterate sentence. (See chapter 4.3.2).

<sup>47</sup> This is a problem regarding the use of African American terminology. The English term “fat” is slang for “doing well in life”. I translated this with “positiefs”, because in the next sentence the phrase “fat or lean” is used which I can translate with “positief of negatief”.

meer geliefd zult zijn door iemand die er daadwerkelijk voor kiest? Waar alles voorbij is behalve het gepraat?

Ze keken op dat moment allebei de andere kant op. De stilte bleef maar duren tot Alice Manfred zei, "Kom hier met die jas. Ik kan die voering niet langer aanzien."

Violet stond op en trok haar jas uit door voorzichtig haar armen terug te trekken die gevangen zaten in rafelig zijde. Vervolgens ging ze zitten en keek toe hoe de naaister aan het werk ging.

"Het enige waar ik aan kon denken was om hem op dezelfde manier terug te pakken."

"Dwaas," zei Alice en brak het draad.

"Ik zou niet weten wat ik moest doen<sup>48</sup> al zou mijn leven ervan af hangen."

"Durf te wedden dat hij het wel weet."

"Hij doet maar."

"Wat denk je dat dat gaat oplossen?"

Violet gaf geen antwoord.

"Kreeg je daardoor aandacht van je man?"

"Nee."

"Ging het graf van mijn nichtje daardoor open?"

"Nee."

"Moet ik het nogmaals zeggen?"

"Dwaas? Nee. Nee, maar zeg eens, ik bedoel, luister. Iedereen waarmee ik opgroeide is daarginds thuis. We hebben geen kinderen. Hij is alles dat ik heb. Hij is alles wat ik heb."

"Dat lijkt anders niet zo," zei Alice. Haar steken waren onzichtbaar voor het blote oog.

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<sup>48</sup> The English phrase "Couldn't name him if my life depended on it" means 'that you have no idea what the right answer is'. In this case it means that Violet "doesn't know the answer to this problem". This sentence is a perfect link with the following remark Alice makes: "bet he can name you" and "Let him".

Eind maart, toen ze in Duggie's drogisterij zat, speelde Violet met een lepel en dacht ze terug aan haar bezoek aan Alice die morgen. Ze was er al vroeg naartoe gegaan. Het was werktijd en Violet had niets te doen.

"Het is anders dan ik had gedacht," zei ze. "Anders."

Violet bedoelde dat de twintig jaar van haar leven in de Stad beter dan perfect waren, maar Alice vroeg niet wat ze bedoelde. Ze vroeg haar niet of de Stad, met haar straten helemaal uitgezet, de jaloezie opwekte die resulteerde in dwaasheid. Of dat het de Stad was die een verbogen rouwproces produceerde voor een rivale jong genoeg om een dochter te zijn.

Ze hadden gepraat over prostituees en vechtende vrouwen - Alice geprikkeld, Violet onverschillig. Toen was er een stilte terwijl Violet haar thee dronk en naar het gesis van het strijkijzer luisterde. De vrouwen waren nu op zo'n goede voet<sup>49</sup> met elkaar dat woorden niet altijd nodig waren. Alice streek en Violet keek toe. Van tijd tot tijd mompelde één van hen iets - tegen zichzelf of tegen de ander.

"Vroeger was ik gek op dat spul," zei Violet.

Alice glimlachte, ze wist zonder op te kijken dat Violet het stijfjel bedoelde. "Ik ook," zei ze. "Mijn man werd er stapelgek van."

"Is het de korst? Het kan niet de smaak zijn."

Alice haalde haar schouders op. "Dat weet alleen het lichaam."

"Het strijkijzer siste tegen de vochtige stof. Violet leunde haar wang op haar handpalm. "Je strijkt zoals mijn oma. Schouderstuk als laatste."

"Dat is de norm voor eersteklas strijkwerk."

"Sommigen doen het schouderstuk eerst."

"En moeten het opnieuw doen. Ik haat lui strijkgedrag."

"Waar heb je zo leren naaien?"

"Toen we nog kinderen waren hielden ze ons bezig. Niets omhanden, je kent het wel."

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<sup>49</sup> The English proverb "become easy with someone" is replaced by a Dutch proverb with different words that produce the equivalent meaning.

“We plukten katoen, hakten hout, ploegden. Wij zaten thuis nooit met de handen over elkaar. Dit hier is het minste wat ik mijn handen heb zien doen.”

Stijfsel eten, beslissen wanneer het schouderstuk aangepakt moet worden, naaien, plukken, koken, hakken. Violet dacht aan dat alles en zuchtte. “Ik dacht dat het grootser zou zijn dan dit. Ik wist dat het niet voor altijd zou zijn, maar ik had wel gedacht dat het grootser zou zijn.”

Alice vouwde het doek opnieuw om het handvat van het drukijzer. “Je weet toch dat hij het nog eens zal doen. En nog eens en nog eens.

“In dat geval kan ik hem er maar beter nu uitgooien.”

“En wat dan?”

Violet schudde haar hoofd. “Naar het hout op de vloer staren denk ik.”

“Zal ik je eens advies geven?” vroeg Alice. “Hier komt een goed advies.

Als je ook maar iets hebt om van te houden, wat het ook mag zijn, houdt er dan van.”

Violet hief haar hoofd. “En als hij het nog eens doet? Moet ik me er dan niets van aantrekken wat mensen denken?”

“Trek het je aan wat er voor jou overblijft.”

“Jij vindt dat ik het moet aannemen? Niet moet vechten?”

Alice zette haar strijkijzer neer, hard. “Voor wat moet vechten, voor wie? Een of ander misbruikt kind dat haar ouders in de vlammen zag omkomen? Wie wist er beter dan jij of ik of wie dan ook hoe kort en nietig dit piepkleine leventje is? Of wilde je je toch liever over iemand met drie kinderen en een paar schoenen heen stompen<sup>50</sup>. Iemand in een sjofele jurk waarvan de zoom door de modder sleept. Iemand die net als jij armen wil en jij wilt ernaartoe om haar vast te houden maar haar jurk zit onder de modder en de zoom en de mensen eromheen zouden niet

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<sup>50</sup> In the English phrase “stomp somebody”, “stomp” is the informal noun for jazz dance or jazz music, also in Dutch. The Dutch phrase “een stomp maken” means “stampend over iemand heen dansen”. I translated this into “over iemand ... heen stompen”. This does sound very aggressive and not many people will make the connection with jazz dance, but I think that the English phrase “stomp somebody” has the similar effect on the source text reader.

begrijpen hoe iemands ogen zo dof kunnen zijn, hoe kunnen ze dat doen? Niemand zegt dat je het moet aannemen. Ik zeg ga ervoor, ga ervoor!”

Het duurde even voor ze in de gaten had dat Violet aan het staren was. Alice volgde haar blik en tilde het strijkijzer op en zag wat Violet zag: het zwarte en rokende schip<sup>51</sup> was recht door het schouderstuk gebrand.

“Shit!” Gilde Alice. “O, shit!”

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<sup>51</sup> The “ship” in the source text is a reference to the slave ships that sailed on the transatlantic slave route. I translated this with “schip”, because here we have learned that slaves were shipped in “schepen” and not in a “boot” or “schuitje”. (See chapter 4.2.1).

## 6 COMPARISON WITH PUBLISHED TRANSLATION OF JAZZ

The only published Dutch translation of *Jazz* was translated by Nettie Vink and appeared in 1992, the same year as the original by Toni Morrison was published. When I compared the translated passages in this thesis to the translation of Vink, several differences were noticeable. In general, it looks like Vink chose to translate the text according to Venuti's strategy of "foreignization" by trying to keep as much of the foreign elements in the translation. In chapter 4.1.1 I referred to the intervention of the source text narrator by the translator in using either strategy of "foreignization" or "domestication". The following example shows that Vink chose the strategy of "foreignization", as she did not interfere in the source text by using in-text explanations such as "zwarte vrouwen" or "hun verleden als slaaf":

"Al die vrouwen hebben dat. Op hun gemak de ruimte hebben voor niets anders dan de vlucht van hun eigen gedachten, daar wachten ze op. Maar het zou ze niet bevallen. Ze hebben het druk en bedenken manieren om het nog drukker te hebben, want zoveel ruimte met niets dringends te doen zou ze nekken" (21).

I have chosen to combine the two strategies of "foreignization" and "domestication" for my translation, as my focus was on bringing the notion of the African American identity across. Therefore, I translated some specific characteristics into the target language in order to preserve the underlying meaning, whereas Vink did not. Instead, Vink's translation shows a very consistent use of nonstandard language and heterogenous language, which are characteristic for the "foreignization" strategy. An example of Vink's consistency is her approach towards the musical phrases. Vink has chosen not to translate these phrases but instead use the English phrase in the target text. Vink has marked the phrases by putting them in italics, which became: "*Blues man. Black and bluesman. Blacktherefore blue man. Everybody knows your name*" (65). I

think this strategy causes a great loss of the historical reference to the African oral tradition as explained in chapter 4.4.3. The target reader will most likely not be able to read what is says, let alone understand its reference to feeling of dislocation which many African Americans felt. Moreover, if the target reader does not know how to pronounce the words 'why' and 'die', the rhyme will get lost as well. That are the reasons why I chose to let go of the alliteration in my translation and replace the words in the first sentence with Dutch words that contain the meaning of the original words such as 'triest' for 'blue'. I also used the Dutch words 'gegaan' and 'bestaan' to maintain the rhyming sentences in the translation.

Vink also used the original English variant of all the character's names in her translation, such as "Joe Trace" and "Golden Gray", as well as the cultural specific elements, such as 'Fifth Street'. In the case of the name "Joe Trace" and Joe's own explanation of how he got his last name, Vink chose not to translate "Trace" in "Spoor", even though she translated the explanation into: "Zoals ik het hoorde, maakte ik eruit op dat ze bedoelde dat ik dat 'spoor' was" (131). The word "spoor" in Vink's translation only refers to the former sentence where Mrs. Rhoda says: "ach schat die zijn verdwenen zonder een spoor" (131). I used a similar approach in my translation by also using the foreign names of the characters and street names. In my opinion, replacing these names with Dutch names that carry a certain underlying meaning would only increase the translator's visibility, and that should be avoided. One significant difference is Vink's simplified translation of the American street name "thirty-seventh Street". Instead of using the foreign name, Vink translated this name into a number, which became "33rd Street". I do not know whether she deliberately translated the wrong number.

Vink's consistency in using the strategy of "foreignization" does falter in her translation of the names of newspapers and magazines. She translated the names into non-existing Dutch names, such as "de Eeuw", "Het Keerpunt" and "De Koerier". The result of this approach is that the setting has changed to the Dutch culture where people read Dutch newspapers. The reference to America is lost here and, more

importantly, some of the original newspapers refer directly to the African American history. For example, the magazine called “the *Crisis*” is the official magazine of the NAACP. I used the foreign names in my translation, because I wanted to avoid creating a situation in which an African American person is reading Dutch newspapers. Also, I did not want to lose the connection to the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*, even though the Dutch reader might never link the newspaper to the association.

For the translation of the African American vernacular English Vink chose the strategy of “naturalisation”, as the language does not show signs of illiteracy or a local/social target language variety. Instead, Vink used the abbreviated forms of the words “eens”, “ik”, “hij” and “zijn”, which are “'s”, “'k”, “ie” and “z'n”, such as in the following example:

“'k Zou z'n naam niet weten al hing mijn leven ervan af.” (120)

“Nee, maar vertel me 's, ik bedoel hoor 's.” (120)

“Ja meneer. Als-ie thuis is. Dat is-ie nou niet.” (165)

The abbreviations used here give the reader the impression that the language used by the characters is an informal variety of standard language and I think that, to some extent, this has the same effect as in *Jazz*. These abbreviations are very neutral and do not refer to any target language local/social dialect. I used the same strategy of “naturalisation”, but only by adding brief responses at the beginning of every dialogue, such as ‘zei Alice met een Afro-Amerikaans accent’. This approach does not give the impression that the language is informal, but it does directly point towards the location where the original language is situated.

The translation of certain metaphors in the novel reveals some other differences between the two translations. On the last page of my translation, I translated the metaphor “ship” with the Dutch equivalent “schip”, since the reference in the source text is made to the slave ships that transported the slaves to

America during the transatlantic slave trade. In Dutch, however, it is usual to add the diminutive “-tje” after words that refer to something smaller than the original form and thus, “ship” should become “scheepje”. This has the same effect as Vink’s translation of this metaphor into “schuitje”, which I think completely misses the underlying meaning of the original word. The Dutch reader will only understand the “schuitje” to be the form of the burn mark and not the reference to the slave ships.

In general Vink’s sentences read very fluently, but she often uses different words to convey the same meaning. For example, her translation of a long sentence reads: “Het was onbegonnen werk om de trommels van Fifth Avenue gescheiden te houden van de broekriemdeuntjes die vibrerend uit piano’s kwamen en op elke Victrola tolden.” (65). The source text reads: “It was impossible to keep the Fifth Avenue drums separate from the belt-buckle tunes vibrating from pianos and spinning on every Victrola.” (59). Vink translated ‘impossible’ with ‘onbegonnen werk’ and ‘keep separate’ with ‘gescheiden te houden’. I think ‘impossible’ has a much stronger connotation and can best be translated as ‘onmogelijk’. I would translate ‘keep separate’ with ‘onderscheiden van’. The use of punctuation is also different in Vink’s translation. The semi-colon, for example is often used in the source text to prevent long sentences from becoming obliterate. Since the use of the semi-colon is rare in Dutch written texts, I replaced them with a full stop, a comma, or the word ‘en’. In the published translation the semi-colon is still used regularly and even appears in places where it does not in the source text.

All in all, the strategies applied by Vink created a target text that carries across the meaning of the source text, even though I think that her strategy of ‘exotisation’ sometimes is excessive in a way that the meaning of the text gets lost where it could have been preserved, such as with the musical phrases.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The research question focused on the stylistic effects in the novel and how they contributed to the notion of African American identity in *Jazz*. The second part concentrated on the most suitable solutions to address these stylistic effects to Dutch.

One of the stylistic features that is often used in jazz literature is the representation of identity through complex narrative structures. Morrison's aim was to have multiple voices tell the story instead of having an authoritative view. The voices in *Jazz* are profoundly different, and they all show their perspectives on the lives of the characters in the story. According to O'sullivan the visibility of the translator in the narrative discourse is clear in both foreignized and domesticated texts, as the translator intercepts the message and transmits his own interpretation of the original in the target text (201). In *Jazz*, the two character's speeches by Joe Trace and Felice contain more specific translation problems in itself. The language in these passages contributes to the reader's perception of the character. The difference between Joe Trace and Felice is their use of language. Whereas Joe's sentences contain traces of African American vernacular English, Felice's sentences are perfectly correct. The best strategy to translate Joe's speech is to use an informal register and abbreviations in places where the subject of the sentence is left out.

The importance of translating the metaphors in *Jazz* is for the translator to make sure that he is well aware of the underlying meaning of the image. The meaning can make the difference in choosing the right equivalent. This is especially the case in the translation of the character's names, such as "Joe Trace" and "Golden Grey", whose names both refer to their past lives. Toury sets out six possible strategies to transfer the source text metaphor into the target text, which are translating the metaphor into an equivalent, translating the metaphor into a different image with the same meaning, translating the metaphor with a non-metaphor, complete omission of the metaphor in the target text, turning a non-metaphor into a metaphor and the last option is to use a metaphor on a different place within the text

(83). Depending on the meaning of the source text metaphor, any of these strategies can be applied.

There are also multiple options for the translation of the African American vernacular English in the dialogues. Since the sentences in the dialogues are very short and AAVE only occurs irregularly, the best solution seemed to be to add a brief response with the addition of an explanation, such as “zei ze met een Afro-Amerikaans accent.” By applying this strategy, the reader will not get distracted from the text by all sorts of illiterate language, which would be the case if the dialect was translated with, for example, a regional target language dialect, or the phenomenon of “eye-dialect” (Leech & Short 135).

Another translation problem is the occurrence of African American terminology. In chapter four multiple solutions are provided, among which are replacing the term with its explanation, keeping the foreign term in the translation, translating the term with a Dutch equivalent, keeping the foreign term and providing “extratextual explanations” such as footnotes or endnotes, or leave out the term in the translation (Aixelá 201). The final choice for one of these strategies is different for every term and depends on several factors.

Furthermore, it is very important that the target text reads fluently and captures the meaning of the source text. In my comparison to the published translation of Nettie Vink, the differences in translation strategies show that every translator has its own view on the strategies he uses to transfer the meaning of the source text. For example, Vink chose to keep the foreign elements of musical phrases, and she marked them by putting them into italics. I, on the other hand, chose to translate these phrases and find equivalent words in Dutch that rhyme as well. Other cultural specific elements such as the names of the newspapers, Vink decided to translate, whereas I used the foreign names in my translation.

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## APPENDIX

### Page 228-229

It's nice when grown people whisper to each other under the covers. Their ecstasy is more leaf-sigh than bray and the body is the vehicle, not the point. They reach, grown people, for something beyond, way beyond and way, way down underneath tissue. They are remembering while they whisper the carnival dolls they won and the Baltimore boats they never sailed on. The pears they let hang on the limb because if they plucked them, they would be gone from there and who else would see that ripeness of they took it away for themselves? How could anybody passing by see them and imagine for themselves what the flavor would be like? Breathing and murmuring under covers both of them have washed and hung out on the line, in a bed they chose together and kept together nevermind one leg was propped on a 1916 dictionary, and the mattress, curved like a preacher's palm and asking for witnesses in His name's sake, enclosed them each and every night and muffled their whispering, old-time love. They are under the covers because they don't have to look at themselves anymore; there is no stud's eye, no chippie glance to undo them. They are inward toward the other, bound and joined by carnival dolls and the steamers that sailed from ports they never saw. That is what is beneath their undercover whispers.

But there is another part, not so secret. The part that touches fingers when one passes the cup and saucer to the other. The part that closes her neckline snap while waiting for the trolley; and brushes lint from his blue serge suit when they come out of the movie house into the sunlight.

I envy them their public love. I myself have only known it in secret, shared it in secret and longed, aw longed to show it - to be able to say out loud what they have no need to say at all: *That I have loved only you, surrendered my whole self reckless to you and nobody else. That I want you to love me back and show it to me. That I love the way you hold me, how close you let me be to you. I like your fingers on and on, lifting, turning. I have watched your face for a long time now, and missed your eyes when you went away from me. Talking to you and hearing you answer - that's the kick.*

But I can't say that aloud; I can't tell anyone that I have been waiting for this all my life and that being chosen to wait is the reason I can. If I were able I'd say it. Say make me, remake me. You are free to do it and I am free to let you because look, look. Look where your hands are. Now.

**Page 58-59**

There had been none of that at the Fifth Avenue march. Just the drums and the Colored Boy Scouts passing out explanatory leaflets to whitemen in straw hats who needed to know what the freezing faces already knew. Alice had picked up a leaflet that had floated to the pavement, read the words, and shifted her weight at the curb. She read the words and looked at Dorcas. Looked at Dorcas and read the words again. What she read seemed crazy, out of focus. Some great gap lunged between the print and the child. She glanced between them struggling for the connection, something to close the distance between the silent staring child and the slippery crazy words. Then suddenly, like a rope cast for rescue, the drums spanned the distance, gathering them all up and connected them: Alice, Dorcas, her sister and her brother-in-law, the Boy Scouts and the frozen black faces, the watchers on the pavement and those in the windows above.

Alice carried that gathering rope with her always after that day on Fifth Avenue, and found it reliably secure and tight - most of the time. Except when the men sat on windowsills fingering horns, and the women wondered "how long". The rope broke them, disturbing her peace, making her aware of flesh and something so free she could smell its bloodsmell; made her aware of its life below the sash and its red lip rouge. She knew from sermons and editorials that it wasn't real music - just colored folk's stuff: harmful, certainly; embarrassing, of course; but not real, not serious.

Yet Alice Manfred swore she heard a complicated anger in it; something hostile that disguised itself as flourish and roaring seduction. But the part she hated most was its appetite. Its longing for the bash, the slit; a kind of careless hunger for a fight or a red ruby stickpin for a tie - either would do. It faked happiness, faked welcome, but it did not make her feel generous, this juke joint, barrel hooch, tonk house, music. It made her hold her hand in the pocket of her apron to keep from smashing it through the glass pane to snatch the world in her fist and squeeze the life out of it for doing what it did and did and did to her and everybody else she knew or knew about. Better to close the windows and the shutters, sweat in the summer heat of a silent Clifton Place apartment than to risk a broken window or a yelping that might not know where or how to stop.

I have seen her, passing a café or an uncurtained window when some phrase or other - "Hit me but don't quit me" - drifted out, and watched her reach with one hand for the safe gathering rope thrown to her eight years ago on Fifth Avenue, and ball the other one into a fist in her coat pocket. I don't know how she did it - balance herself with two different hand gestures. But she was not alone in trying, and she was not alone in losing. It was impossible to keep the Fifth Avenue drums separate from the belt-buckle tunes vibrating from pianos and spinning on every Victrola. Impossible. Some nights are silent; not a motor car turning within earshot; no drunks or restless babies crying for their mothers and Alice opens any window she wants to and hears nothing at all.

**Page 108-109**

By and by longing became heavier than sex: a panting, unmanageable craving. She was limp in its thrall or rigid in an effort to dismiss it. That was when she bought herself a present; hid it under the bed to take out in secret when it couldn't be helped. She began to imagine how old that last miscarried child would be now. A girl, probably. Certainly a girl. Who would she favor? What would her speaking voice sound like? After weaning time, Violet would blow her breath on the babygirl's food, cooling it down for the tender mouth. Later on they would sing together, Violet taking the alto line, the girl a honeyed soprano. "Don't you remember, a long time ago, two little babes their names I don't know, carried away one bright summer's day, lost in the woods I hear people say that the sun went down and the stars shone their light. Poor babes in the woods they laid down and died. When they were dead a robin so red put strawberry leaves over their heads." Aw. Aw. Later on Violet would dress her hair for her the way the girls wore it now: short, bangs paper sharp above the eyebrows? Ear curls? Razor-thin part on the side? Hair sliding into careful waves marcelled to a T?

Violet was drowning in it, deep-dreaming. Just when her breasts were finally flat enough not to need the binders the young women wore to sport the chest of a soft boy, just when her nipples had lost their point, mother-hunger had hit her like a hammer. Knocked her down and out. When she woke up, her husband had shot a girl young enough to be that daughter whose hair she had dressed to kill.

**Page 122-124**

"She didn't give me a look or say anything. But I knew where she was standing and how, every minute. She leaned her hip on the back of a chair in the parlor, while the women streamed out of the dining room to mend me and joke me. Then somebody called out her name. Dorcas. I didn't hear much else, but I stayed there and showed them all my stuff, smiling, not selling but letting them sell themselves.

"I sell trust; I make things easy. That's the best way. Never push. Like at the Windemere when I wait tables. I'm there but only if you want me. Or when I work the rooms, bringing up the whiskey hidden so it looks like coffee. Just there when you need me and right on time. You get to know the woman who wants four glasses of something, but doesn't want to ask four times; so you wait till her glass is two-thirds down and fill it up again. That way, she's drinking one glass while he is buying four. The quiet money whispers twice: once when I slide it in my pocket; once when I slide it out.

"I was prepared to wait, to have her ignore me. I didn't have a plan and couldn't have carried it out if I did. I felt dizzy with a lightheadedness I thought came from the heavy lemon flavoring, the face powder and that light woman-sweat. Salty. Not bitter like a man's is. I don't know to this day what made me speak to her on the way out the door.

"I can conjure what people say. That I treated Violet like a piece of furniture you favor although it needed something every day to keep it steady and upright. I don't know. But since Victory, I never got too close to anybody. Gistan and Stuck, we close, but not like it is with somebody knew you from when you was born and you got to manhood at the same time. I would have told Victory how it was. Gistan, Stuck, whatever

I said to them would be something near, but not the way it really was. I couldn't talk to anybody but Dorcas and I told her things I hadn't told myself. With her I was fresh, new again. Before I met her I'd changed into new seven times. The first time was when I named my own self, since nobody did it for me, since nobody knew what it could or should have been.

"I was born and raised in Vesper County, Virginia, in 1873. Little place called Vienna. Rhoda and Frank Williams took me in right away and raised me along with six of their own. Her last child was three months old when Mrs. Rhoda took me in, and me and him were closer than many brothers I've seen. Victory was his name. Victory Williams. Mrs. Rhoda named me Joseph after her father, but neither she nor Mr. Frank either thought to give me a last name. She never pretended I was her natural child. When she parcelled out chores or favors she'd say, 'You are just like my own.' That 'like' I guess it was made me ask her - I don't believe I was three yet - where my real parents were. She looked down at me, over her shoulder, and gave me the sweetest smile, but sad someway, and told me, O honey, they disappeared without a trace. The way I heard it I understood her to mean the 'trace' they disappeared without was me.

"The first day I got to school I had to have two names. I told the teacher Joseph Trace. Victory turned his whole self around in the seat.

" 'Why you tell her that?' he asked me.

" 'I don't know,' I said. 'Cause.'

" 'Mama be mad. Pappy too.'

"We were outside in the school yard. It was nice, packed dirt but a lot of nails and things were in it. Both of us barefoot. I was struggling to pick a bit of glass from the sole of my foot, so I didn't have to look up at him. 'No they won't,' I said. 'Your mama ain't my mama.'

" 'If she ain't, who is?'

" 'Another woman. She be back. She coming back for me. My daddy too.' That was the first time I knew I thought that, or wished it.

"Victory said, 'They know where they left you. They come back to our place. Williams place is where they know you at.' He was trying to walk double-jointed like his sister. She was good at it and bragged so much Victory practiced every chance he got. I remember his shadow darting in the dirt in front of me. 'They know you at Williams place, Williams it what you ought to call yourself.'

#### **Page 198-200**

"My mother and my father too lived in Tuxedo. I almost never saw them. I lived with my grandmother who said, 'Felice, they don't live in Tuxedo; they work there and live with us.' Just words: live, work. I would see them once every three weeks for two and a half days, and all day Christmas and all day Easter. I counted. Forty-two days if you count the half days - which I don't, because most of it was packing and getting to the train - plus two holidays makes forty-four days, but really only thirty-four because the half days shouldn't count. Thirty-four days a year.

"When they'd come home, they'd kiss me and give me things, like my opal ring, but what they really wanted to do was go out dancing somewhere (my mother) or sleep (my father). They made it to church on the Sunday, but my mother is still

sad about that because all of the things she should have been doing in the church - the suppers, the meetings, the fixing up of the basement for Sunday-school parties and the receptions after funerals - she had to say no to, because of her job in Tuxedo. So more than anything she wanted gossip from the women in Circle A Society about what'd been going on; and she wanted to dance a little and play bid whist.

"My father preferred to stay in a bathrobe and be waited on for a change while he read the stacks of newspapers me and my grandmother saved for him. *The Amsterdam*, the *Age*, *The Crisis*, *The Messenger*, the *Worker*. Some he took back with him to Tuxedo because he couldn't get them up there. He likes them folded properly if they are newspapers, and no food or fingerprints on the magazines, so I don't read them much. My grandmother does and is very very careful not to wrinkle or soil them. Nothing makes him madder than to open a paper that is badly folded. He groans and grunts while he reads and once in a while he laughs, but he'd never give it up even though all that reading worries his blood, my grandmother said. The good part for him is to read everything and argue about what he's read with my mother and grandmother and the friends they play cards with.

"Once I thought if I read the papers we'd saved I could argue with him. But I picked wrong. I read about the white policemen who were arrested for killing some Negroes and said I was glad they were arrested, that it was about time.

"He looked at me and shouted, 'The story hit the paper because it was news, girl, news!'

"I didn't know how to answer him and started to cry so my grandmother said, 'Sonny, go somewhere and sit down,' and my mother said, 'Walter, shut up about all that to her.'

"She explained to me what he meant: that for the everyday killings cops did of Negroes, nobody was arrested at all. She took me shopping after that for some things her bosses in Tuxedo wanted, and I didn't ask her why she had to shop for them on her off days, because then she wouldn't have taken me to Tiffany's on Thirty-seventh Street where it's quieter than when Reverend asks for a minute of silent prayer. When that happens I can hear feet scraping and some people blow their noses. But in Tiffany's nobody blows a nose and the carpet prevents shoe noises of any kind. Like Tuxedo.

"Years ago when I was little, before I started school, my parents would take me there. I had to be quiet all the time. Twice they took me and I stayed the whole three weeks. It stopped, though. My mother and father talked about quitting but they didn't. They got my grandmother to move in and watch over me.

"Thirty-four days. I'm seventeen now and that works out to less than six hundred days. Less than two years out of seventeen. Dorcas said I was lucky because at least they were there, somewhere, and if I got sick I could call on them or get on the train and go see them. Both of her parents died in a very bad way and she saw them after they died and before the funeral men fixed them up. She had a photograph of them sitting under a painted palm tree. Her mother was standing up with her hand on the father's shoulder. He was sitting down and holding a book. They looked sad to me, but Dorcas couldn't get over how good looking they both were.

**Page 109-113**

Could be sitting together, cozy in the kitchen, while Violet did her hair.

"Another time," she said to Alice Manfred, "another time I would have loved her too. Just like you did. Just like Joe." She was holding her coat lapels closed, too embarrassed to let her hostess hang it up lest she see the lining.

"Maybe," said Alice. "Maybe. You'll never know now, though, will you?"

"I thought she was going to be pretty. Real pretty. She wasn't."

"Pretty enough, I'd say."

"You mean the hair. The skin color."

"Don't tell me what I mean."

"Then what? What he see in her?"

"Shame on you. Grown woman like you asking me that."

"I have to know."

"Then ask the one who does know. You see him every day."

"Don't get mad."

"Will if I want to."

"All right. But I don't want to ask him. I don't want to hear what he has to say about it. You know what I'm asking."

"Forgiveness is what you're asking and I can't give you that. It's not in my power."

"No, not that. That's not it, forgiveness."

"What, then? Don't get pitiful. I won't stand for you getting pitiful, hear me?"

"We born around the same time, me and you," said Violet.

"We women, me and you. Tell me something real. Don't just say I'm grown and ought to know. I don't. I'm fifty and I don't know nothing. What about it? Do I stay with him? I want to, I think. I want . . . well, I didn't always . . . now I want. I want some fat in this life."

"Wake up. Fat or lean, you got just one. This is it."

"You don't know either, do you?"

"I know enough to know how to behave."

"Is that it? Is that all it is?"

"Is that all what is?"

"Oh shoot! Where the grown people? Is it us?"

"Oh, Mama." Alice Manfred blurted it out and then covered her mouth.

Violet had the same thought: Mama. Mama? Is this where you got to and couldn't do it no more? The place of shade without the trees where you know you are not and never again will be loved by anybody who can choose to do it? Where everything is over but the talking?

The looked away from each other then. The silence went on and on until Alice Manfred said, "Give me that coat. I can't look at that lining another minute."

Violet stood up and took off her coat, carefully pulling her arms trapped in frayed silk. Then she sat down and watched the seamstress go to work.

"All I could think of was to step out on him like he did me."

"Fool," said Alice and broke the thread.

"Couldn't name him if my life depended on it."

"Bet he can name you."

"Let him."

"What did you think that was going to solve?"

Violet didn't answer.

"Did it get you your husband's attention?"

“No.”

“Open my niece’s grave?”

“No.”

“Do I have to say it again?”

“Fool? No. No, but tell me, I mean, listen. Everybody I grew up with is down home. We don’t have children. He’s what I got. He’s what I got.”

“Doesn’t look so,” said Alice. Her stitches were invisible to the eye.

Late in March, sitting in Duggie’s drugstore, Violet played with a spoon, recalling the visit she had paid to Alice that morning. She had come early. Chore time and Violet wasn’t doing any.

“It’s different from what I thought,” she said. “Different.”

Violet meant twenty years of life in a City better than perfect, but Alice did not ask her what she meant. Did not ask her whether the City, with its streets all laid out, aroused jealousy too late for anything but foolishness. Or if it was the City that produced a crooked kind of mourning for a rival young enough to be a daughter.

They had been talking about prostitutes and fighting women - Alice nettled; Violet indifferent. Then silence while Violet drank tea and listened to the hissing iron. By this time the women had become so easy with each other talk wasn’t always necessary. Alice ironed and Violet watched. From time to time one murmured something - to herself or to the other.

“I used to love that stuff,” said Violet.

Alice smiled, knowing without looking up that Violet meant the starch. “Me too,” she said. “Drove my husband crazy.”

“Is it the crunch? Couldn’t be the taste.”

Alice shrugged. “Only the body knows.”

The iron hissed at the damp fabric. Violet leaned her cheek on her palm. “You iron like my grandmother. Yoke last.”

“That’s the test of a first-class ironing.”

“Some do it yoke first.”

“And have to do it over. I hate lazy ironing.”

“Where you learn to sew like that?”

“They kept us children busy. Idle hands, you know.”

“We picked cotton, chopped wood, plowed. I never knew what it was to fold my hands. This here is as close as I ever been to watching my hands to nothing.”

Eating starch, choosing when to tackle the yoke, sewing, picking, cooking, chopping. Violet thought about it all and sighed. “I thought it would be bigger than this. I knew it wouldn’t last, but I did think it’d be bigger.”

Alice refolded the cloth around the handle of the pressing iron. “He’ll do it again, you know. And again and again and again.”

“In that case I’d better throw him out now.”

“Then what?”

Violet shook her head. “Watch the floorboards, I guess.”

“You want a real thing?” asked Alice. “I’ll tell you a real one. You got anything left to you to love, anything at all, do it.”

Violet raised her head. “And when he does it again? Don’t mind what people think?”

“Mind what’s left to you.”

“You saying take it? Don’t fight?”

Alice put down her iron, hard. “Fight what, who? Some mishandled child who saw her parents burn up? Who knew better than you or me or anybody just how small and quick this

little bitty life is? Or maybe you want to stomp somebody with three kids and one pair of shoes. Somebody in a raggedy dress, the hem dragging in the mud. Somebody wanting arms just like you do and you want to go over there and hold her but her dress is muddy at the hem and the people standing around wouldn't understand how could anybody's eyes go so flat, how could they? Nobody's asking you to take it. I'm sayin make it, make it!"

It took her a moment to notice that Violet was staring. Following her gaze Alice lifted the iron and saw what Violet saw: the black and smoking ship burned clear through the yoke. "Shit!" Alice shouted. "Oh, shit!"