

Translating figurative language - case study of Alan Moore's "Watchmen"

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Dvopredmetni diplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti prevoditeljskog
usmjerenja

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Prevođenje figurativnog jezika – analiza prijevoda djela „Watchmen“

Alana Moorea

Diplomski rad

Mentor izv. prof. dr. sc. Marija Omazić

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Abstract

This paper aims to illustrate the challenges of translating figurative language by using examples from the comic book *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and its Croatian translation by Darko Macan. Because *Watchmen* is a comic book, another aim of this paper is to show the added challenges comic books bring with themselves when it comes to producing a faithful translation. After a brief introduction, the paper describes the general intricacies of translating figurative language. It also lists several strategies that are most commonly used. After that, the paper details a short history of comic books, their structure and the challenges of translating them. Chapter 3 also takes a short look into comic book translations in Croatia. The following chapter talks about the book *Watchmen*. It chronicles the creation of the book and its subsequent success. Finally, Chapter 5 lists examples of figurative language used in either source or the target text and explains the intricacies of each example. The analysis is done on the basis of the six main characters of the book, since they are mostly fleshed out through the language they use. The final subsection of Chapter 5 lists examples of figurative language used by some of the other characters present in the book. The goal of this paper is to show the difficulties of translating figurative language, especially when it is strongly linked to the character using it and restricted by the format it is presented in.

Keywords: Figurative language, comic books, *Watchmen*

Sažetak

Ovaj rad ima za cilj predstaviti izazove prevođenja figurativnog jezika koristeći primjere iz knjige *Watchmen* Alana Moorea i njezina hrvatskog prijevoda. Pošto je *Watchmen* strip knjiga, dodatni cilj ovog rada je prikazati izazove prevođenja stripova. Nakon kratkog uvoda, rad opisuje generalne probleme prevođenja figurativnog jezika. Prikazuje i nekoliko najčešćih prevoditeljskih strategija. Nakon toga, rad daje kratku povijest stripova, opisuje njihovu strukturu i izazove tijekom prevođenja. Treće poglavlje isto tako nakratko prikazuje prevođenje stripova u Hrvatskoj. Sljedeće poglavlje priča o knjizi *Watchmen*. Opisuje samu knjigu i njezine uspjehe. Napokon, peto poglavlje daje primjere figurativnog jezika iz originala i iz prijevoda, te objašnjava pojedinosti svakog primjera. Sama analiza bazirana je na šestero glavnih likova knjige, pošto je njihov govor glavni izvor karakterizacije. Posljednji dio petog poglavlja daje primjere temeljene na sporednim likovima knjige. Cilj ovog rada je prikazati izazove pri prevođenju figurativnog jezika, pogotovo kad je izrazito povezan sa likovima koji ga koriste i ograničen formatom u kojem je prezentiran.

Ključne riječi: Figurativni jezik, stripovi, *Watchmen*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Comic books may have had a humble start as short newspaper comics for children, but over the years, they have become one of the most franchised industries of our time. If a Hollywood movie in 2018 is not a reboot of an old franchise, then it is an adaptation, most probably of a comic book. Because of this enormous gain in notoriety, comic books have quickly started to attract some of the most gifted storytellers, who, with the help of artists, try to break new grounds in stories told and the way these stories are told. In addition, with stories that are more complex comes language that is more complex.

The theme of this paper will be the translation of figurative language in comic books and a look at the challenges that are specific to transferring a text into a new language, but within a limited space. The subject of this research paper will be the comic book *Watchmen* by writer Alan Moore and artist Dave Gibbons and its Croatian translation by Darko Macan entitled *Čuvari*. Before the actual case study, the paper will delve into what it means to translate figurative language and some of the most common strategies used by translators. Because the visual elements contained in comic book storytelling make translating comic books a very specific challenge, the paper will also explore how comic books are translated and adapted into different languages and cultures. In the case study portion of this paper, the figurative language used in *Watchmen* will be categorized by characters from the comic book, i.e. each chapter will explore one of the main characters in terms of what language they use, why they use it and how well it has been translated into Croatian. There will also be a chapter dedicated to the side characters as well.

The goal of this paper is neither to criticize the Croatian translation nor simply to point out the mistakes made. Instead, the paper will instead try to shed some light onto the various challenges one faces when translating figurative language, especially one that is character driven and confined into a speech bubble. In addition, due to the restrictive nature of speech bubbles, some alternatives to the official translation will be given and why they might or might not work in that instance. This is why the book *Watchmen* will be the subject of the analysis. The six main protagonists of the book are all vastly different from each other and the language they use is an important part of their character.

2. TRANSLATING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative language is a form of language where simple ideas are expressed through complex structures. “Figurative language, as an essential means of semantic rhetoric, not only transcends its notional meaning in form but also goes beyond its literal meaning in semantics. Figurative language is considered as a language device to integrate language and human logic thinking” (Qiong, Xiaobing, 2005:122). One would think that because of its complex form and meaning, figurative language would be very noticeable in both spoken and written language, but this is not necessarily the case. Figurative language, especially in everyday communication, is in fact hidden, or at the very least, it is not given much thought. Phrases like ‘A blessing in disguise’, ‘Beat around the bush’, ‘Elephant in the room’ or ‘Jump the gun’ can be heard and read almost daily in everyday language, whether when talking to someone, reading the newspapers or watching TV. Therefore, one would assume that when translating these phrases, the process would be quick and smooth. This is not the case though as figurative language is mostly language specific. The problem is that “figurative language is not only very economical and precise in form but also very vivid and expressive in meaning. In other words, figurative language can not only keep the balance between concrete image and abstract meaning, but also prevent language from remaining a set of abstract, logic but dull explanations, which can keep the fragrance of language through a set of concrete and vivid descriptions” (Qiong, Xiaobing, 2005:123). The aforementioned phrase ‘Jump the gun’ which means, “To do something too soon, especially without carefully thinking about it”¹ only carries this meaning in English. The direct translation ‘Skočiti pištolj’ is not idiomatic in nature and carries no meaning in the Croatian language. Therefore, in order to successfully translate this figurative phrase, one must find an equivalent in the target language, or paraphrase it into ‘regular’ language. In this case, an appropriate translation would be ‘trčati pred rudo’ or ‘srljati kao guske u maglu’.

These examples show that figurative language does not necessarily have word for word equivalents in a given language pair. The reason for this is that figurative language is formed differently from everyday language. Figurative expressions, especially idioms, “have a holistic meaning, they are stored and retrieved whole from memory with their associated meaning and form” (Naciscione, 2006:104). Because of this, when translating figurative language, one must take into account different ways of translation.

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/jump-the-gun>, retrieved on June 27th 2018

2.1 DIFFERENT WAYS OF TRANSLATING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Because figurative expressions oftentimes differ between source language (SL) and target language (TL), translators must use different techniques in order to achieve equivalence when translating a text. “Though the translation of figurative language is not hard, the translator, as the bridge between two languages/cultures, must make the TL readers receive the SL information and furthermore help the TL readers get the artistic conceptions so as to appreciate the beauty conveyed in SL” (Qiong, Xiaobing, 2005:123).

One trilemma of translation strategies consists of a 1:1 translation a 1:2 translation and a 1:X translation. In a 1:1 translation, figurative language is translated with a phrase, which in its structure and meaning is identical in both SL and TL. In a 1:2 translation, the TL phrase is different in structure, but has the same or similar meaning as the SL one. In a 1:X translation, the TL phrase is not a part of figurative language, but simply the literal meaning of the SL phrase. A valid question for this strategy is: ‘When is a 1:X translation appropriate?’ “The problem that this situation presents to translators is which construal operations to choose for the expression of an abstract meaning and, even more fundamentally, how to decide what the meaning intended as a translation equivalent could be” (Kövecses, 2014:34).

I believe that ultimately, this decision falls to the editor/publisher of any given translation. The translator might make the initial decision himself/herself, but his/her decision is valid only if it is subsequently approved. Whether that decision is made with careful consideration, or quickly and without much thought is a mute point. Similar to the first trilemma, Kövecses proposes a pattern in which a figurative expression is translated by looking at its literal meaning, its figurative meaning and its conceptual metaphor. While translating a figurative expression using this pattern, the translation must retain at least one of the three components of the figurative expression. Using this method, one can express figurative meaning in several different ways and in several different languages. On the other hand, Kövecses argues that the flexibility of his method could lead to uncertainty in the translation of figurative language (Kövecses, 2014:33).

This criticism though, could be viewed more as a translator problem, rather than a translation problem. Because (s)he is presented with a plethora of solutions, the translator will be unable to choose and stick to one, which, as I said, does not take away from the solutions themselves.

3. TRANSLATING COMIC BOOKS

3.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF COMIC BOOKS

Salor and Marasligil (2013: 2-3) note that the practice of juxtaposing images, often without a textual component, with the aim of conveying meaning that goes beyond the individual images on their own, has a rich history, especially apart from the medium of comic books. Some historians have identified examples of sequential art in pre-Columbian screenfolds and the eleventh-century Bayeux tapestry. Even earlier examples of images set in a deliberate sequence can be found in ancient Egypt, Greece and Roman wall paintings and murals, as well as Japanese scrolls. These examples though, bear no direct relation to the modern comic book industry. They however, do illustrate a rich and diverse heritage of sequential art in the history of human culture.

The earliest story told in ‘comic’ form can be attributed to the eighteenth-century British artist William Hogarth. His work, which makes use of a serial format and graphic proliferation, is one of the earliest instances of required reader involvement in constructing narrative structure. The awareness to and of sequential art was later furthered by the emerging market economy and the expanding art market. These developments were minor though, and the true comic book boom would happen in the twentieth-century. After the printing press became industrialized, reduced costs and increased production made paper mediums cheap and readily available. Before comics though, there were pulp novels and magazines. While these publications fell into the genres of horror, fantasy and adventure, they did not utilize images in their storytelling outside of the cover page.

The first comics were initially part of newspapers and comedic in nature. Because of this, early comics were called ‘newspaper funnies’. Though this garnered some attention, the true comic boom happened only after comics started serialization, which made it possible to tell continual stories instead of short self-contained gags. In the following decades comics became a staple for any culture that embraced the printing press, from Algeria to Japan. With the growing popularity and diversity of comics, comics creators gradually embraced their artistic impulses, resulting in increasingly audacious and unique styles and movements and much longer works, occasionally called ‘graphic novels’. Regardless of genre or country of origin, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, comics are still one of the most popular and beloved forms of communication media. The numerous artistic and cultural trends within the medium still recall the initial strengths and characteristics that made it so explosively popular a century ago (Salor, Marasligil, 2013:2-3).

3.2 ON THE TRANSLATING OF COMIC BOOKS

At first glance, translating comic books does not seem too different from translating regular books. The goal is to convey the message of the source text (ST) into the language of the target text (TT). This is, of course, a very superficial look into the complexities of comic book translations. If one were to peek just a bit deeper, one would stumble upon a number of different challenges. The most obvious of those would be speech bubbles.

3.2.1 THE STRUCTURE OF COMIC BOOKS

The two main elements of comic books are art and text, which is mostly presented in the form of speech bubbles. They do not simply exist in a vacuum, as “these verbal and nonverbal elements complement each other and, in many cases, influence the way readers understand the comic; the images and graphic elements do not simply illustrate and support the textual message, but they play an equally important role in the document as the verbal elements do” (Taran, 2014:90).

Speech bubbles serve as sort of a ‘container’, which holds the text of a comic book. However, speech bubbles are much more than that. Depending on their purpose, their border changes, which makes it easier to distinguish between them and understand their purpose. Round speech bubbles contain spoken language, i.e. things the characters say. Speech bubbles that contain thoughts, also called thought bubbles, are cloudlike in shape, while rectangle shaped speech bubbles hold narrative text. Narrative text can be either character thoughts, which move the story forward, or general notes on the setting like place and time, similar to stage directions. A special type of speech bubbles are written sounds, i.e. onomatopoeia. Written sounds give comic books an additional auditory layer. Those sounds are always incorporated into the picture and are not limited to a speech bubble, but do have a unique design, which mostly deviates from the rest of the lettering used for speech and thought.

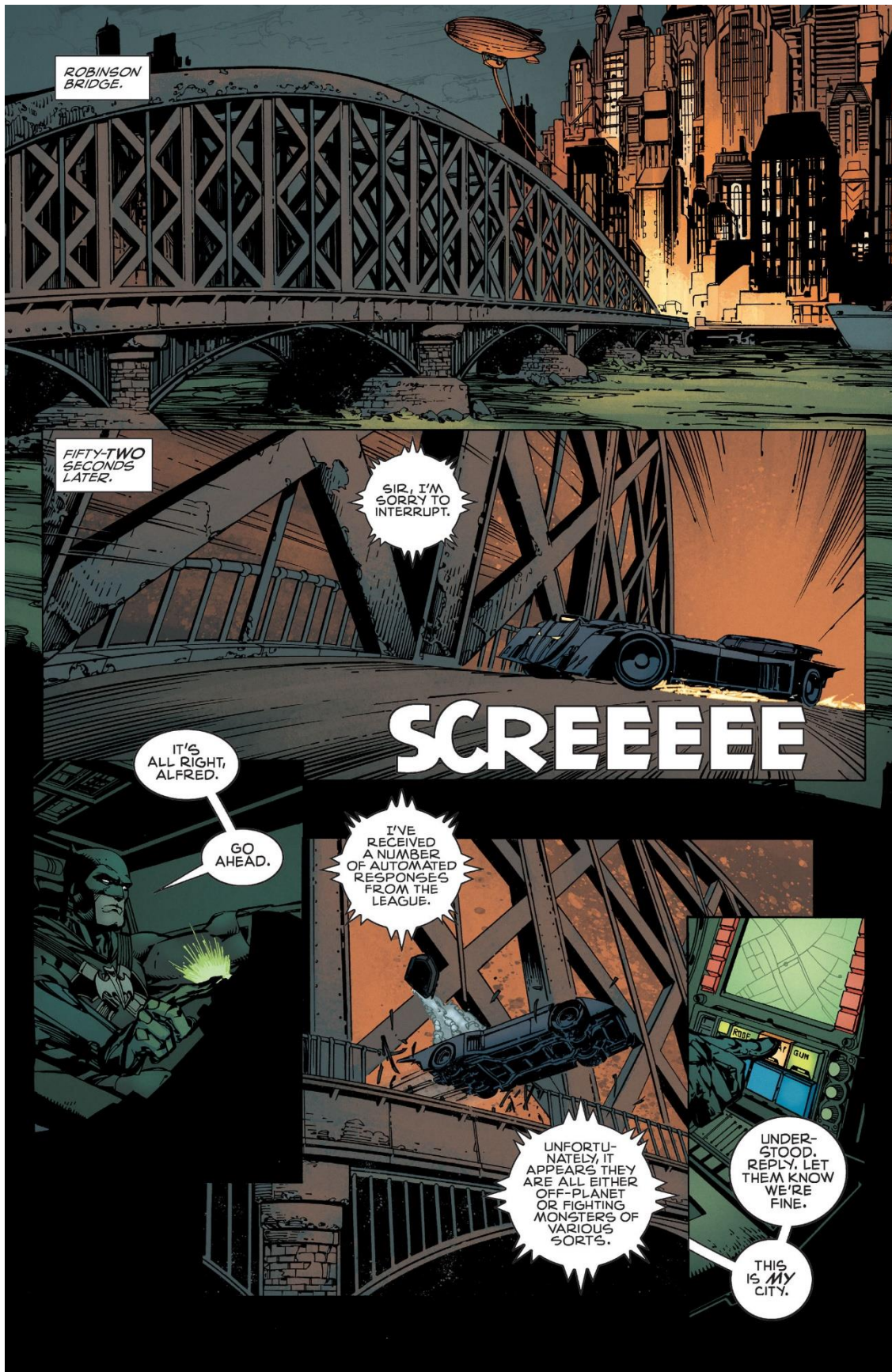


Image 1: Page taken from *Batman #1* (2016) displaying various types of speech bubbles: Narrative, onomatopoeia and two types for speech (round edges for human speech, pointy edges for speech coming out of a speaker. The pointy edges emulate sound waves.)

3.2.2 CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING COMIC BOOKS

As one could assume from the previous chapter, the biggest and most obvious challenge of translating comic books are the speech bubbles. Speech bubbles themselves are part of the art, and cannot and should not be altered. As Taran describes (2014:93), if the translated text ends up being longer than the original, it will no longer fit into the balloons and boxes, unless these are enlarged or the size of the font is reduced. Such modifications, however, may impair legibility and/or have an adverse effect on the aesthetic appearance of the images, thus reducing the artistic quality of the work. Moreover, changes of this kind would entail some considerable production-related problems by significantly increasing the production costs and time (Taran, 2014:93).

Increasing the production cost and time is something the comic book industry cannot afford to do. Even the most popular comic books, those made by DC and Marvel, ship between 100,000 and 300,000 units in the US². In most other countries, those numbers are significantly lower. Adding additional costs to already existing licensing, shipping, translating and marketing costs a foreign publisher has to deal with would make comic book sales outside of the US even less profitable, or not profitable at all.

Even though altering the size of speech bubbles should be avoided, there is one aspect of comic book speech that mostly cannot retain its original form, onomatopoeic words. Although, as Taran notes, onomatopoeic words can be considered a linguistic problem for translators, their translation also causes considerable technical problems. The technical difficulties are due to the fact that onomatopoeias are usually integrated into the drawings, so that if they are translated into a different language, the drawings, and not just the text in the speech balloons and narrative boxes, have to be modified. From a technical point of view, this is much more complex than simply printing the translated text into the speech balloons, which are normally delivered empty to each specific country's editor of a comic published worldwide and therefore make the task of the editor a relatively simple one. (Taran, 2014:96).

The modifications needed to alter these drawings require additional expenses. A way to circumvent those would be to use footnotes, but those are only possible in comics that have a white border between images large enough to hold one or more footnotes.

² <http://www.comichron.com/monthlycomicssales/2018.html>, retrieved on August 7th 2018

Many problems associated with translation are universal, but pose some interesting challenges when transferred into the medium of comic books. One problem that is not universal to comic books, but still plays a large role in translating them is of a linguistic nature. Because most of the language used in comic books is ‘spoken’ by the characters, the language of comic books is considered a hybrid, since all of it is written. As Taran notes, the vocabulary is therefore often very informal and of a low register, and slang terms and expressions are frequently used. Because new slang words pop up all the time all over the world, it is virtually impossible to keep track of all of them and keep dictionaries up-to-date. As a result, translators of comics, in particular of comic strips that appear in newspapers on a regular basis and are very current, may encounter words they are unfamiliar with that they cannot find in any dictionary. Nowadays, however, this is no longer such a big problem because the Internet offers a wide variety of forums for both translators and fans of comics where anybody can post any questions they may have with regard to specific comics, and where the chances of receiving an answer are fairly good. Moreover, comics’ translators have the added advantage of being able to guess at the meanings of certain words by looking at the images that go with them (Taran, 2014:96-97).

Finally, another universal problem in translation that has a unique twist in comic books is the concept of equivalence, or fidelity. Gonçalves de Assis (2016:2-10) notes many instances of how fidelity has been viewed throughout history, citing Friedrich Schleiermacher, Walter Benjamin, Antoine Berman, Eugene Nida, Francis Henrik Aubert and Mathieu Guidère. From their observations, he concludes that fidelity itself is a spectrum, going from word to sense fidelity. The translator also has a fidelity to the reader, i.e. it is his job to faithfully and correctly convey the message of the original. In the same sense, the translator has a fidelity to the author as well. Gonçalves de Assis also notes that the translator may try to create a completely new reading experience, instead of trying to replicate the original. Finally, these three concepts of fidelity are all relative to each other and it is ultimately up to the translator, and his editor/publisher, to adhere to these concepts (Gonçalves de Assis, 2016:8-10). As mentioned before, due to the nature of comic books and the comic book industry, fidelity can become a unique challenge.

Because the art and the text are so heavily linked to each other, when translating a comic book, the translator must not create a translation that only caters to the written. This is because “comics are primarily visual texts which may, or may not, include a verbal component and in the

translation of comics interlingual interpretation happens within the context of visual interpretation” (Zanettin, 2008:12). When this fact is taken into consideration, it becomes evident that the translation of comics is also a translation into another visual culture. Therefore, “the translation of comics does not only imply the interlinguistic replacement of verbal material” (Zanettin, 2008:12).

The only way to achieve fidelity when ignoring the visual component during the translation process would be to, after the fact, partially or completely alter the visual aspect of a comic book. Gonçalves de Assis (2016:14) does mention how Japanese manga had to be flipped horizontally when it was first published in the West, since manga is read from right to left. Altering just the reading direction, changes the whole dynamic of a comic book, since now all of the art accompanying it is also altered. While altering words is indispensable for the translation process and facilitated by graphic software, altering non-linguistic signs would imply more work hours, more graphic skills and possibly the hiring of another professional, like a new artist, to perform these adjustments (Gonçalves de Assis, 2016:14).

3

Original paperback



New hardcover box



Image 2: Comparison between the first English releases of Katsuhiro Otomos manga ‘Akira’ on the left, a subsequent hardcover edition on the right. The original paperback had its art flipped and onomatopoeia altered into English. Most of the speech bubbles have also been altered. The newer edition retains its original art, and therefore reading direction, and the onomatopoeia is left unaltered, with translations given in footnotes.

³ Image source: <https://www.archonia.com/mangashop/en/article/284064/akira+35th+anniversary+manga+box+set>, retrieved on September 19th 2018

3.2.3 COMIC BOOK TRANSLATING IN CROATIA

The comic book market in Croatia originally consisted mostly of comic books sold at newsstands. The most popular books sold were *Alan Ford*, *Zagor*, *Blek*, *Tex*, *Kapetan Miki* and their various spin-offs. During the time of Yugoslavia, all of these were translated into Serbo-Croatian. After the fall of Yugoslavia, production started on Croatian translations and are still being sold to this day. As the comic book industry started gaining traction globally, so did Croatia start to import and sell a wider variety of comic books. DC and Marvel are, like in most countries, at the forefront. In addition, almost all of these books are left untranslated and are sold in their original English language. Some publishers, like Algoritam, before its bankruptcy, also sold Japanese manga. While most of it was imported from US publishers, Algoritam also had its own line of manga that was translated into Croatian.

Of western comics, only graphic novels are translated, graphic novels being comic books that tell a self-contained story and rarely have sequels. Of publishers that translate and sell such books, Fibra is the most notable one. The edition of *Watchmen* analysed in this paper is one of their publications.

4. A FEW NOTES ON WATCHMEN

Watchmen is a graphic novel written by Alan Moore and illustrated by Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen* was initially published by DC Comics between September 1986 and October 1987 in 12 issues. After its initial release, the book garnered critical acclaim and became an instant classic. After its 12 issue run ended, it was collected into a single volume issue and has been sold that way for over 30 years. Davis (2017:115) notes that the book's enduring popularity and critical acclaim led to its canonical status among comics fans and scholars, as well as some literary critics. Time chose the book for its list of '100 Best Novels' alongside *Animal Farm*, *The Big Sleep*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Lolita*, *On the Road*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. *Watchmen*'s popularity has led it to even be analysed by scholars, most notably Andrew Hoberek in *Considering Watchmen: Poetics, Property, Politics* and Sara J. Van Ness in *Watchmen as Literature: A Critical Study of the Graphic Novel*. Numerous extensions and adaptations emerged across a wide range of media, from live-action cinema and animation to video games and new forms like motion comics. Many of these subsequent texts have been derided, however, by fans who see *Watchmen*'s legacy as becoming tainted by a series of inferior variations (Davis, 2017:115).

Critics have been praising not only the story of *Watchmen*, but also its art. The most common praise is given to the way the art is sequenced to make the book an almost cinematic experience.



Image 3: Example of how *Watchmen* utilizes its art to create a cinematic feeling in the reader. A single background image is split into three, while the positioning of characters within the image gives the reader a feeling of motion.

⁴ Image source: *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons (1986-1987), issue 8, page 4

Miettinen (2014:104) notes that since its publication more than two decades ago, the comic has been the subject of extensive study due to its breath-taking narrative structure as well as its acute deconstruction of the superhero genre itself. Indeed, one of the text's most brutal deconstructions comes from the way it addresses superheroic masculinity, from the misogynistic vigilante Rorschach to the emasculated ex-hero Nite Owl. Through its cast of male heroes, *Watchmen* deconstructs the superhero genre by rewriting masculine tropes such as vigilantism and patriotism and by exposing the inherent contradictions within these gender-bound tropes from the fascist undercurrents of violent patriotism to the often-hinted sexual dysfunction of the costume-fetish variety (Miettinen, 2014:104).

Such a complex book is certainly not easy to translate and because of all the challenges comic books bring with themselves, the translation process becomes an even bigger ordeal.

5. THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OF THE WATCHMEN

This chapter will deal with the figurative language used in the comic book *Watchmen* and how it was translated into Croatian. Because the language of this book is strongly linked to its characters, the analysis will be divided into seven sections. The first six sections will deal with the six main characters of the book, while the seventh section will talk about the figurative language used by some of the side characters. The ultimate aim of this chapter is to highlight the various decisions made by the translator and through them show how difficult it can be to achieve fidelity.

5.1 RORSCHACH

The first character analysed will be Rorschach. Rorschach is a masked vigilante whose name comes from the changing pattern on his mask, which resembles a Rorschach blob test. Rorschach is a cynical and pessimistic character, which is reflected in his speech. “While the reader knows he strives at all costs to protect people, he simultaneously critiques and slanders them. Furthermore, even as he protects them, they seek to put him behind bars” (Cummings, 2015:22). A big part of his character and his speech is his journal, which at several points in the book serves as a narrative tool. “Rorschach’s journal entries and the crumbling morale of the surrounding city offer the reader a harsh and frank social critique” (Cummings, 2015:21). Rorschach as a character alone is complex enough to write multiple books about, but this paper will only consider some of his more colourful language.

5.1.1 RORSCHACH’S FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

| ENGLISH | CROATIAN |
|---|---|
| 1. The streets are extended gutters and the gutters are full of blood and when the drains finally scab over, all the vermin will drown. | Ulice su produžetak odvoda a odvodi puni krvi i kad kraste konačno začepe kanale sva će se gamad podaviti |

Example 1 is a straightforward 1:1 translation of a metaphor, but it is a very good example of Rorschach’s way of thinking and talking. The metaphor itself is very bleak and grim, which was also captured in the target text (TT). If one were to nit-pick, the TT uses the phrase ‘extension of gutters’ instead of ‘extended gutters’, but this should not be understood as a critique. This example is the only 1:1 translation that will be showcased in this chapter, since in cases like these there is not much to analyse or comment on.

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 2. [...] somebody's gunning for masks. | [...] netko se ostrvio na maske. |
|--|----------------------------------|

In example 2, one idiomatic expression was translated with another one that has a similar meaning. The only Croatian idiom that uses the word gun is 'raspištoljiti se' meaning 'to be very relaxed'⁵, making a 1:1 translation impossible. The translation uses the verb 'ostrviti se', which has its root in the word 'strvinar' meaning 'vulture'. The translation fits the conversation of killing masked heroes, since the image of a vulture also conjures up imagery of evil.

| | |
|--|--|
| 3. I've broken this gentleman's little finger. | Ovom sam gospodinu maločas slomio mezimca. |
|--|--|

Example 3 is an instance in which figurative language is used in the TT, while the ST is a non-idiomatic phrase. The word 'mezimac' is primarily used to refer to the favourite child of a family, usually the smallest/youngest one. In this instance it is cleverly used as a way to taunt a bar full of criminals and those associated with them, which suits Rorschach's character.

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 4. human cockroaches | uholaži ljudskog lika |
|----------------------|-----------------------|

Example 4 is probably an instance of some creative freedom being used by the translator. The TT uses the insect 'uholaža' or 'earwig' instead of cockroach. There is no apparent reason why 'žohari ljudskog lika' could not be used. The earwig is not used as an insult in everyday Croatian, while cockroach has seen some use as of late, most probably due to American influences.

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 5. Reds have been running scared [...] | Crvenima se tresu gaće [...] |
|--|------------------------------|

The translation in example 5 has more in common with the idiom 'quaking in one's boots' rather than 'run around scared'. Those similarities refer, of course, to their form rather than meaning since both forms imply shaking/quaking. A Croatian idiom with a similar form to the original would be 'trčati glavom bez obzira', but this idiom is used to refer to someone actually running away, rather than being scared in general.

⁵ All definitions for Croatian words and phrases taken from Hrvatski jezični portal. No individual URLs will be given, since the web-site's search function is not linked to its URL and any subsequent fact checking has to be done manually.

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6. Never cashed in his reputation. | Ni reputaciju nije prodao. |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|

In example 6, the TT forgoes the use of a 1:1 translation, i.e. “Nije unovčio reputaciju”. This could be because ‘unovčiti’ is generally used in a conversational style/register and not in serious conversation, as is the case here. Rorschach in general forgoes pleasantries while talking to someone, i.e. does not use a conversational style.

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| 7. Tough break. | Pukao. |
|-----------------|--------|

Example 7 is a rare instance of a mistranslation. To put it into perspective, Rorschach is discussing a series of unfortunate events, which he concludes with ‘tough break’, i.e. ‘it’s a shame all of these bad things happened to that person’. The TT concludes the conversation with ‘pukao’ meaning ‘he snapped’. While the translation makes sense in the context of the conversation and story, where the character referred to did become angry, there is no reason to not use an equivalent phrase like ‘baš šteta’ or ‘nema sreće’, which would avoid such an unnecessary deviation.

| | |
|---|---|
| 8. Can’t make omelette without breaking a few eggs. | Kajgana se ne radi bez razbijenih jaja. |
|---|---|

This is another example of a slight mistranslation. The two phrases are identical, but the TT uses the word for ‘scrambled eggs’, which is very different from an omelette. While this criticism could be seen as nitpicking, when viewed side by side, such details do catch the eye of some readers.

| | |
|--|---|
| 9. Things everyone too scared to face, too polite to talk about. | Sve s čim smo se bojali suočiti, bili prefini da spomenemo. |
|--|---|

Here is another example of normal language being translated into figurative. The change is very small, but it adds a lot. Instead of the literal translation ‘previše pristojni’, the TT uses ‘prefini’. ‘Prefini’ is derived from ‘fin’ meaning ‘tasty’ but is figuratively used to refer to a polite person or person of higher stature, mostly in a cynical and mocking manner. Again, the change is small, but serves the character well. In addition, using the direct translation would require changing the font size in order to fit into the speech bubble.

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 10. Saw the world’s black underbelly [...] | Vidio je crnu utrobu svijeta [...] |
|--|------------------------------------|

Example 10 is another case of a mistranslation. Body parts are used here to refer to the world of criminals, only that the TT uses the wrong body part. The word ‘utroba’ means ‘guts’, i.e. the inside of the body, while underbelly refers to the outside of the body. In addition, it has no

connotations connecting it to criminal activity. A better solution would have been to use the word ‘podzemlje’, which has the same connotations as ‘underbelly’, i.e. the shady and criminal part of society. The body part imagery is lost that way, but the general meaning is kept.

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 11. Days dragged on. | Dani su se vukli. |
|----------------------|-------------------|

In example 11, the TT uses an uncommon phrase. The English idiom ‘drag on’ offers a lot of freedom in what can be inserted as the subject of the phrase, while in Croatian the phrase refers to something else dragging on for days, rather than the days themselves. There are a few instances in literature where the phrase is used in this form, for example in *KLIK* by Mirjana Marković and *Ženski bicikly* by Zvonimir Majdak.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 12. Something was making noise in wasteland at rear. | Nešto se čulo straga, među otpadom. |
|--|-------------------------------------|

In this example, the word wasteland loses its double meaning by being left out of the TT and replaced by ‘trash’. While trash is present in the referred to area, most of it is empty and in a way does resemble a barren area. This though cannot be seen as a mistake, since the Croatian language does not have a word that could carry the double meaning of the original. The Croatian equivalent ‘pustoš’ has no connotations linking it to trash.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 13. Out drinking when I called. | Bio je u birtiji kad sam došao. |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|

In this example the TT again uses a very different phrase from the original, since a direct translation ‘Pio je vani dok sam došao’ could be understood as the subject being outside, instead of at a bar. That though, is not the focus of this example. The focus is on the word call, which is taken from the idiomatic phrase ‘to call on someone’ meaning ‘to visit someone’. Once again, the Croatian language does not have a suitable equivalent for this phrase. This example was taken because Rorschach exclusively uses this phrase when referring to a visit, meaning the translator was forced to abandon that aspect of the character completely.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 14. Stood in firelight, sweltering. | Stajao obasjan vatrom, poteći se od jare. |
|-------------------------------------|---|

In this example, the focus is on the second verb and its dominant meaning. The word swelter does connote sweating; the main focus of it is put on the suffering the heat inflicts. In this example the TT puts more focus on the sweating itself. In addition, the translation uses the phrase ‘poteći se’, which is very rare and difficult to find an example of outside of this book.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 15. [...] suffocating dark [...] | [...] tišteća tama [...] |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|

Example 15 is another case of the TT carrying a different meaning from the ST, but still fitting into the narrative. The verb ‘tištati’ used here does refer to squeezing, but not one that would lead to loss of breath. The denoted squeezing is one that is not concentrated around the neck and simply leads to pain. Despite this slight deviation, example 15 is not a case of mistranslating, since it connotes a bleak feeling much like the ST, capturing which is more important for this example.

| | |
|---|--|
| 16. Existence is random. Has no pattern [...] | Postojanje je slučaj. Nema slike [...] |
|---|--|

Example 16 is another case of a mistranslation. The word ‘slika’ means ‘picture’, not ‘pattern’ and gives a completely different meaning to what is being said. A direct translation such as ‘uzorak’, ‘obrazac’ or ‘šablona’ would not fit either, since those refer more to decorative patterns, rather than existential ones. An adequate translation would be ‘nema reda’ literally meaning ‘there is no order’, which fits better into the connotation of rules which govern given in the ST.

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 17. Tall order. | Visoko pucaš. |
|-----------------|---------------|

Example 17 is a play on word with which Rorshcach indirectly makes fun of a criminal of small stature who is trying to intimidate him. ‘Visoko pucaš’ though, is more close to the phrase ‘to aim high’. Though the phrase used in the TT does carry the connotation of height, as in a high goal, the connotation of difficulty, which is important in the original, is lost in the TT. Still, this is not a mistranslation, since there is no equivalent phrase that could be used to both height and difficulty.

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 18. Fat chance. | Mršavi izgledi. |
|-----------------|-----------------|

Similarly to example 17, example 18 also refers to a criminals body, this time his weight. It is also pertinent to the situation, since it connotes sarcasm. ‘Mršavi izgledi’ is actually the direct translation of ‘slim chance’ rather than ‘fat chance’. The phrase is mostly used in Croatian to refer to a serious or neutral situation. Like in example 17 though, this is not a mistranslation, since it does play with appearances, which is important for the situation in which it is used.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 19. Make inquiries amongst underworld. | Raspitat ćemo se među polusvijetom. |
|--|-------------------------------------|

Example 19 is another case where the word ‘podzemlje’ could have, or maybe even should have been used, since it is the direct translation of ‘underworld’. Similarly to previous examples, this is also not a mistranslation, even though ‘polusvijet’ loses the criminal connotation of the ST and only retains immorality. The reason it is not a mistranslation, is that ‘polusvijet’ puts more

emphasis on the ill repute of the ones referred to, which fits into the conversation Rorschach is having, where he puts more emphasis on a lack of morality, rather than criminal activity.

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 20. Just hang on by fingernails... | Uhvati se zubima i noktima... |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|

In example 20, the addition of ‘teeth’ into the translation fits very well into the context of the phrase, the context being that Rorschach is running from the police. The addition of ‘teeth’ adds to the desperation of the situation, rather than taking away from it by being an unnecessary addition.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 21. You waste time looking for pattern [...] | Gubiš vrijeme tražeći nit [...] |
|--|---------------------------------|

Returning to the word pattern from example 16, example 21 uses the word ‘nit’ meaning ‘thread’ for its translation. ‘Thread’ is a viable translation in this example, since the full conversation refers to a pattern that could lead to a conclusion. The reason ‘nit’ fits here but not in 16 is exactly because of the added connotation of leading somewhere, which is figuratively expressed through ‘threads’ most of the time.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 22. [...] writing is on wall. | [...] a na zidu riječi. |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|

The final example from Rorschach’s figurative language is a literal translation that does not work in the Croatian language. The phrase ‘riječi na zidu’ is not idiomatic and carries no connotations with it other than graffiti. The main goal of ‘writing on the wall’ is to point out a possible danger. Therefore, it would have been better to translate the phrase with ‘prijeti opasnost’ meaning ‘danger is threatening’. This translation is more direct, but it is a personification and that way at least keeps its figurative quality.

5.2 NITE OWL

In terms of design, Nite Owl is somewhat close to Batman. Both use a nocturnal animal as their namesake and use numerous gadgets built around that aesthetic. In addition, both are fairly rich, intelligent, possess no superpowers and use technology for their benefit. In contrast to Batman though, Nite Owl does not become violent, unless necessary and has a more timid persona outside of his hero identity. His meek nature also becomes apparent through his speech, which tends to be reserved and ‘old-timey’.

5.2.1 NITE OWL’S FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

| | |
|---------|----------|
| ENGLISH | CROATIAN |
|---------|----------|

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. These Saturday night beer sessions are what keep me going. | Ovi subotnji sastanci uz pivu me održavaju na životu. |
|---|---|

The first example is taken from one of Nite Owl's first lines. Much like with Rorschach, it builds a rough frame of the character. In this example, the TT sounds a bit more desperate. This is probably because of 'održavati na životu' meaning 'keeping alive'. Because the preservation of life is not directly referenced in the ST, the statement is not necessarily fully negative, although some negative emotions can be seen in it.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 2. Yeah, those were great times Rorschach. | Da, zlatna vremena Rorschach. |
|--|-------------------------------|

The translation in example 2 makes up for the loss of some characterised speech leading up to it. Nite Owl's lingo is greatly influenced by early 20th century America, which is not easy to replicate in a translation. The TT makes up for that loss by replacing regular phrases with figurative ones, which make it sound like an older person, or someone who talks like one, is saying it. In this example, the idiom 'golden times' is used. The phrase fits even better given the connection gold has to old age through the phrase 'golden years'.

| | |
|--|---|
| 3. You're sure you won't let me pick up the tab? | Jesi li sigurna da ne želiš da ja platim? |
|--|---|

Example 3 shows a shortcoming of the Croatian language, which is missing an adequate idiom for this situation. A way to make up for it would be to use a phrase like 'Sigurno ne želiš da ja to riješim?' meaning 'Are you sure you don't want me to handle it?' This solution would not make up for the lack of idiomatic language, but would avoid mentioning payment directly and that way echo the original somewhat.

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 4. He was one for the books. | Taj je bio poseban slučaj. |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|

Example 4 is another shortcoming of the Croatian language. Any substitution with a literal translation like using a simile or saying 'Taj je bio ekstra' runs the risk of sounding modern, which would deviate from Nite Owl's speech patterns. By this point, the TT has already been forced to make several sacrifices pertaining to speech patterns due to the cultural specificities of Nite Owl's speech in the ST.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 5. Comedian, this is a nightmare! | Komedijašu, ovo je košmar. |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|

In this example, the translator makes good use of a lesser used word for nightmare. To someone not familiar with it, it could sound like something people used to say in olden times, even though it is just a Croatian version of the French word for nightmare (*cauchemar*)⁶. If it were not for previous deviations, a direct translation like ‘Komedijašu, ovo je noćna mora’ would have been adequate.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 6. Hell, I thought I had more sugar. | Ježiga, mislio sam da imam više šećera. |
|--------------------------------------|---|

Example 6 is another clever way of adhering to the characters speech patterns created for the TT. Since Nite Owl speaks similarly to a senior citizen, self-censoring of a swear word makes a lot of sense for him to do. This is characteristic unique to the Croatian version of the character though, since in the ST he swears normally.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 7. Here’s looking at you, kid. | Bit će dobro, vidjet ćeš. |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|

Example 7 presented the translator with an untranslatable phrase, which gives problems even to native speakers. The main problem is the actual meaning of the phrase. Before becoming immortalized by the film *Casablanca*, the phrase was used as a form of toast in the US. Examples of this toast can be found in books like *A Holyday Skip for the Far West* by an anonymous author from 1884 and *The Loving Cup: Original Toasts by Original Folks* by Wilbur Nesbit from 1909. The phrase itself was never used outside of the US and is therefore unequivocally American⁷. Because of this, any translation wishing well being would be acceptable. This example is connected to a future example from *Silk Spectre*’s section and will be further analysed there.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8. I have a lot of room there. | Prostora imam koliko hoćeš. |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Example 8 is another case of the TT making up for previous shortcomings. In the conversation containing this sentence, Nite Owl is visibly nervous and fumbles many of his words. The word choice in this example is a small, but very clever way of making him seem like he is trying to compensate for his nervousness by exaggeration. It fits well with his demeanour and without reading the original first, one would not notice that a change has been made.

| | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 9. Hell and damnation. | Grom i pakao. |
|------------------------|---------------|

⁶ <https://www.hrleksikon.info/definicija/kosmar.html>, retrieved on August 14th 2018

⁷ <https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/223900/heres-looking-at-you-kid-meaning>, retrieved on August 14th 2018

Example 9 is a personal choice by the translator, in that there is no right or wrong way to translate this cussing of the ST. One could argue that there are some more adequate translations for this, since in the original the swearing is a doubling of the same meaning. When looked at that way, a good alternative would be ‘Dovraga i bestraga’ or ‘Dovraga i kvragu’.

| | |
|---|--|
| 10. That’s y’know, with hindsight... on reflection. | Ono, kad bolje pogledam ... sve se izokrenulo. |
|---|--|

This example is a complex one, since the text and accompanying image form a multimodal structure. The frame in which this text appears shows a pair of goggles reflecting the actual image of the frame. In order to preserve this multimodal structure, the TT had to use a phrase containing attributes of a mirror. The actual meaning of the original is somewhat lost, but the multimodal structure is preserved, which in this case is more important.

| | |
|---|---|
| 11. [...] at first I used to get cravings [...] | [...] isprva su me svrbjeli prsti [...] |
|---|---|

Example 11 is a case where, using a different phrase with the same meaning adds more drama to the conversation. A phrase like ‘dobio sam želju’ ili ‘imao sam potrebu’ would have been adequate here, but because some of the nervousness and melodrama surrounding Nite Owl was lost leading up to this conversation, this is a well-chosen spot to compensate for it.

| | |
|---|--|
| 12. There I was, hanging out with a real hero [...] | Eto mene, družim se s pravim junakom [...] |
|---|--|

Example 12 shows how the same phrase in different languages is expressed in different registers. While ‘hanging out’ has, over time, become neutral in English, its Croatian equivalent ‘visjeti s nekim’ is part of the language of young people and would therefore stray away from previously established patterns, which is why its more neutral sounding synonym is used.

| | |
|---|---|
| 13. It’s all crap dressed up with a lot of flash and thunder. | Sve je to drek, umotan u munje i gromove. |
|---|---|

Much like example 7, example 13 contains another unequivocally American phrase. As John E. Lewis describes in *D-Day as They Saw it*, flash and thunder were keywords used to distinguish allied soldiers from the enemy. The phrase itself started being used more frequently only after the US joined the European front during Operation Overlord (Lewis, 2004:40). While it can be translated as is, without knowing the historical context behind it, in a translation it loses most of its

meaning. Compensating for it by using a similar phrase from the TL would not work, since the American character using it would have no reason to know of it.

| | |
|--|---|
| 14. I guess it's pretty kitsch or camp or whatever [...] | Valjda imaju kičastu ili ironičnu privlačnost [...] |
|--|---|

The word 'camp' in the meaning used by the ST has no full equivalent in the Croatian language. Therefore, while translating it, one has to use its literal meaning as a translation. This example has no fully viable alternatives to it other than omitting the word 'camp' completely. While 'ironic', as used in the TT, conveys some of the meaning of 'camp', it lacks most of the associations.

| | |
|--|--|
| 15. Put in your earplugs so we can hit the ground running. | Stavi čepove u uši tako da imamo početnu prednost. |
|--|--|

Example 15 could be viewed as a mistranslation. The phrase 'hit the ground running' does not imply advantage, as the TT suggests, but enthusiasm and speed. A better alternative would be 'da možemo brže krenuti' or 'da lakše prođemo'. While both these alternatives reference an advantage, the advantage itself is not directly stated within the phrases, therefore making them sound closer to the ST.

| | |
|--|--|
| 16. [...] our whole plan is in the toilet. | [...] cijeli će nam plan pasti u vodu. |
|--|--|

Example 16 is a simple rephrasing, which, interestingly, creates a contrast in what is said and what is implied. While the ST directly mentions a toilet and only implies a splash of water, the TT directly mentions the water, while the imagery of a toilet can be conjured up from both context of text and image. Here the TT makes good use of the art, which depicts an area near a water closet, making it more likely to think of a toilet than some other body of water.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 17. [...] don't you ever let up? | [...] gdje se ti gasiš? |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|

Similarly to previous examples, in example 17 the character is given a slight addition to his personality. As the story goes on, Nite Owl become more frustrated with the world, which is also reflected in his language. To show this, the TT uses a more aggressive phrase. Again, without reading the ST, one would not notice that the TT is slightly exaggerated.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 18. We're going home to roost. | Idemo požnjati što smo sijali. |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|

Example 18, yet again, falls into the category of ‘the TL is lacking in equivalents’. While both phrases convey the same meaning, the TT loses the avian imagery conjured up by the ST. Since the character is based on an owl, ‘going home to roost’ was very deliberately used instead of ‘reaping what you sow’. As stated previously, the TL lacks an idiom similar to the ST one.

| | |
|--|---|
| 19. And we both needed the sleep we grabbed. | A obojici nam je dobro došlo I što smo odspavali. |
|--|---|

In example 19, the translator chose not to use an equivalent phrase while translating this sentence. The phrase ‘uhvatiti sna’ is commonly used in Croatian, and there is no specific reason why it should not be used in this instance. Like with other similar examples, this one can be chalked off to artistic freedom.

| | |
|---|---|
| 20. [...] I don’t buy this hoax invasion story. | [...] ne pušim priču o lažnoj invaziji. |
|---|---|

Continuing the trend from example 17, example 20 once again adds some exaggeration to the language used, but without overdoing it. Using the non-figurative ‘ne vjerujem’ meaning ‘I don’t believe’ would have been adequate, but using the more aggressive ‘ne pušim’ goes well with the growing frustration the character is feeling at this point in the story.

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 21. Rorschach, he’s kidding you. | Vuče te za nos, Rorschach. |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|

Example 21 is somewhat similar to example 20, only here instead of adding aggression, the translation takes it away. The phrase comes in an instance in which Nite Owl is trying to defuse a tense situation between two other characters. By having the more comedic expression of ‘pulling someone’s nose’, the translation brings back some of the nervousness the character had been exuding earlier in the book. It is a good way of showing how a newly built persona, in Nite Owl’s case a more assertive one, can easily crumble in the face of adversity.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 22. This is too big to be hard assed about! | Ovo je preznačajno da se tvrdoglaviš! |
|---|---------------------------------------|

Example 22 is a funny look into how different cultures perceive stubbornness. While in English, stubbornness can come from both the head and behind, Croatian reserves the behind for rudeness only, so the use of a full equivalent here would fall into the toilet.

5.3 OZYMANDIAS

Ozymandias is a retired superhero and, like Rorschach and Nite Owl, a former member of the Watchmen. Ozymandias is believed to be the smartest man in the world. Ozymandias has used

his intellect to build a vast business empire. His great intellect and physical fitness made him a self-centred and arrogant person who looks down on most of the world, but he hides his traits behind an approachable persona. Even still, Ozymandias is very aware of his superiority and he lets it leak out whenever he feels challenged.

5.3.1 OZYMANDIAS' FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

| ENGLISH | CROATIAN |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. [...] America has problems that need tackling. | [...] Amerika ima goruće probleme. |

Example 1 is from a flashback where Ozymandias was still a young hero and not as disillusioned with the world. For this idiom, there are many viable solutions, but in this case, the one used is one of few 'correct ones'. While phrases like 'uhvatiti se u koštac', 'srediti probleme' or 'pozabaviti se problemima' could also be used, all of those solutions are informal in nature and would not necessarily fit the proper lingo of the character.

| | |
|---|--|
| 2. They saw it as launching on a voyage of spiritual discovery. | Držali su je polaskom na put duhovnog otkrića. |
|---|--|

Example 2 features the word 'launch', which in the Croatian language has its meaning restricted to projectiles, items for sale and information. Because of this, the word 'polazak' meaning 'departure' is adequate, since it conveys the basic meaning of the original verb.

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. [...] did the delivery run smoothly in my absence? | [...] kako je tekla dostava dok me nije bilo? |
|---|---|

Example 3 could be viewed as either an unnecessary change or artistic freedom. Character wise, there is no reason to alter the original statement, since it does not change register like in some other examples, i.e. it would not deviate from previous speech patterns. Space wise, the translation 'je li dostava tekla glatko bez mene?' is much closer to the original and uses fewer characters than the one in the TT, i.e. there would be no need to alter speech bubbles or font size.

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4. Remember the baby boom. | Sjetite se nataliteta poraća. |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|

Example 4 is an interesting case of artistic freedom, which ends up serving the character quite well. Translating the sentence literally 'Sjetite se baby booma' would be just fine here. What makes the official translation better though is the word choice. Using the word for 'birthrate' and a

most unusual and rare way of saying ‘poslijeratno doba’ meaning ‘post war era’ makes the character appear not only intelligent, but also unnecessarily ostentatious; both of which are characteristics Ozymandias displays throughout the book. This example is another clever way of fleshing out the character, without making the intent obvious or going overboard.

| | |
|--|--|
| 5. Really, getting even this far is a breath-taking effort [...] | To što su čak dotle stigli je hvalevrijedan podvig [...] |
|--|--|

Example 5 is similar to example 4. Here, just by replacing the word ‘breath-taking’ with ‘commendable’ in the TT, the statement is given an extra note of arrogance and patronization. Like with most examples of this kind, without reading the original, one would not perceive this as a deviation from the original.

| | |
|---|---|
| 6. Let’s hope they don’t become too reckless and overstep themselves. | Nadajmo se da se ni u što neće bezglavo zalijetati. |
|---|---|

Example 6 is an interesting case of rephrasing. While a small part of the original meaning is somewhat lost in the TT, the phrase ‘bezglavo zalijetati’ i.e. ‘mindlessly rush’ nicely combines both ‘recklessness’ and ‘overstepping oneself’ into one phrase. In addition, a literal translation would sound clumsy.

| | |
|---|--|
| 7. We have a few matters to attend to before they get here. | Trebamo obaviti još par sitnica prije nego oni dođu ovamo. |
|---|--|

The focus of example 7 is the word ‘sitnica’ i.e. ‘small thing’. Although at first glance it is difficult to see why it would be of any importance, one has to take into consideration the context in which it is used. The ‘small thing’ Ozymandias is referring to is the destruction of New York City and murder of his servants. By this point in the story Ozymandias has been revealed as its villain, so using a diminutive word like ‘sitnica’ is a good way of bringing forth his villainous side. The word fits even better, when one takes into account that Ozymandias sees his actions as necessary and good, even.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 8. ... and no time like the present. | ... jer bolji čas neće doći. |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|

Example 8 is a typical untranslatable phrase very commonly used in English, but non-existent in other languages. The phrase is untranslatable in that it has no appropriate equivalent in other languages. Because of that, as is the case here too, the translator is forced to completely change the phrase in order to incorporate its meaning into the context in which it is used.

| | |
|--|---|
| 9. [...] bringing an age of illumination to a benighted world. | [...] donijeti prosvjetljenje posrnulome svijetu. |
|--|---|

While example 9 is an adequate translation, the one problem it does have is that the imagery of ‘light vs. darkness’ is lost in it. Whether it is necessary to keep the imagery in the TT though ultimately falls on the translator. A solution akin to ‘zamračeni svijet’ meaning ‘darkened world’ would maybe serve the ST better, as it completely recreates the play on words from the ST.

| | |
|---|--|
| 10. [...] nor built a unity that would survive him. | [...] niti sazdao jedinstvo koje će ga nadživjeti. |
|---|--|

Example 10 is a situation where the Croatian language is a bit freer to choose its preferred verb. While in English, the synonyms of build are more adequate for a tangible structure, rather than a metaphorical one, in Croatian both ‘graditi’ and ‘zidati’ can be used interchangeably.

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 11. [...] nose to nose [...] | [...] okom u oko [...] |
|------------------------------|------------------------|

For example 11, one could argue that although different body parts are used, this is still a 1:1 translation. This argument could be made because the basic structure of the idiom, i.e. ‘body part to same body part’, is maintained. How important a part the actual structure of the idiom, which here is probably influenced by culture, plays in how its translation should be categorised is a question for another day.

| | |
|--|---|
| 12. I’m afraid the discovery rather drove the wind from his sails. | Bojim se da se od toga otkrića posve ispuhao. |
|--|---|

Example 12 displays a clever way of maintaining the imagery conjured up by a statement. While the nautical part of the ST is lost in the TT, the loss of wind is maintained, which is more important in this case due to the accompanying art. The panel accompanying this statement features one of the characters recoiling from a punch to the gut, as a consequence of which air escapes his body. Because of the art, synonymous phrases that denote loss of enthusiasm would break the fidelity created by the interplay of art and text.

5.4 SILK SPECTRE

Silk Spectre is the only female member of the Watchmen. Even before retirement, she was a reluctant hero, choosing that profession only because of her mother’s pressure to follow her footsteps. Silk Spectre is a very impulsive, angry and emotional person who spends a lot of time

being frustrated at the world. While one would expect her to have a character arc in which she escapes those feelings, that growth only comes after a time skip at the very end of the book.

5.4.1 SILK SPECTRE'S FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

| ENGLISH | CROATIAN |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. [...] I must be really edgy [...] | [...] valjda sam stvarno na rubu [...] |

As with all of the previous characters, Silk Spectre also has a few instances where her character got a few extra notes in the TT. Usually, these were met with praise, but example 1 here is not praiseworthy. At first glance, it seems like just a small exaggeration was made in the TT, but the exaggeration is too heavy. This statement is one of the first things spoken by the character, and although she can be a bit neurotic, going from annoyed in the original, to at the edge in the translation is a bit much. At this point in the story, she is just irked by Rorschach, who she is referring to here. A better alternative would be 'mora da sam jako živčana'.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. I just feel cooped up sometimes. | Nekad se osjećam tako zatočenom. |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|

In example 2 the fidelity between art and text is a bit lost in the TT. The panel of this text is a wide shot of two characters in a lab with lots of instruments around them. The fidelity in the TT is somewhat lost since the TT does not reference a cage, or rather a coop, which in the ST creates the fidelity of text and image. The use of the simile 'kao u kavezu' would have been more appropriate for this panel.

| | |
|---|--|
| 3. There don't seem to be so many laughs around these days. | Čini mi se da se ovih dana skoro više ničemu ne smijemo. |
|---|--|

In example 3 the translator decided to forgo the use of a figurative phrase. The reason for this is only known to the translator, though. One could argue that a phrase like 'ovih dana nema baš puno smijeha' might sound odd to some. Whether that is the case cannot be ascertained at the moment.

| | |
|--|---|
| 4. I don't know why I'm dumping it on you. | Ne znam zašto sam sve to tebi iskrcala. |
|--|---|

In example 4, the translator found a clever way to keep the imagery of 'offloading something'. The TT is a bit cleaner though, in that its verb 'to offload' does not connote sloppiness on the manner that 'dump' does. In order to keep the sloppiness, the verb 'istovariti' should be used. The rest of the sentence does not need changing in order to accommodate this alternative.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 5. He's either smartening up for [...] | Ili se odijeva za TV intervju [...] |
|--|-------------------------------------|

Example 5 forgoes the use of the more similar verb ‘dotjerati se’ and just uses the common verb for putting on clothes. Again, there was not much need for the change and the more colloquial verb would have been fine as well.

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 6. Yeah, well I guess I'll splash out [...] | Pa, valjda ću pljunuti pare [...] |
|---|-----------------------------------|

Example 6 is another instance of imagery retention. The splash from the ‘spitting out of money’ of the translation might come from a different source though. The imagery of ‘spitting’ also lowers the register of the translation a bit.

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 7. Yeah. Here's looking at me. | Da, hoću. Vidjet ću. |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|

Example 7 of Silk Spectre is a continuation of example 7 from the Nite Owl section of this chapter. While in the case of Nite Owl, the wishing well part of the phrase was important, in this case the looking part is important. This is because of the art, which depicts Silk Spectre's face reflected in a cup of coffee. The surrounding conversation also deals with reflecting on oneself, so in order to achieve full fidelity and retain the multimodal structure of the ST, the text of the TT had to retain the aspect of seeing or looking.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 8. It just burns my ass to be so disposable. | Ali me žulja što sam tako potrošna. |
|--|-------------------------------------|

In example 8, Silk Spectre is complaining about the way the government is treating her by viewing her as just a trophy wife to another superhero. The translator did well to maintain the discomfort expressed in the ST, also while expressing it through a metaphor. The discomfort in the TT comes from chafing rather than burning, but most people should at least assume that it is affecting the same body part as in the ST. In addition, a burning ass in Croatian is exclusively a side effect of spicy food and is not really used to refer to a more all-around sense of discomfort.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 9. I was just poking around down here. | Malo sam njuškala ovuda [...] |
|--|-------------------------------|

Example 9 is an inverted case to the previous one. While in example 8, the body part is assumed in the TT, here it is assumed in the ST, since the full phrase used is most probably ‘to poke your nose around’. In this example though, the nose of the TT is a snout rather than a human nose.

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 10. To him, everything's a conspiracy. | Njemu je sve živo zavjera. |
|--|----------------------------|

In Example 10, the TT uses a quintessentially Croatian phrase that cannot be fully replicated in most languages. Adding the adjective ‘alive’ next to ‘everything’ is a common way for Croatians

either to exaggerate something, or to emphasize the seriousness of a situation. While that adds a very Croatian note to this American character, most Croatian readers would probably not see it as such, since to them the phrase is so commonplace that they can just glance over it.

| | |
|---|---|
| 11. Boy, you really have all this stuff figured out, don't you? | Borami, ti si sve ovo temeljito smislio, je li? |
|---|---|

Example 11 is another very Croatian way of speaking, but in this case toned down to better match the English emphasizing word 'boy'. The original form of the word used in the TT is 'bogami' and while it is generally used as just an emphasizing word, it can also be viewed as a mild curse word, since it is a reference to God. By replacing the letters g and r, the swearing aspect of the word is removed, making it closer to the original. An alternative to this solution could be 'Čovječe' i.e 'Man' used as an emphasizing word, which is even closer to the ST than the one used.

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 12. That's it! That does it! | To je kap koja je prelila čašu! |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|

In example 12, regular language from the ST is replaced with figurative language in the TT. The TT still gives the same message as the ST, but it does it more akin to the phrase 'the straw that broke the camel's back'. Of course, the phrases 'To je to! Sad je dosta!' would have also been appropriate. Like in most cases of such an occurrence, the translator was just compensating for the lack of figurative language in some prior parts of the TT. It also fits the occasion, since the TT phrase has become a cliché, so it being used by a generally angry person makes sense.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 13. This mask killer thing, it doesn't hold up. | To sa maskosjekom ne drži vodu. |
|---|---------------------------------|

Much like example 6, example 13 is another case of imagery retention. In this case, the imagery is 'holding something'. The main difference being, that the original expresses the holding imagery more in its word choice than in the meaning of those words. The ST does conjure the holding imagery more in one of its alternative versions, i.e. in 'to hold water' of which the TT is a direct translation.

| | |
|--|---|
| 14. There's a bunch of people still need their asses hauled out of the fire, remember? | Cijela hrpa ljudi čeka da im spasimo guzice iz požara, ako se sjećaš? |
|--|---|

On first glance, simply replacing the phrase 'haul out' with 'save', as the TT did, might not make much of a difference. In this case, though, it does deviate a bit from context. While Silk Spectre is in fact saving people, she is very much annoyed by their constant complaining and reluctance to cooperate. While one can still see the annoyance in the TT, mostly by looking at the

images, the verb ‘izvući’ would have conveyed the annoyance a bit better, and would have stayed truer to the original.

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 15. [...] there’s an awful lot of people in here. | [...] ovdje je strašno puno svijeta. |
|---|--------------------------------------|

In example 15 the TT employs the use of another very Croatian phrase. In English, the word ‘world’, ‘svijet’ from the TT, can be used to refer to quantities, but when used in conjunction with ‘people’ the scale of it becomes much bigger than just a relatively small group, as is the case here. Croatian on the other hand, does allow the word ‘svijet’ to be used for any moderately sized group of people, no matter how small it may actually be, especially compared to a global population.

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 16. What pisses me off [...] | Ono od čega bjesnim [...] |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|

In contrast to example 1, where the TT adds to the aggression of the statement, in example 16 it takes away from it. Unlike example 1, here it cannot really be seen as a mistake and can be attributed to creative liberty. This is because by this point in the story the reader has had more time to learn about the character and her nuances. A more aggressive take would be ‘Ono što me izluđuje’ meaning ‘What drives me crazy’, or ‘Ono što mi ide na kurac’, although the latter one would be going overboard as it contains a hard swear word.

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 17. Not a moist eye in sight! | Oba oka suha ko barut! |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|

When looked at in a wider context of goings on in the book, the TT of example 17 fits better into the story. The world is about to go to war, so using the phrase ‘as dry as gunpowder’ makes a lot of sense in such a setting, due to the connotations ‘gunpowder’ brings with it. On the other hand, the statement is made on Mars, so figurative language that primarily evokes dryness, rather than conflict, could also be seen as appropriate. In essence, the ‘acceptability’ of either figurative phrase depends how far one is willing to extend the context in which it is made.

5.5 THE COMEDIAN

The Comedian is probably the most important character in the book. His murder is the starting point of the story and his actions, all shown through flashbacks, deeply affect the actions of the other main characters. The Comedian, as his name would suggest, does not take many things seriously. He sees most things as a joke or a prank. He is also cruel, self-centered and arrogant. In the TT, his speech is a combination of the Kajkavian dialect mixed with a Bosnian living in Zagreb.

5.5.1 THE COMEDIAN'S FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

| ENGLISH | CROATIAN |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. But I got your number, see? | Ali sad sam te provalio, kužiš? |

Example 1 sets a basis for upcoming examples in this chapter. Like this one, most of the other examples will somewhat pertain to either jokes or domestic slang, be it in the ST or TT. In this example, the TT carries a double meaning. While 'provaliti nekog' can mean to 'figure someone out' or 'have someone's number', it can also mean 'to pull a prank on someone', which is more than fitting for the character of the Comedian.

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2. Which you got in spades, right? | Koje ti imaš na izvoz, a? |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|

Example 2 is a case of domestic slang being used in the TT. Here, having something 'in spades' is replaced with 'having enough to export'. Out of all the main characters in the book, the Comedian is the one who was localised the most. Many of his statements were made very Croatian, which somewhat makes him lose his American identity. When a nationality is such an important part of a character, the character will use many expressions that are exclusive to that nationality. This then raises the question whether fidelity can still be achieved, or at least to what degree.

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 3. It don't matter squat. | Bitno je govno moje. |
|---------------------------|----------------------|

This example manages to somewhat escape the trappings of culture specific language. It achieves this by having the TT provide the contents of the 'squat', here meaning 'small amount', by saying 'my shit's important', meaning nothing is. The vulgarity of the TT also fits nicely into the characters vocabulary.

| | |
|--|---|
| 4. ... and the Ozzy here is gonna be the smartest man on the cinder. | ... I onda će naš Ozzy biti najpametniji momak na žgarištu. |
|--|---|

In example 4, the main problem is in the focus word losing some of its meaning when translated into Croatian, therefore becoming unusable. In Croatian, the definition of 'cinder' does not extend beyond 'the by-product of metal heating'. This makes the TT sound more accurate, but less 'cool' compared to the ST.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 5. See you in the funny papers. | Čitamo se u stripovima. |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|

Example 5 is one of the more interesting solutions found in the TT. The use of the verb 'čitati' i.e. 'to read' as a replacement for see is quite unusual and not something one can hear often.

The translator could have simply used ‘Vidimo se u stripovima’, which is the literal translation of the ST and it would have been fine. By opting to go for such an unusual form, the translator gives the character an additional layer, as the way it is said could be seen as another ‘joke’ made by the Comedian.

| | |
|--|--|
| 6. You’da thought this country had enough goddamn fireworks. | Mislio bi da je ovoj zemlji već pun kufer vatrometa. |
|--|--|

Example 6 is another very Croatian way of saying ‘fed up’. Not only is the saying very Croatian, but the word ‘kufer’ is also a regional variant of the word ‘kofer’ meaning ‘suitcase’. The variant comes from the Kajkavian dialect, which combined with some of the Comedians other word choices in the TT, like using ‘jok’ to say ‘no’, confirms the theory that in the TT he is from Zagreb, but with Bosnian roots.

| | |
|--|--|
| 7. I think it might have driven us a little crazy, y’know? | Mislim da bi cijela zemlja malo pukla, kužiš me? |
|--|--|

Example 7 has an, at first, unnecessary change in word usage. There is seemingly no reason to use ‘pukla’ i.e. ‘snap’ instead of ‘drive oneself crazy’. That being said, in Croatian ‘puknuti’ is a more colloquial way of saying ‘poludjeti’ i.e. ‘to go crazy’, which fits the character a bit better.

| | |
|--|---|
| 8. What did you do, you bitch, you hurt my face, you whore, you... | Što si to napravila kujo, spigala si mi facu, kurvo, ti ... |
|--|---|

Example 8 is another regional variant, further establishing the Comedian as a Croatain. The word ‘spigati’ is a regional variant of the word ‘saviti’ meaning ‘to bend’. This variant, like many others, is difficult to find in dictionaries, since they mostly contain standardised language. Even searching for it on Google is difficult, since without advanced search parameters, Google confuses it for an Italian word. Taking this into account, understanding the Comedian in the Croatian translation might prove difficult even for some Croatians, at least those unfamiliar with the Kajkavian dialect.

| | |
|---|---|
| 9. Lissen, you little punks, you better get back in ya rat holes! | Čujte me, ništarije male, bolje se pokupite u svoje mišje rupe! |
|---|---|

Example 9 is in some way a clash of cultures. While the translation equivalent in meaning, it is not equivalent in word choice, as in the TT ‘mišje rupe’ equates to ‘mouse holes’ rather than ‘rat holes’. Why exactly the English language opted for the bigger rodent is unknown.

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 10. Rorschach's nuts. | Rorschach je puk'o. |
|-----------------------|---------------------|

In example 10, the spelling of the TT is interesting to discuss. 'Puk'o' is a shortened version of 'pukao' meaning 'to snap'. 'Pukao' is also a Bosnian variant of 'puknuo'. In addition, using an apostrophe in the middle of a word, instead of the very end is an uncommon occurrence in any language.

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 11. Well you don't look like you grew up too bad yourself. | Pa ni ti ne izgledaš baš za bacit. |
|--|------------------------------------|

Example 11 has a clever play on words in the ST. While usually the phrase 'it looks like' is used as an alternative to 'it appears to' or 'it seems', here it is used as a comment on appearance. This sentence is part of a conversation between the Comedian and Silk Spectre and like he does with most women; he is only interested in her physical appearance. In addition, he is also comparing her to her mother, whom he knew back in his youth and has a checkered past with. Noticing this dual meaning is important while translating the book, since by missing it, one misses an important nuance to both the character and his relationship with women in general. The TT makes a good effort to show the Comedian's sexist side by using a phrase in which the woman is reduced to an object that can just be thrown away.

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 12. You're a looker. | Prava mačka. |
| 13. Y'know, your mother was a peach... | Znaš, mama ti je bila komad... |

Examples 12 and 13 have been grouped together because they come in quick succession in the book and the nuances of understanding and translating them are mostly identical. Both examples pertain to 'flattery', which depending on the context can be either very pleasing or very creepy. These examples fall into the latter. The TT also uses two very common items of flattery in Croatian, the appropriateness of which also depends on the context of use. 12 literally means 'A true cat.', while 13 is 'Your mother was a real piece'. The cat comparison is a very common one in Croatian, its flattery most probably coming from the elegance of a cat. The second one simply boils a woman down to an object. Interesting to note is that the cat comparison is mostly used by women when talking about other women, while 'piece' is generally used by men. Comparing a woman to a cat is usually a feminine thing, although in this case it probably has more to do with a cat's flexibility, rather than its gracefulness.

5.6 DR MANHATTAN

Dr Manhattan is the only member of the Watchmen actually to possess superpowers. He was born Jon Osterman and after being pushed into it by his father, became a physicist. While at work, he had an accident with an intrinsic field separator, which disintegrated his body. After a few weeks, he put himself together into a new body and came to realize his newfound powers. He is hyper-intelligent, can synthesize any element at will and because of his perception of time can see past, present and future happening simultaneously. All of this turned him into a being of objectivity. He lacks a sense of morality, cares little about feelings and generally speaks ‘straight’. On the odd occasion where he uses figurative language, it his very colourful and lyrical.

5.6.1 DR MANHATTAN’S FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

| ENGLISH | CROATIAN |
|---|--|
| 1. I sit in a Brooklyn kitchen, fascinated by an arrangement of cogs on black velvet. | Sjedim u brooklynskoj kuhinji, zatravljen rasporedom zupčanika na crnom baršunu. |

The ST is a very straightforward description of events, typical of the way Dr Manhattan speaks and thinks. The TT uses the figurative verb ‘zatravljen’, which can be translated as ‘under the influence of herbs’. The TT does convey the same meaning as the ST, but compensating for a lack of figurative language on a character that uses figurative language in only select occasions can be seen as a mischaracterisation brought on by the TT, if one were to really care for the details.

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 2. Matter of fact, I did! | Bogibogme jesam! |
|---------------------------|------------------|

Example 2 is from a flashback where Dr Manhattan was still a human and talked like one. It is from a time when he was still enthusiastic about things, in this case fixing the watch of his girlfriend. The ST uses a figurative, but more straightforward way of saying ‘yes’, while the TT uses a more conversational and region specific enhancer. ‘Bogibogme’ comes from the Kajkavian dialect typical for northern and central Croatia. It suggests that the translator based the character around those regions, most probably the capital city Zagreb, though such indications are sparse and not as prevalent as they were with the Comedian.

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 3. A token funeral service is being held. | Održava se improvizirani pogreb. |
|---|----------------------------------|

Example 3 also comes from a time before the accident and is a bit of a mistranslation, or at the very least, sounds wonky compared to the ST. While the TT still holds true in saying that the funeral was ‘improvised’, in the sense that there was no preacher present, the overall context of the

funeral is more important. The funeral is token, as in symbolic, in the sense that there is nothing to bury, since the whole body of Dr Manhattan has been disintegrated. The symbolic meaning is also important for the fidelity between image and text. The image accompanying the text shows a photo of Dr Manhattan on a wall featuring other deceased co-workers. That way, the funeral and the photo become a token, or symbol, of his life and also become the only proof of his existence.

| | |
|--|---|
| 4. Their bleached faces stare up at me [...] | Njihova isprana lica bulje u mene [...] |
|--|---|

Example 4 occurs in the moment when Dr Manhattan rearranges his body back together. The people witnessing this event are naturally shocked and thus, their faces become white, i.e. bleached. Using the verb ‘washed’ in the TT to convey this is not a mistake though, since it is just another way of saying ‘losing colour’ and the figurative language is not used as a compensation. Although, one could wonder why a more similar word like ‘blijed’ or ‘bijel’ meaning ‘pale’ and ‘white’ was not used.

| | |
|---|--|
| 5. [...] the sighs turn to screams of terror. | [...] uzdasi se pretaču u krike užasa. |
|---|--|

Example 5 is a peculiar instance where compensating for figurative language works when used on Dr Manhattan... if the understanding of the TT is stretched a bit. In English ‘pretočiti’ i.e. ‘transfuse’ is a strictly scientific way of saying ‘pour from one container into another’, but in Croatian can also mean ‘turn into something else’. Because the word ‘pretočiti’ has a purely scientific meaning in English, its use in the TT can be excused by viewing the word bilingually. The excuse is obviously very flimsy, but then again, the average reader might not notice such details, or even care about them.

| | |
|---|--|
| 6. In May, 1962, a masked man retires to open an auto business. | U svibnju 1962. jedna od maski se umirovljuje kako bi otvorila mehaničarsku radionicu. |
|---|--|

Example 6 presents two issues in the ST. Firstly, the ST uses ‘auto business’ to refer to an auto repair shop. At first glance, one would think that the ST is referring to a car sales shop. As in some previous examples, viewing the ST and TT side-by-side makes the TT look like a mistranslation, since it mentions an auto repair shop rather than a sales shop. The other issue is ‘masked man’. The ST is referring to a masked hero. Due to the way Dr Manhattan speaks, the whole sentence comes off as unusual. ‘Masked man’ usually refers to a robber or other unknown assailant, not a vigilante. Using the word ‘mask’ in the TT takes away any of that confusion, since it is immediately obvious he is talking about a masked vigilante. Statements that confuse ‘regular

humans' are par for the course for Dr Manhattan and because of that, maybe it would be more accurate to leave brevity out of the TT as well. Whether such a tactic has any merits to it other than fidelity is debatable.

| | |
|---|---|
| 7. Outside, Janey accuses me of “chasing jailbait”. | Vani me Janey optužuje da “lovim maloljetnice”. |
|---|---|

Example 7 is a case of synonyms and their perception. While Croatian lacks a full equivalent for the word ‘jailbait’, it does use a synonym of it, ‘lolita’. Its meaning is the same as ‘jailbait’ and the word is also used in English as a synonym for ‘jailbait’. The problem arises in that word’s perception. Over the years, in popular culture and in public perception, the term ‘lolita’ has switched from ‘sexually precocious young girl’ to ‘type of gothic fashion’. Lolita fashion has become very popular in the 21st century and has completely overtaken the original meaning of the word ‘lolita’. While ‘young’ is still an important connotation of the word, the illegality of it is completely lost. In such a case, the TT is forced to use either an improvised phrase or the literal meaning of a word, as is the case here.

| | |
|---|--|
| 8. [...] but Laurie feels we’ve lost our privacy. | [...] ali Laurie misli da nemamo samoće. |
|---|--|

Example 8 is similar to the previous one. Here the TT uses the word ‘samoća’. ‘Samoća’ initially means ‘loneliness’ or ‘solitude’, but can also mean ‘privacy’. While the translation is therefore not wrong, the first connotation it creates in the TT is a bit odd, since few would complain about losing their loneliness. While it demonstrates the possibility for some creative freedom, it would be better to use the word ‘privatnost’ i.e. ‘privacy’.

| | |
|---|---|
| 9. [...] a disorganized stream of silicone that seems pregnant with the possibility of every conceivable shape... | [...] neorganizirani slap silikona u kojem je zametak mogućnosti svakoga zamislivog oblika... |
|---|---|

Example 9 provides an example of how colourful Dr Manhattan’s language can be when he decides to be figurative. This also provides the translator with a rare opportunity to become creative. In this case, ‘pregnancy’ is replaced with ‘embryo’. While both create interesting pictures, the TT also manages to avoid a confusing sentence structure. Keeping the word pregnant in the TT in the same position as in the ST would create an awkward sentence structure. Rearranging the sentence would also not necessarily help. This is because of the fact that it is usually not necessary in Croatian to explain what someone is pregnant with. The ‘baby’ part of the phrase is a given without

saying it. Because of that, the full phrase ‘pregnant with a baby’, which exists in that form in Croatian as well, is rarely used.

| | |
|---|--|
| 10. Somewhere, the fat man is already lumbering toward the shooting gallery [...] | Debeljko se već gega prema streljani [...] |
|---|--|

In example 10, the tone of the sentence is shifted in the TT. The shift comes from the word choices, namely from the words ‘debeljko’ and ‘gega’. ‘Debeljko’ is more akin to ‘fatty’, while ‘gega’ is closer to ‘waddle’. Because of this, the observational tone of the ST becomes mocking in the TT. In the ST, any intent of mockery is completely absent and both ‘fat man’ and ‘lumbering’ refer to the person in a completely neutral way. A more appropriate solution would be to use ‘debeli čovjek’ and ‘kreće se’. While ‘kreće se’ meaning ‘moves’ loses the connotation of size, the phrase itself is neutral, which is more important in this case. In order to compensate for that, it is necessary to add ‘teškim koracima’ i.e. ‘with heavy footsteps’ to the phrase.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 11. Laurie is walking out on me. | Laurie me ostavlja. |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|

In example 11 the ST creates a multimodal structure. The accompanying image shows Silk Spectre literally walking out through a door, creating a very literal representation of what is being said. The TT loses this connection by simply using ‘Laurie is leaving me’, which is technically correct, but not descriptive enough. In this case, retaining the multimodal structure should come first. The problem arises in actually creating a sentence that is a correct translation, but also retains the multimodal structure of the ST. Solutions like ‘Laurie odlazi’ do not capture the whole point, while sentences with ‘Laurie izlazi’ would sound sloppy. The biggest problem is that the connection between image and text in the ST is created in the word ‘out’. Recreating that connection in Croatian might be impossible, at least without sounding sloppy, or silly.

| | |
|--|--|
| 12. [...] seeds of the future sown carelessly... | [...] neoprezno razasuto sjeme budućnosti... |
|--|--|

Example 12 is an instance of different connotations a word can create and how that creates a slight deviation in the TT. The TT reads ‘seeds of the future scattered carelessly’ instead of ‘sown carelessly’. While this phrase still creates the same end result, ‘sowing seeds’ sounds like a more organised process than ‘scattering seeds’. This is still true even when taking into account that most sowing is done by scattering seeds, rather than putting them in an exact spot. As mentioned, the end result is the same, but the way one came to the end result seems different in ST and TT. Also, since

Dr Manhattan is talking about future events, adding a sense of ‘chaos’ and ‘unknowing’ is appropriate.

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 13. Sometimes these things slip my mind. | Ponekad zaboravim na takve stvari. |
|--|------------------------------------|

Example 13 is a curious case of not using figurative language to translate figurative language, even though an equivalent exists and is appropriate. That equivalent being ‘smetnuti sa uma’. In this case, the TT simply reads ‘I sometimes forget about these things’. Like in all such cases, only the translator can explain why he opted not to do a 1:1 translation.

| | |
|---|--|
| 14. Don’t you see the futility of asking me to save a world that I no longer have any stake in? | Ne vidiš li beskorisnost zahtjeva a spasim svijet na kojemu mi ni do čega više nije stalo? |
|---|--|

In example 14, the focus of the sentence is shifted in the TT. The ST puts the focus of the statement on the entire world, while the TT puts the focus on things on/in that world. In addition, the TT uses the verb ‘stalo mi je’, which connotes affection towards something. Such affection is not present in the ST, which expresses a neutral interest in the world. The ST could also be understood as ‘a world in which I have nothing to gain’, connoting benefit. To avoid a connotation of affection, a feeling Dr Manhattan does not possess, using ‘svijet koji mi više nije zanimljiv’ would be more appropriate.

5.7 SIDE CHARACTERS

There are numerous side characters in *Watchmen*. Too many of them have do not have enough line to have their own dedicated sections in this paper. Because of this, all the side characters have been grouped together into one category. Like with the main characters, there are instances of speech being an important part of fleshing out certain side characters. Most of this section though deals with intricacies of translating figurative language, rather than how ties to a specific character.

| ENGLISH | CROATIAN |
|---|--|
| 1. Lotta classy expense-account living. | Život na visokoj nozi, računi pokriveni. |

‘Life on the high leg’ is a quintessentially Croatian expression used to refer to classy living. The character using it, detective Stephen Fine, uses a lot of Croatian slang. Him and his partner Joe Bourquin share similarities with the Comedian, at least in the TT. This example also uses the word ‘expense-account’, which has no equivalent in Croatian. The only way to translate it is to either use

its definition, or in this case, present the general idea of its meaning, here being ‘have your accounts covered’.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Somebody really had it in for this guy. | Nekome se naš momak fakat zamjerio. |
|--|-------------------------------------|

Continuing the trend from the previous example, example 2 also uses a very Croatian phrase in the TT, along with a character driven change. The word ‘fakat’ is most close in meaning to the word ‘really’. And just as ‘really’, ‘fakat’ also has a diverse set of uses ranging from agreement to sentence enhancement. In this case, it also fits very well with the detective’s use of local slang in the TT. The problem is that the TT is not figurative in meaning like the ST. A better alternative in ‘Netko je našeg momka fakat imao na piku’ still retains the local feel the TT is going for, while also being figurative like the ST. The character driven change made in the TT can be found in ‘naš momak’ i.e. ‘our boy’. While the two detectives talking about the murder case try to distance themselves from it in both ST and TT, by referring to the murder victim as ‘our boy’, the TT creates an additional layer of separation between them and the victim. While that may be difficult to notice by reading instead of hearing, the intent of their word choice is still ‘visible’ from everything else they say and do. Whether creating an additional degree of separation in the TT was necessary is debatable.

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. You trip against it, even a big guy like that, it don’t break. | Popikni se ti stoput, budi onakva mrga ako treba, ali to ne puca. |
|---|---|

Example 3 continues the trend of Croatian slang. Here, the TT uses two distinctly Croatian phrases. The less interesting one in this case is ‘mrga’, which is just slang for ‘big and strong person’. The more interesting one is ‘stoput’. It literally means ‘one hundred times’, but figuratively, it is one of the most popular ways of saying ‘a lot’. While English also uses instances of 100, like in ‘If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a hundred times’; it is not very often used as an enhancer and is mostly contained in fixed sayings. In contrast to that, ‘stoput’ is one of the most common enhancers used in Croatian.

| | |
|---|--|
| 4. I think you take this vigilante stuff too seriously. | Mislim da zaštitnike malo previše uzimaš srcu. |
|---|--|

In example 4, the TT takes the sentence to a more personal level. ‘Uzimati srcu’ i.e. ‘taking it to heart’ implies a feeling of care, while ‘taking it seriously’ from the ST simply denotes interest.

The surrounding context also does not call for the involvement of personal feelings. The alternative ‘Mislim da te zaštitnike malo preozbiljno shvaćaš’ better conveys the message and tone of the ST.

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 5. You musta been bored as hell. | Sigurno si umro od dosade. |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|

The Croatian language usually reserves Hell for swearing, condemnation and extreme heat. The ‘as hell’ comparison is also a very English term and is not often found in other languages. The TT solution of ‘dying of boredom’ is the only appropriate one, since dying could also imply going to hell.

| | |
|---|---|
| 6. Y’know, it was a cryin’ shame they put you youngsters out to grass in ’77. | Živa je, znaš šteta što su vas mlade ’77. natjerali da se povučete. |
|---|---|

Example 6 is another case of how some expressions are deeply rooted into a single language. Few other languages probably use ‘crying’ to refer to ‘something regrettable’. The TT manages to compensate for that by using a uniquely Croatian expression in ‘živa šteta’ i.e. ‘a living shame’. The Croatian and English phrases are full equivalents, but it is interesting to see how different descriptors are used in the two languages. In addition, ‘putting someone out to grass’ is usually reserved for farm animals only (Ammer, 2013:665). Using that phrases is impossible in Croatian, or it would at least cause major confusion. Using the more common ‘retire’ is better.

| | |
|---|--|
| 7. Steve, for God’s sake, man, shut up... | Majke ti, Steve, umukni ako Boga znaš... |
|---|--|

The expressions ‘By your mom’ and ‘Knowing God’ used in the TT are uniquely Croatian in nature. They continue the trend of the two detectives from previous examples. In this case, though, there exists a 1:1 translation. ‘Steve, za Boga miloga, začepi...’. The additional flavour added to the TT is to keep up with character tropes established previously. This example also shows how previous decisions made by a translator can have long lasting consequences.

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8. Ohhh! Big spender! | Ooo, bacila si se u trošak! |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|

The Croatian language has no way of complimenting someone for spending money using a noun. Therefore, using the idiom of ‘throw oneself into spending’ is the only way of showing the enthusiasm that is behind ‘big spender’.

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 9. It’s history. | Bilo pa prošlo. |
|------------------|-----------------|

Example 9 can be handled in many ways. Some alternatives to it are ‘Nema veze’ i.e. ‘never mind’, ‘Gotovo je’ i.e. ‘It’s over’ and ‘Pusti’ i.e. ‘Let it go’. The only problem with all these

alternatives is that none of them directly references the past, which is done in both ST and TT. In addition, none of them adds ‘local flavour’ as the one used in the TT does.

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 10. I got spots in my eyes... | Plešu mi mrlje pred očima... |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|

Example 10 is case of perception. While the ST refers to the spots as being in the eye, the TT refers to them as being in front of the eye. From a purely factual stance, the Croatian language is ‘more correct’ in the use of this expression, since things inside of the eye would not be visible to the perceiver.

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| 11. No sweat. | Nema frke. |
|---------------|------------|

ST and TT in example 11 are very close to one another, but the TT express the ‘lack of trouble’ through ‘lack of loud noises’ rather than ‘lack of perspiration’. It is a small but interesting insight into what different cultures perceive as problematic.

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 12. You’re safe as houses. | Sigurni ste k’o u tvrđavi. |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|

In example 12, the ST seeks safety in a house, while the TT does so in a fortress. Why a house would be safer than a fortress is unclear, since “in today’s security-conscious climate, where alarm systems to deter housebreaks have become increasingly common, this simile may seem puzzling. Presumably, it uses house in the sense of ‘a shelter from the elements’” (Ammer, 2013:705).

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 13. ... but what’s up, doc? | ... doktore, ima li nade? |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|

‘What’s up doc’ is a cliché expression most people associate with Bugs Bunny. It simply means ‘what is happening’. In the context of the book, it is said to Dr Manhattan in a TV interview, intended as a quip on his name. Because of his nature, Dr Manhattan does not identify the humorous intent and simply states that the word up has no real meaning. One would think that simply using ‘Šta ima doktore?’ would be an easy solution, but that solution disregards the multimodal structure this expression is part of. In the story, the interview is intertwined with a physical confrontation between Nite Owl, Silk Spectre and a street gang. In the ST, it can be seen as a taunting ‘hello’ said by the gang, who have cornered the two heroes. In the TT, the ‘ima li nade?’ i.e. ‘is there hope?’ reflects the dire situation the two are in.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 14. Let’s try and keep it snappy. | Idemo što je moguće žustrije. |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

Example 14 is a continuation of the interview, and here the ST creates a multimodal structure by using the word ‘snappy’ in an image where a gang member’s arm is being broken. In the TT a different multimodal structure is created, one where ‘žustro’ i.e. ‘severly’ reflects on the severity of the situation, rather than what is happening in it.

| | |
|---|--|
| 15. Beats hell outta me, but I’m only an assistant... | Ne razumijem to baš, ali ja sam samo pomoćnik. |
|---|--|

Example 15 is a case of stable and unstable expressions. ‘Beat the hell out of someone’ usually denotes a severe beating, but when applied to oneself, denotes lack of understanding. How such a severe shift in meaning came to be is unknown. Still, the expression is a stable one and is frequently used in English. On the other hand, a similar alternative in Croatian like ‘Vrag me odnio ako razumijem’ or ‘Dovraga ako razumijem’ retain the hellish imagery of the original, but are not fixed or frequently used expressions, at least not in this way. Because of this, the question arises, is it better to use a literal translation or translate the text using an uncommon phrase. The TT uses the former. Which one of those of better is questionable.

| | |
|--|---|
| 16. ... nobody at Gila gives a damn about all this junk. | ... svima se u Gili živo fućka za tu kramu. |
|--|---|

Like in some previous examples, 16 also shows how ‘živo’ i.e. ‘living’ is frequently used in Croatian as an enhancer. It also shows how Croatian perceives ‘lack of care’ as ‘whistling’, which is a very carefree activity in itself. On the other hand, English denotes lack of care by ‘not giving a worthless thing’, the worthless thing being the word ‘damn’. “Although probably in oral use for much longer, damn is first recorded in this negative form in the late 1700s and the worthless item it is used to denigrate is a curse” (Ammer, 2013:564).

| | |
|---|---|
| 17. Jesus H. Christ, what’s wrong with guys these days? | Boga mu poljubim, što je svima ovih dana? |
|---|---|

Examples 17 show a clash of two unique profanities not found outside the two languages. ‘Jesus H. Christ’ most likely comes from an episode in Mark Twain’s life, when he worked at a printing press. One of his co-workers created the expression as a prank on the preacher Alexander Campbell, who was printing out a sermon. The expression is thus limited to only the US and is almost exclusively used by men (Smith, 2010:458). The expression ‘Boga mu poljubim’ i.e. ‘I kiss

his God’ is a very Croatian profanity, although a very mild one. The two expressions are somewhat synonymous and thus, can function as equivalents of one another.

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| 18. You’ve arrived. | Uspio si. |
|---------------------|-----------|

Example 18 uses ‘arrival’ as an expression of success. Janey Slater, a girlfriend of Dr Manhattan, uses it, to which he remarks that he feels as if he had always been here. It creates a humorous situation for the reader and an insight into the 4-dimensional mind of Dr Manhattan. In the TT, he gives the same response to the more bland phrase ‘You’ve succeeded’. By using the literal expression for success, any humour coming from the response is completely lost. A better alternative would be ‘Stiglo je tvoje vrijeme’ i.e. ‘Your time has come’. A humorous, but insightful answer to that would be ‘Meni se čini kao da je moje vrijeme oduvijek tu’ i.e. ‘I think my time has always been here’.

| | |
|--|---|
| 19. Your prediction’s way off, mister. | Tvoje predviđanje je promašilo cio fudbal, gospodine moj. |
|--|---|

Example 19 feels as if the translator got a bit overly excited. The translation in itself is not wrong; rather it is a nice equivalent to the ST. The problem of it is its origin. The phrase comes from the Serbian language and the character using it, Janey Slater, does not speak a Serbian variant of Croatian in any other instance in the book. Why the translator decided to use one here is unknown. A more consistent response would be ‘Tvoje predviđanje je potpuni promašaj, gospodine moj’.

| | |
|--|--|
| 20. Killed both kids in front of their mom, then opened his jugular. | Koknuo je obje klinke pred starom, a onda sebi precvikao vrat. |
|--|--|

Example 20 is a return to the detectives and the continuing trend of creating distance from the victims they are investigating. The TT uses slang terms for ‘kill’, ‘kids’, ‘mom’ and ‘slitting one’s throat’. The prevalent use of slang in the TT makes the detectives seem more apathetic than they really are. Whether this is necessary or not is up to the reader.

| | |
|--|---|
| 21. Spiritual discovery, on the other hand I can take it or... | Duhovno otkriće, s druge strane, nit’ smrdi nit’... |
|--|---|

While the TT in example 21 is an interesting choice to denote indifference, it is a bit inappropriate for the context it is used in. The full phrase of ‘nit’ smrdi, nit’ miriši’ can be translated as ‘it doesn’t stink, nor does it smell nicely’. The phrase is inappropriate because it is said by a young assistant to her boss. That boss being Ozymandias, who is a serious businessman and a man

of intellect, i.e. someone who would not care for such vulgarities in the workplace. Using such a vulgar phrase in front of him would probably lead to at least a talking to, if not more. The phrase becomes even worse when one takes into account that a 1:1 equivalent to the 'take it, or leave it' exists in Croatian; 'uzmi ili ostavi'.

6. CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in this paper, the translating of figurative language is a thought provoking endeavour that forces one to look at a piece of text from several different angles. Most figurative language does not have a 1:1 equivalent in a given TL and some equivalents do not fit into the context of the story. Because at some points in the text, figurative language had to be left out of the TT, some other parts of the text are often used to compensate for the previous lack thereof. As some of the examples in this paper have shown, it can be difficult to decide on a proper part to do this compensation, which leads to an end result that is not compatible with the original. Overall, the translator created a very faithful and interesting to read translation of the book. Many of the solutions were very clever, some of them even ingenious. While there are some mistakes and instances of there being a better alternative, those are few and far between and should not be taken too seriously.

When all these factors are applied to the field of comic books, their complexity suddenly skyrockets. Comic books on their own offer many unique challenges to translators, from limited space in speech bubbles, to onomatopoeic sounds that encompass some of the art, to the many multimodal structures comic books create with their interplay of text and image.

The comic book *Watchmen* by Alan Moore is one of the most celebrated pieces of comic book media ever. It has a compelling story and colourful, interesting characters that inhabit its world. The six main characters are all fleshed out in great detail and most of their characterisation is given to the reader through their speech. What words they use and what figurative language they use is deeply rooted within them and was carefully chosen by the author. Translating the book into another language proves itself to be a massive endeavour.

This paper delved deep into the figurative language of the characters and demonstrated all the challenges and difficulties that arise when translating it into another language. Even so, this paper dove only into a single facet of this book, leaving out many intricacies that deal with other aspects of the book. *Watchmen* and its Croatian translation both tell the same story, but due to cultural and linguistic differences between the two languages do so in sometimes vastly different ways. Some of the ‘missteps’ pointed out in this paper shine yet another light onto the difficulties a translator faces when doing his or her job. As mentioned before, *Watchmen* is one of the most essential comic books ever written and illustrated, and it can be, and has been, dissected and

observed in many different ways, by many different branches of linguistic, natural and social sciences.

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