

# Translation of Multimodal Texts from Croatian into English

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**Translation of multimodal texts from Croatian into English**

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**UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA**  
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ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AND GENERAL MODULE

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## **Abstract**

This Master's thesis will focus on the translation of a Croatian multimodal novel *Doba Mjedi* written by Slobodan Šnajder. The aim of this thesis is to provide an accurate translation of selected paragraphs while respecting the authors stylistic decisions and the work's various semantic, syntactic, stylistic, generic and cultural features, which play a role in the readers understanding of the novel.

This thesis will include a theoretical introduction into multimodal literature and its translation, as well as a brief background on Slobodan Šnajder and his aforementioned work, *Doba Mjedi*. The thesis will also include selected paragraphs and excerpts from the source text, their translations, as well as the commentary and analysis of the source and translated texts, the aim of which is to discuss possible translation problems and their solutions.

**Keywords:** *translation, multimodal text, Slobodan Šnajder, Doba Mjedi*

## Table of content

1. Introduction.....	4
2. What is multimodal literature?.....	6
3. Source text I – <i>Pismo Franji Lauberu na Istok</i> .....	9
3.2. Translation – <i>Eastbound letter for Franjo Lauber</i> .....	13
3.3. Commentary and analysis I.....	18
4. Source text II – <i>Treblinka</i> .....	23
4.2. Translation – <i>Treblinka</i> .....	26
4.3. Commentary and analysis II.....	29
5. Source text III – <i>Izlazna strategija Georga Kempfa</i> .....	32
5.2. Translation – <i>George Kempf's exit strategy</i> .....	34
5.3. Commentary and analysis III.....	36
6. Source text IV – <i>Praotac Kempf pluta u Transilvaniju</i> .....	41
6.2. Translation – <i>Forefather Kempf floats to Transylvania</i> .....	47
6.3. Commentary and analysis IV.....	53
7. Conclusion.....	58
8. Literature.....	59

## 1. Introduction

The novel which will be the focus of this Master's thesis can be considered a multimodal text, mostly due to the nature of Šnajder's implementation of altered graphic layout of the parts of texts (paragraphs) referring to *The Unborn (Cro. Nerođeni)* an omniscient narrator whose interjections are closely related to the overarching story. Such paragraphs are often framed and placed on the right side of printed pages. *The Unborn's* narration physically divides the page and provide another visual and semantic dimension to the central text of the novel. Furthermore, the addition of such an element provides the reader with another take on the story, or an alternative narrative point. It also serves as a way for Šnajder to express his opinions and beliefs, as well as to relate the story with historical facts and happenings. The framing and implementation of *The Unborn's* narrative is a direct visual allusion to the ancient Abrahamic scripts, which Šnajder even explicitly mentions in *The Unborn's* first interjection - "*drago mi je što ovako ispisane margine izgledaju kao babilonski Talmud providen komentari učenicima rabina.*"

*Doba Mjedi* is a novel which requires a thorough and focused reading. It is easy to miss the authors subtle nods to historical events, mentions of archaic and biblical places, or quickly go over his philosophical thoughts and discussions, not appreciating the weight they add to the overarching story. These elements combined add to the author's intent of making the novel multidimensional and open to interpretation. In essence, *Doba Mjedi* is a story of war, love and origin. The narration takes place in a long time period – from Germany in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which was a time of great famine and emigration, all the way up to Yugoslavia in 1945, focusing on the German concentration camps and ethnic cleansing. As already mentioned, the addition of *The Unborn*, whose passages are stylistically marked through the use of different colour, fonts and paragraph borders, provide the reader with a deeper insight into the happenings in the story.

Another aspect of Šnajder's writing providing additional challenge for the translator is the use of long and drawn-out sentences which often times require a reread. The author's vocabulary is exceptional, filled with archaic Croatian phrases and words, as well as many

phrases borrowed from another language, which in the context of the story is usually German.

Before approaching the text as a translator, it is important to gain a clear view of the authors intentions, the meaning, both implied and explicit, and to produce a rough draft of the translation which will be improved upon further analysis of the source text.

Furthermore, because '*Doba Mjedi*' is filled with historical events, places, biblical myths, legends, ancient religions, civilisations and cultures, it was important to research such aspects of the novel as a means of completely and accurately producing a quality translation.

The following chapters will discuss the theory and practice of translating a multimodal text from Croatian into the English language. Firstly, I shall provide a brief introduction into the theory and discourse behind multimodal literature, after which I will translate selected chapters and passages from the aforementioned novel. Each source text, as well as its accompanying translation, will be analysed and commentated in detail in order to provide further insight into the problems, limitations and ultimately decisions which constitute the final translation.

## 2. What is multimodal literature?

With the advent of new technologies, now more than ever there exists an increase in the quantity of multimodal texts and multimodality in general. Ranging from well known and often read media such as newspapers, graphic novels, comics, movies, brochures and advertisements, all the way up to modern instances of multimodal texts, e.g., e-books, PowerPoint presentations, as well as posts on Internet sites or social media, multimodal media blends all sorts of different styles and combinations to present more detailed information than just plain text for the reader.

That is not to say that multimodal texts are a modern age occurrence. Multimodality has, at least to some degree, always been present throughout different art works in history. For example, medieval manuscripts often portrayed visual and calligraphical elements to better navigate the readers throughout the text, as well as to illustrate terms and concepts discussed in the writing. A clear instance of such practice can be seen in a work on medicine known as *Practica Chirurgiae* by the fourteenth-century physician John of Arderne which “included marginal illustrations with a variety of functions. Illustrations included visual/verbal plays on words in the body of the text.” (O'Sullivan, 2013, p. 3.)

As already mentioned, multimodality can be found in many different works of media and literature. While discussing multimodal works, State of Victoria Department of Education and Training considers three distinct categories of multimodal works:

- **Paper-based multimodal media** include picture books, text books, graphic novels, comics, and posters.
- **Live multimodal media**, for example, dance, performance, and oral storytelling, convey meaning through combinations of various modes such as gestural, spatial, audio, and oral language.



- **Digital multimodal media** include film, animation, slide shows, e-posters, digital stories, podcasts, and web pages that may include hyperlinks to external pronunciation guides or translations.<sup>1</sup>

A multimodal text “involves more than language. They can include meanings made from choices from any semiotic system and do not necessarily need to incorporate language. Any text which utilises more than one semiotic resource is a multimodal text.” (O’Halloran, Tan & Wignell, 2016, p. 202.) According to Damaskinidis, a multimodal text “represents a complex semiotic canvas on which the various systems of signification (verbal, images, colour, layout, etc.) interact in complex ways to produce a coherent meaning.” (Damaskinidis, 2016, p. 299.)

Each dimension of the work, e.g., an image, text, video or a graph only carries partial meaning. Only when all the modes are combined can the audience grasp the complete meaning of the work. As such, a multimodal work also implies a capacity for a certain amount polysemy, or rather many different ways for the consumer to interpret different elements contained in the media. The characteristics of a multimodal text which guide the reader and constitute the possible meaning are: formatting of the text, fonts, vocabulary, colours, shapes, illustrations and in some cases sounds. (Slovaček, 2013)

Furthermore, interpretation of a text, image, or any other mode depends heavily on the culture and the sociological context of the work, as well as the audience. Such cultural differences can pose all kinds of limitations and problems for translators.

A multimodal work can often be interpreted in many different ways, and even audience coming from the same cultural background can find different meanings and interpretations based on their way of reasoning. Because language is only one carrier of meaning among many, translation of multimodal texts has to account for various interactions which change the information encoded by text.

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<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/multimodal/Pages/multimodaloverview.aspx>

Translation of such works is rarely a straightforward task. When dealing with multimodal literature, one must pay special attention to the interactions between different kinds of elements in any given work. There are a number of ways in which the modes can interact; **complementation**, **reflection** (certain elements reflecting other parts of narration), **focusing** (meanings of different modes focus on a mutual pattern of narration), **bridging** (one mode transfers the most of the meaning onto another), **cohesion**, **contrast** (produces irony, and reinforces epiphany), **exclusion** (modes acknowledging mutual existence by exclusion). (Tutek, 2020, p.46.) In order to provide a quality and accurate translation of any given multimodal text, the translator has to be aware of all these semantic interrelations, as well as cultural connotations, and render those elements as fairly as possible in the target text.

### 3. Source text I - *Pismo Franji Lauberu na Istok*

*Tvoj stan, 9. III. 43.*

Franja, dragi prijatelju, nikad me nije toliko boljela duša kao u ovom sunčanom početku proljeća. Pružaju se željezni prsti za mojim nervima. Ptice u krošnjama, da li već nastrijeljene? Zar je to cvrkut? Evo, jedan se kos spustio na vrh stupa i razgovara s nevidljivim jatom. Više je srdit nego preplašen. Zar to da je ljubavni zov? Nije, sigurno. Kos poručuje da je ovo ispod, dokle mu oko seže, njegovo. I da neće trpjeti uljeze. Da će ih raščerupati... Zar to da je ljubav? Tu i tamo netko mu se javi. Mislim, povlađujući. Mogući uljezi ne daju se čuti. A svi koji nisu u njegovu jatu su mogući uljezi. Eto, tako izgleda ratno proljeće u tvojemu voćnjaku. Nitko više ne vjeruje da pijetli snube svoje kokoši. Oni ih uzimaju. Pticama više nije za vjerovati. Priroda se postrojava!

Upravo je prošao školski razred: hihot. Djeca! Sunce se, kao nogometna lopta, kotrlja drvoredom. Obično proljetno popodne. A odasvud znaci!

Mi se skupljamo na mjestima gdje prebivaju duše nerođenih i promatramo događaje. Ništa poblizje ne mogu vam reći o sebi i nemojte pitati. Na događaje ne možemo utjecati. Otud strepnja kojom ću ispuniti margine nekih od stranica koje slijede. Premda, budem li rođen, neću biti Židov, drago mi je što ovako ispisane margine izgledaju kao babilonski Talmud providen komentarima učenih rabina. Mi nerođeni strepimo jer nema većeg užasa od užasa nerođenja. S prvim udisajem nestaje i sve ono što smo znali prije rođenja. Bog će nam, čim nas izbace iz ženske torbe, stisnuti nosnice i sve će naše znanje nestati kao da ga nije ni bilo. Oni koji drže da se o Bogu ne može ništa znati, neka slegnu ramenima. Mi toliko strepimo da nemamo vremena za teološke spekulacije. Moje šanse su slabe. Čovjek koji bi trebao biti moj otac sjedi u sobi prijatelja koji je već nestao na Istoku i piše mu pismo koje neće biti otposlano. Strepim da će i on biti poslan na Istok. Taj čovjek u posljednje vrijeme otkrio je da je Volksdeutscher. Nije oduševljen. Ovo je doba kad se ljudi kotrljaju ulicama umotani u zastave, nošeni ritmom koji određuju bubnjevi te prijete. Nema među dušama nerođenih nijedne koja se ne bi skamendala na spomen Staljingrada. Mi smo već ispratili stotine tisuća nerođenih Nijemaca i Rusa jer su oni koji su im trebali biti roditelji pali oko grada tog zlokobnog imena. Moglo bi se pomisliti: mnogo je ljudi na svijetu, svi oni mogu biti očevi i majke. Padne li otac na Istoku, doći će drugi na njegovo mjesto. Ovaj je račun kriv. Svi imamo samo JEDNOGA oca i JEDNU majku.

Pomišljam na onaj dan kad smo čekali Švagelja, a onda saznali da je unovačen i s kućnog praga odveden u Stockerau. Pa on jedva da je znao da je Nijemac. i kakvi smo mi to Nijemci, nas dvojica? Nijemac kaže: *Man ist was man spricht!* Čovjek je ono što govori. A kojim ti jezikom ja slažem ovo pismo? Čak i kad bi mi palo na pamet pisati ga na njemačkom, morao bih pored sebe držati rječnik. No to bi svakako olakšalo posao vojnim cenzorima. Bio je pijačni dan kad su odvezli Švagelja, ne znam kamo. U zadnje vrijeme sve novake šupiraju na Istok.

Istok? Ti do danas sigurno znaš što znači ta riječ. Ja ne znam, ali slutim.

Iz novina se ništa ne može saznati. O onome što ipak mogu pročitati između redaka - moj je stari valjda zadnji čovjek u Nuštru koji još kupuje novine - neću pisati. No pisao ja ili ne pisao, ti znaš. A od tebe već dugo ni mukajet.

Čak ne znamo jesi li još živ. I tako, možda, pišem pismo pokojniku, u ovim danima svoje najveće smutnje, straha, nespokoja. I u njega tražim utjehu.

Bio je pijačni dan, od zaprega digla se silna prašina u kojoj su kuće u šoru gotovo nestajale... Kao da su mislile svoje.

A ja eto mislim, kad bi barem sve to već jednom bilo gotovo, da ležimo nauznak u sjevernim vinogradima i gledamo oblake kako se naganjaju... u onim vinogradima... bilo bi tako lijepo da se raspleću niti života koje bi se sada, svezane u čvor, mogle i prekinuti... Tamo gdje si ljubio, prije svega ovoga, plavokosu djevojčicu koja ti je na rastanku rekla da kani poći u samostan... Pa kad bismo mogli tako ljubiti, poslije svega, da je naime sve što slijedi već svršeno i iza nas... gdje si ljubio, a ona ti se rastvorila i potpuno predala, govoreći, to je zadnji put. Žene često vide ono što je nama nevidljivo.

Sjedim za tvojim stolom. Na njemu je knjiga koju nisi dočitao. Ni ona nije njemačka. Hoćeš li ikad čitati ovo pismo? Tvoja majka posluje po kuhinji, ponekad čujem tih jecaj; radi užurbano da zaboravi. Uskrs ove godine pada kasnije no ikada, no teško da ćemo te do Uskrsa vidjeti. Znaš kako se u nas kaže: Kad me vidiš, onda mi se nadaj!

Kako smo mi ipak donekle naslutili da će lanjsko ljeto biti i posljednje i da se približava nešto zagonetno, strašno! Možda odviše ljudsko da bi čovjek podnio.

Evo ga kod stola tvoj mali brat! Moli da mu nacrtam revolver.

Oprosti što pišem ovako zbrkano. Tako naime i živim, od danas do sutra, pa mi se sad čak čini da bi vojni poziv bio kao neko olakšanje. Osuđenik na smrt koji, dočekavši dan smaknuća, pomisli: Najgore je iza mene!

Postao sam nepodnošljiv za svoju okolinu. Ločem. Samouništenje? Prije dva dana ispisao sam nekoliko stihova. Ako me doista unovače, ostavit ću ih u jednoj duplji. Pa neka čitaju vjeverice! One žive u vrhovima drveća, a mi smo sad tako prignječeni na tlu. Kao ugaženi nogom nekog pretpotopnog čudovišta. Davno si mi pisao o T34, Staljinovu tenku. To da je bilo prvo što si od Rusa vidio. Da ti tenkovi izviru iz zemlje i da nitko nije vjerovao da će ih Staljin toliko imati. Toliko se toga nije moglo vjerovati, a ipak se dogodilo. U pravilu, događa se baš ono što nitko ne bi rekao da će se dogoditi.

Šaljem ti dvije kitice:

*Vjetrovim mrmorenjem osvita*

*Jutra otkrivaju zemlju (...)*

*Klečim u šljiviku*

*I molim Boga da ubije oca.*

Nedovršeno, raskidano.

Ne slažem se sa starim. Ali u ovom pismu ti ne mogu reći zašto. Stihove ću ostaviti stablima, kao što djeca često zaboravljaju svoje rupce u krošnjama. Da mi je biti djetetom! Da mi se bilo roditi u neko drugo vrijeme. Ali tko je nas ikada išta pitao?

p.s. 12. ovog mjeseca bio sam ponovno na stavnji. Dijagnoza: Neuralgični bolovi u predjelu peroneusa. Ahilov refleks nešto slabiji, parestezija prestala.

Znaš li tko je bio u komisiji? Stari Schlauss. Otac one bitange Schlaussa koji je s ostalim bitangama progonio Šalamuna, a ti si mu jednom razbio usnicu. Ni o njemu se ništa ne čuje, osim da je i on na Istoku. Ja mu nisam bio rasjekao usnicu, ali sam ga, recimo, držao za ruke. A držao sam ga za ruke da ne umlati Židova. Sada su staroga Schlaussa digli iz penzije, ima svoj ured u Vinkovcima. Putuje uokolo i daje stručno mišljenje za SS. Putuje i s prijekim sudom, no u tom slučaju utvrđuje smrt. U ovom drugom, u najmu SS-a, on šalje nas dobrovoljce u rat.

Dijagnoza ne ulijeva nadu. A budući da me je pregledavao doktor Schlauss, ne bi mi pomoglo ni da sam na samrti od neke boljke. Čujem da šalje i tuberane s otvorenim kavernama. Zdravih Nijemaca kada ponestaje na zalihama.

Ovdje se sada priča da novače i muslimane. Tako će se uskoro sklopiti jedna SS-divizija od samih bosanskih muslimana. Himmleru, gdje si? Smjet će nositi fesove i klanjati. Kad već moram u rat, rad bih poći s njima, barem bih se najeo krmeta što oni ne jedu.

Oprosti mi na ovom nepriličnom pokušaju s humorom. Ne ide mi to više. Smijeh mi je prisjeo.

Ukratko, očekujem poziv Waffen-SS-a između 15. i 24. ožujka. Potom slijedi Stockerau, muštranje, pa fronta. Gdje će to biti, tko bi znao. Ako netko i zna, ja sigurno ne.

Stavnja bila je u našem razredu (!). Klupe su gdje su uvijek bile, i peć. Čak i škrinja za drva i ugljen. No zgrada je jako propala, više ne služi kao škola, već ju je uzela vojska. Vojnici su obično loši gazde. Voćke napolju su nešto porasle, a jedna se grana kajsije nagnula do prozora; mogao bi se plod rukom dohvatiti.

Ovo nisam primijetio na stavnji, već se prisjećam tek sada, kad ti pišem ovo pismo. Na stavnji sam jedino htio ne uhvatiti pogled doktora Schlaussa koji je bio pun mržnje i taj je napor uzeo svu moju pažnju.

Znaš li što mi je taj gad rekao na izlasku:

"Što je to prema Staljingradu?"

Mislio je na moje dijagnoze.

Ali, čak i da je na njegovu mjestu, u komisiji, sjedio neki normalniji liječnik, te dijagnoze ne bi me izvulde. Vojska ne zbraja dijagnoze, trebalo je igrati na jednu. Mene jedi što je tako lako trijumfirao i što se moje tijelo ponijelo tako izdajnički. Kao da ono želi poći u rat! Valjda rat drži dobrom gimnastikom.

Ipak, nisam si htio odsjeći prst kao što su neki učinili. Jednoga su takvog, kao sabotera i dezertera, jer je odsijecanjem prsta odbjegao od zastave i svastike, postavili uza zid. Prijeki sud, doktor Schlauss!

Ako slučajno dobiješ ovo pismo, nemoj mi odmah otpisivati. Znaš koliko dugo treba da se dobije broj.

Pozdrav, Đuka

Pismo nije ođaslano, zato je i sačuvano. Da je pismo poslano, Franji sigurno ne bi bilo uručeno. Kempfove predodžbe o vojnoj cenzuri u ovom su trenutku još prilično romantične.

### 3.2. Translation – *Eastbound Letter for Franjo Lauber*

*Your apartment, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1943*

Franjo, my dear friend, never did my soul ache as it does at the sunny beginning of this spring. Iron fingers are extending over my nerves. Birds in the trees, have they been shot yet? Is that the bird's song? One blackbird landed at the top of the pole and is talking to the invisible flock. He's more angry than scared. Could that be a love call? It's not, for sure. The blackbird says that everything underneath, as far as his eye reaches, is his. And he will not tolerate intruders. He'll rip them apart... Is that love? Somebody answers every now and then. To pander to his wishes, I think. Potential intruders wouldn't be heard. And all those who are not in his flock are potential intruders. Anyways, that's the spring war in your orchard. No one believes roosters court their hens anymore. They're snatching them. Birds are no longer to be trusted. Nature is lining up!

A school class just passed; giggles. Children! The sun, like a soccer ball, rolls over the trees. Usual spring afternoon. Signs from everywhere!

We gather in places where the souls of the unborn dwell and observe happenings. I cannot go into further details about myself, so do not ask. We can't influence that which is happening. Hence the trepidation with which I will fill the margins of some of the pages that follow. Although, if I am to be born, I will not be Jewish, I'm still glad that the margins look like the Babylonian Talmud filled with the comments of rabbis. We, the unborn, are in trepidation because there is no greater horror than the horror of not being born. With the first breath disappears everything we knew before birth. God will, as soon as we are thrown out of the woman's bag, pinch our nostrils and all our knowledge will disappear as if it weren't there. Let those who believe that nothing can be known of God shrug. We are so afraid that we have no time for theological speculation. My chances are slim. The man who is supposed to be my father sits in the room of a friend who has already disappeared in the East. He's writing him a letter which won't be sent. He's afraid he'll be drafted to the East. The man found out that he was a Volksdeutscher. He's not thrilled. This is the time when people roll through the streets wrapped in flags, carried by the rhythm of threatening drums. There is no unborn soul which wouldn't be petrified at the mention of Stalingrad. We've already said goodbye to hundreds of thousands of unborn Germans and Russians because those who were supposed to be their parents died somewhere around that sinister city. One might think: there are many people in the world, they can all be fathers and mothers. If a father falls in the East, another will come in his place. This is false. We all have only ONE father and only ONE mother.

I think of the day we waited for Švagelj, and then found out he was drafted and taken from his doorstep to Stockerau. Well, he hardly knew he was German. And what kind of Germans are the two of us? The German says: *Man ist was man spricht!* Man is what man says. And in what language am I writing this letter to you? Even if it occurred to me to write it in German, I would have to keep a dictionary next to me. But that would certainly make the job easier for military censors.

It was market day when they took Švagelj, who knows where. Lately, all the recruits have been drafted to the East.

The East? You must know what that word means by now. I don't know, but I have a hunch.

You can't find anything in the newspapers. The things I can gather by reading between the lines - my old man is probably the last man in Nuštar who still buys newspapers - I will not write about. But whether I wrote or not, you know. We haven't hear a word from you in a long time.

We don't even know if you're still alive. And so, perhaps, I am writing a letter to a dead man, in these days of my greatest calamity, fear, unrest. Seeking comfort in him.

It was market day, the carts were raising dust which covered the houses in the street. As if the houses were minding their own business.

And I'm thinking, when all of this is over, of lying down in the northern vineyards and watching the clouds chase each other... in those vineyards... it would be so nice to unravel the threads of life, the same threads which are now tied in a knot, and which could be severed... Before all of this, where you kissed and parted ways with the blond girl who told you she was planning to go to the monastery... So if we could love, after all of it, as if everything which is yet to come is already behind us... where you kissed and where she opened up and completely surrendered to you, saying it's the last time. Women often see what is invisible to us.

I'm sitting at your desk. There's a book that you haven't read. It's not in German either. Will you ever read this letter? Your mother does chores in the kitchen, sometimes I hear her sobbing; she keeps herself busy to forget. This year Easter falls later than ever, but it's unlikely we'll get to see you by Easter. You know how the saying goes: Get your hopes up only when you see me!



How did we somehow guess that the previous summer would also be the last? That something mysterious and terrible is approaching! Could be too human for a man to bear.

Your little brother is at the table! He's asking me to draw a revolver.

I'm sorry, my writing is a mess. That's how I live, day to day. It seems to me that a military call would be a relief by now. A death row inmate who, on the day of execution, thinks: The worst is behind me!

I became unbearable for everyone around me. I'm a boozier. Self-destruct? Two days ago, I wrote a few verses. If I'm really drafted, I'll leave them in a tree hollow. Let the squirrels read them! They live in treetops, while we are crushed down to the ground. As if trampled by the foot of some antediluvian monster. A long time ago you wrote about T34, Stalin's tank. It was the first thing you saw of the Russians. You said these tanks were springing out of the ground and that no one believed Stalin would have so many of them. So much could not be believed, and yet it happened. Usually, the things people say wouldn't happen, happen.

I'm sending you two verses:

*With wind's murmur morning*

*Dawn reveals the earth (...)*

*Kneeling in a plum orchard*

*I beg God to kill father.*

Unfinished, torn.

I don't agree with my father. But I can't tell you why in this letter. I'll leave the verses in trees, like children often forget their handkerchiefs in the treetops. Oh, to be a child! To be born at another time. Did we ever have a say in anything?

p.s. I had an examination on the 12th of this month again. Diagnosis: Neuralgic pains in the peroneus area. Achilles reflex somewhat weakened, paresthesia has ceased.

Do you know who was on the commission? Old Schlauss. The father of that scoundrel Schlauss who, with the rest of the rascals, chased Šalamun. You broke his lip once. We know nothing of him either, except that he is also in the East. I didn't bust his lip, but I was, let's say, holding his hands. And I held his hands so he wouldn't beat a Jew. Now old Schlauss has been brought back from retirement, and he has his office in Vinkovci. He

travels around and gives an expert opinion for the SS. He also travels with the court martial, but in that case he pronounces death. In the latter, when he's working for the SS, he sends volunteers to war.

The diagnosis does not inspire hope. And since Dr. Schlauss was examining me, he'd draft me even if I was dying from some kind of sickness. I hear he's even drafting people suffering from tuberculosis with open ruptures, too. Seems like healthy Germans are running out of stock.

Rumor has it that they're recruiting Muslims, too. A whole SS division full of Bosnian Muslims will soon be formed. Himmler, where are you? They'll be allowed to wear fezzes and worship. If I have to go to war, I'd go with them, at least I'd get the pork they don't eat.

Forgive me for this raunchy attempt at humor. I'm not good at it anymore. I don't feel like laughing.

In short, I expect a call from the Waffen-SS between March 15 and 24. Then follows Stockerau, disciplining, then the front. Who knows where that will be. And if anyone knows, I certainly don't.

The drafting was held in our classroom (!). The desks and the furnace remained the same. Even the chest for wood and coal. But the building is dilapidated, no longer serving as a school, taken over by the army. Soldiers are usually bad homeowners. The fruit trees outside have somewhat grown, and one apricot branch has leaned against the window; the fruit could be picked by hand.

I didn't notice it at the drafting, I'm remembering it as I'm writing you this letter. I was trying to avoid any hateful eye contact with Dr. Schlauss and that effort took all my attention.

You know what the bastard said to me on my way out:

“What's that compared to Stalingrad?”

He was referring to my diagnosis.

But even if there was a more reasonable doctor instead, the diagnose wouldn't save me. The army does not add up diagnoses, I should've stuck to just one. I just can't get over him winning so easily, and for my body being so treacherous. It's like my body wants to go to war! I guess it thinks the war makes for good gymnastics.

Still, I didn't want to cut my finger off like some did. One guy was lined up against the wall for being a saboteur and deserter because, by cutting off his finger he abandoned the flag and the swastika. Court martial, Dr. Schlauss!

If you happen to get this letter, don't write back right away. You know how long it takes to get a number.

Regards, Đuka

The letter was never sent, that's why it was preserved. If the letter had been sent, it certainly wouldn't have been handed to Franja. Kempf's notions of military censorship were still quite romantic at the moment.

### 3.3. Commentary and analysis I

The chapter titled *Pismo Franji Lauberu na Istok* serves as a good insight in the way *Doba Mjedi* is written. In order to facilitate a quality translation, it is necessary to analyse different aspects which constitute this text. First and foremost, the chapter is essentially a letter from one friend to another, written as a monologue which is filled with different symbols and metaphors indicating the state in which the country (and the person writing the letter) currently is. Through the use of subtle imagery such as *iron fingers*, *birds in the trees*, *intruders in the flock*, *spring in the garden*, *hens and roosters*, it is clear that the protagonist is scared of being caught, as well as being drafted in the war. Bearing this in mind, the paragraph had to be translated as such - retaining subtlety, as well as implied imagery and associated information.

The second aspect which had to be considered was the addition of an entirely different perspective. Framed to the right of protagonist's letter is the introduction of the omniscient narrator, *the Unborn*, who interjects the main storyline. Depending on the order of reading, the reader can (and probably will) change his way of viewing and interpreting the letter. Also important is the difference in style between the two perspectives – the letter is less formal, resembling a dialogue between two close friends, while the passage 'written' by *the Unborn* has a more heightened style, as if conveying objective facts. Another part which plays a role in the difference of styles between the 'main' protagonist's letter and the framed interjection is *the Unborn's* self-referentiality – the omniscient narrator states: "*drago mi je što ovako ispisane margine izgledaju kao babilonski Talmud providen komentarima učenih rabina*". Such a statement can be interpreted two ways; the narrator is just writing notes next to a letter of his destined-to-be father, or the narrator is aware he is writing notes in the margins of a book which will be published, and such a statement strikes the reader as a sort of a proverbial fourth wall break.

Because this is a Croatian novel, it is expected to contain Croatian names which will probably sound odd to a foreign reader. There are two possible solutions when tackling such issues - adaptation of names into the target language, or retaining the names as written in the source text. One can choose to adapt the Croatian names into English sounding names,

which will make the target text sound more natural and less like a translation. On the other hand, the translator can keep the names as is, and maintain the source text's sense of culture and identity. For example, the name *Franjo* could be translated as *Francis*, or *Švagelj* into Schwagel. *Doba Mjedi* is a novel which heavily relies on the latter, so I opted to leave the names in their original form.

As already mentioned, this chapter is filled with symbolism relating to the raging war. The author of the letter is afraid of revealing too much information, so he uses metaphors as to not get caught by the authorities. As an example, he talks about the war by describing the situation in the garden, mainly focusing on the war for the territory between the birds - *Kos poručuje da je ovo ispod, dokle mu oko seže, njegovo. I da neće trpjeti uljezi. Da će ih raščerupati... Zar to da je ljubav? Tu i tamo netko mu se javi. Mislím, povlađujući. Mogući uljezi ne daju se čuti. A svi koji nisu u njegovu jatu su mogući uljezi.* It is clear that this passage alludes to Hitler's war strategy, as well as the authors thoughts and concerns regarding the situation they find themselves in. The translator then has to maintain the same sense of vagueness, yet precision with the symbols, so that the foreign reader gets the same feeling of dread and fear which *Šnajder* conveys in his novel.

In the source text, the author chooses to equate the dictator with *kos*, which is a common blackbird mostly found in Europe. Although the bird itself is not ominous, and the author could have opted to use a more frightening bird to symbolise dread and dictatorship, e.g., a crow, vulture, eagle, etc... Still he chooses a blackbird to maintain a sense of vagueness, but still relating to the fear and danger through the bird's colour – black.

Furthermore, the use of language and vocabulary enhances the implied meaning. Words such as *uljezi*, *raščerupati* and phrases such as *ratno proljeće u voćnjaku* give off the deeper meaning. Because the English language lacks such a word, in order to translate *raščerupati*, I had to think of a similar term which might be related to pulling feathers of a bird, as well as killing enemies in a war. I chose to go with the term *rip them apart*, as it can be connected to both types of imagery.

Another interesting passage states that *Nitko više ne vjeruje da pijetli snube svoje kokoši. Oni ih uzimaju. Pticama više nije za vjerovati. Priroda se postrojava!* It is clear that these

lines refer to the author's realisation of what is starting to happen. Again, the use of strong imagery enhances the feelings of concern, as well as maintain the illusion of vagueness. In order to translate it and convey the same notion, I opted for *No one believes roosters court their hens anymore. They're snatching them. Birds are no longer to be trusted. Nature is lining up!*

Similarly, the sentence *Eto, tako izgleda ratno proljeće u tvojem voćnjaku* also proved to be a challenge to translate. At the beginning of the letter, we see that the date is 9. III., March being the month usually equated with the beginning of Spring, so we know that the author of the letter is, at least in some part, referring to Spring as a time period. Furthermore, in this context Spring might indicate the beginning of something, or perhaps a change. Bearing this in mind, I chose to translate it as *Anyways, that's the spring war in your orchard*, which maintained the feel of dismissiveness, as well as the aforementioned imagery.

Further in the chapter, the author writes *Bio je pijačni dan kad su odvezli Švagelja, ne znam kamo. U zadnje vrijeme sve novake šupiraju na Istok*. This sentence adequately presents Šnajder's style of writing – words such as *pijačni dan* and *šupirati* are not a common occurrence in everyday Croatian, and as such indicate the author's use of Slavonian localisms. In order to transfer such a sentence from Croatian into the English language, brief research showed that *pijačni dan* marked the day on which food, clothing and all kinds of goods arrived at a remote place, causing the residents to gather on the main square and trade with the merchants. The closest notion conveying a similar meaning in English culture would be *market day*, so I chose that as an equivalent for *pijačni dan*. The second word, *šupirati*, required a different approach. The word itself has several implications – *leave someone behind, dump, discard, reject*, but also *to force someone to go into a distant place* (usually on the behalf of police or military orders). In the context of the translation, I opted simply for the word *drafted*, as I found that to be the closest equivalent between the two languages.

While describing the market day, Šnajder writes *od zaprega digla se silna prašina u kojoj su kuće u šoru gotovo nestajale... Kao da su mislile svoje*. Dictionary states that *šor* relates to a wide street in a village. It's used to describe a street framed by endless lines of semi-detached houses, typical for the whole of Pannonia. Because I couldn't find the right

equivalent for such a noun in the English language, I chose to translate it simply as *street*. Furthermore, the part of the sentence which states *Kao da su mislile svoje* also provided a challenge due to the uncertainty of the meaning which it is supposed to convey. To translate such a sentence, I visualised houses in the dust, unbothered by the actions taking place around them, and, as Šnajder states, *thinking their own thoughts*. In order to transfer such a statement fully into the English language, I decided that the phrase *minding their own business* would be the closest match.

In the letter, the author also includes few verses of a poem. The poem reads:

*Vjetrovim mrmorenjem osvita  
Jutra otkrivaju zemlju (... )  
Klečim u šljiviku  
I molim Boga da ubije oca.*

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact meaning of the poem, especially in the context of the whole letter, so in order to adapt it, I chose to focus on the imagery and feelings which the poem implants in the reader. The first two stanzas had to be combined and alternated as to convey the same imagery:

*With wind's murmur morning  
Dawn reveals the earth (...)*

In the following two stanzas the author depicts an image of a man praying in a plum orchard. It is unclear from the context what the noun father refers to exactly. In order to keep the sense of vagueness and openness for interpretation, I left the noun *father* without a pronoun or determiner. Furthermore, in the translation, I opted to replace the phrase *to pray* with *beg*, seeing how it better suited the context of the poem:

*Kneeling in a plum orchard  
I beg God to kill father.*

This chapter also features the introduction of the omniscient narrator which is written separately, framed in a closed off box next to the first few paragraphs appearing on the first page. A common problem in translation is that often times the translated text ends up being a few words or lines longer than the source text. Bearing that in mind, I knew I had to pay special attention to the sentences written by *the Unborn*, because I had a strict limitation when it comes to the physical space on the page.

It is easy to think of the noun *Unborn* as having no grammatical gender and opt for the use of neuter *it* and *they* as a third-person singular while translating the narrator's passages. Although Šnajder doesn't explicitly mention the narrator's gender, in one quick sentence *the Unborn* refers to himself in a masculine form - *Premda, budem li rođen, neću biti Židov...*

As previously stated, the narrator speaks with a different, cold-like and objective style. Such limitations caused the need for the translation to remain simple, direct, and as focused as possible, leaving out some unneeded and obscure details. A good example of *the Unborn's* narration style comes from sentences such as *Otud strepnja kojom ću ispuniti margine nekih od stranica koje slijede, or Nema među dušama nerođenih nijedne koja se ne bi skamenda na spomen Staljingrada*. Noticeable is the use of different syntax and vocabulary when compared to the 'main' text. In order to preserve such qualities, I focused on choosing more formal words in my translation of *the Unborn's* passages – e.g., *Hence the trepidation with which I fill the margins of pages that follow*. The other Croatian sentence used as an example above required syntactic alternations to better fit the English language. It was important to retain the structure of the phrase *Nema među dušama nerođenih nijedne...*, while implementing the word *skamenda*, which I transferred into the English language as *There is no unborn soul which wouldn't be petrified at the mention of Stalingrad*.



#### 4. Source text - *Treblinka*

- Koliko još? - pita Kempf.

Teško drži korak sa Židovom. Leon Mordekai čini mu se pticom koja uzalud pokušava poletjeti, ali svaki put preskoči nekoliko pragova. Kao da mu se strahovito žuri. Ili kao da ga netko (nešto?) goni.

Pita ga Kempf kamo vodi ta pruga. Mordekai se zaustavi, u po leta, i svečano otkrije, kao da se radi o nekoj epifaniji za koju očekuje pljesak: Na zapad, Varšava! Istok Bialystok! Na desnu ruku, uskoro, moja gospodo... TREBLINKA! (Kempf bio je jedina publika.) Kod bunkera.

Zna Kempf, pristao je na to, da ga taj čovjek vodi u Treblinku iz koje se prije samo godinu dana čudom spasio. Zna da su sada ondje Sovjeti, zna da su gospodari logora, odmah nakon neuspjele pobune logoraša, u strahu od crvene plime, istu likvidirali, uništivši gotovo sve tragove. Sovjete još Kempf nije sreo, ali ih je osluškivao. Jezik njihovih topova bio je iz dana u dan sve uvjerljiviji. Ali situacija na terenu, pa i ovom kojim su se oprezno provlačili on i Mordekai, bila je još "rovita". Oni se drže pruge, pitanje je koliko je to pametno.

Dolazi vlak, čuju ga prislonivši uho na tračnice. Trče krčevinom nastojeći se što

Ono što sada slijedi ispunjava me još većom zebnjom, ali zebnja je trajno stanje nerodenih. Moj budući otac Kempf riskira mnogo što sada kani slijediti jednoga Židova, a da jedva zna kamo i tko je njegov vodič uistinu. Taj čovjek koji se Kempfu objavio kao Leon Mordekai dugo ga je skrivečki promatrao. Vidio je da je Kempf uistinu zgromljen gušenjem djeteta u *zemljanki*, i sada misli da je taj užas preporuka da ga se bolje uputi. Mordekai je upravo onaj Židov koji se stisnuo u kutu i činilo se da stalno spava, ili barem drijema. Nije uzimao udjela u ritualima, nije zapjevao. Leon Mordekai — jest ime apokrifno. To je zato što suvremeno doba izruguje mitove, pa se Neznamac zakrinkao drugim imenom. Doduše, ni svojom prilikom ni onime što ima na sebi ne odgovara taj čovjek nijednoj od predodžbi o Vječnomu Židu. Naprimjer, nema ljubičasti ogrtač zakopčan do grla, ni hlače isto tako u boji ljubičica, nema bijele čarape... Već on ima na sebi prnje koje su ostaci ostataka odjeće kakvu nose seljaci u malopoljskim zabitima. Jedino šešir široka oboda pomalo podsjeća na slavnu seriju drvoreza Gustava Dora o Ahasveru. To je onaj Židov, zanimanjem postolar, koji nije prepoznao Spasitelja, teško pritisnutog križom na putu prema Golgoti. Takvo što — ne prepoznati objavljenog Spasitelja — velik je grijeh i među Židovima, a nekmoli među kršćanima. Uz gradove gdje je u prošlosti viđen ovaj nevoljni postolar kojemu je za kaznu uskraćena Smrt — Hamburg, Lübeck, Pariz, München, — spominju se i poljski

prije dočepati šume. Nijemci su i ovdje posjekli grmlje uz prugu da bi spriječili diverzije.

Kompozicija čini im se beskonačna. Onda dolaze otvoreni teretni vagoni, na svakome je T34, koji će biti stvarni pobjednik rata na Istoku. Nov, ispod čekića! A pet se godina na ovom prostoru ratovalo. Na svojem besciljnom tumananju Kempf je vidio na stotine unište-nih tenkova, bornih kola, haubica, teških topova... možda i deset puta više bilo ih je sovjetskih nego njemačkih. A sad, novi tenkovi ispod čekića, sa crvenim pentagramima kojih se boja nije pravo osušila. Staljin je očito dobio materijalni rat protiv Hitlera. Ova čudovišta, to je bilo izvan sumnje, idu na Berlin.

Gdanjsk, dok je još bio njemački Danzig te Krakov, u kojemu sada stoluje Hans Frank, svemoćni gospodar Gouvernamenta. Da se radi upravo o Ahasveru, upućuje i to što Leon Mordekai govori mnoge jezike. S Kempfom će se razgovor voditi na njemačkom jer to je jezik filozofije i njezine odmetnute sestrice, teologije. Kako god, ovo dobro završiti neće. Ime Leon sreće se među Aškenazijima; prezime Mordekai upućuje na Sefarda. U Treblinki, gdje su gušeni varšavski Židovi, nestali su i makedonski Sefardi, pa Leon Mordekai, u neku ruku, zastupa i jedne i druge.

Treblinke više nema, to je sada jedno polje zasijano bobom.

Što ima moj otac tražiti na njivi punoj boba?

Ali ja tu ništa ne mogu promijeniti. Prirodna znatiželja čovjeka Kempfa jača je od svega. Stvar mojega rođenja i opet može lako biti prokockana. I ja sam dobio ovoga čovjeka na kocki za svoga oca. Nisam kriv, a opet moram tjeskobiti.

Mordekai i Kempf pokušavaju se provući suprotnim pravcem u nadi da je Crvena armija već daleko iza njih, hitajući Berlinu.

Napokon su došli do skretnica, pruga skreće udesno. Očito je dugo izvan upotrebe. Kao da ju je priroda htjela progutati, potpuno je zarasla u korov i žbunje.

- Još malo! - kaže Mordekai, a Kempfu se učini da se pognuo kao da odnekud očekuje udarac.

Prolaze pokraj bunkera, ali to je samo truo zub: očito, mnoštvo izravnih pogodaka s nevelike udaljenosti. Nijemci su naredili ukrajinskoj straži da uništi svaki trag koji bi podsjećao na ono što se ovdje događalo. Potom Nijemci nestaju. Mjesto na kojemu su ubijeni vrlo mnogi Židovi (koliko, to ni Mordekai nije znao reći, izražavao se neodređeno,

hvatao za grkljan kao da se guši, lamatao rukama po zraku, stenjao: - U Treblinku je ubijeno jako mnogo svijeta!), čuvala su na kraju tek dvojica Ukrajinaca. Logor Treblinka pretvoren je u hutor, u malo seosko imanje, usred njiva zasijanih bobom. Nejasno je što su Nijemci time htjeli postići. Kad su crveni stali nadirati, nestala je i ukrajinska straža.

Mordekai ubrza korak. Sad je kroz raslinje skakutao i opet kao ptica trkačica koja hoće poletjeti. U gustišu njegov je smiješni šešir zapinjao o grane, ali Židov ga ni po koju cijenu nije skidao. Kempfu se činilo da ovaj dugonja nema neku svoju težinu, ako je ipak ima da su mu kosti ptičje, lagane. Ako je uistinu prorok, onda je jasno da za nj vrijede drugi zakoni. Svi su proroci pomalo i mjesečari.

## 4.2. Translation - *Treblinka*

- How much further? - Kempf asked.

He's having a hard time keeping up with the Jew. Leon Mordekai reminded him of a bird trying its best to fly, but every time he tries to take off, he just jumps over a few rails. As if he's in a big hurry. Or as if someone (something?) is chasing him.

Kempf asked him where does the railway lead. Mordekai stopped in mid-flight, and solemnly revealed, as if it were some kind of epiphany for which he expects an applause: To the west, Warsaw! Istok Bialystok! On your right, soon, dear gentlemen... TREBLINKA! (Kempf was the only audience.) At the bunker.

Kempf knows, he agreed to this man taking him to Treblinka, from which he miraculously escaped just a year ago. He knows that the Soviets are there now, he knows that the camp leaders destroyed it along with almost all traces, immediately after the failed uprising of the camp inmates. Kempf had not yet met the Soviets, but he listened in on them. Day by day, the language of their cannons grew more and more persuasive. But the situation on the field, including the one

What follows fills me with even greater anxiety, but anxiety is the permanent condition of the unborn. My future father, Kempf, is risking a lot by following a Jew, hardly knowing who his guide really is, and where he's taking him. The man who introduced himself as Leon Mordekai stalked Kempf for a long time. He saw that Kempf was truly horrified by the suffocation of a child in the *dugout*. He thinks that this horror is a proposal for better guidance. Mordekai is the Jew huddled in a corner, seemingly constantly asleep, dozing at least. He did not partake in rituals, nor did he sing.

Leon Mordekai is an apocryphal name. Because the modern age mocks myths, the Stranger disguised himself with another name. Admittedly, this man does not correspond to any ideas tied to the Wandering Jew, neither by his circumstances nor his belongings. For example, he doesn't have a purple robe buttoned up to his throat, nor does he wear purple pants, or white socks... He's wearing the remains of clothes worn by peasants in remote, secluded farmlands. Only the wide-brimmed hat is somewhat reminiscent of Gustave Dore's famous woodcuts depicting Ahasver. That's the Jew, a shoemaker by profession, who did not recognize the Savior who was carrying a heavy cross on the way to Golgotha. Such a thing - not recognizing the Savior - is a great sin even for Jews, let alone Christians. In addition to the cities where this shoemaker was seen in the past, who was denied Death as a punishment — Hamburg, Lübeck, Paris, Munich — also mentioned are the Polish cities of

through which him and Mordekai were cautiously moving, was still 'trencherous'. Is it smart to stick to the railway?

They hear a train coming by pressing their ear to the rails. They run through the clearing, trying to reach the forest as soon as possible. The Germans have cut down the bushes along the railway to prevent diversions.

Their composition seems endless. Then come the open freight wagons, each carrying a T34, the real winner of the war in the East. Straight from the factory! For five years the war was fought on this ground. On his aimless saunter, Kempf saw hundreds of destroyed tanks, army vehicles, howitzers, heavy artillery... perhaps even ten times more

Soviet than German. And now new tanks are coming from the factory, paint still dripping from the red pentagrams. Stalin clearly won the material war against Hitler. These monsters, without a shadow of doubt, are going to Berlin.

Mordekai and Kempf tried to sneak in the opposite direction, hoping that the Red Army is already far behind them, rushing towards Berlin.

When they came to the turnout, the railway turned right. It has obviously been out of use for a long time. As if nature wanted to swallow it, completely overgrown with weeds and bushes.

- Just a little bit further! - said Mordekai, bent down as if expecting an explosion from somewhere.

Gdańsk, while it was still known as German Danzig, and Krakow, where Hans Frank, the omnipotent master of the Gouvernement, now reigns. The fact that Leon Mordekai speaks many languages also indicates that he is Ahasver. The conversation with Kempf will be conducted in German because it is the language of philosophy and its renegade sister, theology. Either way, this is not going to end well. The name Leon is found among Ashkenazis; the surname Mordekai refers to Sephardi. In Treblinka, where Warsaw's Jews were suffocated, Macedonian Sephardim also disappeared, so Leon Mordekai, in a way, represents both.

Treblinka is no more, now it's just a field sown with beans.

What does my father have to do in a field full of beans?

But I can't change anything. Kempf's natural curiosity is stronger than anything else. My birth can be easily gambled away again. I was given this man for my father. It's not my fault, and yet I have to worry.

They pass the bunker, like a tooth decayed from cavity: it obviously took a lot of direct hits from a close distance. The Germans ordered the Ukrainian guards to destroy every trace of what was happening here. Then the Germans disappeared. In the end, the place where many Jews were killed (even Mordekai couldn't say exactly how many; he tried to express it by clutching his throat as if choking, flapping his hands in the air, moaning: A lot of people were killed in Treblinka!), was guarded by only two Ukrainians. The Treblinka camp was turned into a small farming property in the middle of bean sown fields. It is unclear what the Germans wanted to achieve. When the Reds started attacking, the Ukrainian guards also disappeared.

Mordekai quickened his pace. Again, he was hopping through the vegetation like a bird trying to take off. His funny hat caught onto the branches in the thicket, but the Jew wouldn't take it off at any cost. It seemed to Kempf as if this lanky man had no weight of his own. Even if he did, his bones were light like those of a bird. If he truly is a prophet, then it is clear that different laws apply to him. Every prophet is a bit of a sleepwalker.

### 4.3. Commentary and analysis II

In the chapter *Treblinka*, Šnajder combines a few elements which almost stand in juxtaposition to one another, and serve the purpose of creating tension in the reader's mind. Firstly, there is the dialogue between the main character, Kempf, and a Jew named Leon who is leading him to Treblinka. The dialogue is intertwined with the descriptions of places they find themselves in and a description of a train carrying the tanks towards Berlin. The descriptions are further embellished with the author's thoughts, e.g., *Staljin je očito dobio materijalni rat protiv Hitlera. Ova čudovišta, to je bilo izvan sumnje, idu na Berlin*. The final element which raises the tension in the chapter is the addition of *the Unborn's* commentary, which is placed next to the 'main' narration.

In the commentary, *the Unborn* provides deeper insight into his concerns, as well as a deeper insight into the character of Leon Mordekai. If the reader was even a bit suspicious while reading the dialogue between the protagonist and Leon, *the Unborn's* commentary will provide further doubt in their interactions. If, on the other hand, the reader had no reason not to believe in the genuine intentions of Leon Mordekai, it is probable that the framed text will have changed their viewing of the situation taking place in the 'main' narration. Furthermore, although readers are guided to read the 'main' text first, no one is stopping them from reading *the Unborn's* passage first. In such case, the reader has pre-existing knowledge, as well as information about Mordekai which will probably force a different perspective onto the actions and dialogue taking place in the 'main' text of the chapter.

Focusing on Šnajder's writing style, it is clear that his sentences are efficient and precise, while maintaining a certain poetic sense. He opens the chapter with *Teško drži korak sa Židovom. Leon Mordekai čini mu se pticom koja uzalud pokušava poletjeti, ali svaki put preskoči nekoliko pragova*. Crafting such a sentence in the English language proved to be a challenge due to the phrase *čini mu se pticom...* which required a different kind of sentence manipulation in order to retain the same sense and style. Furthermore, the sentence continues - *ali svaki put preskoči nekoliko pragova*. At first, the noun *prag* causes confusion. Only by reading further can the reader deduce that the author meant *željeznički prag*, or

*željeznička pruga*. In order to maintain a similar sense of vagueness, I resorted to the word rail, as it too can be difficult to pinpoint without a proper context. Bearing all this in mind, I chose to translate the opening sentence as *He's having a hard time keeping up with the Jew. Leon Mordekai reminded him of a bird trying its best to fly, but every time he tries to take off, he just jumps over a few rails.*

While discussing and portraying the war between the Soviet Union and Germany, Šnajder states *Ali situacija na terenu, pa i ovom kojim su se oprezno provlačili on i Mordekai, bila je još "rovita"*. The focal point here is the word *rovita*, which the author even places in quotations, as if hinting at its double meaning and guiding the reader to closer inspection. At first glance, especially when considering the context in which the word appears, the word implants the image of trenches (*rov = trench*) into the readers mind. Upon brief research, the dictionary defines the adjective *rovit* as a word used to describe something unstable, delicate, tense, fragile or complicated. It is clear that Šnajder deliberately had a play on words, so I wanted to retain that element in the aforementioned sentence. The closest sounding word to trench, while still fitting in the context, was treacherous. Although not the same as *rovit*, *treacherous* invokes imagery of betrayal, insecurity, hidden dangers, hazards or perils, which still fitted in the context nicely. By combining *trench* and *treacherous* I formed the word *trencherous*, and used it to translate *rovit* - *But the situation on the field, including the one through which him and Mordekai were cautiously moving, was still "tre(n)cherous"*.

Description of the incoming train and the T34 tanks it is carrying provides more examples of hard to translate phrases. Most notably, the short sentence *Nov, ispod čekića!* cannot be transferred into English as *New, under the hammer!* because such a phrase does not work the way it works in Croatian language. To translate the aforementioned phrase, I chose to go with the common phrase *straight from the factory*, as such a phrase fits well in the context of newly manufactured tanks.

Similarly to the previous issue, a simple and understandable sentence proved to be not quite as easy to translate. While crossing the train tracks and approaching the bunker, the passage reads - *Još malo! - kaže Mordekai, a Kempfu se učini da se pognuo kao da odnekud očekuje udarac*. Although the meaning is perfectly clear and there is no dilemma as to what



the author meant with the sentence, the phrase *Još malo* and word *udarac* was not that straightforward to adapt into the target language. In essence, there are a few ways in which we can interpret the word *udarac* within this context – a hit, gunfire, an explosion, etc. By visualising the situation – two refugees traveling and hiding from enemy troops, not knowing if or when something might go down - I chose to adapt and transform the sentence, and equate *udarac* with *explosion* - *Just a little bit further!* - said Mordekai, bent down as if expecting an explosion from somewhere.

The author's vocabulary shines through again in this chapter, making it difficult to maintain the same sense of style between the source text and the target text. Words such as *zebnja*, *zgomljen*, *prnje*, *krčevina*, *tumarenje*, *svijet (narod)*, *hutor*, *bob*, *gustiš* are near impossible to translate into the English language while maintaining the same style and formality of vocabulary. In such a case, I had to choose the common variants of the aforementioned nouns found in the English language, e.g., *anxiety*, *truly horrified*, *remains of clothes*, *clearing*, *wandering*, *people*, *farmland*, *beans*, *branches*, etc... Although the style of the translation is not as heightened and polished as the original, the meaning of the sentences had to be preserved as closely as possible.

Translating *the Unborn's* passages required some research of biblical terms, as well as old myths, religions and civilisations. A big part of his narration discusses the notion of *Vječni Žid*. Upon research, I discovered that the aforementioned legend in the English language culture bears the name *the Wandering Jew*, *Ahasver* or alternatively *the Eternal Jew*. Because the first option appeared more common in English language discourse, I chose *the Wandering Jew* as a translation for *Vječni Žid*.

## 5. Source Text - *Izlazna strategija Georga Kempfa*

sofija ime ti znači mudrost a u carigradu bila bi crkva htio bih ti vidjeti grudi e to ne može  
sofija zašto ne može jer ja kažem da ne može kupit ću ti dukate imam dukate imaš li ih dosta  
da pokriješ grudi imam ih koliko mi treba pa mnogo ti dukata treba ne budi prost nisam  
prost sretan sam što postojiš pa i meni se sviđa što postojim takva kakva jesi baš takva  
postojim i ja sam time zadovoljna

htio bih ti vidjeti grudi  
kad dođe vrijeme  
onda ću vidjeti sve  
sve ćeš vidjeti kad dođe vrijeme  
tko zna kad će to biti  
bit će kad bude nemoj biti nasilan lijepo se drži svoje strane  
svrbi me  
što te svrbi  
nešto mi plazi po leđima  
legao si na mravinjak  
sad ću se premjestiti  
ne znaš šeprtljo ni otkopčati jesi li već imao ženu dugmad je na unutrašnjoj strani  
skidaj se šeprtljo s mene što ti uopće radiš na meni  
bradavice su ljubičaste s mnoštvom crvenih žilica koje se oko nje oblikuju u cvijet  
gotovo da sam se prepao  
ispod vrata crta kao ravnalom povučena kao trag biča ogrebala se berući kupine  
prepao sam se  
tih bradavica tako neočekivanih boja  
čini mi se da si se prepao  
pa ti si nevin kao i ja  
mi smo oboje nevini  
nevinašca baš nismo  
zovu me u kuću

nisi nabrala kupine  
pomoz mi nabrati kupine  
hajde znaš li bar zakopčati dugmad je unutra  
to je tako zapetljano  
naučit ćeš  
sve ću naučiti  
a kod koje kaniš naučiti

## 5.2. Translation - *George Kempf's exit strategy*

sofia your name means wisdom and in constantinople there is a church I would like to see  
your breasts thats not possible sofia why not because I say so Ill buy you ducats I have  
ducats do you have enough to cover your breasts I have as many as I need you need a lot  
dont be rude Im not rude Im happy that you exist Im also happy I exist the way you are I  
exist the way I am and Im happy with that

I would like to see your breasts  
when the time comes  
then I will see everything  
you will see everything when the time comes  
who knows when that will be  
its gonna happen when it happens don't be pushy stick to your side nicely  
Im itchy  
whats itching you  
something is crawling on my back  
you laid down on an anthill  
Ill move now  
you dont even know how to undo have you ever been with a woman the buttons are  
on the inside get off of me what are you even doing on me  
the nipples are purple with many red veins that form a flower around it  
I almost got scared  
under the neck a line as if drawn with a ruler like the mark of a whip cut while  
picking blackberries  
Im scared  
of nipples and their unexpected colors  
I think youre scared  
youre virgin like me  
were both virgins  
were not really innocent

theyre calling me back to the house  
you didnt pick blackberries  
help me pick blackberries  
can you at least do the buttons inside  
its so clumsy  
you will learn  
I will learn everything  
who are you going to learn from

### 5.3. Commentary and analysis III

The chapter *Izlazna strategija Georga Kempfa* is a short text written in an unusual way. The first paragraph starts off as a jumbled mess of sentences, but upon reading it the reader can understand that the author portrays a dialogue between two young lovers. The paragraph contains no punctuation, nor capitalisation of proper nouns. In my opinion, such writing style helps convey the protagonist's stream of thoughts and nervousness he feels while talking to a girl he is interested in.

It is important to closely follow the dialogue in order to make the distinction between the two speakers. As an example, the last line of the paragraph reads: *ne budi prost nisam prost sretan sam što postojiš pa i meni se sviđa što postojim takva kakva jesi baš takva postojim i ja sam time zadovoljna*. Had Šnajder written the same dialogue in a conventional way, we would not have to guess whose line is whose. If we are to produce an accurate translation, this paragraph requires the correct deduction and pairing of the written lines to their speaker. Taking the aforementioned lines as an example, we should firstly rewrite them as such:

**Speaker A** – *Ne budi prost.*

**Speaker B** – *Nisam prost, sretan sam što postojiš...*

**Speaker A** – *Pa i meni se sviđa što postojim.*

**Speaker B** – *...takva kakva jesi*

**Speaker A** – *Baš takva postojim i ja sam time zadovoljna.*

Knowing which of the characters utters which lines is necessary for accurate translation. By doing so, we can understand that **Speaker A**, in this case, is Sofia, the love interest of our male protagonist, George Kempf, or **Speaker B** in the lines above. Interestingly, the context and polysemy of the word *prost* made the transfer into the English language more difficult. One cannot use the word *vulgar* because, although it fits into the context of the sentences, the style of the translation does not quite match the style of the source text. Nor can one use *simple*, because the word does not fully fit into the context. In order to translate *prost*, I

opted for the word rude. Bearing such restrictions in mind, the translated lines used in the example above read:

**Speaker A** – *Don't be rude.*

**Speaker B** – *I'm not rude, I'm happy that you exist...*

**Speaker A** – *I'm also happy I exist.*

**Speaker B** – *...the way you are.*

**Speaker A** – *I exist the way I am and I'm happy with that*

Finally, the lines can be stripped from their punctuation and jumbled together, forming an accurate translation of the original passage: *dont be rude Im not rude Im happy that you exist Im also happy I exist the way you are I exist the way I am and Im happy with that.*

It is important to note the style of this chapter. Although it breaks the conventional rules of proper grammar, we can see that the author intended this chapter to be a casual conversation between two lovers. The style is conversational, lacking Šnajder's usually long and descriptive sentences. The vocabulary is also adjusted - simplified to better fit the dialogue's aesthetic.

The paragraph also features a few words which do not translate well into the English language – most notably the word *dukat*. *Dukat*, at least in Croatian culture, symbolises a gold coin used as currency in trading, as well as a type of jewellery shaped like a coin, usually worn like pendants. It is understandable that the author had jewellery in mind from the context of the sentences: *kupit ću ti dukate imam dukate imaš li ih dosta da pokriješ grudi*. The problem arises because there is no clear equivalent in English culture. In English speaking countries, a ducat is predominately tied to the notion of a trade coin used in Europe. Similarly, translating *dukat* as gold coin or gold jewellery also loses the cultural and ethnic meaning which permeates the word. I opted to retain the cultural significance of the word, leaving the noun *dukat* as *ducat* in the text.

The chapter then features a shift from the jumbled, unpunctuated paragraph into a poem-like dialogue. The dialogue between the lovers is written in such a way to resemble a poem; each lover's sentence is a line or a stanza, constituting and composing the full poem.

The process then required the pairing of lines with their speaker, similarly to the process used in the example mentioned above. Although the pattern indicates that one line equals to one character's sentence in the poem, the author sometimes breaks the rule by shifting the sentence into another line, perhaps marking a hesitation in speech:

*prepao sam se*

*tih bradavica tako neočekivanih boja*

Furthermore, the author also interjects the poem-like dialogue with one line which apparently is not uttered. The line might be the intervention of an omniscient narrator, or just a brief thought going through the protagonist's head:

*gotovo da sam se prepao*

*ispod vrata crta kao ravnalom povučena kao traq biča ogrebala se berući kupine*

*prepao sam se*

*tih bradavica tako neočekivanih boja*

Such a style of writing conveys a certain feel to the reader which has to be understood and retained in the translated text. Reading the whole chapter invokes a dream-like state, and projects the feeling of bliss, as well as anxiety our protagonist is feeling while talking to his love interest. The dialogue written as a poem resembles a dance, and captures the protagonist's memories of a cherished moment in time.

A big part of this chapter is the author's breaking of grammar rules. In order to carry such a stylistic decision into the target text, I chose to do the same. For example, phrases such as *what's, I am, you're, we're, they're, it's* and *I'll* were all intentionally written as *whats, Im,*



*youre, were, theyre, its and ill*. I believe that this way of writing adds to the general feeling of chaos and mess found in the source chapter.

The dialogue between the two lovers also provided interesting problems which had to be resolved in translation. One poem line states *ne znaš šeprtljo ni otkopčati jesi li već imao ženu dugmad je na unutrašnjoj strani*. If we were to rewrite the sentence following proper grammar rules, the line would read *Ne znaš šeprtljo ni otkopčati! Jesi li već imao ženu? Dugmad je na unutrašnjoj strani!*. The problem here arises from the word *otkopčati*. Depending on the article of clothing, an English user would use different verbs, e.g., *unbutton, undo, unlace, unzip, unfast, etc...*

Although we know from the context that the clothing in question contains buttons, we do not know what the article itself is. The safest option then would be to use *unbutton*, resulting in a sentence such as (...) *you don't even know how to unbutton!* This structure, although serviceable, presents another issue. The poem then reads *dugmad je na unutrašnjoj strani*, forcing us to again use the word *button*. In order to preserve the poem's flow, I chose to translate *otkopčati* as *undo* to avoid repetition, which resulted in the line *you don't even know how to undo have you ever been with a woman the buttons are on the inside*.

Similarly to the previous issue, the word *zapetljano* had to be addressed in a similar manner. The author writes:

*hajde znaš li bar zakopčati dugmad je unutra  
to je tako zapetljano*

A direct translation would transfer the word *zapetljano* as tangled. Even though this works in Croatian, and we understand what the word in question refers to, translating the lines as

*can you at least do the buttons inside  
it's so tangled*

does not work the same in the English language because the word *tangled*, at least in this context, implies some interlaced or intertwined threads, strands, etc... To produce a clearer, more colloquial translation, I decided to shift the perspective of the sentence, and adapt the word *tangled* into *clumsy*, resulting in the translation which reads:

*can you at least do the buttons inside*

*it's so clumsy*

## 6. Source text - *Praotac Kempf pluta u Transilvaniju*

Kempfov dom na vodi šareni se kao šator pred crkvom na proštenju; u tom su šatoru izloženi razni primjerci ljudskog roda kao i drugo što se narodi na Zemlji u svrhu čuđenja. Nema doduše žene s bradom, nema teleta s dvije glave i nitko ne izvikuje svoju čudotvornu mast. Ali tu je Turčin, trgovac koji putuje izdaleka, čak od Hamburga, gdje ima skladište ćilima; tu je Židov, poljski hasid, tu su lutorani, čija nervoza raste s približavanjem granice... iza drvene pregrade skviči prase. Čega sve ima na svijetu, misli Kempf.

Turčin ima široke hlače od svijetlocrvene čohe i dug kaftan te širok pojas prošaran zlatnim nitima, a na glavi turban, bijel s ljubičastim vrhom. Kapetan splavi, iskusan kakav je bio, zna da je Turčin sunit i da je trgovac. Ako ni po čemu drugome, a ono po turbanu. Zelena je, naime, boja pridržana Sretnoj Porti, janjičarski časnici i imami nose drugačije turbane itd. Turci daju mnogo na boje i oblike.

S Turčinom putuju i njegove sluge. Oni ga neprekidno dvore, naročito kad mu ništa ne treba; stalno su na nogama i prate svaki njegov mig. Ponekad ih mora tjerati od sebe kao da su muhe. Turčin putuje ovom groznom splavi do mjesta koje se zove Wolkowar, a onda se kani priključiti nekoj karavani. Krajnji mu je cilj Sarajevo. On se jako čudi što Kempf nije čuo za sarajske opanke koje mu gura gotovo pod nos. Služio se taj čovjek nekim jezikom koji bi se dobro- hotno mogao priznati za neki, doduše nepostojeći, njemački dijalekt. Napokon, imao je on skladišta u Hamburgu, bio je imućan i naputovan. Čim su krenuli iz Ulma, Turčin je isposlovaio da se krme smjesti na drugi kraj splavi, jer da mu njegov vonj i roktanje neće dati počinka.

Židov ima na sebi crn kaput, na nogama crne čizme. Ali pravo čudo je na glavi: Šešir – shtreimel ga zovu njegovi u Galiciji – taj ga hasid nikada nije skidao. Mora da je skup, misli Kempf. Pa naravno da jest, kad je načinjen od sedam samurskih repova! Potonje čuo je Kempf u rodnom selu jer ondje nije bila rijetka zgoda sresti putujuće trgovce koji su svi bili Židovi. Repove samura, na glavi ovog Židova, međutim, nije bilo moguće izbrojiti, a Kempf se nije usudio pitati. Hasid sjedio je na svom buretu mrk, potpuno utonuo u svoj svijet.

Brojiti mu repove – pa to bi bilo kao brojiti mu buhe. Ne bi to bilo lijepo.

Kapetanovo čelo zaorano je dubokim brazdama, nos mu je povelik. To bi upućivalo na gubu. No kako se gubavac nije smio približiti zdravomu na kopljomet, sigurno je da mu nitko ne bi povjerio splav. Kempf se odvažio pitati momka iz posade o tim brazdama te je spomenuo i kapetanovu nosinu.

Odgovor je bio da je kapetan rođen zgužvan, da mu je čelo kao rupčić ostavljene cure, nos da je od lokanja. S posadom se kapetan ophodi svisoka, vrlo grubo, a putnike samo što nije tukao. Posada brinula se za velika vesla koja su bila neke vrsti kormila. Ovo plovilo kreće se prepušteno velikoj rijeci koja se povremeno njime poigrava kao da joj je igračka. Vesla, od kojih se jednim upravljalo s vrha daščare na sredini splavi, jedini su način da se izbjegne smrtonosni vir ili kakva druga nesreća, naprimjer, udar u stijenu. Splav, golemi trupci povezani debelim konopom, plutala je u milosti rijeke prema dalekom ušću. Povremeno viđaju kljusad kako vuče splavi uzvodno što je bio mučan prizor. Većinom, žalili su patnje tih nedužnih životinja. Kapetan je rekao da svak živi svoju sudbinu. – I oni su Božja stvorenja, mrmore neki. – Nije to lijepo ovako kinjiti marvu!

U jednom trenutku, po kretnjama posade, po naglo uozbiljenom licu kapetana, Kempf shvaća da idu ususret opasnosti.

Mora svih onih koji su u XVIII. stoljeću plovili Dunavom nizvodno od Ulma zvala se Dipštajnski grebeni, u to doba dva dana puta od gradića Engelhartzelle; to se ime među splavarima na Dunavu izgovaralo upo glasa. Ipak se plovilo jer ploviti se mora.

Izvor kaže: “Uvučena su vesla a posada je zamolila putnike da svak u svojem jeziku stane moliti očenaš ili nešto tome nalik.”

Naime, na tom mjestu strašan vir putnike zove u podvodni zamak gdje stoluje car Dunava, a suri grebeni prijete na svoj način samoj splavi. Na dnu blista staklen dvor, usred kojega je golema trpeza a oko nje sjede car u prilici golemoga soma te podanici, dok svjetleće ribetine bacaju sjaj svojih krljušti na njihovu gozbu; na trpezi su staklenke, baš onakve u kakve se

sprema ukuhano voće; u tim su staklenkama duše utopljenih. Neke su nastanjene tim dušama, druge su prazne, one čekaju; one pune duša car-som miluje svojim brčinama.

Turčin smjesta prostre molitveni sag i stane klanjati; Židov šalje specijalnu, veoma žurnu poruku svom Bogu; kršćani glasno mole Paternoster.

## **Jahve Gott Allah**

bivaju oslovljeni i svakome je od vrućih molitelja na splavi priznato da je

### **JEDINI**

Samo se Bog kršćana još dodatno dijeli s tri.

Svake hrabrosti nadolaskom vira nestaje, nema više snage do li za šapat...

Allahu ekber... Svemogući... Jedinu Oče... Allahu ekber... Najveći... Svemogući... Oče naš koji jesi...

Kao srma – tkanje zlatno ili srebrno – na čohi od vode ovdje vrlo tamne, gotovo crne, ispisuje plutajući Babilon svoje poruke mješavinom arapskog, južnonjemačkog, hebrejskog, poljskog... Splav se odjednom smanji, čini se bespomoćnim iverkom kojim ravna strašna sila... Koliko god da je sitna, ta se splav sada okreće u viru kao bogomolja pod znakom križa, kao sinagoga, kao džamija.

Čini se da ta babilonska zbrka neće smetati Jedinome. Ovi ljudi neće graditi toranj babilonski da bi Jedinoga pošakljali po tabanima već će se na kraju putovanja, gdje god da to bude, raspršiti kao sjeme maslačka. K tomu, putnici ne govore jedan drugome već se izravno obraćaju Bogu na visini. Zašto da im miješa jezike?

Bog će ih uslišiti, pa onda i kapetana i njegove momke; oni se više ne mole već se čvrsto drže za komade drveta, bačve, škrinje, u koje se nadaju, a ne u Boga-oca, ako vir povuče splav, ili ga struja natjera u hrid. Oni dobro znaju da su njihovi izgledi napola. Putnici pak na splavi svi su iz naroda Knjige, tih naroda jesu tri, knjige su tri, a opet samo jedna: Knjiga! Njima je sve prvi put.

Svak na splavi skrušeno misli na krajnje, o prvim i posljednjim stvarima. I oni bolje odjeveni sada se drže kao pokajnici u kostrijeti. Putnici, o posadi da se i ne govori, bili su upoznati s rizicima. Agenti u Ulmu su ih dakako umirivali, ali svi su oni znali da se svaka druga splav

razbila, i da se o mnogima koji su ovuda plovili više ništa nije čulo. I njihova je splav, splav praoca Kempfa, sada u Božjim rukama. Šanse su njihove napola.

Putnici se čvrsto drže za ogradu, ako se nekoliko štapova pobodenih u trupce može ogradom smatrati te nastoje odmjeriti koliko im još sekundi preostaje do glavnog udara: do trenutka kad će se splav još jednom zavrtjeti na grotlu najvećeg vira i onda se možda razbiti o greben. Svak se moli Ocu kako je naučio, hasid s dugom bradom pjeva psalam, muhamedanac ne prestaje ničice padati na svoj sag...

Splav prođe.

Splav prođe, jer da se razbila, ja se ne bih rodio i ove knjige ne bi bilo, u čemu možda ne bi bilo neke štete.

Nejasno je koja je molitva upalila. Moguće je da se Bogu svidjelo što su tako mnoge. Ili je vodostaj Dunava od proljetnog otapanja snijega bio dovoljno visok? Možda je bio dovoljno nizak pa se vir smirio? Ne vjerujem, naime, da je Bog na visini imao osobit interes za moje rođenje: ta on je otac tako mnogima.

Dipštajnski grebeni uistinu su bili potopili mnogu nadu. Bog u ovom ili onom trenutku, u ponudi jezika valjda nije našao onaj koji može razumjeti bez rječnika. Moguće je da Bog naprosto nije imao svoj dan. Premda je Bog poliglot, ipak je svojedobno jako zakuhao oko Babilona; nitko ne voli debele rječnike. Kapetan također prihvaćao je rizik da mu se na splav provukao grešnik koji se u očima Boga ne može spasiti. Pri tome je isključivao sebe samoga, ubojicu i sjecikesu. Ta on, kapetan, bio je ujedno i poduzetnik, tojest patron splavi, a sada je vozio šarenu skupinu mahom siromašnih ljudi, caričinih kolonista, koji su prodali sve što su imali da bi se uopće ukrcali na splav; da bi uopće mogli riskirati. Nosili su ono što im je preostalo i što se dalo nositi. Eto, naprimjer, onaj Kempf, djetić, koji je iza sebe imao godine naukovanja, i sad je tražio one kojima bi mogao prodati svoj zanat, a ništa nije dopekao nego dopola. Putuju i vojnici, plaćenici, *Söldneri*, pijandure, koji su isto tako tražili nekoga kome bi utrapili svoj zanat, ili su se vraćali s dalekih ratišta, često u ranama koje su napadali rojevi muha. Često su plutali skupa oni koji su se u ratu nemilosrdno trijebili. Mogu se pretpostaviti i žene koje nisu bitno otežale splav jer su ih ionako svi držali lakima. I to bi bila klijentela,

pridodamo li još propovjednika koji je odlučio pratiti svoju malu zajednicu ako se već ona, kao takva, dala na put. Na splavi praoca Kempfa, doduše, nikakvih žena nije bilo, što se kasnije pokazalo kao problem. A i popovi su došli kasnije.

Činovnici Monarhije, koja tada još nije bila dvojna, putovali su na neki drugi manje riskantan način. Godina koju uzimamo u razmatranje – 1770. – u kojoj pratimo dramatičan a, pokazalo se, sretan prelazak splavi na Dunavu, kod Dipštajnskih grebena, jest godina kad je James Watt tek pokazao svoj parni stroj: to stoji za početak industrijske revolucije koja je odlučila razviti se u Engleskoj, a ne u Njemačkoj. Lokomotiva još međutim nije na vidiku, pa se Europom putuje konjskom silom. Činovnici, više klase, plemstvo, bez obzira na kojem jeziku izriču svoj očenaš, ne putuju splavima po Dunavu. Plemstvo luteransko ne putuje u područja pod suknjom moćne carice. Plemstvo habsburško i kato- ličko nema potrebe putovati, osim kad se ratuje. I nijednom imućnom putniku u XVIII. vijeku ne bi se mililo riskirati susret s Dipštajnskim grebenjem.

Kapetan dakle ima pred sobom ljude koji iz jedne oskudice bježe u drugu, ali ipak s nadom u izbavljenje. Ti koji bježe većinom su bili iz južnonjemačkih pokrajina ili iz Schwabenlanda. Čini se da su potonji bili u većini pa je otud lokalno stanovništvo sve koloniste prozvalo Švabama.

Rečena 1769., dakle, bila je u Njemačkoj “gladna godina”. Možda se nije masovno umiralo, kao te iste godine u Bengal: deset milijuna duša. Najveća prirodna katastrofa svih vremena. Ali da se ne bi umiralo, iz Njemačke je valjalo bježati. Smjer gladi bio je točno suprotan smjeru iz šezdesetih godina prošlog stoljeća kad je stotine tisuća krenulo trbuhom za kruhom spram Njemačke, često iz područja koja su u XVIII. stoljeću kolonizirali njemački seljaci i zanatlije u sklopu terezijanskih.

Kad je opasnost ostala iza njih, sve se vraća kako je i bilo. Kapetanu bilo je važno da se razvije cijela mreža jezika u koju je valjalo uhvatiti Božju milost. To što je klijentela splavi bila tako raznolika, smatrao je prednošću. Da mu se na splav ukrcao i kineski trgovac, smatrao bi to dobrim znakom, bio on budist ili sljedbenik onoga što je sam zvao Tao. Kapetana nije smetalo što je ukrcani hasid u svojoj godini: 1770. godinu Židovi su brojali kao godinu smještenu iz- među 5530. i 5531. Svak dakle broji i grunta svoje, sve brojance penju se u jatru prema Nebu, a grebenje bilo je sve bliže, zeleni vir sve bješnji i moćniji. Ribe čekaju, kao

i dunavske djeve, kao i vodeni car-som u svom staklenom dvoru, u dubinama. Gore vladala je, neupitno, carica; dolje, na ulazima podzemnoga carstva, carinici drugi i drugačiji. Te dunavske djeve, zamamne i neodoljive, opasno je čak i spomenuti ih.

No sve to skupa sad je bilo *vorbei*, postaje već zamičuća prošlost. Kapetan je i opet mrk i nepristupačan. Kempf ga je jednom pitao – Gdje je zapravo ta Transilvanija? – ovaj ga je tako grubo otkantao da se Kempfu učinilo kako mu se kapetan, uza sve, još i ruga. Tko razuman putuje tolik put a da ne zna kamo putuje?

Odgovor: Vrlo mnogi. Čak i dan-danas.

Kempf se više ništa ne usuđuje pitati.



## 6.2. Translation - *Forefather Kempf floats to Transylvania*

Kempf's floating home glistens like a tent in front of a church during kermesse; in this tent exhibited are various specimens of mankind, as well as other wonderful things born on this Earth. Yet, there is no woman with a beard, nor calf with two heads, nor miracle ointment merchants. But there is a Turk, a merchant who travels from afar, even from Hamburg, where he has a carpet storage; there is a Jew, a Polish Hasid, there are Lutherans, whose nervousness grows as they're approaching the border... behind the wooden partition a piglet squeaks. What roams this Earth, Kempf thinks to himself.

The Turk is wearing wide trousers made of light red baize, a long kaftan and a wide belt dotted with gold threads. A white turban with a purple top sits on his head. The captain of the raft, experienced as he was, knows that the Turk is a Sunni and a merchant. The turban alone is a dead giveaway. Green, in fact, is the color reserved for Sublime Porte, janissary officers and imams wear different turbans, etc. Turks care a lot for colors and shapes.

Traveling with the Turk are his servants. They court him, especially when he doesn't need anything; they are constantly on their feet and follow his every wink. Sometimes he has to chase them away like flies. The Turk travels this horrible raft to a place called Wolkowar, and then he intends to join some caravan. His final destination is Sarajevo. He's very surprised Kempf hasn't heard of the famous opanci from Sarajevo he's shoving almost under his nose. The man used some kind of language which could be mistaken for some, albeit non-existent, German dialect. After all, he had storage in Hamburg, he was wealthy and well traveled. As soon as they left Ulm, the Turk arranged for the piglet to stay on the other end of the raft, saying that he couldn't rest due to its smell and oinking.

The Jew is wearing a black coat and black boots. But the centerpiece is on his head: The hat - known as shtreimel in Galicia - which the Hasid never took off. It must be expensive, Kempf thought to himself. Well, of course it is. It's made of seven sable tails! Kempf overheard the latter in his home village because it was not uncommon to meet travelling merchants who were all Jewish. Exactly how many sable tails did this Jew wear Kempf couldn't count, nor did not dare to ask. Hasid sat grim on his barrel, completely immersed in his world.

Counting the tails - well, that would be like counting the fleas. It wouldn't be nice.

The captain's forehead is plowed with deep grooves, his nose fairly sizable. That indicates leprosy. But since a leper couldn't have approached the healthy closer than the throwing distance of a spear, it is certain that he wouldn't have been entrusted with a raft. Kempf dared to ask a crew boy about the captain's grooves and schnoz.

The answer was that the captain was born wrinkled, his forehead crumpled like a used handkerchief, nose big from drinking. The captain was stern and rude to his crew. He had to refrain from beating the passengers. The crew commanded large oars which were used as a rudder. The vessel was left at the mercy of a river which occasionally played with it like a child plays with its toy. Oars, one of which was operated from the top of the barrack in the middle of the raft, are the only way to avoid a deadly whirlpool or any other accident, like hitting a rock. The raft, made of huge logs tied with a thick rope, floated at the mercy of the river towards the far estuary. Occasionally they saw mules dragging the rafts upstream, which was an excruciating sight. Most of them mourned the suffering of these innocent animals. The captain said everyone lived their destiny. - They're God's creatures as well, murmured some. - It's not nice to torture cattle like this!

At one moment, judging by the crew's movements and the captain's serious face, Kempf realized that they are facing danger.

Düppsteiner Klippen, two days away from the small town of Engelhartzelle; a nightmare for all those who in the XVIII century sailed the Danube downstream from Ulm. Danube rafters spoke of it only in a low voice. Nevertheless, the sailing had to continue.

The source states: "Oars were pulled in and the crew asked the passengers to start praying the Lord's Prayer in their language or something of that sort."

Here, a horrendous whirlpool preys on the travelers, leading them to an underwater castle where the Emperor of the Danube reigns, and rough ridges threaten the raft. At the bottom shines a glass court, in the middle of which a large table is located. There the emperor dines on a giant catfish with his servants, while the scales of luminous fish cast a glow on their feast; there are jars on the table, same as the ones used for storing cooked fruit; these jars hold the souls of the drowned. Some are inhabited by these souls, others are empty, waiting; the ones filled with souls the catfish emperor caresses with his mustache.

The Turk immediately spreads his praying rug and starts to worship; The Jew sends a very special, urgent message to his God; Christians pray the Pater Noster loudly.

### **Jahve Gott Allah**

were each addressed, and every god being prayed to recognized as

#### **THE ONLY ONE**

Only the Christian God is split into three parts.

Courage disappears as the whirlpool draws closer, there's barely any strength left for even a whisper...

Allahu ekber... Almighty... Only Father... Allahu ekber... Greatest... Almighty... Our Father, who art in heaven...

Like a gold or silver linen — on a dark, black, watery baize

writes the floating Babylon its messages with a mixture of Arabic, South German, Hebrew, Polish languages... The raft suddenly shrinks, like a helpless pile of wood leveled by a terrible force... As tiny as it is, the raft now circles the whirlpool like a praying mantis under the sign of the cross, like a synagogue, like a mosque.

It seems that this Babylonian confusion doesn't bother the one God. These people will not build the tower of Babel to tickle the soles of the Lord. At the end of the journey, wherever that may be, they'll scatter like dandelion seeds. Besides, the travelers aren't communicating with each other, they're directly addressing the God. Why should he mix their languages?

God will first hear the passengers, then the captain and his men; they're no longer praying, but holding fast to pieces of wood, barrels, chests in which they believe, as opposed to the Good Lord who won't save them if the raft is pulled or forced onto the rocks by the current. They know very well that their chances are slim. The passengers on the raft all people of the Book, and there are three kinds of people, and three kinds of the Book, and then again only one: The Book! Everything is a first time for them.

Everyone on the raft thinks humbly of their beginnings and ends. Even the well dressed ones now repent. The passengers, not to mention the crew, were aware of the risks. The agents in Ulm certainly calmed them down, but they all knew that every other raft had been

wrecked, and that many went missing who sailed here. And their raft, the raft of forefather Kempf, is now in God's hands. Their chances are slim.

The passengers hold on tightly to the railing, if a few sticks stuck into the logs can be considered a railing, and try to estimate how many seconds until the big impact: until the raft spins once more in the mouth of the biggest whirlpool and then, perhaps, hits the reef. Everyone prays to the Father as they have learned, a Hasid with a long beard is singing a psalm, a Mohammedan keeps bowing on his rug...

The raft passes.

The raft passed, because, had it sunk, I would not have been born and this book would not exist, which might not have caused any harm.

It is unclear which prayer worked. It is possible that God liked that there were so many. Or was the water level of the Danube high enough from the melting snow? Perhaps it was low enough and the whirlpool calmed down? I do not believe that God took a special interest in my birth: he is the father of many.

The Düppsteiner Klippen had truly sunk many hopes. At one point or another, God probably got confused and couldn't find a dictionary to understand any of the languages. It is possible that it was just not God's day. Although God is a polyglot, he messed up with Babylon; nobody likes thick dictionaries. The captain also accepted the risk that a sinner who could not be saved in the eyes of God slipped onto his raft. In doing so, he excluded himself, the murderer and the cutthroat. The captain was also an entrepreneur, the patron of the raft, and now he was riding a motley crew of mostly poor people, the empress's colonists, who sold everything they had to even board the raft. They carried what they had left and what could be carried. Kempf, for example, who had years of apprenticeship behind him, was looking for those to whom he could sell his trade, but every time he tried, he only got halfway there. Also traveling are soldiers, mercenaries, *Söldners*, drunkards, who were also looking for someone to ply their trade, or were returning from distant battlefields, often with wounds which attracted swarms of flies. Those who fought mercilessly in the war often floated together. One might assume women as well, who did not make the raft significantly

more heavier because everyone considered them light anyway. And that would be the clientele. We might also add a preacher who decided to follow his small community if it, as such, had already set out on the travel. Admittedly, there were no women on the forefather Kempf's raft, which later turned out to be a problem. Also, the priests came later.

The officials of the Monarchy, which was not yet dual at the time, traveled in some other, less risky way. The year we are taking into consideration - 1770 - in which we follow the dramatic and, as it turned out, successful crossing of the Danube near the Duppsteiner Klippen, is the year when James Watt first demonstrated his steam engine: it marks the beginning of the industrial revolution that decided to take place in England, not in Germany. However, the locomotive is still not in sight, so Europeans travel by horse power. Officials, upper classes, nobility, regardless of the language in which they recite the Lord's Prayer, do not travel the Danube by rafts. The Lutheran nobility does not travel to areas under the skirt of the powerful empress. The Habsburg and Catholic nobility have no need to travel, except when they are at war. And not a single wealthy traveler in the XVIII. century would like to risk an encounter with the Duppsteiner Klippen.

The captain therefore carries people who are fleeing from one poverty to another, but still hoping for deliverance. People fleeing were mostly from the southern German provinces or from Schwabenland. It seems that the latter were the majority, so the local population called all the colonists Swabians.

1769, therefore, was a "year of hunger" in Germany. Maybe the death toll wasn't as high as in Bengal: ten million souls. The greatest natural disaster of all time. If you wanted to survive, you had to flee from Germany. The direction of the famine was exactly the opposite from the one in the sixties, when hundreds of thousands headed towards Germany to seek their fortune, often from areas that were colonized by German peasants and artisans in the XVIII. century.

When they left danger behind, everything returned to the way it was. The captain sought out to develop a whole network of languages in which God's grace was to be captured. The fact that the raft's clientele was so diverse, he considered an advantage. If a Chinese merchant had also boarded the raft, he'd considered it a good fortune, whether he was a

Buddhist or a follower of what he himself called Tao. The captain didn't mind that the Hasid on board was in his year: The Jews counted the year 1770 as a year between 5530 and 5531. Everyone counts and grunts their own, all the rosaries climb like a flock towards Heaven. The rocks were getting closer, the green whirlpool more furious and powerful. The fish are waiting in the depths, in their glass court, as well as the Danube maidens, and the catfish emperor. The empress, without a doubt, ruled above; but below, at the entrance of the underground empire, there's a different kind of reign. It's dangerous to even speak of the enticing and irresistible Danube maidens.

But all of that is over *vorbei*, a distant past. The captain is once again sullen and unapproachable. Kempf once asked him - Where exactly is this Transylvania? – the captain scolded him so rudely that Kempf thought he was being mocked. Who in their right mind travels so far without knowing where he is going?

Answer: Very many. Even to this day.

Kempf no longer dares to ask anything.

### 6.3. Commentary and analysis IV

The chapter *Praotac Kempf pluta u Transilvaniju* contains many instances of Šnajder's archaic vocabulary and long sentences which can be difficult to grasp and translate into the English language. He opens the chapter with *Kempfov dom na vodi šareni se kao šator pred crkvom na proštenju; u tom su šatoru izloženi razni primjerci ljudskog roda kao i drugo što se narodi na Zemlji u svrhu čuđenja*. Instantly, one can spot a few problems when it comes to translating this sentence.

Firstly, the structure *Kempfov dom na vodi* is a typical Croatian structure which does not translate well into the English language. *Kempf's home on water* does not sound correct, nor English-like, so the syntax has to be changed. I resolved this issue by using the adjective *floating*; *Kempf's floating home*, as it conjures similar images to the source text. Secondly, *šareni se* is a phrase which has no real equivalent in the target language. One can describe the object as being colourful, but that only further complicates the sentence, e.g., *Kempf's colourful floating home...* Instead, to simplify the sentence and to retain the image of something colourful floating and shining on the water, I used the verb *glisten*. Šnajder then mentions *proštenje* – a term denoting the gathering of people in front of a church, usually after mass. Such gatherings were usually accompanied by merchants, traders, various craftsmen, musicians and entertainers. In order to keep the same imagery, I adapted *proštenje* as *kermesse*, a Dutch word borrowed into the English language describing similar celebrations and festivals held in front of churches. The first part of the opening sentence in the target language reads as: *Kempf's floating home glistens like a tent in front of a church during kermesse*.

The second part of the sentence *u tom su šatoru izloženi razni primjerci ljudskog roda kao i drugo što se narodi na Zemlji u svrhu čuđenja*, required syntactic alternations in order to make it comprehensible for an English reader. Changing the phrase *born on Earth for the purpose of wonder* into *wonderful things born on Earth* made the sentence much more legible.

While describing a Turk merchant, Šnajder writes *Turčin ima široke hlače od svijetlocrvene čohē i dug kaftan te širok pojas prošaran zlatnim nitima, a na glavi turban, bijel s ljubičastim vrhom*. The most problematic part of this sentence proved to be the phrase *prošaran zlatnim nitima*. Possible solutions for this phrase included the use of sentences such as *scattered with, embroidered with* or *dotted with gold threads*. I chose to use *dotted with*, as it was closest to the author's way of describing the article of clothing, alluding to a dispersed pattern of gold threads. Additionally, it was necessary to break the source sentence into two shorter ones, resulting in a more coherent translation - *The Turk is wearing wide trousers made of light red baize, a long kaftan and a wide belt dotted with gold threads. A white turban with a purple top sits on his head*.

Afterwards the author provides a description of Turkish attire and uses a seemingly simple sentence; *Turci daju mnogo na boje i oblike*. Although simple, the sentence is vague and ambiguous. Because it is not clear as to what the verb *daju* is referring to, it is hard to transfer the sentence into English as such. *Turks give a lot on shapes and colour* means very little to an English speaker. It is also unclear whether the author meant *daju* as a verb denoting spending money, or something entirely different. In order to simplify translation, I chose a generic expression - *Turks care a lot for colours and shapes*.

The same passage contains words denoting religions, nations and professions, e.g., *sunit, Sretna Porta, janjičarski časnici, imami*. Such terms required research in order to provide an accurate translation into the English language. By reading about different branches of Islam, I noticed that *Sunni* matches the Croatian notion of *sunit*, and that the term Imam refers to the title of a worship leader for Sunni Muslims. The term causing the most problems turned out to be *Sretna Porta*, and researching the topic provided no relevant results. The source sentence states *Zelena je, naime, boja pridržana Sretnoj Porti, janjičarski časnici i imami nose drugačije turbane itd...* From this, we can deduce that *Sretna Porta* refers to a profession, or certain group of people who wore green. While researching the Ottoman Empire, I came across the Croatian term *Visoka Porta*, which stands for the Ottoman Empire's government and its representatives. It is unclear whether the author referred to *Visoka Porta* while using the term *Sretna Porta*. I decided not to translate the phrase word-



for-word, as Happy Porte seemed incorrect. Rather, I chose to use the English equivalent for Ottoman government officials; *Sublime Porte*.

Similarly to the previous issue, while describing the fear of those who sailed the Danube, Šnajder mentions a few geographical locations: *Mora svih onih koji su u XVIII. stoljeću plovili Dunavom nizvodno od Ulma zvala se Dipštajnski grebeni, u to doba dva dana puta od gradića Engelhartzelle*. The biggest issue here was *Dipštajnski grebeni*, as the term itself did not match any known geographical locations. My first option was to adapt *Dipštajnski grebeni* into an English sounding variant, e.g., *Dipstein ridges*, but I decided to continue with my research. By sheer luck I discovered Slobodan Šnajder's text *Što je njima »Slavonija«?* in a journal for Literature titled *Književna republika*. In it, Šnajder mentions the aforementioned term, and puts *Düppsteiner Klippen* in the parentheses next to it.<sup>2</sup> This led me to use the author's term in my sentence, producing the following translation; *A nightmare for all those who in the XVIII century sailed the Danube downstream from Ulm known as Düppsteiner Klippen, two days away from the small town of Engelhartzelle*.

Although correct, both grammatically and semantically, the sentence felt clunky and unintelligible. To resolve this issue, the sentence was rearranged to read; *Düppsteiner Klippen, two days away from the small town of Engelhartzelle; a nightmare for all those who in the XVIII century sailed the Danube downstream from Ulm*.

While portraying an interaction between our protagonist and the Turkish merchant, Šnajder writes *On se jako čudi što Kempf nije čuo za sarajske opanke koje mu gura gotovo pod nos*. The difficulty here was the phrase *sarajski opanak*. *Opanak* is a traditional style of shoe worn in Southeastern Europe, so the only option here is to retain the word *opanak* in the translation, because opting for a generic term such as *shoe* would lose its cultural meaning. Furthermore, the translation has to include the mentioned type of shoe (*sarajski*), seeing as opanci come in different shapes based on their region of origin. There were two options when it came to the implementation of such a phrase – *Sarajevo opanci*, or *opanci from Sarajevo*. In my translation I chose the latter, seeing as it better suited the sentence.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://hrvatskodrustvopisaca.hr/sites/default/files/casopisi/Republika\\_1\\_3\\_2010.pdf](https://hrvatskodrustvopisaca.hr/sites/default/files/casopisi/Republika_1_3_2010.pdf)

Another word which required slight adaptation came in a sentence used to describe the captain of the raft. *No kako se gubavac nije smio približiti zdravomu na kopljomet, sigurno je da mu nitko ne bi povjerio splav.* The word in question was *kopljomet*, which the Croatian dictionary defines as the distance one can throw a spear by hand.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the English language does not have a word which would correspond to *kopljomet*, so the translation called for some alternation. I wanted to retain the imagery of spears, since the source sentence combined *gubavac* and *kopljomet*, implying the treatment lepers received if they were to get too close to society. The best way to keep that implication was to translate *kopljomet* descriptively, i.e., using the Croatian definition of the word, and shape the translated sentence as *But since a leper couldn't have approached the healthy closer than the throwing distance of a spear, it is certain that he wouldn't have been entrusted with a raft.*

Passage depicting frightened people from different religions praying on the raft is both chaotic and ironic, so it was important to retain Šnajder's sense of humour. The passage starts with a depiction of a Turk, a Jew and Christians praying; *Turčin smjesta prostre molitveni sag i stane klanjati; Židov šalje specijalnu, veoma žurnu poruku svom Bogu; kršćani glasno mole Paternoster*, after which Šnajder experiments with the size of the font in order to portray the loudness of prayers;

### **Jahve Gott Allah**

I have debated on translating *Gott* as *God* in the target text, but I ultimately decided on leaving it as is, seeing that the narration mentions South German Christians and *Gott* stylistically fits the confusion, as they would be praying in German. The passage then continues;

bivaju oslovljeni i svakome je od vrućih molitelja na splavi priznato da je

#### **JEDINI**

Samo se Bog kršćana još dodatno dijeli s tri.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://jezikoslovac.com/word/66j9>

The issue here was the last line which refers to Christianity being a monotheistic religion, albeit having three distinct deities, *the Father, the Son* and *the Holy Spirit* which require worshipping. A direct translation of *Samo se Bog kršćana još dodatno dijeli s tri*, would not suffice, as that might lose the subtle irony of the source sentence, e.g. *Only the Christian God is divided by three*. Instead, I chose to go with the following;

were each addressed, and every god being prayed to recognized as

**THE ONLY ONE**

Only the Christian God is split into three parts.

Another example of a sentence which is easily comprehensible in the Croatian language, but tricky to transfer completely in the target language comes from a passage describing the passenger aboard the raft: *Putnici pak na splavi svi su iz naroda Knjige, tih naroda jesu tri, knjige su tri, a opet samo jedna: Knjiga! Njima je sve prvi put*. The phrase *narod Knjige* proved to be problematic, because such a phrase is not as common in the English language. Although *people of the Book* is used in the same context, we run into problems in the following statement: *tih naroda jesu tri*. Translating it as, e.g., *the people are three* renders the sentence meaningless. Because of the way Šnajder wrote the source sentence, it was important to keep *people* as an equivalent for every instance of the word *narod*. This required slight alternation in order to produce an intelligible translation;

*The passengers on the raft all people of the Book, and there are three kinds of people, and three kinds of the Book, and then again only one: The Book! Everything is a first time for them.*

## 7. Conclusion

In order to produce a target text which conveys all the minute interactions between different semiotic resources of the source work, translation of multimodal texts often times requires improvisation, creativity and adaptation. Unfortunately, when it comes to research, theory and education, translation of multimodal literature still does not get the attention it deserves.

Translators should be acquainted with the properties of different modes, i.e., unique carriers of semiotic resources, their possible purposes and interrelations. They should also be taught how different authors use various semiotic resources to tell their story, as well as how the modes combine and work together to create meaning in a multimodal text. If one is to write, or translate such a text, one should also be apt in the control and implementation of different semiotic resources. Such knowledge would provide translators with a better understanding of the inner workings of multimodality, which would prepare them for the process of translating a text that derives meaning from multiple resources.

Although multimodality can cause various issues when it comes to translation, while translating Šnajder's *Doba Mjedi* I found that the most common issue was the author's vocabulary and sentence structure. There are numerous instances of culturally marked terms, phrases and words which have no direct equivalent in the target language. Such problems required different strategies in order to produce an accurate translation which contained as much of the author's intended meaning as possible. The combination of multimodality, stylistic choices and the Šnajder's sense of humour, culture and identity made the translation of chapters from *Doba Mjedi* a real challenge.

## 8. Literature

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