

The Rulers Claimed Descent from a White Race
A Study on Racism in Robert E. Howard's Works and Its Translation into Finnish

Matti Timonen

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1 Introduction

Society has gradually been giving more emphasis to politically correct usage of language during the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. More and more of the terms previously routinely used in common speech have been deemed derogatory, and this has undoubtedly affected written products, perhaps those written in English most of all. This could be due to the British imperialism and the slavery in southern United States, and the feeling of shame associated with this history, at least in the circles striving to be politically correct. What then would happen to a text written in the late 1920s or the early 1930s – when segregation was still the norm – if it were translated in a society more sensitive to political incorrectness and almost self-censoring in its customs of maintaining civil language; one that is primarily designed not to offend anyone? Would the original author and his expression be respected enough to retain all racist passages, despite the changes that have happened in the political atmosphere and despite the growing recognition of all people as equal, despite their gender, sex, or appearance?

In addition to the changes that have happened in the usage of language, translations also have to face the change from one cultural background to another, especially if the original text was written in another corner of the world, and more than half a century prior to its translation. Therefore, the changes in the language used might not only be based on the prevalent level of tolerance at the time of the translation versus the time of the original creation, but they might also be dependent on the culture the text in question is translated for, and whether or not the translator makes an active effort to localise the story.

Racism in literature has been a recurring theme of study for several decades, and it is certainly an emotive topic. Authors of practically every genre have been under scrutiny and almost every reader has an opinion on racism. These opinions are often voiced and therefore racism in literature has grown to be a lively topic for critical debate since approximately the 1950s, with studies on the treatment of various kinds

of discrimination based on race, gender, or religion in literary works, past and present, as well as in the attitudes of authors. In some cases racism is a prominent, or even the chief theme, while in other works there exist racist attitudes that serve as underlying assumptions, but may not be immediately evident to the reader. This paper is centred on the study of racism in translations of literature, namely in those of the works of author Robert Ervin Howard, an early writer of heroic fantasy, horror, western stories, and adventure, who wrote his works in a racially diverse environment, but where white supremacy was still more the norm than an exception. As the present author has studied Howard, translations of his texts, and racism present in Howard's texts earlier, this thesis is merely a natural follow-up to combine these efforts.

Since many heroic fantasy stories tell tales of travels into faraway foreign lands, they often introduce characters who are of various ethnic backgrounds. This was certainly a highly useful tool for bringing additional depth into a story, but authors are advised, and usually comply, to take care in its use. Surprisingly often authors use ethnic stereotypes only to make shorthand characters which they most likely suppose to be believable. This is especially true for many authors of fantastic fiction – including Howard – who use these stereotypes as a quick-and-dirty method for creating tribes, villages, town and even nations of people, who they most likely regard as plausible, even in such cases that said people are solely based on the authors conception. This quasi-familiar stereotyping seems to be very widespread, even among modern writers, and as such it would appear to be an important subject for study.

Robert E. Howard was chosen for the main subject of the present study primarily because his texts and their translations portray the unadulterated language used by the general public in the late 1920s and the early 1930s. In addition, translations for his texts were readily available in Finnish. Still, the foci of this study are the texts and their translations, or more precisely the possible racist remarks and mentality present in these texts, rather than the author and his personal views.

1.1 Author Robert E. Howard

Robert Ervin Howard was born in January 22, 1906, at Peaster, Texas. His father a country physician, moved their family back and forth within the state of Texas over several years before finally settling in the small town of Cross Plains in 1919. Howard began writing regularly in 1921, when he was only 15 years old, but his stories were only accepted by his school magazine. He finally made his first sale in 1924 when *Weird Tales* accepted “Spear and Fang”, a short story about a fight over a woman by a Cro-Magnon and a Neanderthal (Burke 2011).

Howard created a number of fantasy character, such as Kull, an Atlantean adventurer who became king by his own hand; Solomon Kane, a puritan swordsman who righted wrongs in Europe and Africa in the 16th century; Bran Mak Morn, a Pictish chieftain who battled against the Roman conquerors in Britain; Red Sonya of Rogatino, a swords-woman and the sister of Roxelana, and many others. He also wrote numerous western stories, and contemporary horror and detective stories. Still, his personal genre of choice were boxing stories, for Howard himself was an accomplished amateur boxer who perhaps identified himself closest to his hard-fisted sailor character, Steve Costigan, but Howard did not have the character to leave his mother's side to live a life of adventure. Howard usually wrote his stories in two or three drafts before they went to be published, but he deemed “Rogues in the House” – originally published in 1953 – good enough on its first draft. This story is a clear expression of Howard's genius as a writer, despite many of his other shortcomings.

Howard's best known character all over the globe is Conan, a barbarian from the fictional country of Cimmeria, who was brought forth from Howard's typewriter at the end of 1932 (Finn 2006:166). Howard had spent months in a dry spell, without producing anything noteworthy, when he suddenly came up with Conan, a complete character from the very beginning, who had so many adventures that Howard had barely the time to write them all down. Conan might very well have been an attempt at a self-portrait, albeit a reversed one. Howard was not a seven-foot muscle-man, rather he was about six feet tall and weighed nearly 200 pounds. He was not the

irresistible womaniser Conan is often presented as, but either hated or was afraid of most of the women he ever met – possibly due to his own oppressive mother. He regarded almost every woman he met as a mother or a whore, a wife or a vampire. Every woman was, to him, most likely Lilith in disguise, yet he beheld Sappho as one of the greatest ancient poets. Howard was a regular spectator in local boxing matches, yet he was scared to death of seeing blood.

Howard was a diagnosed schizophrenic, and this, in addition to his serious dependency on his mother led to his early death in his thirties. On the morning of June 11, 1936, the attending nurse replied in the negative when Howard asked if his mother would ever emerge from her coma. He walked to his car, drove home, got in, and fired a bullet into his brain. He deceased eight hours later, some thirty hours before Mrs. Howard (Finn 2006:214).

2 RACISM

This chapter aims to clarify the meanings of the term “racism”. First in more general terms, and then with more detail pertaining to the differences between the time when the texts were originally written and when they were translated. The term has to be clarified, so that the possible customary differences in usage, and what effect certain words would have on the original writer's contemporaries can be deduced, as opposed to the the effect on the translator's contemporaries. For example, whether the word “Negro” would be regarded as a derogatory term, or merely used to denote a black person.

Racism in itself is the belief that there are inherent differences in people's traits and capacities that are entirely due to their race. In the modern English language, the term “racism” is applied especially to racial discrimination, which is often justified by recourse to racial stereotyping or referring to exploits of individual persons of a perceived “race”. In some cases this discrimination is sought to be backed with scientific explanations, which up to this point have been proved false. Modern usage often equates racism and racial discrimination and defines the latter term only as

applying to hurtful practices. Differential treatment of racial groups that is intended to ameliorate past discrimination is known by other terms, for example as “affirmative action”. This is usually hailed as racism (or reverse discrimination) by its opponents, and typically implies a belief in the harmful nature of the practice with respect to the groups not receiving assistance.

According to the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD 1966), which entered into force 1969:

the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

Thus the United Nations conventions make no difference between ethnicity discrimination and racial discrimination, and following the given example, this thesis will also make no difference between prejudice shown for the bodily differences, i.e. of race, or for cultural differences. All cases are based only on possible prejudice or contempt shown. As an interesting aside, the United Nations has not defined the term “racism”, only that of racial discrimination. Still, as stated before, these terms are commonly seen to be synonymous and will therefore be used as such throughout this thesis.

For the purpose of this study it would be prudent to ask whether or not the morals of the late 20th and early 21st century have intrinsic value? After all, at least some of the values of the 1930s were probably viewed as morally upright by the people. It would be more than arrogant to imagine everyone who viewed people of different skin tone with racial prejudice as evil or malignant. Uneducated or misled perhaps, but still, they followed the local majority views, and following the lead of the majority is one of the main tenets in modern democracy-centred world view of the western countries.

Therefore, even if contemporary values seem valid and able to defend themselves on modern moral standards, it would be safe to assume that at least some values on which this research is based will fall out of favour, or change in some aspects in the coming decades. In this light, the customs of the time during the author of the source text should be taken into consideration while determining the possible racism of the texts studied. However, this should also influence the study of the translations, i.e. whether or not the translator has used a term or nomenclature that would create similar effect with their contemporaries as Howard would have had on his. Not being a contemporary of the original author this will most likely be one of the most difficult tasks concerning this thesis.

2.1 Racism in the 1930s

During Howard's literary career, which spanned from 1924 to 1936, racism in Texas was perhaps at its highest. The Ku Klux Klan was at the peak of its power, and even the general opinion was of white supremacy (Cohen 2012). In his attitude towards race and racism, Howard was certainly racist by modern standards. However, the extent of his racist beliefs is debated hotly even now. Howard, like many other authors before and after him, used race as shorthand for physical characteristics and motivation, but still his stories more often depict clashes between differing cultures and ideals than those of somatic race. Howard would often make up racial traits to ease his writing process, but would also conversely sometimes seek detailed information about the ethnic groups he was depicting in his stories, as is evident by some questions sent to the editor of *Adventure Magazine* on March 20th 1924:

- “1. What is the Mongol word for "wolf"? For "tiger"? For "sword"?
2. Is the language used by the Mongols similar to that of the Tartars?
3. Do the Kirghiz inhabit Mongolia or Chinese Turkestan?
4. Are there any Baskir tribes in Chinese Turkestan, and are they allied to the Turkomans?”

The 1930s were a time of great turmoil concerning the racial issues in the United States, especially in the Southern States, which had abolished slavery after the Civil

War, but still opted for segregation. This meant that the blacks were free to live their lives out of shackles, but were still deemed as inferior to the white majority. Skin colour was of common usage in speech and literature, even among those who were against segregation, and was not considered racist in the 30s. Still, the word “nigger” was deemed derogatory by all parties (Wilson 2005:9).

Howard was of the belief that no matter who won these “conflicts of race”, it would only ever be a temporary victory. Howard saw barbarism as the status quo of society, while civilisation was only a light veneer that would eventually crumble down from internal conflicts, or be ground to oblivion by hostile outside forces. The conquerors would most likely be subject to similar hubris and extravagant lifestyles as their predecessors, and fall as the Roman Empire had done. Howard's distrust of human ability to actually evolve permanently beyond the fight-for-survival stage saw no difference between skin colour or cultural background. Despite his universal scorn of civilisation, Howard was no misanthropist, and as he grew older he became also less of a racist (Finn 2006:80–81). Some of his later prose includes decisively more sympathetic black characters than his earlier works, although his highly stereotypical “ju-ju man” N'Longa, who appears in texts from 1927 onward, can be seen as a fatherly character, and is depicted in a sympathetic manner, albeit with many demeaning characteristics, such as his pidgin speech.

It could be argued that racism was much more prevalent in the 1930s than it is now, yet most people understood that such acts as segregation and certain nomenclature, such as the term “nigger”, were racist and showed at least contempt, if not outright hate, towards mostly somatically differing people. Cultural differences were naturally a factor too, but due to the continued segregation in southern states, people living in the general area knew very little of the actual cultures of different “races”. This naturally led to exaggeration of the differences and thus possibly into more racist views. The main difference between the 30s and modern times seems to be the fact that most, albeit not all, remarks describing people by their skin colour should not be viewed as racist, since they were not viewed as such by any parties involved. Still, all such uses of colour to give a quick description of people should be studied in

more depth to ensure that the writer only uses this to point to different characters within the story, as they would with names or visible markings, such as height or clothing, for example.

2.2 Racism in the 1990s

On entering the final decades of the 20th century, the views on what is racist and what is not had changed enormously from the 1930s. General political correctness had gained more foothold and most statements dealing with differing cultures, and especially those dealing with visual issues, were at least checked for possible racist undertones if not outright proclaimed as racist. The 90s saw many changes in the world regarding the racial prejudices, one prime example being the end of apartheid in South Africa, which had been an issue ever since the second World War. This could be seen as direct continuation for the changes in equality that had been taking place since the 1960s and the early 70s, most famously in Martin Luther King's work for the advancement of civil rights, racial equality, and ending discrimination.

A lot of the words that were not viewed as racist in the 1930s were deemed as such in the 1990s, such as “coloured” or “Negro”, although the former should not be viewed as derogatory according to Carla Sims, the communications director for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The word “colored” was chosen for use in the association's name in 1909, when NAACP was formed, because it was the most positive description commonly used at that time. Sims considers the word outdated and antiquated but not offensive (Sevilla 2008). Changes such as these would have great effect on how stories written earlier are read, as the meanings the author was trying to convey could possibly be different than the ones that a reader from a later era would infer from the text.

The increased awareness of political correctness within the general public had also a profound effect on what was perceived as racist. Most ethnic groups have taken upon themselves to decide which terms are racist and which are not. This, in turn has lead into a situation where it is nearly impossible to make a comprehensive list of racist

terms, especially since some ethnic subgroups have reserved some terms for internal use, but view their use by non-members as racist. Most well known example of such reappropriation is the use of the term “nigga”, an eye dialect transformation of the word “nigger”, in African American Vernacular English. Non-racist examples would include the terms “nerd” and “geek”, which have entered common use by the people mostly alluded to by this nomenclature. Similar reclamations of previously derogatory terms occur infrequently, but the list of such re-appropriated terms seems to be growing. This naturally leads to a problem. If there is no single authority on what can be deemed as a racist slur, but rather everyone is free to have a say, then everything and nothing can be seen as racist. Naturally, common sense can dictate much of the appropriate vocabulary, but every now and then there are some borderline cases which model the problems caused by this freedom.

3 MATERIAL

This chapter focuses on the choosing of the material for the thesis. As the focus of this thesis were racist occurrences in the original texts, and how they are processed when translating, the selection of the material had to reflect this aim. For a start, several short stories with translations available were chosen to serve as the pool from which the final decisions were made. Afterwards, these short stories were searched for preordained keywords, and the paragraphs containing these keywords were then scanned for overt and covert racism or racially discriminating overtones. This was done to ensure that there would be enough material for a reliable analysis. Finally, the Finnish translations corresponding to the final paragraphs were sought out. The stories themselves, and their corresponding translations are presented in table 1.

As the dates of the translations were within a four year time-frame, there would most likely be no noticeable change in the general social views on racism in literature. Therefore, the year when the story was translated was decidedly not taken into account as the stories were organised chronologically in ascending order. As the possible changes in the views on racial and cultural differences of the original author were to be analysed, the texts were organised according to the time of writing of the

originals. There was one case for which the time of the original authoring was somewhat vague, but the general time of finishing, that is the fall of 1927, is stated in this case.

Table 1: *Stories studied and their translations.*

Original story	Written in	Translated as	Translated in
The Shadow Kingdom	Sept 1927	Varjojen valtakunta	1992
Red Shadows	fall 1927	Punaiset varjot	1992
Wings in the Night	Aug 1930	Yön siivet	1992
The Scarlet Citadel	Oct 1932	Tulipunainen linnoitus	1990
The Black Colossus	Dec 1932	Musta kolossi	1990
Black Canaan	Sept 1932	Musta Canaan	1992
Queen of the Black Coast	Nov 1933	Mustan rannikon kunigatar	1990
The Valley of the Worm	Feb 1934	Madon laakso	1989
The People of the Black Circle	May 1934	Mustan ympyrän kansa	1990
The Jewels of Gwahlur	Mar 1935	Gwahlurin jalokivet	1991
Red Nails	July 1935	Punaiset naulat	1990
Shadows in Zamboula	Nov 1935	Zamboulan varjot	1989

(Burke 2011)

3.1 Selecting the short stories

The stories used for this paper were picked from a pool of works that were available both in original language and as translations into Finnish. Printed material was used to select the stories, from which the paragraphs would later be drawn. Many of Howard's stories are available in public domain and on the internet, as the writer's death in 1936, over 70 years prior to this writing, has led to the annulling of copyright of some of his works. These are naturally the English language versions, so the availability of Finnish translations was still a hindering factor. Still, this digitalisation of the works helped enormously in scanning the text for keywords.

The texts were chosen, as mentioned earlier, from all material available from the author in both languages, that is in English and in Finnish, with a preference for a wide timespan between the earliest and latest texts. Thus the earliest of the texts

discussed, “The Shadow Kingdom”, was written in September of 1927, and the most recent text, “Shadows in Zamboula”, was written in November 1935. This gives a spread of eight years, which gives ample time to see whether or not the author made changes in his portrayal of ethnicity or race. Keeping in mind that Howard began his actual writing career in 1924 and it ended with his death in 1936, this timespan covers roughly two thirds of his literary career. Thus it seems plausible to deduct that if any changes took place, such shifts would most likely be witnessed in the texts to be analysed.

The short stories were picked randomly for the sake of objectivity, and are a cross-section of Howard's translated texts. The initial pool contained, as described above, only the original English stories for which a Finnish translation was readily available. This limited the selection from Howard's texts considerably, and thus somewhat eased the next step in picking the actual texts, from which the paragraphs would be sought out. The number of stories to be picked was arbitrary, and limited to twelve for manageability. These twelve were then chosen based on their year of original creation, to facilitate a possibility to research any changes taking place within Howard's vocabulary and expression. There were still quite a number of stories to choose from, so additionally a decision was made to check that at least one of the stories was more contemporary to the writer, so that not merely prehistoric fantasy stories would be present for the analysis. Eventually, upholding this decision was also proven to be somewhat difficult to ascertain, since one of the stories, “The Valley of the Worm”, tells in fact a story within a story, narrated by a fictitious Texan contemporary of Howard, James Allison. One of the randomly picked stories satisfied this self-imposed rule very clearly; the story of “Black Canaan” is a fictional retelling of two articles Howard sent to a company periodical, The Texaco Star. Even though the original story was stated by Howard to have basis on real life events in 1858, the final published story is transferred towards Howard's own time, near the turn of the century, almost 50 years later than the proposed actual story of “Kelly the Conjure-Man”. These and rest of the actual stories settled upon were listed earlier, in table 1.

3.2 Choosing the paragraphs

The paragraphs to be analysed were chosen from the twelve English texts by seeking the electronic material with different keywords, listed in table 2, and further examples were chosen from passages that seemed interesting due to covert racism or racist undertones, which are arguably unlikely to be found with basic word-searches.

Table 2. *Keywords used*

Negr*, nigger, black, dark, bronze, red*, people, god*, strange*, skin*, nose*, eyes, rac*, face, primitive, culture, savage
--

The asterisk marks a wildcard of zero or more characters

The stories were scanned for the aforementioned keywords using such tools as were readily available, and from each story at least two examples were produced. These were then further read through, and if there were more than two that contained implicit or explicit racism, two were chosen arbitrarily, with a preference for implicit racist remarks to lessen the effect of possible bias in interpretation, due to the fact that implied racism is highly a subject to misinterpretation. If there were only one or two paragraphs with possible racist tones present after the second screening process, they were included in the study as such.

These paragraphs were then arranged in the order of their original appearance within the complete source text, and furthermore paired with their translations into Finnish. That is to say, the English language versions were the ones selected for study, and their corresponding translations had no impact on the selection of neither the stories, nor the actual paragraphs studied, except for the requirement that a Finnish translation exists for the selected text. This was deemed as a satisfactory condition, seeing how the texts cover a wide swath of the working years of Howard. Since there are Finnish translations for less than half of his stories, some genres, such as the boxing stories and oriental adventures, had to be omitted. In addition, apart from the short story “Black Canaan”, there are no western stories present in this study, due to a lack of their translations in Finnish.

In the end there were 23 paragraphs and their equivalent translations, for a total of 46 excerpts, selected for the study. This was regarded as a large enough sample for reliable research, as the stories were picked from a span of eight years, and the paragraphs themselves were scanned for actual occurrences of racism, whether overt or containing subtle racial undertones. As the number of paragraphs under study is rather large, the complete excerpts are not presented within the main body of this study but can be found in the appendix.

4 METHOD

In this chapter the steps taken while going through the actual research material are described, the research material being the paragraphs chosen and their respective translations, the selection of which was described in detail in the previous chapter. With the text excerpts chosen for the study, the next step was naturally their thorough reading and the comparison of both the original text and the corresponding translation. In this phase both texts, that is, the original English and the corresponding Finnish translation, were subject to scrutiny for racism, its avoidance, and other changes in meaning or content.

4.1 Discerning Racism

The actual work in analysing the paragraphs lay in detecting, interpreting, and analysing the possible racism contained within each text excerpt. As finding and researching possible racist occurrences in both the original texts and their translations was the main subject of this study, making guidelines for determining whether a passage is racist or not was the next logical step to make. To discern whether the usages within these texts were actually racist, or racially discriminating, these guidelines should follow the conventions during the time of the writing of the text under scrutiny, thus forcing sometimes wildly differing views on the original texts as opposed to their translations, which were coined some sixty years later. These differences between perceived racism during the time of writing the original texts

and of their translations were addressed in chapter 2, previously. Discerning racism in covert cases, as opposed to explicitly racist passages, would most likely present altogether different challenge, but since the original selection phase already had to deal with the somewhat objective reasoning for whether or not a certain passage was racist, analysis would be adequate with just reasoning for the perceived racism, or its nonexistence.

5 ANALYSIS

Here the actual comparison between the original texts and their relevant translations takes place. The chapter will be divided into three subsections, all of which present a short span of years when the original texts were written. The sub-chapters are presented only for ease of reference and as such do not present any perceptibly marked or easily distinguishable period of creation by Howard. Such classification would not fit within the scope of this thesis, and as such is left for any subsequent researcher eager to address the possibility of veritable periods of recognisably differing style or content.

The first sub-chapter will deal with the works written during the time from 1927 until 1930, and the selected stories from within this time frame are:

1. "The Shadow Kingdom",
2. "Red Shadows", and
3. "Wings in the Night".

These stories represent the early commercially successful stories written by Howard, and two of these stories are located in a fictionalised Africa. The first story, "Shadow Kingdom", deals with a mythical ancient supernatural horror, and as such is possibly an analogy for the fear of unknown and foreign.

The second sub-chapter contains three stories written in 1932 and 1933. These are in order of presentation:

1. "The Scarlet Citadel",
2. "The Black Colossus",

3. “Black Canaan”, and
4. “Queen of the Black Coast”.

Interestingly enough, three of these titles bears the word “black”, and only in “the Black Colossus” it pertains to the outwards appearance of a sinister magical figure instead of an ethnic classification. In the two other stories it actually refers to black people. In “Black Canaan” to the black slaves – and their descendants – of the local creole people, and in “Queen of the Black Coast”, to the black tribes living along the coast where the two Caucasian main characters sail their pirate ship, manned with local black pirates.

The third and last sub-chapter spans the years 1934 and 1935, and contains analysis on the excerpts from the following short stories:

1. “The Valley of the Worm”,
2. “The People of the Black Circle”,
3. “The Jewels of Gwahlur”,
4. “Red Nails”, and
5. “Shadows in Zamboula”.

These stories deal with people of varying (fictional) ethnicities. “The Valley of the Worm” presents fictional Picts and Nordics, “the People of the Black Circle” are depicted as Asian mystics, “the Jewels of Gwahlur” and “Shadows in Zamboula” present people of black ethnicity in quite negative context, as superstitious servants fooled by an actress pretending to be the living spirit of a long dead priestess, and then as violent cannibals, respectively.

As such, there is likely to be more than enough material for a thorough analysis towards the goal of this thesis, which was as stated in the very beginning: to study how racism is treated in translations, whether overt or covert, and how the translators have taken into account the fact that the original text could have been written in an era of such differing views on racial equality as to be comparable to almost another world altogether.

Every sub-chapter has from three to five stories, and there are two excerpts from each, except for “the People of the Black Circle”, from which there is only one. Therefore there are 23 English passages and paired with their Finnish translations there are 46 excerpts in total. These have been numbered in ascending order, following the date of original composition and the order in which the selected text passages appear in the original short stories, paired with their corresponding Finnish translations. The excerpts will be referred to by their number, and in the introductory paragraph before each story is analysed there will also be a page number reference for the complete excerpts which can be found in the appendix.

The excerpts will be analysed in the aforementioned order, beginning with the English sample and the contemplation of possible racist occurrences therein. This is followed immediately with the analysis of the corresponding Finnish translation, with an in-depth scrutiny of whether the translator has taken any action concerning the possible racist content in the original while translating. These are further elaborated on, as required. The excerpts are not examined word by word, and only the examined portions are subject to analysis of the equivalent translations. These portions can be identified by the italicisation of both the original English and the Finnish translations. These then should be simple to tell apart, the languages being highly different. The model translations, recognisable by the single quotes, are made by the present author and used to show the literal content of the translation, as opposed to any changes in meaning that occur during translation.

5.1 Elemental Savage (1927-30)

The first story, from which excerpts 1-4 (p. 42) are collected, is “the Shadow Kingdom”, written by Robert E. Howard in September of 1927. The story itself is about two men with traditional tribal enmity, who have to join forces to defeat a horrible evil risen from the Earth's primordial darkness.

In excerpt 1 Howard tells of *mutual tribal enmity* of the main characters and how they spoke *the conventional court phrases of a highly polished race, a race not their*

own, thus telling the reader that the two men facing each other here are not as civilised as the nation in which the scene takes place, and how the high cultural aspects, the *court phrases*, are only a veneer covering their true character. Thus Howard places both personages at the same level, even though these characters are depicted as being from different cultural backgrounds.

Further, the main characters are depicted with their eyes gleaming with *the primal traditions of the elemental savage*. Again, both men are depicted with a single passage, and further still we have *two tribesmen glower[ing] at each other*, even though they are stated to be a king and a foreign emissary, thus reinforcing the feeling of how they are two men of characters completely at odds with their surroundings *in the throne hall of kings*.

Excerpt 2 shows, how the Finnish translation has converted the *mutual tribal enmity* into *vanha heimoviha*, literally 'old tribal enmity', thus effectively undermining the effect of both men feeling similar alienation within a culture not of their own. Still, the translation makes certain that the reader understands that both characters are feeling practically the same exact feelings, thus conserving at least the spirit of the original text. The *of the elemental savage* is translated into *alkuvoimaisen villin* which might not carry all the connotations of the original, as elemental is synonymous to something basic or fundamental, most likely pertaining to certain savageness and/or yearning of independence which is contained within every living human being; the Finnish translation, on the other hand, is more a description of primal strength and vigour, making it more a characteristic of these two men, thus missing the point of such savagery lurking within all civilised men, and maintaining how these two stand detached from their surroundings.

The term *tribesmen* has been translated into *soturiamies*, 'warriors', which has the connotation of a fighting-man who has had little or no formal training, yet is someone with prowess, usually within the context of a tribal society. Such societies might very well recognise a separate warrior caste, thus meeting quite well the tribal aspect which is missing as a perceivable item in the Finnish translation. Of some

interest for the study of the translation used here, the name of the king, Kull, is changed into its homophonic equivalent in Finnish *Kall*, in order to avoid the vulgar male genitalia references that inflections of the word “Kull” would generate in Finnish. This change also has the effect of conserving the approximately correct pronunciation of the original name, sans the aspiration.

In the third excerpt we get a description of king Kull *in his primitive fury*, which causes him to flood *his mind with a red wave of slaughter-lust*. As this character is the lead of the short story such aspects are depicted in wholly positive light, so that his primitive actions and this murderous rage, which could very easily be identified as negative characteristics, are in fact presented as not a rational way of action, but nevertheless dictated by the requirements of the situation.

Whereas Kull is depicted as a murderous savage, the other male lead, one of ancestry and cultural background different from that of the main character – and likely the perceived reader – is depicted even in the heat of a battle, alongside the raging king as *parrying and warding with cold skill*, thus presenting him as the more collected, rational, and thus to a modern mind, more efficient character. These attributes also convey an image of a man more civilised than his fighting companion. If we take into account the fact, that Howard himself saw all civilisation as mere coating on the inner savage of every man, this depiction of Brule as the more civilised man could also be viewed as the authors way of pointing out to the reader that Kull is in effect the more natural personage, and thus more worthy of respect. Still, even in that case Howard tells how the two are, by combining their respective skills and using their differences to their advantage, able to overcome incredulous odds.

The Finnish translation makes no changes with the depiction of the *primitive fury*, but the segment *flooding his mind* omits completely any mention of “mind”, and refers singularly to *sielu*, 'soul', as the part overtaken by the *slaughter-lust* (excerpt 4). Thus some of the intellectual aspects of the losing of ones mind in the heat of battle that Howard describes are lost in translation.

Regarding the level-headedness of Brule in comparison to the wild antics of Kull, the Finnish translation explicitly states that during the battle he keeps continuously defending the king with icy calmness, as compared to the original where he is described to be *parrying and warding with cold skill*. The way Howard tells it, this is not done in obeisance or out of servitude, but rather because the Pict, Brule, wants to protect his comrade in arms. Thus both characters are described as upright figures, with no negative qualities actually stemming from their race, ethnicity, or cultural background. Rather, they overcome their mutual *tribal enmity*. It is noteworthy that in this case Howard does not use the word race; perhaps to avoid having the reader or himself associate any racial traits to either of the literary characters.

The second story, “Red Shadows”, from which excerpts 5-8 (pp. 42-43) are taken, was written sometime in the fall of 1927, and tells of white puritan male on a journey vengeance that takes him to the African continent.

In the excerpt 5 there is immediately a mention of *a giant Negro*. Furthermore, this character is depicted to have an *apelike head* and *dusky hands like the talons of an ape*. All this is topped by a *Flat nose and great, thick red lips* which [complete] *this picture of primitive, lustful savagery*. Even though the word “Negro” itself can be seen as non-offensive, given the time frame when the original text was written, the adjectives that follow clearly paint a picture of racial prejudice. In the complete excerpt this black man is depicted as physically very imposing, both by his suppleness and sheer strength of limb, but these positive qualities work mostly to emphasise the near bestial image of this man.

In the translation (excerpt 6) the word *Negro* is replaced with *villi*, 'savage' being the most accurate translation, and he is described as entering proudly on the scene, *asteli ylväästi*, even though the original text states that he *stalked*. The translator has obviously taken some liberties to try and ease the clearly racist prejudices that the word *Negro* brought out in the original text. Still, rest of the description is translated quite faithfully with *apinamainen pää* and *apinan kourat* – 'apelike head' and 'talons

of an ape' respectively – with the final phrases also spot on with their translation, and thus in line with the clearly racist stereotyping of the original.

Seeing that the translation was done in 1992, it can be assumed that the shock value of such a description has moved from the bestial description of the proclaimed savage into the discriminatory way in which the black character was described. Naturally this bestial description was also part of the story, and should be seen as how the white main character, who would be something of a proxy for the original author's contemporary reader, would view such a sight. For a modern reader living in an information society, a black man is nothing to view in horror and awe, and as such the description of this character naturally claims attention to the descriptive language rather than to the man being described. It is still good, if only for the sake of posterity, that most of the racially prejudiced language is retained in the translation, to preserve the wholeness of the short story.

The same black character is again described in excerpt 5. The main character stands on the edge of a clearing wondering *How could he know the craft and hatred in that dusky, slanting skull that had led the Negro, escaping the vengeance of his tribesmen, to trail down the only man he had ever feared?* This instantly distances him from the white main character, who cannot imagine that there could be very human emotions and cunning exhibited by him. Furthermore the main character is obviously very aware that the *giant Negro*, as he was described earlier, had still been in any case afraid of him.

This derogatory wording is complemented by the last lines of the excerpt, wherein he is portrayed as a murderer who was waiting to kill the main character from ambush, but as he was *helpless and unarmed*, the black man now enters to kill him *openly – and slowly, as a leopard kills* which seems to be the favoured custom for him. Thus the black man is also described as cowardly, only presenting himself as he feels that victory is certain, although he is stated to prefer killing in the open.

The translation in excerpt 8 changes only some aspects of the original text. The adjective *dusky* on the third line of the original is left completely out of the translation. In addition the term *Negro*, on the same line, is replaced in translation with the word *soturi*, 'warrior'. Despite of this, the main characters surprise of the unexpected intelligence of the black man is still somewhat retained, but by these two examples it is clear that the translator has opted to lessen the overt racist tones contained within the complete original passage.

The third and last of the earlier stories is “Wings in the Night” (excerpts 9-12, pp. 43-44), which was written in August 1930. It tells another story of Solomon Kane, the same puritan as in “Red Shadows”, and his adventures through Africa.

The second sentence in excerpt 9 has the main character, Kane, thinking *If it was to be a test of endurance, he would see how savage thews compared with his own spring-steel resilience*. This passage has him comparing his own *spring-steel resilience* against the savages, thus creating a clear juxtaposition between him, the reader's proxy, and the “others” – in this case the African people giving chase. This setting is then turned around in the last sentence of the excerpt in question, as the main character's personality is described as having *savage essence* which *chafed at his flight*. In this case the savageness is presented as a positive trait, one of unpretentious courage and manliness, as opposed to the earlier mention, where the *savage thews* are given as a racial, or possibly cultural, attribute of the other people. This lessens the effect of being in a good condition as something one has had to strive for into something that is only natural, and therefore not a symbol of excellence.

Excerpt 10 shows that the translation has changed somewhat into *villien jäntevät lihakset*, “the savages' thews”, thus more clearly marking the comparison between the two factions. In the last sentence the changes in translation are also notable, with the *savage essence of his very being* changed into *sielunsa pohjukassa asuva raakalainen*, 'the savage living in the depths of his soul', and the chafing translated into *kiristeli hampaitaan*, 'gnashed his teeth'. These carry the original meaning well,

and could thus be seen as localisation, but it should be taken into account that the word “savage” is translated differently when pointing to Kane than when it points to his pursuers, especially since the term *raakalainen* has markedly more negative connotations than *villi*, which is used in the Finnish translation of the term “noble savage”, 'jalo villi', and as such has at least slightly more positive content. This could be inferred as the translators attempt to lessen the effect that the original text has in elevating the white main character above the pursuers in spirit and character. It seems that the translator aimed to create more of a connection with the similarities of the two factions than the original author, whose text, as mentioned earlier, creates more of a juxtaposition.

In excerpt 11, we have the chief of a fictional African tribe telling Kane “*If you be not a god, there is the power of a god, in you!*” and further on mentioning his weapons *which speak death in fire and smoke*, creating a traditional racist image of the African blacks as uncivilised, unlearned, technologically backwards, and easily awed. This echoes the “lost world” -genre of fiction and its depictions of native people, the similar treatment of which has been a staple of the genre ever since H. Rider Haggard's “King Solomon's Mines”. This treatment continues further in the last passage in the excerpt, as chief Goru further tells the main character that “*We have thrown of their yoke because our trust is in you!*” The wording here invokes a similar phrase, “In God is our trust”, from the National Anthem of the United States of America, and as such further emphasises the godliness of Kane, the main character, in comparison to the African natives. He is made to be a man of flesh, yet more potent than all the people, or rather the fighting men, of the whole village where he resides.

The translation (excerpt 12) has kept the meaning quite the same, though there are some variations in the delivery. The latter example used has most likely been either quite difficult to translate, or the allusion has been altogether bypassed, for there is no analogy or an idiomatic expression in the Finnish vocabulary to carry similar references to god, as the originals *our trust is in you*. This has been translated quite simply *luotamme sinuun*, 'we trust you', which delivers the obvious meaning but

leaves the covert implications untouched. In this case it might not be prudent to label this mismatch as the translators active doing, but there is an obvious difference between the effect that the passage can have on the reader. Therefore, the text again loses some of its racially discriminating effect during the translation, which has at least up to this point been more the rule than the exception. It is still reasonable to take into account the likelihood that the translator has not noticed the possible connotations that the original phrase might have had with the peers of the original author.

These works show quite well Robert E. Howard's views on both the effect of civilisation on "true men" and on the ancestry of African people. There seems to be no compassion wasted for either, but Howard seems to have been at least honest in his expression, since it does not alter much within his text. The translations, however, seem to endeavour to lessen the racist output that is evident in the original texts, markedly in the passages that deal with black people. On the other hand, wherever the original text points out to the shortcomings of the white protagonist there are practically no changes between the negative sentiments conveyed by the original text when compared to the translations. Therefore it seems prudent to assume that the aim of the translators has been lessening the impact of the racially loaded expression of the original texts, at least to the approximate level the original texts would have had at the time of their initial publication, or possibly to an even lesser degree, in line with the prevalent level of political correctness contemporaneous with the translation.

5.2 No Civilized Man (1932-33)

The fourth short story to be analysed is "the Scarlet Citadel", originally written in October 1932. The main character in this story is Conan of Cimmeria, the most recognisable literary character created by Howard, who is presented as a king about to lose his kingdom. This story was later expanded into the only full fledged Conan novel, "The Hour of the Dragon". Excerpts 13-16 (pp. 44-45) are taken from this story.

Excerpt 13 has Conan fighting a losing fight against a multinational army, led by his political opponents, the leaders of neighbouring countries, and an evil sorcerer. He is described as *the black-mailed [...] western king loom[ing] among his swarming foes*, these opponents being *Ophirean knights in gilded mail [...]; squat Shemites with blue-black beards, and dark-faced Kothian knights*, the latter thus clearly apart from the white – although usually depicted as bronze-skinned – main character. They are also stated to *[draw] back from his desperate savagery, panting and livid*. Thus these many soldiers are forced to retreat by a single person, the readers proxy, who is explicitly stated to be “western”, and fighting against opponents differing somatically from him.

In addition, the passage begins with a statement that *the Aquilonians had not fled*, thus depicting the men that Conan had led, the explicitly western knights, as honour bound and fearless; ready to fight unto death at the side of their king. Conan is described fighting his opponents *like a butcher wielding a great cleaver*, and is as such not perhaps the most positive image of a western king, but it should be taken into account that Howard was never a great advocate for the civilised society.

The translation (excerpt 14) follows very closely the contents of the original text. The “others” are portrayed very faithfully to the source language, and the 'western king' is still the butcher. Thus there are no changes to lessen the specific racial or cultural differences between the men locked in the fight. The final clause in the excerpt has some changes in the wording, with *drew back* translated as *pelästyvät*, 'were frightened', and the actual retreat is pushed all the way into the end of the passage, *perääntyivät kalmankalpeina*, and *panting* is left out of the text altogether.

Excerpt 15 has Conan as a prisoner taunted by his black warden. The black man is portrayed in a rather unfavourable light with *red eyes* and his *teeth [flashing] wolfishly*, he goes on to state “*Aye, you white dog, you are like all your race; but to a black man gold can never pay for blood.*” Thus the author clearly presents the characters as men of different races and different cultural values, and portrays here the black man condemning all of the “white race” as thinking mainly in terms of

monetary value and disregarding the value of family ties, and in doing so specifically misjudges him, the “black man”. This can also be interpreted as the importance of blood feud for Howard's fictional black people, but as the man and his cultural background are not explained in depth in the story, it can be safely assumed that it was only to set the characters apart from each other and to carry the narrative in desired direction.

The translation in excerpt 16 follows quite faithfully, but there is difference of delivery in changing the singular *to a black man* into plural *meille mustille*, 'to us black men'. This does not have any particular effect on the impression that the reader most likely gets from the actual passage, and is more likely a form of localisation. All in all, despite having placed two very different characters face-to-face, this excerpt does not seem to bear any actual ill will towards either of the characters mentioned.

“The Black Colossus”, written in December 1932, tells a story of a frontier kingdom which is in the way of an army of nomads, headed by an ancient wizard portraying as a prophet of the desert people. Excerpts 17-20 (pp. 45-46) are taken from this story, where the main character is again Conan the Cimmerian, who is divined to be the only man able to stop the onslaught of the nomad army.

In excerpt 17 we get a description of a man – who later turns out to be none other than Conan – through the eyes of the female lead of the story, Yasmela of Khoraja. He is described as having *baleful fire* in his eyes, and that *The eyes of no civilized man, however wild or criminal, ever blazed with such a fire*. He is also stated to be markedly a barbarian, which can be taken both as a quick method of depicting his presence and for differentiating the character from the locals. This was possibly also a point made to identify the character Conan as specifically “the barbarian” in the story, but in the context of the story it actually refers to the original meaning of “barbarian”, from the Greek “barbaros” (βάρβαρος), those not of a city-state, “polis”. In the excerpt this is made clear with the clear separation of *barbarians as well as civilized foreigners* who are stated to serve within the mercenary command.

The translation in excerpt 18 misses some of the finer points in the original, especially concerning the negative implications such as the *baleful fire* being translated into *kirkkaampi valo*, 'brighter light', which shirks the ominous connotations of "baleful", and as such makes the character seem more agreeable to the reader, even though that does not appear as the author's original idea. Furthermore, the clear dichotomy between the country where the story takes place and the rest of the world is lost in as the clause *barbarians as well as civilized foreigners* is translated into *barbaarisista kuin sivistysvaltioistakin*, discarding the term "foreigner" completely. As the original text presents outsiders as barbarians or civilised foreigners, making a clear division from natives either way, the translation invokes an image that there are the barbarian "nations" and the civilised nation, one of which is Khoraja, where the story is set.

The excerpt 19 and its translation (excerpt 20) give a depiction of a man foreign to the state where the scene is set and to all other characters present – thus including the reader. He is depicted as a man *typical of the race evolved along Koth's southern borders — tall and gaunt, with features leaner and more hawk-like than his purer-blooded desert kin*. Furthermore the man is portrayed as a fatalist due to his ancestry, creating an image of a man who would walk into his own death, head slung low, because he feels that there is nothing he can do to alter his fate. This is in direct contradiction of the main characters in the story who were decided to do anything within their power to oppose an almost unstoppable enemy force. He can therefore be interpreted to portray a character inferior to the other male characters, who are physically imposing and adamant to have their own way. As such, his importance to the story seems to be as an example of a civilized foreigner and thus in opposition of Conan's barbarism.

The sixth short story, from which excerpts 21-24 (pp. 46-47) are taken, is "Black Canaan" which Howard wrote in September 1933. This is a retelling of the story "Kelly the Conjure-man", which Howard claimed was based on a true story. It tells of an uprising of freed black slaves in a fictional part of the Ark-La-Tex region of the

souther United States, called Tularoosa Creek, as they are led into a rebellion by a sorcerer by the name of Saul Stark.

Excerpt 21 gives a depiction of a black woman, who is the main female character of the story. She is described in an almost otherworldly tone, decorated with *tiny sea-shells that were never gathered on this continent* and *barbaric anklets and armllets*. She is construed to differ clearly from the local black people with such images as *[her jewellery] were as African as her loftily piled coiffure* and most glaringly stating that *she was alien, even in this primitive setting*, and afterwards invoking imagery of her belonging to *a background of steaming jungle, reeking black swamps, flaring fires and cannibal feasts, and the bloody altars of abysmal tribal gods*.

Even as she is made to stand apart from all other women that the main character, the readers' proxy, has seen, the woman is simultaneously given dangerous allure, especially considering that at the time of the writing it was highly controversial for a white man to express any desire toward a black female, particularly one depicted as being as bestial and unabashed as her. The desire that the main character feels towards this *swamp woman* – as the text puts it – is shown in the purposeful detail with which she is described, and brought into the readers attention in the line stating *She posed derisively before me, not in allure, but in mockery*, thus creating an even more enticing image of a witch woman who knows quite well the effect she has on men. This is further emphasised by the *Triumphant malice* which *blazed in her eyes* and *her red lips [curling] in cruel mirth*, creating an image of a veritable she-devil. The fact that she is black seems to be only emphasising her otherworldliness, and as such can be seen as a positive trait, at least for the efforts of the author.

The translation in excerpt 22 stays quite well in line with the original text in the first paragraph, although the translation of *were never gathered on this continent* seems to be lacking the impact of the original, the almost surreal imagery it evokes, as it is translated simply into *toiselta mantereelta poimittuja*, 'gathered from another continent', thus losing the element of the unknown. There is also the translation of

Barbaric into *Korea*, which means something pretty, ornate or colourful, and does not imply similar uncouth beautification as the original text.

The second paragraph, however has quite a few decisive changes in how the woman is described to the reader. To begin with, the term *derisively* is translated as *viekoittelevasti*, 'enticingly', which changes that meaning completely, although the image of the woman is returned as that of the original text in the following two sentences. Further, in the latter part of the second paragraph the *bestial* background is translated into *primitiivisen*, primitive, missing completely the inhuman nature that is courted by the original text, and finally *abysmal* is translated into *ahnaiden*, voracious, which while accurately bringing out one of the possible meanings of *abysmal* – that of immeasurable depth, and in this case an insatiable appetite – fails in delivering the image of the gods being immeasurable in any other sense, that is, in their age or in their evil, which seem to be the other images the original text seeks to invoke.

Excerpt 23 portrays the blacks of the story as a highly superstitious and frantic lot. The death of the magic-woman presented in the previous excerpts, by a gunshot wound acquired earlier in the story, is said to be *to them inexplicable*. As they were in the middle of a magic ritual at the moment, this seems plausible, but further they are described in less than flattering light, being compared to *fear-maddened cattle* and stated to be *screaming, tearing at one another*. Simply put, they are described in as an almost single entity, not unlike cattle, which needs constant guidance lest it is stampeded, a term also used in the text, and scattered in the surrounding area.

The translation (excerpt 24) keeps the image very similar, with some minor details changed, but the image of the uncivilised, fearful blacks is retained. The death of the woman is *heille selittämätön*, 'to them inexplicable', and this is further emphasised by an addition in the Finnish translation, *heidän ymmäryksensä mukaan*, 'to their understanding', which practically replaces the more flat *To them*, used in the original to begin the second sentence. And as there is no single word to translate *stampede* into, the Finnish text switches *tearing* into *tallaten*, 'trampling', to further convey the

image of the blacks running over their comrades without a moment of hesitation, while losing the meaning of the blacks using all their might, including physical attacks, to get away from the scene.

The last short story in this sub-chapter is “Queen of the Black Coast” – written in November 1933 –, arguably one of the best known Conan stories. It tells a story of young Conan, who is taken into a pirate crew and the adventures and love he shares with the pirate Bêlit, the eponymous queen. Excerpts 25-28 (pp. 47-48).

The 25th excerpt compares the main character Conan with the Argosean sailors, with whom he travels. Conan is depicted as *[towering] above them, and no two of them could match his strength*. They are depicted in somewhat favourable light, but in every instance, Conan is described as being superior to them. Still, Howard stays faithful to his views of mankind and mentions that *strong drink was a passion and a weakness to him*, in addition to being *naive as a child in many ways*, thus eroding the superhuman qualities of the main character and making him more realistic and lifelike.

The Finnish translation in excerpt 26 follows the set course of the original, taking no liberties in describing neither the sailors from Argos nor Conan. They are both shown in almost exactly similar terms, with changes only where dictated by the dissimilar structure and set phrases of Finnish, such as the term *trencherman* having no counterpart in Finnish and as such is replaced by a notion how *mässäily*, 'gluttony', was also his passion, in addition to strong drink.

Excerpt 27 and its translation in excerpt 28 depict quite different characters from the main characters and the black pirates they were with, a near-perfect race of beings as imagined by Howard. They were stated to stand ways apart from mere men, *not a branch of the mysterious stalk of evolution that culminated in man*, and in every way superior to mankind, resembling them *only as man in his highest form resembles the great apes*. Howard clearly shows his viewpoint of the men who like to view themselves as the epitome of life, going as far as comparing humankind to the likes

of gorillas when compared to a truly advanced species. The translation depicts the imagined race of beings quite the same as the original text, preserving the clear distinction between base humans and the higher race of winged beings, that built *their colossal city* in a time when *man's primal ancestors had not yet risen from the slime of the primordial seas*.

These stories again show most characters in very non-complimentary light, at least some of the time, but there were certain terms used that convey a feeling of racial prejudice. With this text as an indicator, it could be argued that Howard's expression has moved to a less racist direction, as it is not prejudiced against any single ethnic group, but rather shows contempt for everyone. Still, in the light of the previous sub-chapter it can only be seen as a minor change.

The translations seem to differ more from those of the previous texts, seeing how there were practically no softening of the caustic expression used by Howard, no matter which ethnic or cultural group was targeted. Here the translators themselves seems to have some effect, since all the texts in chapter 5.1 and most in 5.2 were translated by Selkälä and Äärelä, the only exception being “Black Canaan”, which was translated by Rosvall. It is this translation which seems to most adhere to the racist content of the original text, at least if all the previously studied translations are taken into account, and as such sparks an interesting question about the effect a translator has on such occurrences as racism. This appears a valid topic for additional research, either on racism or in a more general sense.

5.3 Different Era and Race (1934-35)

The eighth short story, source for excerpts 29-32 (pp. 48-49), “The Valley of the Worm” written in February of 1934, tells of a Viking-like character, Niord, and how he vanquishes a serpentine monster “from the depths of Hell”. Howard tells his story as the original dragon slaying tale, the “real story” behind similar tales of Perseus, Siegfried, Beowulf, or St George. Howard also mentions in passing that the main character is but one incarnation in a long line, and it is actually the latest who tells

the story via a racial memory, similar to how Jack London presents the story in “the Star Rover”.

Excerpt 29 presents a race of people Howard calls Picts, and as most of the Picts he describes, these too have practically only the name in common with the actual historical people, who lived in the northern and eastern parts of Scotland. According to the story *they were the most primitive and ferocious of any Picts that the main character had ever met*. Their primitiveness is further elaborated on by comparing them to *black savages in jungle countries*, such as the one where the story takes place, and how the jungle *was obliterating their pristine characteristics*. Howard goes on to mention cannibalism and head-hunting, and even writes: *These things are natural adjuncts to the jungle*. He states that the Picts *did not learn them from the black people*, using the very non-discriminatory term of “black people”, while simultaneously labelling them, too, as cannibals and head-hunters.

The translation in the excerpt 30 has most of the content intact, changing only such terms as *pristine* into *alkuperäiset*, 'original', perhaps lessening a bit of the negative impact created by the constant downplaying of the racial traits that Howard affiliates with his fictional Picts and black people of *jungle countries*. Still, this minor change does little to diminish the feeling of superiority that the white main character exerts over the other races.

Excerpt 31 delivers intertwined the views of the main character, his dying descendant, and the author of the story, of a giant serpent called “Satha”. This was often the name of giant snakes in Howard's fiction. Howard tells that *He was never worshipped by the pure-blood Picts, though the blacks that came later deified him, and the snake worship persisted in the hybrid race that sprang from the Negroes and their white conquerors*. The story continues stating that to other races this serpent *was the nadir of evil horror*, and how in the passing of time it first became the Set of Egyptians and later the Satan of Christian mythology.

The translation in excerpt 32 is quite peculiar in comparison to the previous one, since the choice of words in it actually emphasises the racism of the original text. Specifically the term *hybrid race* is translated into *sekarotu*, 'mongrels', which is used only for animals. The translation retains all other indicators of the horror that the worship of such false gods by the Stygians and later the Egyptians caused in the white race.

The ninth story under scrutiny was “the People of the Black Circle”, the first of the late period of Conan stories (Finn 2006: 170). Excerpts 33 and 34 (pp. 49-50) are from this story and its scene is analogous to Howard's conception of historical Nepal and its mysticism.

Excerpt 33 has the main character facing a local “mesmerist”, and as such practically impervious to his arcane might. There is first quite a build-up to explain how the locals were brought up generation after generation with *firm conviction of the reality and power of hypnotism*, and how in this situation *the individual [...] finds himself helpless*. And then the author goes forth to present Conan who *was not a son of the East. [...] The heritage that prepared a native of the East for submission [...] was not his*. Thus he is placed immediately above the locals by the fact that he is of different cultural background, and as such not swayed by local superstition. It should be noted, though, that in many other stories Conan is made to be as superstitious as any man of his fictional era, maybe even more so since he actually confronts many such supernatural creatures.

The Finnish translation in excerpt 34 does not alter the delivery, although the final sentence is slightly different with the alteration of *a native of the east* as *idässä syntyneen ihmisen*, 'a man born in the East', and as such passes by the issue that the term “native” could cause, especially in the old British colonies. Still, this is of a minor note since the translation delivers all other demeaning characteristics of the Easter people that such a minor change bears no perceptible difference.

Excerpts 35-38 (pp. 50-51) are from another Conan story, “the Jewels of Gwahlur” March 1935, where the main character is in the search of the eponymous treasure in Hyborian Africa. It is of some interest, that names for some of the countries mentioned such as Punt or Zembabwei were taken from African history before these nations actually formed under similar names; Puntland was declared autonomous state of Somalia in 1998, and Zimbabwe was declared independent from the United Kingdom in 1965, some 30 after “the Jewels of Gwahlur” was published.

Excerpt 35 describes the *barbaric kingdom* of Keshan, with its *dusky nobility ruling a population that was largely pure Negro*, and [*claiming*] *descent from a white race*, thus immediately giving them an imagined precedence over the black populace. The white race in question is said to have ruled *in a mythical age*, thus giving the claims of the rulers a tint very similar to that of later white supremacists. The translation, excerpt 36, is highly faithful to the original and does not shirk the term “Negro”, translating it into *neekerirotu*, 'Negro race', to fully utilise the effect of the racial segregation.

Later in the story, Conan is exploring the ancient ruins of Alkmeenon (excerpt 37) and examining ancient engravings. These are depicted as *grotesque*, showing *half-bestial creatures that might have been gods or devils*. Howard states them – via the musings of Conan – highly archaic, possibly representing art of *a different era and race* so far from the story's set time period to be in *itself a relic of an age lost and forgotten [...] immeasurably distant* from even the original settlers of the hidden valley, possibly even as old as the superior race mentioned in “Queen of the Black Coast”.

The translation in excerpt 38 follows the original text faithfully, except as the “race” in *different era and race* is translated into *ihmisrotua*, 'race of men', thus eliminating the possibility of a non-human presence. This racial element is so clearly apparent in the translations that it seems prudent to mention that it is the only one by its translator examined within this study, which in retrospect seems rather unfortunate.

Other than that, the translation takes care to deliver the *irvokkaat*, 'grotesque', engravings of the creatures with high fidelity.

The next story under study is "Red Nails, written in July 1935, from which excerpts 39-42 (pp. 51-52) are samples. The story itself is another Conan tale, yet it differs from most in having a pronounced female lead – Valeria of the Red Brotherhood – who is not only a capable warrior, but a force which even Conan recognises.

Excerpt 39 has Conan and Valeria exploring a domed city they thought abandoned, found in the middle of a desert, as they witness a living man within. The man is described as *very dark, though not Negroid*, and further his *wild appearance* is addressed in great detail, and the man has a gaunt but muscled visage which is portrayed as *built with an economy that was almost repellent*. Thus there are certain differences to the male protagonist which until this point have not been made clear, for Conan has been always depicted – in the texts by Howard – with a lean, yet muscular build. Still here we have a man who is superficially similar, yet stated to be physically unattractive.

In translation, excerpt 40, the term *Negroid* is translated into *neekeri*, 'nigger', which was already deemed as a racist term during the time of the translation in 1990, unlike the original term, at least during its first publication. The translator could have used the accurate Finnish term 'negridi', even though it too could have been taken as a racist term, due to the perceived racist connotations of its English language counterpart. The term 'neekeri' gains a further racially discriminating effect, since it can be read as bringing out the only positive trait of the lean and knotty man, stalking the seemingly empty hallways – that his only saving grace was him not being a nigger.

Excerpt 41 has the female lead Valeria contemplating the people of the enclosed city. She seems them as *decadent; any sort of perversity might be expected*, and continues to state that they *were neither sane nor normal; [...] if they were even human*. She also describes the other noteworthy female character of the story, Tascela, pointing

out her *cruel, cryptic eyes [...], which held secrets and mysteries more abysmal than madness*. It could be argued that it is also Tascela, who is referred to with the line *some secret terror fouler than common degeneracy*, since Valeria's previous meetings with her contained veiled lesbian eroticism, which would most likely been described as degeneracy by the contemporaries of Howard.

The translation in excerpt 42 makes no active effort to soften these meanings. The term *perversity* is translated into *sairaita mieltymyksiä*, 'sick preferences', instead of the more obvious 'perversioita', and the actual translation draws undoubtedly stronger reaction from Finnish readers, similar to the effect that the original text most likely had. The translation seems to keep this line throughout, except for the term *degeneracy*, translated as *rappautuneisuus*, as it is absolutely correct in meaning, but has no connotations toward lesbianism, or indeed any other kind of sexual implications. Thus here the translated work loses some of the effect of the original, despite the translators obvious effort to the contrary.

The final story under scrutiny is "Shadows in Zamboula", written in November 1935, which has Conan staying in the desert city of Zamboula, where black slaves eat people wandering about at night. This story yielded excerpts 43-46 (p. 52).

Excerpt 43 starts with a warning Conan gets from an old man in a local suq. The man tells of the owner of Conan's inn that *The people of the city would not suffer him to slay their people, but they care nought for the strangers who fall into his hands*, giving the citizens a bleak but realistic portrayal. He goes on to describe the black people, used as slaves within the city as *the demons of the desert* who worship their god with *fire that devours human victims*. The translation in excerpt 44 does not change anything of this rather uncomfortable portrayal of the people living in the city, but unlike in some of the previously treated translations, there is no actual effort to emphasise the negative traits either.

In the penultimate excerpt, number 45, Conan meets Baal-pteor the strangler, who is one of the very few humans who actually matched Conan with physical strength in

Howard's works. He is depicted as *brown-skinned, with close-cropped black hair and restless black eyes*. Furthermore, his physical stature is *enormous, with huge limbs, and great muscles [that] swelled and rippled*. And finally he is stated to have an *assurance of gigantic physical strength*. All this comes into play as he bids Conan to enter *mockingly, with an exaggerated gesture of invitation*. Thus the man is given very high praise for his physical stature, with almost no negative traits whatsoever; one of the few blemishes being his *arrogant face*. The fact that he is non-white seems to play no part at all, and as such tells more of the values the original author placed on strength, in comparison to the value of inherent attributes, such as the colour of skin or cultural background.

Excerpt 46, the translation of the previous, makes again very little changes to the original text, not changing the given image of the character one way or another. It could be that there were no perceivable negative racist commentary within the excerpt to soften, or to harden, to extract an effect comparable to the original text among its contemporaries. Then again, it could be the style of the actual translators, which have up to this point been mostly left out of consideration, the analysis concentrating more on the date of the translation in comparison to the original text. As such, this would perhaps require additional study into the effect that different translators have had in the possible racially discriminating language used in the original and its appearance – or the absence thereof – in the final translated texts.

These five stories seem to bring the racist content of Howard's original texts back in line with the earlier ones, provoking a question on whether the texts studied in chapter 5.2 were affected in any way by an outside influence, such as the surrounding atmosphere or the demands of a publicist. Still, these excerpts convey clearly the distrust for “others”, and the translations do not seem to actively seek to diminish that effect. On the contrary, at least in the story “the Valley of the Worm” the translation seems to be at places such as to emphasise the racial prejudices within the original.

6 CONCLUSION

This final chapter contains discussion on the questions posed in the very beginning of this thesis, and then aims to answer them with the data gathered from analysing the excerpts. In the first chapter there were two questions which served as the basis for this thesis: What would happen to a text written in the late 1920s or the early 1930s if it were translated in a society more sensitive to political incorrectness? And would the original author and his expression be respected enough to retain all racist passages, despite the changes that have happened in the political atmosphere?

These questions naturally required some research on how the level of political correctness had changed during the years between the original writing and the translation, some 60 years. It would have also been prudent to take into account the differences between the source language, English, and the target language, Finnish, when analysing the translations – especially considering the different notions of what is required for a text to be politically correct. The fact that there were two radically different cultural backgrounds for the texts was likely to have an effect on their contents and whether or not they would be viewed as racist. This seemed important enough to require acknowledging. Furthermore, all text comparison was based on a notion of racism, which certainly required a clear definition for the sake of this thesis.

As it turned out, the term “racism” in itself was a somewhat problematic entity. Its common use pointed to a very close synonymity with the term “racial discrimination”, and as such the terms were decided to be used interchangeably within this work. This seemed like a sensible decision, as these two terms are usually taken as pointing to similar discriminatory practises, and as was the case with this body of work, concentrating on these “racist” aspects – that is, the differentiating of characters with dissimilar features or cultural background – was more than enough for a preliminary study such as this.

Considering the differences between the culture from which the stories originate and the cultural norms during their translation, it is safe to state that there are fewer acceptable terms for describing differing people, especially those with somatic differences such as skin tone. While the Finnish society in the 1990s was certainly more aware of these sensitive matters than was the state of Texas in the late 1920s and early 1930s, it was still probably less politically correct environment than its contemporary English speaking countries. And it would seem reasonable to assume that the political correctness and universal sensitivity has only increased since.

This difference was present in the analysis, but it was taken into account rather subconsciously – given that the present author is a native Finnish speaker – and not given due merit in the actual examination. Still, it is safe to say that this fact of different measures for different languages (or perhaps more accurately for different cultures) had an effect on the analysis due to assessing the degree of racism within the passages with different notions of politically correct speech and acceptable terms.

The division of the texts under study into three bodies was made to find out whether or not the racist content within the original texts would change over time. Since the Finnish translations were done within a few years from each other it did not seem plausible that any changes in what was deemed acceptable could actually be seen in the translations. Rather, the difference between translators was more likely to have an effect on preserving or dispersing any racially prejudiced content during the translation.

As there were certain differences between the works of different translators it would be interesting to study if the environment where the translators were brought up – that is, if it was Finland or any other country – and their year of birth have any effect on their translation output. In fact this topic would merit a treatise for its own sake, and for future research on translating racism or other controversial subjects. It was taken into account while analysing the excerpts, but as there was practically no research of the translators beforehand, it remained mostly superficial. Still, there was clear distinction between the works of different translators, as pointed by the

summarising paragraph at the end of chapter 5.2 (p. 30). In future research where there are more than one translator, whose works are under scrutiny, it would be advisable to research the translators as well as their work, especially if the target language could clearly be affected by the upbringing and values of the translator.

In addition, a research on different translations of a same original text would perhaps bring more light on how the translator inevitably affects the end product. Such a study would be of use for anyone researching the translation of racism, but unfortunately such multiple translations of prose texts are rather uncommon. Still, such texts could be used for a study on how racism is, or can be, portrayed in a single culture but during different equality standards.

The sub-chapters did show some changes between the perceivable racism within the original language. These changes however did not follow a clear pattern, since the earliest and the newest stories under study had more distinct racial scorn than the four stories in the middle. This would indicate that Howard did not much alter his views during his lifetime. It is of interest, though, that Howard's contempt was not only toward the "others" in his stories, or perhaps more aptly, he disparaged the civilisation of white people at least as much as he did the non-whites. There were people Howard clearly saw as being of fine characteristics, but they were very few aside his main characters, who were mostly white men. This contempt for the weakness bred in civilised societies also followed Howard until his very death.

Going back to the first of the two original questions, what did happen to the texts as they were translated, and were the original expressions, despite their possible racist content, retained?

The excerpts studied in chapter 5.1 were clearly affected by the changes of sensitivity. The texts portrayed people of all cultural backgrounds and skin colours with similar disdain, yet the translations seemed to downplay this belittling whenever it was aimed at blacks or other non-white characters. This becomes a double-standard as the passages with white men are not treated similarly, preserving the disparaging

content of the original text. While considering this, it should be taken into account that in the current atmosphere of social equality it is completely acceptable to show contempt for one's own social or cultural group, and as such Howard thoroughly chewing the civilisation of white men can be translated with high fidelity. Still, it is clear that the translators have created a text more in line with their contemporaneous level of equality by lessening the racial prejudices toward non-whites exhibited in the original texts.

In chapter 5.2 the excerpts showed less racism than before, based on the notion that Howard seemed to be prejudiced against everyone. The translations, too, did not soften his expression nearly as much as those studied earlier. This led to the conclusion that no matter how the original text is presented, the translator most likely will have an effect on the racist content of the target language, whether knowingly or not. Still, as discussed earlier, the veritable effect of translators on racism should be a distinctive study in its own right. The translations here raise another question, which could be studied much further even with the material presented in this thesis: is there a difference in the racism evident within these excerpts and those studied before? This question is important, since all the texts studied in chapters 5.1 and 5.2 with the exception of "Black Canaan" were translated by the same people, Ulla Selkälä and Ilkka Äärelä. And since there were two translators, it would be interesting to find out which of these translations were actually done by which one, for it is highly unlikely that all the excerpts are joint endeavours.

The final sub-chapter of analysis (5.3) brought another possibility in translating racism on surface. The translation of "the Valley of the Worm" by Matti Rosvall actually seems to emphasise the racial discrimination contained within the original. This is especially interesting if we compare the current level of political correctness in the English language cultures to that of the original writing in 1934. The translation would most likely have to be more outrageous to have similar effect on Finnish audience as the English language original would have on modern readers. Could the emphasising of racism in the translation be explained with the aim of the translator to have similar effect in Finnish as the original would most likely have in

English? It would be intriguing to study this hypothesis, whether or not it would turn out to be true or merely reading too much into the possibilities of any single translator. In this light, it would also be interesting to study how native English speakers would react to these texts if they thought they were written in the last few years instead of in the 1920s or the 1930s.

In conclusion, there seemed to be three discernible ways of translating the implicit or explicit racism found in the original texts.

1. Racism was diminished in translation,
2. Racism was magnified in translations, and
3. Racism was not altered in translations.

Of these three, the first one was most abundant as racism was toned down in most translation excerpts. There was but one example of magnification of racism in translation, the story “the Valley of the Worm” and its translation of “Madon Laakso” being the sole instance.

The original two questions can easily be answered with the information gained from the analysis. The texts are usually altered, to reflect the translations contemporary level of racial equality and to downplay racism. There are also occurrences to the contrary, but these are few and far between, thus making the softening of racism the predominant convention. These other occurrences are most likely due to the translators attempts to deliver some of the impact from the original to the readers of the translated texts. The authors voice was not retained verbatim in the translations, but there still lingers the strong distrust toward the “others” and pure disdain toward weaker specimens of civilisation.

It can be said that the translators aimed to preserve the spirit of the text but mostly decided to tone down the vocabulary which would be highly controversial by modern standards. The expression of Howard seems to be retained as much as possible, thus acknowledging the importance of his articulation despite the strong racist tones.

APPENDIX

The Shadow Kingdom (September 1927) Translated in 1992

(Excerpt 1)

They eyed each other silently, their mutual tribal enmity seething beneath their cloak of formality. Their mouths spoke the cultured speech, the conventional court phrases of a highly polished race, a race not their own, but from their eyes gleamed the primal traditions of the elemental savage. Kull might be the king of Valusia and the Pict might be an emissary to her courts, but there in the throne hall of kings, two tribesmen glowered at each other, fierce and wary, while ghosts of wild wars and world-ancient feuds whispered to each.

(Excerpt 2)

He silmäilivät toisiaan äänettöminä, vanha heimoviha kihisten virallisuuden pintakaavun alla. Heidän suunsa lausuivat huoliteltuja sanoja, sivistyneen rodun sovinnaisia hovifraaseja, rodun johon he eivät itse kuuluneet, mutta heidän silmissään leimusivat alkuvoimaisen villin syväänjuurtuneet vaistot. Kall saattoi olla Valusian kuningas ja pikti hänen hoviinsa tullut lähettiläs, mutta kuninkaitten valtaistuinsalissa kyräilivät toisiaan kaksi valpasta ja kärsimätöntä soturia, joiden korviin kuiskailivat veristen sotien ja ikuisten heimoriitojen haamut.

(Excerpt 3)

Not often did Kull forget his fighting craft in his primitive fury, but now some chain had broken in his soul, flooding his mind with a red wave of slaughter-lust. He slew a foe at each blow, but they surged about him, and time and again Brule turned a thrust that would have slain, as he crouched beside Kull, parrying and warding with cold skill, slaying not as Kull slew with long slashes and plunges, but with short overhand blows and upward thrusts.

(Excerpt 4)

Kall ei usein unohtanut taistelutaitojaan alkukantaisen vihan pyörteissä, mutta nyt jokin salpa oli murtunut hänen sielussaan ja sen oli täyttänyt murhanhimon punainen hyöky. Hän surmasi yhden vastustajan jokaisella iskullaan, mutta he tungeksivat hänen ympärillään ja kerta toisensa jälkeen Brule ohjasi sivuun lyönnin joka olisi osuessaan surmannut Kallin; hän seiso i kyyryssä kuninkaan vieressä puolustaen tätä kylmäverisesti, eikä hän käytänyt taistellessaan samanlaisia laajakaarisia iskuja ja survaisuja kuten Kall, vaan lyhyitä ylös- tai alaspäin suuntautuvia lyöntejä.

Red Shadows (fall 1927) Translated in 1992

(Excerpt 5)

A giant Negro stalked into the space between them. He was the hugest man that Kane had ever seen, though he moved with catlike ease and suppleness. His arms and

legs were like trees, and the great, sinuous muscles rippled with each motion. His apelike head was set squarely between gigantic shoulders. His great, dusky hands were like the talons of an ape, and his brow slanted back from above bestial eyes. Flat nose and great, thick red lips completed this picture of primitive, lustful savagery.

(Excerpt 6)

Jättiläismäinen villi asteli ylväästi miesten väliin. Hän oli valtavin mies jonka Kane oli koskaan nähnyt, mutta liikkui silti kissamaisen pehmeästi ja notkeasti. Raajat olivat kuin puunrungot, ja mahtavat, jänteikkäät lihakset värisivät jokaisen liikkeen myötä. Apinamainen pää seisoa jökötti suunnattomien harteiden välissä. Leveät, tummat kädet olivat kuin apinan kourat ja otsa vietti taaksepäin petomaisten silmien yläpuolelta. Litteä nenä ja isot, paksut huulet täydensivät alkukantaisen, himokkaan raakalaisen kuvan.

(Excerpt 7)

A huge figure stepped out of the jungle, and Kane saw, and recognized, his doom. The man was Gulka, the gorilla-slayer. Kane remembered that he had not seen the black among those doing homage to N'Longa. How could he know the craft and hatred in that dusky, slanting skull that had led the Negro, escaping the vengeance of his tribesmen, to trail down the only man he had ever feared? The Black God had been kind to his neophyte; had led him upon his victim helpless and unarmed. Now Gulka could kill his man openly--and slowly, as a leopard kills, not smiting him down from ambush as he had planned, silently and suddenly.

(Excerpt 8)

Mahtava hahmo astui viidakosta, ja Kane näki ja tunnisti noutajansa. Tulija oli Gulka, gorillantappaja. Kane muisti ettei ollut nähnyt jättiä niiden joukossa jotka olivat osoittaneet kunnioitusta N'Longalle. Miten hän olisi voinut tietää luisussa kallossa asuvan oveluuden ja vihan, joka oli ajanut heimoveljiensä kosta pakenevan soturin jäljittämään sen ainoan miehen, jota Gulka oli koskaan pelännyt? Musta jumala oli ollut suojelevalle ja johdattanut hänet uhrinsa luo juuri kun tämä oli avuton ja aseeton. Gulka saattoi nyt tappaa saaliinsa avoimesti – ja hitaasti kuten leopardi, ei iskemällä tämän kimppuun väijyksistä niin kuin hän oli alunperin suunnitellut.

Wings in the Night

(August 1930)

Translated in 1992

(Excerpt 9)

Kane smiled bleakly and without mirth. If it was to be a test of endurance, he would see how savage thews compared with his own spring-steel resilience. Let night come and he might yet give them the slip. If not--Kane knew in his heart that the savage essence of his very being which chafed at his flight, would make him soon turn at bay, though his pursuers outnumbered him a hundred to one.

(Excerpt 10)

Kane hymyili synkän ilottomasti. Jos tästä tulisi kestävyyskilpailu, hän oli valmis katsomaan miten villien jäntevät lihakset vetivät vertoja hänen omalle teräksiselle sisulleen. Yön tullen hän voisi vielä järjestää niille yllätyksen ja livahtaa tiehensä. Ja jos ei – Kane tiesi että hänen sielunsa pohjukassa asuva raakalainen, joka kiristeli hampaitaan hänen pakonsa takia, pakottaisi hänet lopulta kääntymään taisteluun vaikka vastassa olisi satakertainen ylivoima.

(Excerpt 11)

"Save us from the akaanas!" said Goru. "If you be not a god, there is the power of a god, in you! You bear in your hand the mighty ju-ju stave which has in times gone by been the sceptre of fallen empires and the staff of mighty priests. And you have weapons which speak death in fire and smoke for our young men watched and saw you slay two akaanas. We will make you king--god--what you will! More than a moon has passed since you came into Bogonda and the time for the sacrifice is gone by, but the bloody stake stands bare. The akaanas shun the village where you lie; they steal no more babes from us. We have thrown off their yoke because our trust is in you!"

(Excerpt 12)

"Pelasta meidät akaanoilta!" Goru pyysi. "Vaikka et olisikaan jumala, sinussa on jumalan voima! Kannat kädessäsi voimakasta ju-ju-sauvaa, joka on muinaisaikoina ollut sortuneiden valtakuntien valtikkana ja mahtavien pappien työkaluna. Ja sinulla on kauheita aseita jotka sylkevät kuolemaa savun ja tulen kautta – nuorukaisemme tarkkailivat sinua ja näkivät sinun surmaavan kaksi akaanaa. Teemme sinusta kuninkaamme – jumalamme – mitä ikinä haluat! Enemmän kuin yksi kuunkierto on kulunut siitä kun tulit Bogondaan ja seuraavan uhrin määräaika on jo ohi, mutta verinen paalu on yhä tyhjillään. Akaanat karttavat kylää jossa sinä asustat; ne eivät saalista enää pienokaisiamme, olemme vapautuneet niiden ikeestä koska luotamme sinuun!"

The Scarlet Citadel

(October 1932)

Translated in 1990

(Excerpt 13)

The Aquilonians had not fled; they had died on the field, and of the five thousand knights who had followed Conan southward, not one left the field alive. And now the king himself stood at bay among the slashed bodies of his houstroops, his back against a heap of dead horses and men. Ophirean knights in gilded mail leaped their horses over mounds of corpses to slash at the solitary figure; squat Shemites with blue-black beards, and dark-faced Kothian knights ringed him on foot. The clangor of steel rose deafeningly; the black-mailed figure of the western king loomed among his swarming foes, dealing blows like a butcher wielding a great cleaver. Riderless horses raced down the field; about his iron-clad feet grew a ring of mangled corpses. His attackers drew back from his desperate savagery, panting and livid.

(Excerpt 14)

Aquilonialaiset eivät olleet paenneet; he olivat kuolleet taistelukentälle, ja niistä viidestä tuhannesta ritarista jotka olivat seuranneet Conania etelään yksikään ei poistunut tasangolta hengissä. Ja nyt kun kuningas itse oli ahdingossa ratsumiestensä silvottujen ruumiiden keskellä selkä kuolleitten hevosten ja soturien muodostamaa kasaa vasten. Ofirin ritarit kullatuissa haarniskoissaan kannustivat ratsunsa hyppäämään ruumisröykkiöiden yli hakatakseen yksinäisen hahmon maahan; tanakat sinipartaiset shemiitit ja mustanpuhuvat Kothin ritarit piirittivät hänet jalkaisin. Teräksen kalske kohosi huumaavaksi; läntisen maan kuningas hämötti tungeksivien vihollistensa keskellä mustassa rautapaidassaan ja jakeli iskuja kuin lihakirvestä heiluttava teurastaja. Hevoset säntäilivät tasangolla ilman ratsastajaa ja hänen teräksen verhoamat jalkansa peittyivät silvottuihin ruumiisiin. Hyökkääjät pelästyivät hänen epätoivoista hurjuuttaan ja perääntyivät kalmankalpeina.

(Excerpt 15)

The red eyes glittered, the white teeth flashed wolfishly in the torchlight. "Aye, you white dog, you are like all your race; but to a black man gold can never pay for blood. The price I ask is – your head!"

(Excerpt 16)

Punaiset silmät kiiluivat ja valkoiset hampaat välähtivät susimaisesti soihdun kajossa.

“Niinpä tietysti, senkin valkoinen koira, olet samanlainen kuin kaikki muutkin rotusi miehet, mutta meille mustille kulta ei ikinä korvaa verta. Hinta jota vaadin on – pääsi!”

The Black Colossus

(December 1932)

Translated in 1990

(Excerpt 17)

He stood facing her, his hand on the long hilt that jutted forward from beneath the scarlet cloak which flowed carelessly from his mailed shoulders. The torchlight glinted dully on the polished blue steel of his greaves and basinet. A more baleful fire glittered blueely in his eyes. At first glance she saw he was no Kothian; when he spoke she knew he was no Hyborian. He was clad like a captain of the mercenaries, and in that desperate command there were men of many lands, barbarians as well as civilized foreigners. There was a wolfishness about this warrior that marked the barbarian. The eyes of no civilized man, however wild or criminal, ever blazed with such a fire. Wine scented his breath, but he neither staggered nor stammered.

(Excerpt 18)

Mies katseli Jasmelaa käsi pitkällä miekankahvalla; se törötti tulipunaisen viitan alta, joka oli huolimattomasti kietaistu panssaroiduille harteille. Soihdun liekki heijastui himmeästi säärisuojusten ja kevyen kypärän kiillotetusta sinisestä teräksestä. Kirkkaampi valo tuikki miehen sinisissä silmissä. Heti ensisilmäyksellä Jasmela näki, ettei mies ollut kothilainen, ja miehen alkaessa puhua hän tiesi, ettei tämä ollut lainkaan hybori. Hän oli pukeutunut kuin palkkasotureiden kapteeni, ja siinäkin hurjassa joukossa oli miehiä monista maista, niin barbaarisista kuin

sivistysvaltioistakin. Tämän soturin olemuksessa oli susimaisuutta, josta hänet tunnisti barbaariksi. Yhdenkään sivistyneen miehen silmät eivät voineet leiskua tuolla tavalla, oli hän sitten kuinka hurja rikollinen tahansa. Barbaarin hengitys löyhähti viinille, mutta hän ei huojunut eikä sammaltanut.

(Excerpt 19)

He shrugged his shoulders resignedly. He was typical of the race evolved along Koth's southern borders — tall and gaunt, with features leaner and more hawk-like than his purer-blooded desert kin.

"Ishtar gives, princess." The fatalism of his ancestors spoke for him.

(Excerpt 20)

Mies kohautti olkapäitään alistuneesti. Hän oli tyypillinen Kothin eteläisen rajaseudun kasvatti – pitkä ja hoikka, ja kasvonpiirteet olivat kapeammat ja haukkamaisemmat kuin hänen puhdasverisimmillä autiomaan sukulaisillaan.

"Ishtar antaa, prinsessa." Agha Shupraksen esi-isien fatalismi puhui hänen puolestaan.

Black Canaan

(September 1933)

Translated in 1992

(Excerpt 21)

She was clad as I had never seen a swamp woman, or any other woman, dressed. Snakeskin sandals were on her feet, sewn with tiny sea-shells that were never gathered on this continent. A short silken skirt of flaming crimson molded her full hips, and was upheld by a broad beadworked girdle. Barbaric anklets and armllets clashed as she moved, heavy ornaments of crudely hammered gold that were as African as her loftily piled coiffure. Nothing else she wore, and on her bosom, between her arching breasts, I glimpsed the faint lines of tattooing on her brown skin. She posed derisively before me, not in allure, but in mockery. Triumphant malice blazed in her dark eyes; her red lips curled with cruel mirth. Looking at her then I found it easy to believe all the tales I had heard of torture and mutilations inflicted by the women of savage races on wounded enemies. She was alien, even in this primitive setting; she needed a grimmer, more bestial background, a background of steaming jungle, reeking black swamps, flaring fires and cannibal feasts, and the bloody altars of abysmal tribal gods.

(Excerpt 22)

Hänellä oli asusteet, jollaisia en ollut milloinkaan nähnyt yhdelläkään rämesseudun naisella tai kellään toisellakaan. Jaloissa hänellä oli käärmeennahkaiset sandaalit, joihin oli ommeltu toiselta mantereelta poimittuja näkinkenkiä. Lyhyt, leiskuvanpunainen silkkihame myötäili täyteläisiä lanteita, ja se oli sidottu vyötäisille helmin kirjoitulla vyöllä. Koreat nilkka- ja rannerenkaat välkähtelivät hänen liikkeessaan, karkeasti taotut painavat kultakorut olivat yhtä leimallisesti afrikkalaiset kuin naisen pään päälle keoksi tehty hiuslaitekin. Muuta hänellä ei yllään ollut, ja näin povella ylväinä kaartuvien rintojen välissä ruskeasta ihosta heikosti erottuvia tatuointiviivoja.

Hän asettui viekoittelevasti tielleni, ei minua houkuttaakseen vaan pilkataakseen. Hänen silmistään paistoi pahanilkinen voitonriemu; punaiset huulet kaartuivat julmaan ivanauruun. Häntä katsellessa oli helppoa uskoa kuulemiini tarinoihin kidutuksista ja silpomisista, joihin villiheimojen naiset alistivat haavoittuneet viholliset. Hän oli muukalainen jopa tässä alkukantaisessa maisemassa; hän olisi tarvinnut karumman, primitiivisen taustan, höyryävän kuuman suonlöyhkäisen viidakon, jossa ihmissyöjien juhlanuotioden lieskat leiskuivat ahnaiden heimojumalien veristen alttarien ympärillä.

(Excerpt 23)

The blacks were in a frenzy. In the sudden, and to them inexplicable, death of the sorceress they saw a fearsome portent. They had no way of knowing that she was dying when she entered the glade. To them, their prophetess and priestess had been struck down under their very eyes, by an invisible death. This was magic blacker than Saul Stark's wizardry-and obviously hostile to them. Like fear-maddened cattle they stampeded. Howling, screaming, tearing at one another they blundered through the trees, heading for the neck of land and the shore beyond.

(Excerpt 24)

Mustat olivat vihan vimmassa. Äkkiarvaamatta ja heille selittämättömällä tavalla tapahtunut noitanaisen kuolema tuntui heistä pelottavalta enteeltä. He eivät voineet mitenkään tietää että nainen oli jo aukealle tullessaan ollut kuoleman oma. Heidän ymmärryksensä mukaan heidän ennustajattarensa ja papittarensa oli lyöty kuoliaaksi heidän silmiensä edessä ja sen oli tehnyt näkymätön käsi. Se oli vielä mustempaa magiaa kuin Saul Starkin loitsut – ja kaikesta päätellen heille vihamielistä. Väkijoukko hullaantui kuin pelosta villiintynyt karjalauma. Ulvoen ja kirkuen, toisiaan tallaten mustat säntäsivät metsikön halki kohti maakaistaletta ja sen takana olevaa rantaa.

Queen of the Black Coast

(November 1933)

Translated in 1990

(Excerpt 25)

They were characteristic Argosean sailors, short and stockily built. Conan towered above them, and no two of them could match his strength. They were hardy and robust, but his was the endurance and vitality of a wolf, his thews steeled and his nerves whetted by the hardness of his life in the world's wastelands. He was quick to laugh, quick and terrible in his wrath. He was a valiant trencherman, and strong drink was a passion and a weakness with him. Naive as a child in many ways, unfamiliar with the sophistry of civilization, he was naturally intelligent, jealous of his rights, and dangerous as a hungry tiger.

(Excerpt 26)

He olivat tyypillisiä Argoslaisia merenkulkijoita, lyhyitä ja vanteratekoisia. Conan oli päätä pitempi heitä, eikä kukaan heistä olisi kaksin pareinkaan pärjännyt hänen voimilleen. Argoslaiset olivat pelottomia ja tarmokkaita, mutta hänellä oli suden kestävyys ja elinvoma; hänen lihaksensa olivat kehittyneet teräksenkoviksi ja aistinsa

terävöityneet julmissa maailmankolkissa vietetyn kovan elämän aikana. Hän nauroi herkästi, mutta oli vihassaan äkkipikainen ja hurja. Mässäily ja väkijuomat olivat hänen intohimonsa ja heikkoutensa. Hän oli lapsenomainen monin tavoin, tottumaton sivistyksen tapoihin, mutta luonnostaan älykäs ja tarkka oikeuksistaan ja vaarallinen kuin nälkäinen tiikeri.

(Excerpt 27)

Cast in the mold of humanity, they were distinctly not men. They were winged and of heroic proportions; not a branch on the mysterious stalk of evolution that culminated in man, but the ripe blossom on an alien tree, separate and apart from that stalk. Aside from their wings, in physical appearance they resembled man only as man in his highest form resembles the great apes. In spiritual, esthetic and intellectual development they were superior to man as man is superior to the gorilla. But when they reared their colossal city, man's primal ancestors had not yet risen from the slime of the primordial seas.

(Excerpt 28)

He olivat ihmisyyden muotista valettuja, mutta eivät selvästikään ihmisiä. He olivat siivekkäitä ja uljaan näköisiä; eivät haara siinä mystisessä evoluution rungossa joka päättyy ihmiseen, vaan täysin vieraan puun kypsä hedelmä, tyystin erillinen ihmisyyden puusta. Siipiensäkin lisäksi he muistuttivat fyysisesti ihmistä vain samalla tasvoin kuin ihminen korkeimmalla tasolla muistuttaa apinaa. Henkisessä, esteettisessä ja älyllisessä kehityksessä he olivat yhtä paljon ihmistä edellä kuin ihminen gorillaa. Kun he rakensivat valtaisan kaupunkinsa, ihmisen kaukaiset esi-isät eivät olleet vielä edes nousseet alkukantaisten merien limasta.

The Valley of the Worm

(February 1934)

Translated in 1989

(Excerpt 29)

I believe this particular tribe represented the easternmost drift of the race. They were the most primitive and ferocious of any I ever met. Already they were exhibiting hints of characteristics I have noted among black savages in jungle countries, though they had dwelled in these environs only a few generations. The abysmal jungle was engulfing them, was obliterating their pristine characteristics and shaping them in its own horrific mould. They were drifting into head-hunting, and cannibalism was but a step which I believe they must have taken before they became extinct. These things are natural adjuncts to the jungle; the Picts did not learn them from the black people, for then there were no blacks among those hills. In later years they came up from the south, and the Picts first enslaved and then were absorbed by them. But with that my saga of Niord is not concerned.

(Excerpt 30)

Uskoakseni tämä nimenomainen heimo edusti rodun itäisintä haaraa. Nämä villit olivat alkukantaisimpia ja hurjimpia mitä koskaan olin kohdannut. Heissä esiintyi jo viitteitä piirteistä joita olin pannut merkille viidakkoseutujen mustaihoisissa villoissa, vaikka he olivatkin asustaneet näillä seuduilla vain muutamia sukupolvina. Heitä

piiritti yltympäriinsä pohjattoman kuilun kaltaisena viidakko, joka häivytti heidän alkuperäiset luonteenpiirteensä ja muovasi heitä nyt omaan kammottavaan muottiinsa. He olivat ajautumassa pääkallonmetsästäjiksi; kannibalismi oli vain yhden askeleen päässä, ja uskoakseni he ottivat sen askeleen ennen kuin hävisivät olemattomiin. Nämä seikat kuuluvat erottamattomina viidakon yhteyteen; piktit eivät omaksuneet niitä mustilta, sillä tuolloin ei noilla kukkuloilla ollut mustia. He kulkeutuivat myöhemminä vuosina sinne etelästä; ensin piktit orjuuttivat heidät ja sittemmin sulautuivat heihin. Se ei kuitenkaan kosketa saagaani Njordista.

(Excerpt 31)

He was never worshipped by the pure-blood Picts, though the blacks that came later deified him, and that adoration persisted in the hybrid race that sprang from the Negroes and their white conquerors. But to other peoples he was the nadir of evil horror, and tales of him became twisted into demonology; so in later ages Satha became the veritable devil of the white races, and the Stygians first worshipped, and then, when they became Egyptians, abhorred him under the name of Set, the Old Serpent, while to the Semites he became Leviathan and Satan.

(Excerpt 32)

Puhdasveriset piktit eivät olleet milloinkaan palvoneet häntä joskin myöhemmin tulleet mustat tekivät hänestä jumalansa, ja palvonta jatkui myös sen sekarodun keskuudessa, joka syntyi neekereistä ja heidän valkoisista valloittajistaan. Muille kansoille hän oli kaiken pahuuden ja kauhun perikuva, ja hänestä kerrotut tarinat sekoittuivat paholaisuskomuksiin; siten Sathasta kehkeytyi myöhemminä aikoina valkoisten rotujen todellinen paholaisolento, ja ensin styygialaiset palvoivat häntä ja kun heistä tuli egyptiläisiä, he kammoksuivat häntä Set-nimisenä jumaluutena, Ikikäärmeenä, kun taas semiiteille hänestä tuli Leviathan tai Saatana.

The People of the Black Circle (May 1934) Translated in 1990

(Excerpt 33)

Khemsas's sorcery was based on hypnotism, as is the case with most Eastern magic. The way has been prepared for the hypnotist for untold centuries of generations who have lived and died in the firm conviction of the reality and power of hypnotism, building up, by mass thought and practise, a colossal though intangible atmosphere against which the individual, steeped in the traditions of the land, finds himself helpless.

But Conan was not a son of the East. Its traditions were meaningless to him; he was the product of an utterly alien atmosphere. Hypnotism was not even a myth in Cimmeria. The heritage that prepared a native of the East for submission to the mesmerist was not his.

(Excerpt 34)

Khemsan taikuus perustui hypnotismiin, kuten on laita useimpien idän velhojen kohdalla. Hypnotisoijan voima perustuu lukemattomiin sukupolviin, jotka ovat eläneet ja kuolleet uskoen vahvasti hypnotismin aitouteen ja tehoon, ja tämä usko on

vähitellen lujittunut niin painostavaksi voimaksi, ettei maan perinteisiin pienestä pitäen juurtuneella yksilöllä ole mitään mahdollisuuksia sitä vastaan.

Mutta Conan ei ollut syntyisin idästä. Sen perinteet olivat hänelle merkityksettömiä; hänen kulttuuritaustansa oli kokonaan toisenlainen. Kimmeriassa hypnotismia ei tunnettu edes myyttinä. Se perintö, joka valmisti idässä syntyneen ihmisen alistumaan hypnotisoijan edessä, oli hänelle vieras.

The Jewels of Gwahlur (March 1935) Translated in 1991

(Excerpt 35)

Keshan was a barbaric kingdom lying in the eastern hinterlands of Kush where the broad grasslands merge with the forests that roll up from the south. The people were a mixed race, a dusky nobility ruling a population that was largely pure Negro. The rulers — princes and high priests — claimed descent from a white race which, in a mythical age, had ruled a kingdom whose capital city was Alkmeenon. Conflicting legends sought to explain the reason for that race's eventual downfall, and the abandonment of the city by the survivors. Equally nebulous were the tales of the Teeth of Gwahlur, the treasure of Alkmeenon. But these misty legends had been enough to bring Conan to Keshan, over vast distances of plain, riverlaced jungle, and mountains.

(Excerpt 36)

Keshan oli barbaarinen kuningaskunta, joka sijaitsi Kushin valtakunnan itäisillä takamailla, missä laajat ruohomaat yhtyivät metsiin, jotka vyöryivät etelästä ylöspäin. Sen kansa oli rodullisesti sekoittunutta. Tummaihoisen ylhäisö hallitsi väestöä, joka suurimmaksi osaksi oli puhdasta neekerirotua. Hallitsijat – ruhtinaat ja ylipapit – väittivät polveutuvansa valkoisesta rodusta, joka myyttisenä taruaikana oli hallinnut kuningaskuntaa, jonka pääkaupunki oli Alkmeenon. Keskenään ristiriitaiset tarinat pyrkivät selittämään sitä, miksi tuo rotu aikoinaan kärsi tappion ja miksi henkiinjääneet hylkäsivät kaupunkinsa. Yhtä usvaisia olivat tarinat Gwahlurin Hampaista, Alkmeenonin aarteesta. Mutta nämä utuiset legendat olivat olleet kylliksi Conanille, joka oli niiden vuoksi saapunut Keshaniin yli valtaisien etäisyyksien, poikki tasangon, jokien halkoman viidakon ja vuorien.

(Excerpt 37)

Crouching in the deep, velvet-black shadows of the bushes, he scrutinized the great jut of rock which stood out in bold relief in the moonlight. It was covered with strange, grotesque carvings, depicting men and animals, and half-bestial creatures that might have been gods or devils. The style of art differed so strikingly from that of the rest of the valley, that Conan wondered if it did not represent a different era and race, and was itself a relic of an age lost and forgotten at whatever immeasurably distant date the people of Alkmeenon had found and entered the haunted valley.^(p.140)

(Excerpt 38)

Hän kyyristeli pensaiden syvissä, sametinmustissa varjoissa ja tarkasteli suurta kallioulkonemaa, joka kohosi kuin korskea korkokuva kuutamossa. Sitä peittivät

oudot, irvokkaat kaiverrukset, jotka esittivät ihmisiä ja eläimiä, sekä puolittain eläimellisiä olentoja, jotka saattoivat olla jumalia tai paholaisia. Taidettyli erosi niin suuresti muusta laaksosta, että Conan mietti, edustiko se toista aikakautta ja ihmisrotua, ja oliko se itsessään jäännös ajalta joka oli kaikonnut ja unohdettu jo sinä mittaamattoman kaukaisena hetkenä, kun Alkmeenonin kansa oli löytänyt tämän haamujen riivaaman laakson ja asettautunut sen sisälle.

Red Nails (July 1935) Translated in 1990

(Excerpt 39)

The man in no way resembled the figures depicted on the friezes. He was slightly above middle height, very dark, though not Negroid. He was naked but for a scanty silk clout that only partly covered his muscular hips, and a leather girdle, a hand's breadth broad, about his lean waist. His long black hair hung in lank strands about his shoulders, giving him a wild appearance. He was gaunt, but knots and cords of muscles stood out on his arms and legs, without that fleshy padding that presents a pleasing symmetry of contour. He was built with an economy that was almost repellent.

(Excerpt 40)

Mies ei lainkaan muistuttanut seinäkuvien henkilöitä. Hän oli hieman keskimääräistä pitempi ja erittäin tummaihoinen, vaikkakaan ei neekeri. Ainoa vaatekappale oli niukka silkkinen lannevaate, joka peitti lihaksikkaat lanteet vain osittain; sen lisäksi miehellä oli yllään vain kämmenen levyinen nahkavyö joka ympäröi kapeaa vyötäröä. Pitkä musta tukka valui suorana harteille antaen hahmolle villimiehen näköä. Hän oli luiseva, mutta lihaskimput pullottivat käsivarsissa ja jaloissa vailla pehmentävää rasvakerrosta, joka antaa ihmisvartalolle sen miellyttävät symmetriset muodot. Miehen ruumiinrakenne oli taloudellinen lähes vastenmielisyyteen asti.

(Excerpt 41)

Fear and the memory of Tascela's burning eyes stirred in her, rousing all her tigerish instincts of self-preservation. These people were decadent; any sort of perversity might be expected to be encountered among them. But Valeria sensed here something that moved behind the scenes, some secret terror fouler than common degeneracy. Fear and revulsion of this weird city swept her. These people were neither sane nor normal; she began to doubt if they were even human. Madness smoldered in the eyes of them all — all except the cruel, cryptic eyes of Tascela, which held secrets and mysteries more abysmal than madness.

(Excerpt 42)

Pelko ja Tascelan kiiluvan katseen muisto saivat hänen tiikerimäisen itsesuojeluvaistonsa heräämään. Nämä ihmiset olivat rappeutuneita ja heiltä voisi odottaa mitä vain sairaita mieltymyksiä. Mutta Valeria vaistosi että asian takana oli enemmänkin, jokin salattu kauhu joka olisi paljon pahempaa kuin tavallinen rappeutuneisuus. Pelko ja inho tätä omituista kaupunkia kohtaan valtasivat hänet. Nämä ihmiset eivät olleet tervejärkisiä eivätkä normaaleja, ja hän alkoi epäillä

olivatko he edes inhimillisiä. Hulluus paloi kaikkien silmissä – paitsi Tascelan julmissa, arvoituksellisissa silmissä jotka tunsivat hulluuttakin kauheampia salaisuuksia ja mysteerejä.

Shadows in Zamboula (November 1935) Translated in 1989

(Excerpt 43)

The people of the city would not suffer him to slay their people, but they care nought for the strangers who fall into his hands. Conan, you are of the West, and know not the secrets of this ancient land. But, since the beginning of happenings, the demons of the desert have worshipped Yog, the Lord of the Empty Abodes, with fire — fire that devours human victims.

(Excerpt 44)

Kaupungin asukkaat eivät sallisi hänen tappaa heidän omiaan, mutta he eivät välitä vähääkään muukalaisista, jotka joutuvat hänen käsiinsä. Conan sinä olet lännestä etkä tiedä tämän ikivanhan maan salaisuuksia. Aina aikojen alusta asti autiomaan demonit ovat palvoneet tulella Yogia, Tyhjien Asumusten Herraa – tulella joka nielee ihmisuhreja.

(Excerpt 45)

On one of the divans a man was reclining, looking toward the door. He laughed as he met the Cimmerian's startled glare. This man was naked except for a loin cloth and high-strapped sandals. He was brown-skinned, with close-cropped black hair and restless black eyes that set off a broad, arrogant face. In girth and breadth he was enormous, with huge limbs on which the great muscles swelled and rippled at each slightest movement. His hands were the largest Conan had ever seen. The assurance of gigantic physical strength colored his every action and inflection. "Why not enter, barbarian?" he called mockingly, with an exaggerated gesture of invitation.

(Excerpt 46)

Eräällä divaanilla loikoili mies joka katseli ovelle. Mies nauroi kun Conan hätkähti huomattessaan hänet.

Mies oli alaston lukuun ottamatta lannevaatetta ja nyörisandaaleja. Hän oli ruskeaihoinen, tukka oli musta ja pään myötäinen, ja leveiltä, pöyhkeiltä kasvoilta katsovat silmät vilkuilivat jatkuvasti ympäriinsä. Ruumiinrakenne oli valtaisan jyrkää, paksujen raajojen suuret lihakset värisivät ja pullistuivat pienimmästäkin liikkeestä. Conan ei ollut koskaan nähnyt isompia käsiä. Valtavan, fyysisen voiman suoma varmuus paistoi miehen jokaisesta liikkeestä ja teosta.

“Tule toki sisään, barbaari”, mies sanoi hännästä, viitaten kädellään liioitellusti.

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