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*"Gayer Than a Tree Full of Monkeys on Nitrous Oxide"*

Translating Wordplay and Allusions in the Comic Fantasy Novel *Good Omens*

Master's thesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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**Discipline:**        English Studies
**Author:**         Emilia Salomaa
**Master's Thesis:**    *Gayer than a tree full of monkeys on nitrous oxide*
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**ABSTRACT**
I denna avhandling granskas översättningen av ordlekar, allusioner och modifierade idiom i den svenska översättningen av den komiska fantasyromanen Good Omens (svensk titel: Goda Omen). Översättningen av ordlekar anses ofta vara svår, eftersom de har starkt språkbundna särdrag, och allusioner och modifierade idiom kräver att mottagaren (i romanens fall, både dess översättare och dess läsare) kan identifiera dem. Därtill ställs översättaren inför valet mellan att bevara humor eller bevara form i de fall där ingen direkt motsvarighet finns i målspråket, och detta är särskilt märkbart då det gäller översättningen av komiska verk som Good Omens.

Avhandlingen är en deskriptiv fallstudie, där målet är att ta reda på om den dominanta översättningsstrategin var bevarande (retentive) eller återskapande (re-creative). Det teoretiska ramverket för avhandlingen är James S. Holmes' teori om översättningsval, och tyngdpunkten låg på att ta reda på vilken den vanligast förekommande lokala strategin var. Hypotesen var att återskapande översättning var den mest förekommande lokala översättningsstrategin.

Materialet bestod av 159 ordlekar, allusioner och modifierade idiom som sorterades in i sju olika klasser. Materialet sorterades efter klass (homofon, homograf, allusion, allusivt namn, modifierat idiom, stilparodi och namn som ordlek) och delades därefter in i bevarande (retentive) eller återskapande (re-creative) översättningar. Då hela materialet analyserades var fördelningen var 35,2% bevarande och 64,8% återskapande, vilket är en tydlig skillnad. I fråga om fördelning inom materialklasser var skillnaden något oväntat mindre markant i majoriteten av klasserna.

**KEYWORDS:** wordplay, idioms, allusions, retention, re-creation, literary translation

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the Swedish translation of wordplay (including idioms that have been modified to include wordplay) and allusions in the comic fantasy novel *Good Omens*, focusing on how the wordplay has been transferred; that is, on whether a particular type of wordplay or allusion has been translated into the same type of wordplay or if a different type has been used. The study is descriptive rather than prescriptive as its aim is to analyse the existing local and global translation strategies used rather than to offer suggestions for new ones. Local translation strategies are those that are employed when dealing with individual translation units (phrases or sentences, or in the case of the material for this thesis, units of wordplay), while global strategies are ones that affect the text and translation as a whole.

The tentative hypothesis this thesis sets out to test is that there will be a dominant local translation strategy used for each of the groups of wordplay and allusions in the material, and that this strategy will be re-creative, as wordplay often is highly language-dependent and allusions are culture-bound, meaning the translator must take these restrictions into account when transferring the humour.

In the context of this thesis, the definition used for wordplay is that of Delabastita (1996: 128, emphasis in the original); one that is frequently used in works on the translation of wordplay:

> Wordplay is the general name for the various *textual* phenomena in which *structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with *more or less similar forms* and *more or less different meanings.*

These structural features are most often spelling or pronunciation, and another distinguishing characteristic is that it is deliberate (Delabastita 1996: 131-2) as opposed to being a mere slip of the tongue.

Idioms are, as per *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1993: 1123): "an expression established in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in

grammatical construction ... or in having a meaning that cannot be derived as a whole from the conjoined meaning of its elements". Allusions are implied or indirect references, where the object being referred to is not named outright. In literature these references can be to other literary works or works of art or to cultural phenomena; however, allusions are not limited to those alone.

Delabastita (1996, 1997, 2008) and Vandaele (2002) have written extensively on the subject of wordplay and its translation from a number of perspectives, including wordplay as a translation problem and humour in translation, and researchers such as Victor Raskin (1985) and Salvatore Attardo (2002) have studied the language of humour and the mechanisms behind it. Alexieva (1997) applies cognitive linguistics theories to the translation of wordplay and metaphor, while Leppihalme (1996) has studied the translation of allusive wordplay by focusing on the target culture.

Despite the relatively large volume of existing studies, the translation of wordplay and humour is still a rich vein for study as the variety of wordplay is large and as the field of translation thereof can be divided into several areas: literary translation, audiovisual translation and dubbing, etc. Each area requires its own strategies and has its own norms, and as the variety of wordplay is very large, there is little risk of over-saturation.

1.1 Material

The material for this thesis consists of 159 instances of wordplay and allusions in the comic fantasy novel *Good Omens* by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman and its translation into Swedish by Peter Lindforss. The material has been sorted into categories by dominant type of wordplay or humour. The categories used are homophone pun (words which sound the same but no not share a meaning or spelling), homograph pun (words which share a spelling but do not mean the same thing), allusion (an indirect reference), modified idiom (idioms where some element has been changed to produce a humorous effect), allusive names (names that allude to other names or contain cultural references), punning names (names that contain or consist of wordplay) and parody of style.

Henceforth, the original will be referred to as GO-ENG and the translation as GO-SWE to avoid confusion as the titles of both works render down to the acronym "GO".

The reason for including names in the source material is that they can be both punning in form and allusive: for example, in the novel, the character War is referred to by several names punning on the colour red, such as Scarlett and Carmine, which is in itself alluding to the Book of Revelation in which War as one of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse is said to ride a "horse that was red " (Revelations 6:4). This allusive pattern is repeated with two other characters corresponding to two of the other Biblical Horsemen.

As *Good Omens* includes parodies of style as well as grammatical wordplay, some attention has also been devoted to the translation or re-creation of the style in the target text. A series of prophecies and fictional fragments of literature are of particular interest. The prophecies form an integral part of the plot, and are written or rendered in a style that parodies the format of late-mediaeval literature; they are also intentionally fragmented and vague. The other fragments are purported to be from other literary works that exist only within the world of the novel. As the translation of both of these groups involves a transferral of both style and message, they have been considered briefly and partially. The prophecies and quotes have been considered to constitute units as wholes, and possible smaller units have not been considered separately.

Though it is not its main function, the wordplay in the novel nevertheless also functions as indicator of style and genre (i.e. comic fantasy/satire/parody). Ideally, the translation of this wordplay involves retention of as much of this element as possible in order to ensure that the target text belongs as firmly in the genre in question as the source text does. This thesis does not, however, discuss the parodic style other than in the context of a number of instances of graphological (based on the written form) wordplay, which is wordplay that manipulates the way in which text is written, either through spelling or through altering the way a text is printed (such as printing a text so that it forms a certain shape; a subset of this is known as concrete poetry (Augarde 2003: 168)).

1.2. Method

The wordplay and allusions in the novel present a challenge for the translator, as wordplay in particular is bound by constraints of form (homophones must sound alike or identical, homographs must have identical written forms etc.). While Vandaele (2002: 151) states that humour can be "readily recast as *humorous effect* and, hence, translating humour would come down to achieving the 'same humorous effect'" (emphasis in the original), it may not always be possible to employ this method when translating wordplay and punning if the desired outcome is that a pun in the source text is retained as a pun in the translation. This thesis sets out to examine the local translation strategies used by the translator, with an aim to determining whether it is possible to see a global translation strategy pattern in these choices of strategy. The basis for the examination will be James S. Holmes' concepts of re-creation and retention, though like Holmes (1988: 48) himself notes: "in practice, translators … perform a series of pragmatic choices".

Attardo (1996:174) notes that "the persistence of meaning between what was said/written in the SL [source language] and what is produced in TL [target language] is the real crux of the translation process". While his analysis concerns the translation of humour in general and this thesis focuses on specific types of verbal humour (that is, wordplay), the same rule can be said to govern both.

Theorists such as Nida (1964) have divided translations into dynamic and formal equivalence, while Baker (1995: 15) urges the reader to remember that

> "[t]he choice of a suitable equivalent will always depend not only on the linguistic system or systems being handled by the translator but also on the way the writer of the source text … and the translator choose to manipulate the linguistic systems in question".

In addition to examining local translation strategies, this thesis will also briefly consider the question of equivalence between the source text and the translation into Swedish.

The main goal of this thesis is to examine how the wordplay and humour (in the form of allusions and modified idioms) has been transferred in the translation into Swedish by

examining the local translation strategies used, specifically if these classes of material have been retained or re-created. The hypothesis is that re-creation will be the more prevalent local strategy when it comes to the material as a whole.

The analysis of the material (which consists of 159 instances of wordplay, idioms and allusions collected from the comic fantasy novel *Good Omens* and the corresponding instances in the Swedish translation) is based on the similarity and differences between the source text and the translation, with a particular emphasis on whether the different classes of wordplay and allusions have been re-created or retained. There is also some discussion of modified idioms as they, in some cases, can be classified as wordplay.

The second chapter of this thesis presents wordplay and allusions, elucidating their main features and function, while the third chapter deals with the theory used to analyse the material and with the translation of wordplay and humour in general, with some discussion of the concept of equivalence. The fourth chapter presents the material and the analysis thereof, and the fifth chapter presents the findings.

## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Good Omens

*Good Omens* was first published in 1990, and was well-received, garnering a nomination for Best Novel at the World Fantasy Awards in 1991 (Worlds Without End) and a Locus Award nomination for Best Fantasy Novel in the same year. In 2003, the novel was listed at number 68 on the BBC's survey *The Big Read* (BBC 2003). It has been adapted as a six-part radio serial broadcast on the BBC and a television series is being scripted, with a planned air date in 2018.

The main plot of the novel *Good Omens* centres on the premise that the Antichrist has taken the shape of a mortal baby who accidentally ends up in a perfectly normal family, rather than in the specifically chosen one he had been intended for. In order to stop the Antichrist from bringing about Armageddon and thus destroying the entire world, Heaven and Hell despatch an angel, Aziraphale, and a demon, Crowley, to eliminate the child. Each party attempts to persuade the child they think is the reborn Antichrist to join their side, without success, before realising that they have been pursuing the wrong child. Twelve years after the birth of the new Antichrist, who is unaware of his true identity, Armageddon begins. The angel and demon must track down the now twelve-year-old Antichrist and prevent him from ending the world.

*Good Omens* can be loosely classified as fantasy, and also part of a subset of the genre, namely comic fantasy, due to its irreverent treatment of its subject. This subset is commonly parodying another specific work or trope of fantasy (Garrott-Wejksnora 2009: 72), and may do so directly or indirectly. In *Good Omens*, the tropes being mocked are somewhat less typical of the fantasy genre, but it can be argued that the inclusion of common folkloristic elements (angels, demons and witches) justifies the placement. As comic fantasy occasionally mocks either previous works of fantasy (ibid.) or even entire mythologies, one can posit that the irreverent treatment of characters common to Christian mythology (angels, demons, the Antichrist, the Horsemen of the Apocalypse etc.) qualifies as the 'comic' element of a story that is essentially fantasy.

However, a case might also be made for it being satire or parody (as noted above, comic fantasy also commonly parodies other specific works), as Pratchett has been said to write satirical rather than comic fantasy (Hägg 2000: 720). In certain aspects the novel parodies *The Omen* horror movies based on the novel by Brian Seltzer (Butler 2001: 80): the title of the book alludes to the same thing; and central conceit of the novel is largely the same, namely that the Antichrist has been reborn in human form and intends to bring about Armageddon. This presupposes, however, that the reader is aware of the tropes used in both *The Omen* and in religiously-themed apocalyptic literature, as parody is "subversive mimicry" (Fowler 1987:172), which seeks out stylistic weaknesses or pretensions in another work or the original work and uses them to comic (occasionally satirical) effect. There are smaller allusions to *The Omen* in the text, though at least one of them refers to the film version[1], though these are fairly subtle and on a micro-level (local) as opposed to the macro-level (global) allusion of the parody itself.

Parody of a particular literary style is dependent on both the source text author and the translator bringing across the peculiarities or typical features of the original text being parodied clearly enough to let the readers know it is a parody (Nash 1985: 88-89) and also identify the original which is being parodied.

## 2.2 The authors

Terry Pratchett is one of the world's best-selling fantasy authors, and has sold over 90 million books world-wide (Smythe 2015). He co-authored *Good Omens* with Neil Gaiman, who is best known for the *Sandman* graphic novel series and for his works of urban fantasy, *Neverwhere* and *American Gods,* as well as for numerous film and television scripts.

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[1] There are two versions of the film: the original was made in 1976 and is the one the book refers to, as the remake (with no significant changes to the script) was made in 2006, 16 years after the book was published.

The combined literary output of Pratchett and Gaiman consists of over a hundred novels, screenplays and graphic novels. Of the two, Pratchett is the more prolific author and his style is often referred to as comical or parodic:

> Pratchett writes fantasy, and his work is most often classified as comedy, parody, or satire; most of his novels function within all three genres, but the earlier works are more comic (Schaechterle, 2009: 243).

The authors have stated (Pratchett & Gaiman 2005: 404), however, that they no longer remember who wrote exactly which parts of the novel, and as the focus of this thesis is the analysis of the wordplay as a whole, considering which parts were written by which author and whether that impacted the style has been considered irrelevant to the analysis.

Chronologically, *Good Omens* was one of the earlier novels by Pratchett, which supports the claim that these earlier works were more comical than the subsequent ones. Gaiman's work also spans many genres, including comic fantasy and horror (Wagner, Golden & Bissette 2008: 375). Schaechterle's (2009: 243) note above underlines the blurring of genres in Pratchett's writing, and this blurring can be seen in *Good Omens*, as it has features common to both satire and to parody: both echo a style, but satire is more aggressive than parody, which can be affectionate toward the subject or person it is echoing (Simpson 2004: 46-8). In the case of *Good Omens*, the novel parodies horror novels (see section 1.1) by using the same tropes but in a deliberately humorous way.

2.3 *Goda Omen,* the Swedish translation of *Good Omens*

The translation used for this thesis is, thus far, the only translation of *Good Omens* into Swedish. The translator is Peter Lindforss, who also wrote novels of his own, as well as lyrics.

It may be of interest to note that *Goda Omen* was published in 2000 by a publishing house focusing on children's and young adult literature, namely B. Wahlströms förlag, rather than as conventional adult literature, despite not being explicitly labelled or

marketed as children's or young adult literature. One possible reason may be a tendency to classify fantasy as young adult literature rather than adult literature, though there is also an increasing number of works that exist between the two categories (Warnquist 2012: 340).

## 2.4 Comic fantasy and *Good Omens*

Terry Pratchett is arguably the most well-known writer of comic fantasy at present, due to the success of his *Discworld* series, which spans forty-one novels. Neil Gaiman can also be grouped among authors primarily writing fantasy, though many of his works are classed as not as comic but as urban fantasy (such as *American Gods*) due to being more contemporary.

In terms of genre classification, fantasy is often included in the same rather large category as science fiction, and both genres may be considered to be quite young. Contemporary fantasy is generally thought to have had its definitive breakthrough in 1954 with the publication of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings,* though works which have since been classified as classical fantasy were published much earlier (Nikolajeva 2007: 330). Over time, the genre has been split into several subcategories, such as epic fantasy, urban fantasy and comic fantasy:

> Fantasy is also an eclectic genre, borrowing traits from myth, epic, romance, piqaresque, Gothic tale, mystery, science fiction, and other genres. (Nikolajeva 2007: 331)

Comic fantasy can been seen to mean those fantasy novels where the style includes jokes and humorous plot points, but also includes novels where the setting allows different levels of parody while not making the whole work parodic (Garrott-Wejksnora 2009: 73). In the case of *Good Omens*, the genre classification is difficult as it straddles several genres such as parody (see section 2.1), satire and comic fantasy, but for the purposes of this thesis, it has been classified as comic fantasy due to its parodic elements and the amount of different types of wordplay employed in the narrative.

2.5 Wordplay, manipulated idioms and allusions

In this thesis, wordplay has been defined as the deliberate use of certain linguistic ambiguities for comical effect (Delabastita 1996:128, 130). This ambiguity may be based on sound (homophony) or on form (homography), or on the multiple meanings of a word (polysemy). One instance of wordplay may include more than one type of ambiguity. In addition to wordplay, this thesis also examines the translation of idioms and allusions which have been used to create comical effect, as this effect is achieved through manipulating the idioms to bring out their ambiguities.

Wordplay can take many forms, such as homophones which play on sound, homonyms which play on meaning, or etymological puns which play on the roots of words (Nash 1985: 138-141). It can occur either as a single isolated instance, such as a joke (ibid.: 54), or it may be repeated throughout a text, such as in a parody (ibid.: 21). Though there are many variations and terms for different classes of wordplay, they can also be categorized more strictly according to their *formal* mechanisms or functions, which are the linguistic levels on which they function. These mechanisms can relate to sound or form, meaning some wordplay is nearly exclusively spoken (homophonic) whereas some functions best in writing (homographs).

Walter Nash identifies several subtypes of wordplay divided by formal similarity: *Homophones*, which are pairs or groups of words which have the same sound but different meanings, such as fain/feign or need/knead; the rarer *homophonic phrase,* where the phrases sound alike syllable for syllable, but carry different meanings; *mimes*, which Nash defines as "phonetic similitudes, usually rhymes, with the appeal of homophones" (1985: 139); *mimetic phrases*; homonyms, which are spelt the same but which do not share a meaning, and *portmanteaux*, which are nonce-words constructed by blending two words, e.g. *spork* for *spoon+fork*, or *guesstimate* for *guess+estimate*.

One of the more widely used definitions of wordplay within translation and humour studies is that proposed by Delabastita (1996: 128; emphasis in the original):

> Wordplay is the general name indicating the various *textual* phenomena in which *structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with *more or less similar forms* and *more or less different meanings*.

Here, Delabastita defines wordplay as textual phenomena, by which he means that they exist *in* texts and also function within them in a variety of ways (1996: 129). The structural features mentioned can be ones related to sound or spelling, to meaning, or to lexical, morphological or syntactic structure, and two or more of these may be employed in the same instance of wordplay (ibid.: 130-1). He further argues that wordplay is communicatively significant by virtue of being *intended*, that is, it is deliberate, unlike slips of the tongue or unintentional ambiguities (ibid.: 131), hence the confrontation is between what the recipient expects a person to say or write and what the speaker or writer intentionally does.

As mentioned earlier, wordplay can be said to be a universal phenomenon, as languages generally have at least some form of ambiguity:

> Punning is possible in any language insofar as it seems to be a universal feature of language to have words with more than one meaning (polysemy), different words with the same spelling or pronunciation (homographs and homophones), and words which are synonyms or near-synonyms while having different pragmatic meanings and evoking different associations (Alexieva 1997: 139).

However, it should be noted that while the potential for wordplay is present, it does not always present itself in the same way in each language.

In addition to Delabastita, many other theorists such as Gottlieb have attempted to classify wordplay or at least offer a model by which it can be divided. Gottlieb (1997: 209) notes "one could say that in wordplay the word involved no longer merely serve the *function* of communication, but also become part of the *objective* of communication" (emphasis in the original). Delabastita (1997: 6) also considers the deliberate nature of wordplay to be what separates it from non-wordplay. In *Good Omens*, part of what characterises the genre it belongs to (comic fantasy) is specifically

the use of wordplay and/or other forms of humour on either a local or global (spanning the whole work) level.

Crystal (2001: 16) posits that "enjoyment, rather than humour, is what language play is chiefly about". He also notes that "a sign of highly sophisticated language play … is the way several linguistic levels can be successfully manipulated at the same time" (ibid.: 11). In comic writing, particularly in novels, this can be seen quite clearly, as there is more space into which these levels can be inserted. In *Good Omens,* there is not only language play in the narrative itself, with punning names and modified idioms, but there is also a series of prophecies which have carefully been rendered in a form of pseudo-Old/Mediaeval English, in what might be termed orthographic play; that is, the very form and spelling of it mimics that of Old/Mediaeval English while not explicitly being that. An extra level is added by characters attempting to "decipher" these prophecies.

The material for this thesis has been divided into seven major groups: *homophones*, *homographs*, *allusions, allusive names, punning names, modified idioms* and *parodies of style*. Short descriptions of each one of these groups are given below.

2.5.1 Homophones

Homophones are words or pairs of words having the same sound but different meanings (Nash 1985: 138) and often different spellings as well. Examples of homophones are *peace/peas* and *which/witch*, and in both cases, it is also clear that the spelling of the words is different. Homophones need not be perfect in sound-fit, notes Nash (1985: 139), but can also be what he calls "phonetic similitudes, usually rhymes with the appeal of homophones". In *Good Omens*, an example of this is a young character mistakenly objecting to "grass materialism" (GO-ENG 1990: 200). The homophone pair here is "crass materialism", which is alike enough in sound to pass as a homophone or what Nash (1985: 139) calls a mimetic phrase .

2.5.2 Homographs

Homographs are words that are written identically but which have different meanings. Homographs can either be pronounced the same (homonyms) or pronounced in different ways (heteronyms). Examples of homographs are *lead* (to guide someone or the metallic element Pb) and *bow* (a weapon, a hair decoration, something used when playing a violin or a cello, or a subservient gesture).

2.5.3 Allusions

Allusions are most often references to cultural phenomena, though they may also reference current or historical events. Leppihalme (1994: 28) points out that allusions perform many functions, some of which are overlapping. Allusions may be overt or subtle, and Leppihalme (ibid.: 29) and others note that it is generally up to the reader to recognize allusions, something which may affect translation as the translator also is a reader at the beginning of the translation process.

2.5.4 Allusive names

Allusive names are names that either allude to a particular name or to a naming convention. They can be historical (referring to royalty or statesmen) or modern (referring to celebrities etc.).

2.5.5 Punning names

Punning names are names that include deliberate wordplay, either sound-based or spelling-based. They are often similar in form to conventional (non-punning names), but the wordplay can be noticeable to some extent. There can be some overlap between the categories of punning names and allusive names.

2.5.6 Modified idioms

Modified idioms are idioms that have been extended (by adding explications) or modified by substituting certain elements, usually with the intention of making them humorous. This modification can be overt or subtle, and can involve substantial changes to key words in the idiom while still retaining enough of the structure of the original to let the reader know which idiom has been modified or is referred to (Veisbergs, 1997: 156, 158-9). Idioms themselves are "a stable word combination with a fully or partially transferred meaning" (Veisbergs, 1997: 156).

2.5.7 Parodies of style

For the purposes of this thesis, the name "parodies of style" has been used to denote instances (some shorter, some tens of words long) of narrative that parodies the main features of a particular literary style. In the case of *Good Omens*, this style is mediaeval literature.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The main theory used to examine the wordplay and allusions and the translation thereof of in *Good Omens* and its Swedish translation is based on James S. Holmes's theory of retention and re-creation. Holmes proposed that translations can be analysed by placing the choices made by the translator on twin axes: on the X axis, there is the pair *naturalizing* and *exoticising*, and on the Y axis there is the pair of *modernizing* and *historicizing* (1988: 48). Though his analysis was of verse translations, the theory is applicable to prose translations as well, as the main mechanism is the same: the rendering of a text in another language, intended for another culture.

Re-creation and retention can be considered forms of equivalence, as they represent two sides of a similar goal: retention aims at being equal to the form or timbre of the original, while re-creation aims to recreate the effect of the original by reformulating the text itself. Holmes (1988: 37) himself, however, suggested that re-creative translation was the half more concerned with finding equivalents (a term he placed in quotes), which he emphasised were "equivalent only to a greater or lesser degree".

3.1 Equivalence

Equivalence is a frequently occurring term in translation studies, and some theorists state that it is the basis for all translation. Kenny (2009: 77) points out that it is central but controversial concept, and that it is "variously regarded as a necessary condition for translation, an obstacle to progress in translation studies, or a useful category for describing translations". According to her, the general view of equivalence in earlier works was that it was "a relation between texts in two different languages, rather than between the languages themselves" (ibid.: 78).

Different scholars have offered up different views on and divisions of equivalence: Nida (1964: 129) divides the concept into halves: *formal* and *dynamic*, where the formal "focuses attention on the message itself" and the dynamic "aims at complete naturalness

of expression". Many other theorists, such as Koller (1989:100), divide it up further. Pym (2010: xi) states that "translation can be defined by equivalence, but there are many reasons why equivalence is not a stable concept". He divides equivalence into *natural* and *directional* equivalence.

Gideon Toury (1980: 65; subscript "1" in the original) echoes in part what Kenny (2009:77) says about equivalence: "in its application as a theoretical term (equivalence$_1$) it denotes an abstract idealized category of TT-ST relationships"[2]. He divides the concept into *potential*, *actual* and *realized* equivalence, and also posits that equivalence is a given, "and the question posed is "what *type* and/or *degree* of equivalence do the texts compared show" (ibid.: 113, emphasis and quotes in the original). This is partially found in Holmes's theory as well, where Holmes (1988: 48) posits that any translation is never wholly re-creative or retentive, but instead an amalgamation of many local translation strategy choices, where the position of the choices on his graph (see Figure 1 on page 23) may vary, just as the types and degrees of equivalence mentioned by Toury may vary. Toury (1995: 86) also states that "a descriptive study would always proceed from the assumption that equivalence does exist between an assumed translation and its assumed source", which this thesis, being descriptive, also does. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, Holmes (1988: 37) also speaks of degrees of equivalence, which is similar to Toury's assertion that what is to be considered is the degree of equivalence rather than its existence.

In the case of translating the wordplay and allusions in *Good Omens*, the issue of equivalence rises to the fore when the translator chooses which strategy to use for a particular class or instance: in re-creating, the equivalence becomes more a question of to what degree the effect of the item is retained, while the equivalence in retentive translations is more tied to the form of the narrative. In both cases, equivalence exists, but its degree and type is different.

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[2]   In *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, Toury (1980: 65) distinguishes between equivalence as a theoretical term and equivalence as a descriptive term by using subscript numbering: equivalence$_1$ is the theoretical term and equivalence$_2$ is the descriptive one.

3.2. Holmes's theory of re-creation and retention

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the main theory used when analysing the local translation strategies used is the division into re-creative and retentive translation strategies proposed by James S. Holmes. Though it was initially presented in an essay on verse translation, it has been deemed sufficiently universal to apply to prose translation as well.

Holmes (1988: 48) notes that translators do not necessarily choose only one or the other of these pairs of alternatives (naturalizing/modernizing or exoticizing/historicizing) when working on the translation of a literary text: "translators … perform a series of pragmatic choices, here retentive, there re-creative, at this point historicizing or exoticizing, at that point modernizing or naturalizing, and emphasising now this plane or that at the cost of the other two". This variety in the choices of translation strategy made by the translator can be mapped (see Figure 1 on page 23), he suggests, and he goes on to say that these charts always end up being "highly complex, reflecting as they do the complexity of the translator's choices" (Holmes 1988: 49). He also posits that a translator may, by selecting a particular translation strategy, unintentionally limit their choices when it comes to the rest of the translation (ibid.: 54). This ties into what he calls a "mental conception" of the text,  something that can be used "as a kind of general criterion against which to test each sentence during the formulation of the new, translated text" (ibid.: 83). If this mental conception is too tightly drawn, the translation choices available to the translator may be fewer.

Holmes (1988: 54) explains that these translation choices, while made on both a macrostructure level, which is the text as a whole, and a microstructure level, which is the word level, are ones that the translator can "make only on the basis of his individual grasp … of the two languages and cultures involved". In the case of *Good Omens*, it can be argued that some of the translation choices indeed do have an impact on the rest of the text: there is, for instance, a homophone pun that not only recurs but is vital to the plot of the novel, and it follows that the choice the translator makes at the first occurrence of this pun limits the number of alternatives available when it occurs for the

second time at a pivotal moment in the plot. On a more general level, it can be argued that the preservation of wordplay and humorous effect (whether through retention or re-creation) would be a priority for the translator in cases such as *Good Omens*, where the wordplay is an integral part of the text itself, and that this would dictate some or even the majority of the choices made by the translator.

Levý divides choices made by translators into necessary and unnecessary, and motivated and unmotivated (2000: 151). In the case of the translation of wordplay, the choices can be said to be necessary (if the translator wishes to retain the humorous effect) and motivated (the choice is motivated by the presence of wordplay). Levy (2000: 149) also notes that the process is akin to problem-solving, and that "the interpreter has to choose from a class of possible meanings of the word or motif". Wordplay, which often plays on the multiple meanings of words, has a dual set of such problems to be solved. The translator must first recognize the wordplay (and may at this point formulate a local strategy for translating it) and then decide whether or not to translate it (this requires the translator to determine if the wordplay is significant to the text as a whole). Veisbergs (1997: 172) argues that wordplay may have an important function in a text, that it is "more than just a decorative frill", but also notes that "[w]hat matters in the end is whether the overall semantic, stylistic and pragmatic effect of the original has been reproduced". Holmes (1988: 54) has a similar argument: he describes "matchings" that fulfil "functions in the language of the translation and the culture of its reader that in many … ways are closely akin … to those of the words etc. in the language and culture of the original".

While Holmes (1988: 49) emphasises that the charts of translation choices that he has drawn up are complex, he also offers a few generalizations:

> Among contemporary translators … there would seem to be a marked tendency towards modernization and naturalization of the linguistic context, paired with a similar but less clear tendency in the same direction in regard to the literary intertext, but an opposing tendency towards historicizing and exoticising in the socio-cultural situation.

In this context, intertext is defined by Holmes as consisting of "interaction with a whole body of poetry existing within a given literary tradition ...also its imagery, themes and

*topoi*" (1988: 47, emphasis in the original). Again, while this definition specifically mentions poetry, the definition can be expanded to include prose as it, too, exists within a literary tradition.

The translation choice graph (pictured below) can, according to Holmes, be used both to analyse a single line (the aforementioned microstructure level) and a whole poem (the macrostructure level) by plotting the different contexts in the graph (1988: 49). He divides them into backgrounds, of which there are three: the linguistic context, the literary intertext mentioned above, and the socio-cultural situation (ibid.: 47).
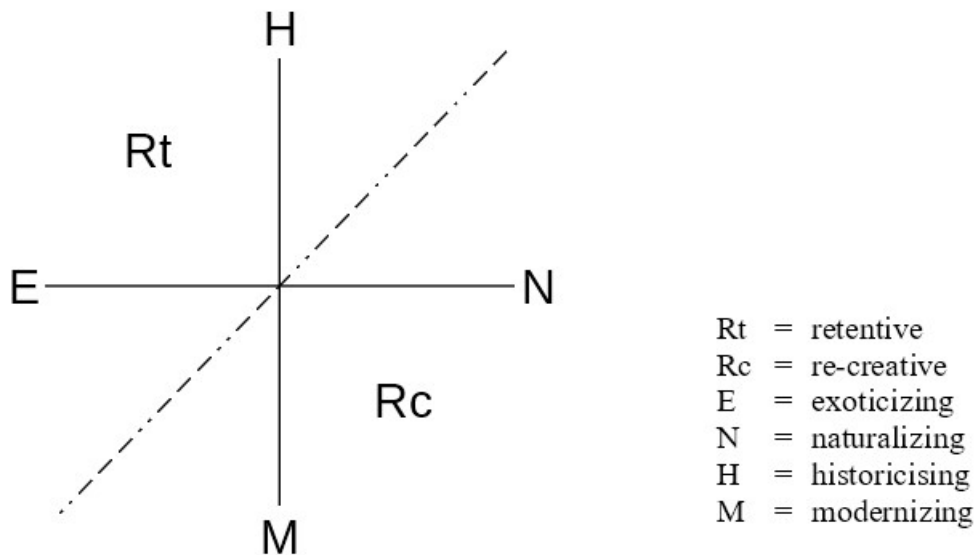


| | |
|---|---|
| Rt | = retentive |
| Rc | = re-creative |
| E | = exoticizing |
| N | = naturalizing |
| H | = historicising |
| M | = modernizing |

**Figure 1:** Holmes's graph for charting translation choices. (1988: 49)

The graph has a dividing line in addition to the X and Y axes, creating one half containing what he terms "re-creating" and another "retaining" (Holmes 1988: 48). Retention consists of exoticizing and historicizing, while re-creation is naturalizing and modernizing. These terms are similar to Nida's division of equivalence into *dynamic* and *formal* equivalence (1964: 129) and Venuti's *domestication* and *foreignization* (Venuti 1995: 22), but Holmes notes that there is a lack of consistency among theorists when it comes to terminology (1988: 18), and that the terms often overlap or have similar names

while their meaning is different. In the interest of clarity, this thesis uses Holmes's terms, i.e. *retention* and *re-creation* when discussing the choices made by the translator.

Holmes (1988: 48) defines historicizing as rendering the translation in a style or form closer to the original if the text in question is not modern, such as Shakespeare or an Italian rondel. In the case of *Good Omens*, most of the subject matter is modern as the novel is contemporary (it was published in 1990) and its prose style is likewise contemporary. However, part of the novel is written in what can be described as a parody of a period style, specifically a late-mediaeval style where the spelling of many words differs from their standardized modern forms, such as "sharl" for "shall" or appending an "e" to the end of words, creating spellings such as "certaine" or "wronge". One might therefore assume that translating this part of the novel would mean that the translator needs to find a matching literary style to use in the translation to achieve the same parodic effect. In the case of *Good Omens*, the translator has opted to mimic this style, and has rendered the relevant part of the book in a similar style that mimics older Swedish vernacular found in literature.

Hence this part of the translation would be plotted in the upper left-hand quadrant of the graph, as the literary intertext of the source text is historicizing in its attempt to imitate an older style. The translation is similarly historicizing as it too utilizes the same type of style mimicry.

The other half of the retention pair is exoticizing, where the translator attempts to retain the form or symbols of original text in order to emphasize that the source text is exotic (Holmes 1988: 47-8), or to ensure that, as Holmes puts it, "[the] element will acquire an exotic aspect not attached to it in its native habitat" (ibid.: 48). The socio-cultural context is exoticizing, as it has retained the allusions found in the original rather than replacing them with ones culled from the target culture, which is Swedish.

On the opposite half of the graph is the pair that form the *re-creative* approach to translating: *naturalizing* and *modernizing.* Holmes (1988 49) notes that contemporary translators have a "marked tendency towards modernization and naturalization of the

linguistic context, paired with a similar … tendency in the same direction in regard to the literary intertext". In the case of *Good Omens*, this may not be a particularly significant or visible shift, as the translation is of a contemporary novel that was only 10 years old when the translation was published, rather than an older text, though it can be argued that the literary intertext has to be taken into account. It should also be noted that the essay in which Holmes lays out his strategy was first presented in 1971 (Holmes 1988: 44), which means that the "contemporary" translators Holmes speaks of are no longer as contemporary as they were when the paper was written.

The material collected for this thesis consists of 159 instances of wordplay, allusions and idioms, and they have been classified into the following categories: *homophone puns*, *homograph puns*, *allusions, allusive names, punning names, modified idioms* and *parodies of style*. The majority of the instances are single phrases or sentences, though there are 12 instances of slightly longer units, most commonly due to the allusion or wordplay necessitating a larger block of text. As mentioned earlier, Holmes's graph can be used both for microstructural units (single lines or phrases) or the macrostructure of a text (in the case of the material for this thesis, the entire novel), and in this thesis, it has been used in the former way, to analyse the microstructural units. However, rather than divide the analysis into four classes (*exoticizing, naturalizing, historicizing* and *modernizing*), this thesis will use the two main classes, which might be called the superordinate ones: *retention* and *re-creation.* The main goal of the analysis on the material has been to determine whether the wordplay, the allusions and the idioms have been retained (translated in a way that preserves the original, which may not always preserve the humorous effect) or re-created (translated in a way that conveys the *effect* of the wordplay, idiom or allusion). Because allusions function in a slightly different way from wordplay and idioms in that they are less tied to form, the question of their retention or re-creating is less clear-cut.

Though Holmes provides a map in the form of a graph for analysing translations, the material for this thesis has not been explicitly mapped on this graph for reasons of both space and time available. Instead, the analysis will focus on whether the dominant local

strategy used is retentive or re-creative and whether deductions can be made about the global translation strategy employed.

3.3 Translating wordplay, idioms and allusions

Wordplay, which in this thesis has been defined as the deliberate use of (certain) linguistic ambiguities for comical effect (Delabastita 1996: 128, 130), is generally characterized as being difficult to translate. Delabastita (1997: 13) also notes that the differences between languages can be a contributing factor: "[w]ordplay can … therefore be seen as a kind of signature, epitomizing each language's unique individuality and therefore quite naturally resisting translation".

This perceived difficulty can also be assumed to arise, in part, from the common assumption that written or spoken humour is linked to the originating culture (Chiaro 1992: 77) and literary system, that "jokes do not travel well", and that successful transfer requires intimate knowledge of this culture and/or literary system. It is also worth noting that while the formal mechanisms of wordplay may be understood by the translator, it may not be possible to render them in the same way in the target language due to restrictions arising from the differences in grammatical or semantic structure (Delabastita 1996: 131). In such cases, wordplay may be re-created, in which case it is (generally) replaced with an equivalent structure in the target language, or it may, in some cases, be omitted.

As mentioned above, most wordplay is dependent on certain linguistic structures, such as syntax, pronunciation or spelling (Nash 1985: 12). While certain types of wordplay such as allusive wordplay, may be less dependent on formal structures as they can occur both on a larger scale where the whole text can allude to another one or a smaller one where only individual phrases allude (Leppihalme 1997: 28), homonyms (same spelling, different meaning) and homophones (same pronunciation, different spelling and/or meaning) are more resistant to transfer between source and target languages. While allusions often have elements which allow for partial substitution (names or

phenomena may be re-created; that is, replaced with similar ones more familiar to the intended audience of the target text (Baker 1992: 31)), homophones and homographs are strongly tied to the phonology and/or orthography of a given language. Alexieva (1997:141) underlines the importance of equivalents: "it should be remembered that identity or near-identity of phonic and graphemic substance provides the necessary formal basis for wordplay".

What is also important to remember is that wordplay does not function in a vacuum, that is, it is often dependent on its context (Chiaro 1992: 39). The translation of straightforward jokes or anecdotes can operate according to different norms than the translation of wordplay in a comic novel, where the translator has to weigh the combination of text and picture when translating visual jokes or jokes that hinge on both verbal and visual units (Kaindl 2010: 39, Delabastita 1996: 129).

If taken at face value, i.e. literally, without taking into account possible ambiguities in meaning and the expected cultural knowledge or knowledge of the domains involved of the intended audience (Nash 1985: 4), an instance of wordplay will most likely not produce the desired humorous effect. The joke will, in other words, fall flat or not be recognized as a joke. A literal translation of an instance of wordplay will similarly produce a result that may be incomprehensible or confusing, as wordplay is similar in nature to idioms which often cannot be understood at face value. Lopez (2002: 37) notes that humour in novels, as opposed to verbal humour which is immediate and interpersonal, has an extra barrier: "textual humour is designed for a distant and anonymous receptor that has to interpret the complex clues imbricated in the text". Nash (1985: 6) emphasises the importance of "signalling the intention to joke" in social interactions, and that this signalling can be subtle or crude. If it is not signalled when a joke is made, he continues, laughter is compromised. In the case of a novel such as *Good Omens*, perceiving this signalling is left up to the reader. Leppihalme (1994: 29) notes that the same holds true for allusions, and that perceiving allusions can be seen as a game of puzzles between author and reader.

Wordplay can occur either intentionally, as is the case with jokes, limericks, spoonerisms and the like; or unintentionally, as is the case with Freudian slips, typing errors and malapropisms (Delabastita 1997:6, Chiaro 1992: 17). It is both culture- and language-dependent (Baker 1992: 21) to some extent, and the latter aspect is very often present. Therefore some attention should ideally be paid to the cultural facets in addition to the language-related ones, and to whether the dominant local (and global) translation strategy is (to use Holmes' division) re-creation or retention. Translation also concerns the transfer of implied meaning. This is particularly true of wordplay, as there often are two layers to each instance: the explicit (the form, whether it is sound- or spelling-based) and the implicit (allusions to culture etc.). However, it might be argued that the greatest obstacle when translating wordplay is language itself – both the source language and the target language (Baker 1992: 22-26). Many instances of homonymic wordplay hinge crucially on either phonetic or graphological structure; the humorous effect derives from either of these and from their manipulation. Augarde (2003: vii-viii) notes that wordplay can be used "to make new sense (or nonsense) by playing with the basic elements of our language, as well as for pure entertainment and enjoyment".

When translating heavily language-dependent types of wordplay like homophones, asymmetry or differences between the source and target languages is a factor in the difficulty of it, since so much of punning hinges on both phonological (sound-based) and graphemic (writing-based) matters (Alexieva, 1997:140). This is particularly obvious in cases where the differences between the languages involved may cause a key mechanism of an instance of wordplay to be impossible to transfer: "a polysemous word in the source language may not be polysemous, or may be polysemous in a different way, in the receptor language" (Alexieva, 1997: 140).

It can be argued that there is somewhat less asymmetry in the language pair English-Swedish than in a pair like English-Finnish, as Swedish as well as English are Indo-European languages, and as English has drawn fairly extensively on Old Norse (Trask 1999: 98) during its development. However, it should be noted that structural or lexical similarities between languages do not necessarily render them more symmetrical, nor

does it guarantee that an instance of wordplay will have the same connotations or the same semantic function in the receiving or target language. Indeed, closely related languages often have what are called "false friends", which are words that are similar or identical in spelling and which even may have partially overlapping meanings (Newmark 1988: 72).

Despite many theorists such as Delabastita and Vandaele emphasizing the difficulties of translating wordplay, some theorists such as von Stackelberg consider the translation of wordplay and other comical writing to be straightforward: "The main thing is... that the effect of the translation is the same as the original one: comical writing remains comical writing!" (von Stackelberg 1988: 11). The fallacy in this statement is that the definition of "comic" may vary widely between translators, and that merely positing that the humorous or comical *effect* should be retained is not specific enough. While instances of wordplay in a text where the global translation strategy is re-creation may have been replaced by target language equivalents that accomplish the feat of retaining the humorous effect, they may not have the same function as the replaced items had in the source text, which effectively means that comic effect has been retained at the cost of a certain specifically used source text structure.

Vandaele (2002: 150) points out that humour poses difficulties for translators not just when it comes to recognizing humour but when re-creating it: "translators may experience its compelling effect on themselves … but feel unable to reproduce it". The translator may even, he points out, recognize humour in a text but not find it amusing, and "be confronted with the dilemma of 'translating a bad joke', or going for a 'real' funny effect" (Vandaele 2002: 150).

Delabastita and Attardo caution against over-simplifying theories concerning wordplay: "the production, the reception, and the translation of wordplay is never just a question of language *alone*" (Delabastita 1997: 19). Attardo (1996: 174) elucidates this further by saying that "the persistence of the meaning between what was said/written in the source language and what is produced in target language is the real crux of the translation process". Arguably, this is crucial to *any* translation process, but in the case of wordplay,

it can be argued that both form *and* meaning are crucial and that success in translating wordplay depends on successful transfer of both, whereas translation of other texts may allow for some compromises in terms of proportion, i.e. either form or meaning may be prioritized. Eugene Nida (1964: 156) notes that

> the content of a message can never be completely abstracted from the form, and form is nothing apart from content; but in some messages the content is of primary consideration, and in others the form must be given a higher priority.

In questions of form versus content, some classes of wordplay may necessitate the use of multiple or overlapping strategies. Dorothea Hygrell (1997) and Ritva Leppihalme (1994) both discuss the problems arising from multi-layered wordplay and allusions. Hygrell (1997: 48) focuses on the overlap of categories (and translation strategies) when dealing with wordplay:

> Svårigheterna i samband med översättningen av komiska texter kan indelas i två grupper: dels svårigheter som beror på skillnader mellan källspråket och målspråket ... dels skillnader mellan de berörda kulturerna/samhällena ... det finns komiska fenomen som hör hemma i båda grupperna, exempelvis den komiska användningen av ordspråk eller talessätt.

> [The difficulties which arise when translating comical texts can be divided into two groups: on the one hand, difficulties which are caused by differences between the source language and the target language … on the other hand, differences between the cultures/societies in question … there are comical phenomena which belong in both groups, such as the comical use of proverbs or sayings.] (own translation)

This is another example of the somewhat complicated nature of wordplay, as not only does it frequently involve several different linguistic features that may or may not be transferable to the target language, it may also be part of a culturally specific framework that may or may not have an equivalent in the target culture. This is particularly true of translations between widely disparate cultures.

Leppihalme (1994: 4) notes that "translators need to be not just bilingual but bicultural in order to fully understand the ST [source text] and to be able to transmit it to the target audience".

She further notes that

> what is important is that the analysis of the ST requires recognition of connotative meaning by the translator. ... It can no doubt be accepted that while the translator cannot control and should not even attempt to control the subjective associations and interpretations of individual readers, s/he needs to be aware of and sensitive to the more collective connotations ... of allusive names and phrases." (Leppihalme 1994: 4)

Though Leppihalme discusses allusions rather than wordplay, it may be argued that some allusions can constitute wordplay, especially in the cases where the expression or allusion involves a name or alludes to a person. Manini (1996: 164) points out that authors may choose to name a character in a way that emphasises some aspect of the character's personality, making the name both what he terms "semantically empty" and one that "acquires a specific semantic substance". In the case of more culture-specific allusive names (such as Biblical names), the translation process often involves weighing the assumed importance of the allusive name against the story itself: that is, if it is integral or if it can it be replaced with a similar or equivalent target culture trope or name.

The difficulty in transferring wordplay is often not simply a question of inclusion versus omission, however, but frequently includes other issues, such as which degree of modification can be accepted. Delabastita (1997: 11) observes that the constraints involved in the translation of wordplay may be more severe than in conventional translation (here taken to mean translation of non-wordplay):

> "However, what makes translating puns special is that here *so many* different and usually *such conflicting* constraints (formal ones as well as semantic and pragmatic ones) crowd in on the translator in the narrow textual space of a few words that the need to **prioritize** becomes much more acute than in 'ordinary' translation." (emphasis in the original)

Another dilemma arising from translation choice, restrictions, and inclusion versus omission, is that of the comparisons between source text and target text. As has been mentioned earlier, certain types of wordplay and similar linguistic ambiguities may not have feasible equivalents in the target language, or the translator may have opted to omit a certain instance on certain grounds, which can vary from restrictions on space to

taboo subjects such as political jokes. Similarly, instances of wordplay may have been inserted or included in the target text even though the source text did not have such instances in the passage in question. Toury (1995: 83) offers a warning regarding the interpretation of results from source text/target text unit comparisons:

> "care should be taken not to automatically couple the obliteration of a source-text metaphor ... in one place with the introduction into the text of another metaphor ... elsewhere in such a way as to regard the two as constituting evidence of compensation. The two practices may well have been independent, reflecting two different, totally unconnected sets of considerations."

While this thesis tallies the amount of translational units in each category and compares the source text to the target text in this regard, it does not draw conclusions as to whether or not compensation has been an issue. Instead, omissions and additions have been noted and very briefly discussed but no effort has been made to comprehensively evaluate whether or not these equal each other in amount or if their deletion or addition affect the reception of the translation or decrease the humorous effect of the novel as a whole.

Gordon (1986: 146) notes that

> "[b]ecause the paradox of simultaneous expansion and restriction of conventional meanings is constantly at work in linguistic humour … At any rate, it clearly demands a high degree of involvement on the part of the reader; he must participate in the word-play, discovering and decoding as much as his ear and imagination will allow. A translator approaching his task in the same way will be assured of achieving the effect intended by the original".

The caveat that must be offered here is that the "effect" Gordon refers to in the quote above is ambiguous. Humour is generally considered to be, at the very least, subjective (Latta 1999: 14, 16).

Theorists such as Vandaele (2002: 150) note that "one cannot write about humour translation in the same way one writes about other types of translation" as humour in itself appears to defy or at least complicate definition of it as a concept. Furthermore, as Raskin (1985: 2) notes, "[d]ifferent people will not necessarily find the same things

equally funny". He adds that "it is not only that people tend to find different things funny but they also exercise this ability in various degrees" (Raskin 1985: 2).

In this thesis, the transfer of humour has been considered in passing, but the main emphasis is on whether the translation strategy used by the translator has been retentive or re-creative when it comes to wordplay and allusions.

Leppihalme (1994: 33) notes that the burden of identifying allusions lies with the translator:

> "it can no doubt be accepted that while the translator cannot control, and should not even attempt to control, the subjective association and interpretation of individual readers, s/he needs to to be aware of and sensitive to the more collective connotations … of allusive names and phrases".

Holmes (1988:53) reasons along similar lines but also notes that the translation process and the process of finding equivalents is one filled with choices that inevitably are based on what the translator him/herself knows:

> In seeking "counterparts" or "matchings", the translator is constantly faced by choices, choices he can make only on the basis of his individual grasp (knowledge, sensibility, experience…) of the two languages and cultures involved, and with the aid of his personal tastes and preferences.

Holmes goes on to say that each choice the translator makes affects the methods available to him or her.

Finally, what should also be considered when translating wordplay and allusions is the target audience: in the case of the Swedish translation of *Good Omens*, it can be argued that since it appears to have been geared toward a younger readership (an assumption based on the fact that it was published by a company explicitly focusing on books for children and youths), the translator would have to conscious of the difference in assumed cultural knowledge between adults and young adults. Chifane (2013: 97) notes that this genre "occupies a special place in the context of the so-called children's literature as well as in the literary polysystem as a whole", as it sits between the adult

and children's genres. This does not mean the difference is marked (as it would be if the translation was geared toward children), but it can nonetheless be assumed to influence the translator's choices to some small degree, particularly in the translation of non-overt allusions.

# 4 ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION STRATEGIES IN *GOOD OMENS*

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the local translation strategies used in the translation of wordplay as well as in the translation of allusions and modified idioms. In the case of *Good Omens*, the authors make use of several types of wordplay (homonymous wordplay, polysemy, parodies of literary styles, parodies of dialects). In translating these types of language play, and consequently also the novel which has been analysed in this thesis, the task to be performed is double: it consists both of translating and moving the wordplay from the source language and source culture to the target language and target culture, and of ideally also working within the constraints of the genre (parody/comedy), which has its own set of conventions pertaining to narrative elements and timing (Veisbergs 1997: 155). It should be noted, however, that a reader may not be aware of the work which is being parodied, but may be aware of the intent to parody (Nash 1985: 87-89).

In this chapter, each class of material has been discussed separately. The introduction contains three charts, detailing the overall division between the two strategies, the proportion of different classes or material, and the division between retention and re-creation on a per-class basis.

Holmes (1988:54) notes that the translator constantly is faced by choices, "choices he can make only on the basis of his individual grasp (knowledge, sensibility, experience)". In the case of wordplay, this choice can, at its most extreme, be reduced to either retaining (some form of) wordplay or leaving it out. Removal does not necessarily mean that the entire phrase or instance is edited out, it can also mean rendering the phrase literally (with adjustments for syntax and grammatical structure so that the resulting translation does not violate the rules of either). However, it is important to note that the two above-mentioned poles are the extreme ends of the scale (Holmes 1988: 47), and that both retention and deletion can occur in different ways. Compensation may occur, meaning that an instance or a pattern is removed in the transfer between source text and target text, and that another pattern is inserted into the target text in a position where a corresponding pattern did not exist in the source text. Some theorists, such as Toury

(1995: 273), are critical towards the use of the term and the concept as a whole, arguing that obliteration of a pattern between source text and target text and subsequent insertion of a pattern in another place in the target text should not *automatically* be considered an instance of compensation.

As opposed to a comic strip, where the form is necessarily compact and concise, as well as supported by a visual, the wordplay in a comic novel operates in a different context (Delabastita 1996: 129). In *Good Omens*, the novel format allows wordplay to be inserted both in dialogue and in narrative, as there are considerably less restrictions on space. It also causes what Toury (1995: 82, italics in the original) mentions, namely the blurring of lines between narrative and actual metaphor (or, in the case of the material for this thesis, wordplay): "even when proceeding from the *source text,* there can be absolutely no guarantee that the mere existence of a metaphor would ensure its treatment as *one unit*". It is therefore technically possible both to extend certain instances of wordplay – either due to a need to explicate or due to difference in length between a source language instance and a target language equivalent – or to delete them without causing severe disruptions to the flow of the text or the narrative.

The division (measured in percent) between re-creation and retention in the material was rather marked, with 65,4% of the instances being re-created and the remaining 34,6% translated in a retentive manner (see Figure 2 on page 37). This clear difference supports the hypothesis that re-creation is the more commonly used local strategy, but as the material was divided into several subgroups, it is perhaps not advisable to draw conclusions based solely on the division between main classes in the material as a whole.

**Retention and re-creation**
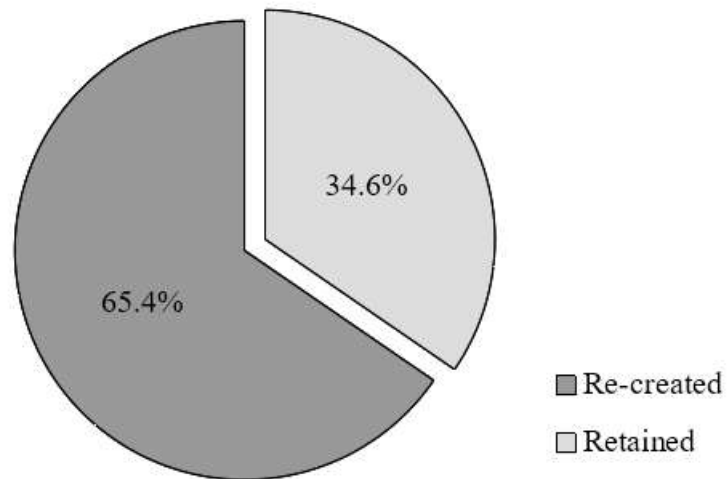
in the material as a whole



**Figure 2.** Overall division between re-creation and retention in the material as a whole

As opposed to the division on an overall level seen in the chart above, the sizes of the different categories (see Figure 3 on page 38) were fairly similar: the largest group was modified idioms, which made up 19% of the material and the smallest homographs, which made up 9%. Given that the division between different classes of material is rather even compared to the more stark division shown in Figure 2, it was felt that a chart detailing the division between re-creation and retention in each class would also be of interest. For this chart, please see Figure 4.
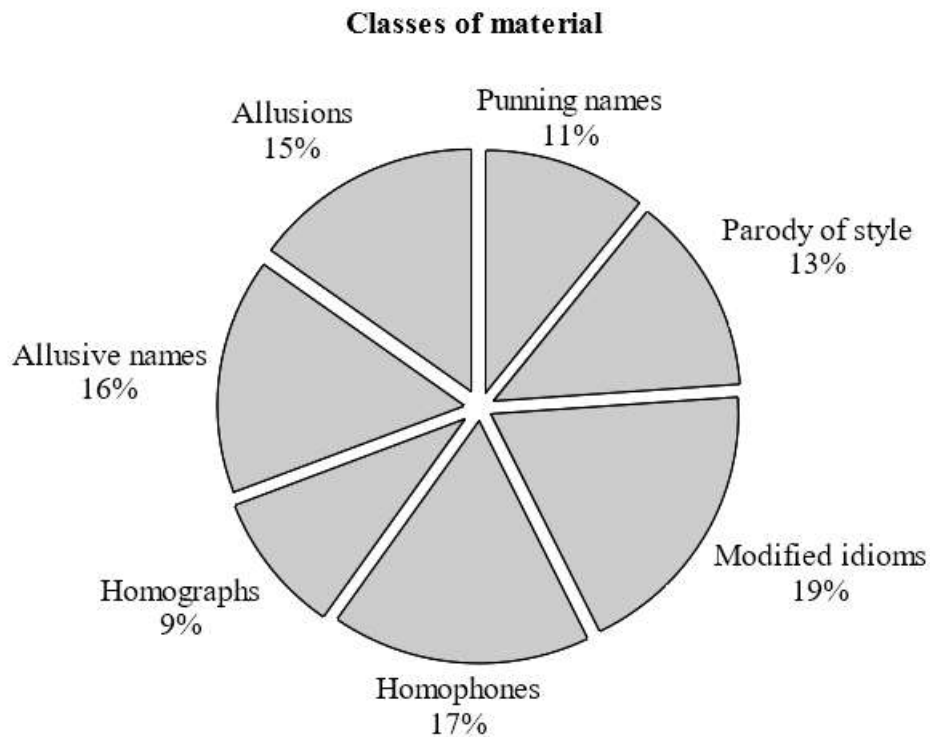
**Classes of material**



**Figure 3.** Classes of material and their share of the total in percent

Figure 4 (on page 39) shows the proportion of retention to re-creation for each class in the material. In the chart, the marked difference in homophone translations can be seen, along with the only class where retention was the more common local translation strategy, namely modified idioms. The lack of a bar for retention in the *Parody of style* class is not an error: as mentioned above, *all* of the prophecies and fictional[3] quotes rendered in a faux-mediaeval style were translated in a re-creating manner. Possible reasons for this solution are discussed in section 4.7. on page 62.

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[3]   For explanation of the use of this term, please see section 4.7 on page 62.
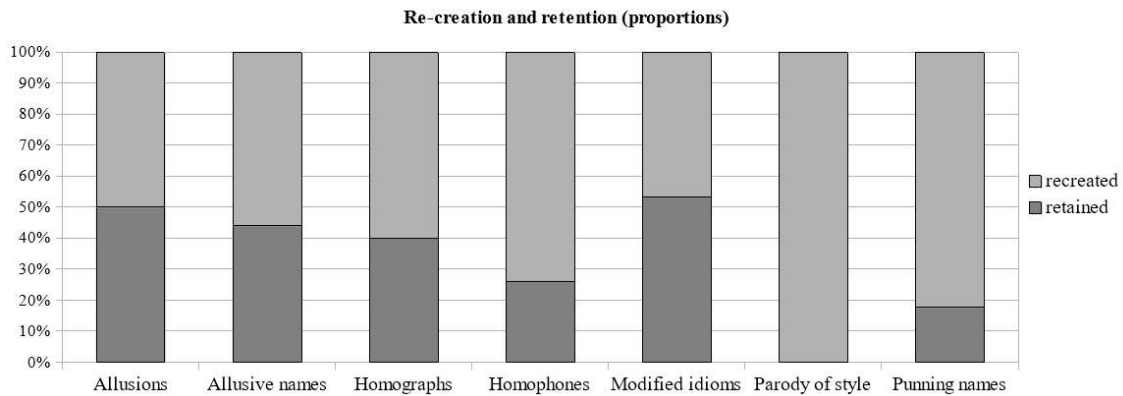
**Figure 4**. Proportion of retentive to re-creative translation, divided by class of material

The fairly even distribution between retentive and re-creative translation in more than half of the chart above is somewhat unexpected given the marked difference in the graph showing the distribution between the two classes (see Figure 2 on page 37), but also shows the difficulty in making assumptions about the local translation strategies used in the material as a whole based only on the data for one category.

The different major categories of wordplay occurring in *Good Omens* are discussed in the following sections. More precise definitions of the different categories may be found in Chapter 2. All backtranslations of target text quotes are those of the author.

4.1 Homophones

Homophones are words or phrases which are alike in sound but differ in meaning, such as the pair "sole – soul" (Nash 1985: 138). They are frequently used in verbal/spoken humour, as the effect can be lessened if the difference in spelling is visible. There are 27 homophones in the material (some of these also qualify as punning names, but have been considered homophones as that is their most distinguishing feature). 20 instances (74.1%) have been re-created while only 7 (25.9%) have been retained. The difference

is one of the most marked in the material, with only parodies of style and punning names having a more marked difference.

One of the reasons for the large amount of re-created homophones may be that sound-based wordplay is highly dependent on form, as Alexieva (1997: 140) notes: "it should be remembered that identity or near-identity of phonic and graphemic substance provides the necessary formal basis for wordplay". She further points out that languages tend to have profound differences in structure, particularly when it comes to semantics. Hygrell (1997: 176-77) underlines the differences between English and Swedish when it comes to sentence structure and ortography (spelling).

In example 1 (below), the title of a fictional book causes a misunderstanding which is exploited for comical effect.

(2)  ""The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, **Witch**," said Anathema.
"**Which what?**"
"No. **Witch. Like in Macbeth**," said Anathema. (GO-ENG 2000: 140),

""**Häxan** Agnes Nutters Nyktra och Precisa Profetior", sa Anathema.
"**Häxan**?"
"Ja, **som i Macbeth**," sa Anathema. (GO-SWE 2000: 129)

Backtranslation:
"The Sober[4] and Precise Prophecies of Agnes Nutter the **witch**," said Anathema.
"**The witch**?"
"Yes, **like in Macbeth**," said Anathema.

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4  It should be noted that in the novel, the word "nice" in the title is said to mean "scrupulously exact" (GO-ENG 2000: 38). In the translation, the replacing word "nykter" (literally "sober") is specifically and explicitly defined as "(något som) inte bara har med avsaknad av alkohol i kroppen att göra" (own translation: something which is more than just a lack of alcohol in the body) (GO-SWE 2000: 38). Hence the use of "sober" in the backtranslation of this quote.

In this exchange, the noun *witch* has been confused with the homophone interrogative pronoun *which*, which in turn provokes the question "Which what?". The reply alludes to Macbeth, which features the three witches also known as the Weird Sisters. As there is no contextually suitable or equivalent pun in Swedish (the equivalent interrogative is *vilken*), the exact structure has not been retained. However, the question and answer have been left in and the question has been re-created to emphasise the allusion to Shakespeare that was present in the source text.

Hence, in this example the local strategy is not one of purely retention or re-creation, even though the *which-witch* pun has been rendered as a non-pun or zero, but rather of a literal transferral of the information given: witches are associated with Macbeth, and the information transferred in the translation is sufficient to allow a smooth transition into the next comment in the narrative, which references the happenings in the play. It can be assumed that the allusion to Shakespeare has been deemed transparent enough to let pass without elucidation even in the target text. Therefore, it can be placed in the re-creating-naturalizing part of Holmes's graph. By translating the exchange in a manner that preserves (retains) the allusion but re-creates the crucial question in a non-punning way, the translator has chosen to sacrifice the humorous effect in exchange for an uninterrupted narrative flow.

In the case of the few source-language homophones that have been retained, the homophonic quality is fairly marked in the source text but no direct target language equivalents exist. In one case, the retention is followed by an explanatory clause not in the original (see Example 2 below).

> (2)     Also, they'd heard there were **missals** in the building. (GO-ENG 1990: 37)

> Dessutom hade de hört att det fanns **missaler** i byggnaden **och uppfattat det som "missiler"**. (GO-SWE 2000: 37)

Backtranslation:

In addition to this, they'd heard there were missals in the building and misheard it as "missiles".

In Example 2, the homophone pun hinges on the word *missal* (the book containing the liturgy of the Mass, used in the Roman Catholic church (Kirkpatrick, 2000: 679)) and the word *missile* being pronounced in an almost identical way. In the translation of this sentence, which otherwise is retentive, the translator has added the explicatory clause "och uppfattat det som "missiler"". Here, the specialized theological terminology in both languages is nearly identical, which aids the transferral of the humorous effect. However, explanatory additions to the target text may not always be desirable, and Leppihalme (1994: 139) cautions that such explanations may even come across as condescending. In the example discussed above, the intrusion is fairly restrained and it can be argued that this insertion in fact is a fairly unobtrusive way of ensuring that the allusion is noticed.

4.2 Homographs

Homographs are words which have the same spelling, but which are not always pronounced the same[5] and which do not share a meaning, such as *agape*, which can either mean "wide open" or "Christian love" (Collins Concise dictionary). Often, context is needed to be able to gauge which pronunciation and meaning is the correct one. Some homographs even have opposing meanings, such as *left*, which can mean both "remained" or "departed", and these are called contronyms or Janus words (Augarde 2003: 240).

In the material, there are 15 instances of homographs, which makes them the least frequently occurring type of wordplay. Nine instances (60%) have been translated in a re-creative way and the remaining six (40%) in a retentive way, making the division between types much less marked than in the material as a whole.

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[5] Homographs which do not share a pronunciation are called *heteronyms*, and "agape" is an example of this. Those which do share a pronunciation, like *left*, are sometimes referred to as homonyms.

One of the re-created homograph puns in the material contains a target-language pun that uses an entirely different simile while preserving the double meaning of the homograph (see Example 3). This re-creation also brings it closer to the naturalizing axis of Holmes's graph.

(3)     "Many people, meeting Aziraphale for the first time, formed three impressions: that he was English, that he was intelligent, and that he was **gayer than a tree full of monkeys on nitrous oxide**." (GO-ENG 1990: 160),

"De flesta människor som träffade Aziraphale för första gången kom snabbt fram till tre slutsatser: att han var engelsman, att han var intelligent, och att han var **fjolligare än en fikus i full blom**." (GO-SWE 2000: 148)

Literal backtranslation:
Most people who met Aziraphale for the first time quickly reached three conclusions: that he was an Englishman, that he was intelligent, and that he was **more effeminate than a rubber plant[6] in full flower**.

In this example, the homograph is the adjective *gayer*. While *gay* formerly meant joyful or happy, its meaning in modern usage has shifted to mean homosexual. In this example, the word is part of a simile that utilizes both meanings: the character in question, Aziraphale, is referred to as somewhat fussy and effeminate at several points in the book, which appears to suggest that the word *gayer* refers to him being homosexual. However, when reading on, the meaning appears to shift to the older usage as the sentence concludes with a mention of nitrous oxide, which is commonly referred to as laughing gas. There is also a mention of a tree full of monkeys, which functions as an intensifier: a tree full of monkeys would be quite loud, and if the monkeys were also under the influence of laughing gas, it would be even louder.

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6     The Swedish term *fikus*, when used to refer to plants, is often used generically to denote several different varieties, such as the rubber plant (fönsterfikus) and the weeping fig (benjaminfikus).

In the translation, the translator has chosen a re-creative local strategy: translating the meaning of the sentence literally (retentive strategy) would not preserve the play on the double meaning of the word *gayer* or the comical effect derived from the simile, as there is no equivalent homograph in Swedish (that is, one that has a double meaning of homosexual and happy). Instead, the translator has used an equivalent word for the homograph: *fikus*, which can mean both a houseplant (or genus of plants) and a homosexual. It should be noted, however, that *fikus* is considered to be somewhat derogatory in modern usage. The translator has chosen to signal the ambiguity of *fikus* by using the adjective *fjolligare* (the comparative form of *fjollig*, effeminate), which is not used when describing plants.

As the homograph has changed and as it no longer has a meaning that ties into happiness, the latter half of the sentence has also been changed. Now, the simile makes a connection between houseplants and an extreme state: *en fikus i full blom*. Here, the intensifier functions on similar lines to the original: a plant in full flower is more striking. The phrase is now also alliterative (*fjolligare-fikus-full*), though this may not necessarily be a deliberate choice on the translator's part. As both the source language and the re-created target language similes are non-standard, they capture the reader's attention.

In the case of the retentively translated homographs, all but one of them were translated using equivalent expressions in the source language. In only one case did the translator opt for a null solution, that is, to translate the homograph literally without retaining the double meaning. That instance is an example of the translator occasionally opting to sacrifice a unit to preserve the flow of the narrative.

4.3 Manipulated idioms

In this thesis, the term "manipulated idiom" is used to denote instances where an idiom has been changed in such a way as to alter either its original meaning or its referent. Veisbergs (1997: 156) points out that "contextual transformations … are intentional,

subjectively and stylistically motivated transformations of the meaning of the idiom in its contextual use". In *Good Omens*, these manipulations and transformations are use for humorous effect. In the material, there are 30 instances of manipulated idioms, and the distribution between retentive and re-creative local solutions is very even: 53.3% (16 instances) of the manipulated idioms have been translated retentively and the remaining 46.7% (14 instances) have been re-created. The only division in the material that is more even is that of allusions, where the split is exactly 50%.

An example of this type of humorous manipulation is:

(7)     "It'd be a real **feather in your win**g." (GO-ENG 2000: 58)

"Det skulle verkligen bli en **fjäder i vingen** för dig." (GO-SWE, 2000: 56)

Backtranslation:
It would really be a feather in the wing for you.

In this instance, the idiom being alluded to is *a feather in your cap*, meaning an honour or a mark of merit (Kirkpatrick 2000: 377), and part of the humorous impact derives from the context, as the person addressed is an angel with literal feathered wings. In the target text, the idiom is retained, as the idiom that was modified exists in the same form (*en fjäder i hatten*) in Swedish. There is therefore no need to seek out or construct another target language idiom to achieve equivalent effect.

It can be argued that any instance of wordplay in fact is manipulative, as it hinges on the reader's/listener's ability to identify the original and compare it to the present statement, something which is an intrinsic part of humour. Toury (1997: 278) notes:

> Up to a point, humour no doubt resides in the output utterance itself and derives from the way the output deviates from standard verbal patterns in terms of constituents, collocation and/or degree of habituality.

Some of the manipulated in the material idioms also qualify as homophonic puns, which slightly complicates the division into categories as it may skew the data to include them in two different categories. In the material, those manipulated idioms which contain a homophone pun have, in the interest of clarity, been classified as homophones and do therefore not count toward the final tally of manipulated idioms.

The retentively translated manipulated idioms in the material include both ones where there is a corresponding or identical idiom in the target language (see Example 6 below) and ones where the translation has not replaced the idiom with another but instead translated the phrase more or less literally.

> (6)    "A guilty look **passed across his face**, and then **came back and camped there**" (GO-ENG 1990: 10),
>
> "Ett skuldmedvetet uttryck **drog över hans ansikte** och **återvände sedan och slog läger där.**" (GO-SWE 2000: 12)
>
> Backtranslation:
> A guilty expression **passed over his face** and then **returned and made up camp there**.

In this example, the impact derives from the unexpected extension of the idiom in the latter part of the sentence: *A guilty look passed across his face* is commonly used to describe a brief and transient expression of guilt, but here the rest of the sentence, *and then came back and camped there* ascribes sentience to the abstract look and also serves to underline that the expression is now present once more as well as longer in duration (*camped there*). This form of absurd extension can occasionally be found in idioms which have been manipulated for explicitly comic effect and does in fact occur more than once in the novel. In the example discussed above, the translator has used a pre-existing Swedish idiom which mirrors the English one, and as a result the effect and structure of the source text idiom is retained.

Another example of this extension of an idiom, and of a different (that is, re-creative) translation solution occurs late in the novel:

(7)     Newt had indeed **been harboring certain thoughts about Anathema**; **not just harboring them**, in fact, **but dry-docking them, refitting them, giving them a good coat of paint and scraping the barnacles off their bottom**. (GO-ENG 2000: 229)

Newt hade verkligen **närt vissa tankar beträffande Anatema**; **inte bara närt** förresten **utan även matat, klätt och gett dem ett eget nytapetserat rum att leva i**. (GO-SWE 2001: 211)

Backtranslation:

Newt had actually **nurtured certain thoughts concerning Anathema**: **not just nurtured them**, actually, **but also fed, clothed and given them a newly-wallpapered room of their own to live in**.

In the source text, the idiom "*harbouring thoughts about [someone]*" has been extended to the point of absurdity, with four additional ship-related items (dry-docking, refitting, re-painting and removing barnacles). The translation similarly uses an idiom and extends it, but as the ship association does not exist in Swedish, a significantly different one has been used. In the target text, the idiom is extended with three items (the items all refer to the care of a living thing, possibly an infant), mimicking the significant and exaggerated extension of the idiom in the original. However, as opposed to the previous example, here the local translation strategy is re-creating, as the source language idiom does not have an identical (here, identical is used to denote an idiom which also uses a ship metaphor) equivalent. Here, the place on Holmes's graph would fall in the re-creative-naturalizing part.

Four of the manipulated idioms (this count includes the one discussed above) that were translated re-creatively have had the manipulated idiom replaced with a different but

similarly manipulated target language idiom. The remaining ten have been translated in a manner that re-creates and retains the humorous *effect* but not the idiom in the source text or any other idiomatic form.

In the material, there are also one cases of non-idioms/non-wordplay units gaining a manipulated idiom in the target text (see Example 8 below).

> (8)   "Below [Hell] had, for once, taken it [a suggestion] up, and, as usual, **got it dead wrong**" (GO-ENG 2000: 25)
>
> "Därnere hade de, för en gångs skull, hakat på men, som vanligt, **fått alltsammans om bockfoten**" (GO-SWE 2000: 26),
>
> Backtranslation:
> Below, they had, for once, caught on, but as usual, **got it all tangled around their cloven hoof**. (NB: this translation is literal in order to emphasize the modification and is therefore idiomatically invalid.)

The last word, *bockfoten* (lit. he-goat's foot/hoof) is a homophone play on the usual component of the idiom, *bakfoten* (lit. back or hind foot), the whole phrase being *få något om bakfoten*. This phrase literally translates as *having something tangle around [your] back legs*, the reference being to a fettered animal which has tangled itself into the rope or chain; it is idiomatically used to indicate that someone has misunderstood something. The target homophone most likely alludes to the usual image of demons having goat's legs and hooves (Tresidder 2004: 148, 209). It is, however, possible to see the phrase *got it dead wrong* as being wordplay in itself, since the those in Hell are demons or dead humans atoning for their sins. By modifying an idiom not present in the source text and using it in a sentence that did not contain an idiom, the translator is in fact re-creating a part of the narrative by adding humorous effect rather than simply transferring the meaning of the sentence.

The majority of wordplay, both in general and in *Good Omens,* can be argued to employ the same basic structure of intent as in the example given above: an utterance contains elements that are unexpected, either in terms of the utterance as a whole or in terms of suitability, and the majority of the humorous impact of the utterance derives from this surprising element or what McGraw and Warren (2014) call a "benign violation". In the case of manipulated idioms, it can therefore be argued that re-creative local strategies retain the humorous effect caused by an unexpected element while the actual form of the idiom in the text might change significantly. In re-creating a modified idiom, the translator has chosen to use another idiom from the same register, and has opted for a subtle manipulation: only one word in the sentence signals the modification.

4.4 Punning names and allusive names

In this context, the word "punning" has been used to describe names that play on either the sound or the meaning of names, to distinguish them from names that are allusive (that is, are or contain cultural references). In the material, there are 17 punning names and 25 allusive names. This section has been divided into two parts for clarity, and each section will discuss the characteristics of the type (punning or allusive) and the local translation strategies used.

4.4.1 Punning names

There are 17 punning names in the material, and all except one belong to minor characters and occur only once or twice. The only punning name to occur more frequently belongs to one of the main characters, Anathema Device (GO-ENG 2000: 38). Both her first name and her surname are punning, but her surname is the one utilized most often as the punning element. The dominant local translation strategy used for punning names is re-creation, with 14 instances (76.5%) translated in this manner; the remaining 11 instance (23.5%) were translated retentively. The division between re-creation and retention is the second most marked in the material, after parodies of style.

The name mentioned in the above paragraph, Anathema Device, has been translated in a re-creative manner: *Anatema Manick*. The literal meaning of the Swedish word *manick* is device or thing, and it is an informal word. The spelling of her first name has been adjusted to the Swedish spelling of the word in the translation (GO-SWE 2000: 38), which moves it somewhat toward the naturalizing part of Holmes's graph. Some ancestors of this character, who in the source text also have names which constitute named-based wordplay, have also had their names translated, though in these cases, there is some blurring between categories. All of the source text names of these ancestors pun on synonyms for the word *device*: *gadget, doodad, widget* and *gizmo*. While the names in themselves have been translated almost literally, their spelling has been altered, such as in the name *Sir Humphrey Gadget* (GO-ENG 2000: 205), which has been translated as *Sir Humphrey Pryyl*. The literal meaning of *pryl* in this example is *thing*, but it is also the Swedish name for a bradawl. Here, too, the spelling has been adjusted to further emphasise the punning nature of the name (GO-SWE 2000: 190).

One of the problems raised by punning and/or allusive names is that of choice: when names are wordplay in themselves, such as *Anathema Device*, ancestor of *Agnes Nutter*, it forces the translator to consider if the information transmitted by the name or the wordplay is vital to the story or if it merely is a stylistic device. Manini (1996: 167) notes that what he calls "neologistic names" are likely to cause problems in translation, and also elucidates the complex process the translator must go through:

> "breaking a given name down into its components and understanding the process which has led the author to create it; interpreting its components and understanding the process which has led the author to create it; interpreting its components, usually two, which can be either both meaningful, or one meaningful and the other meaningless; deciding what the meaning of the name is, or, if there exists a range of possible meanings, establishing their functional priority; and finally, attempting reproduce the same semantic effect in the target language."

Manini (1996: 171) also notes that translators may translate some names, ones which have "a more or less equivalent" form in the target language in a bid to make it more accessible to the reader, or to "naturalize the whole nomenclature of a translated text". In the case of *Goda Omen*, some of the re-creatingly translated names retain a certain strangeness even after being translated, which would place them closer to the

exoticizing part of Holmes's graph than to the naturalizing one. There are several complicated, multi-part names in *Good Omens*, some of which are allusions to old naming practices: *Thou-Shalt-Not-Commit-Adultery Pulsifer*, for example. All of these names are multiply-hyphenated names, the longest of them being 18 words long: *Ye-Shall-Not-Eat-Any-Living-Thing-With-The-Blood-Neither-Shall-Ye-Use-Enchantment-Nor-Observe-Times Dalrymple*. All have been translated using the same local strategy: the more transparently humorous name has been translated in a re-creative way and the surname has been left untranslated.

In the case of the character Newton Pulsifer, one can argue that his nickname, Newt, constitutes an allusive pun, as newts traditionally are linked to witches (the witches in *Macbeth* prepare a brew with eye of newt as one of the ingredients, for example) and as he is a member of the Witchfinder Army and later becomes involved with Anathema, who is a witch. The translator has not, however, chosen to attempt to re-create this name, as no immediate equivalents exist. This does not affect the text in any significant way, as the allusion is subtle.

For the minority of names that have been retained (only three instances out of 17, which amounts to 21.4%), the uniting characteristic is that they are not names of characters. Instead, they are a slightly derogatory name given to a group (the *Four Button-pressers of the Apocalypse*, a play on the *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*), another group name (*Hell's Angels*, which puns on the double possible referents: the notorious motorcycle gang or literal denizens of Hell) and the name of a restaurant (*Top of the Sixes*, which plays on it being situated at 666 Fifth Avenue in New York[7] (GO-ENG 1990: 62)). The decision not to translate these names is likely to have been deliberate on the translator's part, and one possible reason for this is that they are names that occur only once. Furthermore, they are not personal names but rather collective names.

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[7]  "From the restaurant windows you could see the whole of New Yourk; at night, the rest of New York could see the huge red '666's that adorned all four sides of the building." (GO-ENG 1990: 62). The number 666 is traditionally considered to be satanic or apocalyptic and is often referred to as the Number of the Beast (Kirkpatrick 2000: 728).

4.4.2 Allusive names

In the material, there are 25 allusive names and this group constitutes 16% of the whole. The division between retentive and re-creative translation is quite even: 56% (14 names) have been re-created and 44% (11 names) have been retained. Some of the allusive names in the material could also be considered punning, but have been sorted into the allusive class as their allusive qualities have been considered more marked than the punning ones.

Four characters go under more than one name, and their uniting characteristic is that they are members of a particular group of characters: the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Their names and aliases all allude to the Bible, specifically to the Book of Revelation where the Horsemen are described. These names do not, however, allude to Biblical names but to the description of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, which makes the allusion somewhat harder to identify. Leppihalme (1994: 29) compares the interaction between reader and author as (among other things) a puzzle, which must be solved, and in the case of the Biblical allusions in the names discussed here, this puzzle requires knowledge of a specific domain, namely both the Bible and the Book of Revelation. While Biblical allusions are not uncommon in Western literature, they nevertheless require some degree of familiarity with the text. Leppihalme (ibid.:31) further notes that "allusions are used because of the extra effect or meaning they bring to a text by their association or connotations". In this case, the extra effect is manner in which the aliases (discussed briefly below) allude to the Biblical text from which the characters[8] are drawn.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are *Death*, *War*, *Famine* and *Pestilence*. They are mainly mentioned in the Book of Revelation, specifically chapter 6[9]. The colour of each

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[8]  An argument could be made for the characters being "shared" as they are archetypes or manifestations of forces rather than people: "four agents of destruction, two being agents of war and two of famine and pestilence" (Kirkpatrick 2000: 405).

[9]  In *Good Omens*, this is alluded to as the group encounter a motorcycle gang who demand to know which chapter (of the club Hell's Angels) they belong to. One of the members replies "REVELATIONS. CHAPTER SIX." (GO-ENG 1990: 262; capitals in the original. This allusion is also a homograph punning on the double meaning of "chapter".)

horseman is given in this chapter: Death rides a pale horse, Famine rides a black horse, War rides a red horse and Pestilence rides a white horse (Bible, KJV: Revelation 6, verses 2-8). In *Good Omens*, these characters occur as themselves but also use aliases while in disguise as humans. The number of aliases varies from character to character: Death has no aliases and Famine uses only one, War has four, and Pollution, the character who has replaced Pestilence, has six. None of the aliases used by the Horsemen have been translated, while their original Biblical names have: *Död, Krig, Hungersnöd* and *Miljöförstöring*. Pestilence is referred to only once, and this name has also been translated: *Pest* (GO-SWE 2000: 243). This makes the dominant local strategy retention.

All of the aliases (six in total) used by the horseman Pollution pun on and allude to the colour white and have been considered as a single unit as they all, with the exception of *White* and *Chalky*, occur only once and in the same clause (GO-ENG 1990: 64[10]). These aliases are somewhat more transparent than the aliases used by the horseman War, as they are all names for white, though not all are in English: *Blanc* is French, *Albus* is Latin and *Weiss* is German. None of these names have been translated but are instead left intact in the text, which makes the strategy shift rather sharply toward the retentive-exoticizing part of Holmes's graph.

The aliases used by the horseman War involve the colour red, in keeping with the theme of names alluding the colour given in the Book of Revelations: *Red*, *Scarlett* and *Carmine Zuigiber*. Red is the most transparent, while Scarlett is more ambiguous, as it is in common use as a first name and may not immediately cause the reader to reflect on its double meaning. *Carmine Zuigiber* is a double allusion: carmine is a type of red pigment, and Zuigiber plays on the scientific Latin name for ginger, which is *Zingiber*. *Ginger* is also used as an adjective to describe red hair. Here, the source language allows for greater liberties in the construction of the names, as the English synonyms (or the foreign ones imported into and used in English) for the colour can and are used as names. None of these names have been re-created, which places them in the same part

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[10] "Sometimes he was called White, or Blanc, or Albus, or Chalky, or Weiss, or Snowy, or any of a hundred other names. His skin was pale, his hair a faded blond, his eyes light grey." (GO-ENG 1990:64)

of the graph as the aliases of the horseman Pollution discussed above: retentive-exoticizing.

One of the aliases used by War is not related to colour, and has been classified as a homophone: *General Waugh*, where "Waugh" shares a pronunciation with "War". It, unlike the other aliases, has been translated in a re-creating way. The target text equivalent is *General Krieg* which uses the same homophonic type of punning: "Krieg" shares a pronunciation with "krig", the Swedish word for war. While the translation is re-creative, it is closer to the exoticizing part of the graph as "Krieg" is German rather than Swedish, which makes it somewhat less transparent as a pun.

The horseman Famine uses only one alias, and it, too, puns on the colour ascribed to him. This colour is black, and the alias used is *Raven Sable*. Both halves of the name are synonyms for black. This alias has been retained in the translation, just like the preceding ones.

The group of four as a whole is referred to as both *Hell's Angels* (which alludes to the motorcycle gang and plays on the double meaning of the title) and *Apocalyptic Horsepersons* (both an allusion to non-sexist language and to the fact that one of the Horsemen in *Good Omens* is female), but neither have been translated in a manner that transparently preserves the humorous effect: *Hell's Angels* has been retained, and *Apocalyptic Horsepersons* has been rendered as "Apokalypsens ryttare" (GO-SWE 2000: 14), which translates literally as "Riders of the Apocalypse". While the latter is re-creative, it no longer includes the humorous effect caused by the uncommon nonce word "Horsepersons".

Another cluster of names has been translated in a re-creating manner: the names of a small sect of Satanic[11] nuns. These names adhere to and allude to monastic naming traditions: Catholic nuns traditionally take new names that often are drawn from the

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[11]   The nuns in the novel are explicitly stated to be Satanist (GO-ENG 1990: 30), and the name of the order is given as the Chattering Order of Saint Beryl (whose full name was Beryl Articulatus of Cracow). Both the name of the order and the name of the saint are punning; the names play on words related to speech and excessive talking, just like the names of the nuns in the order.

names of saints (Lowe 2003: 65). There are three names: sister *Mary Loquacious*, sister *Grace Voluble* and *sister Talkative*, though the latter is not a name per se but an incorrectly recalled form of Mary Loquacious. The names of sister Mary Loquacious and sister Grace Voluble have been translated as *Mary Pratsjuk* (talkative, gabby) and *Grace Munvig* (glib) respectively. The incorrectly recalled name "sister Talkative" (GO-ENG 2000: 116) has also been translated, as "syster Pratsam" (GO-SWE 2005: 98), which is re-creative, close to the translation of the correct name, and indeed the literal translation of "talkative". One of the names, *Faith Prolix*, has not been translated, though it is not clear if this is due to an oversight on the translator's part or due to a choice not to "force" a pun on the name.

There is also a small number of allusions to film titles, which have also been re-created and which all pun on the translated name of the film alluded to in the source text. In the source text, these titles are allusive rather than direct, as a key word in each title has been replaced with the word "pin". In the translation, key words have been replaced with "nål" (the Swedish word for a pin or needle), which makes these instances both re-creative and retentive. They have been considered re-creative for the purposes of the analysis as the translation in fact uses both the Swedish distribution titles of the films being alluded to (in two cases) as well as using other titles that could be manipulated in a manner than preserved the humorous effect (two cases).

The is also one case of a re-creative translation of a name where the translated name arguably is less transparent than its source-text counterpart: *Stalks-by-Night* (GO-ENG 1990: 71), which in the novel is the suggested name for a literal hell-hound, has been translated as *Borman* (GO-SWE 2000: 67). While the purpose of re-creative translation generally is to make an allusion or similar translational unit more familiar to the target culture readers, replacing a clearly playful name that could have been re-created as "Smyger-i-Natten" with a non-obvious surname that may be a reference to a Nazi war criminal (whose name, however, is spelled *Bormann*) is not necessarily an example of re-creation. Nor is it retention, since the source text name has been replaced.

In the case of allusive and punning names, the hypothesis did not prove entirely true as the division between re-creation and retention was very even in the case of allusive names. There was, however, very slightly more re-creative translations than retentive translation if both classes (punning and allusive) were added up.

## 4.5 Omissions and insertions

While omissions in themselves clearly do not constitute instance of wordplay or allusions (they are also not included in the material), they have been considered briefly as certain omissions involve the obliteration of source text wordplay. This obliteration seems to occur when there is no equivalent structure in the target language and where the construction of a replacing structure would mean too much "interference" in the text – that is, it would possibly even mean that the translator has to add explanations, either in-text or as a footnote. It can be argued that the choice to omit or remove an instance of wordplay constitutes a re-creative translation strategy, as the translator is working within the constraints of a target culture that lacks an equivalent unit.

### 4.5.1 Omission by removal

There are three instances of omissions of wordplay in the material, the most noticeable one removing 59 consecutive words of dialogue and exposition. The omission centers around wordplay concerning the double meaning of the word "faggot" (formerly used of a bundle of kindling, now mostly used as a derogatory term for homosexual). There is no direct equivalent lexical unit in the target language, and more importantly none with the required double meaning, but it can be argued that a source text wordplay - target text editorial device substitution might have been made, or even a source text wordplay - target text non-wordplay solution.

Another, somewhat less noticeable omission similarly involves the omission of an instance of wordplay which does not have an equivalent structure in the target language: the slogan *Peace is our Profession* has been misspelled in a prophecy as "Peas is our Professioune" (GO-ENG 1990: 228), and one of the characters realises this, exclaiming

"It's got nothing to do with peas. It's 'Peace Is Our Profession.'" (ibid.: 304). In the translation, the first sentence, "It's got nothing to do with peas." has been omitted, as the translation of "Peas is our Professioune" in the target text is *Fredhen*[12] *är vårt jobb* [Peace is our profession] (GO-SWE 2000: 211). There is no homophone pun in the translation, and the only way it differs from the correct form is in its deliberate misspelling of the main word. Here, too, is an example of the translator choosing to re-create by omitting wordplay when there is no direct lexical and punning equivalent and when substituting a more creative solution, would have forced the translator to consider its effect on the later occurrences of this wordplay.

There is also a case of source text pun – target text non-pun that can be counted as an omission even though no part of the text has been left out. Instead, the text has been translated strictly retentively. The source text pun (see Example 8 below) is a punning allusion, and it is in fact even pointed out explicitly that the allusion is a joke: *He called [his car] Dick Turpin, in the hope that someone would ask him why* (GO-ENG: 203). The joke hinges on the reader knowing that Dick Turpin was a famous highwayman in the 18th century (Kirkpatrick 2000:1050). The punchline to the joke is delayed significantly, with the final pay-off occurring very late in the novel.

(8)     "Why've you got "**Dick Turpin**" painted on the door of **your car**?"
        "It's a joke, really," said Newt.
        "Hmm?"
        "Because **everywhere I go, I hold up traffic**," he mumbled wretchedly.
        (GO-ENG: 372)

        "Varför har du "**Dick Turpin**" målat på sidan av **bilen**?"
        "Det är ett skämt", sa Newt.
        "Hm?"
        "Därför att **vartän jag beger mig, så hejdar jag trafiken**", mumlade han
        olyckligt. (GO-SWE: 325-6)

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12   The correct spelling of the word is "freden". In this case, the misspelling is a re-creative translation of the non-standard spelling of the corresponding word in the source text, though in this case the translation only re-creates the spelling, not the humorous effect of the homophone pun *peace-peas.*

Backtranslation:

"Why do you have **"Dick Turpin"** painted on the side of your **car**?"

"It's a joke", said Newt.

"Hm?"

"Because **wherever I go, I stop traffic**", he mumbled unhappily.

In the translation, both the initial setup and the final punchline have been retained, but no attempt has been made to retain or re-create the joke. It can be argued that the punning part of the allusion is the use of *hold up traffic*, as highwaymen (such as Dick Turpin) hold up travellers and rob them, while slow or stalled cars hold up traffic. In the translation, "hold up" has been translated as "hejda", which has the same literal meaning (to stop someone) but does not carry the double meaning (to stop (cars) from moving forward *and* to stall (people) in order to rob them). Unlike the earlier examples discussed, where the source text puns have no equivalent in the target language and therefore get omitted, this retention of the punning expression merely omits some of the humorous effect, not the entire pun.

Davis (2007: 57) offers that some omissions may be justified on certain grounds:

> Literary translators have traditionally been attributed much greater freedom in the ways in which they manipulate their texts, it being generally accepted that no translation of a work of literature can faithfully retain every aspect of the source text, and that omission of certain element is a fair price to pay for the preservation of others.

However, she adds that while it may "perhaps be excusable … can hardly be considered desirable (Davis 2007: 58). In the case of a comical novel like *Good Omens*, however, one can make a case for a single omission of humorous effect not affecting the humorous value of effect of the translation as a whole. Had the amount of omissions been more significant, a case could have been made for it being an unwelcome and excessive manipulation of the source text.

4.5.2 Insertion

One case of insertion was also discussed in the section on homophones (4.1) on pages 41-42, and will therefore only be very briefly summarized here. In this case, an

explanatory clause was inserted into a sentence containing a homophone pun, and the intent of the translator may have been to ascertain that the reader noticed the pun (which was both homophonic and allusive; it was classified as homophonic as that was the more dominant feature) as it involved a religious reference and specifically one referring to a concept in Catholicism.

4.6 Allusions

The novel also contains a large amount of allusions, most if not all cultural ones (literature and cultural phenomena). Some of these allusions have been included in the material as they involve some degree of manipulation and/or wordplay and are therefore of interest. The reason for only including part of the allusions is that including every instance would have necessitated the addition of new categories not necessarily related to wordplay and would have made the material less manageable. There are 24 allusions in the source material, and the split between re-created and retained is exactly even at 12 (50%) and 12 instances (50%) respectively.

The translation of allusions is ostensibly more free of constraints than the translation of wordplay, as allusions are not always bound by verbal form; that is, they need not be given in a particular manner of writing or spelling. Leppihalme compares allusions to echoes (1997: 65) and notes that recognition of allusions may be triggered by familiarity. She also notes (ibid.: 67) that

> familiarity of such a phrase may be enhanced – or, if there is no familiarity, the phrase may be signalled – by deviations in spelling, lexis, grammar or style (such deviations serving to distinguish the allusion form its context). Additionally, at times, there may be an introductory phrase, quotation marks, or some other such "extra-allusive" device.

In the case of *Good Omens*, many of the allusions are to British culture, but the timescale is wide: there are allusions to 18th century highwaymen and the witch trials of the 17th century, but also to modern forgeries (the Hitler Diaries). In some cases, the allusions have what Leppihalme refers to as "extra-allusive devices" in the quote above. In the case of the allusion to the forgery mentioned, there is an explication: "*The Nice*

*and Accurate Prophecies* made the Hitler diaries look like, well, a bunch of forgeries"
(GO-ENG 1990: 123). Here the somewhat flippant allusion is to a series of highly-
publicised journals that were purported to have been written by the dictator but which in
fact were forged by a German con artist (Rentschler 2003: 200-1).

That allusions are not bound to form does not, however, necessarily mean that they are
easier to translate than form-based wordplay, as the translator will need to weigh the
likelihood of the concept being referred to being one that is familiar and intelligible (and
therefore needing no explanation) to the reader against the likelihood that it is
unfamiliar to them and will need to be either explained or substituted with a target
culture equivalent. The transfer is also complicated by the fact that translators may
recognize humour in a text but feel unable to reproduce it themselves (Vandaele 2002:
150). Further complicating the issue in this analysis is the fact that the translation has
been done for young-adult readers. Chifane (2013: 97) notes that the young-adult genre
sits between two genres: literature for children and literature for adults. It might be
assumed that the demands on the translation are subtly different from those on a
translation aimed at adults because of this. Without access to the translator's process,
only guesses and assumptions can be made, and because of this, the analysis in this
thesis does not attempt to factor in the (slightly) different intended readership.

Not all allusions in the text are clear or as explicit: at the very end of the novel, there is
a reference to George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* that requires deeper knowledge of
the novel, as the quote is in the middle of the novel rather than the first or the last
sentence.

> (9)  "And if you want to imagine the future, **imagine a boot** . . . no, imagine
> **a sneaker**, laces trailing, **kicking a pebble**" (GO-ENG 2000: 402).
>
> "Och om du vill föreställa dig framtiden, **föreställ dig då en stövel**…
> nej, föreställ dig **en gymnastisko**, med oknutna skosnören, som **sparkar
> en sten**" (GO-SWE 2000: 352)

Backtranslation:

"And if you want to imagine the future, then imagine **a boot**… no, imagine **a plimsoll**, with untied shoelaces, that is **kicking a stone**.

The allusion is to a line in the novel: "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face – for ever" (Orwell 2008: 280). In the Swedish translation, the line reads: "Vill du ha en bild av framtiden så föreställ dej en stövel som trampar på ett ansikte – i evighet" (Orwell 2001: 241). Here, only half of the line is included, and the humour or modification lies in the substitution of a sneaker for the boot, and the substitution of a harmless activity (pebble-kicking) for the considerably more violent act in the original quote. In the translation, the allusion is likewise opaque. In the case of this particular allusion, it is difficult to tell if the translator has chosen to retain or re-create the allusion as it is so vague.

Another allusion hinges on the reader knowing classical song lyrics (Example 10).

(10)   They went to **the Ritz** again, where a table was mysteriously vacant. And perhaps the recent  exertions had had some fallout in the nature of reality because, while they were eating, for the first time ever, **a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square**. (GO-ENG 2000: 392-3)

De gick **på Ritz** igen, där ett bord märkligt nog råkade vara ledigt. Och kanske hade de nyligen timade händelserna ändå haft någon effekt på verkligheten, ty för första gången någonsin **sjöng en näktergal på Berkeley Square**. (GO-SWE 2000. 343-4)

Here, the allusion is to *A Nightingale Sang in Berkely Square*, which includes the line "There were angels dining at the Ritz / And a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square" (Lyrics.com: 2017); the joke being that Aziraphale (and to a lesser extent, Crowley[13]) is an angel, and is literally dining at the Ritz while a nightingale sings in Berkeley Square.

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[13]   In the Dramatis Personae at the beginning of the novel, Crowley is described as "An Angel who did not so much Fall as Saunter Vaguely Downwards" (GO-ENG 1990: 13, capitalization in the original.)

The Ritz allusion also occurs earlier on in the novel, though in that instance it is even shorter and more opaque: """Come on," he said. "Let's do the Ritz." (GO-ENG 1990:50), and a case could be made for it not even being an allusion if considered separately. In both cases, the allusion has been retained, as the song is well-known and therefore likely to be part of the cultural register in Sweden, though a case could be made for the argument that the allusion is less visible in Swedish, as recognition would mean switching registers to English and furthermore remembering or knowing the lyrics to the song.

In the case of the allusions included in the material, the hypothesis of re-creation being the dominant local strategy did not prove true, which is somewhat unexpected, particularly given the advice of theorists like Leppihalme (1994: 65) to make sure the reader "has something to work with", that is, encounters an element that is familiar. In retaining the allusions, the translator has moved the text further away from the reader, though an argument could be made for many of the allusions being to items that exist in both the source culture and the target culture, therefore making them less "foreign" or distant.

4.7 Parody of style

In the material, there are also 21 instances of style parodies, the majority of which are prophecies rendered in a faux-mediaeval style, which has been considered allusive as it refers to and is written in a style mimicking the non-standard spelling of English mediaeval manuscripts. These prophecies have been considered as single units regardless of their length (the longest is 65 words long, the shortest only nine) as the feature that is being analysed is style rather than a particular grammatical or word-level feature or mechanism. All of these (100%) have been translated in a re-creative manner, which may be explained by 1) a similar literary style being found in the target culture (Swedish) and 2) the intent to parody is clearer if the form of the parodic text is moved closer to the receiving culture and the reader.

There are also a number of fictional quotes ("fictional" is here used to distinguish them from quotes from other works; the quotes referred to here are fictional in the sense that they are purported to be from other works, which exist only within the world of *Good Omens*). These quotes have also been translated in a re-creating manner, as they are very similar in style to the prophecies, both in their vocabulary and in their non-standard spelling. One of these quotes (see Example 11 below) is the text of the title page of the fictional book of prophecies, and this text includes a fictional review of said book. It can be argued that this part of the novel parodies both Mediaeval literary style and modern style, particularly review blurbs and advertising copy found on book dust jackets.

(11)   The **Nife** and Accurate **Prophefies** of Agnes Nutter

In slightly smaller type: Being a **Certaine** and **Prefice Hiftory** from the **Prefent** Day Unto the **Endinge** of this World.

In slightly larger type: Containing therein Many **Diuerse** Wonders and precepts for the Wife

In a different type: More complete than ever yet before **publifhed**

In smaller type but in capitals: CONCERNING THE STRANGE TIMES **AHEADE**

In slightly desperate italics: *And events of a Wonderful Nature*

In larger type once more: '**Reminifent** of **Noftradamus** at **hif beft**' -Ursula Shipton. (GO-ENG 1990: 115; italics, capitalizations and deliberate misspellings[14] in the original, extra line breaks and indentations omitted in the interest avoiding a large block of text.)

Agnes Nutters Nyktra och Precisa Profetior.

Och med aningen mindre stil: **Warande** en **Definitiw** och Exakt Historia från Våra Dagar till **thenna Werldens** Slut.

Med aningen större stil: Omfattande **Diwerse** Olika Under och råd till Husmodern.

---

[14]   The use of the letter *f* instead of *s* or *c* in words like "nice" or "history" is most likely an attempt to mimic the long s, *ſ*, that was used in some gothic printing types (Mosley 2008).

> Med en annan stil: Mer komplett än någonthing **tillförne** publicerat.
>
> I mindre stil men med kapitäler: BEHANDLANDE **THE MERKELIGE** TIDER SOM KOMMA SKOLA.
>
> I aningen desperat kursiv: *Och händelser af Underbar Natur.*
>
> Och åter med större stil: "För **tankarne** till Nostradamus när han är som bäst" - Ursula Shipton. (GO-SWE 2000: 106; italics, capitalizations and deliberate misspellings in the original, extra line breaks and indentations omitted in the interest avoiding a large block of text.)

This mixture of styles has been re-created in the translation, including the line breaks and even the changes in typeface (capitals); multiple deliberate misspellings[15] have also been included. While the shape of the texts is the same, the text itself has been re-created. This effect is even clearer in one of the other instances, where the frustrated utterance *Buggre Alle this for a Larke* (GO-ENG 1990: 51; capitalization and deliberate misspelling in the original) has been re-created as *Fanen Ta Allt Detta Här* (GO-SWE 2000: 49; capitalization in the original). In this case, the translator has chosen to re-create the humorous effect by using a different curse (lit. *may the devil take all of this*) that is more appropriate for the target culture.

In the case of parodies of style, the hypothesis of re-creation being the dominant local strategy proved to be entirely true, in contrast to the translation of allusions. When re-creating the allusive and parodic styles, it can be argued that the translator is both bound by stricter rules than in the translation of a conventional text, as the emphasis now is on the *formal* aspect of the source text (which can be seen as a variant of what Holmes (1988: 48) calls "temporal dialect"), and more free as the re-creation may focus more on re-creating the humorous effect of the source text than on rendering it in a way that strictly preserves each aspect of the original.

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[15] These deliberate misspellings and archaic spellings have been marked in bold type in both original and translation. This quote has not been backtranslated as it was felt simply marking the instances of re-creative spelling/translation would suffice as illustration of the extent of re-creation of non-conventional spelling.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This thesis set out to examine the local translation strategies employed by the translator when it came to the translation of certain types of wordplay and humour (in the material for this thesis, allusions and modified idioms), and to determine if retention or re-creation (as defined by James S. Holmes) was the most prevalent strategy used locally. The hypothesis was that re-creation would be the dominant local strategy as both wordplay and allusions/idioms bring their own restrictions: wordplay is often highly language-dependent (Alexieva 1997: 140) and allusions are tied to culture. This hypothesis proved to be true. There were, however, some marked differences in the proportions of retained and re-created items.

The most common local translation strategy used in the translation of the wordplay in Good Omens was re-creation (see Figure 2 on page 36). 64.8% of the units, 103 in total, were translated in a re-creating manner. Closer examination revealed that in many cases, it was a question of a translation unit that had been "modified" in the source text (such as a manipulated idiom, which is an idiom that has been changed to achieve a humorous effect) also being modified past simple transferral as a whole in the target text. The remaining 35.2%, 56 units in total, of the material was translated using a retentive translation strategy. On the basis of this, one might suggest that the global translation strategy used in *Goda Omen* is re-creation. In all cases except for the category of allusions where the split between the two categories is exactly even, the division between re-creation and retention is fairly marked, with parodies of style being disproportionately re-creative: all instances of this type had been translated in that manner.

In the material collected from *Good Omens*, the most common type of wordplay was modified idioms (see Figure 3 on page 36), but in contrast to the material overall, the division between retention and re-creation was very even. The least common class was homographs. The largest difference between re-creation and retention was in the translation of the prophecies and fictional quotes (grouped under *Parodies of style*), where all instances were rendered in a re-creative way. This, however, may be explained

by the type, which is style-bound rather than bound by spelling (homographs) or pronunciation (homophones). In the case of homophones, the dominant type was re-creating translation, which can be expected as English and Swedish, while both fairly closely related languages, are different enough to force a translator to re-create the humorous effect by using a different homophone. The material also included names, but not all names in the material were translated, and it appeared that the names most likely to be translated or re-created were the ones that were clearly marked out as punning names (*Anathema Device*, *sister Grace Voluble* etc.). Names that were allusions (*Raven Sable* for Famine, whose colour in the Bible is black, etc.) were often left intact and therefore represent a retentive translation strategy with an exoticizing slant. For proportions between re-creation and retention in all classes, please see Figure 4 on page 39.

Delabastita (2008: 600) points out that

> whatever its exact form or function, wordplay exploits the intrinsic structure of the (source) language used and throws into prominence certain characteristics of that language for which it may well be difficult or impossible to find analogues or equivalents in the target language.

In the case of the material analysed, the use of re-creative local translation strategies seems to support this assertion, as such a large proportion of the items were translated in a re-creative manner. In some cases, a direct equivalent structure existed in the target language and could be utilized, while in others, the difference necessitated that the translator instead use another structure altogether: one source text idiom was translated as a homophone, for instance. (See section 4.3 on page 44.) Other idioms were replaced by idioms, but different ones (that is, ones not necessarily containing the same elements), to ensure that an equivalent punning or humorous effect could be attained by manipulation of the target text idiom. This naturalizing lead to a difference in meaning from the original in some cases, but as has been noted earlier in this thesis (Augarde 2003; discussed on page 28), the primary function of wordplay and humour is to amuse, and in the translation of wordplay, it can be argued that part of the task of the translator is to transfer the amusement as much as the message. This transferral of the humorous effect at the expense of original meaning or form represents a more dynamic form of

equivalence, as opposed to formal equivalence where the attention is on the form rather than the message (Nida 1964: 129).

It can be concluded that differences both in source language and target language (in the case of wordplay and modified idioms) and in source culture and target culture (in the case of allusions) appeared to shift the dominant local strategy used toward re-creation. However, there were significant differences between different groups of material, which suggests that certain types of wordplay were more likely to be re-created, and that this tendency could be due to either purely mechanical reasons (the sound-fit required for a homophone pun) or more subjective reasons, such as the familiarity of allusions. These differences offered an almost incongruous picture of the material: when examined on a class-to-class basis, the division between retention and re-creation appeared significantly more even than when considering the material as a whole.

Worthwhile areas of further study might, on the basis of the findings described above, be studies of whether translation strategies concerning more subjective categories such as allusions can be predicted, and whether the variation in strategy can be tied to a more specific area of this category; that is, for instance, if allusive names are more or less likely to be translated in a re-creative manner. Additionally, comparisons could be made between source and target texts belonging to the same cultural sphere (Western) and those belonging to another one.

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