

The Joke is on Who? – On the Relevance of Culture for Translating Humorous Novels

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### **Introduction**

Considered by many to be one of the most important aspects of a person's character, humour has been studied thoroughly throughout history, going all the way back to Plato and Aristotle. From theories to formulae, there is an incredible amount of information to be found on humour in its many shapes and forms. Yet for reasons that are not immediately apparent, one area of humour, namely humour in translation, has received far less attention than the others. Despite humour studies and translation studies overlapping in the fields of linguistics, sociology and psychology, very little has been written on humour in translation. But why is this the case? This thesis will attempt to both explain why there is such a lack of research on humour in translation, as well as reduce this gap by looking at one particular aspect of humour in translation, namely the importance of culture in translating humour. Ultimately, the goal of this thesis is to find out to what extent the retention of cultural aspects is relevant when translating a humorous novel from English to Dutch.

To address the issue of the lack of research, this thesis will turn to Jeroen Vandaele, one of the leading translation scholars on the subject of humour in translation. His essay "(Re-) Constructing Humour: Meaning and Means", at the time one of the first essays to address the matter of humour in translation, will be analysed to find a possible answer to the how and why of this seeming lack of research. Where Vandaele offers an explanation as to the root of the humour translation problem, using the works of Robert M. Gordon (1950 - ) and Paul Grice (1913 – 1988) (amongst others) as his basis, Salvatore Attardo and Patrick Zabalbeascoa offer tools for dealing with the humour translation problem in practice. Both Attardo's and Zabalbeascoa's approaches to humour in translation will subsequently be analyzed to find out how their approaches work, and whether they can be used for translating humour in a literary work. This

builds up to the heart of the thesis: the significance of culture when translating humour. In order to find out how significant culture truly is, two translations of the same text will be made. One will be made in accordance with Venuti's 'domestication' strategy, the other will be made in accordance with his 'foreignization' strategy, selected for being polar opposites with regards to culture (the former adheres to target culture, the latter to source culture). Additionally, the text that is to be translated, Douglas Adams' "Life, the Universe and Everything", was chosen for being both humorous as well as being laden with (British) culture. These translations will then be supplied with notes elaborating on general translation decisions, leaving the humour related translation decisions to be elaborated on in more detail in the subsequent chapter. It is there that both translations will be compared and analysed in accordance with Attardo's and Zabalbeascoa's articles, in order to find out which of the two translations is better, and as such arrive at an answer to the question to what extent the retention of cultural aspects is relevant when translating a humoristic novel from English to Dutch.

### **Chapter 1 - Humour translation studies**

The field of humour translation is a field still relatively unexplored, even though humour is a rather common occurrence, both in writing and in speaking. What is the reason for humour in translation seemingly being ignored, and why does it warrant its own sub-category to begin with? These questions will be answered in this chapter, alongside a look at two different approaches to translating humour, to see if either could complement Venuti. These first two questions will be answered by exploring Jeroen Vandaele's "(Re-) Constructing Humour: Meaning and Means", an excellent introduction to the world of humour translation. The two approaches that will then follow are Salvatore Attardo's (1962 - ) "An Approach Based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour", and Patrick Zabalbeascoa's "Humor and Translation - an Interdiscipline."

### Chapter 1-1: Jeroen Vandaele

The notion that there is a considerable lack of research done in the field of humour translation is not new, it was in fact Vandaele's "(Re-) Constructing Humour: Meaning and Means" that first brought this to light. An odd situation at first glance, everyone can understand humour, yet to properly describe and categorize it is far more difficult. In a similar vein, Vandaele says, humour translation as a field was also considered too vast, and few academic efforts have been made to understand it. Many of the contributions that are made end up being "no more than intelligent or not so intelligent *ad hoc* reflections by swimmers who lack an overview, not by cartographers with tentative maps in need of completion." (p.149). The fact of the matter here is that humour translation is a different type of fish compared to "other kinds" of translation, and as such requires a different approach. Vandaele lists four different reasons as to why humour translation can be considered 'qualitatively different' from other types of translation:

(1) Humour as a meaning effect has an exteriorized manifestation, laughter and such, whereas other texts have less noticeable meanings;

(2) Research has shown that humour comprehension and production are two different skills. Being 'funny' cannot be taught (which is why one can be 'funny' for a living);

(3) Appreciation of humour varies as well. Humour can be recognized as such without it being found 'funny';

(4) The rhetorical effect of humour may be so overwhelming it blurs out the specifics of its creation.

Vandaele does not feel that he can offer simple tools to deal with reproducing humour in translation, but instead hopes his analysis "may help scholars and trainers alike (a) to see structures in effects that are fuzzy but still bear strong (meanings), (b) to understand the ways in

which these effects are encoded in language (means), and finally to compare source and target texts with respect to (a) and (b).” (p.150).

One important subject that has been ignored thus far is one of definitions. What is the definition of humour, and what does ‘translating humour’ mean exactly? The problem with defining humour is that it “is not articulated in the sense of a conventionally coded linguistic unit *per se*, a semantic meaning attached to lexicalized linguistic forms (words, phrases, etc.).” (p.151), so unlike other stylistic elements, it does not come with clear-cut signifiers. What is more: “At a higher language level (involving syntax), humour is not necessarily a consequence of merely the ‘literal’ meaning of sentences (or, to use the more technical term, their propositional content).” (p.151). At a glance it could seem that this would make it impossible to study humour, but this is far from the truth. What it does mean, however, is that humour, if it is to be properly analyzed for use in translation studies, needs a better definition. Vandaele does this by rebranding humour as a cognitive, humorous effect. If one were to consider dynamic, functional or pragmatic theories, then translational equivalence can be realized in cognitive terms, if one views the “relationship between two texts (source and target) capable of producing ‘the same or a similar effect’, as a result of the translator reconstructing the ST’s intention and recoding it in the TT for the same intended effect.” (p.151). Following the same line of reasoning, changing humour to humorous effect would make translating humour boil down to accomplishing the same humorous effect. This way of looking at it can be appealing especially to those not involved in the world of academia, for it speaks to our common sense. This is reflected in folk psychology; (where this idea of humour translation would be evident) for everyone knows the ‘humour feeling’. Throughout this thesis, ‘humour feeling’ is considered to stand for “any sort of ‘positive feeling’ or response to a (relatively) successful instance of humour, where ‘positive’ means that the instance of humour is indeed somehow acknowledged; this does not exclude ‘aggressive’

humour.” (p.151), to avoid any confusion. This would mean all a translator would have to do is to mirror the feeling source and target text evoke, which would be a cognitive approach. A second argument in favour of this cognitive approach would be that plausible interpretations are preferable over computer like explanatory models which force an artificialization beyond recognition as representative of human life. Studying humour without mentioning intentions and effects is a seemingly difficult task. There is, however, a flipside to this folk-psychological rationale towards humour: its intuitive nature undermines the scholarly debate on humour. If asked the question ‘What is humour?’, the ordinary man on the street could respond with “(the ability to understand and enjoy) what is funny and makes people laugh”, or “the quality of causing amusement” (Longman). In other words, "in everyday parlance, humour is used to refer to an effect and its contextual causes simultaneously, an occurrence so normal(ized) that we don't even notice it.” (p.153). This “two-edged concept of humour” is why the folk-psychological rationale alone is insufficient for scholars, in fact it “is so strong that it has never ceased to confuse humour scholars and challenge a scholarly definition of humour.” (p.153).

This has led some researchers to focus on the concept of humour stimuli, others on the felt response to humour, and yet others on both at the same time by looking at the relation between them as well. The latter, focussing on humour in its entirety, has brought some scholars (e.g. Escarpit 1991) to the brink of desperation, throwing out any hope of establishing a working definition of humour, for “how could we accurately describe all and only those clusters of physiological states and perceived causes that, together, define humour as opposed to other feelings or emotions?” (p.153). Other approaches have had a little more success, research in the direction of its effects (e.g. Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1981) gave way to this definition of humour: humour is whatever has a humorous effect, “When a person laughs, smiles or has a more general experience of humour the humour feeling, we have humour. Whatever that humour feeling is, it

undeniably forms part of our practical grasp of the world, and procedures have been developed to report it.” (p.153). Stimuli-oriented research rapidly pointed out that this 'minimalist' stance will easily lead to subjectivism, consequently 'heavily underdetermining' humour, as the criterion is far too broad. Anything that produces a laugh is humorous, even horrible acts that only perverted minds find humorous. At the same time, intended (say, Monty Python) but misunderstood humour would then not be humour at all. The supposed response would be that if no one ever laughed at Monty Python, then it must not be funny, and the perverted minds are too few, and too far removed from our understanding, to be worth considering. Vandaele mentions that translation scholars and translators, amongst others, could certainly be appreciative of this definition in terms of effect, “It offers a provisional way out of the vicious circle into which disciplines may fall with their objects of study (do they study or construct the object? Or both). The safest place to break that circle for humour is the point at which effect, with its ‘realist’ appeal, becomes tangible (in the form of laughter, for instance).” (p.154). While this approach of 'object detection' is content with the minimalist operational definition of humour, in the end a translator must come back to and account for humour's "casual relations", “(1) what is it that caused the humour effect and (2) what *further* effects does humour itself cause. Answers to these two questions may vary, and with them the *specific* meaning of humorous instances.” (p.154). In regards to the first statement, Robert M. Gordon (1950 - ), cognitive philosopher, argues that any kind of emotion is "arousal plus attribution" (p.101). Emotions are evoked when a person experiences physiological arousal, and at the same time attributes it to a mentally constructed cause. What this means with regard to humour is that there can be subtle differences in the general feeling of humour, depending on how its perceived causes are specified. A pun will not have the same response as, say, satire, and so on. With regards to the second statement, Gordon assigns additional 'casual depth' to emotive states, i.e. "in human beings certain states are apt to

cause certain other states" (p.13).

While it has thus far been well established that the way humour makes one feel can be regarded as an emotional state, it can cause more feelings than just that one. It can have rhetorical purposes, be inoffensive, or be underappreciated (having a negative response instead of a positive response). What one can conclude from this is that "the meaning of humour is not necessarily reducible to just a specific state of positive arousal but may be multiplied by both its causes and specific further effects. Thus, terms such as "*humorous feeling, emotion or effect* are misleading because they seem self-sufficient." (p.155). To bring this back to the matter of humour translation, to say that a text is 'humorous' is no more a helpful analysis than stating that a text is 'serious' (or any other non-specific denomination) Both carry with them a spectrum containing an infinite number of subgenres, each having different purposes and effects. They can be persuasive, informative, etc. But the key difference is that humour is often thought of as the very effect of a text, especially given Vandaele's current definition, even though "*its humour may be as general as a characteristic as a serious text's seriousness*" (p.155). While it may be a general characteristic, it would still be a boon to translators to subdivide into more specific types, each with its own tangible (or perlocutionary) effects, and reactions, as opposed to what, up until now, has been an indefinable concept as it has been up until this point, "Satire, for instance, can be defined as humour with a further critical effect and caused, for example, by an exaggerated imitation of social norms. Similarly, parody can be seen as humour with an equally sharp edge but is provoked, for instance, by an exaggerated imitation of *aesthetic* norms." (p.155). The varieties of humour and their varied effects, approaches and consequences will be further explored with Attardo and Zabalbeascoa. Regardless, this indicates that humour is not a monolithic and perlocutionary effect in and of its own.

To sum up this short segment, the minimalist notion, in which everything that is laughed

at is considered humour, is one that will suit translators fine, but they should not stop there, leaving an instance of humour un-analyzed because they find it self-evident or analyzable within their known frameworks. Moving past this minimalist notion would lead to, according to Vandaele, “further understanding of what a particular instance of humour means may be achieved *a posteriori*; we should ‘look back’ to its causes, both linguistic and otherwise, and ‘look ahead’ to its future, intended and unintended effects, so as to broaden and refine the meaning of humour.” (p.155). A noble statement, but not very realistic/practical for translators, (even less so for interpreters) it is aimed at scholars and researchers, more than anyone else.

What this means moving forward towards establishing a working framework for humour, (translation) is that its operational definition is 'single', while its conceptual structure is 'double' (what is the origin of humour and the humorous effect), and its meaning is even 'multiple' (the further effects of the humorous effect). This is a rather complex semiotic situation, so to once more follow Vandaele, a beginning will be made by looking at 'functions' of source text items. As a side note, Vandaele does not discuss any functionalist theories in relation to this, so neither will this thesis. Throughout the course of human history, incongruity and superiority have been the two general concepts that defined humour in humour research. Being as old as they are, both have represented a great many concepts, but only the most usable definition for both will be applied here. In other words, “in terms of cause/effect, (humour as) perceived incongruity is defined here as a (humorous) effect caused by a departure from normal cognitive schemes. In ordinary language, superiority (as in ‘a feeling of superiority’) clearly relates to the effect of humour.” (p.156). Both sides have their proponents. Incongruity theorists argue that all humour is naturally playful, and that aggression in humour is not necessarily aggression. Superiority theorists oppose this viewpoint by claiming to be able to find aggression in any kind of humour, as well as claiming that humour is inherently competitive. This distinction would suggest there

are two distinct types of humour, Incongruous 'humour *per se*' (as an innocent goal) and rhetorical humour' as a means for achieving a different (possibly aggressive) goal." (p.156-157). This is not an ideal situation to be in, as Vandaele agrees, so he suggests to broaden the previous meaning of superiority, to make it include "any (anti)social effect, intention or cause ... either interpersonal and socially visible, or 'private' but with reference to the social world" (p.157). This act of broadening is outweighed by all the advantages that come with it: the possibility of retaining both (if somewhat) basic concepts, and interweaving the apparent opposite concepts of incongruity and superiority in a closer and a more revealing fashion.

A broader categorization of superiority can make it easily relatable to incongruity in a number of ways. In concordance with this, Vandaele claims that one should "define superiority as any possible social effect of a social meaning of humour (from overtly aggressive effects to fairly harmless and private feelings of arousal) - which is what advocates of superiority theories must do if they want to demonstrate the presence of superiority in all instances of humour" (p.157), from which one can draw the following arguments that suggest a relation between superiority and incongruity, in terms of superiority.

"(1) incongruity can be seen as abnormality (inferiority). Most acts of incongruity can be assigned to a social product and/or agent. Incongruities are therefore not merely cognitive but they also constitute products and agents as deviant and not well adapted, in other words inferior;

(2) ironic incongruity is controlled abnormality as a sign of superiority. Strangely enough, it appears that an ironist may overtly commit incongruities as a sign of superiority, not inferiority;

(3) incongruity can in most cases be resolved and overcome, thus creating superiority. The ability to understand humour is commonly accepted as an important index of intelligence. Each time we laugh at humour, we demonstrate our wit to our peers and diminish the social pressure they may exercise on us;

(4) paradoxically, some incongruities are conventionalized (socialized) as humorous. Prototypical humour feelings are spontaneous but humour can conventionally be forced via cues, the right preliminary conditions or humorous stereotypes that are supposedly funny *per se*." (p.157). Accepting the existence, and gaining further insight into this synergistic relationship between incongruity and superiority is the first step translation studies needs to take to move away from the monolithic way of thinking about the meaning of humour, and in the direction of its potentially multiple effects. Likewise, it is important not to turn a blind eye towards the negative side of humour, as there is a strong tendency to do so because of the high social desirability of humour, as well as it being influenced by a "tradition of humanistic-psychologists". That being said, this first step is not the only step that needs to be taken, incongruity and superiority alone are insufficient for a full description of humour. Both elements can be interpreted in a multitude of ways; incongruous elements can be humorous, disappointing, ridiculous and so on, whereas superiority could lead to actual non-humorous feelings like 'happiness' or 'aggression'. To resolve this situation, both should come accompanied by notions related to specific elements of the communicative context, e.g. assumed knowledge by/about sender. The first of these situational categories is elaborated upon next.

It was established earlier that humour, being an emotion, is an effect that can be considered as arousal and attribution of arousal to a cause. An important aspect of this attribution is that "for attribution theory, there is one prime classification: an attribution may be internal or external" (Hewstone and Antaki 1993:119). What this means with regard to humour is that one could establish a(n) (important) distinction between two types of humour feeling, internal and external, i.e. internal would be intentional humour, whereas external would be situational, non-intentional humour. There are some who have coined the terms 'humour' and 'the comic' respectively for the two variants, however, this thesis, and Anglo-Saxon humour studies in

general, use 'humour' as a catch-all term, with 'comic' only being a 'stylistic synonym'. To establish whether a given instance of humour is internal or external, two questions need to be asked, "is there a communicator and, if so, is there an apparent humour intention and/or effect?" (p.159). These two yes/no questions lead to four possible outcomes: if there is no obvious communicator, then one can speak of a "comic situation" (which can be, to hearken back on the above, both incongruous or incongruous and superior, a funnily shaped tree or an embarrassing situation); if there is an obvious communicator, but no intention, yet it has a humorous effect, then it is possible to speak of 'unintended humour' (can cause feelings of inferiority to sudden understanding of incongruity on the sender); if there is an obvious communicator, obvious intention, and effect, it is possible to speak of 'intended humour' (although the intention can differ from the effect); lastly, if there is an obvious communicator, intention, yet no effect, it is possible to speak of 'unachieved humour' (which carries emotional implications as well). This seemingly clear cut distinction of types does have a flaw unfortunately, it is difficult for a hearer or reader to "be ontologically certain to have correctly and truthfully inferred a speaker's intention." (p.160). Likewise, it is tricky for a reader/hearer to assert whether to attribute a given instance of humour to someone's intentions or to reality (or intentionality). To solve this next issue in a seemingly endless stream of problems with humour translation, Vandaele turns to pragmatics, for "Translators and interpreters may find themselves in all of these situations and may need to evaluate the various attributions of emotions. According to the type of situation and communication, the attributions may be considered more or less important." (p.160).

Pragmatics as a discipline is relevant to humour studies for it tries to describe, amongst other things, how humans apparently understand or bring across humour. It does so by referring to coherent categories of intentionality/consciousness. Its strongest contribution is the dissection it makes between perlocution and illocution, otherwise known as the effect a message has on the

reader/hearer, and the intended effect by its writer/speaker. These two terms make it possible for one to focus their attention on the key issue in the aforementioned description of humour: the "intention-effect" distinction, "In pragmatic terms, the minimal definition of humour plays on the purely perlocutionary level of factual effect: the hearer/reader experiences the humour feeling." (p.160-161). This is, however, not all pragmatics has to offer. Not only can this discipline, to return to previously introduced terminology, connect speech acts indirectly with principles of humour, (incongruity, superiority, and everything that comes with them) but also with specific principles of intention. The latter links to Paul Grice's (1913-1988) Cooperative Principle: "make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (p.41). With the Cooperative Principle, the perlocution/illocution distinction can explain precisely why a message might be intended as humorous, yet be perceived differently (these are "unachieved" and "intended" humour from above). According to Grice, in ordinary conversation, speakers and hearers assume communication to be truthful, relevant, informative, and transparent. Thus it is "well known that the evaluation of a communicator's illocution/intention is a decisive factor in distinguishing between a lie, a joke and an error." (p.161). Additionally, incongruity and superiority can interact with perlocution and illocution, giving way to a variety of effect.

Pragmatics, useful though it may be by focussing on comic intention and effect, undervalues yet another important element: "'distance' – distance of many kinds and varieties." (p.162). Relevant here is the 'deconstruction' movement, started by French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). Deconstruction is an attempt to dismantle key linguistic premises (e.g. Saussure's division of signified and signifier) as well as challenging the capacity to define, capture, or stabilize meaning. As Christopher Norris (1947 - ) puts it, "it seeks to undo both a given order of priorities and the very system of conceptual opposition that makes that order

possible ... deconstruction is therefore an activity of reading which remains closely tied to the texts it interrogates" (p.30-31). With this in mind, one could ask if the pragmatic view on communication is not overly positive, or context restricting. It naively assumes that intentions are perceptible, an assumption that can be traced back to Grice, who assumed that all communication was to be truthful, relevant, informative, and transparent. There could be major consequences if Grice's assumption turns out to be erroneous: "humour can be a way of expressing disengagement with what one states ('retractability') but it may also cause (both comic and serious) feelings of superiority/inferiority. What, indeed, if 'nonsensical disengagement' is intended but 'aggression' is perceived instead?" (p.162). The consideration that Grice is overly or even naively positive is echoed by Attardo, who also feels that Grice's Cooperative Principle makes pragmatics out to be a quite 'optimistic' and 'positive' paradigm that takes interpersonal cooperative behaviour as the standard mode. Attardo noted, accurately, that "Grice indifferently used his idea of cooperation in locutionary or perlocutionary, i.e. as 'literal' cooperation or 'real' cooperation." (p.162). He then takes Grice's Cooperative Principle and turns it into his perlocutionary Cooperative Principle, which can simply be summarized as "be a good Samaritan" (1997, p.776), illustrated by this example: "when one is asked for 'the next gas station', one replies by pointing to 'the next open gas station'." (p.771). This may seem similar to Grice in that it also implies naive optimism, by using a bona fide mode as the standard, but it is actually quite the opposite. The present third part (spectator/reader) at the gas station exchange is presented with "an incongruity on the level of perlocutionary cooperativeness (A sending B to a gas station when A knows it is closed). We partially resolve the incongruity (A is literally cooperative) and, depending on our attitudes toward A and B, we may entertain superiority feelings." (p.162).

The introduction of the attitude of the 'third party' highlights another shortcoming of the pragmatics paradigm: does it hold a too restrictive notion of context? Pragmatics narrows down

attitude, and other contextual features, to discrete labels ('negative', 'positive', and so on) too often, whereas it is (justly) treated as much more complex in deconstruction, etc. This does not mean, however, that pragmatics should be regarded negatively. It will work as a concept, if it is applied sensibly, adjusting previously mentioned concepts as 'attitude' and 'context' to specific objects of study. Since this thesis concerns itself with translational issues, it is relevant to mention here that "translation-oriented scholars who, much like semioticians, work on multilingual objects, are unavoidably confronted with the limitations of those very same workable concepts." (p.163), where the 'workable concepts' refers to 'workable definitions' for "conceptual refinements for the description of communication mechanisms within smaller contexts." (p.162) worked on by pragmaticians. To further distance translators from pragmatics, Umberto Eco (1932 - ) states the following in defence of deconstruction: "when Derrida says that the concept of communication cannot be reduced to the idea of transport of a unified meaning, that the notion of literal meaning is problematic, that the current concept of context risks being inadequate: when he stresses, in a text, the absence of the sender, of the addressee, and of the referent and explores all the possibilities of a nonunivocal interpretability; when he reminds us that every sign can be cited and in so doing can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable – in these and many other cases he says things that no semiotician can disregard." (p.36). Most interesting to a translator is that "every sign can be cited and in doing so break with every given context,". Following this statement, it is possible to argue that the speaker's intention is no longer something that needs to be followed and upheld above all else. After all, once an utterance has been made, it becomes nigh impossible to control it, thus coming back to 'distance', something that even opponents of deconstruction cannot deny. 'Distance', between sender and receiver, when dealing with any sort of utterance, goes beyond existing merely on a material plane, it also exists on a social, cultural, etc. level, all depending on

the degree of interactivity of the communicative situation. Ultimately, matching a sender's true intention with the translator's inferred intention is held up by a number of factors.

Not only is achieving this closer to a pipedream than reality, Kathleen Davis adds an additional problem in that it is not possible to “to convey a certain meaning and then formulating this meaning in speech or writing” (p.53). Because that would mean “the meaning precedes the language event” (p.53), whilst “meaning is the *effect* of language, and therefore cannot precede it any more than it can be extracted from it.” (p.53). Though this is a viewpoint worth considering, many translators and translation scholars would otherwise argue that it is possible to somewhat accurately predict meaning effects. This also moves the subject away from speaker's intention and towards the existence of hearer's intention. It would be hard to dispute that the hearer might, be it consciously or subconsciously, have a different agenda from the speaker. To illustrate this, imagine that a translator, for prescriptive purposes, might opt to ignore translating a racially sensitive joke. Likewise for descriptive purposes, Toury's statement in “*Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*” that “translations are facts of target culture” is worth considering.

There is another aspect of intention and meaning that pragmatics seems to overlook or underplay, namely the unconscious. It is a minor detour into the sub-domain of psychoanalysis (one again showing that translation studies is an amalgam of a multitude of fields) for it is reasonable to state that some speakers are not aware of what they intend to say, even if they think or claim otherwise. If this is so, then it will no longer be intention in the way pragmatics accepts it. A similar problem, unawareness of intention on behalf of the speaker, exists within humorous effects as well, as they depend structurally on specific languages and codes (the relative sociological importance of a language in multilingual societies) that need to be translated. Vandaele suggests the following four ways in which specific meanings are linked to specific codes:

“(1) ‘the force of reality’: different languages create different concepts for different realities (if a culture doesn’t know some type of tree, it may not have a word for it);

(2) ‘the conceptual freedom of language’: different languages create different concepts for the *same* reality ( think of the different colour systems);

(3) ‘sociolinguistic force’ : different languages attach different connotations to *similar* denotations (how would you translate *les écolos* in English?);

(4) ‘metalingual force’: different languages adopt different ways of joining various realities in one form (e.g. wordplay)” (p.164-165).

To elaborate on Vandaele’s colour system comment, it references the way in which our perception of colour is based on how it is referred to in our language, a perception that can vary from language to language.

Attardo deals with the problem of humour effects that rely heavily on specific language and code by lowering his criterion of translational equivalence to 'similar effect' (because humorous texts that highlight language are 'non-causal', thus not 'a priori', absolutely translatable, according to him). In the process of dealing with the humour effect problem, he introduces his 'script' concept “A script or frame is an organized complex of information about something, in the broadest sense: an object (real or imaginary), an event, an action a quality, etc. It is a cognitive structure internalized by the speaker which provides the speaker with information on how the world is organized, including how one acts in it.” (p.181), which includes the four aforementioned code-specific language forms. Because Script Opposition (the opposition of two overlapping scripts in a text, which results in humour (further elaborated upon below)), is the most important parameter for joke similarity, translating would become a matter of substituting unknown scripts with known scripts, thus solving the problem.

The above should make clear that: one cannot always know the speaker's intention; one

has their own conscious or subconscious agenda for interpreting these intentions; other contextual elements play a role too; original contexts might not be present; new contexts might keep on emerging; and a text's humorous function can be combined with other functions. In other words, too much for a translator to take into consideration all at once, so decisions will have to be made. In response to this, Vandaele suggests an ethics of humour translation, and gives his thoughts on an incredibly vast subject. Translation, and consequently (bona fide) communication is likely to be a highly ethical activity, however, "I would hesitate to say the same about humour." (p.165). According to Pym (2001), ethics in translation is concerned with these issues: respecting source text meaning, being committed to represent the client, acknowledging the other, and respecting divergent opinions on what is seen as a good translation. Humour can indeed be a positive ethical force, but as shown earlier it can also be a powerful rhetorical device, a loose cannon that does not play by the ethical rules. Incongruity and superiority are clear examples of unethical elements: "Humour may very effectively serve further causes or have ulterior motives, which clearly raises important ethical issues; at the same time, this can be emotionally so compelling that it leaves no room for any serious explicit ethical discussion." (p.166).

To arrive at some all-inclusive conclusion on the nature of humour at the end of this chapter is nothing if not impossible. In a strange way, it is actually the most (or at least a 'very') desirable outcome. The goal of this segment was not to provide 'the' answer, to resolve any and all issues, but to show that humour is worthy of holding a special place when it comes to translating, and that humour translation studies, in that extent, has a justifiable existence. The following two sections aim to illustrate the importance of humour translation studies, as well as give a practical solution to the problem of translating humour.

## Chapter 1-2: Salvatore Attardo

Salvatore Attardo's (who was briefly mentioned above) contribution to humour translation theory comes, in part, in the form of an article he wrote on the General Theory of Verbal Humour, named "An Approach Based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour". This theory is based on, or used in cooperation with, this working definition of translation: " A correspondence between two texts  $T_1$  and  $T_2$ , such that the meaning (M) of  $T_1$  ( $M_{T1}$ ) and the meaning of  $T_2$  ( $M_{T2}$ ) are similar (approximate):  $M_{T1} \approx M_{T2}$  and/or the pragmatic force (F) of  $T_1$  ( $F_{T1}$ ) and the pragmatic force of  $T_2$  ( $F_{T2}$ ) are similar/approximate:  $F_{T1} \approx F_{T2}$ " (p.175). The appearance of this almost scientific formulae gives a clear image of what to expect from the rest of the article: a clear-cut, orderly and schematic approach, one that can easily be applied in practice. What can be derived from this definition is that a theory of translation needs a metric of similarity between meanings and pragmatic forces, and according to Attardo, "No theory of humour translation has ever claimed to provide any such tools." (p.175). Instead, existing approaches to humour translation, using tools from a source-theoretical domain, take a general theory of translation, and shoehorn it into humour translation, a trend that is broken by the General Theory of Verbal Humour. It provides the aforementioned metric of similarity, which in turn might go some way towards establishing a criterion for "determining similarity of meaning/force *in the domain of texts whose perlocutionary goal is the perception of humour.*" (p.175). With the reason for its existence explained, the rest of this chapter will be structured as follows: first the General Theory of Verbal Humour will be explained, secondly, it will be shown how it works in translation, lastly, a commentary on its usefulness/applicability in general, and literary texts specifically.

What comes next a brief explanation of the General Theory of Verbal Humour. According to the General Theory of Verbal Humour, every joke can be seen as existing out of (up to) six

parameters, otherwise known as Knowledge Resources. These are, from low to high (the logic behind this specific hierarchy is explained below): Language, Narrative Strategy, Target, Situation, Logical Mechanism, and Script Opposition.

The first, Knowledge Resource is Language. It "contains all the information necessary for the verbalization of a text. It is responsible for the actual wording of the text and for the placement of the functional elements that constitute it." (p.176-177). For one to fully grasp the kind of variety that this Knowledge Resource represents, paraphrasing plays a vitally important role. Any joke can be worded in various ways, without necessarily changing its semantic content. For instance, take this joke: "How many Polacks does it take to change a light bulb? Three, one to hold the light bulb, and two to turn the ladder", which is the same, even though it is worded differently, as this joke: "The number of Poles needed to change a light bulb? Three - one to hold the light bulb, and two to turn the ladder.". This means that any paraphrasing or recasting that does not lose meaning in the process counts as an instance of the same joke. There is a marginal exception to this rule, namely jokes based on the signified, a category consisting mostly of puns. Often referred to as verbal, as opposed to referential, these jokes put a great deal of importance on the precise wording of the punch line and/or connector ("The connector is an ambiguous element which occurs in the text of the joke prior to the punch line itself. The punch line reveals the existence of the two senses in the connector. Punch line and connector may coincide, in which case the punch line of a verbal joke is also its connector and hence ambiguous"(p.177)). This is because a linguistic element needs to be ambiguous, as well as connect the two opposite senses in the text. This marginal exception is the only time where a higher Knowledge Resource preselects a lower Knowledge Resource: here Script Opposition decides the precise nature of a specific fragment of the Language (the punch line and/or connector). Aside from this, verbal and referential jokes behave the same in this Knowledge Resource. Lastly, the Language Knowledge

Resource is responsible for the positioning of the punch line, an essential position, both for the functional organization of the information in the text, as well as distribution of implicit information of the text.

The second Knowledge Resource, Narrative Strategy, is responsible for shaping every joke in some sort of narrative organization (e.g. a conversation, a riddle, a monologue, etc.). As it fulfils only this marginal role, scant research has been done (or needs to be done) beyond listing the various potential narrative strategies. As for not all humour being narrative, if the Narrative Strategy Knowledge Resource is applied outside of narrative humour, it either becomes pointless, or deals with organizing how the humour is being presented.

The third Knowledge Resource is Target. Contained within the Target is information pertaining to names of individuals or groups with (potentially humorous) stereotypes attached to them. This is one of the optional Knowledge Resources, for it is possible that a joke is non-aggressive, (it does not target/ridicule someone or something) thus leaving the parameter empty. Also relevant to this Knowledge Resource is the question of how targets are selected, and what targets are viable. According to Attardo, an additional group of targets needs to be added: ideological targets, "i.e. groups or institutions that do not have a clear constituency, but may nevertheless be made the subject of ridicule. (examples include 'marriage', 'romantic love', 'the establishment', etc.)" (p.178). He also argues that, while these ideological targets still retain some connection to people or identifiable groups, (thus targetable by aggression) the same cannot be said for non-human targets: "one cannot be aggressive to a tree" for "...aggression is a social business" (p.178).

The fourth Knowledge Resource is Situation. The situation can be seen as the basic elements a joke is made up of: participants, objects, activities, etc. They are generally derived from scripts activated in the text, and even though every joke must have a situation, it is more

relevant for some than others. Effectively no research has been done on this Knowledge Resource either, as it "consists essentially of a list of things, activities, etc. mentioned in the text" (p.179). Also, this Knowledge Resource can be found in every type of text, humorous or non-humorous.

The fifth Knowledge Resource is Logical Mechanism. Originally being defined only through examples (see Attardo & Raskin 1991) it has proven difficult to figure out a workable definition for this parameter. What it boils down to is that this "Logical Mechanism embodies the resolution of the incongruity-resolution." (p.179). Consequently this parameter becomes optional, as resolution is not a requirement in all forms of humour (e.g. nonsensical or absurdist humour). Additionally, the Logical Mechanism parameter assumes and incorporates a sense of logic, twisted, playful logic, restricted to the joke in question. Speakers are well aware of the limitation of this localized logic, and play along with it for the sake of willingly suspending their disbelief. This hooks up to the non-bona fide character (i.e. going against Grice's aforementioned cooperative principle) of jokes. Lastly there is a finite, and small, number of Logical Mechanisms, all of which are contained in the table below:

Role reversals	Role exchanges	Potency mappings
Vacuous reversal	Juxtaposition	Chiasmus
Garden-path	Figure-ground reversal	Faulty reasoning
Almost situations	Analogy	Self-undermining
Inferring consequences	Reasoning from false premise	Missing link
Coincidence	parallelism	Implicit parallelism
Proportion	Ignoring the obvious	False analogy
Exaggeration	Field restriction	Cratylysm
Meta-humour	Vicious circle	Referential analogy

The final Knowledge Resource is Script Opposition. This parameter is derived from Victor Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humour, which first presented the Script Opposition/Overlapping requirement, and is the centre piece of Attardo's humour translation theory. The main hypothesis contained therein is phrased as follows: "A text can be characterized as a single-joke-carrying-text if both of the conditions are satisfied: i) the text is compatible, fully

or in part, with two different scripts, ii) the two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite... the two scripts with which some text is compatible are said to overlap fully or in part in this text." (Raskin p.99). The two key terms, overlapping and oppositeness, mean the following: For overlapping, in the course of combining scripts, the semantic theory will, every now and again, come across segments of text that could have more than one corresponding script, or way of reading, at the same time. Imagine this sequence of events in a text: waking up in the morning, taking a shower, having breakfast, and so on. Such a sequence equally fits a script for 'hang around the house all day' as it would 'going to visit friends'. One can speak of an overlap when the relevant stretch of text is compatible with both or more scripts. As a side note, overlap can be both partial and total, with neither being better or worse. Overlap alone is not enough of a reason to consider something humorous, as there are many other text type (figurative, metaphorical, obscure, etc.) that have overlapping scripts. This is where oppositeness comes into play, the second condition of the semantic script theory of humour. It "calls for the two scripts that overlap in the text to be 'opposed' in the technical sense, which can be defined as local autonomy" (p.182). Local autonomy is, in turn, described by Raskin to be "two linguistic entities whose meanings are opposite only within a particular discourse and solely for the purposes of this discourse" (p.108).

From these six Knowledge Resources a similarity metric was devised, based on the hypothesis of Linear Variation (see Ruch et al 1993). According to said hypothesis, "the degree of perceived difference between jokes increases linearly with the height of the Knowledge Resource in which the two jokes differ." (p.183). Keeping the order mentioned at the start of this chapter in mind, this means that jokes that differ at the Language level will be seen as more similar than jokes that differ in Narrative Strategy, and so on, which is in accordance with the linear nature of this hypothesis. This metric proves to be most useful as a preliminary mini-theory

of joke translation (there is a significant difference between translating humour in general, and jokes in specific, which will be explained below) can be drawn from it: “if possible, respect all six Knowledge Resources in your translation, but if necessary, *let your translation differ at the lowest level necessary for your pragmatic purposes.*” (p.183). Attardo notes that “this heuristics...”, referring to the preliminary mini-theory above, “...is based on the straightforward equation of closeness of translation with desirability.” (p.184). In addition, he wishes to avoid the “age old trade-off between faithfulness to the original and aesthetic effect.”, instead having “faithfulness *and* the aesthetic effects that were originally present in the source text.” (p.184). This translation heuristic will be addressed next, once again by going over each Knowledge Resource individually, in order.

As mentioned previously, the Language Knowledge Resource pre-selects the choices of the signified used for encoding all high level choices made in the other Knowledge Resources. Variations in language of the five higher Knowledge Resources are paraphrasings of a joke, hence translations. Consider the following example joke, and its various translations and paraphrasings; taken from Attardo, original quotes from elsewhere “Eine Frau ist wie ein Regenschirm. Man nimmt sich dann doch einen Komfortabel.” (p.184) this was translated as “A wife is like an umbrella. Sooner or later one takes a cab.” (p.185). This can be paraphrased as “A wife is similar to an umbrella, one eventually takes a cab.”. To show that this is not some bizarre English phenomenon, the Italian and French versions: “Una moglie è come un parapigioggia. Poi però si prende una vettura di piazza.” and “une femme, c’est comme un parapluie. Tôt ou tard on prend un fiacre.” which can also be written as “Una moglie è come un ombrello: prima o poi si prende un tassì.” and “Une femme est comme un parapluie. On finit toujours par prendre un fiacre.” All these different versions of the same joke, which differ only in language, can easily be said to be equivalents of each other. What this means is that the General Theory of Verbal

Humour has an inherent, simple, theory of humour translation built into it, if limited to meaning correspondence: keep all knowledge resources, except Language, the same. Alternatively: substitute target language for source language.

When it comes to the Narrative Strategy Knowledge Resource, one should avoid making any changes unless forced to, as it is a language independent parameter. The exception to this rule is formats unique to a given culture/language, or preferred by a culture/language. An example of this would be 'knock-knock' jokes, "unknown outside of the Anglo-Saxon world" (p.186), according to Attardo. When dealing with such an occurrence, a translator is best off respecting the 'within-Knowledge Resource taxonomy'. A dialogue would still be a dialogue in the target text, even if it might not be exactly the same. Only if no close match exists should a translator opt to use a completely different narrative strategy.

The Target Knowledge Resource can be equally culturally bound. Groups or individuals are targeted in relation to their particular features, the perception of which varies from culture to culture. For instance, 'stupid' jokes in the Netherlands target Belgians, (the French do the same incidentally) whilst the same joke in Britain would target the Irish or Scots. Thus, translating target across text is a matter of finding the corresponding target to the one presented in the source text.

For the Situation Knowledge Resource, consider an earlier example: "The number of Poles needed to change a light bulb? Three - one to hold the light bulb, and two to turn the ladder." , and compare it to this: "The number of Poles needed to empty the ashtray of a car? Ten- to turn the car upside down". Here, all Knowledge Resources, bar Language and Situation, are the same. Like with Target, if the situation from the source text is not funny or non-existent in the target language, a substitute should be found, while simultaneously respecting the other Knowledge Resources.

There is no probable cause to suspect that Logical Mechanisms would not be readily translatable, with the exception of the cratylistic Logical Mechanism. “After Cratylus, a character in Plato’s eponymous Dialogue, who maintains that there is a natural relation between words and their meanings. In humour theory, the (pseudo-logical) assumption that two words (but the definition applies to strings of sounds of arbitrary length) that have the same or similar sounds must have the same meanings as well, and therefore that one can freely switch from one sense to the other.” (p.180). The reasoning behind this supposed ease of translation is that non-verbal Logical Mechanisms deal with reasonably abstract logico-deductive language processes, and are language independent. This means that Logical Mechanisms such as role reversals, analogy, or coincidence, which do not depend on language, are easier to translate.

Lastly, Script Opposition in translation is a complicated matter. Because of the importance of Script Opposition for shaping jokes, changing the scripts in translation would result in a different joke, thus no longer a true translation. However, to then claim that one should never make any changes to the scripts in a translation would be incorrect. Not only can it once again be said that if it does not exist in target language, it would be acceptable to substitute it, but there are also rare cases where it can be ‘ok’ to change the scripts even if they exist in both languages. Perhaps this applies more to interpreting, but nevertheless imagine a situation wherein: a(n) (simultaneous) interpreter hears a pun which they cannot immediately translate, so instead they say “the speaker would like you to laugh now”. Here the interpreter provides a joke with a different Script Opposition, (funny/not funny or actual/non-actual instead of whatever the original was) yet with the same intended outcome. Still, even though the translation is successful from a functional (perlocutionary) point of view, semantically one cannot call it a translation. Rather, it is the substitution of jokes. For this reason “we can say that all jokes are translatable, at the perlocutionary level, because the perlocutionary goal of humour appreciation is of course

universal.” (p.189).

What can be drawn from this summary and explanation of the General Theory of Verbal Humour is that it provides a solid metric for the translation of jokes, and even accounts for the importance of culture in understanding and appreciating humour. Therein, however, lies the big problem with this theory. As good as it may be, its biggest strength is also its greatest weakness: it can only really be used for translating jokes in isolation, or without any context. This thesis is striving to bring to light the connection of culture and humour in relation to literary texts, thus the General Theory of Verbal Humour unfortunately comes up short. This means it is up to the final article to be fully discussed in this thesis to provide the necessary answers, before moving on to the translations themselves.

### **Chapter 1-3: Patrick Zabalbeascoa**

Building on Attardo’s work on the General Theory of Verbal Humour, Patrick Zabalbeascoa wrote his article “Humour and Translation - an Interdiscipline”. In this article he presents a new model of his own to combine with the six Knowledge Resources, resulting in an adaptable binary branching model for dealing with humour in translation. Zabalbeascoa, too, feels that the connection between translation and humour has received scant attention in the past, for: “The translatability of humor, how well humor travels across languages, and the nature of the barriers, these are the kinds of issues that need to be addressed from both sides of the area where humor and translation overlap.” (p.186). Translators would benefit through gaining more and better ways of dealing with humour, and humour study scholars could advance their field and achieve greater insights into the social, linguistic and psychological factors of humour by using the test of translation, experimentally and descriptively. Furthermore, he also believes that current general theoretical models, are not sufficient for dealing with the humour issue. In fact, none of these ‘general’ theoretical models ever gained enough ground in the scholarly community

to become true general modes “Such is the case of Skopos theory, a powerful functionalist theory for translation, as it accounts for a lot, but this does not mean that it can usurp the contribution of humor studies, or ignore the hard work of its scholars.” (p.186).

The inherent unavoidable problem that makes it so difficult to grasp the concept of translation in its entirety is that it is about dealing with contingency. A translator needs to act on textual items that go against the norm, or use material that has never been used before. The almost infinite amount of variables that this leads to made it so that all attempt to formulate a series of absolute truths that together make up translation have failed thus far. In spite of this, Zabalbeascoa listed the ten most obvious variables in his ABC of translation variables:

- “a. the language(s)/culture(s) one is translating from (including all aspects of language variation, such as dialects and registers)
- b. the language(s)/culture(s) one is translating into
- c. the purpose(s) and justification(s) for the existence of the translated version
- d. the nature of the text, including parameters such as textuality, genre, style and discourse
- e. the intended recipient(s), what they are assumed to be like
- f. the client(s) or translation initiator(s), their needs and demands
- g. the expectation(s) for the translated text and prejudice towards translations and translators
- h. the translator(s): human (individuals or teams), fully automatic, or computer assisted
- i. the conditions in which the task is carried out (deadline, materials, motivation, etc.)
- j. the medium, mode and means of communication: oral, written, audiovisual, private, mass media, etc.” (pp. 186-187).

From this amount of variability two complementary procedures can be deduced, beneficial to translator and scholar both. These procedures are known as ‘mapping’, i.e. “locating and analyzing textual items (e.g., instances of humor) according to relevant classifications (e.g.,

humor typologies).” (p.187), and ‘prioritizing’, i.e. “establishing what is important for each case (in the context of translating), and how important each item and aspect is, in order to have clear set of criteria for shaping the translation in one way rather than another.” (p.187). Both parties should weigh the relative importance of humour, as well as the type of humour, when looking for a solution to the problem of humour in translation. It is not a given that an instance of humour will necessarily be of equal importance in both source and target text. This is equally true for the nature of humour in source and target text. To turn this into something of use, a so-called ‘map of humour’ would be of great use to all parties involved with humorous texts in translation. Such a map would contain “a series of classifications, definitions, and examples of instances of humor and humor-types, as well as models and insights like the ones laid out in the General Theory of Verbal Humor” (p.187-188), with most of the work being done by humour scholars, and then picked up by translation scholars and translators.

Zabalbeascoa also takes a moment to look at priorities in translating. The ‘impossible to translate’ status that humour enjoys, or suffers from, amongst experts, is the unfortunate result of a hastily reached conclusion. This conclusion is reached by using common sense and practice when translating, i.e. being faithful to all aspects of a text, which effectively boils down to “translate the words and/or the contents and then keep your fingers crossed and hope that the humor will somehow come across with the rest” (p.188). Even the degree or circumstances of this supposed ‘untranslatability’ is a matter of debate, though it stands without question that the matter of translatability is an important component of the common ground between translation and humour studies. This almost ‘slavish’ devotion to the words of the source text is where, according to Zabalbeascoa, the priorities are laid out incorrectly. The same joke can be told in many different ways without losing its (intended) effect. (as illustrated with the Poles jokes earlier) So where does the fear of changing the words come from? Where does nonsensical

humour fit in? What to do if humour works against the author's goal in the translated environment, or, on the other side of the coin, is it not pointless to translate the contents of a text that intends to be humorous if it loses this quality in translation? What it comes down to with all these questions is that translators need to be aware of the nature of humour, and its relative importance in different context. Still though "our commitment to humour should not lead us to prioritize it in situations where it may have to be sacrificed to some extent to allow for a satisfactory rendering of other textual items that are actually more important." (p.189).

The important question that needs answering, then, is what these joke-types, supposed to help with translation, are, and what should be done with them. Zabalbeascoa distinguishes thirteen different types. The easiest, most welcome of types to translators, is the unrestricted, or inter-/bi-national joke type of humour. These jokes/types of humour offer little to no resistance in translation, assuming there is an overlap between source language and culture, and target language and culture. Additionally, text users on both sides must share the knowledge, values, and tastes needed to appreciate a given instance of humour in the same fashion. Of course, it is of no concern to a translator if a joke is universal, or even international, as long as the joke is bi-national with regards to the involved cultures, i.e. "it can easily cross from the source-text community to the target-text (translation) community, without any need for adaptation or substitution because of linguistic or cultural differences; it can be literally translated with no loss of humor, or content, or meaning." (p.189). To illustrate this with an example, take this joke offered by Attardo: "Gobi Desert Canoe Club" (p.181). This is an unrestricted joke, as it can be translated without any loss (into Dutch): "Gobi Woestijn Kanoclub". The "Gobi Desert" has the same connotations and referential values for intended readers in both languages, and the same goes for canoe clubs. What is most important here is that "funniness is not restricted by any (meta)linguistic or cultural-knowledge barrier." (p.190). For a joke to fall into this 'unrestricted'

category, it must pass all the other parameters that will be elaborated upon below.

The first of these is one very relevant to the translations below: jokes restricted by audience profile traits. Certain humour-types and jokes present complex issues for a translator because of restrictions on the part of the text user. This could be dependent on their (lacking) encyclopaedic or linguistic knowledge, or familiarity/appreciation of a given theme, genre, subject-matter or humour-type. In actual fact, the main problem areas here can be found summed up in this list offered by Zabalbeascoa:

“– Semiotic and linguistic differences, including metalinguistic devices

– Knowledge (of social and cultural institutions, themes, genres, etc.)

– Frequency-restricted (rare, marked v. familiar)

– Appreciation (of humor-value of theme, approach, presentation, occasion)” (p.190).

Audience profile traits are a very relevant restriction because most of the individual restrictions fall into a category of “culture-specific items of interpersonal communication and social dynamics” (p.190). This type of joke places its emphasis on the reader because there are no linguistic restrictions. Instead, it depends on how ignorant (or not) one is of both source and target culture. Thus, a translator should be aware when dealing with this type of joke that, even if a joke can be translated without a hitch in a linguistic sense, it is still possible for it to not be understood by the target audience. Coming back to the “Gobi Desert Canoe Club” example, it was perfectly possible for it to be translated whilst retaining its humoristic qualities. Yet when printed on a T-shirt, it would cease to be understood as ‘funny’ in cultures where it is uncommon, or even unheard of, to wear ‘funny’ T-shirts. As Zabalbeascoa puts it: “the mode of discourse and social occasion are important sociocultural factors to take into account.” (p.191).

Another important aspect for translators to be aware of is intentionality of humour, in both the TT *and* the ST. It is possible that a reader will find humour where it was never intended to be,

through, say, funny mistakes or circumstantial factors or coincidences. Avoiding these mistakes or coincidences, or preserving them, is equally difficult, as it depends heavily on accidental errors, or very personal circumstances. Regardless, when dealing with more sensitive texts, translators should naturally exercise more caution to not add any accidental jokes. Consider the following example from the perspective of a biblical scholar, they would dread the thought ‘ass’ being used instead of ‘donkey’ : “Monsignor to new priest, “When David was hit by a rock and knocked off his donkey, don’t say he was stoned off his ass.”” (p.191).

There is more to a joke than the joke itself. To aid in their understanding, jokes can be accompanied by signals, and since this adds another element, it also adds another aspect that can be missed by the reader or translator (alternatively, the author might have failed to supply the needed signalling for their joke). Conversely, because of the difficulties that translators face when translating humour, they can choose to change “covert forms humour into more overt manifestations” (p.192) through use of signals. Although this would show to the public that the translator failed to render the funniness (not that the public will know this without reading the original), at least the reader will know that a joke was originally present. A downside to such an approach is that humour based or relying on subtlety, irony, allusion, or other covert devices will have their fabric torn apart if handled so crudely. Still, the way of going about this has become so common in translation that “it has given rise to the hypothesis that translations have a universal tendency to be more explicit than their source texts.” (p.192).

A specific, intentional form of an audience profile trait restricted joke is the private/in-group joke, a type of humour heavily reliant on people belonging to certain groups. The size of these groups can vary drastically, from entire countries to small villages, they can all be ‘left out’. These groups, smaller groups, can be defined by “small geographical regions, certain social classes or professions, interest groups, political parties, minority groups, and so on. Often such

groups are characterized by their sociolect or dialect, or particular language awareness.” (p.193). The bigger the group, the easier to translate, for the smaller groups it carries on what factor the exclusion is built on (political can be easier than geographical, and so on).

Briefly touched upon earlier, when discussing the downsides to Attardo’s approach, the size of jokes is important as well. Not all humour comes in tidy bite-sized and isolated chunks, sometimes it is woven into the narrative itself. This does not mean it is more difficult to translate, though a translator needs to keep an overview of the text as a whole as to not miss the forest through the trees. Solutions here need to take into account both compensations of place and compensations of kind. The former, compensations of place, encompasses the process of making a given source text feature or item appear elsewhere in the translation. To ensure meaning, function, effect, or intention are not lost, compensation of kind refers to attaining the same effect by different means, making up for not using what appeared in the source text.

The unwritten assumption up until this point has been that humour is always an entirely optional factor, not necessarily to always be retained in translation. However, there are text types (beyond jokes themselves) where humour is more or less required, and in a similar vein, there are texts in which humour is an unwelcome guest. For instance, speeches in English-speaking countries are expected to contain some humorous elements, whereas serious legal texts should (probably) not be funny at all. It is up to the translator to assess for each individual case to what extent humour is or is not expected in their respective target culture.

Another culture-bound factor that needs to be taken into consideration when translating humour is that of taboo. Humour itself can go two ways in interacting with taboo: either challenging taboos (or dealing with them light-heartedly), or being a taboo in and of itself (it can be both at the same time). How a translation deals with this is the same as the previous joke-type, though with the added risk of having to avoid censorship, so the translator will need to be aware

of relevant laws and regulations in the target culture.

A category of humour that is less restricted by culture is the metalinguistic type of humour. Since translation is about changing language, these jokes are sizable obstacles to overcome for a translator. Because of this, it is important to remember that the function of the wordplay is more important than the form it appears in. If, say, an example like “John, where Peter had had “had had”, had had “had”; “had had” had had his master’s approval.” (or an alternative from American English “Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo”) is used to illustrate how silly the English language can be, it is likely better to forego the humour element, as it is unlikely that such a joke can be replicated in the target language, in favour of a simpler explanation.

Ultimately, what can be surmised from the above is that “Translating is to a large degree a decision-making process, and much of this involves deciding what to do with the form of expression and how it relates to the author’s underlying intentions and reasons for choosing one form over another.” (p.195). Also to be drawn from the above is that form and performance are vital parts for successful humour. A translation will occasionally force a change of form, but one must take care not to start shaking things up too quickly, as change for the sake of change is not a goal worth pursuing.

One of the parameters of humour, featured earlier as a Knowledge Resource in Attardo’s General Theory of Verbal Humour, namely Target, is still in need of some elaboration.

According to Attardo, all jokes containing a target must be aggressive in nature, and all targets are either human or ideological targets, as he claims that “one cannot be aggressive towards a tree” (p.179). Zabalbeascoa expands on this concise categorization of targets and victims in humour, highlighting two important, broad categories. One covers the role of the victim’s identity, the other the function and nature of the attack. When it comes to identity, Zabalbeascoa

agrees with the first two groups. However, he moves to have the third group, non-human objects, included as a valid target. It is true that these things have no feelings to offend, but it is possible to “show either a certain degree of madness or anti-tree obsession; or one might be openly targeting trees, and between the lines be having a dig at human groups or institutions, environmentalists, local authorities, tree-loving children” (p.196). Regardless of one’s opinion on non-human objects/concepts being viable targets, it stands without question that identity is important when translating. There are perspective shifts much like what one sees when going from direct quoting to reporting speech. Perhaps it is stating the obvious, but between source and target text there will in all likelihood be some combination of different people in different places at different times. For instance, if the source text takes its readers as victims (as is the case in "Life, the Universe and Everything", it ridicules the British, amongst other things), a translator will run into problems trying to figure out what to do when the readers change. British humour cannot even travel abroad within its own language while staying the same. The translator can either accept that it is going to be different, or shape an analogical situation wherein the foreigners poke fun at themselves in the same way the British did, (assuming that culture is familiar with self deprecating humour) thus erasing the original Britishness entirely (otherwise known as adaptation, see Vinay & Darbelnet (1958)).

It is equally important that a translator is aware why a specific victim is chosen, or why a victim-related joke is told, in order to be able to determine whether it will still work in the foreign language version. It is important because “Establishing or strengthening some kind of relationship between the interlocutors is a possible reason for many kinds of humor. We might call this tenor defining” (p.197). There are two separate, opposite, objectives that a humorist can assign to their text. They can either choose to generate sympathy or empathy towards a victim, (known as humanizing) or to use humour as a weapon, making a victim seem undeserving of

sympathy or empathy (known as dehumanizing). Dehumanizing jokes can, when told in different circumstances by their intended targets, turn their original objective around. Often ironically, these jokes are, in such an event, denunciations, in situations where tenor and function are closely linked. This has led to the failure of identifying irony being a common problem in translation (without irony, the joke shifts back to dehumanizing). Because of this, and other potentially confusing signals, a translator should strive to “discriminate whether an instance of humor is attacking or serving a certain item or aspect of a given community or society” (p.197).

The result of establishing all these different joke categories and parameters, and the most important part of Zabalbeascoa's article, is the translational model based upon it. Zabalbeascoa's Binary Branching Model is an adaptive model, which offers the advantage of being less dependent on developments in neighbouring fields of study, or even worse “that translation scholars should be called upon to resolve different schools of thought in humor studies” (p.198) (this may seem to go against the statement that there should be more cooperation between fields, but the fact of the matter is that it will always be better to be independent if at all possible). Likewise, it might seem like a hindrance to have a diversity of typologies; it would be contradictory to impose definitive classifications on joke typologies, the different kinds of relations amongst jokes is in fact part of the dynamics of a translator. There are even different cases to categorize jokes, either to understand or explain what a joke is, or to establish relations between source text and target text.

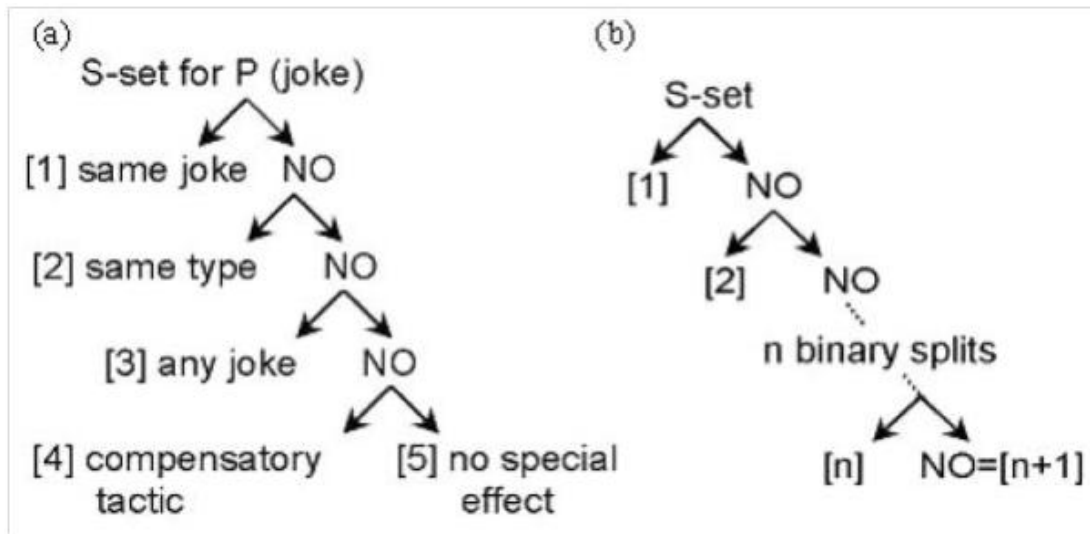


Figure 1

The above figure gives a rough idea of Zabalbeascoa's binary branching model. It shows the mapping possibilities for translation, where S-set is the set of all possible solutions, and problem-P a typology of jokes of a particular joke. This model is not designed to, or supposed to, give definitive answers on joke translation, even though translators, unlike scholars, cannot afford to be cautious or introduce fuzziness when classifying jokes. Thus, it is up to the translator to decide if a joke could also be a non-joke, or an ambiguous non-joke, which is also why the branches are numberless, and have no names, so they can be re-established for each new case. In fact, it is even possible that a translator will establish a typology without full awareness of his or her own behaviour, and as a result, be unable to verbalize their criteria. To elaborate on the numbered categories, solutions within [1] are regarded as essentially still the same joke; solutions within [2] are of the same type; (where different criteria amongst translators can lead to different typologies) solutions within [3] are any jokes of any other type; solutions within [4] are jokes not rendered as jokes, but as any other device; (simile, etc.) and finally, solutions within [5] are all

the remaining possibilities, straight-forward prose. (there is a clear case for cooperation judging from category [1] through [3]) The second diagram above, figure 1(b), shows how the original concept can be made 'telescopic' to incorporate any number 'n' of types and subtypes. At the same time, it is also a more abstract version that can be used for analyzing other kinds of translation problems; according to a binary type-within-type structure, further expanding on the original can be found in the figure below:

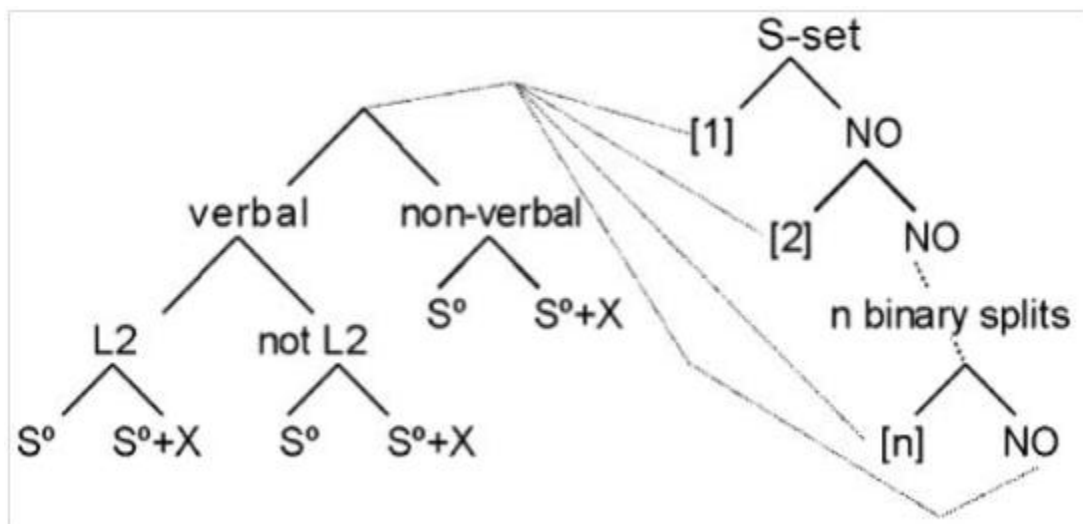


Figure 2

This figure shows “potential ramifications for verbal and non-verbal solutions, for L2 or other languages, and for simple or complex solutions.” (p.200). 'L2' here is the stated target text language ('L1' being source text language) 'S°' being simple solutions, (ST joke into TT item (not necessarily a joke) or omitting the joke) and 'S° +X' being complex solutions. (simple solutions complemented with something else (X), such as footnotes, a glossary, etc.) A final note on this model, one might have noticed that it does not account for the strategy of compensation of place, as a separate entity. This is because, according to Zabalbeascoa, if by moving a joke it will still

fall under, say, 'same type' then it will be regarded as such, regardless of movement.

Unfortunately, mapping alone will not suffice, as a map is of no use without a direction to go in. Through ranking needs and objectives in a translation according to a hierarchical set of priorities, a set that cannot be predefined by a theory, direction can be given to the previously created map. Instead, as this is an adaptive approach, it depends on the task and the restrictions that come with it. Thus, to properly translate humour, one must assess where humour ranks as a priority, and what restrictions stand in the way of fulfilling the intended goals. This means that the complexity of translation comes from the many possible combinations of many variables. even though priorities shift from text to text, one can make a ranking list of priorities, as Zabalbeascoa did:

“Top: e.g. TV comedy, a joke-story, one-liners, etc.

Middle: e.g. happy-ending love/adventure stories, TV quiz shows.

Marginal: e.g. as pedagogical device in school, Shakespeare's tragedies.

Prohibited: e.g. certain moments of high drama, tragedy, horror stories, laws, and any other inappropriate situations.” (p.202) (prohibited should be avoided at all costs in the same circumstances, the rest is straightforward).

Coming back to Attardo once more, Zabalbeascoa remarks that, while Attardo's system is both interesting and enlightening, and could be applied in a meaningful way to the mapping scheme, its hierarchical structure is not ideal for usage by translators. The problem with using the provided hierarchical structure for the Knowledge Resources as a metric of sameness is, firstly, that embedded jokes are not necessarily a translator's main priority in translating a text. Secondly, funniness can be found to have priority over retaining sameness, depending on the translator's judgement, whilst according to Attardo, sameness reigns supreme. Looking at the complete picture, Zabalbeascoa reaches that same conclusion at this thesis did earlier, in that Attardo's

suggestions with regard to the General Theory of Verbal Humour only takes into consideration 'joke-texts': "their validity does not seem so apparent for translating jokes or other forms of humour that are items of a larger text." (p.202).

Criticism aside, it is of course possible to turn figure 2a and figure 3 into models for equivalence, i.e. first aim for [1], if nothing can be found, move onto [2], and so on. This, however, is not a role that the binary branching map can fulfil, as it is a descriptive tool for scholars, not a prescriptive tool for translators (they can still use it of course) Still, even if it is impossible, this model would look something like this, incorporating the six Knowledge Resources.

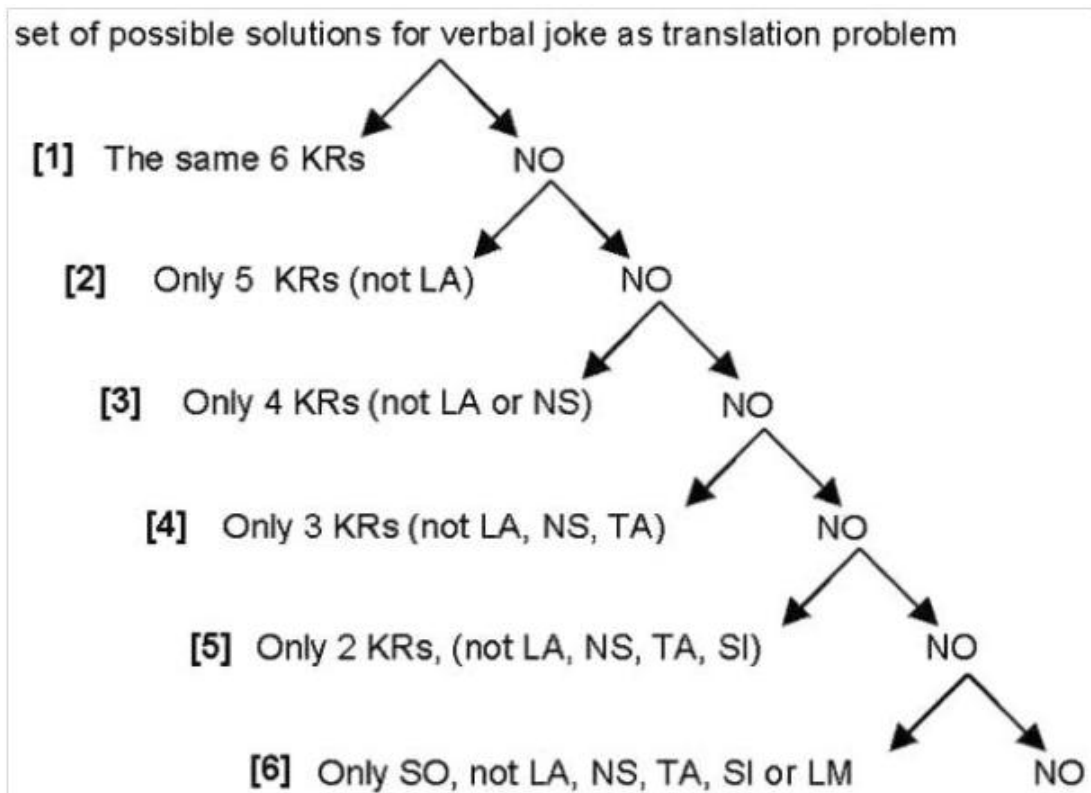


Figure 3

At this point, a conclusion can be drawn. Having first reasoned for the existence of humour translation as a serious field of study, through the analysis of Vandaele's work, two articles, by Attardo and Zabalbeascoa, were subsequently analyzed, not only to further cement the idea of humour translation as a field of study, but also to provide a practical solution to the humour translation problem, as established by Vandaele. Attardo's article on the General Theory of Verbal Humour was found to be a very competent theory, with its greatest strength also being its greatest weakness. It was found to be excellent for translating 'joke-texts', yet also inapplicable to anything but these texts (a sentiment later echoed by Zabalbeascoa). On the other hand there was Zabalbeascoa's parameter driven 'mapping' model, which due to its flexibility proved to be a satisfactory approach to dealing with humour in more than just 'joke-texts', despite being aimed more at translation scholars than actual translators. Ultimately, neither Attardo nor Zabalbeascoa could provide a (prescriptive) model that encompasses both humour translation and general translation in one, but as this thesis attempts to prove, such a model should not be necessary. When used in conjunction with a general translation model, humour translation models should give the desired results when translating humorous texts, literary or otherwise.

#### **Chapter 1-4: Lawrence Venuti**

It has now been made evidently clear that humour translation studies is a field most worthy of attention, but also that humour in translation is not the unconquerable behemoth that some make it out to be. The previous two chapters each gave their own separate solutions on how to deal with humour in translation, but, as mentioned before, they alone do not suffice for translating a text as a whole. This means a general theory of translation will also be required, and with the primary goal of this thesis in mind, finding out the relevance of culture in translating humour, the most suitable candidate was found to be Lawrence Venuti's (1953 - ) foreignization-domestication theory. This theory is actually a part of his greater work concerning the invisibility

of the translator, on the position of the translator in contemporary British and American culture. This thesis will not concern itself with the position of the translator, but minor references might be required in the explanation behind the foreignization-domestication distinction.

According to Venuti, domestication is currently the dominant strategy for translation due to two reasons: "by the way translators themselves tend to translate 'fluently' into English to produce an idiomatic and 'readable' TT, thus creating an 'illusion of transparency'" and, "A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or non-fiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text - the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the "original"" (p.1). In other words, the process of domestication will result in a target text where as much of the source culture has been replaced with target culture. Standing as an opposite to this practice is foreignization, it "entails choosing a foreign text and developing a translation method along lines which are excluded by dominant cultural values in the target language" (p.242). However, the two are not binary opposites, but instead part of a continuum and related to ethical choices. "The terms 'domestication' and 'foreignization' indicate fundamentally ethical attitudes towards a foreign text and culture, ethical effects produced by the choice of a text for translation and b the strategy devised to translate it, whereas the terms like 'fluency' and 'resistance' indicate fundamentally discursive features of translation strategies in relation to the readers cognitive processing" (p.19).

This means that a difference on the ethical level is seen reflected on the discursive level in the translation itself. A domesticated translation will be more fluent (assimilated to TL norms, transparent in reading), whereas a foreignized translation will be more resistant (challenging TL

norms, resistant in reading). Coming back to the synergistic relationship between humour studies and translation studies, it was stated that the theories of Attardo and Zabalbeascoa were too limited to be used for translating a literary text on their own, but the opposite is true as well. Venuti's approach, like so many other general translation theories, is insufficiently equipped to deal with humour in translation, so by combining the two, one creates an approach capable of dealing with all sorts of humour in (literary) texts. At the same time, through applying Venuti's foreignization-domestication split to two separate translations of the same text, backed up by the humour translation theories, it should be possible to find an answer to the question to whether and to what extent humour is culturally bound. This would, to return to Vandaele, add another map to the collection of the humour cartographers, a small step towards what one day could become a complete collection.

## **Chapter 2 - Translation**

Up until this point, this thesis has occupied itself primarily with humour translation in a theoretical context, but theory alone will not provide a sufficiently adequate answer to how relevant culture is in translating humour. Ergo, this chapter will concern itself with translation in a practical context, which will be accomplished through a set of translations of the same text, one translation done in accordance with the domestication strategy, one translation done in accordance with the foreignization strategy. Additionally, a thorough stylistic analysis of the ST will accompany these two translations, to offer background knowledge that cannot be gathered from the excerpt selected for translation, as well as provide clarification for some of the decisions made in the translations. Lastly, the translations will be annotated, to provide further clarification.

### **Chapter 2 - 1 Stylistic Analysis of Life, the Universe, and Everything**

To fully understand the decisions made in the two translations, and to keep the accompanying notes at a manageable length, a stylistic analysis of Douglas Adams' (1952-2001)

"Life, the Universe, and Everything", will now be provided, with a focus on the segment that has been selected for translation. "Life, the Universe, and Everything" is the third in a series of five books that together create the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy trilogy (the author himself called it a trilogy, only three books were planned originally). It is a series set in alternate reality in which the planet Earth, at the start of the first book, gets destroyed to create an interstellar bypass. Only three inhabitants manage to escape, two earthlings (Arthur Dent and Trishia McMillan), and an 'alien' (Ford Prefect). Together, and separately at times, they wander the Galaxy, and the books follow them and some of the other characters encountered along the way (there is no true protagonist). The main point of contention, or the main plot line, in the third book revolves around the inhabitants of the planet Krikkit. A very, very long time ago they nearly destroyed the universe, only to be stopped at the very last moment, an act for which they were punished by having their planet be locked away behind the Wikkat Gate. Now, many aeons later, they are attempting to reassemble the key, escape, and finish what they started, something the 'protagonists' are trying to prevent. From this rough synopsis it can be deduced that: one, the novel does not take itself too seriously; two, it is poking fun at the British (the author himself is British) – in part the reason why this book was picked for the purposes of this thesis.

One of the selected passage's most notable features, and potential problem for translators, is the crucial role cricket plays (Krikkit is a pun on cricket). There is no proper equivalent to be found in Dutch culture, as there is nothing that fulfils the criteria for a match: it has to be a sport, with a long history, famous playing grounds (Lord's Cricket Grounds is one of the locations visited in the book), international fame, strange rules, and enjoy a reputation of being taken serious and not serious at the same time. To go back to Zabalbeascoa, it has the status of an in-joke, In a broader sense, cricket can be considered to be included in this, Adams is fond of using stark contrasts, bordering on the absurd. For instance, here is a fragment describing the dreaded

Masters of Krikkit, almost destroyers of the universe: "They walked quite near the watchers beneath the tree, swinging lanterns which made soft and crazy lights dance among the trees and grass, chattering contentedly, and actually singing a song about how terribly nice everything was, how happy they were, how much they enjoyed working on the farm, and how pleasant it was to be going home to see their wives and children, with a lilting chorus to the effect that the flowers were smelling particularly nice at this time of year and that it was a pity the dog had died seeing as it liked them so much." (p.76), which hardly depicts them as anything to be afraid of. Also seen in this excerpt: Adams' frequent usage of lengthy sentences and rapid topic switching within said sentences, as well as his attention to seemingly unimportant details, all examples of logical mechanisms.

Another note on the topic of protagonists and how these are dealt with, one of them in particular, Arthur Dent, stands out in his relation to the reader. Adams makes him out to be an idiot, unable to ever fully grasp what is going on: "Arthur peered at the group and tried to make sense of what little information he had at his disposal at this point." and "'Um,' said Arthur with a reflective frown to indicate that his cognitive synapses were coping with this as best they could, 'um.'" (p.77-78). This role of being a clueless idiot has a two-fold purpose, the first obviously to amuse the reader. The second is less obvious, Arthur also serves as a vehicle that enables Adams to lay out plot exposition without it being a jarring break in the narrative. The reader is just as clueless as Arthur is, thus, he effectively takes the fall for the sake of the reader.

Another vital part of the trilogy's style are the occasional breaks in the narrative to simulate Guide entries, Hitchhiker's Guide entries to be precise. These serve to flesh out the universe the story is set in, but at the same time are always plot relevant, even if this is not immediately apparent to the reader. An example of this is "The profoundness ... a year" (p.80-82), where the narrative jumps from Arthur and company witnessing a spaceship crash to a description of the

Starship Titanic, beached like a Silver Arcturian Megavoidwhale. This lengthy side-step happens to serve a dual purpose, and after two pages it comes to its first, primary purpose: illustrating how impressive the Krikkit One, the first spaceship built by the Krikkiters, actually is (and secondly, finally making the Guide entry relevant, it becomes clear that the Krikkit One is a direct consequence of the Starship Titanic's crash). This is perhaps an extreme example of Adams' frequent tendency to get sidetracked just to prove a small point (here: how mind-blowing the Krikkit One is). Briefly glossed over in this example is another of Adams' key stylistic elements, one that contributes to the humour aspect of the novel: absurd imagery. This is referring back to the "Silver Arcturian Megavoidwhale". Even though it is an utterly fantastical being, the 'whale' part makes it sound familiar, whereas the 'Arcturian Megavoid' lets the reader imagine whatever kind of a whale they want (additionally, whales in space are a recurring joke in the trilogy).

Another humoristic stylistic element is Adams' usage of punch-lines, as seen in this example: "On the way back they sang a number of tuneful and reflective songs on the subjects of peace, justice, morality, culture, sport, family life and the obliteration of all other life forms." (p.85). The position of the obliteration is important here; up until now these songs have been all about happy and positive things, but then, out of nowhere, the polar opposite. Positioned anywhere else and it would lose its effectiveness and power as a joke. Also intended as humorous are the names given to most of the alien characters, from meaningful; Ford Prefect (named after what was at the time a very common British car), to meaningless, like Zipo Bibrox  $5 \times 10^8$ . In fact, it is not just the characters that have humorous names, nearly all the alien concepts receive a name that should result in a chuckle, like the aforementioned Megavoidwhale. Other examples would be the infamous Pan-Galactic Gargleblaster, or the Strenuous Garfighers of Stug and the Strangulous Stilettans of Jajazikstak (the latter being something of a cratylism). In addition to this, Adams is fond of using recurring imagery or gags for humorous effects. Both on a small scale (the various

ways Slartivartfasts manner of speaking is compared to a grave-like tone in the excerpt), and on a larger scale (Paul McCartney raking in the money is first introduced on pp. 76-79, and then forgotten until an unexpected return on p.162: “From somewhere at the back of the crowd a single voice started to sing a tune which would have enabled Paul McCartney, had he written it, to buy the world.”). All that being said, there are more stylistic elements translators need to be aware of, which will be discussed in the notes accompanying the translations.

## Chapter 2-2 Foreignizing Translation

‘Shhh,’ zei Slartibartfast<sup>1</sup>. ‘Kijk en luister.’

De nacht was nu gevallen op het oeroude Krikkit<sup>2</sup>. De hemel was donker en leeg. Het enige licht kwam van het nabijgelegen dorp, waarvandaan fijne gezellige<sup>3</sup> geluiden zachtjes aan kwamen drijven op een briesje. Ze stonden onder een boom waar een bedwelvende lucht vanaf kwam die om hen heen dreef<sup>4</sup>. Arthur hurkte en voelde de Informatieve Illusie<sup>5</sup> van de aarde en het gras. Hij liet het door zijn vingers lopen. De aarde leek zwaar en rijk, het gras stevig. Het was

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Slartibartfast’: This being the foreignized translation, all names are kept the same.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Krikkit’: The Krikkit/cricket situation is not a problem in translation as it strives to stick to the original as closely as possible.

<sup>3</sup> ‘pleasant convivial’: ‘*pleasant convivial*’ is the first example of Adams’ usage of positive sounding adjectives, with the intent of painting Krikkit and its inhabitants as incredibly positive and nice. This presented the translator with the problem of retaining this degree of positiveness through (excessive) usage of adjectives in translation, without adding more repetition than present in the ST. This specific instance of ‘*pleasant convivial*’ (“pleasantly merry and friendly” according to Longman, making it a tautology as well) was translated as ‘*fijne gezellige*’, for it retains the tautology, and can be used to describe the quality of a sound. (as ‘convivial’ does)

<sup>4</sup> ‘Ze stonden... de bries’: This sentence can also be phrased in a manner that makes it less of a run-on sentence. (as seen in the other translation) Here it was kept as such to remain close to the ST.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Informational Illusion’: A literal translation of ‘*Informational Illusion*’ works perfectly fine, (in both translations) retaining the alliteration present in the ST.

moelijk om aan de indruk te ontkomen dat dit een volstrekt aangename<sup>6</sup> plaats was in elk opzicht<sup>7</sup>.

De hemel was, echter, extreem leeg en leek voor Arthur een zekere kilte te werpen over het anders zo idyllische, zij het momenteel onzichtbare, landschap. Toch<sup>8</sup>, dacht hij, het is maar de vraag waar je aan gewend bent.

Hij voelde een tikje op zijn schouder en keek omhoog. Slartibartfast dirigeerde stilletjes zijn aandacht<sup>9</sup> naar iets onder aan de andere kant van de heuvel. Hij keek en kon net aan wat zwakke lichtjes zien dansen en zwaaien, en langzaam bewegend in hun richting.

Ze kwamen steeds dichterbij, en geluiden werden ook hoorbaar<sup>10</sup>, en al snel vervormden de gedimde lichten en geluiden zich tot een kleine groep personen die naar huis aan het lopen waren over de heuvel naar het dorp.

Ze liepen best vlakbij<sup>11</sup> de toeschouwers onder de boom, lantaarns zwaaiend<sup>12</sup> die zachte en gekke lichten deden dansen tussen de bomen en het gras, content kletsend<sup>13</sup>, en zelfs een lied

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<sup>6</sup> **‘Volstrekt aangename’**: Second instance of excessive adjective usage, but not a tautology. *‘thoroughly’* serves to amplify *‘delightful’*, which in turn is not an adjective specifically associated with places, hence the translator went for a as literal translation as possible.

<sup>7</sup> **‘Het was... elk opzicht’**: Original sentence structure is once again retained, a more Dutch sounding example can be found in the domesticized translation.

<sup>8</sup> **‘Still,’**: *‘still’* can be translated in a multitude of ways, none of which better or worse, in this example.

<sup>9</sup> **‘dirigeerde stilletjes zijn aandacht’**: When it comes to attention and the way others can grab yours, the inclusion of *‘attention’* or *‘aandacht’* is more common in English than in Dutch. As shown in the other translation, the Dutch way of phrasing this is *‘wees hem geruisloos op’*, without any *‘attention’*. Leaving it in, then, is a foreignization.

<sup>10</sup> **‘en geluiden... ook hoorbaar’**: The translation keeps the sub clause without agent, leaving it uncertain whether the sound and the approaching figures are connected. (though it is indubitable that they are)

<sup>11</sup> **‘quite near’**: *‘quite near’* does not imply a sense of direction or movement, it merely described the position of *‘they’*, thus, the translation should retain this. The translator accomplished this by using *‘vlakbij’* instead of *‘vlak langs’*

<sup>12</sup> **‘lantaarns zwaaiend’**: Noun and verb have switched places here, to keep a properly grammatical structure, whilst still keeping it as close to the ST by not adding anything else.

<sup>13</sup> **‘content kletsend’**: Adverb and verb switched places to retain grammaticality, as well as using *‘content’* to keep the alliteration.

zingend over hoe vreselijk mooi<sup>14</sup> alles was, hoe blij ze waren, hoeveel ze ervan genoten op de boerderij te werken, en hoe fijn<sup>15</sup> het was om naar huis te gaan om hun vrouw en kinderen te zien, met een liltend refrein<sup>16</sup> over de bloemen die bijzonder goed roken in deze tijd van het jaar en dat het zonde was dat de hond was doodgegaan aangezien hij zo van hen had gehouden<sup>17</sup>. Arthur kon zich haast Paul McCartney<sup>19</sup> zittend met z'n voeten omhoog naast het vuur voorstellen<sup>20</sup>, het neuriënd tegen Linda<sup>21</sup> en afvragend wat te kopen met de opbrengsten, en denkend waarschijnlijk Essex<sup>22</sup>.

‘De Meesters van Krikkit,’ ademde Slartibartfast in grafachtige tonen<sup>23</sup>.

Komend, zoals deze<sup>24</sup> deed, zo hard op de hielen van zijn eigen gedachten over Essex bracht deze opmerking<sup>25</sup> Arthur een moment van verwarring. Toen daalde de logica van de

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<sup>14</sup> ‘vreselijk mooi’: Third instance of excessive adjective usage, here it is a combination of an adjective derived from something negative, ‘terribly’, and an ordinary positive one. Additionally, ‘nice’ is so overused in regards to giving ones opinion on a wide variety of things (from looks to taste to appreciation) that it has lost any true meaning. Both these aspects are reflected in the translation.

<sup>15</sup> ‘fijn’: No excessive amount of adjectives here, translated the same as the ‘pleasant’ in note 3.

<sup>16</sup> ‘lilting’: ‘lilting’ is a form of traditional singing common in Gaelic speaking areas of Scotland and Ireland, and it does not have a Dutch translation. As this is the foreignized translation, the translator decided to carry over the term and in doing so create a new Anglicism.

<sup>17</sup> ‘van hen had gehouden’: ‘houden van’ is more akin to ‘to love’ than it is to ‘to like’. Unfortunately, the closest alternative to ‘houden van’ is ‘iemand leuk vinden’, which is not suitable for an alien/human-dog relationship, leaving ‘houden van’ as the only option.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Ze liepen... had gehouden’: Sentence length is the same as ST, nor have any commas been added.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Paul McCartney’: There is no need to change his name as this is the foreignized translation, nor is he too old to have been forgotten, and thus making the joke not work.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Arthur kon... vuur voorstellen’: ‘one evening’ was omitted to make it possible to reproduce this sentence as close to the ST as possible.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Linda’: McCartney’s wife at the time, less likely to be recognized than him. This is not a concern, as she is not important to the success of the joke.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Arthur kon... waarschijnlijk Essex’: This example of a joke contains a number of elements discussed in chapter 2. It is a joke targeted at Paul McCartney/the music industry/the sheepish masses, its logical mechanism is exaggeration, and it can potentially be restricted through audience profile traits. (Essex will be less known outside of the UK, which will reduce the effectiveness of the joke, or render it ineffective entirely) None of this matters for the foreignized translation, as it needs to be left as is.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Ademde Slartibartfast in grafachtige tonen’: Here the contrast is introduced to the up until now cheerful and positive introduction of the inhabitants of Krikkit, adding the comedic element to the text. Slartibartfast’s manner of speaking also becomes a theme through this brief fragment, always being described or associated with death. (when speaking of Krikkit) ‘sepulchral tones’ is not a commonly used expression, nor is the literal translation of it, thus the translator opted to use that.

situatie neer op zijn verstrooide hoofd, en hij ontdekte dat hij nog steeds niet begreep wat de oude man bedoelde.

‘Wat?’ zei hij.

‘De Meesters van Krikkit,’ zei Slartibartfast opnieuw, en als zijn ademen eerst grafachtig was, dit keer klonk hij als iemand in Hades<sup>26</sup> met bronchitis.

Arthur tuurde naar de groep en probeerde iets zinnigs te maken van het kleine beetje informatie dat hij op dit moment tot zijn beschikking had.

De personen in de groep waren duidelijk alien<sup>27</sup>, al was het maar omdat ze een beetje lang, dun, hoekig en bijna zo bleek dat ze wit waren leken<sup>28</sup>, maar anders leken ze opvallend vrolijk; iets eigenaardig misschien, men zou waarschijnlijk geen lange busreis met ze door willen brengen, maar het punt was dat als ze op enige manier afweken van normale personen dan was dat door misschien te aardig te zijn in plaats van niet aardig genoeg<sup>29</sup>. Dus waarom al dit rasperige longwerk<sup>30</sup> van Slartibartfast dat meer op z’n plaats leek in een radio commercial<sup>31</sup> voor een van die vieze films over een man met een kettingzaag<sup>32</sup> die z’n werk mee naar huis neemt?

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<sup>24</sup> **‘deze’**: ‘it’ cannot be translated as ‘het’, as ‘het’ cannot refer to its antecedent ‘deze opmerking’, forcing a slight deviation from the ST.

<sup>25</sup> **‘bracht deze opmerking’**: Word order had to be inverted here to retain grammaticality.

<sup>27</sup> **‘alien’**: ‘alien’, though it may be an Anglicism, can be found in the Van Dale, making it a ‘proper’ Dutch word.

<sup>28</sup> **‘waren leken’**: Verbs changed location to retain grammaticality.

<sup>29</sup> Is politeness typically British or not?

<sup>30</sup> **‘rasperige longwerk’**: Third instance of Slartibartfast’s manner of speaking being mentioned. A literal translation is suitable here, it sounds equally odd in both ST and TT.

<sup>31</sup> **‘commercial’**: A commonly used Anglicism in the current day and age.

<sup>32</sup> **‘man met een kettingzaag’**: The ‘operator’ part of ‘chainsaw operator’ poses a problem even for the foreignized translation. In Dutch, a ‘bestuurder’ (‘operator’) is only used for a person who is operating, say, a large piece of machinery or driving a vehicle, nor is there an existing profession solely for operating chainsaws. This means a literal translation (‘kettingzaag bestuurder’) and the closest approximation (‘kettingzager’) are out of the question. Since the chainsaw part is a vital component for this analogy, it strikes home the horror theme better than any other tool, it had to be kept in, thus the translator opted to use a generalization.

En dan, dit Krikkit gedoe was ook<sup>33</sup> lastig. Hij had nog niet echt uitgevogeld wat de verbinding was tussen wat hij kende als cricket en wat...

Slartibartfast onderbrak zijn gedachtegang op dit punt alsof hij aan kon voelen wat er door zijn hoofd ging.

‘De sport die je kent als cricket,’ zei hij, en zijn stem klonk nog steeds alsof die verdwaald was in onderaardse passages<sup>34</sup>, is gewoon een van die buitenissige gevallen van raciaal geheugen dat plaatjes<sup>35</sup> een eeuwigheid lang levend kan houden in het hoofd lang nadat de ware betekenis verloren is gegaan in de mist der tijd<sup>36</sup>. Van alle rassen in de Melkweg, enkel de Engelsen konden<sup>37</sup> mogelijk de herinnering aan de gruwelijkste oorlogen die het Universum ooit aan stukken heeft gereten terug tot leven brengen en transformeren in ik ben bang<sup>38</sup> een algemeen beschouwd onbegrijpelijk saai en zinloos spel.

‘Ben er zelf eigenlijk wel aan gehecht,’ voegde hij toe, ‘maar in de ogen van de meeste mensen zijn jullie onexcusbaar<sup>39</sup> schuldig aan de meest gruwelijk slechte smaak. In het bijzonder het stuk van de kleine rode bal die de wicket raakt, dat is erg akelig.’

‘Um,’ zei Arthur met een denkende frons die aangaf dat zijn cognitieve synapsen hier zo goed mogelijk mee om probeerden te gaan, ‘um.’

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<sup>33</sup> **‘ook’**: ‘too’ can only be translated as ‘ook’ here, and ‘ook’ cannot be placed at the end of a sentence. Thus, the translator was forced to deviate from the ST. Although, the comma before ‘too’ introduces an unnatural/unexpected break in momentum to the sentence, which must have been intentional, but even with this in mind, ‘ook’ at the end is not a viable option.

<sup>34</sup> **‘in onderaardse passages’**: Fourth instance of Slartibartfasts manner of speaking, a literal translation is suitable here.

<sup>35</sup> **‘plaatjes’**: can only be used if used as a diminutive, closest literal translation.

<sup>36</sup> **‘is gewoon... der tijd’**: Once again word order has been altered to retain grammaticality.

<sup>37</sup> **‘konden’**: Having ‘konden’ in this position is grammatical because of the comma before ‘enkel’, though it is still a rather stilted sentence as far as flow goes. This is not an issue for this translation as, again, it is the foreignized translation.

<sup>38</sup> **‘ik ben bang’**: A comma before ‘ik’ and after ‘bang’ would make this much less of an apparent run-on sentence in Dutch. (it is less noticeable in the ST).

<sup>39</sup> **‘onexcusbaar’**: The translator invented another Anglicism here to stay as close to the ST as possible.

‘En dit,’ zei Slartibartfast, terugvallend in cryptige keelklanken<sup>40</sup> en wijzend naar de groep mannen van Krikkit die nu langs hen liepen, ‘zijn degene die alles zijn begonnen, en het gaat vanavond beginnen. Kom, wij zullen volgen, en zien waarom.’

Ze slopen onder de boom vandaan, en volgden de opgewekte groep langs het donkere heuvel pad. Hun natuurlijke instinct was om stil en onopvallend achter hun prooi<sup>41</sup> aan te sluipen, echter, omdat ze simpelweg door een opgenomen Informatieve Illusie liepen, hadden ze net zo goed eufoniums en barbaarse kleding<sup>42</sup> kunnen dragen voor alle aandacht die hun prooi aan hen gaf.

Het viel Arthur op dat een aantal groepsleden nu een ander lied aan het zingen waren. Het kwam aangelilt<sup>43</sup> door de zachte nacht lucht, en was een zoete romantische ballade die McCartney Kent en Sussex had opgeleverd en hem in staat had gesteld een goed bod te doen op Hampshire<sup>44</sup>.

## Chapter 2-3 Domesticized Translation

‘Ssst<sup>45</sup>,’ zei Magdiragdag<sup>46</sup>. ‘Kijk en luister.’

<sup>40</sup> ‘**cryptige keelklanken**’: Fifth and final instance of Slartibartfasts manner of speaking being described. This is done through usage of a self-invented compound noun in the form of ‘*crypt guttural*’, and as such, there is no existing Dutch equivalent. Since the ST term is made up, the translator decided to make up a corresponding equivalent for the translation. An identical compound noun cannot be made in Dutch for this particular example, so the translator made an adjective-noun pairing instead.

<sup>41</sup> ‘**prooi**’: ‘*prooi*’ might seem to aggressive given that there is no hostile intent here, but the same could be said for ‘*quarry*’.

<sup>42</sup> ‘**barbaarse kleding**’: ‘*woad*’ is a very specific term, referring to a type of blue dye used to decorate the body in ancient times. There is no equivalent in Dutch, leaving the translator with no choice but to employ a generalization.

<sup>43</sup> ‘**Aangelilt**’: Since Adams reuses ‘*lilting*’ here, so does the translation.

<sup>44</sup> ‘**Het kwam... op Hampshire**’: Conclusion to the joke started earlier.

<sup>45</sup> ‘**Ssst**’: Though seemingly an insignificant change, it is nonetheless a change worth noting. The difference in both cultures most commonly used term for shushing comes from the words they are derived from. ‘*shhh*’ is derived from ‘*to shush*’, whereas ‘*ssst*’ is derived from ‘*stil*’. A Dutch audience would undoubtedly understand ‘*shhh*’, it hardly

De nacht was nu gevallen op het oeroude Korvbhal<sup>47</sup>. De hemel was donker en leeg. Het enige licht kwam van een nabijgelegen dorp, waarvandaan fijne gezellige geluiden aan kwamen drijven op een briesje<sup>48</sup>. Ze stonden onder een boom die een bedwelmende walm om hen heen verspreidde. Arthur hurkte op zijn knieën en voelde de Informatieve Illusie van de aarde en het gras. Hij liet het door zijn vingers lopen. De aarde leek zwaar en rijk, het gras stevig. Het was moeilijk om aan de indruk te ontkomen dat dit in elk opzicht een ongelooflijk aangename plek was<sup>49</sup>.

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looks or sounds any different, but as this translation strives to be as close to Dutch culture as possible, the translator chose to use ‘*ssst*’.

<sup>46</sup> **‘Magdiragdag’**: ‘*Slartibartfast*’ is not a name chosen randomly. Adams explains in the notes accompanying the published volume of original radio scripts (the ‘Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy’ first saw the light of day as a radio play) that he wanted the character’s name to sound as rude as possible while still being allowed on the air by the BBC. (the first iteration of the name, ‘Phartiphukbowlz’, is much less subtle about this) While this translation will not have to deal with getting past the censor, it is still important to convey the message Adams originally wanted to convey, which will not work in this translation if the name is kept the same. Hence, the translator decided to use ‘*Magdiragdag*’, the name used in some earlier translations of the same work.

<sup>47</sup> **‘Korvbhal’**: Probably the most controversial change in this translation, one that would be unjustifiable were it not for the purpose behind this translation. The role, significance, and working of Krikkit/cricket were explained in the preceding stylistic analysis, which made it abundantly clear that there is no possible translation for ‘*Krikkit*’. However, when this fragment is taken in isolation, many of the parameters that needed to be met fall away, leaving a more manageable set of criteria that the equivalent of cricket needs to match. These are: a sport typical of the culture, enjoying a state of being taken serious and not serious at the same time; being rather complicated, obscure, or hard to follow; being less well known in other countries. This leaves a small subset of sports that can be chosen from, where, in the opinion of the translator, (again, there is no literature to support this either) korfbal is the most suitable candidate. While it enjoys a smaller degree of fame than cricket, (one will find more cricket on TV in England than one would find korfbal on TV in the Netherlands) it fits the other criteria. It cannot be used for the novel as a whole (for instance, it has no equivalent to Lord’s cricket grounds) without bending through so many hoops a professional contortionist would be jealous, but it is manageable enough for this brief passage. As for the spelling of ‘*Korvbhal*’, the translator did the same as Adams did with ‘*Krikkit*’, a slight change in spelling that does not change it phonetically, so the reader will quickly figure out the link to the corresponding sport. (long before Arthur does, further establishing him as an idiot and making a joke out of him)

<sup>48</sup> **‘een briesje’**: The ‘*breeze*’ here is a very subtle and weak wind. This is better reflected in the diminutive ‘*briesje*’ than with the regular ‘*bries*’.

<sup>49</sup> **‘Het was... plek was’**: This sentence functions as a punchline to this paragraph. Not because it is a joke, (though it is part of the meta-joke about the inhabitants of Krikkit) but because it drives home the idea that this is a ‘*thoroughly delightful*’ place in every single way. It achieves this punch through placing ‘*in all respects*’ at the end of the sentence. Doing the same in translation, putting ‘*in elk opzicht*’ at the end, results in a sentence that does not carry as much punch as the original, hence it being moved forward.

Het ontbrak de hemel echter aan alles<sup>50</sup>, en leek volgens Arthur ook een zekere kilte te werpen over het anders zo idyllische, zij het momenteel onzichtbare, landschap. Maar toch<sup>51</sup>, bedacht hij, het is maar net<sup>52</sup> waar je gewend aan bent.

Hij voelde een tikje op zijn schouder en keek op. Magdiragdag wees hem geruisloos op iets onderaan de andere kant van de heuvel. Hij keek en kon net aan wat zwakke lichtjes zien dansen en zwaaien, en ze kwamen langzaam hun kant op.

Terwijl ze dichterbij kwamen werden er ook geluiden hoorbaar, en al snel gingen de gedimde lichtjes en geluiden om in een kleine groep personen die naar huis liepen over de heuvel naar het dorp toe.

Ze liepen best vlakbij de toeschouwers onder de boom, zwaaiend met lantaarns die zachte en gekke lichtjes<sup>53</sup> deden dansen tussen de bomen en het gras, content kletsend, en ze zongen zelfs een lied over hoe vreselijk mooi alles was, hoe blij ze waren, hoe veel ze ervan genoten op de boerderij te werken, en hoe blij ze waren om thuis naar hun vrouw en kinderen te gaan, met een zeer zangerig<sup>54</sup> refrein over de heerlijk ruikende bloemen in deze tijd van het jaar, en dat het jammer was dat de hond die zo van hen hield was dood gegaan. Arthur kon zich bijna Frans

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<sup>50</sup> **‘Het ontbrak... aan alles’**: In order to avoid repeating *‘leeg’*, (*‘empty’* and *‘blank’* both translate to *‘leeg’*) the translator changed the sentence around to accommodate an alternate translation. As this deviates from the ST, a similar solution was not available for the foreignized translation, which was forced to reuse *‘leeg’*.

<sup>51</sup> **‘Maar goed,’**: Instead of the literal translation used in the foreignized translation, the translator opted to add a *‘maar’* not present in the ST. Though a seemingly minor difference, this slight deviation was deemed appropriate for the domesticized translator as it is more common to begin a contradiction with *‘maar’*.

<sup>52</sup> **‘het is maar net’**: Some of the differences between both translation are there for no reason other than to be different. The translations being too similar could affect the survey results.

<sup>53</sup> **‘lichtjes’**: The diminutive, *‘lichtjes’*, Works better in this situation as well.

<sup>54</sup> **‘zangerig’**: The same solution as presented in note (note 15 FT) is not possible in this translation. Instead, the closest equivalent was used.

Bauer<sup>55</sup> voorstellen, achterover gehangen op de bank<sup>56</sup>, terwijl hij het lied neuriede tegen Mariska<sup>57</sup>, en zich afvroeg wat te kopen met de opbrengst<sup>58</sup>, waarschijnlijk<sup>59</sup> Brabant<sup>60</sup>.

‘De Meesters van Korvbhal,’ ademde Magdiragdag met een stem die uit het graf leek te komen<sup>61</sup>.

De opmerking kwam<sup>62</sup>, geheel onverwacht, zo vlak op de hielen van zijn eigen gedachten over Brabant dat Arthur even in de war<sup>63</sup> raakte. Toen daalde de logica van de situatie neer op zijn verstrooide hoofd, en kwam hij er achter dat hij nog steeds niet begreep waar de oude man het over had.

‘Wat? zei hij.

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<sup>55</sup> **‘Frans Bauer’**: Another significant departure from the ST, this change is also somewhat debatable. Paul McCartney is a figure well known even outside of the Anglo-Saxon world, even Dutch readers will recognize the name. The rest of the joke, (the counties, and less importantly, Linda) are less widely known. Changing any one aspect of the joke requires a change in all three, which is why the translator decided to replace ‘*Paul McCartney*’ with ‘*Frans Bauer*’, one of the wealthiest contemporary Dutch artists. Whether it is in his nature to buy excessive amounts of property is unclear though, but the same can be said about Paul.

<sup>56</sup> **‘Achterover gehangen op de bank’**: ‘*to put one’s feet up*’ is, when translated literally, not a proper Dutch expression, it would not convey the image of relaxation that the ST does. Instead, the translator opted for a slight deviation from the ST in setting (the fire is gone, replaced by a comfortable couch) to retain this image of relaxation, important for showing the ease with which these songs are conceived.

<sup>57</sup> **‘Mariska’**: ‘*Linda*’ was Paul’s wife at the time of writing, ‘*Mariska*’ is Frans’ wife.

<sup>58</sup> **‘opbrengst’**: It is more common, in Dutch, to use a singular here.

<sup>59</sup> **‘waarschijnlijk’**: The verb ‘*thinking*’ was left out to improve sentence flow.

<sup>60</sup> **‘Brabant’**: English counties are not quite the same as Dutch provinces, but they both fulfill the purposes of the joke. County names are well known, and well known to not be buyable, Province names are well known, and also well known to not be buyable. There being fewer provinces than (ceremonial) counties (in England alone) (12 to 48) is not a problem, as only four names are needed in total.

<sup>61</sup> **‘een stem ... te komen’**: Here, the translator opted to transpose the adjective ‘*sepulchral*’ to a noun phrase in the shape of ‘*een stem die uit het graf leek te komen*’. Though lengthier than the ST, this way the image is presented in the clearest fashion. Alternative, shorter options appear much more stunted and forced (e.g. : ‘*stem vanuit het graf*’) This was done to create continuity/uniformity between this and the next description of Slartibartfasts breathing. (‘*het graf*’ and ‘*Hel met bronchitis*’, both noun phrases)

<sup>62</sup> **‘De opmerking kwam’**: The ‘*comment*’ has been fronted to make for a better running sentence.

<sup>63</sup> **‘in de war’**: ‘*verwarring*’ and ‘*in de war*’ are equally viable, though the former is a transposition.

‘De Meesters van Korvbhal,’ zei Magdiragdag opnieuw, en als zijn ademen eerst uit het graf kwam, dit keer klonk hij als iemand in Hel<sup>64</sup> met bronchitis.

Arthur tuurde naar de groep en probeerde iets zinnigs te maken van het kleine beetje informatie dat hij op het moment tot zijn beschikking had.

De mensen in de groep waren duidelijk buitenaards<sup>65</sup>, al was het maar omdat ze een beetje lang, dun, hoekig, en bijna zo wit als een spook<sup>66</sup> leken, maar behalve dat leken ze opvallend vrolijk; een beetje eigenaardig misschien, je zou liever niet een lange busreis<sup>67</sup> met ze maken, maar het punt was dat als ze op enige manier afweken van normaal zijn, dan was dat waarschijnlijk omdat ze te aardig leken in plaats van niet aardig genoeg<sup>68</sup>. Dus waarom al dit rasperige longwerk<sup>69</sup> van Magdiragdag dat beter gepast leek in een reclame<sup>70</sup> op de radio, voor zo’n horrorfilm over een man met een kettingzaag die zijn werk mee naar huis neemt?

En daarbij, met dit ‘Korvbhal’ gebeuren was ook iets aan de hand. Hij had nog net niet de link gelegd tussen wat hij kende als korfbal, en wat...

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<sup>64</sup> **‘Hel’**: Whilst ‘*Hades*’ is likely to be an equally foreign term in both source and target culture, having its origin in classical antiquity, this does not preclude it from being domesticized, hence the use of the more commonly known ‘*hel*’.

<sup>65</sup> **‘buitenaards’**: Using an Anglicism, if avoidable, is not an option for a domesticized translation. ‘*alien*’ has a perfectly acceptable Dutch translation.

<sup>66</sup> **‘wit als een spook’**: The translator added a simile here, to enrich the text.

<sup>67</sup> **‘busreis’**: While the Netherlands are not as big as Britain, the concept of a long coach journey is not an alien concept to them. Going on a holiday to, say, Italy or Spain by bus is still a commonality in this day and age. Thus, ‘*long coach journey*’ can simply be translated as ‘*lange busreis*’. (there is only one word for ‘*bus*’ in Dutch)

<sup>68</sup> **‘te aardig... aardig genoeg’**: It could be the case that Adams is playing the “all British people are polite” stereotype here, as the assumption is made that all normal people are nice/polite. This certainly is not a stereotype that could apply to current Dutch culture. But even if the former claim were true, there is not much that can be done to accommodate a change here. The entire fragment has been building up the image of the people of Krikkit as being incredibly nice and carefree, culminating in this statement, so if one were to change that, one would have to alter everything preceding it as well. With this in mind, as well as the fact that the stereotype angle is not vitally important, the translator decided to leave it unchanged.

<sup>69</sup> **‘longwerk’**: Neither ‘*lungwork*’ nor ‘*longwerk*’ are existing terms.

<sup>70</sup> **‘reclame’**: Avoiding the Anglicism in ‘*commercial*’.

Magdiragdag onderbrak zijn gedachten op dat moment, aanvoelend wat er op dat moment door zijn hoofd ging.

‘De sport die je kent als korfbal,’ zei hij, en zijn stem klonk nog steeds alsof hij ergens diep onder de aarde verdwaald was, ‘is gewoon een gek geval van raciaal geheugen dat plaatjes levend kan houden in het geheugen, een eeuwigheid nadat de ware betekenis ervan verloren is gegaan in de mist der tijd. Van alle rassen in de Melkweg konden alleen de Nederlanders<sup>71</sup> mogelijk de herinnering aan de gruwelijkste oorlog die het Universum ooit aan stukken heeft gereten terug tot leven wekken, en ervan maken wat, ik ben bang, over het algemeen wordt gezien als een onbegrijpelijke saaie en zinloze sport.

‘Ben er zelf eigenlijk wel aan gehecht,’ voegde hij toe, ‘maar in de ogen van de meesten zijn jullie onvergeeflijk schuldig aan de slechtst mogelijke smaak. In het bijzonder het deel waar er twee mannen en vrouwen in een vak moeten staan<sup>72</sup>, dat is echt smerig.’

‘Uhm<sup>73</sup>,’ zei Arthur met een reflectieve frons om aan te geven dat zijn cognitieve synapsen hier zo goed mogelijk mee probeerden om te gaan, ‘uhm.’

‘En dit,’ zei Magdiragdag, terugvallend op zijn crypte stem<sup>74</sup>, wijzend naar de groep mannen van Korvbhal die nu langs hen waren gelopen, ‘zijn degenen die het allemaal zijn begonnen, en vanavond zal het beginnen. Kom, we volgen ze en zien waarom.’

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<sup>71</sup> ‘**Nederlanders**’: Reviving horrific memories is not typically English, so with the shift to korfbal comes the consequence that ‘*English*’ has to change to ‘*Nederlanders*’.

<sup>72</sup> ‘**In het... moeten staan**’: In the ST, Adams makes a quip here about the objects used in a game of cricket. Unfortunately, korfbal is much more sparse when it comes to objects involved in play. There is a ball, and two poles with a basket. So instead the translator uses a strategy of compensation, while still keeping it about the game in question. There is an actual rule in korfbal that states that there have to be two men and two women in each square. Combined with ‘*dat is echt smerig*’, one has a sexual innuendo not present in the original, and thus compensation.

<sup>73</sup> ‘**uhm**’: Based on personal experience, as there is no research done on the matter, the translator changed ‘*uh*’ to ‘*uhm*’, having seen more usage of the latter amongst Dutch-speaking peers.

Ze gleden onder de boom vandaan, en volgden de opgewekte groep langs het donkere pad op de heuvel. Hun natuurlijke instinct was om langzaam en onopvallend achter hun prooi aan te sluipen. Echter, omdat ze gewoon door een opgenomen Informatieve Illusie liepen, hadden ze net zo goed in hun blootje een tuba kunnen dragen<sup>75</sup>, voor alle aandacht die hun prooi aan hen schonk.

Het viel Arthur op dat een aantal leden van de groep nu een ander lied aan het zingen waren. Het kwam aandrijven op de zachte avondlucht, en was een zoete romantische ballade die Frans Limburg en Zeeland had opgeleverd, en hem in staat had gesteld een goed bod te doen op Gelderland<sup>76</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> **‘crypte stem’**: *‘cryptige’* is not an existing word, and also sounds very similar to *‘cryptische’*, which has a completely unrelated connotation. Thus, to make the sentence look like proper Dutch, the translator went with the somewhat generalized *‘cryptige stem’*.

<sup>75</sup> **‘in hun... kunnen dragen’**: The point of *‘wearing euphonics and woad’* is to paint a mental image of the group that is most ridiculous and noticeable, to make it very clear that they cannot be noticed. A ‘euphonium’ is a musical instrument for which there is no word in Dutch. Luckily it is very similar to a tuba, so a generalization was used. As for the ‘woad’ becoming *‘blootje’*, (both equally noteworthy) this was done for the sake of brevity.

<sup>76</sup> **‘Limburg en... op Gelderland’**: Finishing the joke with three more provinces instead of counties.

### Chapter 3 – Humour Analysis

A sizable portion of this thesis has been dedicated to showing that humour is a parameter that can be measured. This chapter will put this knowledge into practice by comparing the humour aspects of the two translations above, using Attardo's and Zabalbeascoa's articles as a guideline. This will be done as follows: all of the humorous instances present in the original fragment have been identified (see Appendix A), and will be categorized in accordance with the General Theory of Verbal Humour, as well as being given their applicable joke-type in accordance with Zabalbeascoa. Then, on a joke by joke basis, the same will be done for both translations, resulting in an objective comparison of the quality of humour in both translations, and thus an answer to the main question of this thesis.

The first instance of humour the reader will encounter is simply a name, "Slartibartfast" (note 46 gives a detailed description as to why this is an instance of humour). Starting at the top of the hierarchical chain of Knowledge Resources, the two scripts that could apply here are 'normal name' and 'name avoiding censorship'. It has no Logical Mechanism, and the Situation is Irrelevant, but it does have a Target, namely censorship in general, or censorship by the BBC in specific. Lastly, the Narrative Strategy is wordplay, and as far as Language is concerned, for this instance of humour and all the consecutive instances of humour described here, the Language parameter can be seen in Appendix A. The corresponding joke typologies here are Taboo, because of the censorship, and wordplay. How then does this compare to both translations? The foreignizing translation, by virtue of being exactly the same as the original, is also exactly the same in its Knowledge Resources and joke typology. The domesticizing translation, however, does differ on some parameters, namely Language and Target. The change in Language is forced through a change in the Target, as the name had to be changed to avoid Dutch censorship. Both joke typologies are also retained.

An initial observation reveals that the foreignizing translation is closer to the ST than the domesticizing translation, even when it comes to the jokes, despite being so similar in both sets of measurement. However, it is the joke typologies that forced the change here, in conjunction with Venuti. Adhering to both meant having to change the name in the domesticizing translation, as it needed a name, in the form of a wordplay, that circumvents Dutch censorship, and is more readily understood, thus fulfilling the taboo requirement (Magdiragdag is the name used in the official translation of Hitchhiker's). English curse words would likely be censored out as well, but are less likely to be fully understood by a broad target culture audience.

The two scripts opposed in the second instance of humour are 'well-known sport' and 'alien planet/race', the Logical Mechanism is referential ambiguity (is it the sport or the race?), it has no clear Target or Situation (it is difficult to pinpoint a situation on humour instances repeated throughout a novel), and the Narrative Strategy is wordplay. The corresponding joke typologies are: wordplay, and restriction by audience profile traits (knowledge of cricket and the position it occupies within society). As with the previous instance of humour, the foreignizing translation is identical. The domesticizing translation, on the other hand, deviates massively, as far as the plot is concerned (both the stylistic analysis and the annotations explain the reasoning behind this). Structurally though, both translations are essentially the same as the ST.

The third instance of humour, the series of comments on Paul McCartney, opposes a 'writing a song' and a 'making absurd amounts of money' script, the Logical Mechanism is 'exaggeration', the situation is 'observing the people of Krikkit', the Target is Paul McCartney, and the Narrative Strategy is 'an aside in conversation'. The joke typology is restriction by audience profile traits. This is the first instance of humour longer than a single word, adding another layer of complexity, as the translation needs to fit the narrative whilst retaining the instance of humour, if possible. Here, the foreignizing translation is not a direct copy, though it

only differs on the Language parameter, and still strives to be as similar there as possible. The domesticizing translation differs on the Language as well as the Target parameter, again, to make it more accessible to a broad Dutch audience.

After three instances of humour a trend is starting to develop: differences between foreignizing translation and domesticizing translation exist only in the lower part of the hierarchy, Language and Target. This trend, when glossing over the other instance of humour, continues on through to the end, which raises the question: if both translations are so similar, then what is the point of using ‘sameness’ as the criterion to judge them by? and is ‘sameness’ even the best criterion to judge them by? As a follow up, if ‘sameness’ proves to be insufficient, how can these translations be judged instead? Despite there being only minor differences, on the level of humour, between both translations, the foreignizing translation is still closer to the ST. This fact alone would make it the better translation according to Attardo, who values ‘sameness’ above all else. This would, however, be a far too simple answer. Ignoring the inevitable differences on the Language level, the differences on the Target level are the key to determining the superior translation. All the jokes that differ on the Target level also carry the joke typology of being restricted by audience profile traits, specifically the knowledge of what role certain concepts take within one’s own culture. Now, the worst kind of joke is one that is not understood, no matter the quality of the joke, it will never produce a laugh. When looking at both translations with this in mind, the balance shifts in favour of the domesticizing translation, Since the foreignizing translation retained the targets from the ST, targets interwoven into British culture, it is likely to have its jokes be misunderstood, as the target audience exists within Dutch culture instead. The domesticizing translation on the other hand respects the joke typology, changing the targets of the jokes so they can be understood by a broad Dutch audience, giving the jokes a chance to be successful.

Not only does this mean that the degree to which a translation respects its joke typologies is a better way to determine the potential funniness of a translation, but also that humour is bound to culture. Culture is the soil in which the jokes can grow, plant a seed that does not correspond with the soil, and it will never grow, but plant a seed that does correspond, and it will grow to become a mighty joke-tree. Or not. Humour, at the end of the day, is still subjective, but a chance to be funny will always be better than a joke with no chance at all.

### **Conclusion**

The outset of this thesis was to determine the importance of retaining cultural aspects when translating a humoristic novel from English to Dutch, as well as dealing with the lack of research on humour in translation. It succeeded in doing the former, through shaping two translations with the help of Venuti, and subsequently analyzing them with the help of Attardo and Zabalbeascoa. This resulted in the answer that cultural retention is important to the potential success of humour instances, in the sense that the source culture should be replaced by the target culture. For the latter however, it only succeeded partially. Whilst the lacking amount of research was explained through Vandaele, this thesis on its own is not enough to remedy the problem. But perhaps it is sufficient for this thesis to be added to the growing pile of maps available to the translator sailing the ocean of humour in translation, so that maybe someday the ocean will be mapped in its entirety, and humour will no longer be a problem when translating.

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## Appendix A

Original text from *Life, the Universe and Everything*

‘Shhh,’ said Slartibartfast<sup>77</sup>. ‘Listen and watch.’

Night had now fallen on ancient Krikkit<sup>78</sup>. The sky was dark and empty. The only light was coming from the nearby town, from which pleasant convivial sounds were drifting quietly on the breeze. They stood beneath a tree from which heady fragrances wafted around them. Arthur squatted and felt the Informational Illusion of the soil and the grass. He ran it through his fingers. The soil seemed heavy and rich, the grass strong. It was hard to avoid the impression that this was a thoroughly delightful place in all respects.

The sky was, however, extremely blank and seemed to Arthur to cast a certain chill over the otherwise idyllic, if currently invisible, landscape. Still, he supposed, it’s a question of what you’re used to.

He felt a tap on his shoulder and looked up. Slartibartfast was quietly directing his attention to something down the other side of the hill. He looked and could just see some faint lights dancing and waving, and moving slowly in their direction.

As they came nearer, sounds became audible too, and soon the dim lights and noises resolved themselves into a small group of people who were walking home across the hill towards the town.

They walked quite near the watchers beneath the tree, swinging lanterns which made soft and crazy lights dance among the trees and grass, chattering contentedly, and actually singing a song about how terribly nice everything was, how happy they were, how much they enjoyed working on the farm, and how pleasant it was to be going home to see their wives and children, with a lilting chorus to the effect that the flowers were smelling particularly nice at this time of year and that it was a pity the dog had died seeing as it liked them so much. Arthur could almost imagine Paul McCartney sitting with his feet up by the fire one evening, humming it to Linda and wondering what to buy with the proceeds, and thinking probably Essex.<sup>79</sup>

‘The Masters of Krikkit,’ breathed Slartibartfast in sepulchral tones.<sup>80</sup>

Coming, as it did, so hard upon the heels of his own thoughts about Essex this remark caused Arthur a moment’s confusion. Then the logic of the situation imposed itself on his scattered mind, and he discovered that he still didn’t understand what the old man meant.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> ‘Slartibartfast’: First joke

<sup>78</sup> ‘Krikkit’: Second joke

<sup>79</sup> ‘Arthur could... probably Essex’: Part of third joke

<sup>80</sup> ‘Breathed Slartibartfast... sepulchral tones’: Part of fourth joke

‘What?’ he said.

‘The Masters of Krikkit,’ said Slartibartfast again, and if his breathing had been sepulchral before, this time he sounded like someone in Hades with bronchitis.<sup>82</sup>

Arthur peered at the group and tried to make sense of what little information he had at his disposal at this point.

The people in the group were clearly alien, if only because they seemed a little tall, thin, angular and almost as pale as to be white, but otherwise they appeared remarkably pleasant; a little whimsical perhaps, one wouldn’t necessarily want to spend a long coach journey with them, but the point was that if they deviated in any way from being good straightforward people it was in being perhaps too nice rather than not nice enough.<sup>83</sup> So why all this rasping lungwork from Slartibartfast which would seem more appropriate to a radio commercial from one of those nasty films about chainsaw operators taking their work home with them?<sup>84</sup>

Then, this Krikkit angle was a tough one, too. He hadn’t quite fathomed the connection between what he knew as cricket, and what...

Slartibartfast interrupted his train of thought at this point as if sensing what was going through his mind.

‘The game you know as cricket,’ he said, and his voice still seemed to be wandering lost in subterranean passages<sup>85</sup>, ‘is just one of those curious freaks of racial memory which can keep images alive in the mind aeons after their true significance has been lost in the mists of time. Of all the races in the Galaxy, only the English could possibly revive the memory of the most horrific wars ever to sunder the Universe and transform it into what I’m afraid is generally regarded as an incomprehensibly dull and pointless game.’<sup>86</sup>

‘Rather fond of it myself,’ he added, ‘but in most people’s eyes you have been inadvertently guilty of the most grotesquely bad taste. Particularly the bit about the little red ball hitting the wicket, that’s very nasty.’<sup>87</sup>

‘Um,’ said Arthur with a reflective frown to indicate that his cognitive synapses were coping with this as best they could, ‘um.’

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<sup>81</sup> ‘Coming, as... man meant’: Fifth joke

<sup>82</sup> ‘The Masters... with bronchitis’: Sixth joke

<sup>83</sup> ‘The people... nice enough’: Seventh joke

<sup>84</sup> ‘So why... with them’: Part of fourth joke

<sup>85</sup> ‘The game... subterranean passages’: part of fourth joke

<sup>86</sup> ‘is just... pointless game’: Part of eighth joke

<sup>87</sup> ‘Rather fond... very nasty’: Part of eighth joke

‘And these,’ said Slartibartfast, slipping back into crypt guttural<sup>88</sup> and indicating the group of Krikkit men who had now walked past them, ‘are the ones who started it all, and it will start tonight. Come, we will follow, and see why.’

They slipped out from underneath the tree, and followed the cheery party along the dark hill path. Their natural instinct was to tread quietly and stealthily in pursuit of their quarry, though, as they were simply walking through a recorded Informational Illusion, they could as easily have been wearing euphoniums and woad for all the notice their quarry would have taken of them.<sup>89</sup>

Arthur noticed that a couple of members of the party were now singing a different song. It came lilting back to them through the soft night air, and was a sweet romantic ballad which would have netted McCartney Kent and Sussex and enabled him to put in a fair offer for Hampshire.<sup>90</sup> (p. 75-78)

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<sup>88</sup> ‘And these... crypt guttural’: Part of fourth joke

<sup>89</sup> ‘They slipped... of them’: Ninth joke

<sup>90</sup> ‘Arthur noticed... for Hampshire’: Part of third joke