

The Boundaries of Imagination

Important aspects of fantasy translation



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Introduction

The literary genre of fantasy is not new, but in the thousands of years of literature, the concept of fantasy literature is relatively long; it has been around for at about a century in its modern definition, since the publication of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. Though at that time it may not yet have been called such, it is said by some today that Tolkien was the father of all modern fantasy, though names such as Edith Nesbit and Lewis Carroll are also mentioned in that role (Nikolajeva, 139). Some might say the genre is older than just a century, having been present since the arrival of the Gothic novel, the fairytales of medieval times or the mythology of the old world, the Greek, Irish, or Scandinavian folk tales. Most of these examples certainly tick the boxes of what are today considered to be hallmarks of a fantasy novel, but mostly because they were the greatest source of inspiration for the eclectic genre that is fantasy (Nikolajeva, 139). Magic, powerful gods, strange creatures, other worlds even, all are tropes to be found in those traditional tales as well as our modern fantasy. Fantasy is part of man, as old as the world itself perhaps, but its current written form, the modern fantasy genre, has only gained in popularity in the last sixty years.

The novels that have been written since Tolkien first wrote about that hobbit that lived in a hole in the ground are numerous, and especially in the last twenty years more and more fantasy authors have come out of the woodworks. And of these many authors, only a handful has written their novels for children; the main target audience of the largest contributors to the genre are (young) adults. It is strange then, that in modern translation studies, adult fantasy translation seems to be a suppositious child. Scrolling through any translation studies database with the 'fantasy' keyword in the search machine will give up pages and pages of articles and books about translating children's literature and the role of fantasy in them, but next to nothing about translating fantasy for adults, even though those novels come with their own set of problems. They can be thrillers, spy mysteries or might fall into many other genres; dramatic stories set in a completely different world and often very graphic in content, with violence and sexuality. Sometimes such a world serves only as

a new framework in which to tell the tale, but more often than not the world itself is an intricate part of the plot, the field for great feats of magic, political intrigue or titanic power struggles which would not fit into our own world. And with these worlds come new, unknown parameters within which the translator must stay, and they are far stricter parameters than in fantasy children's literature. For children, the main purpose of a fantasy tale is to amuse, and a secondary purpose might be to teach. However, fantasy novels with an adult audience are often created to cast a critical eye on a specific source culture, historic events or human behaviour (Loponen, 165). To keep these allusions or metaphors recognisable for the target audience, the translator must be aware of the framework in which the novel was written. For if the parameters are not kept, and the world is not believably translated within the framework the author imagined for it, then the adult fantasy reader could fail to recognise the underlying intention of the author and the novel might lose its momentum.

Then why has the translation of adult fantasy been so ignored in the translation studies? The answer might be found in the way literary scientists view the genre; it is not considered 'proper' literature and therefore not worthy of such attention. That attitude is certainly misplaced, however. A fantasy author is not any less of an author than any other, or any less read. As mentioned above, they often handle the same subjects as those acclaimed literary authors, only against the backdrop of an unknown world which gives them more freedom in writing, for they do not have to worry about the cultural parameters of our own world; they can create their own. For example, Terry Goodkind writes about how one type of people wishes to annihilate the other, to create the perfect human race in his *Sword of Truth* series. Philip Pullman investigates what the world would look like if the Church ruled it in his *His Dark Materials* trilogy, as well as playing with the many-worlds theory from quantum physics. He even goes as far as killing God in the last instalment, a scene that caused great outrage amongst the religious community. J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* may be one of the most undervalued literary works of the last century, considering its subject matter touches on many things, from an epic struggle between good and evil to the personal struggles of many of its

characters. However, titles of fantasy have rarely found their way into scholarly discussions, and it is not so strange then that in translation studies, the fantasy genre is also underrepresented.

This thesis will be an attempt to change this. It will investigate the challenges provided by translating contemporary fiction and fantasy fiction for adults, with a special focus on contemporary fantasy, and attempt to list the important aspects of a fantasy novel that a translator will have to take into account. The biggest challenge of any fantasy author is to keep the setting and story believable, logic and consistent, and to lead the reader into the stage of willing suspension of disbelief for full enjoyment of the story. The translator's challenge is to retain this feeling in the translation. It is the goal of this thesis to aid the fantasy translator into meeting this challenge by attempting to list the aspects of the novel to which the translator should pay attention from the outset. Its focus will be on the different parameters in contemporary fiction and fantasy fiction, the cultural differences in source and target language as well as the existing world versus the fantasy world, and the role a fantasy world may or may not play in the general plot of the novel. In reviewing the translation process of adult fantasy, the main focus will be on the fantasy setting, government and politics, and realia. These common aspects of a fantasy have been gathered by extensive reading of the genre and translating several excerpts from (contemporary) fantasy fiction. This thesis will strive to combine all findings to conclude which are the most important aspects to take into account while translating fantasy, with the hope that it will shed some light on this somewhat obscure corner of translation.

Chapter 1 – The Importance of the Setting

The literary genre of modern fantasy has been gaining strength, momentum and popularity among readers in the last twenty years and in Hollywood in the last ten. With the influx of fantasy novels, the translation of the genre has also taken flight. Nearly all novels mentioned in this thesis have been translated to Dutch and many other languages, and books like the *Harry Potter*-series by J.K. Rowling and the *Twilight*-series by Stephanie Meyer are immensely popular amongst a broad audience. Other popular writers that have been translated to Dutch are Raymond E. Feist, Robin Hobb, George R.R. Martin, Robert Jordan and J.R.R. Tolkien. While translating a fantasy novel, one of the first things the translator has to familiarize themselves with is the setting. This chapter will, using many original fantasy works as an example, discuss the importance of that element of the novel, as it is essentially that which denotes whether the novel is part of the fantasy genre or not. It will explain the characteristics of fantasy as well as discuss the different ways in which the setting can add to the story.

The commonplace characteristics of the genre are simple: a fantasy novel contains elements that are impossible in the realistic world. The most common occurrence of unrealism is the supernatural such as magic and gods who interact with the world, or creatures such as werewolves, vampires and elves (Clute, "Fantasy" 338). The story will most likely be set in a world other than our own, a fantasy world sprung from the imagination of the author, but that is the case in only part of the novels falling under the genre; for example the sub-genre of contemporary fantasy mixes fantasy with our own contemporary world (Clute and Kaveney, 225), while urban fantasy does the same, but in an urban setting (Clute, "Urban Fantasy" 975).

In most fantasy novels, the imagined setting is often based on our own world, with humans inhabiting it in a feudal world reminiscent of a (romanticised) medieval western Europe, as in Raymond E. Feist's Midkemia from the novel *Magician* or George R.R. Martin's Seven Kingdoms in his *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, or other historic cultures, such as feudal Japan in Feist's *Empire Trilogy*

or the Mongol-like Dothraki in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Sometimes the world is completely different from ours, such as the world of the mulefa - sentient animals whose four legs are set in a diamond fashion: one in the front and back, one to each side - in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. The world can be inhabited by only humans or have such fantasy creatures as elves, dwarves, orcs and goblins appear in it as well. The most important characteristic of the fantasy genre however is that it only describes the setting in which the novel is set. Within this fantasy setting, many types of stories can be told. Thrillers, murder mysteries, comedies, political intrigue, dramas, all can and have been set against a fantastical background, providing a wide variety of tastes for the reader of fantasy. The fantasy setting is therefore one of the most important aspects to take into account while translating a fantasy novel, as it is a unique backdrop to the story with both similarities and differences to known cultures and countries. The choice of a fantasy setting instead of the existing world is usually one of significance, and it is therefore paramount that the setting loses nothing in translation.

According to Josip Novakovich, author of the *Fiction Writer's Workshop*, the setting is a very important aspect of the novel as it answers two of the six questions – who, what, when, where, how and why – an author must answer for themselves before starting to write the novel. Whether this is a real or imagined setting makes little difference, as long as it is vivid and descriptive enough to be as complete a background for the story as possible (Novakovich, 27). A setting can have various functions, each of importance to the whole. It can function as the groundwork for the story, the starting point from which the rest, the characters and the plot, will sprout. This is most likely the case with every imagined setting; first the author creates the world (the setting), then he creates an image of the people inhabiting it (the characters) and finally he thinks about how these people interact with each other (the plot) (id. 28). The setting can also function as the antagonist (id. 30) or it can influence the plot simply by being there and being menacing, or deadly, or difficult to traverse. The antagonist can be the intense cold of the North Pole, or the intense heat of a desert, or the pathless

tracks of a deep dark forest. It can be a new and big city that seems hostile towards the protagonist, or a strange place full of mysteries that is dangerous to the ignorant. In Terry Goodkind's *Sword of Truth* series for example, there are several magical boundaries separating the different lands of the world. The starting point of the first novel is Westland, a magic-less medieval-like country that is peaceful and quiet but for the looming Boundary Mountains, which pose a danger to everyone who comes near. For those mountains are actually the Underworld, and its creatures might cross the boundary between life and death at night to snatch the unwary. It is an antagonistic piece of the setting, which sprouted characters such as the Boundary Wardens, the men responsible to keep everyone well clear from the hunting grounds of death's creatures. Further on in the series there is also a magical boundary between the north and the south of the continent, which drives all who go through it insane through visions and hallucinations of their worst fears and nightmares or their best hopes and wishes, drawing them in never to come out, unless the magic – a fickle power – 'decides' to let the person pass unscathed. In Pratchett's and Gaiman's *Good Omens* a part of the setting turns against its maker, in the excerpt shown in Appendix A, by becoming one of the biggest obstacles on his path. The demon Crowley designed the M25 around London to be a truly hellish highway, but because the Apocalypse is nigh and the world is going crazy, the road has turned exactly as he intended, hellish, so much so that even the demon would get in trouble if he were to cross it, even though he must to get to his goal, the Anti-Christ. The setting can be a powerful tool to motivate characters or signify important plot, but it can also be used to underline a character's mindset, for example by showing the setting through that character's eyes, and colouring it through the character's thoughts and words.

Without the proper background it could be difficult to make the plot and the characters alive, for they don't only interact with each other but of course also with their surroundings; in a fantasy setting, to make the characters and the plot believable and enjoyable, the setting has to be believable and consistent too. In a way, while the fantasy setting does not necessarily have to *be*

realistic, it has to *feel* realistic enough for the reader to believe it. The author must take special caution that his setting is logical and inherently functional, being a world upon itself and a holistic entity (Loponen, 166). Even if it is the most fantastical place ever imagined, if the reader does not sense any logic to it, he might give it up as a bad job. The translator must pay heed to this, for if the novel loses its sense of feigned realism in the translation, the characters and plot could suffer from it; mistakes in character-setting interaction could be breaking the suspension of disbelief which, as Nikolajeva describes, is the willingness of the reader to accept that which it reads as ‘true’ for the purpose of the story (Nikolajeva, 152).

The contemporary world, the earth in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, is the setting in most novels written these past two decades. The advantage of a contemporary setting is that “you will be rooted; you will draw new inspirations out of the houses and streets” (Novakovich, 27). The advantage of an imagined setting as an author is that there are no boundaries to take into account, but complete freedom in what things will be and look like. However, either contemporary or imaginative, Novakovich underlines the importance of a well-written and vivid background. He states that “without a strong sense of place, it’s hard to achieve suspense and excitement – which depend on the reader’s sensation of being right there, where the action takes place” (id. 26). In short, the reader must be able to go into a willing suspense of disbelief and see the story in his mind’s eye, against a detailed background. This is very important for the translator to keep in mind; if the translation fails to attain the same standard of description, if it is not expressed as good in translation as it is in the source language, then the story loses momentum, for the background frames the characters and the plot, and without a good idea of the background, important aspects of the characters and plot might be lost.

There are several things in translating background descriptions that are the same in both contemporary and fantasy settings. With a contemporary setting, it is often a place the author is very familiar with, while the translator generally is not, having not visited every small town in America, for

example. Sometimes, if the setting is a famous or a very big place, it may be that the translator has experienced some of it through television or a visit, but more often than not it is a place grounded in the author's mind and strange to the translator's mind. To try to reconstruct an unknown image from the source language to the target language is possible, but the translation will most likely be coloured by the translator's own subjective view of that image if he or she is unfamiliar with it, as Jiri Levý describes in his essay "Translation as a Decision Process." Whenever the translator needs to make a choice between one or more possible translations, then he will (hopefully) choose with the author's wishes and background in mind, but the final choice will be influenced by his own background and ideas. Once the choice is made, all future choice will go along a similar path with the intent to keep the text cohesive (Levý, 136).

The same can be said for a fantasy setting. The author of a fantasy novel generally has a good idea of the world he's writing and will have notes and maps about the important places and aspects to keep all the facts straight to create the image in his head. The translator only has the information provided in the novel itself to go on. Novakovich's statement that a setting should be vivid is especially true for an imagined setting, where the reader does not have many handholds of reality to fall back on if the setting description falls short of complete. In translating both settings the translator is bound to the parameters provided by the author, but in a contemporary setting the translator is also bound by the parameters of the real world and cannot go beyond them. In a fantasy setting however, those parameters may give a little more leeway, for they are unknown and uncertain and it is not likely to be noticed by many if the translator strays a little from the path to embellish a point or a place, to make it feel more alive, especially if the author does not give all the information in the novel itself but keeps some things at hand to reveal at a later date. For example, in Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, it is not completely clear how the seasons work; they are not as the seasons in the real world, each lasting about three months of the year in a set cycle that keeps repeating itself. In Westeros, the setting for the series, the seasons are controlled by something

magical that as of yet has not been revealed. At the start of the first novel, *Game of Thrones*, what the characters call 'the long summer' is just starting to turn into fall, and that summer lasted nine years. In the world's past there has been a winter that lasted for decades (called 'the Long Night') and throughout the novel the characters speak of such things as 'the year of false spring' and how sometimes autumn lasted only a little while before turning into winter.

A difference between a contemporary and a fantasy setting is the presence of magic and the supernatural in the latter. The presence of magic can be volatile, especially if the author is not careful to keep it logical and reasonable. In novels where magic is present in abundance, there is the danger of the setting or the plot becoming unbalanced. Some authors may want to give their protagonists the best tools to defeat their enemies, and then have to think of something even bigger and worse to give his characters something to fight in the next novel. Goodkind's series are a good example of such, where in each novel the antagonists are trying to achieve the end of the world or the destruction of all the protagonist holds dear by even bigger means. It is difficult to keep a world consistent in that way, which makes it more difficult for the translator to keep track of it all as well. Especially if the story extends over several different novels it is probably best to keep it all with one translator, for they already have their own notes and thoughts about the setting, which helps to keep things consistent in the translation. Again however, if there is use of magic in the novel, it has to feel believable, consistent and logic to the reader and that sense must be retained in translation. As the author has to make sure his setting is inherently logical and functional, so does the translator with the translation. A magical fire blast should not 'destroy' in one scene and 'devour' in the next if it is the same spell, for destroying and devouring are words with two different outcomes.

Translating occurrences of magic could be as difficult as walking a tight rope, especially if the magic forms itself around a prophecy. Prophecies are oft-used plot devices in fantastical settings, often a magical incentive to go one way or the other, and the so-called self-fulfilling prophecy a la Oedipus is a common occurrence. When a prophecy is mentioned, they always come true later on in

the story (Bell and Langford, 789). Translating prophecies is extremely difficult, for they are often layered with hidden meanings, and finding all the right words to convey those hidden meanings might take hours. Since sometimes the eventual outcome of the prophecy might not even be in the same novel, the translator might have to rely on guesswork to finish such a fickle occurrence of magic, only to discover later that his interpretation was wrong. Communication with the author would help in such a situation, but this is not always possible. Such occurrences in an imagined setting only help to underwrite the importance of having as complete an understanding of the setting as possible when translating it.

The last difference between a contemporary and fantasy setting is the amount of knowledge residing with the readers that the translator has to take into account. With a contemporary setting the translator can rely on some general knowledge present in the target audience and can use that in his translation. With a fantasy setting, he cannot rely on this, and also sometimes the author may decide to go off the beaten path of what's common fantasy knowledge in an attempt to be more original than the others. This is for example the case in Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series, in which the vampires, commonly accepted as pale humanlike creatures that can only walk at night, drink human blood to survive and wither and die when faced with the sun, can walk the earth by day, sustain themselves with animal blood and sparkle in direct sunlight, a controversial change in vampire methodology. In Jim Butcher's *Fool Moon*, the common werewolf is divided into five different categories: the voluntary werewolf, the involuntary werewolf, the Hexenwolf, the lycanthrope and the loup-garou. The author uses several foreign terms denoting werewolf and gives each different traits to recognize them by. None of them are able to infect other people with the disease through biting them – it's actually not a disease, according to Butcher, but a magic spell, an inbred ability or a curse – and only one of them, the loup-garou, is impervious to all weaponry except silver, and then it has to be inherited silver. The other categories can be killed with normal weaponry. This clashes with the knowledge and expectations most people have when starting to read such a

novel, and if the author has managed to believably sell his new take on werewolves, it is up to the translator to live up to that, also by keeping each category of werewolf distinct and true to its description throughout the novel. The same is true for all other supernatural beings. When writing about Elves, Dwarves or Orcs, most people will link them in their minds to the Elves, Dwarves and Orcs in the forerunner of modern-day fantasy, *The Lord of the Rings*, but most authors attempt to make their portrayal of the race quite different from their forerunners. George R.R. Martin called his 'elves' the Children of the Forest, made them smaller, rather unwarlike and most of all old spirits of nature, long dead (or so it is said) but not forgotten. His dwarves are not the fantasy type dwarves but the real world type dwarves, physically handicapped beings who were born stunted and have to make their way in a world which is extremely hostile to anyone different from the norm. And Stan Nicholls with his *Orcs: First Blood* series portrays a group of orcs not as the senseless murdering beings of Tolkien but as rounded characters suffering a slave collar, with likes, dislikes, fears, hopes and likeable character traits, while also retaining the more barbarous character traits like bloodlust and aggression.

In short, whilst comparing a contemporary setting with a fantasy setting there are many differences but also quite a few similarities to take into account. Both have characteristics which might make it more challenging for the translator to find the right tone in which to translate the novel, and both need to be thoroughly researched and read to create a believable and realistic setting in translation. When translating a contemporary setting the real world parameters are clear borders within which a translator must stay, while with a fantasy setting those borders are less clearly drawn and to help the translation along the translator might cross those uncertain parameters in an attempt to keep the setting grounded in logic. Without the strong sense of scene and display of (feigned) realism and functionality, a setting might not be able to support the rest of the novel (Loponen, 166). Keeping as close to the source text while translating a contemporary or a fantasy setting is important in both cases, and more so when the novel is of the sub-genre of

contemporary fantasy, when both characteristics are blended into one to create a world half grounded in realism and half in feigned realism. To understand the inherent rules of the setting is important for both reader and translator.

Chapter 2 – Aspects of Culture

As discussed in chapter one, the setting is considered the basis of a novel. However, the sum makes the parts, and the setting is more than just the lay of the land and the existence of strange supernatural creatures and/or magic. The culture or cultures in which the story takes place are an important element of the setting, as it is that which comprises the rules of interaction between the characters and the environment. For example, in a culture where no magic is known, the sudden introduction of it would yield from its characters quite different reactions than from their counterparts who were raised in a magical environment. The culture in which the protagonist grew up will have great effect on his actions and decisions, and his interaction with his surroundings is based upon that background which has shaped him or her. Authors often use cultural differences to initiate interesting scenes of inter-culture interaction when the protagonist first encounters something new, a plot device used by fantasy authors such as Raymond E. Feist, Terry Goodkind, George R.R. Martin and many others. The origin of the cultures described in fantasy novels can be very different, as will be described in the sub-chapter below. This chapter will also discuss some specific cultural elements, namely the form of government used in the fantasy world and the cultural realia that are part of the imagined reality and therefore have no basis in reality for translation.

The four categories of fantasy cultures

It is commonly accepted that the translator has to take the cultural differences between source and target culture into account while translating a novel, which Nord defines as the culture-specific translation problems that appear because of differences between norms and conventions of both cultures (Nord, 237). In novels set in a contemporary setting, this is a common occurrence that can be solved by researching these differences in realia in relation to the problem at hand, and then choosing one of seven translation strategies as defined by Grit: retention, calque, approximation, description or definition, core translation, adaption, omission or a combination of two or more

strategies, based on whether the connotation or denotation is important for the target audience and what would be the best way to relate that connotation or denotation (Grit, 281-284). This strategy can also be applied to novels in a fantasy setting, but a fantasy translator might be confronted with more than just one strange culture in such a novel. Fantasy settings may be based in or on real world cultures to a bigger or lesser extent, may be a mix of several cultures both old and new, may be a mix between existing cultures and original elements or may be a completely original world with no notable connection to any country, historical setting or culture to help the author in translating the pages. Below I will attempt to define these categories of fantasy cultures based on personal observation and reading.

1. The historical setting

The first one is the historical setting, in which the fantasy setting is based on an existing historical culture with added elements of fantasy, such as magic or elves. The most common historical culture used is that of medieval Western Europe, with its feudal system of nobility, clergy and commoners, sometimes with the addition of the middle class if it is a late medieval historical setting. An example of that is The Kingdom of the Isles in Feist's *Riftwar Cycle* - consisting out of dozens of books, the first being *Magician* - in which lesser nobility owes fealty to their betters and all are owed fealty to the King. The clergy (of a polytheistic pantheon) is not as powerful as it was in medieval Europe but they had influence and power, some churches more than others, and the middle class and commoners have their place as well. A similar system exists in Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series in the kingdom of Westeros. The advantages of this are that a lot of realia, like titles, are the same as in real history. Squires remain squires, dukes remain dukes – though in Westeros there are only kings and queens, princes, lords, knights and squires, with lesser lords having no specifically lesser title – and the translations therefore already exist in most target languages that have had a similar historical feudal culture. Small things may be changed - like that knights in

Westeros are called 'Ser' and not 'Sir' – but overall, if the translator searches for knowledge about the historic culture it will be of help in translating the fantasy setting. If the historic culture that a fantasy culture is based on is somewhat more obscure or unknown, such as Martin's Dothraki being based on Mongol horse lords of which most European translators have little knowledge, it may require more of an effort to get a clear outline of the culture, but then the translator still has some handholds in historic fact.

In the case of a fantasy culture based on a well known historic culture, the audience will most likely recognise the source of the culture and deviations from historic fact might be more obvious to the reader. If that is the intention of the author then it will most likely be apparent from the original text, though the translator must take care to remain consistent with the changes. With more obscure cultures, there might be a little more leeway in translation, for most readers simply accept what they have been given for the sake of willing suspension of disbelief and will not look up the minor details.

2. The eclectic historical setting

The second is a fantasy setting that is a mix of several historical cultures. Such a setting might make it more confusing for the translator, especially if he is not acquainted with some cultures and will therefore not recognise it as such, the danger then being that the translator then assumes there are original fantasy elements and translates accordingly. Often when a fantasy author mixes cultures he takes two or more that lie relatively close together, but he might also try to merge two completely different historic cultures to make his own a more complex one. More often than not one fantasy world has different countries and/or continents that each has their own (mix of) cultures, just like each country in our world has different cultural denominators. An example of a setting based on more than one culture is the great Empire of Kesh in the *Riftwar Cycle*, which is a blend of many African cultures, reminiscent of what would have happened if the ancient Egyptians would have conquered nearly the entire continent. The culture of the ruling people of the Empire, the Keshians

or 'Trueblood', is based on Ancient Egypt – down to their gods having animal heads and aspects – with the Emperor or Empress being both temporal and divine ruler of the land. Their subjects range from sophisticated Arab-like desert people to barbaric-seeming tribesmen from the more backwater regions. The odd ones out seem the Shing Lai people, which are more reminiscent of an Asian culture, though the reference to that culture is too brief and superficial to define its source. Kesh is an Empire containing many conquered lands, and each new conquest has added new elements to its general culture, since the cultures influence each other, that makes the whole a little daunting and confusing, and challenging to translate if the translator is unfamiliar with the many cultures being introduced in for example Feist's *Prince of the Blood*, in which the protagonist travels from the outskirts of the Empire to its capital and meets many of the different inhabitants on the way. Each subject of Kesh has values that are strange and values that are common to all subjects, like how the Trueblood rulers are being treated.

Translating such a mix of cultures might be challenging because the realia might clash, with several different characters using different words to denote the same thing, or the different way in which one people for example treat women, and how people from another cultural background respond to such. A telling scene in *Prince of the Blood* is one where the Ashuntai, who treat their women like slaves and cattle, clash with the Brijaners, who are raised in a matriarchal society and think all women are holy. These blatant differences between cultures can cause friction between characters and is therefore a common plot device. Keeping the many cultures straight could be a challenge, especially if there might a lack of consistency or logic within the novel itself, with the extra work of investigating the more unknown historical cultures the author uses in his setting. If the author himself has not properly researched the cultures he is basing his fantasy setting on then inconsistencies within the novel or deviation from (historic) fact might occur as well.

3. The part historical, part original setting.

The third category is fantasy settings that part existing historic culture(s), part original setting, and one of the most common occurrences of a fantasy setting. Often the author borrows from known cultures and embellishes upon it through their own imagination to create something relatively new. In such a novel, the translator has to investigate both the set parameters from the known culture and the new, unknown parameters from the original content. Most often the author has already worked at blending both together into a believable setting, and then all the translator has to do is retain that status quo. This seems easy, but might be more of a challenge if the existing culture is unknown to the translator, so that he might not be able to successfully differentiate between what is borrowed and what is original.

A example for this would be the world Kelewan in Raymond E. Feist and Janny Wurts's *Empire Trilogy*. The main culture in these novels is that of the Tsurani and the empire of Tsuranuanni. The Tsurani culture is Asian in origin, based mainly on feudal Japan and in lesser extent on old Korean cultural aspects. Tsuranuanni is ruled by the Emperor, who like in feudal Japan is more of a ceremonial and religious figurehead than an actual ruler. The land is ruled by the High Council, the congregation of all Ruling Lords and Ladies (akin to a Japanese daimyo) that each rules their own estate like it is a small kingdom. The Ruling Families quarrel, through politics and through warfare, and the military aspects of the empire are under the care of the Warlord (akin to the Japanese shogun), the semi-democratically chosen leader of the High Council. Their culture is based on the concept of honour as it was in feudal Japan, where following the Way of the Warrior (Bushido), fighting prowess and prowess in advancement of one's house can gain a Family or a person honour, and shame and defeat can lose them honour, up to the point where honour might be regained through ritual suicide, the ritual of seppuku or hari-kiri in feudal Japan. They also believe in the Buddhist way of Samsara, or the cycle of suffering and rebirth in which one must lead an exemplary life according to the station – layer of the hierarchy – they were born in, in order to attain a higher

station in the next life and finally achieve Nirvana. The possibility of falling in station – for example through loss of honour in their previous life – is also present and feared by the characters. None of the terms we know from feudal Japan are explicitly named in the novels, having been anglicised or substituted with a new, imagined term. but it is very clear where the basics of Tsurani culture lie.

There are several original additions however. One is the natami, the family stone which is considered the mainstay of a house and family. The natami is the most important reliquary to a ruling house, for their honour and existence is bound within it. It is also seen as the place to which the spirits of the ancestors return upon their death, to watch over their house. If a natami was taken from the ruling family, their line and power ceased to exist even if many family members were still living, for without the natami there could be no house, and any remaining family members would most likely either die trying to get it back or commit ritual suicide in shame. Such a relic did not exist in the feudal Japanese culture, and has most likely been added by the author as a physical representation of a house's honour, life and line. However, for one unfamiliar with Japanese culture it might not be entirely clear that the natami is an original addition to the culture. While in this case it has little consequence for translating the novel, it might not always be so. The second original aspect is that the Tsurani believe in a polytheistic pantheon which might directly intercede with the world of mortals if they so desired. The magic of the gods could have effect on Tsurani life. This in itself should cause no translation problems, as it is a clear enough deviation from the existing culture to prevent any confusion on the matter. The third addition is the magicians called the Great Ones. They are viewed as people outside the Law and the defenders of Tsurani culture and tradition, capable of doing whatever it takes to make sure the stability and safety of the Empire is upheld. They are in that way a rogue group that can act in unexpected ways, and the position they take in Tsurani culture is therefore unique. They are feared and hated, and properly translating the way the rest of the Tsurani view and treat them might be a challenging task in some cases.

There is usually a balance between the existing and original cultural elements as merged by the author, and it is something the translator must understand and be aware of while translating such a novel. Awkwardly translating certain realia or nomenclatures, such as the honorific “Great One” for the magicians in *Tsuranuanni*, which contains several layers of meaning, might lessen the impact of the original additions therefore could fail to convey the importance of such things to the reader, which could lead to a lesser experience of the intricacies of the novel. Especially in such a politically-oriented series as the *Empire Trilogy*, where every action and spoken word is only part of a very intricate political web of intrigue, misunderstandings in translation could seriously affect the way the reader perceives the story.

4. The original setting

The fourth category is that of a nearly completely original setting and/or culture. While a completely original setting with no basis in any historical fact is something that has yet to occur in a fantasy novel, an original culture as part of the setting, while rare, has been written. This means that the translator is facing unknown parameters when translating realia in this culture. Especially if the original culture is introduced early in a series of novels in the same setting, these unknown parameters can cause pitfalls when translating the sequels. Seemingly unimportant cultural references could prove to be very important ones later on, and since the translator has no insight in what the author intends, mistakes could be made in translating them. When faced with unfamiliar cultural realia, the only available source to check them against is the author of the novel, and it is not always possible to confer with the author on such things. Caution is therefore necessary in translating the unknown, keeping as close to the original meaning as possible, and even then the perceived meaning of the translator might differ of that of the author, or perhaps miss a second layer that is to become important later.

An example of original cultures in which such translational mishaps may occur is the Cho-ja in Feist and Wurts's *Empire Trilogy*. The Cho-ja are not humans or humanoids but insects, bugs reminiscent of ants, living in hives that resemble giant ant hills. Their biological details are like ants, with a queen overseeing the affairs of the hive, breeding whichever type of Cho-ja is needed, but they are not animals but sentient beings, and their cultural norms and values are entirely different from their human counterparts, a fact which becomes increasingly important throughout the trilogy. Only the Queen, the officers of the soldiers and select workers are truly sentient, and the Queen is the one person who controls what happens in the hive. The novelty of the race, however, is that they seem devoid of human concepts like honour or shame. As the protagonist of the trilogy, Mara of the Acoma, learns early on, the Cho-ja queens care little for such things and are like a race of merchants; they barter for the lives of their underlings in the hive as much as they would barter for goods. This seems strange, until in the final part of the trilogy it is revealed that most of their culture is being repressed by the Tsurani through ancient treaties, and that outside the borders of the Empire they express much more individuality, for example by showing a wide variety of colours on their carapaces as opposed to the Empire Cho-ja, which are all black. This contrast is a marked one, and mishaps in translating the Cho-ja's cultural oddities in the first two instalments might be cause difficulties for the translator in the last instalment. Most of those oddities in the Cho-ja culture are born out of necessity to survive in – in their eyes – hostile country and are therefore quite strange, especially opposed to the cultural norms and values displayed by the free Cho-ja or those of the Tsurani. If this concept loses in translation, then the impact of the third novel loses as well.

Another strange and original culture in fantasy novels is that of the Drow in R.A. Salvatore's *Forgotten Realms* novels. The Drow are a race of dark elves, black of skin and white-haired, who have a matriarchal society that is only distantly reminiscent of the Greek Amazons. They are also a society that is inherently evil, following a dark spider goddess whose goal it is to enslave the world in darkness and using her priestesses – the leaders of the Drow – to make that come to pass. The leader

of a Drow clan is called the Matron, and her word is law; she is also a High Priestess of Lloth, their goddess. Only women may be priestesses of Lloth, and only men may practice magic. Their rigid hierarchy, with human slaves on the bottom of the pyramid, is not such a strange concept, but the way the author has built a culture around it is. Such a strong, inherently evil matriarchal culture has never existed in our world, and though some elements may be borrowed from or reminiscent of existing cultures, the end result can be called original.

Each category comes with its own set of challenges for the translator to deal with. Especially if the used (historical) cultures are unknown to the translator, translating the realia correctly might require more effort on the part of the translator, to be able to transfer all layers of meaning to the target language. And often heard peeve of fantasy readers about translations is that translators do not seem to take the extra trouble to investigate the origins of a fantasy culture or take notes on how the realia were translated, resulting in the same thing being translated in two different ways. While this lack of thorough investigation is not only practiced by fantasy translators, it may be especially jarring if the mistranslations jar the credibility of a culture, especially if it happens in the original additions. Uncertainty about meaning in an existing culture can be looked up by the reader if so inclined, but with an original setting this is not the case, leaving the reader to guess at what might be an important aspect of life in that setting.

Government in fantasy settings

Cultural norms, values, habits, customs and history are not the only things which help differentiate between different fantasy settings. The form of government used by the author is also quite telling to what sort of story he is trying to tell. The most common form of government used in fantasy settings is the monarchy, with kings, queens and noblemen either vying for each other's powers or kingdoms or working together to face a common enemy; sometimes both. A monarchy is

simple in form and easiest to associate with a fantasy setting, especially if it is set in a western European medieval background. Monarchies, princes and princesses are most associated with the past and with fairytales, and are therefore often deemed a fitting form of government in any form of fantasy setting. A constitutional or elective monarchy on the other hand is less common; an absolute and hereditary monarchy is the mainly used form, most likely because politics – except court intrigue – are not often part of the main plotlines in fantasy novels and it is therefore easier to create as few political structures as possible so that one will not have to take such things into account while writing towards a great plot twist. Most fantasy novels, if it has multiple cultures and countries in its setting, have at least one country in which absolute monarchy is the form of government.

The other popular choice for fantasy authors is fascism, often with the accompanying plot of the evil dictator that has to be defeated in order to win freedom for all the land. In most fantasy settings implementing a fascist government, the country and its leader or military leaders – in which case it is a military dictatorship - are painstakingly described as the antagonist, trying to conquer and rule over the free people or the happy kingdom, and the protagonist of the story is exactly the one to put a stop to the antagonist's plans. Whereas a dictator is not inherently evil, since the word simply implies being an absolute sovereign without a hereditary title, modern history has only known dictators who eventually became mass-murderers and that connotation with the word and the form of government has resonated in the fantasy genre.

The third most popular form of government in a fantasy setting is that of a theocracy. While uncommon in our own world, in a fantasy world with magic and endless possibilities concerning gods it offers many possibilities to play with as an author. In a fantasy world, a god or gods can take an active interest in the world, and their cult or religious order could have more power to take control of the land with more than just physical power. A theocracy is a way of experimenting with religion, or even satirizing or demonizing modern religion like in Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights*, in which the

Christian Church on a parallel earth is controlling most aspects of life in such a way that causes one of its underlings to attempt to find a way to destroy all religion by killing God.

Often a fantasy setting does not have just one form of government. A prime example of different lands with different governmental institutions is the *Sword of Truth* series by Terry Goodkind. The story starts in the Westland, a republic with the leader being chosen by popular vote. The protagonists then travel towards the Midlands, which is actually many little kingdoms together of which delegates from each country form a high council of the Midlands with a ceremonial monarch at its head, making it akin to a constitutional monarchy. The Midlands are threatened by D'Hara, an autocratic state with Lord Rahl at its head; though the title of Lord Rahl is hereditary, it is not given to the firstborn son but to the only son that shows magical abilities, since Lord Rahl has to be someone with the 'Gift', the ability to do magic. Together these lands comprise the New World. In the meantime, in the Old World, a communist state has evolved under the leadership of someone who calls himself Emperor Jagang but who preaches the communist belief of equal opportunity for all. If it is the case that more forms of government are present in the same fantasy setting, most often it means that they are at some point warring with each other to gain superiority over the other. It seems strange that even though monarchies, feudal systems and theocracies seem in abundance in fantasy novels, the modern concepts of democracy are rarely used.

Setting a story against a fantasy background is a way for authors to experiment with concepts which are not readily available in the real world. Those that prefer to be grounded in reality will write contemporary fantasy, borrowing existing modern cultures and giving it an added layer of the supernatural. A fantasy author often experiments with ideas about social, cultural, governmental or economical structures, with the purpose of being satirical, informative, philosophical or parodical, and might have more possibilities of experimentation in a world of feigned realism where he is not hampered by fact (Nikolajeva, 139). A fantasy novel could be simply entertaining or highly critical of certain social or political structures. If the purpose is to be critical, the translator has the task to

thoroughly research and understand the choice of government and/or culture of the author, in order to translate the intent as well as the literal text.

Translating fantasy names and (ir)realia

In translation studies, the cultural specific terms, names, locations and language use are called realia, and form an integral part of many discussions on translations, for it is realia that often cause translation problems to occur when no target-culture equivalent can be found. Realia can also be found in imagined settings and cultures, though in that case many of them are imagined themselves, and finding a target-culture equivalent, if necessary, for such created realia would be considered a difficult undertaking. A fantasy setting is (partly) constructed out of these fictional realia, created by the author to determine the cultural, geographical and historical settings of the fantasy world, in order to make it an inherently logical structure (Loponen, 167). Loponen, in his article called “Translating Irrealia”, suggests that these fictional realia be called *irrealia*, to denote the fictional aspect of these cultural specific terms.

The translation of (ir)realia and especially personal names has always been a point of discussion in translation studies. Opinions on the matter vary from leaving names as they are to altering them slightly to make them sound better in the target language (neutralising) to changing them completely to fit the target language (naturalising). In his article titled “Translation of Names in Children’s Fantasy Literature”, Lincoln Fernandes quotes Tymoczko:

“There is a widespread disposition that names should be transposed unchanged in textual writings (...). Indeed, a naïve or inexperienced translator (...) may look forward to the proper names in a text as islands of repose – unproblematic bits to be passed intact without effort into the new linguistic texture being created – translated in the sense of carried across the language gap without alteration, in the sense that a saint’s relics are translated from one resting place to another” (Tymoczko via Fernandes 44).

With this quote Tymoczko and with him Fernandes implies that occurrences of proper names – for characters, for places, for special objects – cannot simply be left alone in a text, transferring them from source to target text without trouble. Indeed, many proper names have been chosen with specific intentions by the author, and the translator ought to take this into consideration with every proper name he encounters. Whereas in a modern setting, leaving a name in the original form might add to the exotic nature of the setting, in fantasy it is quite possible that names carry very specific meanings. The most often quoted example is of course Harry Potter, in which nearly all characters have been named with their personalities or backgrounds in mind. The Harry Potter books are aimed at children and young adults, but the same can be said for works of fantasy meant for adults. Often you cannot get away with letting the name stand in its original form since then the meaning would be lost on the reader of the translation. A good example of this is found in Robin Hobb's *Farseer Trilogy*. The nobles of the land called the Six Duchies have the custom to name their children after virtues or traits, in hopes of them emulating that which they were named after in later life, and with a little help from magic, that hope may often be borne out. There's King Shrewd, Prince Chivalry, Prince Verity, Prince Regal, Lady Patience and Queen Desire. If we look at those names from a translator's point of view, some of them are fairly straightforward to translate to Dutch, but decisions have to be made; should you translate just a few or translate them all? Keep the names in the target text similar to the source text or translate the meaning instead of the exact word? Not translating these names would mean the underlying thought for them could be lost on the reader of the translation, who might not realise the names are not fantastical-sounding but English words. Some translators might worry that the translations of these names might look really odd in their own language, since things like 'Geduld' and 'Begeerte' are not generally considered names, but neither are such names as 'Shrewd' or 'Desire' in the source language. The Dutch translators, Erica Feberwee and Peter Cuijpers, seemed to have erred on the side of caution; they translated 'Chivalry' to 'Chevalric' and 'Verity' to 'Veritas', but kept 'Patience' as it is, trusting people would recognize it as

an English or even French word, and made 'Desire' into 'Desirée', which is a common enough name to not recognise the meaning behind it, especially since for this character 'desire' does not just mean she is to be desired, but also that she desires much, has ambition. Especially that second meaning is lost in the chosen translation. By only translating half of the noble names to something of similar meaning in the target language, the underlying cultural habit of naming noble children after virtues is lost on the reader of the translation, since in translation it does not seem to happen often enough to be of significance in the setting's culture while it actually is.

Character names are not the only names to which this applies however. Place names, objects, titles, races, all of these irrealia may have important meaning in a fantasy novel, or a 'semantic load' as Fernandes calls it. He states that "names are viewed as mono-referential – they refer to a single entity – but not as mono-functional, since they may function as carriers, for instance, of semantic, semiotic, and/or sound symbolic meanings in literary works" (Fernandes, 45). This basically means that names in literature, especially fantasy literature, more often than not have more meaning than just the one on the surface. He goes on to describe three different ways in which a name can be formed to relay a deeper meaning (Fernandes, 46-48). It can have a semantic meaning, where the name itself is used to sum up someone's personality, like in Hobb's *Farseer Trilogy* or Artemis Fowl ("fowl") in Eoin Colfer's series of the same name. It can have a semiotic meaning, generating signs of ancient or recent historical associations, such as gender denotation, class, intertextuality and other things. Lastly it can have sound symbolic meanings, like the name being an onomatopoeia or a phonestheme, which "is a sound, sound cluster, or sound type that is directly associated with a meaning" (Fernandes, 47). In translating all of these, the translator needs to take the intent of the author in creating such names into account and where possible create an equivalent name in the target language. This poses quite a challenge, for finding a word with for example a similar semantic meaning or a similar phonestheme in the target language might prove very difficult, as is shown in the Dutch translations of the virtue names in Hobb's *Farseer Trilogy*. If the name is

specific to the fantasy culture as described by the author it may even be more difficult, since more often than not the translator lacks all in the information of said culture to properly divine the intended meaning or reference. Therefore names are often not “islands of repose” but difficult hurdles that require some effort on the part of the translator to properly communicate into the target language.

In short, while translating a fantasy setting, the translator must take the cultural differences between source culture and target culture but also between book culture and target culture into account, lest he makes the mistake of transferring cultural reference from the imagined culture into a target culture equivalent. While translating a fantasy novel the translator has to decide in which of the four categories the novel belongs and make sure they understand which existing cultures and forms of government the author has used, to be able to search for answers when posed with a difficult translation problem. Names can often pose a problem in a novel, but especially so in a fantasy novel since then the names might have special significance in the fantasy culture in a way that might not be easily recognised by the translator. Translating an unknown culture may be difficult, but translating a culture that mostly exists in the author’s mind may be much more of a challenge.

Chapter 3 – Translating Contemporary Fantasy

When translating a novel, each literary genre often comes with its own set of translation specifics and challenges. In murder mysteries it is important to retain the feeling of suspense the author is trying to impress on the reader about who did it, in romance novels the reader has to feel as the protagonists feel when they share their love, in a thriller the feeling of not knowing what happens next is often essential to the scene and to translate that feeling may be very difficult and in poetry every rhythm, rhyme and other poetical structures could be mind-bending for the translator. While some of these specifics are unique to that particular genre, they may all appear in the fantasy genre, for as mentioned before, a novel falls under the fantasy genre because of its setting and not its plot. Fantasy is often associated with stories of epic heroes struggling with evil sorcerers or demons, the epic fantasy, but that is just one of the types of fantasy novels, though it is probably the best known type. There are fantasy detectives, romance novels, thrillers, bildungsromans and even fantasy poems, which all combine the specifics of one genre with the specifics of the fantasy genre. Some of these general translation specifics, like the cultural differences and translating names and (ir)realia, have been discussed in the previous chapter. That the translator would have to pay special attention to names and imagined cultures, norms and values were part of the expected translation specifics for adult fantasy. It is important for any translator to make careful note of all names and realia in translation, especially if the novel is the first book in a series. Casually mentioned characters in the first novel might become important to the plot in the second or third novel, and if that character suddenly has a different name, someone will notice. If each part of the series is translated by a different person, it could make consistency a bit more problematic. This is of course true for all translations of fiction but could cause a little more difficulty in fantasy novels since names and realia may be strange and unknown, set against the translator's frame of reference. There is one sub-genre of fantasy however in which the fantasy elements may be an even more jarring aspect of the setting, and that is the sub-genre of contemporary fantasy.

Contemporary fantasy is a relatively new genre in the literary world, and is in short the addition of fantastical or supernatural elements (as described in chapter 1) to a contemporary or modern setting. Most often this setting is indeed contemporary, but historical or futuristic settings are also amongst the possibilities. They differ from 'regular' fantasy in that they are set on the planet earth, in factual historic times. With historical settings, the novels might be referred to as low fantasy, depending on the time in which the novels take place as well as the amount and variety of fantastical and supernatural elements mentioned. For example, books with fantastical elements in medieval time, like the *Avalon*-series of Marion Zimmer Bradley about King Arthur and his court, would most likely be dubbed low fantasy, whereas the *Temeraire*-books by Naomi Novik, about dragons in the time of the Napoleonic Wars, would fall under the contemporary fantasy header.

Contemporary fantasy is a sub genre of the fantasy genre, though with its relative rise in popularity in the last twenty to thirty years and the many new novels published that fall into this type of setting, it is not a small part of the genre. The most popular aspect of contemporary fantasy is urban fantasy, where next to the primary prerequisites to define a novel as contemporary fantasy, it must also be set in an urban environment, taking place in an around a single city (Clute, "Urban Fantasy", 975). More often than not, the fantastical and supernatural elements are hiding themselves from the common populace in contemporary fantasy, to keep from too many people finding out they exist. It is one of the tropes of contemporary fantasy (Clute and Kaveney, 225).

The primary conditions to decide whether a novel is contemporary fantasy are as follows: The tale has to be grounded in an existing setting - i.e. earth as we know or knew it - and needs to have sufficient fantastical and/or supernatural elements intertwined with that world to mark it as different from the real world that we actually live in (Clute and Kaveney, 225). For example, a novel in which there is mention of unproven paranormal activity (houses being 'haunted') would not be qualified as contemporary fantasy, but a novel where the protagonist has tangible interaction with ghosts, and the ghosts with their surroundings, would be. Granted, it is a very fine line between

novels where those characters with overactive imaginations meet those who actually do live in a fantastical rendition of our world where ghosts simply exist, whether there's someone to see them or not. The difference is that in contemporary fantasy, the supernatural prominently features in such a way that there can be no doubt of their existence (Clute and Kaveney, 225). Most novels of the contemporary fantasy category are more clearly recognised as such, having their characters being or dealing with supernatural creatures such as vampires or werewolves. Contemporary fantasy should not be confused with horror fiction, either. In horror fiction, the supernatural elements are mostly there to scare and frighten and might not even be real, whereas in contemporary fantasy those elements are used to inspire awe and wonder in the protagonist and reader and are real in that setting (Clute and Kaveney, 225).

As mentioned, there has been a great rise in popularity of contemporary fantasy. Throughout history there have been many publications that bordered the fantastical, though the eclectic genre that we now call fantasy is a "twentieth-century phenomenon" (Nikolajeva, 140). In the last twenty years there has been a notable outbreak of contemporary fantasy authors, the most famous of which have seen their books being adapted for the big screen or a TV series. Perhaps the most known example of a recently popular contemporary fantasy series are the *Harry Potter* books by J.K. Rowling. Set in the nineties, it tells the story of a young boy who discovers he's actually a wizard and grows up learning that he has to defeat the darkest wizard of all time. It is a bildungsroman in a contemporary fantasy setting which, though mostly occurring in a fictional place is set in modern England. A second popular example are the *Twilight* series by Stephanie Meyer, about a group of vampires who don't drink human blood, werewolves who are their natural enemy and the girl who is caught between the two groups. They are but two well-known examples of contemporary fantasy, though mostly it is not a mainstream genre and only read by a specific group of readers.

Like 'normal' fantasy, contemporary fantasy is written mainly for (young) adults. The subjects of the book are gritty, there isn't always a happy ending, and the characters are more layered and

darker than in most novels which people define as fantasy stories. Most contemporary fantasy stories are set in a more dystopian version of our own world, where the atmosphere is just a little darker, the government just a little more corrupt, and the violence just a little more violent. This does not mean it is all horrific, it is simply meant for a more adult audience, to challenge their perception of the world (Nikolajeva, 140). Some of the most notable examples of the darker type of contemporary fantasy are the novels of the *Vampire: The Requiem* series, where the vampires are in control of everything behind the scenes, and in *the Dresden Files*, where a wizard detective comes across the most gruesome supernatural entities and occurrences one can imagine.

Within the genre of contemporary fantasy there are quite a few different characteristics that may or may not fall under the fantasy header, and many novels don't fall into only one category, as is usual with works of fiction. Some works of contemporary fantasy stay firmly grounded in our own world and universe while others, such as the *His Dark Materials*-trilogy by Philip Pullman or *The War of Flowers* by Tad Williams, wander across many parallel universes, including our own, resulting in a strange mix of normal-typed and contemporary fantasy, for not every universe is like our own. Many authors use every type of old mythology and legends to fuel their stories (Nikolajeva, 139), from the usual suspects of vampires and werewolves to the ancient gods, such as in Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*, where the old Scandinavian god Odin tries to get back into power once more and to achieve that has to fight his way through the world's new gods, such as 'Media' and 'Technology', or in *Anansi Boys*, which describes what happens if an old god (Anansi the spider, an African trickster god) dies and his sons have to take over.

Translating contemporary fantasy is different from translating fantasy in the way that the translator has to consolidate both the existing (contemporary) culture and the imagined culture living side by side into the target language. The added challenge with translating contemporary fantasy novels is that the translator will have to make sure that every fantastic and supernatural element is translated in such a way that it consolidates with the real world and stays believable within it. The

small liberties a translator might have while translating normal fantasy, where he is not bound by the margins of the real world are not available to translator of contemporary fantasy, since the novel is set in the real world and thus provides its margins. The supernatural elements might stretch those margins a bit, but rarely breaks them. Some contemporary fantasy novels, like *Storm Front* and *Fool Moon* by Jim Butcher and *A Hunger like Fire* by Greg Stolze, add established supernatural elements to the setting like vampires, warlocks and werewolves, and build a story around the dynamics between the mundane and the supernatural. Some, like *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman and *Good Omens* by Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, are written under the assumption that people like gods, angels and demons are real and influence the world of man, and take that as their starting point for story dynamics. Through translating these five books it is attempted to gain some insight into the task of translating contemporary fantasy, of merging the known and the unknown together into a believable story in the target language. By using examples of these five excerpts things like the influence of setting, culture (including the clash between 'normal' and 'paranormal' culture), genre-specific irrealia and working with the willing suspension of disbelief of readers are discussed, in hopes of shedding some light on the translation mechanics behind them.

Greg Stolze - A Hunger Like Fire

The first excerpt is *A Hunger Like Fire* by Greg Stolze, published in 2004. It is the first instalment of a trilogy based on the tabletop roleplaying game *Vampire: the Requiem*, in which the players create a vampire character and play out adventures constructed by the game leader, the storyteller. The setting is a darker version of our own modern world where vampires, werewolves and Fae exist, and especially the vampires have great influence on the world through manipulating the people in it, especially people in the government, police force, army, hospitals; any place whose existence has influence on the human race. Most big cities have shadow courts of vampires who hold the ropes behind the scenes, coming together in the so-called Elysium to discuss the business of the

realm, i.e. the city they rule. The court is presided over by a Prince, a title irrespective of gender, who is advised in matters of rule by his council of primogen, often elder vampires and leaders of the various clans and covenants. It is a very political structure, and it is therefore politics which is usually the driving force of many confrontations and character interactions. The hierarchy in the vampire is culture is one of both age and lineage; older vampires are more respected, and vampires from some clans are of better renown than vampires of others. For example, the vampires belonging to the clan called Ventrue are usually of higher standing, being the clan who covets power and money the most, whereas those from the clan called Nosferatu is usually of the lowest standing, since their blood lineage carries an extra curse that deforms their vampiric bodies into something repulsive, with deformities, sores, rashes and pointy teeth, making them seem less human. These vampires are like the vampires we know from books like Dracula; creatures of the night, drinkers of human blood, more powerful than humans, though they cannot change into bats. Some can control bats, though; each clan has clan-specific 'powers' with they can for example become stronger, run faster, alter themselves, or influence the minds of others. The interaction of the vampire society with real society is partly what these novels are about, the ways which both influence each other.

The setting of the novel is the American city of Chicago. The city is as it would be in our world, but there is a shadow society of vampires who roam the night, with its own hierarchy to keep the vampire populace under control. The form of government can be best termed as despotism, the Prince of a realm having absolute final authority in all things, though counselled by his council of primogen who also rule (part of) the populace. The Prince's position is a precarious one, and he only rules as long as he has the majority of the people in power behind him, otherwise he will most likely be disposed of in rebellion. This means the position requires great political influence to maintain; a vampire does not become Prince if he does not have enough (political) strength to back him up. In a sense it is also therefore in a sense a meritocracy; for the ambitious, there are only two outcomes, victory and failure. Those who come out on top have walked over many bodies to get there, and

those on the losing side often lose, at the very least, a lot of prestige or, at the most, their (un)lives. The setting has its own set of irrealia specific to the vampire culture, such as *Childe*, *Sire*, *Prince*, *Kindred* and *Embrace*, which will each be discussed below.

The following excerpt is a scene setting for the vampire society of Chicago, the hierarchy and the court, the description of an Elysium through the eyes of a young vampire who also happens to be the 'Childe' of – meaning she was bitten and created by – the Prince of Chicago, a position that earns her less favour than one would expect for the offspring of the current ruler. The weak are quick to be eliminated, and showing weakness is a sure way to become the next on everyone's hit list. The protagonist, Persephone, was the Prince's sign of weakness; creating - 'siring' – offspring is a carefully regulated activity, for the court is to remain hidden to human eyes and it would therefore not do to have an overly abundant group of vampires in the city. Though the Prince has enough power to get away with such an indiscretion, it has earned him some new enemies and a lessening of respect and has made Persephone a target for those who would use her to strike at the Prince. The moment his power base seems to crumble, the vultures will be on him. This excerpt shows that very clearly. Maxwell, the Prince, uses symbols of power – being preceded by his steward, wearing a naked sword, sitting on a throne – to emphasize his position, while also showing a genial face to his subjects to make them like him. Some of his circle of advisors, like Solomon Birch, are clearly not impressed, and show it. The scene ends with a video of another rogue offspring called Bruce causing trouble for the vampire community, being ignorant of what he has become. It will later turn out that he was the indiscretion of the Nosferatu leader called Scratch, who calls out for his death before his mistake can be unearthed and he be punished for it. The problems that were unearthed during the translation of this excerpt are listed in the footnotes.

Honger als vuur¹

Greg Stolze

Bella leunt een beetje naar achteren en trekt² verdedigend haar kin op. Ze maakt zich klaar om haar positie te verdedigen als de klank van een gong door de ruimte weerkaatst.

Prins Maxwell is aangekomen.

“Ga staan!”

Dat is natuurlijk niet Maxwell’s stem, het is een man genaamd Garret McLean³ en hij valt

¹ The first problem a translator usually comes across while translating any form of fiction is the title of the novel. Often the title alludes either to the protagonist or the main storyline of the novel, whether overtly or subtly. Therefore the title often can only be translated last, when the translator has fully read and translated the novel and has a full understanding of the intricacies of the story. In this particular case, the title *A Hunger like Fire* refers to the hunger for blood the vampires in the novel feel, and how it affects their actions; the hunger burns and can make them lose control, such as fire is uncontrollable. A second detail is that vampires have an inbred mortal fear for fire, as it is one of the few things that can effectively destroy them. As my options I came up with *Vurig Verlangen*, *Vurige Honger*, *Hete Honger* and *Heet Verlangen*, but all the titles made it sound like a cheap romance novel. I finally settled for *Honger als vuur*, close to the original title but omitting the article.

² The original phrase is “raises her nose defensively” and my first instinct was to translate it as ‘haalt haar neus verdedigend op.’ However, in Dutch the phrase ‘je neus ophalen’ has both the connotation of having the sniffles as well as disdain, which is the right connotation in this context. There is also the problem of the sentence becoming a little awkward, since the adjective ‘defensively’, while odd in the original text, does not really seem to work in the target language in combination with raising one’s nose. To make it more logical I substituted ‘chin’ for ‘nose’, which still retains the connotation of disdain but removes the awkward combination of ‘neus optrekken’ with ‘verdedigend’.

onmogelijk te negeren. Het is alsof zijn stem door ons heen siddert, zoals zijn hamer de gong beroerde. De jongere vampiers springen op als schildwachten die zijn betrapt op luieren. De ouderen, Solomon Birch in het bijzonder, gaan met meer ernst staan, met een air van *Ik hoef niet te staan, ik kies ervoor*.

Garret schrijdt naar binnen, statig en serieus, terwijl hij een simpele mahonie kist van ongeveer anderhalve meter lang, vijftien centimeter hoog en vijftien breed hooghoudt.⁴ Hij stevent geleidelijk af op de lege stoel op de bodem van het amfitheater. -Deze is groot, barok en oud. Hij is ongeveer halverwege als Maxwell achter hem binnenkomt.

De Prins van Chicago is niet echt lang – 1.75 meter, misschien 1.80. Ongeveer mijn lengte. Hoewel, als hij echt rond achttienhonderd is geboren dan moet hij in zijn tijd een reus zijn geweest. Hij is gedrongen, gekleed in een conservatieve Phat Farm sweater, zo eentje die Bill Clinton draagt. Hij heeft hoge, prominente jukbeenderen en een kalme, vriendelijke verschijning. Vanavond is hij

³ I have chosen not to translate any of the names to Dutch, since this is a novel for adults set in Chicago, and the readers would expect English names and would also most likely understand them enough to keep any kind of allusion to a person's character or background through the name intact.

⁴ This sentence was difficult to translate because of the present continuous in the source text, which allows the text to consist out of one sentence with a comma. This caused difficulties in Dutch, because the present continuous does not exist in the target language. One of the solutions would be to use the Dutch form of the present participle (the "onvoltooid/tegenwoordig deelwoord") which comes closest to the present continuous, but it is not often used by the native speakers of Dutch and would therefore come across as forced. I tried hacking the sentence in two (Garrett schrijdt statig en serieus naar binnen. Hij houdt ...) but then the deliberate pauses made by the author are lost, whose intent it was to accentuate Garrett's demeanor to underline the gravitas of the situation. Finally I came to as it is now, adding 'terwijl' to make the second part of the sentence connect to the first.

opa die zich klaarmaakt om de kalkoen aan te snijden op Thanksgiving.

Mijn 'schepper'.⁵

Tegen de tijd dat hij de stoel bereikt, heeft McLean de kist geopend en er (met gepaste zwierigheid) een glimmend metalen zwaard uitgehaald. Maxwell gaat op de troon zitten en McLean overhandigt hem het wapen. Maxwell haalt het uit de schede en legt het naakte staal over zijn knieën, en het is moeilijk om zijn blik te duiden terwijl hij dit doet. Deze is meerduldig, subtiel. Je kunt er de complete overgave aan de zaak die al dit machtsvertoon symboliseert in lezen. Je kunt hem lezen als uitgestreken ironie, een dubbel snijdend gelaat dat deze pretentieuze formaliteiten bespot door ze te perfectioneren. Je kunt er beheerste tirannie in lezen, een beteugelde minachting voor de ceremonie die zegt, 'ik heb dit belachelijke staafje metaal niet nodig om mijn wil op te leggen.'⁶

⁵ The source word for this is 'sire', which in English has the connotation of both forefather and creator. There is no one-on-one Dutch equivalent for this word, which made finding a good Dutch translation difficult. The word 'sire' exists in Dutch, but there it is only used as a way of addressing the king. I wrote down various options for translation, but none were the perfect word I was looking for. There was the simple "Vader", with a capital V, but the word 'vader' in Dutch has the connotation of love and warmth, a protector, which in vampire society was not often the case. With 'Voogd' it lacked the connotation of creator. 'Ouder' was a possibility, being more distant a word than 'father', but still had that family feeling that didn't fit the scene of the novel. I finally settled on 'schepper', choosing to bypass the connotation of forefather in favour of that of creator.

⁶ This paragraph was rather difficult to translate because of all the commas and pauses, which the author uses to lend weight to his description of the Prince of Chicago, the leader of the coven of vampires in that city. It didn't already flow naturally in the source text, which made it doubly difficult to achieve some form of natural structure in the target language without breaking up the author's intended effect in describing this character. Stolze uses quite a lot of commas in his writing, which

Zijn uitdrukking verandert en voor even zou ik zweren dat hij naar me knipoogde. Daarna zie ik de bewegingen, de veranderingen van houding in de galerij en ik realiseer me precies hoeveel van ons hetzelfde dachten.

Degenen vooraan, de ouderen – Solomon, Scratch, Rowen – zij zijn niet overtuigd. Zij in de middelste rijen, zoals Bella, schudden het na een paar seconden van zich af. Maar de jongeren, de nieuwelingen, zij onder ons die het verste weg staan, bij de gratis drank... de meesten van ons vallen ervoor.

Ik kijk naar de ongebondenen⁷. Raphael kijkt perplex, Ambrose fronst. Ik kan niet zien of ze erin zijn getrapt of niet.

“Wij zijn de Verdoemden,” begint Maxwell, “En toch zijn we niet zo ver gevallen dat we niet meer van onszelf kunnen maken dan we zijn. Wij zijn, bij voorkeur, solitaire jagers, maar vanavond bevinden wij ons in vredig gezelschap. Wij dragen in elke druppel van ons bloed een vervuilende wreedheid... maar hoewel we met honger doordrenkt zijn, blijft de menselijkheid. Koude ogen verlangen nog steeds naar schoonheid,” zegt hij, gebarend rondom de hal, en hij heeft gelijk.

Ondanks het spookachtige of misschien wel juist daardoor is de sobere uitstraling aangrijpend. “Een

sometimes comes across as rather forced, and then the translator must wonder whether that’s intentional or accidental and translate as such. In this case, it was most likely intentional, which means puzzling with words until something grammatically correct, yet still with a similar rhythm to it as the source text, comes out.

⁷ The ‘unbound’ is another one of the setting-specific irrealia. Since I translated ‘sire’ to avoid confusion with the Dutch use of the word I must also translate all other setting-specific terms. The ‘unbound’ are vampires unconnected to a coven and/or a prince. This translation seems rather straightforward, though I considered putting it in with a capital to underline the fact that the word has a specific meaning. However, since the source text does not use a capital letter either, I opted out of it.

verstild hart verlangt nog steeds naar gezelschap. Daarom, Elysium. Daarom, ons hof. Daarom, onze verdragen. Al onze hogere impulsen – alles dat ons boven brute roofdieren verheft – al het goede dat voortleeft, wordt vanavond hier tentoongespreid.”

Hij zegt elke keer zoiets, een clichématige openingstoespraak, maar als hij het zegt, is het niet afgezaagd. Als hij het zegt, is het een sprankje hoop in de rode duisternis. Vanavond, zoals elke avond, applaudisseert de menigte.

“Mijn beste mede-Verwanten⁸, alsjeblieft – neem plaats. We hebben vanavond twee gasten in ons midden,” zegt hij, wijzend naar de twee vreemdelingen. Zoals hij vast en zeker had bedoeld, kijkt iedereen naar hen op. Raphael gaat rechtop staan en ik voel een straaltje waardering voor hem, hij is aan het Duwen⁹ maar het is zwak en kunstmatig, te veel uitgespreid over te afgestompte zielen. Hij probeert onze blikken te verwarmen, maar het is als een lucifer aansteken in een cel vol bevroren vlees.

⁸ ‘Kindred’ is another setting-specific term, denoting the race of vampires. They name themselves Kindred because they are, in a way, kinsmen, having all come from the first vampire, the biblical Caine, and because they are a secret society and if any hapless mortal should overhear vampires talking about each other they would not immediately know the truth. It is also considered tawdry to refer to themselves as vampires. I considered ‘familie’ briefly, but that would make it sound too mafia, so I settled for the direct translation, ‘Verwanten’.

⁹ The source text says “[...] he’s Pushing Out but it’s weak and artificial.” With ‘Pushing Out’ the point-of-view character means the vampire in question uses one of the supernatural powers that comes with being Embraced, though she herself is young and she (and with her the reader) has not yet learned the more common term for that power, Presence, which is the ability to affect the feelings of the people around you. It is here described as a sort of altering wave that is pushed towards the targets, and therefore I chose to translate it as ‘Duwen’, with a capital letter to denote importance, as in the source text.

Ambrose reageert slechts gelaten.

“Mag ik onze gasten voor de avond introduceren?” Hij geeft ze een strakke, tolererende glimlach. “Ik weet dat jullie de formaliteiten van onze bijeenkomsten wat verstikkend kunnen vinden, maar toe, wees ons ter wille met jullie namen en een opsomming van jullie afstamming.”

Raphael ontmoet zijn blik. “Ik ben Raphael Ladue, en mijn schepper was Old John.”

Ik heb geen idee wie Old John in godsnaam is, maar anderen blijkbaar wel. Vele bleke gezichten kijken reikhalzend op om hem met hernieuwde interesse te bekijken en de meeste geïnteresseerden zitten vooraan, waar de macht is. Rowen kijkt niet om, maar alle anderen in de eerste rij wel, de gezichten zorgvuldig uitdrukkingloos. Een paar rijen daarachter zijn er een paar Verwanten die hun angst niet kunnen onderdrukken.

“Zo, zo,” zegt Maxwell. “Een roemruchte afstamming, zeker. En je metgezel?”

“Ik ben Ambrose Masterson en ik ben Verworden¹⁰ door de Onheilige.”

Dat krijgt *iedereen* aan het staren. Iedereen behalve de nieuwsten van ons weten wie de Onheilige is. Het is zoets als zeggen dat je vader de duivel is.

“Gelul,” zegt een stem uit het midden, een man in een onberispelijk mooi pak met een huid als albast.

¹⁰ Another setting-specific term, ‘Embraced.’ To be Embraced by a vampire is to be turned into one. The process involves draining the human body of all blood and then giving it back by letting them drink it from the vein of the sire, with the vampire ‘taint’ in it. The word is not used in the conventional meaning of ‘taking into one’s arms’ but in the sense of corrupting someone and taking hold of someone. The Dutch word ‘omhelzen’ simply would not cut it, having connotations of warmth and safety that do not apply to the process. After some searching I found the word ‘verworden’, which means both ‘to change’ and ‘to deteriorate’. In a way to be turned into a vampire is to change and deteriorate the living body, so the word fit the process.

Ambrose ontbloot zijn tanden en we kunnen allemaal zien dat ze onmenselijk zijn, vlijmscherp en onnatuurlijk lang. Niet zoals Scratch, echter. Terwijl Scratch zijn mond een ware ruïne is, een fout van de natuur, ziet deze mond er uit als zorgvuldig geëvolueerd om te doorboren en te verscheuren.

“Ja,” zegt de Prins. “Nu weet ik het weer. Van de DNC.” Ambrose knijpt zijn ogen samen en knikt.

(Zei Maxwell nu “D&C” – wat een abortus betekent? Of was het “DNC,” de Democratische Nationale Conventie met de rellen? Of is het iets compleet anders?)

Maxwell gaat verder. “Ondanks hun... welbekende afstamming, hebben onze gasten er in het verleden voor gekozen onze gastvrijheid te negeren. Desalniettemin hoop ik dat jullie mij allemaal zullen volgen in hen een hoffelijk welkom te heten vanavond.

Onze gasten delen een gemeenschappelijk probleem met ons. We zijn beiden bezorgd over de daden van ene Bruce Miner. Garret, als je zo vriendelijk zou willen zijn..? Ik ben vrij hulpeloos als het op het programmeren van videorecorders aankomt.” De uitspraak veroorzaakt gelach.

Terwijl hij aan het praten was, heeft Garret een grote tv binnengerold, waar hij nu mee rommelt tot er een opgenomen nieuwsuitzending op komt. Het verhaal gaat over een man in Cicero die zich verzet tegen zijn arrestatie en de politie ontvlucht; halverwege laten ze een korrelige opname van een politiecamera zien, van een potige man in een vieze overal, worstelend met een politieman. De twee slingeren tijdelijk uit het beeld van de camera en dan komt de diender over de motorkap vliegen. Het is dramatisch, des te meer omdat het zonder geluid is.

De sombere nieuwspresentator vult aan met wat ik al gehoord had – vrouw en dochter leeggebloed, handboeien gebroken, et cetera.

Ze plaatsen een stilstaand frame uit de opname naast wat duidelijk een verkleinde foto uit het fotoalbum van een buurman is. De eerste is voornamelijk gewoon een grijze vlek, zo ongeveer

wat we allemaal in de spiegel zien als we een keer de moeite nemen om te kijken. De laatste is een bedroevend gemiddelde blanke man met slecht haar.

Als het nieuwsitem eindigt, is het even stil.

“Commentaar?” zegt Maxwell uiteindelijk.

Scratch staat op. “Maak hem af,” zegt hij. “Hij is van mijn clan, hij deelt mijn vloek en nog steeds zeg ik, maak hem af.”

Discussing A Hunger Like Fire

Most of the translation problems in this particular excerpt are on the language and style used for the novel and setting-specific irrealia. Stolze’s way of writing is very erratic, using lots of comma’s to force pauses in the text, creating tension and a sense of importance to certain scenes. Since this scene is the first entrance of Chicago’s Prince, the usage of the style most likely has the intention to lend gravitas to the man and his behaviour by punctuating it with extra pauses. The setting-specific irrealia each has its own background and connotations that might be hard to retain in the target language, Dutch. While each problem has been individually discussed in the footnotes, below I will view them in light of the whole book and the special attention for fantasy-specific aspects of the novel.

As mentioned, the scene in the chosen excerpt is the first in which the Prince of Chicago, an important character in the setting and one of the protagonists, is introduced to the reader. To immediately give the reader some sense of who this man is, the author uses certain a certain style of writing to emphasize both this man’s character and his status, as well as casting light on the reaction of the other vampires to certain behaviour and happenings. In this, attitude is very important, and translating the power dynamics in this scene properly was one of the biggest challenges. The author uses rhythm and punctuation to set the atmosphere, and to translate that similarly to Dutch proved difficult, especially the entrance of the Prince.

“By the time he reaches the chair, McLean has opened the box and produced (with suitable small flourishes) a shiny metal sword. Maxwell sits on the throne and McLean hands him the weapon. Maxwell unsheathes it and lays the naked blade across his knees, and it’s hard to explain his expression when he does this. It’s ambiguous, oblique. You can read it as an absolute commitment to the cause that all this pomp represents. You can read it as straight-faced irony, a double bladed visage that mocks this pretentious formality by perfecting it. You can read it as a constrained tyranny, a reined-in contempt for the ceremony that says, “I don’t need this ridiculous metal stick to enforce my will.”

His expression alters, and for a moment I’m *certain* that he winked at me. Then I see the movements, the shifts of posture through the gallery and I realize just how many of us had the same thought” (Stolze, 65).

The description of Maxwell’s expression was difficult to translate, with the short, pointed sentences, the repetition of ‘You can read it as...’ which does not translate well to Dutch, and the message behind this particular paragraph about the character that’s being described: pointed, direct, brooking no nonsense but suffering it for duty and genial when he wants to. Retaining the short sentence structure in Dutch was difficult, and in the end I decided to not keep the same repetition of ‘You can read it as...’ in Dutch but altered it a little to make the sentences flow better, avoid making them look construed and unnatural.

“Tegen de tijd dat hij de stoel bereikt, heeft McLean de kist geopend en er (met gepaste zwierigheid) een glimmend metalen zwaard uitgehaald. Maxwell gaat op de troon zitten en McLean overhandigt hem het wapen. Maxwell haalt het uit de schede en legt het naakte staal over zijn knieën, en het is moeilijk om zijn blik te duiden terwijl hij dit doet. Deze is meerduidig, subtiel. Je kunt er de complete overgave aan de zaak die al dit machtsvertoon symboliseert in lezen. Je kunt hem lezen als uitgestreken ironie, een dubbel snijdend gelaat dat deze pretentieuze formaliteiten bespot door ze te perfectioneren. Je kunt er beheerste

tirannie in lezen, een beteugete minachting voor de ceremonie die zegt, 'ik heb dit belachelijke staafje metaal niet nodig om mijn wil op te leggen.'"

The other problems in this excerpt were the setting-specific irrealia that were present in the text:

Sire, Kindred, Embrace, Unbound, Elysium. Each term has its own special meaning. Some, like 'Elysium', did not need translating, being Latin word and retaining the same connotation of peace. Others, like 'Kindred' (Verwanten) and 'Unbound' (Ongebondenen) were fairly straightforward. The last two were mind-bending, considering the collocations associated with them by the vampires. That same understanding should be felt by the reader, be it source text or target text, and getting that right might be rather difficult. With 'Sire' (Schepper) the difficulty was to find an equivalent that suggested enough distance between Sire and Childe, without any collocation of warmth, for the relationship between Sire and Childe is rarely, if at all, one of warmth and love. More likely it is reminiscent of a boss and his employee. With 'Embrace' (Verworden), the act of being turned into a vampire, this is a little more difficult, for embracing someone does have a connotation of warmth and affection, even though that is not what is meant; in Embracing someone, the vampire sucks all the blood and life out of a human, then feeds them of their own veins to turn them into a vampire. The victim gets 'embraced into the fold' so to speak. To be embraced is to be created anew, and it is from that association that I attempted to find a decent solution. I finally settled on 'Verworden' cause it has the connotation of creation but also sounds a little like 'verworven', the connotation of taking someone in, and 'verdorven', the corruption that is a vampire according to humans.

In short, in this novel the most important fantasy aspects to pay attention to would be: the setting, a mingling of modern Chicago and popular culture with a society of blood-drinking undead who live under strict rules imposed on them by their betters; the culture, a strict hierarchy and an intricate system of etiquette developed over hundreds of years of (un)living, imposed upon the 'younger' generation by those in power so they can retain their exalted position; and the irrealia, which form part of the foundation of the setting and the interaction between the characters.

Neil Gaiman - American Gods

The second excerpt is that of *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman, first published in 2001. In this novel, the world is as it is, with one major difference: all mythology is fact. Gods like Odin, Loki, Thoth, Eostre, Anubis, Kali and Anansi all exist and make an appearance in the novel. It tells the story of a man named Shadow - actually the Norse god Baldur, son of Odin, though he doesn't know this himself - who gets hired by a confidence man called Mr. Wednesday to do some jobs for him. Gradually Shadow – and with him the reader – learns that Mr. Wednesday is actually the Norse god Odin, and that his plan is to regain the power he used to have as a god of the Vikings and rule the world once again. For that he needs the support of many of the other forgotten gods of all pantheons, though. All these gods have been brought to the United States by the immigrants, and therefore live there and not in their country of origin. They travel through the United States to make contact with them; the Egyptian gods Anubis and Thoth, who run a funeral home nowadays and have Horus and Bast with them, the African trickster god Anansi the Spider, the Slavic god Czernobog and Slavic goddesses the Zorya, the German Goddess Eostre. In this they have to contend with the world's new gods however, going by the principle that man creates their own gods; these new gods bear names like Technology and Media and are quite against giving up their power over mankind. Shadow is the linchpin in this struggle, and he's not even sure he wants to be. The novel is a sort of 'road novel'; Shadow and Mr. Wednesday travel through the United States to find supporters for their cause.

The excerpt chosen is where Mr. Wednesday tries to recruit 'Easter', who is actually the Germanic goddess Eostre, whose fertility rites were the basis of the Christian festival of Easter, as is described in the excerpt: rabbits, eggs and candy were part of Eostre's rites. In the novel, Easter claims that she is not a forgotten goddess, for every year the humans still practice her rituals, but Wednesday is quick to point out that they don't do it to honour her but their replacement god, Jesus Christ. This results in a monologue by Wednesday to guilt trip Eostre into helping him.

The setting of this novel is not one that would cause a translator much trouble; it is contemporary America, and the fantasy elements are not all that abundant throughout the novel. The fact that the protagonists are all gods does little to chance this, as they do not use much divine power, they all act mostly like normal humans. Some things, like Shadow's dead wife following him around, are of course elements of the supernatural, but it is not until rather late in the book that such things as magic and supernatural creatures really begin to manifest themselves. Aspects of government are not important in this novel, since there is no mention of a hierarchy with rules. There is a hierarchy amongst the gods, but it is not bound up in rules and is resolved mostly on who is the strongest. There are also not many setting-specific realia in this excerpt; since the novel entails many mythological aspects, which have been studied in many different countries, many target language equivalents already exist. This excerpt was chosen mainly as an example of the difficulties that may arise when a translator tries to keep the work inherently logical when the author incorporates things that are not easily translated into another language.

Amerikaanse Goden

Neil Gaiman

Er zat een vrouw op het gras, onder een boom, met een papieren tafelkleed voor zich uitgespreid en een assortiment aan Tupperwarebakjes op het kleed.

Ze was – niet dik, nee, verre van dik: wat ze was, een woord waar Shadow tot nu toe nooit reden voor had om te gebruiken, was *wulps*.¹¹ Haar haren waren zo licht dat het wit was, het soort

¹¹ There is no perfect translation for the word 'curvaceous'. The image of a well-rounded woman, probably with an hourglass figure, that comes with reading that word has several different connotations; beautiful, well-rounded, sexual. As with most other occurrences of words where a source word has no one-on-one counterpart in the target language – i.e. a word with the same multiple meanings – the translator must choose which of those meanings takes precedence and choose

platinablonden lokken dat zou moeten toebehoren aan een al lang gestorven filmster, haar lippen waren karmijnrood gestift en ze zag eruit alsof ze ergens tussen de vijftig en de vijftig jaar was.

Ze was een gevuld ei op een bord aan het uitzoeken toen ze dichterbij kwamen. Ze keek op terwijl Wednesday haar naderde, legde het ei dat ze had gekozen neer en veegde haar hand af.

‘Hallo, oude bedrieger,’ zei ze, maar ze glimlachte terwijl ze het zei en Wednesday boog diep, pakte haar hand en bracht deze naar zijn lippen.

Hij zei, ‘je ziet er goddelijk uit.’

‘Hoe zou ik er anders uit moeten zien?’ verlangde ze liefjes. ‘Trouwens, je bent een leugenaar. New Orleans was een *grote* fout – ik ben, wat, dertien kilo aangekomen daar? Ik zweer het je. Ik wist dat ik weg moest gaan toen ik begon te waggelen. De bovenkant van mijn dijen wrijven nu tegen elkaar aan als ik loop, kan je het geloven?’ Dat laatste was aan Shadow gericht. Hij wist niet wat hij als antwoord moest geven en voelde een warme gloed over zijn gezicht trekken. De vrouw lachte verrukt. ‘Hij *bloost*. Wednesday mijn schat, je hebt me een *blozer* gebracht. Wat ontzettend geweldig van je. Hoe heet hij?’

‘Dit is Shadow,’ zei Wednesday. Het leek alsof hij plezier had in Shadow’s ongemak. ‘Shadow, zeg Easter eens gedag.’¹²

a word based on that. The Dutch options were ‘welgevormd’ or ‘vol’, focussing on the well-rounded aspect, ‘weelderig’ focussing on the beautiful as well as the well-rounded aspect, ‘rondborstig’ or ‘voluptueus’ focussing on the well-rounded and the sexual aspect or finally ‘wulps’, focussing mainly on the sexual and beautiful aspect but with the well-rounded hourglass figure in mind. This last option is the one I chose, as the sexual and beautiful aspects seems most important in this scene – the protagonist blushes because of her appearance and manner – and she is described as a sort of Marilyn Monroe, to whom ‘wulps’ would also apply.

¹² Not translating this occurrence of the word ‘Easter’ has two reasons. One, because it is a name and I prefer to keep names as they are as well as that the Dutch equivalent, ‘Pasen’, would not sound

[...]

Ze dronk een papieren beker met iets wat eruitzag als witte wijn leeg en ging toen staan.

‘Shadow is een goede naam,’ zei ze. ‘Ik wil een Mochaccino. Kom mee.’

Ze begon weg te lopen. ‘En het eten dan?’ vroeg Wednesday. ‘Je kan het hier niet zomaar laten liggen.’

Ze glimlachte naar hem, wees naar het meisje dat naast de hond zat en hief daarna haar armen op om de Haight en rest van de wereld te omvatten. ‘Laat het hen voeden,’ zei ze en ze liep weg, met Wednesday en Shadow achter haar aan.

‘Denk eraan,’ zei ze tegen Wednesday terwijl ze liepen. ‘Ik ben rijk. Met mij gaat het prima. Waarom zou ik je moeten helpen?’

‘Je bent een van ons,’ zei hij. ‘Je bent net zo vergeten en ongeliefd en verwaarloosd als ieder van ons. Het is vrij duidelijk aan wiens kant je zou moeten staan.’

Ze bereikten een café met terras, gingen naar binnen en namen plaats. Er was slechts één serveerster, die haar wenkbrauwpiercing droeg als een teken van sociale status en een vrouw die koffie maakte achter de toonbank. De serveerster naderde hen, glimlachend uit gewoonte, en nam hun bestelling op.¹³

appropriate and two because it has importance further on in the chapter. If I would translate this to the Dutch name for Easter then the whole connection between the feast and the old German goddess of the dawn, Eostre, would be lost, for Eostre does not at all resemble ‘Pasen’ while it certainly resembles Easter. The name is therefore of importance to the story and must stay in its original form.

¹³ The source text had an extra phrase here, ‘sat them down’, when just a few lines before that the characters had already ‘sat down’ themselves. When I informed the author Neil Gaiman of this small mistake he at first assumed I had an older version, but when he learned I had what is called “the author’s preferred text” from 2005 he did some checking and found that, even though he had known

Easter legde haar slanke hand op de rug van Wednesday's vierkante grijze hand. 'Ik zeg het je,' zei ze, 'met mij gaat het *prima*. Op mijn feestdagen doen ze zich nog steeds tegoed aan eieren en konijnen, aan snoep en aan vlees, als symbool voor wedergeboorte en paren. Ze dragen bloemen op hun hoed en geven elkaar bloemen. Ze doen het in mijn naam. Elk jaar meer en meer van ze. In *mijn* naam, oude wolf.'

'En jij wordt dik en welvarend van hun aanbidding en liefde?' zei hij op droge toon.

'Doe niet zo stom.' Plotseling klonk ze erg vermoeid. Ze nam een slok van haar Mochaccino.

'Serieuze vraag, mijn schat. Ik ben het er ongetwijfeld mee eens dat miljoenen en miljoenen van ze elkaar geschenken geven in jouw naam en dat ze nog steeds de rites van jouw festival beoefenen, tot het zoeken naar verborgen eieren aan toe. Maar hoeveel van hen weten wie je bent? Hm? Pardon juffrouw?' Dit laatste tegen hun serveerster.

Ze zei, 'Wilt u nog een espresso?'

'Nee, mijn schat. Ik vroeg me enkel af of je¹⁴ een klein meningsverschil dat we hier hadden, kunt oplossen. Mijn vriendin en ik kunnen niet eens worden over wat het woord 'Easter' betekent.¹⁵ Weet jij het misschien?'

of it before, it had still slipped his and his editor's attention in the publication of his final version of the novel. Mr. Gaiman said he wanted the second sitting down to be removed, so true to the author's wishes I left it out in the translation. This is a prime example of how a translator can pick up things even editors miss, simply because they generally read the text with more attention for detail due to having to translate it.

¹⁴ The English 'you' can of course be translated to both 'je' and 'u' in Dutch. Since in this situation it is an older man speaking to a younger woman, and Wednesday is a rather jovial fellow, I chose to translate it with the informal 'je'.

¹⁵ I've doubted about whether inserting the word 'Engelse' to this sentence to make clear that 'Easter' is an English word, but the translator should not insert his own thoughts into the text too

Het meisje staaarde naar hem alsof groene padden zich door zijn lippen naar buiten begonnen te wurmen. Daarna zei ze, 'Ik weet helemaal niks van dat Christelijke gedoe. Ik ben een paganist.'

De vrouw achter de toonbank zei, 'Ik denk dat het Latijn of zoiets is voor "Christus is herrezen" misschien.'

'Echt waar?' zei Wednesday.

'Ja, echt,' zei de vrouw. 'Easter. Zoals de zon opkomt in het oosten, east,¹⁶ weet je.

'De herrezen zoon. Natuurlijk – een zeer logische veronderstelling.' De vrouw glimlachte en keerde terug naar haar koffiemolen. Wednesday keek op naar de serveerster. 'Ik denk dat ik wel nog een espresso neem, als je het niet erg vindt. En vertel me, als een paganist, wie aanbid je dan?'

'Aanbid?'

'Dat klopt. Ik neem aan dat je een best wel ruime keuze hebt. Dus aan wie wijd je je huiselijk altaar? Voor wie buig je? Tegen wie bid je bij dageraad en schemering?'

Haar lippen vertrokken in een aantal figuren zonder iets te zeggen voor ze zei, 'Het vrouwelijk principe. Het is een empowerment iets, weet je wel.'

'Zeker. En dit vrouwelijk principe van je. Heeft ze een naam?'

much, and such an addition would not make it any more clear. It is already known from the beginning of the book that the characters are in the United States so that they are discussing an English word should not be odd. However, it does alert the reader to the fact that they are reading a translation, whereas the ideal translation would be one where the reader would not, in fact, realize it was one. (Hermans, 4)

¹⁶ This is a similar problem as in note 15, but here I chose to add the 'east', to underline the importance of the word in this context. The Dutch 'oosten' resembles the English 'east' but not enough as to make the link directly clear. One can argue from context that the reader would understand that it was the English east being discussed, but since the connection is fairly important to the story I thought that here it would be appropriate to mention it again.

‘Ze is de godin in ons allen,’ zei het meisje met de wenkbrauwring, terwijl haar wangen een kleur kregen. ‘Ze heeft geen naam nodig.’

‘Aha,’ zei Wednesday met een grote apengrijs, ‘dus houd je geweldige bacchanalen ter ere van haar? Drink je bloedwijn onder de volle maan, terwijl scharlaken kaarsen branden in zilveren houders? Stap je naakt het zeeschuim in, extatisch zingend naar je naamloze godin terwijl de golven je benen beroeren, likkend aan je dijen als de tongen van duizend luipaarden?’¹⁷

‘U houdt me voor het lapje,’ zei ze. ‘We doen niet van dat soort dingen die u beschrijft.’ Ze haalde diep adem. Shadow vermoedde dat ze tot tien aan het tellen was. ‘Nog meer koffie hier? Nog een mochaccino voor u, mevrouw?’ haar glimlach leek ontzettend op degene waarmee ze hen had begroet toen ze binnenkwamen.

Ze schudden hun hoofden en de serveerster draaide zich om om een andere klant te begroeten.

‘Daar,’ zei Wednesday, ‘loopt iemand die *‘het geloof niet heeft en de lol niet zal hebben.’* Chesterton. Een heuse paganist! Dus. Zullen we buiten de straat op gaan, Easter mijn schat, en de oefening herhalen? Erachter komen hoeveel voorbijgangers weten dat hun Easter-festival haar naam heeft van Eostre van de Dageraad? Eens kijken – ik weet het. We zullen het aan honderd mensen vragen. Voor elk van hen die de waarheid weet, mag je een van mijn vingers afsnijden en als die opraken mijn tenen; voor elke twintig die het niet weten zal jij een nacht de liefde met mij bedrijven. En jij hebt hier het voordeel – dit is immers San Francisco. Er lopen heidenen en paganisten en Wiccans genoeg op deze steile straten.’

Haar groene ogen keken naar Wednesday. Ze waren, besliste Shadow, precies dezelfde kleur als een blad in de lente als de zon er doorheen schijnt. Ze zei niets.

‘We *kunnen* het proberen,’ ging Wednesday verder. ‘Maar ik zou eindigen met tien vingers, tien tenen, en vijf nachten in jouw bed. Vertel me dus niet dat ze je aanbidden en je feestdag in acht nemen. Ze mompelen je naam, maar het heeft geen betekenis voor ze. Helemaal niets.’

Tranen stonden in haar ogen. ‘Dat weet ik,’ zei ze zachtjes. ‘Ik ben niet dom.’
‘Nee,’ zei Wednesday. ‘Dat ben je niet.’

Discussing *American Gods*

The biggest difficulty in this excerpt was the connection between Easter and Eostre that the author uses to show the correlation between the Germanic fertility goddess and the Christian Easter festival. The Dutch for Easter is ‘Pasen’, but then the whole connection with Eostre is lost to the reader, for the whole scene relies on the visual link between Easter and Eostre. Luckily it is made fairly apparent for the Dutch reader that it is about the Easter festival, plus the fact that the setting is clearly foreign and so keeping the names exotic might not be as jarring, but it requires some linguistic tricks to keep the scene intact, which may come across as artificial to the reader. The name ‘Wednesday’ is similarly a problem. Wednesday is Odin’s day of old, though more derived from his Anglo-Saxon name Woden; people who are unfamiliar with Norse mythology may be unaware of the connection, which is most likely exactly the author’s intent. However, here it is important to be consistent: translate all names, or translate none of them. Since some names would ruin parts of the plot in translation, all names remain as they were.

While this excerpt had few genre-specific problems, it is a great example of how the inherent meanings or visual aspects of names can be very difficult to translate to the target language – in this case Dutch – because of their importance to the characters and the story and the damage it would do to the story or scene if it were translated without a second thought. As stated in the previous chapter by Fernandes, translating names may be one of the most problematic aspects of translation because of how they tie to the character or the plot, and the character of Eostre, while minor, has an

important role to play that would be diminished by careless handling of her name and background. And this is not only true for her name in this novel; all gods have names that refer, openly or obliquely, to their backgrounds. Retaining these references in the target text is challenging, which is why sometimes the best option is to keep them as they are.

Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett - Good Omens

The third excerpt is of *Good Omens* by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, first published in 1990, though this excerpt is from the revised edition published in 2006. Here the setting is England, in a world where angels and demons are very much real and meddling with the world in the name of God and the Devil, though the authors stress that real good and evil is not made in heaven or hell, but is inside the human race itself. The book starts with the arrival of the Antichrist on earth to herald the apocalypse; the Antichrist arrives in baby form and is supposed to be swapped with the baby of an American diplomat. However, one of the attending nuns makes a mistake and swaps the baby with that of an English accountant instead. When both babies go home, both heaven and hell send people to the American diplomat's child, who is a normal human, to teach him good and evil, while the real Antichrist grows up undisturbed in Tadfield, England. When the apocalypse begins eleven years later this mistake causes the Antichrist to have no idea about who he is and what is being expected of him, namely to lead the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse to the end of the world. He only has this vague feeling that he wants to conquer the world, but lacks the theoretical background to discern why. In this story, the last days of the earth have been correctly predicted by the witch Agnes Nutter several centuries before, and it is her descendent, Anathema Device, who is now preparing herself for it; Agnes' prophecies have always come true before. The two scenes in the excerpt are about the demon Crowley - who was responsible for making sure the swapping of the babies went alright and is now also being held responsible for everything that went wrong after -

who is trying to get out of London and towards Tadfield, and about Adam the Antichrist, hiding in a grove with his friends, waiting for the Four Horsemen so that the apocalypse can begin.

The setting of this novel is England, more specifically London and Tadfield, where Crowley and Adam respectively live. The authors introduce the supernatural elements of angels and demons and witches as something quite natural, something that has always been there but never really occurred to the human race because they were simply stories to them. Of course, the angels and demons had strict order to keep themselves a secret, so any meddling with humans would be done circumspectly. And meddling is why they existed, though generally in small ways, being the little butterfly flapping its wings to cause a great storm a while later. All supernatural occurrences therefore seem quite small and easy to cover up, though it changes drastically when the apocalypse actually starts and no one is bothering to hide it anymore, which is made quite clear in the first part of this excerpt where Crowley, to the eyes of the humans, survives driving in a flaming car.

As with *American Gods*, this novel has few genre-specific problems next to the setting, but many names/realia that cause difficulties in translation to the target language, Dutch. While not all of them appear in this excerpt, again I've chosen to retain the names in their original format for the sake of consistency. Some names, like Crowley and Adam, could have working target language equivalence, but others, like Anathema Device and Newton Pulsifer, would lose in translation. Next to the names the merging of the supernatural with the contemporary setting so that it remains inherently logical takes some effort on the part of the translator, but other than that this novel's greatest challenge is that it is a satire, and the language used by the authors is aimed towards the goal of amusing their audience. Retaining that humour would most likely be the translator's main concern with this novel.

Goede Voorbodes

Terry Pratchett & Neil Gaiman

Je zou het niet als dezelfde auto hebben herkend. Er was bijna geen centimeter zonder deuken. Beide voorlampen waren gebroken. De wioldoppen waren allang verdwenen. Hij zag eruit als de veteraan van honderd sloopraces.

De trottoirs waren erg geweest. De voetgangerstunnel was nog erger. Het ergste was het oversteken van de rivier de Theems. Hij had tenminste de tegenwoordigheid van geest gehad om alle ramen te sluiten.

Toch had hij het gehaald.

Over een paar honderd meter zou hij op de M40 zijn; een redelijke vrije rit naar Oxfordshire. Er was nog maar een probleempje: tussen Crowley en de open weg lag nogmaals de M25. Een schreeuwend, gloeiend lint van pijn en donker licht.* *Odegra*. Niets kon het oversteken en dat overleven.

Niets sterfelijks in ieder geval. En hij wist niet zeker wat het zou doen met een demon. Het kon hem niet doden, maar plezierig zou het zeker niet zijn.

Er stond een politieversperring voor het viaduct voor hem. Uitgebrande wrakken –sommigen brandden nog – waren getuige van het lot van de vorige auto's die over het viaduct boven de donkere weg moesten rijden.

De politie zag er niet blij uit.

Crowley schakelde naar de tweede versnelling en trapte het gaspedaal ver in.

Hij reed met honderd door de versperring. Dat was het makkelijke gedeelte.

Voorvallen van spontane zelfontbranding staan in de hele wereld geregistreerd. Het ene moment is iemand vrolijk zijn leven aan het lijden; het volgende moment is er slechts een treurige foto van een hoopje as en een eenzame en mysterieus onverkoolde voet of hand. Voorvallen van spontane voertuigontbranding zijn minder goed gedocumenteerd.

Wat de statistieken ook waren, ze zijn zojuist met één omhoog gegaan.

De leren stoelbekleding begon te roken. Terwijl hij voor zich uit staarde, tastte hij linkshandig¹⁸ op de bijrijderstoel voor Agnes Nutter's Fijne en Accurate Profetieën¹⁹ en verhuisde deze naar de veiligheid van zijn schoot. Hij wou dat ze dit had voorspeld. † Daarna verzwelgde de vlammen de auto.

Hij moest door blijven rijden.

Aan de andere kant van het viaduct was nog een politieversperring, om de overtocht van auto's die London in probeerden te komen te voorkomen. Ze waren aan het lachen om een verhaal dat zojuist over de radio was verteld, dat een motoragent op de M6 een gestolen auto had aangehouden, enkel om te ontdekken dat de bestuurder een grote octopus was.

Sommige politiekorpsen geloofden ook alles. De Metropolitische politie niet. De Met was de meest taaie, cynisch pragmatische, koppig nuchtere politiekorps in heel Groot-Brittanië.

Er was veel voor nodig om een smeris van de Met van streek te maken.

Er was bijvoorbeeld een grote, beschadigde auto dat niets meer of minder was dan een vuurbal, een vlammend, brullend, verwrongen metalen wrak uit de Hel voor nodig, bestuurd door

¹⁸ It is an English car, so the driver's seat is to the right and the passenger seat to the left. I've doubted about whether to naturalise it to make it conform to the Dutch cars that Dutch readers will know, but it does not serve much purpose nor does keeping it as left-handed interfere with the story.

¹⁹ The title of the book in the source text is *Agnes Nutter's Nice and Accurate Prophecies*. As is described in the novel several times, "nice also means 'scrupulously exact'." (Pratchett & Gaiman, 45) With that in mind I had to think of a similar Dutch word which both has the 'nice' and 'exact' connotation, which of course the most common equivalent for 'nice' in Dutch, 'leuk', has not. The only translation of 'nice' which came close was 'fijn', which aside from the 'nice' aspect is also mentioned in the van Dale dictionary as meaning "in staat bijzondere onderscheiding te maken", with the connotations of quality, precision and purity attached. This together with 'accuraat' makes it perfectly clear to the readers that these prophecies are indeed very accurate.

een grijnzende gek met zonnebril gezeten tussen de vlammen, die dikke zwarte rook achterliet en recht op hen afkwam door de neerslaande regen en wind met een snelheid van honderddertig kilometer per uur.

Dat zou het elke keer weer doen.

~*~

De groeve was een kalm middelpunt in de stormachtige wereld.

Donder rommelde niet slechts boven hun hoofden, het scheurde de lucht in tweeën.

‘Er komen nog wat vrienden van me,’ herhaalde Adam. ‘Ze zullen hier snel zijn en dan kunnen we echt beginnen.’

Hond begon te huilen. Het was niet langer het betoverende gehuil van een eenzame wolf maar het vreemde getril van een kleine hond in grote problemen.

Pepper zat naar haar knieën te staren.

Ze leek iets op haar lever te hebben.

Eindelijk keek ze op en staarde Adam in zijn lege grijze ogen.

‘Welk stuk ga jij hebben, Adam?’ zei ze.

De storm was vervangen door een plotselinge, luide stilte.

‘Wat?’ zei Adam.

‘Nou, je hebt de wereld verdeeld, toch, en wij hebben allemaal een stuk gekregen – welk stuk ga jij hebben?’

De stilte zong als een harp, hoog en dun.

‘Ja,’ zei Brian. ‘Je hebt ons nooit verteld welk stuk jij gaat hebben.’

‘Pepper heeft gelijk,’ zei Wensleydale. ‘Het lijkt mij alsof er niet veel over is, als wij al deze landen gaan hebben.’

Adam’s mond ging open en dicht.

‘Wat?’ zei hij.

‘Welk stuk is van jou, Adam?’ zei Pepper.

Adam staarde haar aan. Hond was opgehouden met huilen en keek zijn meester met de onbeweeglijke, gespannen, peinzende blik van een vuilnisbakje aan.

‘I-ik?’ zei hij.

De stilte ging maar door, één noot dat de geluiden van de wereld kon overstemmen.

‘Maar ik zal Tadfield hebben,’ zei Adam.

Ze staarden hem aan.

‘En, en Lower Tadfield, en Norton, en Norton Woods—’

Ze staarden nog steeds.

Adam’s blik trok over hun gezichten heen.

‘Dat is alles wat ik ooit heb gewild,’ zei Adam.

Ze schudden hun hoofd.

‘Ik kan ze hebben als ik dat wil,’ zei Adam, zijn stem doorspikkeld met stuurse opstandigheid en zijn opstandigheid omrand met plotselinge twijfel. ‘Ik kan ze ook beter maken. Betere bomen om in te klimmen, betere vijvers, betere...’

Zijn stem stierf weg.

‘Dat kan je niet,’ zei Wensleydale mat. ‘Ze zijn niet Amerika en al die andere plekken. Ze zijn echt *echt*. Trouwens, ze behoren ons allemaal toe. Ze zijn van ons.’

‘En je kan ze niet beter maken,’ zei Brian.

‘Trouwens, zelfs al deed je dat, dan zouden we het allemaal weten,’ zei Pepper.

‘Oh, als dat alles is waar jullie je druk om maken, maak je dan geen zorgen,’ zei Adam luchtig, ‘want ik kan jullie toch allemaal laten doen wat ik wil, wat dan ook—’

Hij stopte, terwijl zijn oren met afschuw luisterden naar de woorden die zijn mond sprak. De Zij²⁰ waren aan het terugdeinzen.

Hond deed zijn poten over zijn hoofd.

Adam's gezicht zag eruit als de verpersoonlijking van de val van een keizerrijk.

'Nee,' zei hij schor. 'Nee. Kom terug. *Ik beveel het je!*'

Ze verstijfden midden in hun vlucht.

Adam staarde naar hen.

'Nee, ik meende het niet—' begon hij. 'Jullie zijn mijn vrienden—'

Zijn lichaam schokte. Zijn hoofd was achterover gegooid. Hij hief zijn armen op en beukte de lucht met zijn vuisten.

Zijn gezicht vertrok. De krietvloer barstte onder zijn schoenen.

Adam opende zijn mond en gilte. Het was een geluid dat een slechts sterfelijke keel niet zou hebben moeten kunnen voortbrengen; ze dreef uit de groeve²¹, mengde zich met de storm, zorgde dat de wolken zich verwrongen tot nieuwe en onaangename vormen.

²⁰ "It didn't matter what the four had called their gang over the years, [...] Everyone else always referred to them darkly as Them, and eventually they did too." (Pratchett & Gaiman, 135) 'Them' is what the neighbourhood these kids were 'terrorizing' called the four characters whenever they were referring to them, usually in the context of something bad that happened in their vicinity that the Them were blamed for. The Dutch equivalent of this pronoun would be 'zij', which also fits the context in which it was used. "Who did this?" "Them, who else?" / "Wie heeft dit gedaan? 'Zij, wie anders?" The other option was 'hen', but 'zij' is more informal and therefore more fitting. It can be argued that 'de Zij' is not grammatical in Dutch, but the same is true for 'the Them' in English, because the author has turned the pronoun into a name and therefore into a noun.

²¹ "...it wound out of the quarry..." The many options for 'wound', 'blazen', 'kronkelen', 'schallen', 'draaien', 'slingeren', all were not adequate in the sentence. Some were too strong (like 'schallen'),

Het ging door en door.

Het weergalmde door het universum, welke een stuk kleiner is dan de meeste natuurkundigen zouden geloven. Het rammelde aan de hemelse sferen.

Het sprak van verlies en het hield een hele lange tijd niet op.

En toen wel.

Iets stroomde weg.

Adam's hoofd zakte weer naar beneden. Zijn ogen gingen open.

Wat er ook hiervoor in de groeve had gestaan, Adam Young stond er nu. Een wijzere Adam Young, maar evengoed Adam Young. Mogelijkerwijs zelfs meer van Adam Young dan er ooit eerder was geweest.

De spookachtige stilte in de groeve was vervangen door een meer vertrouwde, behaaglijke stilte, slechts de simpele afwezigheid van geluid.

De bevrijdde Hen zaten in elkaar gedoken tegen de krijten klif, hun ogen op hem gericht.

'Het is goed,' zei Adam zachtjes. 'Pepper? Wensely? Brian? Kom terug. Het is goed. Het is goed. Ik weet alles nu. En jullie moeten me helpen. Anders gaat het allemaal gebeuren. Het gaat allemaal echt gebeuren. Het gaat allemaal gebeuren, als we niet iets doen.'

* Eigenlijk geen oxymoron. Het is de kleur na ultraviolet. De technische term ervoor is infrazwart. Het kan vrij makkelijk gezien worden onder experimentele omstandigheden. Om het experiment uit te voeren selecteer je simpelweg een gezonde bakstenen muur met een goede aanloop en storm je, met gebogen hoofd, erop af.

others did not fit the noun it was connected with. In Dutch, a 'kronkelend geluid' or a 'draaiend geluid' sounds rather odd. A viable option was a 'schallend geluid' but it was too strong a word in this context. After trying them all I finally settled on a synonym, 'drijven', which fit both the noun and the scene.

De kleur die in flitsen achter je ogen flikkert, achter de pijn, vlak voor je doodgaat, is infrazwart.

† Dat had ze. Er stond:

Een strate van lichte zal schreeuwen, de swarte coets van de Serpente sal flammen en een Kwiene sal niet langer kwiksilveren liederen singen.²²

Het grootste gedeelte van de familie had ingestemd met Gelatly Device, die rond 1830 een korte verhandeling had geschreven waarin het werd uitgelegd als een metafoor voor de verbanning van Weishaupt's Illuminati uit Beieren in 1785.

Discussing Good Omens

As mentioned, the difficulty with this novel is mostly that it is a satire; the writing style is often humorous, with short sentences to lead up to the pun. The scene with Crowley is meant to evoke laughter, but the scene with Adam would sooner be met with an indulging smile. The fact that angels and demons exist is taken completely for granted because it is a humorous book, and the angel and demon that are two of the main characters are really what you'd expect very old humans who've

²² "A street of light will scream, the black chariot of the Serpente will flayme, and a Queene wille sing quickfilveres songes no moar." A quick search in the Oxford English Dictionary reveals that the spelling of the words has no source and has sprouted from the fingers of the author only; 'flame' for example was never spelled 'flayme' according to the OED, nor was 'scream' ever spelled as 'screem' (though there were occurrences of 'skreem' and 'screme' in Middle English according to the OED.) For a fitting translation, I used the Old and Middle Dutch Dictionary and used either Old or Middle Dutch spelling for the nouns and verbs, using both forms of Dutch indiscriminately to make the prophecy look old. I also chose to change the band Queen's name to 'Kwiene', to keep the English pronunciation but making it look a little more Dutch, conforming with the rest of the sentence.

seen too much would be: not angelic, not monstrous, just doing their jobs in the eyes of heaven or hell. They are utterly without pretention and therefore very mundane for supernatural beings. In this scene with Crowley, he has to drive his car to a hell of his own making which, while not permanently harming him, is rather ironic; he hadn't thought to be inside his devised fiery prison when the apocalypse began, and he's escaping it to stop the world from ending. The most difficult part of this scene was bringing the humour across to the target language. The authors manage to sketch a very lively scene with just a few short sentences, and emulating that in Dutch proved rather difficult.

In the meantime Adam the Antichrist discovers he is actually very much human, capable of love, with some help from his friends, and realises that if he doesn't do something soon, everything he loves will come to an end. The change between Adam the Antichrist and Adam the Human was the challenge in this scene, to go from the unfeeling supernatural creature whose goal it was to destroy the world to the boy who would do anything to save it. In the end however, combining the supernatural with the mundane was fairly easy because of the humoristic writing. As a translator I was so intent on translating the puns that the rest becomes a part of that. Keeping the setting believable became inherent to keeping the humour as intact as possible, because part of the humour was a result of the setting, with angels and demons working together and the Antichrist being raised away from all evil influence by pure chance. Mostly *Good Omens* is a comment on how we are the product of our environment; the son of the Devil can learn to love, angels and demons learn that they can work together, and ultimately, good and evil comes not from outside influences, but from within. Keeping that message, while not specifically present in this excerpt, would be something to keep in mind while translating this novel.

Jim Butcher - The Dresden Files: Storm Front and Fool Moon

The last two excerpts are from the first two books in the *Dresden Files* series by Jim Butcher, *Storm Front* (2000) and *Fool Moon* (2001). The *Dresden Files* are about the only openly practicing

wizard private detective in the United States, Harry Dresden, whose office is in Chicago and who is asked to deal with many different things, from the horribly mundane to the horrifically supernatural. In Dresden's world, not many people believe in the existence of the supernatural and ignore or deny it, but that doesn't stop them from hiring a wizard to exorcise their houses (that usually aren't really haunted) and tentatively ask for help if there is something wrong that they can't explain. He also gets a lot of prank calls of people asking him if he's serious. To scrape by, Harry Dresden consults for the police on cases they cannot mundanely explain away, though lieutenant Murphy of the Special Investigation Unit trusts him about as far as she can throw him. Through his consultancy work for the police, Harry gets involved in big supernatural problems that threaten his life, his city and the people he knows/loves. It is a classic detective novel with a supernatural twist.

The setting of these novels is again a grim and dark Chicago, though an alternate universe from *A Hunger Like Fire*. In this Chicago, there are vampires, werewolves, witches, wizards, fae, ghouls, ghosts, angels and demons, basically everything supernatural a person can think of. All of these creatures live side by side with the normal humans, though hiding from them as much as they can. It is one of the secret rules of the supernatural society: don't tell the outsiders. Harry Dresden, the protagonist, violates this rule by being the only open practitioner of magic in the city, probably in the country. However, nobody really believes him, so this violation goes fairly unpunished. The challenge in this setting is to keep the supernatural side of the world grim, dark, and mysterious until Dresden himself discovers new facts. The novels are whodunits, with someone causing Dresden and lieutenant Murphy a lot of supernatural trouble until they discover and defeat the culprit.

Harry Dresden is a 30's detective; poor, gritty, cynical, but with an inherent sense of good to guide him; A cynical young man who has already seen too much strange stuff to believe in a good world anymore, but also has his own norms and values and a morality and sense of justice that point nearly due north. He has killed his own teacher in the arts because the man was trying to make him cross over the dark side and would sooner die than let innocents take any harm, but his dark sense of

humour and shabby clothing do not make him very likable. He also has a talking skull called Bob, a spirit bound to his skull to aid Harry in his magical endeavours. Dresden's Chicago is a gloomy city, where vampires, ghosts and gangsters reign.

The setting has two forms of 'government', the normal world in which the Chicago Police Department has its inner hierarchy, and the supernatural one in which there is a White Council of wizards that created the rules on the use of magic and enforces them with the aid of supernatural creatures like angels. Dresden is more of a rogue, and gets himself into trouble accordingly. The novel also has a fair few irrealia that require careful thought in translation, as will be expanded upon in the footnotes and below.

Storm Front

In the first novel, *Storm Front*, Dresden is confronted with black sorcerer who flaunts all the rules of magic to further his own ambition. Because Harry stands in the way of becoming the most powerful sorcerer of the Chicago area, he becomes an obvious target for the sorcerer's magical attacks. The first excerpt is the first few pages of the novel, a character introduction of Harry Dresden. The narrative is in the first-person point of view of Dresden himself, as he sits in his office waiting for a job. He's rather broke and desperately needs work, but can't really do much normal work because electrical machines tend to go haywire around him. In this particular scene a new mailman comes and makes fun of him, to which Harry gives a resigned response; he is used to people not believing him. When a real prospective client calls, he jumps at the chance, abstaining from his humoristic remarks to get the job. The author uses short, descriptive sentences to set the scene, and Dutch is hardly ever as concise as English can be, so translating in the same style proved difficult. In this particular scene there are no supernatural occurrences, but it shows the attitude of the world regarding magic and the supernatural; one of contempt, derision and ridicule. To be openly magical in such a world is not easy, which makes it rather hard for one in Harry's profession to earn the rent.

This is fairly usual in contemporary fantasy novels: the main characters are either supernatural beings or humans getting tangled up with supernatural things, but the one red thread in almost all contemporary fantasy novels is that the supernatural community hides from the mundane community. Harry Dresden is the odd one out in that he openly admits he is supernatural, magical, and for that gets the treatment we would expect such people to be given in our own world, being viewed as a quack. That feeling of being the resigned butt of oft-heard jokes was an important part of the scene, and getting that through in translation was a little difficult, especially in the direct exchange with the mailman, whose confusion and later contempt shows in the words he uses, the way he acts through the eyes of Harry. Life is not easy for Harry Dresden, and this first scene shows that very clearly.

Stormnacht

Jim Butcher

Hoofdstuk 1

Ik hoorde de postbode de deur van mijn kantoor naderen, een half uur eerder dan normaal. Hij klonk niet juist. Zijn voetstappen vielen zwaarder, kwieker, en hij fluitte. Een nieuwe. Hij fluitte zijn weg tot mijn kantoordeur, viel daarna even stil. Daarna lachte hij.

Daarna klopte hij aan.

Ik kromp ineen. Mijn post komt door de brievenbus tenzij het aangetekend is. Ik krijg maar een beperkt aantal aangetekende brieven en het is nooit goed nieuws. Ik stond op uit mijn bureaustoel en opende de deur.

De nieuwe postbode, die er uitzag als een basketbal met armen en benen en een zonverbrande, kalend hoofd, stond nog te grinniken om het bordje op het deurraam.

Hij keek me even aan en wees met z'n duim richting het bord. "Je maakt een grapje, toch?"

Ik las het bord (mensen veranderen het soms) en schudde mijn hoofd. “Nee, ik meen het. Mag ik alstublieft mijn post.”

Dus, ehm. Zoals feestjes, shows, dat soort dingen?” Hij keek langs me heen, alsof hij verwachtte een witte tijger te zien, of mogelijkere wijs een paar schaars geklede assistentes die rondansten in mijn eenkamerkantoer.

Ik zuchtte, ik was niet in de stemming om nog eens bespot te worden en reikte naar de post die hij in zijn handen hield. “Nee, niet dat soort dingen. Ik doe geen feestjes.”

Hij bleef vasthouden, met zijn hoofd een beetje scheef gehouden. “Dus wat dan? Soort van toekomstvoorspeller? Kaarten en kristallen bollen en zo?”

“Nee,” zei ik tegen hem. “Ik ben geen medium.” Ik trok aan de post.

Hij bleef vasthouden. “Wat ben je dan?”

“Wat staat er op het bord op de deur?”

“Er staat, ‘Harry Dresden. Magiër.’ ”

“Dat ben ik,” bevestigde ik.

“Een echte magiër?” vroeg hij, grijnzend, alsof ik hem de grap moest vertellen. “Spreuken en drankjes? Demonen en incantaties? Subtiel en snel boos te maken?”

“Niet zo heel subtiel.” Ik trok de post uit zijn hand en keek scherp naar zijn klembord. “Kan ik voor mijn post tekenen alstublieft?”

De grijns van de nieuwe postbode verdween, vervangen door een frons. Hij overhandigde me het klembord om me te laten tekenen voor mijn post (alweer een aanmaning van mijn huisbaas) en zei, “Je bent gek, dat is wat je bent.” Hij nam het klembord terug en zei, “Een prettige dag nog, meneer.”

Ik keek hem na.

“Typisch,” mompelde ik en sloot de deur.

Mijn naam is Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden. Bezweer ermee op eigen risico. Ik ben een magiër. Ik werk vanuit een kantoor in de binnenstad van Chicago. Voor zover ik weet ben ik de enige openlijk praktiserende professionele magiër in het land. Je kunt me vinden in de gouden gids, onder "Magiërs." Geloof het of niet, ik ben de enige die er staat. Mijn advertentie ziet er zo uit:

HARRY DRESDEN – MAGIËR

Verloren Voorwerpen Gevonden. Paranormale Onderzoeken.

Consultatie. Advies. Redelijke Prijzen.

Geen Liefdesdrankjes, Eindeloze Beurzen, Feestjes, of Ander Entertainment.

Het zou je verbazen hoeveel mensen me bellen enkel om te vragen of ik het meen. Maar toch, als je de dingen hebt gezien ik heb gezien, als je ook maar de helft wist van wat ik wist, zou je je afvragen hoe iemand *niet* kon denken dat ik het meende.

Het einde van de twintigste eeuw en het begin van het nieuwe millenium had een soort renaissance gezien in het publieke besef van het paranormale. Mediums, geesten, vampiers – noem maar op. Mensen namen ze nog steeds niet serieus, maar alle dingen die de Wetenschap ons had beloofd waren niet gebeurd. Ziekte was nog steeds een probleem. Verhongering was nog steeds een probleem. Geweld en misdaad en oorlog waren nog steeds problemen. Ondanks de ontwikkeling van technologie waren dingen gewoon niet veranderd op de manier waarop iedereen had gehoopt dat ze zouden doen.

Wetenschap, de grootste religie van de twintigste eeuw, was een beetje bezoedeld door beelden van ontploffende spaceshuttels, drugsbaby's en een generatie van zelfingenomen Amerikanen die hadden toegelaten dat de televisie hun kinderen opvoedde. Men was op zoek naar iets – ik denk dat ze gewoon niet wisten wat. En hoewel ze opnieuw waren begonnen met hun ogen te openen voor de wereld van magie en het esoterische die de hele tijd bij hen was geweest, dachten ze nog steeds dat het een soort grap moest zijn.

In ieder geval, het was een lange maand geweest. Een paar lange maanden, eigenlijk. Mijn huur voor februari werd kon ik niet betalen tot de tiende van maart en het zag er naar uit dat het nog langer zou zijn tot ik genoeg had verzameld voor deze maand.

Mijn enige klus was vorige week geweest, toen ik naar Branson, Missouri ging om een mogelijk bezeten huis van een countryzanger te onderzoeken. Dat was het niet. Mijn client was niet blij met dat antwoord en was zelfs nog minder blij toen ik voorstelde dat hij moest stoppen met stimulerende middelen en proberen om wat beweging en slaap te krijgen, en dan te kijken of dat niet meer hielp dan een exorcisme. Ik had reiskosten plus een uurloon gekregen en was weggegaan met het gevoel dat ik het eerlijke, juiste en onpraktische ding had gedaan. Ik hoorde later dat hij een gewetenloos medium had ingehuurd om een ceremonie met heel veel wierook en zwarte kaarsen²³ te laten doen. Sommige mensen.

Ik las mijn paperback uit en gooide het in de doos met GEDAAN er op. Er lag een stapel van gelezen en weggelegde paperbacks in een kartonnen doos aan de ene kant van mijn bureau, de ruggen gebogen en de pagina's gescheurd. Ik ben vreselijk hard voor mijn boeken. Ik bekeek de stapel met ongelezen boeken, twijfelend over welke ik daarna zou beginnen, aangezien ik niet bepaald echt werk te doen had, toen mijn telefoon overging.

Ik staarde er een beetje kribbig naar. Wij magiërs zijn geweldig in broeden.²⁴

²³ "...a lot of incense and black lights." Lights and candles are similar but not the same thing. Still, I chose to translate to candles because it is more occult, and also because the direct translations of light, 'lamp' and 'licht', don't fit well with the adjective 'black' in this context. Black lights exist, but they are not very occult and probably not used in an attempt to drive out a spirit. Candles are used in such a manner, especially black ones.

²⁴ 'Brooding' is another good example of an English word that's difficult to translate because of its layered connotations. On the surface it means being deep in thought, usually with negative emotions attached, but it calls up all kinds of images for the reader, especially in connection with a wizard who

Nadat de telefoon voor de derde keer was overgegaan, toen ik dacht dat ik niet een beetje té gretig zou klinken, pakte ik de hoorn op en zei, "Dresden."

"Oh. Is dit, ehm, Harry Dresden? De, eh, magiër?" Haar toon was verontschuldigend, alsof ze ontzettend bang was dat ze me zou beledigen.

Nee, dacht ik. Het is Harry Dresden de, eh, agrariër.²⁵ Harry de magiër zit hiernaast.

Het is het voorrecht van magiërs om humeurig te zijn. Het is echter niet het voorrecht van freelance consultants die laat zijn met hun huur, dus in plaats van iets bijdehands te zeggen, zei ik tegen de vrouw aan de telefoon, "Ja mevrouw. Waarmee kan ik u vandaag van dienst zijn?"

are, as the text suggest, famous for their brooding. The options in the target language were 'piekeren', 'peinzen', 'tobben' and 'broeden. 'Piekeren' is more stress in thought than 'brooding' is and 'tobben' is too much insecurity and doubts and not so much deep thinking, so those were out. That left 'peinzen' and 'broeden', of which the latter was obviously the direct translation, only it has the second meaning of breeding as well. There is no such problem with 'peinzen', but it is more thinking about a specific problem than random thought. I therefore finally chose 'broeden', since it should be clear enough that it is not meant as 'breeding' in this context.

²⁵ "Oh. Is this, um, Harry Dresden? The, ah, wizard?" [...] No, I thought. It's Harry Dresden the, ah, lizard."

The joke is rather weak and must stay that way in translation. There are several options that rhyme with 'magiër': dalmatiër, ariër, agrariër, vegetariër, and 'magistraat' is also an option, not end rhyme but alliteration. 'Ariër' is not an option because of the negative connotations to that word.

'Magistraat' sounds out of place and not really Harry's type of humour, which is very dry. If we wish to stay in the animal kingdom (wizard, lizard) then 'dalmatiër' would be the only option, but I opted to go with 'agrariër' because then the 'g' is still present in the word so the sound rhymes as well as the end.

Fool Moon

In *Fool Moon*, a couple of excessively violent killings during a full moon get Harry employed by the police again, and werewolves seem the obvious cause. But then Harry discovers that what he knows of werewolves is quite different from the actual facts about the creatures. The second excerpt, from this novel, shows Dresden in discussion with his spirit skull Bob about the many types of werewolves. Far from what Harry – and the reader – know about werewolves, it appears that in this universe there are five types, with each their own different characteristics, apart from the wolf part of course, that is the same in most of them. The author here uses terms for werewolves in several different languages for each type, and keeping them apart is difficult for Harry, let alone the reader who knows less of magic. All but one type of these werewolves are not immune to silver and can be killed quite easily. Conforming the supernatural with what is known and making the difference with what is viewed as common knowledge about werewolves was the challenge in this excerpt, as well as keeping true to Harry's character when responding to all this new information. Since werewolves are already fairly known in the real world and there is not really a case of an unknown fantasy culture in this excerpt, combining two worlds and cultures is not really the case here. Still, this supernatural world is clearly different from what people assume it to be, and the author uses that to stay original in the ever-growing field of contemporary fantasy novels.

Wolvenmaan²⁶

Jim Butcher

“Oke. Ik kan aan deze beginnen. Hoeveel weet je over weerwolven, Bob?”

“Genoeg. Ik was in Frankrijk tijdens de Inquisitie.” Bob’s stem was droog (maar dat was te verwachten, als je erover nadacht).

[...]

“Heel veel weerwolverie gaande dan?”

“Meen je dat?” zei Bob. “Het was dé plek voor weerwolven. We hadden alle soorten weerwolven die je je kan bedenken. Hexenwolven, weerwolven, lykantropen en loup-garou ook nog eens. Elke vorm van wolfachtige theriomorf die je je kan bedenken.

“Therro-watte?” zei ik.

“Theriomorf,” zei Bob. “Alles wat verandert van een menselijke in een dierlijke vorm. Weerwolven zijn theriomorfen. Net zoals weerberen, weertijgers, weerbuffels...”

“Buffels?” vroeg ik.

“Zeker. Sommige Indiaanse sjamanen konden een buffel doen. Maar bijna iedereen doet roofdieren en tot vrij recentelijk waren wolven het engste roofdier dat wie dan ook in Europa kon bedenken.”

²⁶ The original title is *Fool Moon*, which has a double meaning. The first is that ‘fool’ sounds like ‘full’, and the book is about werewolves; a full moon plays a rather big role when it comes to werewolves. The second is the meaning of the word ‘fool’, foolish, silly, crazy, in reference to the fact that people tend to do the most idiotic things when the moon is full. Since there is no direct translation for *Fool Moon*, the translator must once again choose between the two meanings: wolves, or foolishness. The options I’ve considered are *Volle Maan*, *Zotte Maan* and *Wolvenmaan*. I finally chose *Wolvenmaan* because *Volle Maan* is very cliché and the wolf still has the connotation of unpredictability as well as werewolves.

“Eh, oke,” zei ik. “En er is een verschil tussen typen weerwolven?”

“Precies,” bevestigde Bob. “Meestal hangt het er van af hoe je van menselijke naar wolvenvorm gaat en hoeveel menselijkheid je weet vast te houden. Laat de koffie niet aanbranden.”

Ik draaide geërgerd de vlam onder beker met koffie naar beneden. “Weet ik, weet ik. Oke dan. Hoe wordt je een wolf?”

“De klassieke weerwolf,” zei Bob, “is simpelweg een mens die magie gebruikt om zichzelf in een wolf te veranderen.”

“Magie? Zoals een magiër?”

“Nee,” zei Bob. “Nou ja, soort van. Hij is zoiets als een magiër die alleen maar weet hoe hij die ene spreuk moet doen, degene die hem in een wolf veranderd, en hoe hij er weer uit moet komen. De meeste mensen die leren weerwolf te zijn er een tijdje niet heel erg goed erin, omdat ze al hun menselijkheid behouden.”

“Wat bedoel je?”

“Nou,” zei Bob, “ze kunnen zichzelf veranderen naar de vorm van een wolf, maar het is eigenlijk gewoon anatomie. Ze herschikken hun fysieke lichaam, maar hun geest blijft hetzelfde. Ze kunnen nadenken en redeneren en hun persoonlijkheid verandert niet – maar ze hebben niet het instinct en de reflexen van een wolf. Ze zijn gewend om zicht-gerichte tweevoeters te zijn, niet reuk-gerichte viervoeters. Ze zouden alles vanaf het begin moeten leren.”

“Waarom zou iemand zoiets doen?” zei ik. “Gewoon leren om in een wolf te veranderen, bedoel ik.”

“Je bent nooit een boer in middeleeuws Frankrijk geweest, Harry,” zei Bob. “Het leven was hard voor die mensen. Nooit genoeg te eten, of onderdak, of medicijnen. Als je jezelf een warme vacht en de mogelijkheid naar buiten te gaan om je eigen vlees te jagen kon geven, zou je de kans ook met beide handen aanpakken.”

“Oke, ik denk dat ik het heb,” zei ik. “Heb je zilveren kogels ofzo nodig? Verander je in een weerwolf als je wordt gebeten?”

“Bah,” zei Bob. “Nee. Hollywood heeft dat gejat van de vampieren. En het zilveren-kogel- ding is alleen in speciale gevallen. Weerwolven zijn net als gewone wolven. Je kan ze net zoals bij een echte wolf met wapens verwonden.”

“Dat is goed nieuws,” zei ik, terwijl ik in het drankje roerde. “Wat voor andere soorten zijn er?”

“Er is nog een versie van een weerwolf – als iemand magie gebruikt om je in een wolf te veranderen.”

Ik keek even naar hem op. “Gedaanteverandering? Dat is illegaal, Bob. Het is een van de Wetten van Magie. Als je iemand in een dier verandert, vernietigt het hun persoonlijkheid. Je kan iemand niet transformeren zonder zijn geest te vernietigen. Het is zo goed als moord.”

“Yea. Handig he? Maar eigenlijk kunnen de meeste persoonlijkheden de transformatie overleven. Voor even tenminste. Mensen met een heel erg sterke wil kunnen hun menselijke herinneringen en persoonlijkheid voor enkele jaren vasthouden. Maar vroeg of laat zijn ze reddeloos verloren en heb je enkel nog een wolf over.”

Ik wendde me van de drankjes af om iets in mijn notitieboekje te schrijven. “Oke. Hoe maak je nog meer een weerwolf?”

“De meest gebruikelijke manier, toen in Frankrijk, was om een deal te maken met een demon, een duivel of een krachtige magiër. Je neemt een wolvenhuidriem, doet hem om, zegt de magische woorden en tadaaa, je bent een wolf. Een Hexewolf.”

“Is dat niet net zoals de eerste?”

“Nee, helemaal niet. Je gebruikt niet je eigen magie om een wolf te worden. Je gebruikt dat van iemand anders.”

Ik fronste. “Is dat niet als de tweede dan?”

“Doe niet zo dom,” beriste Bob me. “Het is anders omdat je er een talisman voor gebruikt. Soms is het een ring of een amulet, maar meestal is het een riem. De talisman fungeert als een anker voor een geest van dierlijke woede. Akelige dingen van de slechte kant van de Nevernever²⁷. De geest wikkelt zich om een menselijke persoonlijkheid om ervoor te zorgen dat deze niet wordt vernietigd.”

“Een soort van isolatie,” zei ik.

“Precies. Het zorgt ervoor dat je je eigen intellect en ratio behoudt, maar de geest bestuurt alle andere dingen.”

Ik fronste. “Klinkt een beetje makkelijk.”

“Ja, tuurlijk,” zei Bob. “Het is heel erg makkelijk. En als je een talisman gebruikt om in een wolf te veranderen, verlies je al je menselijke remmingen enzo en functioneer je alleen nog maar op je onbewuste verlangens, met de talisman-geest in controle over de manier waarom het lichaam beweegt. Het is heel efficient. Een gigantische wolf met menselijke intelligentie en dierlijke woestheid.”

[...]

Bob zei niets terwijl ik de ingrediënten toevoegde en toen ik daarmee klaar was zei ik, “de meeste mensen hebben niet de kracht om zo’n geest te controleren, denk ik. Het zou hun acties beïnvloeden. Misschien ze zelfs beheersen. Hun bewustzijn onderdrukken.”

“Ja, en?”

“Dus het klinkt meer alsof je een monster scheidt.”

²⁷ The ‘NeverNever’ is a setting-specific term, the name of the supernatural parallel world where various supernatural creatures like spirits, demons and fae reside. The Dutch translation would be ‘NooitNooit’, but that sounds rather peculiar in Dutch. Because it is a setting-specific term there’s no direct need to translate it and therefore I’m letting it stand.

“Het is effectief,” zei Bob. Ik weet niets over het goede of het slechte ervan. Dat is iets waar alleen stervelingen zich druk over maken.”

“Hoe noemde je deze smaak ook alweer?”

“Hexenwolf,” zei Bob met een sterk Duits accent. “Toverwolf. De Kerk had de oorlog verklaard aan iedereen die ervoor koos een Hexenwolf te worden en gooide een groot aantal mensen op de brandstapel.”

“Zilveren kogels?” vroeg ik. “Gebeten worden en in een weerwolf veranderen?”

“Wil je ophouden voor dat hele ‘gebeten worden en in een weerwolf veranderen’-ding, Harry?” zei Bob. “Het werkt zo niet. Nooit niet. Of je zou binnen een paar jaar over de hele wereld weerwolven hebben rondrennen.”

“Oke, oke,” verzuchtte ik. “En de zilveren kogels?”

“Die heb je niet nodig.”

“Oke,” zei ik en ging verder met het opschrijven van informatie om samen te voegen in een verslag voor Murphy. “*Hexenwolf*. Begrepen. Nog meer?”

“Lykantropen,” zei Bob.

“Is dat geen psychologische aandoening?”

“Het kan ook een psychologische aandoening zijn,” zei Bob. “Maar het was eerst realiteit. Een lykantroop is een natuurlijke geleider voor een geest van woede. Een lykantroop verandert in een beest, maar enkel in zijn hoofd. De geest neemt het over. Het tast de manier waarop hij denkt en doet aan, maakt hem aggressiever, sterker. Ze schijnen ook erg goed bestand tegen pijn, verwondingen of ziektes te zijn; ze genezen vliegensvlug – dat soort dingen.”

“Maar ze veranderen niet daadwerkelijk in een wolf?”

“Geef die jongen een snoepje²⁸,” zei Bob. “Ze zijn gewoon mensen ook, maar ze zijn ontzettend fel. Ooit gehoord van de Noorse berserkers? Die gasten waren lykantropen, denk ik. En ze worden geboren, niet gemaakt.”

Ik roerde in het stimuleringsdrankje en zorgde ervoor dat het gelijkmatig sudderde. “En wat was de laatste? Loep watte?”

“Loup-garou,” zei Bob. “Of dat was de naam die Etienne L’Enchanteur²⁹ voor ze gebruikte, voor hij op de brandstapel belandde. De loup-garou zijn de grootste monsters, Harry. Iemand heeft ze vervloekt om een wolfachtige demon te worden en meestal tijdens de volle maan. Die persoon moet ook heel krachtig zijn, zoals een grote machtige magiër, een demonenheer of een van de Feekoninginnen. Wanneer de volle maan opkomt, veranderen ze in een monster, gaan los³⁰ en slachten alles en iedereen wat op hun pad komt af tot de maan ondergaat of de zon opkomt.

²⁸ My first reaction at seeing the word ‘Kewpie’ in the source text was that it must be some kind of American candy, so I naturalised it to ‘snoepje’. After a little research however it turned out a Kewpie is a doll, which made little sense. I decided to keep the word ‘snoepje’ because the phrase “Geef die jongen een popje” is not something that would be uttered in Dutch in response to someone giving a good answer or something similar.

²⁹ ‘Etienne the Enchanter’ could be directly translated to ‘Etienne de Tovenaar.’ However, ‘Etienne de Tovenaar’ sounds a bit like a character in a children’s book and not so much like a serious medieval mage. Since Etienne is French and the Dutch, having once been conquered by the French which left them with quite a few new French words in their language, are no strangers to French words in their texts, I decided to make it ‘Etienne L’Enchanteur’.

³⁰ The English phrase ‘killing spree’ can be translated into Dutch, such as “moordpartij” or ‘moordtocht’. However, ‘going on a killing spree’ appeared to be more difficult to fit correctly into a Dutch sentence, because every option threw off the rhythm of the sentence. I therefore opted for the verb ‘losgaan’, which still holds the connotation of someone losing it completely, while the

Een plotselinge koude rilling ging door me heen, en ik huiverde. “Wat nog meer?”

“Bovennatuurlijke snelheid en kracht. Bovennatuurlijke wreedheid. Hun verwondingen genezen bijna meteen, als ze al gewond raken. Ze zijn immuun tegen gif en tegen elk soort toverkunst dat op de hersenen is gericht. Moordmachines.”

“Klinkt geweldig. Ik neem aan dat dit niet al te vaak is gebeurd? Ik had er dan tot nu toe wel eens iets van gehoord.”

“Precies,” zei Bob. “Niet vaak. Meestal weet de arme vervloekte drommel genoeg om zichzelf ergens op te sluiten, of om de wildernis in te gaan. De laatste grote loup-garou rooftocht gebeurde in de omgeving van Gevaudan, Frankrijk, in de zestiende eeuw. Meer dan tweehonderd mensen werden gedood in iets meer dan een jaar.”

“Jezus Christus,” zei ik. “Hoe hebben ze het tegengehouden?”

“Ze hebben het gedood,” zei Bob. “Dit is waar de zilveren kogels eindelijk van pas komen, Harry. Enkel een zilveren wapen kan een loup-garou verwonden, en dat niet alleen, het zilver moet geërfd zijn van een familielid. Geërfde zilveren kogels.”

“Echt waar? Waarom zou dat werken en niet normaal zilver?”

“Ik maak de wetten van de magie niet, Harry. Ik weet alleen wat ze zijn en heb er een idee van wanneer ze veranderen. Die is niet veranderd. Ik denk dat het misschien iets te maken met het element van opoffering.”

Discussing *Storm Front* and *Fool Moon*

With these two excerpts, the most of the attention in translating went to keeping the setting straight, keeping the characters true to nature, think of the irrealia and focus especially on wordplay.

killing-part is being described in the rest of the sentence as it talks about slaughtering everyone in sight.

The author, Jim Butcher, gives the impression that he likes to play with language, making puns and jokes, but also expressing cynicism, sarcasm, emotion, by carefully choosing the words to fit with the expression of such a feeling in a written medium. This was one of the main difficulties with these excerpts, to achieve the same feeling in the target language. Harry Dresden is introduced as a cynical character with a dry sense of humour, which is expressed in the way he responds to the mailman ("Subtle and quick to anger?" / "Not so subtle" (Butcher, 2) and his anonymous caller ("Oh. Is this, um, Harry Dresden? The, ah, wizard?" [...] No, I thought. It's Harry Dresden the, ah, lizard" (Butcher, 4). The first few pages of the first novel are very much a character setting, introducing the reader to the protagonist as well as to his writing style. Keeping that consistent and believable is one of the challenges of the book, especially since it is all from a first person point of view; the reader is in the protagonist's head. Since this will be the case through the entire novel, the first impression is fairly vital, which was one of the main concerns in the first excerpt. In the second excerpt the most challenges were presented by the interaction between Harry and his magic skull Bob, and the subject of their dialogue. There was one case of irrealia, the "NeverNever", which would suffer in translation, and all the other problematic areas were once again because of wording and wordplay. With first person point of view, the translator should keep in mind that every word must come from the same character, so keeping things consistent might be more difficult with such novels. The short sentences and the humoristic take on things by the protagonist are vital to take into account while translating. As for believability of the setting, it can be presumed that if the character is believable in translation, so could the setting be, for the reader views the setting through the protagonist's eyes.

Translating contemporary fantasy is a little bit of both translating contemporary fiction and translating fantasy. Some novels are chiefly set in the supernatural culture within the real world, some alternate between the two and some are predominantly contemporary with just a few fantasy elements mixed in. When translating contemporary fantasy the translator has to take both the modern and the fantasy into account, and make sure that they clash where the author intends them

to clash and mingle where the author intends them to mingle through a clever use of words. While having a little bit of both settings, all in all translating contemporary fantasy does not really differ from translating normal fantasy. In both types you have to take both existing and original cultures into account that live side by side or mingle, in both types there may be occurrences of genre-specific realia, in both types the supernatural elements may be either dominant or subtle, and in both types the willing suspension of disbelief from the reader has to be maintained in the translation. The only way contemporary fantasy differs from normal fantasy is that it is grounded in reality instead of imagination, but reality may be just as twisted as imagination sometimes is.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to discover and describe some of the common points of interest in translating fantasy for adults, as the author was quick to discover that very few literary articles existed concerning the subject; near all articles about translating fantasy was focussed on doing so in children's literature, even though adult fantasy fiction is a very large portion of the genre. Translating fantasy is unlike translating contemporary fiction because the translator has to take original additions into account while translating; additions to the setting, culture, and genre-specific irrealia. Especially with such original additions, continuance is very important, so the translator has to read the source text very carefully to keep everything internally consistent and logical, for the sake of the reader's willing suspense of disbelief. The author sometimes relies heavily on the ability to imagine the new surroundings in describing them, so the translator has to make sure to be just as descriptive in the target text without drastically altering the content. These things are not unique to translating a fantasy novel, but may be doubly so important because what is being described may be something that has sprouted from the author's imagination, and the description they wrote is the only thing the reader has to go on when it comes to that person, place or object.

The most important thing that sets a fantasy novel apart is the setting; a fantasy novel is most often only named such because the story plays in an original setting, a magical world created by the author that has little to no connection to earth. In this setting, a story of every type of genre, detectives, horror, thrillers, romance, everything is possible; the author has only chosen to set the story against a background of his own imagination. The setting of a fantasy novel often relies on its culture to make it internally consistent: the fantasy culture may be, or may be related to, existing historic cultures, may be a mix of several cultures, may be an existing culture with new elements or may be a wholly new culture, though the last one is rare. The next important thing that sets a fantasy novel apart is magic. A fantasy novel will not be called such without magical beasts and races,

magical objects, magical or supernatural elements. Fantasy is associated with wizards, dragons, mythology, and each of these have magic.

While translating a fantasy novel, the translator has to take several things into account. First, the way the setting interacts with the story; the setting may be a simple backdrop or may have a tangible role in the plot. Second, the way the characters interact with the setting; a setting is only as real as the characters make it to be, so the translator needs to make sure there are no jarring elements in the translation. Third, the underlying meanings of many of the names in a fantasy novel; most names in fantasy literature refer to the character's background, personality, looks, even intent. Translating such underlying meanings is difficult, but should be attempted with every name that requires translation. Fourth, the whole is as good as the sum of its parts. All these things are separately important, but the most important is that they all work together to form the novel in translation.

Translating contemporary fantasy is not all that different from translating normal fantasy. While the background setting is reality with a twist, still things like names, magic and cultural differences are an important part of the story, so all the things that apply to translating fantasy also apply to its sub-genre of contemporary fantasy. In the five excerpts translated for the purpose of putting the investigated theory into practice, one of the translation problems that most often came to the fore was the introduction of genre-specific irrealia by the author. Since such irrealia are significant for the story and story dynamics, translating them requires some thought from the translator. Another common problem in these excerpts was the style used by the author to create a setting, and to have the characters interact with it. Especially for the first person novels (*A Hunger Like Fire*, *The Dresden Files*), where the reader perceives the setting through the protagonist's eyes, the description of the scene and setting is doubly important, since it also gives insight into the protagonist's mind. The character names in these excerpts also posed a problem, especially when their original form was paramount to the scene dynamics, as was the case with Easter in *American*

Gods. Lastly, consolidating the supernatural occurrences with the contemporary setting was also one of the translation challenges in these excerpts. It can be concluded that in these five excerpts, the theory as discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis applied.

In short, while translating fantasy novels for adults, the translator has to take a few key differences from contemporary fiction into account, but aside from those, translating fantasy is much like translating other types of fiction. Tension, dialogue, description, humour, names, all these things may pose difficulties for a translator, and all can be found in fantasy as well as in most types of fiction. The key is to see them in perspective with the view of the author when he decided to set his story against an imaginary background and work from there.

Appendix A – Original Source Texts

A Hunger Like Fire

Greg Stolze

Bella leans back a little and raises her nose defensively. She's getting ready to defend her position when the sound of a gong cascades through the room.

Prince Maxwell has arrived.

"All stand!"

That's not Maxwell's voice, of course, it's a guy named Garret McLean, and he's impossible to ignore. It's as if his voice shudders through us, the way his hammer shivered the gong. The younger vampires start to their feet like sentries caught slouching. The older ones, Solomon Birch in particular, rise with more gravitas, projecting a fine subtext of *I don't have to stand, but I'm choosing to stand.*

Garret processes in, stately and serious, holding aloft a plain mahogany box about four feet long, six inches deep and six wide. He's making a gradual beeline towards the empty chair at the bottom of the amphitheater. It's big, baroque and old. He's about halfway there when Maxwell enters behind him.

The Prince of Chicago is not really tall – five-nine, maybe five-foot-ten. About my height. Though if he really was born around 1800, he must have been a giant in his day. He's stocky, dressed in a conservative Phat Farm sweater, the kind Bill Clinton wears. He has high, prominent cheekbones and a calm, genial appearance. Tonight, he's grandpa getting ready to cut the turkey at Thanksgiving.

My "sire."

By the time he reaches the chair, McLean has opened the box and produced (with suitable small flourishes) a shiny metal sword. Maxwell sits on the throne and McLean hands him the weapon. Maxwell unsheathes it and lays the naked blade across his knees, and it's hard to explain his expression when he does this. It's ambiguous, oblique. You can read it as an absolute commitment to

the cause that all this pomp represents. You can read it as straight-faced irony, a double bladed visage that mocks this pretentious formality by perfecting it. You can read it as a constrained tyranny, a reined-in contempt for the ceremony that says, “I don’t need this ridiculous metal stick to enforce my will.”

His expression alters, and for a moment I’m *certain* that he winked at me. Then I see the movements, the shifts of posture through the gallery and I realize just how many of us had the same thought.

The ones up front, the elders – Solomon, Scratch, Rowen – they aren’t convinced. The middle range, like Bella, they shake it off after a moment. But the youngsters, the fledglings, those of us farthest away, up by the free drinks... most of us fall for it.

I glance at the unbound. Raphael looks puzzled. Ambrose is frowning. I can’t tell if they were fooled or not.

“We are the Damned,” Maxwell begins, “And yet we are not so fallen that we cannot make more of ourselves than we are. We are, by inclination, solitary hunters, but we find ourselves tonight in peaceful company. We carry in every drop of our blood a polluting cruelty... but steeped in hunger though we may be, humanity remains. Cold eyes yet seek beauty,” he says, gesturing about the hall, and he’s right. Despite its eeriness or maybe because of it, the austere display is thrilling. “A stilled heart still craves companionship. Thus, Elysium. Thus, our court. Thus, our covenants. All our higher impulses – all that raises us above brute predation – all the good that lingers, is displayed here tonight.”

He says something like this every time, some corny opening remark, but from him, it’s not trite. From him, it’s a ray of hope in the red darkness. Tonight, as every night, the crowd applauds.

“My dear fellow Kindred, please – be seated. We have with us tonight two visitors,” he says, gesturing to the two strangers. As I’m sure he intended, everyone else looks at them. Raphael stands up straight and I feel a trickle of regard for him, he’s Pushing Out but it’s weak and artificial, spread

too thin over souls too jaded. He's trying to warm our gazes, but it's like lighting a match in a locker full of frozen meat.

Ambrose just acts resigned.

"May I introduce our guests for the evening?" He gives them a tight, tolerating smile. "I know you may find the formality of our gatherings somewhat stifling, but please. Humor us with your names, and a recitation of your lineage."

Raphael meets his gaze. "I'm Raphael Ladue, and my sire was Old John."

I have no idea who the hell Old John is, but apparently others do. Many pale faces crane around to look at him with new interest, and most of the interested parties are sitting up front, where the power is. Rowen doesn't turn, but everyone else in the front row does, expressions all carefully blank. A few rows back, there are Kindred who can't repress fear.

"My, my," Maxwell says. "A notorious lineage indeed. And your companion?"

"I'm Ambrose Masterson and I was Embraced by the Unholy."

That gets *everyone* looking. All but the newest of us know who the Unholy is. It's like saying your dad is the boogeyman.

"Bullshit," says a voice from the middle, a man in an impeccably beautiful suit with skin like alabaster.

Ambrose bares his fangs, and we can all see that his teeth are inhuman, needle-sharp and unnaturally long. Not like Scratch, though. Where Scratch's mouth is a wreck, a mistake of nature. This mouth looks carefully evolved to pierce and shred.

"Yes," the Prince says. "I remember you now. From the DNC." Ambrose narrows his eyes and nods.

(Did Maxwell say "D & C" – meaning an abortion? Or was it "DNC," the Democratic National Convention with the riots? Or is it something else entirely?)

Maxwell goes on. "Despite their... well-known heritage, our guests have opted to ignore our

hospitality in the past. Nonetheless, it is my hope that you will all join me in extending them courteous welcome tonight.

“Our guests share with us a common problem. We are both concerned with the actions of one Bruce Miner. Garret, if you’d be so good...? I’m quite helpless when it comes to programming VCRs.” The line gets a laugh.

While he was talking, Garret wheeled in a big screen TV, which he now pokes at until a recorded news show comes on. The story is about a man in Cicero resisting arrest and fleeing the cops, and in the middle of it they show grainy cop-cam footage of a burly guy in filthy coveralls struggling with a policeman. The two of them lurch out of the camera’s coverage for a moment, and then the officer comes flying across the hood of the car. It’s dramatic, the more so for being silent.

The somber news anchor fills in what I already heard – wife and daughter bled out, snapped handcuffs, et cetera.

They juxtapose a still frame from the video and what’s obviously a cropped snapshot from some neighbor’s scrapbook. The former is basically just a grey blur, pretty much what we all see in the mirror whenever we bother to look. The latter is a depressingly average white guy with bad hair.

When the segment ends, there’s a silent moment.

“Comments?” Maxwell says at last.

Scratch stands. “Ice him,” he says. “He’s from my clan, he shares my curse and still I say ice him.”

American Gods

Neil Gaiman

There was a woman sitting on the grass, under a tree, with a paper tablecloth spread in front of her, and a variety of Tupperware dishes on the cloth.

She was – not fat, no, far from fat: what she was, a word that Shadow had never had cause to use until now, was *curvaceous*. Her hair was so fair that it was white, the kind of platinum blonde tresses that should have belonged to a long-dead movie starlet, her lips were painted crimson, and she looked to be somewhere between twenty-five and fifty.

As they reached her she was selecting from a plate of devilled eggs. She looked up as Wednesday approached her, and put down the egg she had chosen, and wiped her hand. ‘Hello, you old fraud,’ she said, but she smiled as she said it, and Wednesday bowed low, took her hand and raised it to his lips.

He said, ‘You look divine.’

‘How the hell else should I look?’ she demanded, sweetly. Anyway, you’re a liar. New Orleans was *such* a mistake – I put on, what, thirty pounds there? I swear. I knew I had to leave when I started to waddle. The tops of my thighs rub together when I walk now, can you believe that?’ This last was addressed to Shadow. He had no idea what to say in reply, and felt a hot flush suffuse his face. The woman laughed delightedly. ‘He’s *blushing*! Wednesday my sweet, you brought me a *blusher*. How perfectly wonderful of you. What’s he called?’

‘This is Shadow,’ said Wednesday. He seemed to be enjoying Shadow’s discomfort. Shadow, say hello to Easter.’

[...]

She drained a paper cup of something that looked like white wine, and then she got to her feet. ‘Shadow’s a good name,’ she said. ‘I want a Mochaccino. Come on.’

She began to walk away. 'What about the food?' asked Wednesday. 'You can't just leave it here.'

She smiled at him, and pointed to the girl sitting by the dog, and then extended her arms to take in the Haight and the world. 'Let it feed them,' she said, and she walked, with Wednesday and Shadow trailing behind her.

'Remember,' she said to Wednesday as they walked. '*I'm* rich. I'm doing just peachy. Why should I help you?'

'You're one of us,' he said. 'You're as forgotten and as unloved and unremembered as any of us. It's pretty clear whose side you should be on.'

They reached a sidewalk coffee house, went inside, sat down. There was only one waitress, who wore her eyebrow ring as a mark of caste, and a woman making coffee behind the counter. The waitress advanced upon them, smiling automatically, sat them down, took their orders.

Easter put her slim hand on the back of Wednesday's square gray hand. 'I'm telling you,' she said, 'I'm doing *fine*. On my festival days they till feast on eggs and rabbits, on candy and on flesh, to represent rebirth and copulation. They wear flowers in their bonnets and they give each other flowers. They do it in my name. More and more of them every year. In *my* name, old wolf.'

'And you wax fat and affluent on their worship and their love?' he said, dryly.

'Don't be an asshole.' Suddenly she sounded very tired. She sipped her Mochaccino.

'Serious question, m'dear. Certainly I would agree that millions upon millions of them give each other tokens in your name, and that they still practice the rites of your festival, even down to hunting for hidden eggs. But how many of them know who you are? Eh? Excuse me miss?' This to their waitress.

She said, 'You need another espresso?'

'No, my dear. I was just wondering if you could solve a little argument we were having over here. My friend and I were disagreeing over what the word "Easter" means. Would you happen to know?'

The girl stared at him as if green toads had begun to push their way between his lips. Then she said, 'I don't know about any of that Christian stuff. I'm a pagan.'

The woman behind the counter said, 'I think it's Latin or something for "Christ has Risen" maybe.'

'Really?' said Wednesday.

'Yeah, sure,' said the woman. 'Easter. Just like the sun rises in the east, you know.'

'The risen son. Of course – a most logical supposition.' The woman smiled and returned to her coffee grinder. Wednesday looked up at their waitress. 'I think I *shall* have another espresso, if you do not mind. And tell me, as a pagan, who do *you* worship?'

'Worship?'

'That's right. I imagine you must have a pretty wide-open field. So to whom do you set up your household altar? To whom do you bow down? To whom do you pray at dawn and at dusk?'

Her lips described several shapes without saying anything before she said, 'The female principle. It's an empowerment thing. You know.'

'Indeed. And this female principle of yours. Does she have a name?'

'She's the goddess within us all,' said the girl with the eyebrow ring, color rising to her cheek. 'She doesn't need a name.'

'Ah,' said Wednesday, with a wide monkey grin, 'so do you have mighty bacchanals in her honor? Do you drink blood wine under the full moon, while scarlet candles burn in silver candle holders? Do you step naked into the sea-foam, chanting ecstatically to your nameless goddess while the waves lick at your legs, lapping your thighs like the tongues of a thousand leopards?'

'You're making fun of me,' she said. 'We don't do any of that stuff you were saying.' She took a deep breath. Shadow suspected she was counting to ten. 'Any more coffees here? Another Mochaccino for you ma'am?' her smile was a lot like the one she had greeted them with when they had entered.

They shook their heads, and the waitress turned to greet another customer.'

'There,' said Wednesday, 'is one who "*does not have the faith and will not have the fun*". Chesterton. Pagan indeed. So. Shall we go out onto the street, Easter my dear, and repeat the exercise? Find out how many passers-by know that their Easter festival takes its name from Eostre of the Dawn? Let's see – I have it. We shall ask a hundred people. For every one that knows the truth, you may cut off one of my fingers, and when I run out of them, my toes; for every twenty who don't know you spend a night making love to me. And the odds are certainly in your favor here - this is San Francisco, after all. There are heathens and pagans and Wiccans aplenty on these precipitous streets.'

Her green eyes looked at Wednesday. They were, Shadow decided, the exact same color as a leaf in spring with the sun shining through it. She said nothing.

'We *could* try it,' continued Wednesday. 'But I would end up with ten fingers, ten toes, and five nights in your bed. So don't tell me they worship you and keep your festival day. They mouth your name, but it has no meaning to them. Nothing at all.'

Tears stood out in her eyes. 'I know that,' she said, quietly. 'I'm not a fool.'

'No,' said Wednesday. 'You're not.'

Good Omens

Terry Pratchett & Neil Gaiman

You wouldn't have known it as the same car. There was scarcely an inch of it undented. Both front lights were smashed. The hubcaps were long gone. It looked like the veteran of a hundred demolition derbies.

The pavements had been bad. The pedestrian underpass had been worse. The worst bit had been crossing the river Thames. At least he'd had the foresight to roll up all the windows.

Still he was here now.

In a few hundred yards he'd be on the M40; a fairly clear run up to Oxfordshire. There was only one snag: once more between Crowley and the open road was the M25. A screaming, glowing ribbon of pain and dark light³¹. *Odegra*. Nothing could cross it and survive.

Nothing mortal, anyway. And he wasn't sure what it would do to a demon. It couldn't kill him, but it wouldn't be pleasant.

There was a police roadblock in front of the flyover before him. Burnt-out wrecks – some still burning – testified to the fate of previous cars that had to drive across the flyover above the dark road.

The police did not look happy.

Crowley shifted down into second gear, and gunned the accelerator.

He went through the roadblock at sixty. That was the easy bit.

³¹ Not actually an oxymoron. It's the colour past ultra-violet. The technical term for it is infra-black. It can be seen quite easily under experimental conditions. To perform the experiment simply select a healthy brick wall, with a good runup, and, lowering your head, charge.

The colour that flashes in bursts behind your eyes, behind the pain, just before you die, is infra-black.

Cases of spontaneous human combustion are on record all over the world. One minute someone's quite happily chugging along with their life; the next there's a sad photograph of a pile of ashes and a lonely and mysteriously uncharred foot or hand. Cases of spontaneous vehicular combustion are less well documented.

Whatever the statistics were, they had just gone up by one.

The leather seatcovers began to smoke. Staring ahead of him, Crowley fumbled left-handed on the passenger seat for Agnes Nutter's Nice and Accurate Prophecies, moved it to the safety of his lap. He wished she'd prophesied this³².

Then the flames engulfed the car.

He had to keep driving.

On the other side of the flyover was a further police roadblock, to prevent the passage of cars trying to come into London. They were laughing about a story that had just come over the radio, that a motorbike cop on the M6 had flagged down a stolen police car, only to discover the driver to be a large octopus.

Some police forces would believe anything. Not the Metropolitan police, though. The Met was the hardest, most cynically pragmatic, most stubbornly down-to-earth police force in Britain.

It would take a lot to faze a copper from the Met.

It would take, for example, a huge, battered car that was nothing more nor less than a fireball, a blazing, roaring, twisted metal lemon from Hell, driven by a grinning lunatic in sunglasses,

³² She had. It read:

A street of light will scream, the black chariot of the Serpente will flayme, and a Queene wille sing quicksilveres songes no moar.

Most of the family had gone along with Gelatly Device, who wrote a brief monograph in the 1830s explaining it as a metaphor for the banishment of Weishaupt's Illuminati from Bavaria in 1785.

sitting amid the flames, trailing thick black smoke, coming straight at them through the lashing rain and the wind at eighty miles per hour.

That would do it every time.

~*~

The quarry was the calm centre of a stormy world.

Thunder didn't just rumble overhead, it tore the air in half.

'I've got some more friends coming,' Adam repeated. 'They'll be here soon, and then we can really get started.'

Dog started to howl. It was no longer the siren howl of a lone wolf but the weird oscillations of a small dog in deep trouble.

Pepper had been sitting staring at her knees.

There seemed to be something on her mind.

Finally she looked up and stared Adam in the blank grey eyes.

'What bit're you going to have, Adam?' she said.

The storm was replaced by a sudden, ringing silence.

'What?' said Adam.

'Well, you divided up the world, right, and we've all of us got to have a bit – what bit're you going to have?'

The silence sang like a harp, high and thin.

'Yeah,' said Brian. 'You never told us what bit *you're* having.'

'Pepper's right,' said Wensleydale. 'Don't seem to *me* there's much left, if we've got to have all these countries.'

Adam's mouth opened and shut.

'What?' he said.

'What bit's yours, Adam?' Pepper said.

Adam stared at her. Dog had stopped howling and had fixed his master with an intent, thoughtful mongrel stare.

'M-me?' he said.

The silence went on and on, one note that could drown out the noises of the world.

'But I'll have Tadfield,' said Adam.

They stared at him.

'An', an' Lower Tadfield, and Norton, and Norton Woods—'

They still stared.

Adam's gaze dragged itself across their faces.

'They're all I've ever wanted,' said Adam.

They shook their heads.

'I can have 'em if I want,' said Adam, his voice tinged with sullen defiance and his defiance edged with sudden doubt. 'I can make them better, too. Better trees to climb, better ponds, better...'

His voice trailed off.

'You can't,' said Wensleydale flatly. 'They're not like America and those places. They're really *real*. Anyway, they belong to all of us. They're ours.'

'And you couldn't make 'em better,' said Brian.

'Anyway, even if you did we'd all know,' said Pepper.

'Oh, if that's all that's worryin' you, don't you worry,' said Adam airily, 'cos I could make you all just do whatever I wanted—'

He stopped, his ears listening in horror to the words his mouth was speaking. The Them were backing away.

Dog put his paws over his head.

Adam's face looked like an impersonation of the collapse of empire.

'No,' he said hoarsely. 'No. Come back! *I command you!*'

They froze in mid-dash.

Adam stared.

'No, I din't mean it—' he began. 'You're my friends—'

His body jerked. His head was thrown back. He raised his arms and pounded the skies with his fists.

His face twisted. The chalk floor cracked under his trainers.

Adam opened his mouth and screamed. It was a sound that a merely mortal throat should not have been able to utter; it wound out of the quarry, mingled with the storm, caused the clouds to curdle into new and unpleasant shapes.

It went on and on.

It resounded around the universe, which is a good deal smaller than physicists would believe. It rattled the celestial spheres.

It spoke of loss, and it did not stop for a very long time.

And then it did.

Something drained away.

Adam's head tilted down again. His eyes opened.

Whatever had been standing in the old quarry before, Adam Young was standing there now. A more knowledgeable Adam Young, but Adam Young nevertheless. Possibly more of Adam Young than there had ever been before.

The ghastly silence in the quarry was replaced by a more familiar, comfortable silence, the mere and simple absence of noise.

The freed Them cowered against the chalk cliff, their eyes fixed on him.

'It's all right,' said Adam quietly. 'Pepper? Wensley? Brian? Come back here. It's all right. It's all right. I know everything now. And you've got to help me. Otherwise it's all goin' to happen. It's really all goin' to happen. It's all goin' to happen, if we don't do somethin'.'

Storm Front

Jim Butcher

Chapter One

I heard the mailman approach my office door, half an hour earlier than usual. He didn't sound right. His footsteps fell more heavily, jauntily, and he whistled. A new guy. He whistled his way to my office door, then fell silent for a moment. Then he laughed.

Then he knocked.

I winced. My mail comes through the mail slot unless it's registered. I get a really limited selection of registered mail, and it's never good news. I got up out of my office chair and opened the door.

The new mailman, who looked like a basketball with arms and legs and a sunburned, balding head, was chuckling at the sign on the door glass.

He glanced at me and hooked a thumb toward the sign. "You're kidding, right?"

I read the sign (people change it occasionally), and shook my head. "No, I'm serious. Can I have my mail, please."

"So, uh. Like parties, shows, stuff like that?" He looked past me, as though he expected to see a white tiger, or possibly some skimpily clad assistants prancing around my one-room office.

I sighed, not in the mood to get mocked again, and reached for the mail he held in his hand. "No, not like that. I don't do parties."

He held on to it, his head tilted curiously. "So what? Some kinda fortune-teller? Cards and crystal balls and things?"

"No," I told him. "I'm not a psychic." I tugged at the mail.

He held on to it. "What are you, then?"

"What's the sign on the door say?"

"It says 'Harry Dresden. Wizard.' "

"That's me," I confirmed.

"An actual wizard?" he asked, grinning, as though I should let him in on the joke. "Spells and potions? Demons and incantations? Subtle and quick to anger?"

"Not so subtle." I jerked the mail out of his hand and looked pointedly at his clipboard. "Can I sign for my mail please."

The new mailman's grin vanished, replaced with a scowl. He passed over the clipboard to let me sign for the mail (another late notice from my landlord), and said, "You're a nut. That's what you are." He took his clipboard back, and said, "You have a nice day, sir."

I watched him go.

"Typical," I muttered, and shut the door.

My name is Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden. Conjure by it at your own risk. I'm a wizard. I work out of an office in midtown Chicago. As far as I know, I'm the only openly practicing professional wizard in the country. You can find me in the yellow pages, under "Wizards." Believe it or not, I'm the only one there. My ad looks like this:

HARRY DRESDEN—WIZARD

Lost Items Found. Paranormal Investigations.

Consulting. Advice. Reasonable Rates.

No Love Potions, Endless Purses, Parties, or Other Entertainment

You'd be surprised how many people call just to ask me if I'm serious. But then, if you'd seen the things I'd seen, if you knew half of what I knew, you'd wonder how anyone could *not* think I was serious.

The end of the twentieth century and the dawn of the new millennium had seen something of a renaissance in the public awareness of the paranormal. Psychics, haunts, vampires—you name it. People still didn't take them seriously, but all the things Science had promised us hadn't come to pass. Disease was still a problem. Starvation was still a problem. Violence and crime and war were

still problems. In spite of the advance of technology, things just hadn't changed the way everyone had hoped and thought they would.

Science, the largest religion of the twentieth century, had become somewhat tarnished by images of exploding space shuttles, crack babies, and a generation of complacent Americans who had allowed the television to raise their children. People were looking for something—I think they just didn't know what. And even though they were once again starting to open their eyes to the world of magic and the arcane that had been with them all the while, they still thought I must be some kind of joke.

Anyway, it had been a slow month. A slow pair of months, actually. My rent from February didn't get paid until the tenth of March, and it was looking like it might be even longer until I got caught up for this month.

My only job had been the previous week, when I'd gone down to Branson, Missouri, to investigate a country singer's possibly haunted house. It hadn't been. My client hadn't been happy with that answer, and had been even less happy when I suggested he lay off of any intoxicating substances and try to get some exercise and sleep, and see if that didn't help things more than an exorcism. I'd gotten travel expenses plus an hour's pay, and gone away feeling I had done the honest, righteous, and impractical thing. I heard later that he'd hired a shyster psychic to come in and perform a ceremony with a lot of incense and black lights. Some people.

I finished up my paperback and tossed it into the DONE box. There was a pile of read and discarded paperbacks in a cardboard box on one side of my desk, the spines bent and the pages mangled. I'm terribly hard on books. I was eyeing the pile of unread books, considering which to start next, given that I had no real work to do, when my phone rang.

I stared at it in a somewhat surly fashion. We wizards are terrific at brooding. After the third ring, when I thought I wouldn't sound a little too eager, I picked up the receiver and said, "Dresden."

"Oh. Is this, um, Harry Dresden? The, ah, wizard?" Her tone was apologetic, as though she were terribly afraid she would be insulting me.

No, I thought. It's Harry Dresden the, ah, lizard. Harry the wizard is one door down. It is the prerogative of wizards to be grumpy. It is not, however, the prerogative of freelance consultants who are late on their rent, so instead of saying something smart, I told the woman on the phone, "Yes, ma'am. How can I help you today?"

Fool Moon

Jim Butcher

"Fine. I can get started on these. How much do you know about werewolves, Bob?"

"Plenty. I was in France during the Inquisition." Bob's voice was dry (but that is to be expected, considering).

[...] "Lot of werewolfery going on then?"

"Are you kidding?" Bob said. "It was werewolf central. We had every kind of werewolf you could think of. Hexenwolves, werewolves, lycanthropes, and loup-garou to boot. Every kind of lupine theriomorph you could think of."

"Therro-what?" I said.

"Theriomorph," Bob said. "Anything that shape-shifts from a human being into an animal form. Werewolves are theriomorphs. So are werebears, weretigers, werebuffaloes..."

"Buffaloes?" I asked.

"Sure. Some Native American shamans could do a buffalo. But almost everyone does predators, and until pretty recently, wolves were the scariest predator anyone around Europe could think of."

"Uh, okay," I said. "And there's a difference between types of werewolves?"

"Right," Bob confirmed. "Mostly it depends on how you go from human form to wolf form, and how much of your humanity you retain. Don't burn the coffee."

I turned down the flame beneath the beaker of coffee, annoyed. "I know, I know. Okay, then. How do you get to be a wolf?"

"The classic werewolf," Bob said, "is simply a human being who uses magic to shift himself into a wolf."

"Magic? Like a wizard?"

"No," Bob said. "Well. Sort of. He's like a wizard who only knows how to cast the one spell, the one to turn him into a wolf, and knows how to get back out of it again. Most people who learn to be werewolves aren't very good at it for a while, because they keep all of their own humanity."

"What do you mean?"

"Well," Bob said, "they can reshape themselves into the form of a wolf, but it's pretty much just topology. They rearrange their physical body, but their mind remains the same. They can think and reason, and their personality doesn't change—but they don't have a wolf's instincts or reflexes. They're used to being sight-oriented bipeds, not smell-oriented quadrupeds. They would have to learn everything from scratch."

"Why would someone do something like that?" I said. "Just learn to turn into a wolf, I mean."

"You've never been a peasant in medieval France, Harry," Bob said. "Life was hard for those people. Never enough food, shelter, medicine. If you could give yourself a fur coat and the ability to go out and hunt your own meat, you would have jumped at the chance, too."

"Okay, I think I've got it," I said. "Do you need silver bullets or anything? Do you turn into a werewolf if you get bitten?"

"Bah," Bob said. "No. Hollywood stole that from vampires. And the silver-bullet thing is only in special cases. Werewolves are just like regular wolves. You can hurt them with weapons just like you can a real wolf."

"That's good news," I said, stirring the potion. "What other kinds are there?"

"There's another version of a werewolf—when someone else uses magic to change you into a wolf."

I glanced up at him. "Transmogrification? That's illegal, Bob. It's one of the Laws of Magic. If you transform someone into an animal, it destroys their personality. You can't transform someone else without wiping out their mind. It's practically murder."

"Yeah. Neat, huh? But actually, most personalities can survive the transformation. For a little while at least. Really strong wills might manage to keep their human memories and personality locked away for several years. But sooner or later, they're irretrievably gone, and you're left with nothing but a wolf."

I turned from the potions to scribble in my notebook. "Okay. What else makes a werewolf?"

"The most common way, back in France, was to make a deal with a demon or a devil or a powerful sorcerer. You get a wolf-hide belt, put it on, say the magic words, and whammy, you're a wolf. A Hexenwolf."

"Isn't that just like the first kind?"

"No, not at all. You don't use your own magic to become a wolf. You use someone else's."

I frowned. "Isn't that the second kind, then?"

"Stop being obtuse," Bob chided me. "It's different because you're employing a talisman. Sometimes it's a ring or amulet, but usually it's a belt. The talisman provides an anchor for a spirit of bestial rage. Nasty thing from the bad side of the Nevernever. That spirit wraps around a human personality to keep it from being destroyed."

"A kind of insulation," I said.

"Exactly. It leaves you with your own intellect and reason, but the spirit handles everything else."

I frowned. "Sounds a little easy."

"Oh, sure," Bob said. "It's really easy. And when you use a talisman to turn into a wolf, you lose all of your human inhibitions and so on, and just run on your unconscious desires, with the talisman-spirit in charge of the way the body moves. It's really efficient. A huge wolf with human-level intelligence and animal-level ferocity."

[...]

Bob said nothing while I added the ingredients, and when I was finished I said, "Most people don't have the strength to control a spirit like that, I'd think. It would influence their actions. Maybe even control them. Suppress their conscience."

"Yeah. So?"

"So it sounds more like you'd be creating a monster."

"It's effective," Bob said. "I don't know about the good or the evil of the thing. That's something that only you mortals worry about."

"What did you call this flavor again?"

"Hexenwolf," Bob said, with a strong Germanic accent. "Spell wolf. The Church declared war on anyone who chose to become a Hexenwolf, and burned a huge number of people at the stake."

"Silver bullets?" I asked. "Bitten and turn into a werewolf?"

"Would you get off this 'bitten and turn into a werewolf' kick, Harry?" Bob said. "It doesn't work that way. Not ever. Or you'd have werewolves overrunning the entire planet in a couple of years."

"Fine, fine," I sighed. "What about the silver bullets?"

"Don't need them."

"All right," I said, and continued jotting down information to put together for Murphy in a report. "*Hexenwolf*. Got it. What else?"

"Lycanthropes," Bob said.

"Isn't that a psychological condition?"

"It might *also* be a psychological condition," Bob said. "But it was a reality first. A lycanthrope is a natural channel for a spirit of rage. A lycanthrope turns into a beast, but only inside his head. The spirit takes over. It affects the way he acts and thinks, makes him more aggressive, stronger. They also tend to be very resistant to pain or injury, sickness; they heal rapidly—all sorts of things."

"But they don't actually shapeshift into a wolf?"

"Give that boy a Kewpie," Bob said. "They're just people, too, but they're awfully fierce. Ever heard of the Norse berserkers? Those guys were lycanthropes, I think. And they're born, not made."

I stirred the stimulant potion, and made sure it was at an even simmer. "And what was the last one? Loop what?"

"Loup-garou," Bob said. "Or that was the name Etienne the Enchanter used for them, before he got burned at the stake. The loup-garou are the major monsters, Harry. Someone has cursed them to become a wolflike demon, and usually at the full moon. That someone's got to be really powerful, too, like a major heavyweight sorcerer or a demon lord or one of the Faerie Queens. When the full moon comes, they transform into a monster, go on a killing spree, and slaughter everything they come across until the moon sets or the sun rises."

A sudden little chill went over me, and I shivered. "What else?"

"Supernatural speed and power. Supernatural ferocity. They recover from injuries almost instantly, if they become hurt at all. They're immune to poison and to any kind of sorcery that goes for their brain. Killing machines."

"Sounds great. I guess this hasn't happened all that often? I'd have heard something by now."

"Right," Bob said. "Not often. Usually, the poor cursed bastard knows enough to shut himself away somewhere, or to head out into the wilderness. The last major loup-garou rampage happened around Gevaudan, France, back in the sixteenth century. More than two hundred people were killed in a little more than a year."

"Holy shit," I said. "How did they stop it?"

"They killed it," Bob said. "Here's where the silver bullets finally come in, Harry. Only a silver weapon can hurt a loup-garou, and not only that, the silver has to be inherited from a family member. Inherited silver bullets."

"Really? Why would that work and not regular silver?"

"I don't make the laws of magic, Harry. I just know what they are and have an idea of when they're changing. That one hasn't changed. I think maybe it has something to do with the element of sacrifice."

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