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Elly de Groot

3679594

Supervisor: Onno Kusters

Second Reader: Cees Koster

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Gods of Discussion

An analysis of Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*, concerning the dualist/monist discussion in stylistics and its consequences for translation.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter 1: Style and Translation: A Theoretical Framework	5
1.1 Dualist/Monist.....	6
1.2 Dialogue	8
1.3 Humour.....	12
Chapter 2: Case Study: <i>American Gods</i>	16
2.1 General Analysis	17
2.2 Dialogue	18
2.3 Humour.....	25
Chapter 3: Critical Comparison.....	28
3.1 Genre.....	28
3.2 Raymond Chandler.....	29
3.3 Chandler, Gaiman, and Translation	33
3.4 Gaiman and Translation	36
Chapter 4: Annotated Translation	39
Conclusion.....	46
Bibliography	48
Appendix	49
Fragments ST.....	49

Introduction

"Words may belong to language, but the voice belongs to the artist" (Farrel 60). Translation is a tricky business. Anyone who has ever translated anything has at a certain moment realised that it is much more than looking up words in a dictionary, putting them together and be done with it. The translator comes across many aspects that he has to analyse in order to determine possible problems and, with that, possible solutions to these problems. For one, there is content: what is being said? Next, there is form: how is it being said? This is what Joseph Farrel means with the voice: style is the voice of the author. And since the voice of the author is something that speaks to the reader, this voice should elicit the same response in translation.

Style is an integral element of a text; readers can be fans of particular styles related to specific authors or genres. Readers of a target text (TT) usually want to experience it the same way the readers of the source text (ST) do. This means that style somehow needs to be translated along with the text. But how does one translate style? Is form more important than content or the other way around?

There are numerous aspects of style, but some are more relevant than others, depending on the author and the text. In this thesis the focus will be on two aspects that are interconnected, dialogue and humour, how these aspects may relate to the discussion between dualist and monist views on style and how translation may be affected by these elements. Dialogue is an important element of most fictional texts as it reveals much about characters, but also comes with varying sub-styles that can provide insight into the overall style of a text. Humour is connected to dialogue in the sense that it is often dialogue that causes a comic effect in a text. It also influences the overall style of a text through elements such as humorous images or cynical and sarcastic undertones.

In chapter one a theoretical framework will be presented. The discussion between dualist and monist views will be examined, followed by an investigation into the stylistic aspects of dialogue and humour. This chapter will also explore these elements in connection with the translation of texts. Chapter two provides a translation-oriented analysis of the primary research case: Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*. This analysis will provide the theoretical elements from chapter one with practical examples. In chapter three the primary research case is compared to another text in the source language (SL) to discuss genre-specific stylistic elements, after which both texts are compared to their translated equivalents, to see if and how style is transferred to these translations. One fragment of the existing translation of *American Gods* is compared to a fresh translation by my own hand. Chapter four consists of an annotated translation of multiple

fragments, partially used as examples in previous chapters. The footnotes will also provide explanations on deviations from the existing translation, where applicable. The fragments in the SL can be found in the appendix.

Chapter 1: Style and Translation: A Theoretical Framework

Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short have dedicated an entire book to the study of style: *Style in Fiction* offers an expansive documentation on various aspects of style and the stylistic analysis of texts. To start defining style they begin Ferdinand de Saussure's terms of *langue* and *parole*, where *langue* encompasses the entire language system and *parole* denotes the particular selections from that system. They say that "style, then, pertains to *parole*: it is selection from a total linguistic repertoire that constitutes a style" (Leech & Short 9). As Leech and Short say, this is not a far-reaching definition, but it is a start.

Defining style is only the beginning: it is a requirement before a text can be structurally analysed to prepare for translation. So what is it that determines style? And how does one translate it? Opinions differ in this regard. Some claim that style, or form, is not connected to the content of a text. Others claim that form and content are one and cannot be separated. The latter claim seems to endanger the whole idea of translating a text into another language.

Style is a rather difficult term to explain or define. Leech & Short acknowledge that there are many ways to describe style, and that there are many definitions floating around that are all useful in their own way, but they also say that "we should be wary of becoming slaves to verbal definition" (Leech & Short 9).

M.H. Abrams's *A Glossary of Literary Terms* describes style as follows:

Style has traditionally been defined as the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse – as how speakers or writers say whatever it is they say. The style specific to a particular work or writer, or else distinctive of a type of writings, has been analyzed in such terms as the rhetorical situation and aim; the characteristic diction, or choice of words; the type of sentence structure and syntax; and the density and kinds of figurative language. (Abrams 349)

Leech and Short provide a description that in many ways corresponds with Abrams' definition:

Style is a relational term: we talk about 'the style of x ', referring through 'style' to characteristics of language use, and correlating these with some extralinguistic x , which we may call the stylistic domain. The x (writer, period, etc.) defines some

corpus of writings in which the characteristics of language use are to be found.

(Leech & Short 10)

They clarify that the motivating questions to study stylistics are "not so much *what* but *why* and *how*" (Leech & Short 11). Abrams keeps the 'why' out of the picture, but both descriptions agree that the 'how' is perhaps the most important object of study when it comes to stylistics. However, opinions differ in this regard.

1.1 Dualist/Monist

Leech and Short state that "there is a strong tradition of thought which restricts style to those choices which are choices of *manner* rather than *matter*, of *expression* rather than *content*" (L&S 13). What is implied in this traditional view is that the style of a text is purely the way something is said or written. If a piece of text is paraphrased, translated or otherwise adapted the style may change, but it may still convey the same meaning. Form and content are separate entities. As Leech and Short acknowledge, however, "there is an equally strong academic and literary tradition, which assumes the opposite" (L&S 13). This opposing view stands firm in the belief that form and content are inseparable. Their hypothesis is that as soon as the exact form of a text is altered, likewise through paraphrasing or other means, the content will also have been altered, however slightly.

The first view of separation between form and content is understandably dubbed *Dualism*. Leech and Short appropriately name the opposing view *Monism*. Regardless of whether these specific terms have always been used for the phenomena, the discussion between the two opposing views has been present since the days of Aristotle and Plato. It has, to this day, not been resolved. This thesis does not have the intention of trying to settle this seemingly endless battle once and for all, but merely tries to shed some light on the circumstances and the consequences of either of the two views for the world of translation.

When comparing dualist and monist views on style it will be immediately clear that the advocates of each side are concentrated in different areas of the literary world. The monist camp is defended fiercely by many and especially the field of poetry is associated with this stance. There is some logic to this: poetry is a genre that puts incredible focus on both the form and content of a text at the same time. Dualism is a view more often seen in text-types such as non-fictional prose. Fictional prose seems to remain rather stuck in the middle. While it is not entirely true that authors of non-fictional prose do not put much consideration in the form of their text, it does seem less relevant to that genre as opposed to poetry.

Fictional prose is where the problems with both views become apparent. Fictional prose relies more on form than non-fictional prose. Authors have a certain way of describing objects, people or situations in their novels, often using figurative language, such as metaphors, similes or allusions, just as poetry does. Most fiction also focuses on the content that needs to be conveyed. Authors describe characters in a certain way to achieve an image in the readers' mind. Neil Gaiman barely describes his characters in a technical sense. He doesn't state that someone is, for instance, six feet eight and weighs an exact amount of pounds. Instead he describes Shadow (the main character) as "big enough, and look[ing] don't-fuck-with-me enough that his biggest problem was killing time," (Gaiman 3) not giving any clues as to the colour of his hair or eyes, his exact height or weight, but it still provides a very striking image. The same goes for the description of one of Shadow's cellmates named Iceman, who "was the same size and shape as a Coke machine, with blue eyes and hair so blonde it was almost white." (Gaiman 6) This description gives some more details on colour, but the image is mainly formed by the comparison to a Coke machine. It is then easy to imagine that Iceman looks rather bulky and square. The image created in the minds of readers would not have been the same had the description of Shadow been something along the lines of: "he was big and tall, with blond hair and he looked impressive so people did not bother him much." This type of description often not only tells the reader something about a character's appearance, but can also reveal details about their personality.

As stated, monism is a view widely accepted among poets and critics of poetry. Many advocates have tried to apply this view to literature as well. Leech and Short use David Lodge, novelist and critic, as a prime example. He is fierce in his monist stance claiming that "(i) it is impossible to paraphrase literary writing; (ii) it is impossible to translate a literary work; (iii) it is impossible to divorce the general appreciation of a literary work from the appreciation of its style" (Leech & Short 21). Lodge claims that these rules are valid for both prose and poetry, making the differences between them practically nonexistent.

Lodge's stance provides a rather large stumbling block for translators. If a prose text, e.g. a work of fiction, cannot be translated, then how is it possible that so many translations exist? It is likely that Lodge would argue that translations are not to be compared to the source text, because a change has been made that makes the text different. The difficulty with this statement is that a person may hold the opinion that form and content are indeed so interwoven that they cannot be separate entities, but if that person would like to translate a text he or she would be forced to accept a dualist view.

As Leech and Short point out, it is relatively easy to challenge each view. They say that they "can see the justice of Lodge's claim that there is no discontinuity between the way language is used in prose and poetry," marking prose and poetry not so different from each other. However, as Leech and Short also argue, "this conclusion should lead us to an accommodation between dualism and monism rather than the rejection of one in favour of the other" (L&S 22)

One solution of dealing with the monist/dualist discussion is possibly rejecting both stances and taking their views and opinions to incorporate them in a larger way of thinking: a way that Leech and Short call *pluralism*. The name already suggests that this view does not limit itself to one or two types of elements in style (so form or content), but focuses on the functions that the used language may have. This way each function will be individually analysed for translation. Some pieces of a given text, like metaphors, will be more difficult to translate, because they are not straightforward in their language use, while other parts may be easier to translate, since the exact content is less relevant than the overall image being projected in a reader's mind. Considering Lodge's fierce stance and the assumption that he is not the only one, either on the side of monism or dualism, there is clearly no end in sight when it comes to the discussion. Meanwhile, a closer look at some stylistic elements and their function in a text may shed some light on the possibilities within each of the opposing views.

1.2 Dialogue

Since dialogue is a representation of speech within the story world, the author can apply a number of techniques and strategies in his writing to make the dialogue credible and realistic. The reader should be able to imagine the dialogue as if it were happening right in front of them. To achieve this the author must not only represent *what* is being said, but also *how* it is said, what the character is feeling or doing while speaking and *why* the character is saying what he/she is saying in that particular way.

Direct speech is often found between quotation marks, giving it a sense of immediacy; a sense of the conversation happening right now. In their introduction of *The Translation of Fictive Dialogue* Jenny Brumme and Anna Espunya argue that "despite innovations in the articulation of reporting utterances with direct speech, this mode of discourse is generally the default option in presenting dialogue in fiction" (Brumme 17). Of course, direct speech is not the only option to present dialogue in fiction. In *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* Janet Burroway explains a number of other techniques and their benefits, for instance:

Summary and indirect speech are often useful to get us quickly to the core of the scene, or when, for example, one character has to inform another of events that we already know, or when the emotional point of a conversation is that it has become tedious. (Burroway 75)

A common example of summary is when two characters in any given story meet and are described as 'exchanging greetings'. The reader can here fill in how they think the two will greet each other. This is often done in summary, since greetings are usually fairly standard and thus not interesting enough to provide the reader with a detailed report. It is only when the greeting in some way deviates from the standard that it becomes interesting to clarify exactly what is being said. As mentioned before, however, dialogue in fiction is not just about what is being said. When speaking face-to-face with someone we take it all into account: what is being said, the tone at which it is said and the non-verbal communication that the speaker is conveying with body language, for example exaggerating to emphasise a point. Burroway states that characters are

sharply differentiated from each other not only by the content of what they say, but also by their diction (choice and use of words) and their syntax (the ordering of words in a sentence). Like appearance, these choices convey attributes of class, period, ethnicity, and so forth, as well as political or moral attitudes. (Burroway 76)

This is the reason that the specific style of each utterance in a novel generally cannot be the same for each character: every person has his/her own way of speaking, both verbally and non-verbally, and therefore the author must give every character his/her own distinct voice or they might all just as well be the same person. As Burroway says:

Speech characterises in a way that is different from appearance, because speech represents an effort, mainly voluntary, to externalize the internal and to manifest not merely the taste or preference but also deliberated thought. Like fiction itself, human dialogue attempts to marry logic to emotion. (Burroway 74).

This is what appeals to readers, because that process allows them to relate to the characters.

In 'Translating fictive dialogue in novels' Susanne M. Cadera uses a model of two poles for distinction between written and oral language, whereby oral language is called "language of immediacy" and written language is called "language of distance", although both have various

gradations and possibly overlap. She uses the example of a personal letter as being technically distant, since it has been written, but due to the personal nature very close to immediate language. By contrast, a university lecture is technically immediate, because it is spoken, but so impersonal that it is closer to language of distance. Direct speech is technically language of distance, since it is written, but the quotation marks give it the sense of immediacy that Cadera ascribes to oral language.

Cadera argues that "fictive dialogue in literature constitutes a very specific degree of language of distance mainly for two reasons"(Cadera 36). These two reasons are that, firstly, fictive dialogue belongs to the author, since it is the author who creates the speech of his/her characters; the author "selects certain features of immediacy for the sake of verisimilitude" and "selects features from the written/graphic code in order to represent and spontaneous and dynamic oral communication"(Cadera 37). That basically means that, although the dialogue needs to be realistic, the author chooses how to represent the dialogue within the 'language of distance'. The second reason Cadera mentions is that "fictive dialogue can have many forms"(Cadera 37), by which she means that the degree of orality/immediacy within the language of distance depends on the techniques and strategies that the author chooses to employ and the impression that the results of those choices cause on the reader.

Cadera says that the 'fictive orality', or the speech representation within a novel, consists of a "particular combination of different resources"; these resources are on the narrative and the linguistic levels:

By resources on the narrative level, what is meant is first, the narrative techniques used by the authors themselves, and second, the graphic presentations of the text (punctuation marks, paragraph marks, spacing, etc.). The function of these resources is to mark the dialogue of the characters in the literary discourse and to suggest universal features of oral communication. These universal communication features are, for example, rhythm, spontaneity, dynamism, free turn-taking, hesitation phenomena, or pauses. (Cadera 37)

Resources on the linguistic level means the different historical speech types or linguistic variations such as dialect, slang, or informal speech (used to adapt specific oral language features), as well as the use of oral characteristics such as simple phrasing, filler words and particles, repetitions and redundancy, or the description of

non-verbal communications, used to adapt universal oral linguistic and pragmatic features. (Cadera 38)

All of these aspects are relevant to the study of dialogue in fiction and therefore also to translating fiction, since dialogue cannot be taken away from fiction: it is an inherent part of it. As such, those aspects should be very carefully analysed when the novel is to be translated in order to achieve the same effects on the reader in the target language (TL). As Cadera also says:

[N]arrative resources to imitate oral speech have to be analysed and recognized before their translation. Innovative or experimental forms as part of the conversational style of a novel cause a specific effect on the reader. If this effect cannot be transmitted through the translation, the reception in the target culture has been manipulated. (Cadera 48)

Earlier in her text she mentions fillers and particles that exist in regular, spontaneous conversation. These are speech elements that a speaker will not consciously think about when speaking, but he/she will use them nonetheless, because it is a natural solution to avoid gaps or pauses in speech where this is not wanted. It is what makes speech natural and flowing, and, as Brumme and Espunya say,

these items fulfil distinct semantic, pragmatic and discourse structuring functions in spontaneous dialogue, and consequently they are used as devices in its recreation, especially where the novel depicts situations of immediacy. More importantly, though, they are used by the author to individuate the voices in the novel, as the narrator struggles to reconstruct his own version of the events from reports that come from various other sources of information. (Brumme 18)

These fillers and particles exist in every language, but they are not the same or homologous in every language. For instance, German and Dutch use modal particles, such as *doch*, *mal*, *ja* (in German) and *nou*, *eens*, *even* (in Dutch), that English does not, and cannot, exhibit in the same way. This may require a translator to add particles like these when translating from English into German or Dutch. A translator translating from Dutch (or German) into English, however, will have to consider omitting certain forms of modality or perhaps add them in ways that the English language does allow.

Brumme and Espunya also say the following about translation of dialogue:

A measure of success in the recreation of speech is that it should be a window onto the mind of the character, that it should be able to convey his or her subjectivity, including feelings and emotions. [...] In translation, changes may affect precisely this aspect of communication, even when they involve apparently insignificant formal aspects. (Brumme 23)

Things as seemingly trivial as fillers or particles can affect the readers' perception of a character and the wrong translation or addition or even omission of these aspects can therefore greatly influence that perception, or what Cadera called 'manipulate', making the perception in the mind of the source language (SL) reader different from that in the mind of the target language (TL) reader, and that the translator should keep this in mind. Even the tiniest aspects of language that an author has chosen to use in his dialogue, no matter how unimportant they seem at first, determine the perception in the readers' minds, and that perception is also what the translator should aim to achieve.

1.3 Humour

At first glance, humour seems easier to define than style: it is that which makes us laugh, or as Jeroen Vandaele says "what causes amusement, mirth, a spontaneous smile and laughter" (Humor 1). In his article 'Humor in Translation' he starts by exploring the phenomenon of laughter, discovering that it is not something limited to humans, whereas humour is. Laughter has always been a form of 'social play', and it is therefore very likely that humour is, too. Vandaele argues that "in humans, laughter relates to symbolically created and mediated surprise, uncertainties and insights - to humor" (Humor 1). He states that although humour is connected to primitive aspects of our brain, it is "not just laughter," but "laughter that has been captured as a useful response to uncertainty, surprises and insights constructed by our symbolic mind" (Humor 1). The symbolic mind is basically that which allows us humans to assign meaning to something; it is what makes humour typically human, since computers, for instance, are not capable of doing this in the same way.

Vandaele mentions 'social theories of humor.' Some of these are theories of superiority, in which the humour is targeted at a scapegoat, not always intentionally, with the effect of producing higher self-esteem in the people appreciating the humour. This effect is also not always intentional. Other theories include 'incongruity theories', which focus more on the

cognitive features of humour, rather than its social aspects. This means that something is funny when there are incongruities. These incongruities have multiple causes, for instance when cognitive rules are being disregarded or when expectations are set up, but not fulfilled. The incongruities create elements of surprise, which seems to be one of the most important facets of humour. Vandaele concludes this first part of the text by saying "all instances of humor always contain many related aspects - social, emotional, and cognitive ones" (Humor 1).

There are, of course, many different ways to achieve a comic effect, whether it is based on superiority or incongruity theories. Not completely unrelated to the previous section is the play on words, or pun. In 'Wordplay in Translation' Vandaele insists that "wordplay is not a subcategory of humor" (Wordplay 1). This is because puns are not always meant to have a comic effect and are sometimes quite serious. Nevertheless they are a rather effective tool to elicit laughter or a smile from the audience. Wordplay is often used in a humorous fashion, but Vandaele's article on wordplay shows how both humorous and other forms can be treated in translation.

Vandaele defines wordplay as when "several meanings are activated by identical or similar forms in a text" (Wordplay 1). These identical or similar forms are defined as '*homonymy* (same sound and writing), *homophony* (same sound), *homography* (same writing), and *paronymy* (similar form)' (Wordplay 1). Wordplay is not completely unrelated to the previously mentioned instances of humour, since the same rules apply for the conception of puns as being humorous: the incongruity and superiority theories also work here, since "wordplay may be (naïvely) perceived as a linguistic incongruity" (Wordplay 1), and "some forms of wordplay activate superiority mechanisms: they require us to activate relevant background knowledge and invite us to find interpretative 'solutions' to the incongruous communication" (Wordplay 1).

Vandaele makes a valid claim when he says that 'humor is known to challenge translators,' (Humor 2) since humour is often bound to cultural or linguistic factors that may increase the difficulty of translating a text. He states that humour is "often seen as a paradigm of 'untranslatability'." (Humor 2) Humour comes in so many forms that it is impossible to say that all humour is untranslatable, although some instances will certainly seem to be. Humour in texts is usually quite clearly present, it calls attention to itself by being incongruous in a way that elicits amusement in the reader. This visibility is the reason that it is always obvious when a translation of a humorous element has failed, since no one will laugh. Of course, as Vandaele says, "the translator of humor has to cope with the fact that the 'rules,' 'expectations,' 'solutions,' and agreements on 'social play' are often group- or culture specific" (Humor 2). He also mentions that parody only works for those who are aware of the existing discourse being parodied.

Vandaele also mentions linguistic untranslatability, the problems of which take root in linguistic denotation, in the sense that it "poses translation problems when humor builds on a concept or reality which is specific to a certain language" (Humor 2), and connotation, in the sense that it 'causes trouble if a concept in the source language has a different 'lectal' value than its usual equivalent in the target language"(Humor 2) He uses an example by Umberto Eco who points out the difference between the use of English 'Sir' and the French 'Monsieur', which are mostly equivalent, but may cause incongruities depending on the context. The example states that polite French people use 'Monsieur' to address a cab driver, while the (normally) equivalent 'Sir' would be inappropriate or ironical in that same situation in New York. Building on this, a source text (ST) may exhibit many different registers, dialects or other facets that may clash to achieve a comic effect, but have no functional equivalent in the target language (TL). Vandaele here points out a question asked by more translators and translation theorists, whether or not it is acceptable for a translator to insert his own jokes when confronted with a lack of functional equivalents in the TL. Considering those critics that see this as an unacceptable technique Vandaele argues that it "puts considerable pressure on the translator" and the idea posed by Cadera that a text belongs to its author alone generally seems to lead to the notion of untranslatability. Questions of ownership are, however, not easy to answer when they concern translations. The author is responsible for the ST, but often that author has little input in the creation of a translation. Translations being recreations of the original work make the translator, at least partially, responsible for the existence of the translation. Partially, because without the ST a translation would not have reason to exist in the first place. In 'Herscheppend vertalen en de inleving,' Barho Kriek argues that the translator immerses himself in the ST in such a way that he can imagine (and therefore reproduce) what would be said in that situation in the target language (Kriek). That seems to be the moment in which ownership of the author ceases to be exclusive and the translator assumes the role of co-author.

Wordplay may not always be used with the intent of comic effect, but it is often used as such and therefore requires some attention with regards to the translation of this phenomenon. As Vandaele says, "[w]hether serious or comical, wordplay creates linguistic problems of translatability because different languages have different meaning-form distributions" (Wordplay 2). The meaning-form distribution constitutes, for instance, the sentence structures in which the wordplay is situated. Since wordplays or puns can either be single words or phrases, the sentence structure is relevant. Some puns are nouns, some are verbs and the phrases may contain multiple word categories. However, during translation it is quite common for a word to shift to a different category, because the conventional sentence structure of the TL may not allow the construction

that the SL employs. Despite this being a common strategy in translation, it may have more effect in the translation of puns, since they are completely reliant on the form.

The following chapters will explore instances of the examined phenomena in the primary research case *American Gods*, as well as possibilities and problems arising during translation of this work, illustrated by a fresh translation. This translation as well as the source text will then be used for comparison to an existing translation as well as other texts in a critical investigation of these texts.

Chapter 2: Case Study: *American Gods*

Neil Gaiman was described by *Forbes* magazine as "the most famous author you've never heard of"(qtd in Hank Wagner et al. 1) and indeed, to a wider public, he is not very well known. Yet, somehow, within the group of people that do know his name, he is very popular. He started out by writing graphic novels, among which the hugely popular *The Sandman*. When he decided he wanted to try out novel writing he contacted another popular author: Terry Pratchett. The two had met in 1985 when Gaiman interviewed Pratchett as a freelance journalist and they stayed in contact. They collaborated on a story that would be immensely well-received and mark the starting point of Gaiman's career as a novelist. *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch* was nominated for a World Fantasy award.

In an interview with Martijn Lindeboom, organiser of the Harland Award events (formerly 'Paul Harland Prijs') Gaiman was asked about genre and said that those questions are irrelevant, since according to him everything is fantasy unless it really happened (Lindeboom 2). In his own words that makes his novels fantasy, although his works show many elements commonly associated with other genres, such as crime or detective fiction. Lindeboom asked about the difference in styles between *American Gods* and *Ocean (The Ocean at the End of the Lane)*, saying that *Ocean's* style is more layered. Gaiman admitted that he deliberately tried to use a very specific style for *American Gods*, something he calls 'American invisible' (Lindeboom 3) and which he praises in Stephen King and Elmore Leonard. His intent of using a specific style in *American Gods* has resulted in a long novel, the main story broken up by the shorter 'Coming to America' stories (as well as other short stories that interrupt the main storyline). At first glance these short stories seem distracting and irrelevant, but as the story progresses their purpose and place in the whole become clearer. The stories are, as the reader finds out gradually, written down by Mister Ibis. The ibis is a name as well as the hieroglyphic symbol for the Egyptian god Thoth. Thoth, both portrayed as an ibis or a baboon (the baboon being the face that Shadow later sees while on the carousel) is associated with the writing and telling of stories, which is exactly what Mister Ibis does. Not only are the short stories different in style from the larger whole that they break up, they are all written with a specific language, depending on where the characters in those stories originate, for instance whether they were Cornish or African Slaves. Gaiman also mentioned that the voice of this one novel is not the same as any of the others, they all have different voices. This has not gone unnoticed, as Jenny Davidson also mentions:

Neil Gaiman's novels are striking for their very marked differences in terms of structure and pacing, from the fantastic baggy monster of *American Gods* - which seems to contain several novels within its multitudes - to the fable-like economy of *Stardust* or the Kiplingesque cumulative tale-compilation of *The Graveyard Book* (Davidson 62).

This is where the difficulties arise: Gaiman himself admits that he uses different voices and different styles for each book and that in the case of *American Gods* he even uses various different styles within one novel. With this being the case, how can any of the stylistic elements found in *American Gods* attribute to the author's individual style? And at the same time, how could they not?

American Gods portrays a multitude of stylistic aspects, meaning a thorough analysis of all of them would provide an enormous amount of information to process. This is also partially a reason for the limitation of the research to two aspects that Gaiman employs strongly: dialogue and humour. In *American Gods* these two often go hand in hand: dialogue is mainly, though not exclusively, responsible for the comic effect throughout the novel. This chapter will provide a short general analysis and then proceed to explore some instances of dialogue and humour in the fantastical novel, analysing them in light of translation in an attempt to see how these aspects could be translated and taking into consideration the ideas posed by the monist/dualist discussion mentioned before.

2.1 General Analysis

American Gods is a long novel, first published in 2001 after a lot of trimming and editing. Gaiman decided that he wanted a different version of the text published as well. This was a combination of his final unedited draft, his final edited draft and the actual published version, and turned out twelve thousand words longer than the originally published novel. This 'author's preferred version' was first published in 2006 and is the version used as a case study.

American Gods starts with protagonist Shadow, who is in prison for armed robbery; after three years serving time he is released a few days early to attend the funeral of his wife Laura, who has died in a car crash. On his flight home he is offered a job by an odd man who calls himself Mister Wednesday. Shadow refuses, because his best friend has offered to hire him already. After he learns, however, that his wife cheated on him with this friend (they were both in the car when it crashed) he realises that his hometown has nothing left for him. Despite an insistent warning by a young, fat man in an expensive car not to, Shadow accepts Mister Wednesday's job offer to be Wednesday's driver and bodyguard, among other things. The two of

them embark on a remarkable journey, on which it turns out that Mister Wednesday is, in fact, the old Norse god Odin and needs Shadow's help to save the old gods from the new. The man warning Shadow was actually the new 'god' of internet and he and his contemporaries are not too fond of the old gods. Shadow learns that the old gods have been around and watching him for a very long time; for instance his cellmate Low-Key Lyesmith turns out to be none other than Loki, the Norse god of mischief. The journey is quite fantastical and Shadow even dies when he holds vigil for Odin, who died first, by hanging from a tree for nine days and nights, but is resurrected to see the outcome of the final battle between the old gods and the new. In the end Shadow goes back to the small town of Lakeside, where Mister Wednesday had made him live for about a year before. There he single-handedly solves the murder of a young girl.

The story is divided into four parts, using twenty 'regular' chapters which are set apart by the heading 'chapter [insert number, spelled out]' and chapter count continues across the parts. Occasionally the story is broken up by short stories in between the chapters, but only in the first two parts. These are divided into a few types: 'Somewhere in America,' 'Coming to America,' and the other ones with varying headings, such as 'Interlude 1'(also 2 and 3), or 'Meanwhile: A Conversation.' When browsing through these chapters it becomes immediately clear that the styles of these chapters are not all the same. Every regular chapter opens with a citation, whereas the other chapters do not. The 'Somewhere in America' and 'Coming to America' stories usually start with an indication of the time and sometimes a location.

Most of the chapters use the past tense for most events and the future or past perfect to indicate other times. This is fairly straightforward and commonly used in fiction writing. However, the first 'Somewhere in America' story, positioned between chapters One and Two, as well as the one between chapters Seven and Eight use the present tense throughout. This creates a different feel and approach to those stories. Between chapters Nine and Ten there is a chapter that is even more distinctly different from the rest of the novel, because it is made up of pure dialogue. Dialogue overall is usually represented by quotation marks, while thoughts and dreams are represented mainly through the use of italics.

2.2 Dialogue

Dialogue is one of the strong points in this novel. Many characters are given their uniqueness and their personality mainly through their speech, rather than their actions or through descriptions. In that sense Gaiman clearly has a good grasp on the 'show, don't tell' principle commonly used in writing. He lets the characters speak for themselves.

In chapter 1.2 a number of ways to portray dialogue were put forward. Direct speech is one of these ways and seemingly the most conventional when it comes to dialogue in fiction. This is also the most frequent form encountered within *American Gods*. However, Janet Burroway mentioned a number of other techniques, such as summary and indirect speech. All of these different types are not necessarily kept separately, as Gaiman illustrates by using all three in a short fragment:

He found himself thinking about a guy named Johnnie Larch he'd shared a cell with when he'd first been put inside, who told Shadow how he'd once got out after five years behind bars, with \$100 and a ticket to Seattle, where his sister lived.

Johnnie Larch had got to the airport, and he handed his ticket to the woman on the counter and she asked to see his driver's license.

He showed it to her. It had expired a couple of years earlier. She told him it was not valid as ID. He told her it might not be valid as a driver's license, but it sure as hell was fine identification, and it had a photo of him on it, and his height and his weight, and damn it, who else did she think he was, if he wasn't him?

She said she'd thank him to keep his voice down.

He told her to give him a fucking boarding pass, or she was going to regret it, and that he wasn't going to be disrespected. You don't let people disrespect you in prison.

Then she pressed a button, and a few moments later the airport security showed up, and they tried to persuade Johnnie Larch to leave the airport quietly, and he did not wish to leave, and there was something of an altercation.

The upshot of it all was that Johnnie Larch never actually made it to Seattle, and he spent the next couple of days in town in bars, and when his \$100 was gone he held up a gas station with a toy gun for money to keep drinking, and the police finally picked him up for pissing in the street. Pretty soon he was back inside serving the rest of his sentence and a little extra for the gas station job.

And the moral of this story, according to Johnnie Larch, was this: don't piss off people who work in airports.

'Are you sure it's not something like "kinds of behavior that work in a specialized environment, such as a prison, can fail to work and in fact become harmful when used outside such an environment"?' said Shadow, when Johnnie Larch told him the story.

'No, listen to me, I'm *telling* you man,' said Jonnie Larch, 'don't piss off those bitches in airports.' (Gaiman 15-16)

An example of a summary taken from the fragment is this paragraph:

The upshot of it all was that Johnnie Larch never actually made it to Seattle, and he spent the next couple of days in town in bars, and when his \$100 was gone he held up a gas station with a toy gun for money to keep drinking, and the police finally picked him up for pissing in the street. Pretty soon he was back inside serving the rest of his sentence and a little extra for the gas station job. (Gaiman 16)

The summary uses very little detail, but just enough to give the reader a general idea of what happened over the course of the few days. The reader does not need to know what exactly Johnnie was drinking or how many drinks he had, whether or not he visited a bathroom or slept at all. It is not relevant and it is not interesting. What is relevant is the image created in the mind of the reader, how drunk Johnnie must have been when he was robbing the gas station and it is not necessary for them to know all the details of his conversations.

The main form of dialogue in this fragment is the use of indirect speech, but even within this classification there are a few minor variations. Some sentences like "she asked to see his driver's license" and "they tried to persuade Johnnie Larch to leave the airport quietly" are examples that makes it clear to the reader what the gist of the conversation was, while not giving exact words or phrases used. They are common enough occurrences that any reader can easily imagine what might have been said. Another example like "he told her it might not be valid as a driver's license, but it sure as hell was fine identification, and it had a photo of him on it, and his height and his weight, and damn it, who else did she think he was, if he wasn't him?" is slightly different version of the indirect speech, because it shows overlap with free indirect speech, where the exact wording that was used in the conversation is portrayed without using direct speech and quotation marks. The only difference with the free indirect speech is that in this example the narrator does not take on the voice of the character completely and the text at that point remains in the third person, rather than the first person perspective commonly applied to free indirect speech. The sentence "you don't let people disrespect you in prison," is an example of free indirect speech, since the context makes it clear that it is Johnnie Larch's utterance, but there is no clarification like 'he said' or 'he told them that...' to accompany this lone statement. The fragment ends by going back to the moment where Johnnie has just told his story to Shadow

and Shadow asks him a question, which is presented in direct speech. Johnnie has already been given a personality through the previous recollection of his actions, but by giving him even a single sentence in direct speech he gains a real voice. This allows the reader to acknowledge him as an actual person, a character, rather than an object of discussion or something Shadow happened to think about. Johnnie's reaction "no, listen to me, I'm *telling* you man, don't piss off those bitches in airports,' shows the way he speaks by clarifying his emphasis. It also reveals how he feels about the story he just told. From his comment it is clear that he thinks he was completely in the right and that the lady at the airport, who was clearly just doing her job, was a bitch. The whole fragment gives Johnnie a clear personality: a hothead who is self-absorbed, arrogant, stubborn and not very clever. He sees only one right way and that is his way, evident by his refusal of Shadow's proposition for the actual moral of the story and clear disregard for what is really important. Gaiman achieved this clear personality without using any description of Johnnie's character whatsoever. The last thing this fragment achieves is a jump in time. It begins with Shadow in his present time thinking back to when Johnnie told him the story. It then makes another jump back to Johnnie going through his actions, before the reader is jolted back to the moment where Johnnie tells Shadow through the use of direct speech. This is where the memory ends as well and the reader is then back in Shadow's present. In the end, the fragment also has a humorous undertone, because the reader can see Johnnie's ridiculous conclusion for what it is, just like Shadow does.

It is, of course, not necessary to always use a variety of techniques representing dialogue and instead the author can fall back to the most conventional portrayal: direct speech. In fact, sometimes this can be taken so far as to completely leave out anything that is not a direct quote by one of the characters. Normally this is done gradually, where a conversation starts with some direct speech, accentuated by a 'he said' 'she said' inspired mechanism to show how the turns are taken between two or more speakers. Once the turn-taking has been established, it is no longer necessary to identify the speaker of each utterance and the direct speech is the only thing left. Gaiman manages to take this technique to the next level by providing a whole (short) chapter that exists of pure dialogue presented in direct speech. The full chapter can be found in the appendix.

The chapter starts with the ringing of a doorbell, setting the location. Two men are at the door to ask Sam, who answers the door, about Shadow, regarding the disappearance of two of their colleagues. Sam is not very eager to help them, however. The amount of visitors is actually not known initially. Sam asks "Are you cops? What are you?" (Gaiman 277) suggesting there is

more than one person at the door. When Mister Town responds: "My name is Town. My colleague here is Mister Road," it becomes clear that there are two men.

This chapter shows how dialogue can be very influential in painting a portrait of a character. Disregarding the context of the story, the reader can deduce quite some information from the conversation taking place here. There are two men at the door. Sam opens the door, so she is familiar with the house and probably lives there. Sam is a young woman, possibly not even an adult, identified by one of the men in response to her sarcastic remarks:

'Do you guys just see things and pick names? "Oh, you be Mister Sidewalk, he's Mister Carpet, say hello to Mister Airplane"?'
'Very funny young lady.' (Gaiman 277)

It is most likely Mister Road who makes this remark, since he seems to be the more impatient of the two men, whereas Mister Town remains polite throughout the conversation. Sam does not take the two men very seriously; she makes sarcastic remarks to them and makes fun of their names. She asks if the men are cops, but they do not actually respond to her question other than that they are 'investigating' a disappearance. That fact, accompanied by the rather odd names, is a likely reason for Sam not to trust the two enough to grant them her cooperation. It also does not provide the reader with much reason to trust them, so the reader sympathises with Sam. Sam seems to try provoking the men by saying she has never met Shadow, despite them knowing she did. Mister Town is the man who seems to be in charge: he starts the conversation, introduces himself and his colleague and is trying to stay polite in order to get Sam's cooperation. He also calls back Mister Road when he starts getting rude. It is mainly Mister Town who keeps calling Sam 'ma'am'. Mister Road, however, is not as able to maintain the polite disposition of his colleague, showing that he is rather quick-tempered and impatient. He is more aggressive in his attempt to coerce Sam into cooperation, also to no avail. It is mostly quite clear, even without further identification, to discover which of the three speakers is speaking at any given point; proof that Gaiman has been able to give each character personal voice that makes them different from one another. All information gained from the passage has been deducted from both the language that has been used (like register) and the way it is used (e.g. tone) to create a certain image of events in the reader's mind. It is very important that these aspects are all acknowledged by a translator if he wants to give the readers of the TT the same image in their mind when they read this passage.

To achieve this same image a translator will have to overcome a number of obstacles. Aside from the regular translation problems that he may encounter, such as vocabulary and specific register, sentence construction, etc. there are more aspects to consider when translating dialogue from one language to another. The dialogue chapter is entirely in direct speech, accompanied by quotation marks. This provides a sense of immediacy. As mentioned in chapter 1.2, this is the most common form of presenting dialogue. The dialogue also shows a graphic representation of fillers, such as "...okay." after Sam asks the names of the missing colleagues. The ellipsis indicates that the speaker is hesitating or thinking before answering. Sam's "Whoa" and "Mm" are similar in the sense that their presence creates the image of spontaneous conversation that Cadera, as well as Brumme and Espunya, presented.

In a body of text without dialogue, like many non-literary texts, the translator will have to take a certain style in consideration. This style is usually a consistent aspect throughout that body of text. When dialogue is translated the translator has to take into account not only the overall style of the text, but also the style of each individual speaker. Since dialogue represents both what a character says and how it is said it is of great importance that a translator recognises all these separate aspects and uses them in the recreation of the text in the TL. The fillers used mainly by Sam are aspects of her speech that add to her character. She is a person who thinks while speaking, whereas the men are more likely to think before they speak, producing fully formed sentences without these fillers. The most substantial exception to that is when Mister Road loses his temper. The dash in that sentence shows how he stops talking midsentence, because he is interrupted by Mister Town.

If the dialogue chapter were to be translated word for word or sentence by sentence without using any context other than that chapter, the translator would soon encounter multiple problems. When translating into Dutch, for instance, a substitute would have to be found for the typically American form of address 'Miz' used to address adult unmarried women. From just that first sentence it is not clear that the person addressed is a young woman. The most neutral option would be to translate 'miz' with the Dutch word 'mevrouw'. This way no distinction needs to be made between married or unmarried, young or old. Realising later on, however, that Sam is a young woman, the translator may choose to use 'mejuffrouw' in Dutch, rather than 'mevrouw'. This is not as commonly used in Dutch, but it does provide a contrast with the later use of 'ma'am' that could just as easily be translated with the Dutch 'mevrouw'. Clearly these issues are usually quite superficial and common in a regular body of text and the translator decides what fits best with the overall style of that text, but when it comes to dialogue this is a little more difficult: in speech representation the translator is also responsible for creating the reader's image of the

character speaking. Thus the translation should not only conform to the overall style of the text, but mainly to the style of the character. A word in the ST could have one single perfect translation in the TL, but if that word clashes with the register used by that character it would not fit after all and the translator would have to find a different word to use that does fit with the character. The question here is then whether or not Mister Town would use 'mejuffrouw' at the risk of him sounding rather archaic or 'mevrouw', which is more common but fails to distinguish between married or unmarried. It can be argued that Sam's marital status is quite irrelevant and considering the context of the entire novel she is highly unlikely to be married, since she is still very young. This would make the option 'mevrouw' the most logical one. Despite there being a difference in address between 'Miz' and 'Ma'am' in the ST, this is not a relevant difference either, so 'mevrouw' can easily be used in both cases.

One of the main issues in this passage (and many other instances of dialogue in fiction) is the English 'you'. It is a word that is often used and in many different ways. Since English does not distinguish between singular and plural this provides a difficulty. When translating into Dutch another issue is added to that, since Dutch may distinguish between a formal and informal form of address, which provides a translator with a multitude of options to choose from when translating the seemingly simple 'you'. The options are 'je/jij' for singular informal, 'jullie' for plural informal and 'u' for both plural and singular formal forms.

This is where the tone of the dialogue becomes very important when translating to Dutch. The voices of the characters are being made quite clear. The diction and syntax reveal a lot about the speakers. Both Mister Town and Road are fairly polite, Town more so than Road. They use a higher register than Sam. If English had made a distinction between formal and informal forms of address there is not a doubt that Mister Town would have been using the formal option. It is therefore credible and desirable to have Mister Town use a formal form in Dutch. Mister Road is less likely to consistently use this form, as he seems to lose his temper. It is possible that he attempts to remain polite, remembering that he is supposed to be acting like a professional. But since he also lashes out into his calling Sam a "snotnosed little..." it is plausible that he may regress into an informal form during the conversation. It is, however, generally more desirable to uphold a certain consistency, therefore it is possibly a more desirable option to have Mister Road also use a formal form of address and show him losing his temper without changing his register too much.

Sam is a different character: from the beginning of the conversation she is clearly not happy with the two men talking to her. The question here is whether Sam respects the two men enough for them to deserve a formal form of address in her eyes. The use of an informal version

would definitely add to her rebellious nature and behaviour towards the two men, although another option would be for her to use formal forms of address and possibly adding a rather sarcastic undertone to them. Both options are credible due to her nature and behaviour and tendency to make sarcastic remarks in any case. It is up to the translator to decide which option fits best with the general characteristics he portrays of her in other instances of dialogue. Seeing her overall cynical stance the sarcastic, yet formal approach is likely to be the most desirable in this case.

2.3 Humour

Humour can be presented in many forms and *American Gods* is no exception: it employs numerous different ways to achieve a comic effect. Sometimes Gaiman conjures up an amusing image in the readers' mind, not so much by what he is describing but the way in which it is described. For example:

Shadow folded the newspaper up once more, and slid it back across the table, toward Wednesday, who was gorging himself on a steak so bloody and so blue it might never have been introduced to a kitchen flame. (Gaiman 37)

The image itself is not so amusing: a big man is ferociously eating a very raw steak. If Gaiman had used a different way of describing this it would not have had any humorous effect. The use of the word 'gorging' exaggerates the manner in which Wednesday is eating and the descriptive words 'bloody' and 'blue' are an exaggeration on the rawness of the meat. This gives Wednesday a barbarian image. On top of that the steak is personified by making it a subject to be 'introduced to a kitchen flame'. Personification of objects that are normally not able to actively do something often achieves a comic effect.

Another way of creating a humorous effect is through dialogue. Gaiman seems to have mastered sarcastic and cynical characters. As seen in the previous section, Sam can be very sarcastic towards people she does not particularly like. She makes fun of the names of the men at her door and the way in which she takes her leave of them is a rather sarcastic rudeness. Sarcasm, however, comes in more than one form too. Sam uses hers in a rebellious way, provoking people she does not like. Mad Sweeney, a completely different character employs it slightly differently:

'You working for our man then?' asked the bearded man. He was not sober, although he was not yet drunk.

'It looks that way,' said Shadow.

The bearded man lit his cigarette. 'I'm a leprechaun,' he said.

Shadow did not smile. 'Really?' he said. 'Shouldn't you be drinking Guinness?'

'Stereotypes. You have to learn to think outside the box,' said the bearded man.

'There's a lot more to Ireland than Guinness.'

'You don't have an Irish accent.'

'I've been over here too fucken long.'

'So you *are* originally from Ireland?'

'I told you. I'm a leprechaun. We don't come from fucken Moscow.' (Gaiman 39)

In this fragment, Mad Sweeney has not been introduced yet. He is the man with the red beard. The passage actually shows more than one way to achieve a humorous effect, one of which being that Mad Sweeney is a leprechaun. Leprechauns are commonly seen as very small fellows with green clothes and a green top hat, distributing (fake) gold coins. Though not in this particular passage, Mad Sweeney is generally described as a very large man. This falls into the category of 'incongruity theories' mentioned in chapter 1.3. Another aspect that is funny about this passage is the fact that Shadow tells him that he does not have an Irish accent and Mad Sweeney proceeds to answer him with a marked form of 'fucking'. The word is adapted in such a way that most native speakers of English will immediately recognise the form as sounding Irish, completely defeating Shadow's previous comment. This also falls under incongruity, because the reader does not expect an Irish accent in Mad Sweeney after Shadow's comment, but is then presented with an accented utterance nonetheless. Mad Sweeney's final comment is a very sarcastic one. Someone who has difficulty recognising sarcasm may mistake his tone for anger, but as it is a common personality trait in Gaiman's characters most readers will easily recognise it for what it is. The key here is to stay true to the characters and their personality traits. That way a translator can provide readers of the TT with the same image as the readers of the ST. This passage does provide a number of interesting obstacles when it comes to translation, however. For one, a rather common translation into Dutch for 'leprechaun' is the word 'kabouter'. A 'kabouter' is actually something that covers a wider range and they are not exclusively associated with Ireland, whereas leprechauns are. 'Kabouter' would not provide a reader of the Dutch translation with the same image the readers of the ST create upon

reading the word 'leprechaun'. An option is to not translate it and use the word 'leprechaun' in the TT, running the risk that not all readers of the TT know exactly what a leprechaun is. The second issue is concerned with the accent. Some novels, like Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* are so full of accents and dialects that it is seemingly impossible to leave them out and still have the same story. In a small quantity like this, visible accents are often not translated as such: they do not appear marked in a TT. The idea with this particular portrayal of the accent, however, is to illustrate the fact that there is an accent where Shadow previously commented that there was not. If the translator would choose to leave out the marked accent, it would completely defeat the point of Shadow's remark. An option is to place a slightly marked word in the TT to signal to the readers of the TT that there is, in fact, an accent. If a translator would choose to not place any marked words in the TT the joke would be lost. In some cases the loss of a small humorous fragment might have a large impact on the rest of the passage, chapter or even the entire story. In this particular case it does not seem to be so dependent on that one joke for the passage to be humorous as there is still Mad Sweeney's last comment dripping with sarcasm to take over.

Chapter 3: Critical Comparison

The analysis of a single text is, of course, not enough to provide insight into the monist/dualist discussion. To create that depth it is necessary to compare that text to others. The idea is to give the text a bigger framework in which it exists so that it may be used as an actual research case. It gives the analysis of that text a context and meaning. In order to achieve that, *American Gods* will undergo a number of comparisons in the following chapter. First, there will be some focus on style; beginning with a genre comparison and continuing to compare authors. Next, there will be a comparison of one fragment of text to its translation after which fragments of *American Gods* shall be compared to both an existing translation as well as my own.

3.1 Genre

In the case of *American Gods* it makes sense to draw a comparison with a rather specific genre: the hard-boiled detective. This is because *American Gods* seems to take a number of its characteristics and uses them, partially to achieve a comic effect. It almost seems to be a parody on the genre, but in order to provide acceptable arguments to support this hypothesis it is vital to characterise the hard-boiled detective novel. One source to start with is Andrew Pepper's 'The "Hard-boiled" Genre', chapter 10 of *A Companion to Crime Fiction*. Pepper tries to establish a concept of the hard-boiled detective, using many examples and quotations to support his arguments. He starts by quoting Raymond Chandler and his praise of Dashiell Hammett's writing. Of course, those two authors are probably the first two to come to mind when hard-boiled detectives are topic of discussion. Chandler seems to have praised Hammett for making his fiction realistic and innovative and regards himself and Hammett as rather exceptional detective writers, because of the quality and seriousness of their novels.

Pepper admits that 'the hard-boiled *is* a predominantly American form' (Pepper 140), although he states later that it should 'not be seen as exclusively period-based or American' (Pepper 143). He seems to contradict himself a little, but as he is trying to establish an objective view on the genre, he provides all angles, including the common ideas (i.e. that it is typically American) and the actual realities (i.e. that it is, in fact, far more widespread than America). The point that he is trying to argue is that 'hard-boiled writing is always inflected with political assumptions, even where these assumptions are unclear or indeed contested'(Pepper 141). He outlines, as a general idea, a major plotline of the genre: '[...] the straight, white male protagonist vanquishes that which threatens his autonomy by projecting or displacing his anxieties onto a polluting 'other' characterised as black, female, and homosexual' (Pepper 141). Indeed, the

protagonist of *American Gods* is a straight, white male and the plotline can certainly be seen as following these general rules. Pepper also states that 'the hard-boiled is best theorized as a highly unstable political category that operates in a field of tension between different and competing political ideologies' (Pepper 142). This is an aspect which, in general, can certainly be seen in *American Gods*. There is indeed a fierce battle between two different and competing ideologies. What is different, however, and supportive of the parody theory, is that it is not a purely political battle, but a religious one. The old gods are fighting for their existence; their very lives and legacies are endangered by the modern gods and their ideologies. The fact that these modern gods are personified versions of the Internet, the Media, Television, etc. ensures the satirical effect on the conventionally political issues.

Pepper mentions some examples of hard-boiled detective writing about 'the perils of social organization, particularly as a manifestation of corporate capitalism,' or 'a landscape of civic corruption and corporate gangsterdom' and how 'the protagonists' struggle against civic and corporate corruption usually ends in failure and death. Even when it does not, the price to be paid is a great one' (Pepper 143). These descriptions appear to be a common theme in the genre, as also evidenced by the fact that this aspect, too, can be found within *American Gods*. The manifestation of corporate capitalism is taken very literally, by personifying and even deifying the concepts of Internet and other modern technologies. They are elevated to their divine status through worship and the modern capitalist world is giving them exactly that, while the old gods are slowly becoming powerless and forgotten. The protagonist's 'struggle', Shadow's part in the war between old and new gods leads him to his end. When Odin/Mister Wednesday dies and Shadow holds vigil for him by hanging from a tree for nine days and nights, he, too, dies. He is, however, resurrected, so that he can continue his journey to fulfil his destiny. With the death of Odin, all hope is lost, at first. This can be seen as the failure. Shadow experiences a great loss, his great price, as he loses his wife, his best friend, his life and, as it turns out, his father: Odin.

3.2 Raymond Chandler

Has Gaiman been influenced by writers like Chandler, not only in using the genre-specific characteristics and general type of plotline, but also in other ways? In an attempt to answer that question the opening paragraphs of two works will be studied here: Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* and Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*. The opening paragraphs of a novel are meant to draw the reader's attention, to suck him into the story and to make him curious enough to keep on reading. The question here would be if Gaiman can be seen to employ techniques to get his

readers interested similar to Chandler's. Below is the opening paragraph of *The Big Sleep* by Raymond Chandler:

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning, mid October, with the sun not shining and a look of hard wet rain in the clearness of the foothills. I was wearing my powder-blue suit, with dark blue shirt, tie and display handkerchief, black brogues, black wool socks with dark blue clocks on them. I was neat, clean, shaved and sober, and I didn't care who knew it. I was everything the well-dressed private detective ought to be. I was calling on four million dollars. (Chandler, chapter 1)

This short body of text contains a rather general opening statement about how the protagonist, Marlowe, is dressed. This is hardly going to catch the readers' fancy, but then Chandler comes with a turn: 'I didn't care who knew it.' This immediately throws up a different idea of Marlowe: that this, how he is dressed and looking neat and clean is not his usual look and that he is doing this for a reason. Then he states that he is 'calling on four million dollars' which will certainly compel the readers to read on, because they want to know what he means: why is he dressed up, how does he intend to get four million dollars and who needs a private detective and why do they need him? These are all questions that arise after reading that short first paragraph. Not only is the content relevant, of course, but also the form: how is it depicted? All information in this sentence is presented in a rather sober way, possessing a certain matter-of-factness, as if it just is, and does not have any other meaning, no consequences, whatsoever. The information is presented as if trivial, unimportant, yet it is there. This conjures up a contradictory image, because why would the author write it, if it is not important? This is another aspect that compels the reader to continue reading; to find out if it really is unimportant, or if there is actually an underlying reason for the author to have put it there.

The opening paragraph of Gaiman's *American Gods* (disregarding the quotation that every regular chapter opens with):

Shadow had done three years in prison. He was big enough, and looked don't-fuck-with-me enough that his biggest problem was killing time. So he kept himself in shape, and taught himself coin tricks, and thought a lot about how much he loved his wife. (Gaiman 3)

One of the more obvious differences here is the fact that Chandler's narrative is presented from a first person point of view, while Gaiman's narrative employs the third person. However, what is rather strikingly similar is that the same type of matter-of-factness can be detected in this opening paragraph. Gaiman's sentences are presented as minor facts: it is truth, nothing more and nothing less. The text is not packed with descriptive words; only that information that is necessary is given, with as little ceremony or glorification as possible. These are very similar strategies, it seems, even though the contradictory image that Chandler creates is not as clear in this narrative: Gaiman's opening paragraph misses that turn between boring description and inciting curiosity through a contradicting statement. However, what may compel the reader to read on in Gaiman's opening is the innovative description of how Shadow looks: 'don't-fuck-with-me enough'. This is a description that will have every reader conjure up his or her own version of this man. The curiosity is also ignited by the fact that, apparently, Shadow is bored in prison, followed by the seemingly trivial (or unnecessary) comment that he thinks about 'how much he loved his wife' a great deal. It is, naturally, a reasonable thing to do for someone who is in prison, to think about those he loves and how much he loves them, but it is also a matter of course that he should have those thoughts, so why would the author mention it at all?

Another aspect to compare is, naturally, dialogue. Similarities between the two novels present themselves from early on; below is an example of dialogue from *The Big Sleep*, chapter two:

The butler stood in front of him and said: "This is Mr. Marlowe, General."

The old man didn't move or speak, or even nod. He just looked at me lifelessly.

The butler pushed a damp wicker chair against the backs of my legs and I sat down.

He took my hat with a deft scoop.

Then the old man dragged his voice up from the bottom of a well and said:

"Brandy, Norris. How do you like your brandy, sir?"

"Any way at all," I said.

The butler went away among the abominable plants. The General spoke again, slowly, using his strength as carefully as an out-of-work show-girl uses her last good pair of stockings.

"I used to like mine with champagne. The champagne as cold as Valley Forge and about a third of a glass of brandy beneath it. You may take your coat off, sir. It's too hot in here for a man with blood in his veins." (Chandler, chapter 2)

Compare this to a fragment from chapter two of *American Gods*:

'I have taken the Liberty,' said Mr Wednesday, washing his hands in the men's room of Jack's Crocodile Bar, 'of ordering food for myself, to be delivered to your table. We have much to discuss, after all.'

'I don't think so,' said Shadow. He dried his own hands on a paper towel and crumpled it, and dropped it into the bin.

'You need a job,' said Wednesday. 'People don't hire ex-cons. You folk make them uncomfortable.'

'I have a job waiting. A good job.'

'Would that be the job at the Muscle Farm?'

'Maybe,' said Shadow.

'Nope. You don't. Robbie Burton's dead. Without him the Muscle Farm's dead too.'

'You're a liar.'

'Of course. And a good one. The best you will ever meet. But, I'm afraid, I'm not lying to you about this.' He reached into his pocket, produced a newspaper, much folded, and handed it to Shadow. 'Page seven,' he said. 'Come on back to the bar.

You can read it at the table.' (Gaiman 35-6)

The two fragments show very similar ways of portraying dialogue, not only in the way that new utterances do not always necessarily begin a new paragraph, but also the lack of dialogue tags accompanying the utterances.

Other than the form of the dialogue, both Gaiman and Chandler employ a matter-of-factness to their text, especially to the dialogue in these passages. Nothing is said beyond what needs to be said by the characters, but the narrator, too, provides no more information than is absolutely necessary. This gives a very serious tone to the text, making it feel like something not to be messed with. It just is what it is, and nothing more. These passages only show a limited view, but whereas most of Chandler's novel is strikingly consistent *American Gods* shows chapters and passages with increasing absurdity: journeying far into the fantastical where Chandler's story remains utterly realistic. This does not influence the matter-of-factness of the text as it is written, but it does create a different effect than Chandler's serious crime fiction has on the reader.

There is a naturalness to the dialogue and the descriptions in between that make the text flow onwards and both authors seem to have achieved a similar flow. On top of that, parts of *American Gods* have that distinct feel that crime fiction has, a sense of mystery and desire to

understand what has occurred and how and why in that way. This is most evident at the end of the story where Shadow actually solves the murder of a young girl, a topic common in many instances of crime fiction. All these aspects combined show that there are many similarities to be found between Neil Gaiman and Raymond Chandler, although these are not limited by genre alone.

3.3 Chandler, Gaiman, and Translation

The previous section showed similarities between Chandler and Gaiman in aspects such as dialogue and tone, as well as genre-specific factors like plot. Since those similarities have been established already it seems useful to also use Chandler for a comparison with texts in the TL. To provide a useful comparison with their respective source texts, the same passages from the previous section will be taken from the existing translations. Chandler's *The Big Sleep* was translated by J. van Woensel and published in 1973 as *Het grote slapen. Amerikaanse Goden* is the translated version of Gaiman's novel, by Hugo and Nienke Kuipers, first published in 2002.

De butler ging recht voor hem staan en zei: 'Dit is de heer Marlowe, Generaal.'

De oude man bewoog, sprak, of knikte zelfs niet eens. Hij keek me alleen maar wezenloos aan. De butler duwde een vochtige rieten stoel tegen de achterkant van mijn benen en ik ging zitten. Hij nam mijn hoed met een handige, vloeiende beweging af. Op dat moment haalde de oude man zijn stem uit de bodem van de put op en zei:

'Brandy, Norris. Hoe drinkt u hem het liefst, meneer?'

'In een glas,' zei ik.

De butler vertrok tussen de afschuwelijke planten door. De Generaal sprak langzaam verder; hij gebruikte de kracht die hem restte zo zorgvuldig als een werkeloze revuedanseres haar laatste goede paar kousen.

'Vroeger dronk ik graag brandy met champagne. Eerst een derde brandy, en dan aanvullen met champagne, zo koud als Valley Forge. U mag uw jasje best uittrekken. Het is hier veel te warm voor iemand die nog bloed in zijn aderen heeft. (Woensel 11)

The first thing to notice is that the translator of this text has remained very close to the form of the ST. This may indicate a bias in favour of monistic views towards style. He uses the same sentence constructions as far as the TL allows this and uses direct translations of the metaphors

Chandler uses. The only sentence where Woensel really deviates is when Marlowe answers the brandy question with "in een glas." This is less literal than the rest of the passage. A similarly direct translation would be something like "hoe dan ook" or "het maakt niet uit hoe." The fact that Woensel deviates here and turned it into "in een glas" shows that he picked up on the rather cynical and sarcastic undertone that Marlowe seems to be fond of using. He is not actually making fun of the offer, but is not completely serious about it either. There is a very subtle humour that Chandler places in his text and Woensel seems to have picked up on it.

The largest shift in sentence construction takes place in the sentence about the mixing of brandy and champagne. The ST starts with describing the champagne, its relative temperature and proceeds to what is already in the glass when the champagne is added. The TT follows the order of pouring by first mentioning the brandy and then describing the champagne added. This is not necessarily a change in sentence construction due to the limitations or rules belonging to the TL. An option where the construction is not changed as much could be something like: "De champagne zo koud als Valley Forge met ongeveer een derde glas brandy eronder." This construction is very close to the ST, but still perfectly clear and understandable in the SL. Woensel's solution does seem to sound more idiomatic, however, making it an understandable shift. A nice addition on Woensel's part is the word 'nog' in the last sentence of the passage. The ST does not use any form of this word, such as 'still' or 'yet', but the idea is present in the words of the General. He implies that he barely has any blood flowing through his veins any more, that he is old and possibly close to dying. By adding 'nog' in the translation, Woensel uses the word as a pragmatic particle to make this statement stronger and exaggerate the opposition between the old General and the much younger, livelier Marlowe. Without the addition of 'nog' the sentence would have likely sounded a little strange in the TL, as if the General literally meant that he had no blood in his veins.

Next, the existing translation of Gaiman's fragment:

'Ik ben zo vrij geweest,' zei Wednesday, terwijl hij zijn handen waste in de herentoiletten van Jack's Crocodile Bar, 'om voedsel voor mijzelf te bestellen dat naar jouw tafel zal worden gebracht. Per slot van rekening hebben we veel te bespreken.'

'Dat hebben we niet,' zei Shadow. Hij droogde zijn handen aan een papieren handdoek af, verkreukelde hem en liet hem in de afvalbak vallen.

'Je hebt een baan nodig,' zei Wednesday. 'Mensen nemen geen ex-gedetineerden in dienst. Ze voelen zich niet op hun gemak bij jullie.'

'Ik kan een baan krijgen. Een goede baan.'

'Bedoel je de baan in de Muscle Farm?'

'Misschien,' zei Shadow.

'Nee. Die baan is er niet. Robbie Burton is dood. Zonder hem is de Muscle Farm ook dood.'

'Je bent een leugenaar.'

'Natuurlijk. En een goede ook. De beste die je ooit zult tegenkomen. Maar jammer genoeg lieg ik deze keer niet.' Hij greep in zijn zak, haalde een opgevouwen krant tevoorschijn en gaf hem aan Shadow. 'Pagina zeven,' zei hij. 'Kom maar mee naar de bar. Je kunt het aan de tafel lezen.' (Kuipers 38)

In comparison with the Chandler fragment, the translator of this passage has made more shifts in things like sentence construction than Woensel did. This has, however, ensured a realistic dialogue with idiomatic language in the TT. Rather than translating "you don't," into something literal like "die heb je niet" the translator has chosen for clarification by adding the job as a subject. This is rather necessary because the TT also has a shift in the sentence where Shadow explains that he has a job waiting for him. In English "you don't," is a phrase to be used with all sorts of verbs and easily goes with 'have' that is used. The translator chose not to translate that sentence as "Er wacht een baan op me" or "Ik heb een baan die op me ligt te wachten," because these options are far less idiomatic. They personify the job, while personification of abstract things and objects is not a common strategy used in the Dutch language. The translators therefore decided to make a shift towards a far more idiomatic expression that does not necessarily mean exactly the same thing, but that minor change is hardly influential to the understanding of the idea that is being presented: Robbie was going to hire Shadow, but he can't do that now because he is dead. Another minor shift is when Wednesday tells Shadow that he is afraid he is not lying to him about Robbie. The ST clearly states "lying to you about this," involving Shadow in the sentence. The translation just states that Wednesday is not lying. It's possible that an inclusion of the left out factors in that sentence would provide a less idiomatic sentence in the TL, but more important is that it would not have any effect on the understanding of the sentence. The reader understands that Wednesday means he is not lying about Robbie and since his conversation is with Shadow it is rather obvious that he means he is not lying to Shadow. The translator seems to have given good thought about leaving unnecessary things out of the translation where possible.

3.4 Gaiman and Translation

The comparison of an existing translation to its ST can provide insight into the mind of the translator. Some strategies may become clearer, while others remain obscure, however. In that case it may be useful to also compare the existing translation to a fresh translation. The existing translation by Kuipers is from 2009 (first print 2002), which makes it fairly recent. My own intention of translating this text for a modern audience is therefore equal to the probable intention of Kuipers. I have, however, tried to focus on a realistic portrayal of dialogue, trying to stay true to the characters' personalities. In addition I have attempted to minimise the loss of humorous elements. The comparison will show whether the existing translation has also been made with these intentions. It may also provide some insight into the aims and techniques used by the translators. This section will present one translated fragment by my own hand and the corresponding fragment from Kuipers' translation. The annotated version of this and other fragments can be found in chapter four. The ST of all fragments are in the appendix.

The fragment is a short piece of dialogue between Shadow and Mr Wednesday. Shadow has a hangover from the night before and Wednesday is driving the car.

My own translation:

'En hoe voel je je deze mooie ochtend?' vroeg Wednesday zonder zich om te draaien.

'Wat is er met mijn auto gebeurd?' vroeg Shadow. 'Het was een huurauto.'

'Mad Sweeney heeft hem voor je teruggebracht. Dat was onderdeel van de afspraak die jullie gisteravond gemaakt hebben.'

'Afspraak?'

'Na het gevecht.'

'Gevecht?' Hij wreef over zijn wang en zijn gezicht vertrok. Er was inderdaad een gevecht geweest. Hij herinnerde zich een lange man met een rode baard en het gejuich en gejoel van een enthousiast publiek. 'Wie heeft er gewonnen?'

'Je weet het niet meer, hè?' Wednesday grinnikte.

'Niet dat je het zou merken,' zei Shadow. Gesprekken van de avond daarvoor begonnen oncomfortabel in zijn hoofd rond te woelen. 'Heb je nog meer koffie?'

De grote man reikte onder de passagiersstoel en gaf een ongeopend flesje water naar achter door. 'Hier. Je bent vast uitgedroogd. Dit helpt beter dan koffie op het moment. We stoppen wel bij het volgende tankstation zodat je wat ontbijt kan halen en jezelf kan opfrissen. Je ziet eruit als een verzopen geit.'

'Verzopen kat,' zei Shadow.

'Geit,' zei Wednesday. 'Enorme ranzige stinkende geit met grote tanden. '

The same fragment from the existing translation by Kuipers:

'Hoe voel je je op deze mooie ochtend?' vroeg Wednesday zonder zich om te draaien.

'Wat is er met mijn auto gebeurd?' vroeg Shadow. 'Het was een huurwagen.'

'Die heeft Mad Sweeney voor je teruggebracht. Dat hoorde bij de afspraak die jullie gisteravond maakten. Na het gevecht.'

Gesprekken van de vorige avond drongen zich onbehaaglijk aan Shadow op. 'Heb je nog meer van die koffie?'

De grote man greep onder de passagiersstoel en gaf een ongeopende fles water naar achteren door. 'Hier. Je zult wel uitgedroogd zijn. Dit helpt voorlopig beter dan koffie. We stoppen bij het volgende benzinstation, dan kun je ontbijten. Je moet je ook wat opknappen. Je ziet eruit als iets wat door de geit naar binnen is gesleept.'

'Door de kat,' verbeterde Shadow hem.

'Geit,' zei Wednesday. 'Een kolossale, vieze, stinkende geit met grote tanden.'

(Kuipers 48-9)

The most obvious difference between the two translations is the fact that the existing translation is missing a part of this conversation. In the ST Shadow does not remember at first that he had fought Mad Sweeney. His temporary memory loss lends credit to his hangover; a subtlety missing from the existing translation. Kuipers' text seems to understate Shadow's hangover, making it less obvious why Wednesday gives Shadow water instead of coffee. Shadow also touches his face, making himself cringe as it hurts. This is how he remembers the fight at all, but it is also a good reason for him to need to clean himself up at the next stop and for Wednesday to tell him he looks like something the cat dragged in.

Another interesting difference is the figure of speech that Gaiman used. 'Something the cat dragged in,' is a very common phrase, especially in American English. It is an idiomatic expression fitting in with the typically American language found in this novel. Its intent is to tell the reader that Shadow looks bad after the fight and having had too much to drink the night before. Kuipers has taken the expression very seriously, translating it literally. The readers of the TT will probably understand what is meant by this, but it might have been more ideal for Kuipers to use an existing idiomatic expression that may just as

easily be altered to have a goat in it rather than whatever other creature might usually be named in that expression. In this case I chose to go with 'verzopen kat,' because it sticks close to the cat, but is also a Dutch idiomatic expression basically denoting the same thing as the ST: that Shadow looks bad. Granted, 'verzopen kat' may give a slight impression of someone who is very wet, but the overall connotation is something who is not looking their best. The cat is easily changed to a goat in this phrase as well, making it a decent option. Kuipers' choice to keep the expression the same seems to be a rather monist thing to do, while it actually causes a minor loss in content.

Chapter 4: Annotated Translation

Hij dacht ineens aan een kerel genaamd Johnnie Larch waar hij een cel mee deelde toen hij net binnenkwam die hem vertelde hoe hij ooit was vrijgekomen na vijf jaar achter de tralies, met honderd dollar op zak en een ticket naar Seattle, waar zijn zus woonde. Johnnie Larch kwam aan op het vliegveld en gaf zijn ticket aan de vrouw achter de balie en zij vroeg hem om zijn rijbewijs.

Hij liet hem aan haar zien. Hij was een paar jaar eerder verlopen. Ze vertelde hem dat het geen geldig identiteitsbewijs was. Hij zei dat het misschien geen geldig rijbewijs was, maar het was toch écht wel een prima identificatie en er stond een foto van hem op en zijn lengte en zijn gewicht en wie dacht ze verdomme dat hij was als hij hem niet was?¹

Ze zei dat ze het op prijs zou stellen als hij zijn stem niet zo² zou verheffen.

Hij zei dat ze hem een klotepas³ moest geven of ze zou er spijt van krijgen en dat hij zich niet zo respectloos liet behandelen. In de gevangenis laat je je niet respectloos behandelen.⁴

Toen drukte ze op een knop en een paar minuten later kwam de beveiliging van het vliegveld opdagen en ze probeerden Johnnie Larch over te halen om rustig te vertrekken en hij wilde niet vertrekken en er onstond wat⁵ onenigheid.⁶

¹ The existing translation is slightly different in the first part of this sentence: it says 'niet geldig als rijbewijs, maar heel erg geldig als identiteitsbewijs'. That construction allows for the repetition of 'geldig' as well as 'bewijs'. My construction does not use these repetitions. The next part 'er stond een foto van hem op en zijn lengte en zijn gewicht' is not present in the existing translation.

² I added a pragmatic particle here to add emphasis. Without it the sentence may come across as the lady telling Johnnie it is something he should not do in general, whereas 'zo' adds a layer onto the sentence, making it clear that it is about something happening right then and there. This also helps making it descriptive of the fact that Johnnie is indeed raising his voice at that particular moment. The existing translation also uses 'zo' to add emphasis and immediacy, but is still different: 'Ze zei dat ze het op prijs zou stellen als hij niet zo hard zou praten.' This is similar, but 'hard praten' is not necessarily an indication of anger or aggression that 'stem verheffen' does carry and is logical in this situation.

³ The ST states 'fucking boardingpass.' While 'fucking' is a word that is nowadays quite common in Dutch, it's possible that leaving the phrase 'fucking boardingpass' might make it sound too English and have an estranging effect. Despite the fact that a boarding pass is also the term used in Dutch airports I chose to make it a typically Dutch word by using the Dutch swearword 'klot' as a prefix to the shorter 'pas'. It retains Johnnie's swearing and anger, while making it idiomatic Dutch without the Dutch seeming weird in an obvious non-Dutch environment.

⁴ Existing translation uses 'verdomme' again. This is an unnecessary repetition in my opinion, although it is not very substantial. The other difference in this sentence is that I chose to translate 'disrespect' with 'respectloos behandelen' whereas Kuipers chose 'vernederen'. Although I understand the choice, and disrespecting may lead to humiliation, I believe that 'vernederen' is too strong a word to denote that Johnnie just wants respect. (regardless of whether he actually deserves respect or would be able to recognise it if he got it)

⁵ Here, too, I added a particle for nuancing purposes. 'wat' denotes that there was some commotion, but Johnnie is obviously telling a tall story, understating the actual commotion. 'wat' is a good option to nuance the amount or intensity of the commotion, which is rather fitting in the storytelling situation.

⁶ Existing translation split this up into two sentences. Where I just used the 'and' construction from the ST, Kuipers decided to place a full stop. I think that is a very valid choice, since it provides better flow in reading, whereas the 'and' construction may require a reader to read the entire sentence again to understand. The reason I chose to stick to the ST construction is because Gaiman tends to use many of these constructions, he keeps adding 'and' even multiple times in one sentence, making the sentences monstrous, but it signifies the way a character is telling something. When someone is excitedly telling a story they don't allow for many full stops either. I believe this is the sense that Gaiman was aiming for and I tried to retain that.

Waar het op neer kwam was dat Johnnie Larch nooit in Seattle aankwam en de volgende paar dagen in kroegen doorbracht en toen zijn honderd dollar op was beroofde hij een tankstation met een speelgoedwapen zodat hij geld had om te blijven drinken en de politie pakte hem uiteindelijk op omdat hij op straat stond te pissen. Hij was snel genoeg weer binnen om de rest van zijn tijd uit te zitten en nog iets langer door dat akkefietje bij het tankstation.⁷

En de moraal van dit verhaal, volgens Johnnie Larch, was dit: mensen die op een vliegveld werken moet je niet kwaad maken.

'Weet je zeker dat het niet zoiets is als: "sommige gedragingen die in een gespecialiseerde omgeving zoals een gevangenis werken, werken niet altijd en zijn eigenlijk juist nadelig buiten die omgeving"?' zei Shadow, toen Johnnie Larch hem het verhaal vertelde.

'Nee, luister nou, ik zeg het je, man,' zei Johnnie Larch,' die trutten die op die vliegvelden werken moet je niet kwaad maken.'⁸

⁷ The existing translation is as follows: 'Al gauw was hij in de gevangenis terug om de rest van zijn straf uit te zitten, en nog een tijdje extra voor die beroving van dat benzinstation.' Firstly, I decided not to explain as much as Kuipers did. He clarifies 'inside' by adding 'in de gevangenis', while it is quite obvious from the context that they mean inside the prison. Kuipers also adds 'die beroving van dat benzinstation.' I believe this is also unnecessary, because the robbery was literally mentioned in the previous sentence, needing no additional clarification.

⁸ the existing translation: 'Nee, luister naar mij, neem dit nou van mij aan, man,' zei Johnnie Larch. 'Maak geen ruzie met die krenge op vliegvelden.' I think 'krenge' is possibly better than 'trutten' because it seems to be a bit stronger and Johnnie's use of 'bitches' in the ST is quite strong too. However, I think that 'luister naar mij, neem dit nou van mij aan' is too long and sounding too formal or decent for someone like Johnnie. It sounds uncharacteristic, whereas the phrase 'ik zeg het je' is more fitting to Johnnie's personality. It is closer to spoken language than the longer version Kuipers presented.

Dingdong

'Mevrouw Crow?'

'Ja.'

'U bent Samantha Black Crow?'

'Ja.'

'Vindt u het goed als we u een paar vragen stellen, mevrouw?'

'Niet echt, nee'¹⁰.'

'U hoeft niet zo'n houding aan te nemen, mevrouw.'¹¹

'Zijn jullie van de politie? Waar zijn jullie van?''¹²

'Mijn naam is Town'¹³. Mijn collega hier is meneer Road. Wij onderzoeken de verdwijning van twee collega's.'

Hoe heetten ze?'

'Pardon?'

'Vertel me hun namen. Ik wil weten hoe ze heten. Jullie collega's. Vertel me hun namen en misschien help ik dan.'

'... oké. Hun namen waren Stone en Wood'¹⁴. Mogen we u nu wat vragen stellen?'

'Kijken jullie gewoon naar dingen om er dan een naam van te maken ofzo? "Oh als jij'¹⁵ nou meneer Stoep'¹⁶ bent, dan is hij meneer Tapijt, en doe de groeten aan meneer Vliegtuig'¹⁷"?'

⁹ The ST states whether Sam 'minds' if they ask her some questions, to which she answers positively, that, yes, she does mind. In Dutch this could be translated as something like: "vindt u het erg als we u een paar vragen stellen?" However, the word 'erg' means that it might bother her in a very negative way. What they are actually asking is if they are not too inconvenient. In that sense it is more idiomatic Dutch for the men to ask for permission to ask her some questions, so the phrase "vindt u het goed als," is used, instead.

¹⁰ Since the question has slightly changed in my TT, the answer must be changed from confirming to rejecting what the question was asking for.

¹¹ The existing translation skips these two sentences. Mister Town's request for asking some questions is immediately followed by Sam's question whether they are from the police.

¹² Existing translation: 'wat zijn jullie?' Although a more direct translation from the ST 'what are you?' it seems a rather odd question. 'wat' is used more for objects or asking if someone is other than human, perhaps, but is not a common question for asking what someone's job is.

¹³ Names are often not translated, since they are a part of the character and it makes them who they are. In most cases this works and, as such, I have chosen to not translate most names.

¹⁴ The ST keeps stating Mister here before every name. This is not necessary for the reader to understand it. Sam is asking for their names, and 'mister' or the Dutch 'meneer' is not exactly part of their name, so just the names themselves are sufficient. The existing translation also left out the additional 'meneer' or an equivalent.

¹⁵ Sam normally is quite polite. But I chose to use 'jij' in this sentence as the person common in expressions. In English this could be compared to 'one' being used in the expressional sense. This 'jij' is not aimed at any particular person, but rather as a hypothetical conversation partner in a mocking expression.

¹⁶ The ST uses 'sidewalk' as a hypothetical name that Sam comes up with. This may be translated as 'trottoir', but I decided that since Sam is a young woman her register will not be very high and a 'trottoir' is a rather high register word for something that is very commonly called 'stoep'. The common word fits better with Sam's character. The existing translation used 'trottoir' 'vloerbedekking' and 'vliegtuig'.

¹⁷ As mentioned before, names are often not translated. In this case, however, they are hypothetical names, not existing ones. These names are used in a mocking expression by Sam, meaning they are everyday objects that she thinks of. Since they are not actual names they can appear in the TL. Also, the names of Town, Road, Wood and

'Ontzettend grappig, jongedame. Eerste vraag: we moeten weten of u deze man heeft gezien. Hier. U mag de foto wel vasthouden.'

'Wow. Voor- en zijaanzicht, met nummertjes eronder... en groot. Hij is wel knap¹⁸. Wat heeft hij gedaan?'

'Hij was een paar jaar geleden betrokken bij een bankroof in een klein stadje, als chauffeur. Zijn twee collega's besloten om de poet zelf te houden en gingen ervandoor. Hij werd boos. Kwam ze achterna. Heeft ze bijna met zijn blote handen vermoord. De staat heeft een deal gesloten met zijn slachtoffers: zij getuigden en kregen voorwaardelijke straf, Shadow kreeg zes jaar. Hij heeft drie jaar gezeten. Als je het mij vraagt mogen ze kerels zoals hij gewoon achter slot en grendel zetten en de sleutel weggooien.'

'Dat heb ik nog nooit iemand in het echt horen zeggen, weet u¹⁹ dat. Niet hardop.'

'Wat horen zeggen, mevrouw Crow?'

'*Poet*.²⁰ Dat is niet echt een woord dat mensen veel gebruiken. Misschien zeggen ze dat in films, maar niet in het echt. '

'Dit is geen film, mevrouw Crow.'

'Black Crow. Het is mevrouw Black Crow. Mijn vrienden noemen me Sam.'

'Prima, Sam. Maar even over deze man-'

'Maar jullie zijn niet mijn vrienden. Jullie mogen me mevrouw Black Crow noemen.'

'Luister eens eventjes, brutaal klein²¹- '

'Het is goed, meneer Road. Sam hier - pardon, mevrouw - ik bedoel mevrouw Black Crow hier wil ons alleen maar helpen. Ze is een nette burger die de wet respecteert.²²

Stone are such easy names that most readers of the TL will still understand them as being seemingly randomly named after everyday objects, which means they will understand Sam's sarcasm.

¹⁸ Existing translation: 'maar vast wel aardig.' I'm not sure how Kuipers got to that sentence from the ST 'he's cute though'. 'Cute' being a very general (American) English word for saying someone looks good or handsome.

¹⁹ I chose to use 'u' here, because Sam is actually talking to one of the men here and being polite. Overall I used 'jullie' because she has been talking to the both of them and 'jullie' seems to have a more neutral connotation, while 'u' can be used for both plural and singular, 'jullie' is purely plural, but not necessarily very informal.

²⁰ The dilemma here was to either use 'poet' or 'buit' as a translation. 'Buit' seems to be the usual and most logical translation for 'loot', but as 'buit' is not necessarily an uncommon word in Dutch, that would make Sam's statement wrong or unnecessary. 'Poet,' however, is a word that is not commonly heard, but seems to have a stronger meaning pointing towards money, whereas 'buit' can encompass pretty much anything stolen. Since the loot is from a robbery at a bank, however, money is a very acceptable meaning to have in the translation.

²¹ The ST just says 'listen', but it is a rather common Dutch idiomatic expression to use 'luister eens even' complete with pragmatic particles to emphasise the obvious irritation of the person speaking. Since the insult was not finished in the ST, it is anyone's guess what the speaker was going to say, but 'brutaal klein' is a good start of an insult that can be left open. The existing translation uses 'hoor eens' which has the same function as 'luister eens even' in Dutch. Kuipers chose 'eigenwijs' rather than 'brutaal', but both are equally plausible.

²² Existing translation uses 'gezagsgetrouwe burger'. This seems like a decent, shorter, alternative for my solution that I had not come up with.

'Mevrouw, we weten dat u Shadow heeft geholpen. U bent met hem gezien in een witte Chevrolet²³ Nova. Hij gaf u een lift. Hij heeft uw eten betaald. Heeft hij misschien iets gezegd wat ons zou kunnen helpen bij ons onderzoek? Twee van onze beste mensen zijn verdwenen.'

'Ik heb hem nog nooit gezien.'²⁴

'U heeft hem wel gezien. Denkt u alstublieft niet dat wij achterlijk zijn. Wij zijn niet achterlijk.'

'hm. Ik ontmoet zoveel mensen. Misschien heb ik hem wel gezien en ben ik het alweer vergeten.'

'Mevrouw, het is echt het beste voor u om met ons mee te werken.'

'Want anders moeten jullie me voorstellen aan meneer Duimschroef en meneer Pentothal?'

'Mevrouw, u maakt het echt niet makkelijker voor uzelf.'

'Goh. Wat vervelend nou. Was er nog iets anders? Want ik zeg zo "Oké, doi." en doe de deur dicht en ik gok dat jullie dan in meneer Auto stappen en wegrijden.'

'Uw gebrek aan medewerking staat genoteerd, mevrouw.'

'Oké, doi.'

Klik.

'Sam? Wie was dat aan de deur?'

'Oh niets boeiends.'²⁵

²³ The ST states Chevy, which is a very normal way to talk about a Chevrolet in American English. It is, however, not such a common type of car in the Netherlands as it is in North America. As such, it is not known whether the term 'Chevy' would be as clear to readers of the TT as it would be to readers of the ST. It is not bothersome for readers of the TT to read 'Chevrolet' instead, since they most likely will not be reading the ST to compare, so the translation may as well be rather too clear than not clear enough.

²⁴ the existing translation uses 'ontmoet' to translate 'met'. This is a rather literal translation. It seems more idiomatic to say 'Ik heb hem nog nooit gezien.'

²⁵ The existing translation ends at the click of the door. It doesn't show the fourth speaker. This is not a very significant loss, since it is never made clear who the fourth speaker is. The only thing it does is show that Sam does not tell anyone about Shadow or the two men at the door, meaning she keeps secrets.

'Dus jij werkt nu voor onze man?' vroeg de man met de baard. Hij was niet nuchter, maar hij was ook nog niet dronken.

'Daar lijkt het wel op,' zei Shadow.

De man met de baard stak zijn sigaret aan. 'Ik ben een leprechaun²⁶,' zei hij.

Shadow glimlachte niet. 'Echt?' zei hij. 'Moet je geen Guinness drinken dan?'

'Stereotypes. Je moet eens leren buiten vaste kaders te denken,' zei de man met de baard, 'Ierland heeft wel meer dan alleen Guinness.'

'Je hebt geen Iers accent.'

'Ik zit hier al veel te fokking²⁷ lang.'

'Dus je komt origineel *wel*²⁸ uit Ierland?'

'Dat zeg ik toch. Ik ben een leprechaun. We komen niet uit fokking Moskou.'

²⁶ A common translation for leprechaun might be 'kabouter'. The problem with 'kabouter' is, however, that it does not have the typically Irish connotation in the Netherlands. A Leprechaun is commonly seen as a small Irish man in green outfit, handing out (gold) coins. A 'kabouter' in the Netherlands is often seen as something in English more commonly called a garden gnome. The typically Irish connotation is, however, a necessity for this novel, since Mad Sweeney is, in fact, Irish. He also hands Shadow a gold coin. The only thing that is not normal about Mad Sweeney being a leprechaun is the fact that he is enormous, rather than tiny, but this is done for the comic effect. The existing translation solved this issue by calling him an 'Ierse dwerg.' Although this seems to be a decent enough explanation of what a leprechaun is, I'm not sure most readers would have the right image in their minds. 'dwerg' may subconsciously conjure up images of Snowwhite's seven dwarves or the dwarves from *Lord of the Rings* or other such fantasy stories.

²⁷ As mentioned in one of the chapters, the accent is part of the joke here. I tried using a different spelling of the word 'Fucking' just like the ST did to make them marked. I am still unsure whether or not I am actually happy with the outcome on this, because it is probably easier to leave out a marked word and lose the joke, which is not very substantial in the first place and not quite necessary to the overall story. The existing translation leaves out both the swearing and the marked words to indicate an accent. This is a common enough strategy, but as my intention was to maintain as much humour as possible I chose to keep it and incorporate it this way. The swearing is also a personality trait belonging to Mad Sweeney, which is another reason for leaving it in.

²⁸ I added the pragmatic particle 'wel' here and placed it in italics for emphasis. The ST uses 'are' in italics to show a certain emphasis asking for confirmation. 'wel' does the same thing in Dutch, emphasising and asking for a confirmation of an earlier statement.

'En hoe voel je je deze mooie ochtend?' vroeg Wednesday zonder zich om te draaien.

'Wat is er met mijn auto gebeurd?' vroeg Shadow. 'Het was een huurauto.'

'Mad Sweeney heeft hem voor je teruggebracht. Dat was onderdeel van de afspraak die jullie gisteravond gemaakt hebben.'

'Afspraak?'

'Na het gevecht.'

'Gevecht?' Hij wreef over zijn wang en zijn gezicht vertrok. Er was inderdaad een gevecht geweest. Hij herinnerde zich een lange man met een rode baard en het gejuich en gejoel van een enthousiast publiek. 'Wie heeft er gewonnen?'²⁹

'Je weet het niet meer, hè?' Wednesday grinnikte.

'Niet dat je het zou merken,' zei Shadow. Gesprekken van de avond daarvoor begonnen oncomfortabel in zijn hoofd rond te woelen. 'Heb je nog meer koffie?'

De grote man reikte onder de passagiersstoel en gaf een ongeopend flesje water naar achter door. 'Hier. Je bent vast uitgedroogd. Dit helpt beter dan koffie op het moment. We stoppen wel bij het volgende tankstation zodat je wat ontbijt kan halen en jezelf kan opfrissen. Je ziet eruit als een verzopen geit.'

'Verzopen kat'³⁰, zei Shadow.

'Geit,' zei Wednesday. 'Enorme ranzige stinkende geit met grote tanden.'³¹

²⁹ As mentioned in chapter 3.4, parts of this conversation are missing in the existing translation. Wednesday just says that the returning of the car was in the agreement they made after the fight and Shadow does not question the fight.

³⁰ Wednesday here uses a play on words on an existing expression very common in American English: something the cat dragged in. He just changes the cat to a goat. The idea is that Shadow does not look very good, so I chose to use an idiomatic Dutch expression to denote the same thing, 'er uit zien als een verzopen kat.'

³¹ The goat is reasonably important, a translator may get the idea to just use the actual expression with the cat or leave it out. The goat may actually be a hint to Heidrun, which was a goat that lived on top of the mead hall Valhalla. Since Valhalla belongs to Odin, it is likely that the goat belongs to him as well, making her a pet of some sorts. This further explains why Wednesday uses the expression 'something the cat dragged in' because it is commonly said to denote a pet cat bringing home horrifying looking dead mice or birds it has caught. In this case the pet is just not a cat, but a goat. Chapter 3.4 explains how this passage differs with the existing translation.

Conclusion

This thesis explored stylistic aspects, more specifically as seen through the lenses of the discussion between dualist and monist views on style, and the translation of style on a theoretical as well as a practical level. The focus was on dialogue and humour and how these aspects may relate to the dualist/monist discussion as well as how translation may be affected by these elements.

Dialogue and humour often go hand in hand. This puts considerable pressure on the translator, as he/she needs to recreate dialogue into an idiomatic version in the TL. While this is difficult enough in itself, in humorous dialogue he/she also has to consider how that humour is presented, what its effect is and how that effect is/can be achieved.

Dialogue in itself appears often aided by a dualist approach, but the humorous dialogue in *American Gods* is mostly dependent on precisely the way something is said, e.g. the choice of words or the tone. Therefore humorous dialogue appears to benefit more from a monist stance on translation, for instance in the sarcastic remarks common in Gaiman's characters as well as the use of metaphors or other figures of speech.

At the same time some descriptions of comical elements are not bound by form, as the image that makes it comical can be acquired in a different way, allowing a dualist approach. This can be seen in the description of Mad Sweeney as being a huge man while he is a leprechaun. It does not matter exactly how the image is achieved, as long as it is recreated in the TT.

In addition, the intention of the translator may greatly influence the outcome as seen in the comparison of an existing translation to a fresh translation with only slightly different intentions. The translator's intention can fuel reasons behind a choice for a monist or dualist approach, for instance. And while all translators at some point accept that something, no matter how small, might be lost in translation, minor shifts can have a much greater impact. Leaving out Shadow's memory loss and how miserable he feels in the dialogue in the car with Wednesday can cause a reader to not realise that Shadow is badly hung over, making it illogical for Wednesday to give him water rather than coffee.

In the end a translator does not have to choose between a purely monist or dualist approach. Depending on his/her intention, a choice for either view can be made continually throughout a translation, regardless of whether this is a conscious decision or not. The translator may then end up with a mostly monist or mostly dualist translation or a text that varies with each chapter, page, paragraph or even sentence. As stated before, this thesis did not intend to solve the discussion between the dualist and monist movements, nor does it seem likely to ever be

solved. Rather, a balanced variety of the two, much like Leech and Short's pluralism seems to be the answer.

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Appendix

Fragments ST

He found himself thinking about a guy named Johnnie Larch he'd shared a cell with when he'd first been put inside, who told Shadow how he'd once got out after five years behind bars, with \$100 and a ticket to Seattle, where his sister lived.

Johnnie Larch had got to the airport, and he handed his ticket to the woman on the counter and she asked to see his driver's license.

He showed it to her. It had expired a couple of years earlier. She told him it was not valid as ID. He told her it might not be valid as a driver's license, but it sure as hell was fine identification, and it had a photo of him on it, and his height and his weight, and damn it, who else did she think he was, if he wasn't him?

She said she'd thank him to keep his voice down.

He told her to give him a fucking boarding pass, or she was going to regret it, and that he wasn't going to be disrespected. You don't let people disrespect you in prison.

Then she pressed a button, and a few moments later the airport security showed up, and they tried to persuade Johnnie Larch to leave the airport quietly, and he did not wish to leave, and there was something of an altercation.

The upshot of it all was that Johnnie Larch never actually made it to Seattle, and he spent the next couple of days in town in bars, and when his \$100 was gone he held up a gas station with a toy gun for money to keep drinking, and the police finally picked him up for pissing in the street. Pretty soon he was back inside serving the rest of his sentence and a little extra for the gas station job.

And the moral of this story, according to Johnnie Larch, was this: don't piss off people who work in airports.

'Are you sure it's not something like "kinds of behavior that work in a specialized environment, such as a prison, can fail to work and in fact become harmful when used outside such an environment"?' said Shadow, when Johnnie Larch told him the story.

'No, listen to me, I'm *telling* you man,' said Jonnie Larch, 'don't piss off those bitches in airports.' (Gaiman 15-16)

Dingdong

'Miz Crow?'

'Yes.'

'You are Samantha Black Crow?'

'Yes.'

'Do you mind if we ask you a few questions, Ma'am?'

'Yeah, I do, actually.'

'There's no need to take that attitude, Ma'am.'

'Are you cops? What are you?'

'My name is Town. My colleague here is Mister Road. We're investigating the disappearance of two of our associates.'

'What were their names?'

'I'm sorry.'

'Tell me their names. I want to know what they were called. Your associates. Tell me their names and maybe I'll help you.'

'... okay. Their names were Mister Stone, and Mister Wood. Now, can we ask you some questions?'

'Do you guys just see things and pick names? "Oh, you be Mister Sidewalk, he's Mister Carpet, say hello to Mister Airplane"?''

'Very funny, young lady. First question: we need to know if you've seen this man. Here. You can hold the photograph.'

'Whoa. Straight on and profile, with numbers on the bottom... and big. He's cute, though. What did he do?'

'He was mixed up in a small town bank robbery, as a driver, some years ago. His two colleagues decided to keep all the loot for themselves and ran out on him. He got angry. Found them. Came close to killing them with his hands. The state cut a deal with the men he hurt: they testified and got a suspended sentence, Shadow here got six years. He served three. You ask me, guys like that, they should just lock them up and throw away the key.'

'I've never heard anyone say that in real life, you know. Not out loud.'

'Say what, Miz Crow?'

'*Loot*. It's not a word you ever hear people say. Maybe in movies people say it. Not for real.'

'This isn't a movie, Miz Crow.'

'Black Crow. It's Miz Black Crow. My friends call me Sam.'

‘Got it, Sam. Now about this man– ‘

‘But you aren’t my friends. You can call me Miz Black Crow.’

‘Listen, you snotnosed little– ‘

‘It’s okay, Mister Road. Sam here – pardon, Ma’am – I mean, Miz Black Crow wants to help us. She’s a law abiding citizen.’

‘Ma’am, we know you helped Shadow. You were seen with him, in a white Chevy Nova. He gave you a ride. He bought you dinner. Did he say anything that could help us in our investigation? Two of our best men have vanished.’

‘I never met him.’

‘You met him. Please don’t make the mistake of thinking we’re stupid. We aren’t stupid.’

‘Mm. I meet a lot of people. Maybe I met him and forgot already.’

‘Ma’am, it really is to your advantage to cooperate with us.’

‘Otherwise, you’ll have to introduce me to your friends Mister Thumbscrews and Mister Pentothal?’

‘Ma’am, you aren’t making this any easier on yourself.’

‘Gee. I’m sorry. Now is there anything else? ‘Cos I’m going to say “buh-bye now” and close the door and I figure you two are going to go and get into Mister Car and drive away.’

‘Your lack of cooperation has been noted, ma’am.’

‘Buh-bye now.’

Click.

‘Sam? Who was that at the door?’

‘Nobody interesting.’ (Gaiman 277-9)

'You working for our man then?' asked the bearded man. He was not sober, although he was not yet drunk.

'It looks that way,' said Shadow.

The bearded man lit his cigarette. 'I'm a leprechaun,' he said.

Shadow did not smile. 'Really?' he said. 'Shouldn't you be drinking Guinness?'

'Stereotypes. You have to learn to think outside the box,' said the bearded man.

'There's a lot more to Ireland than Guinness.'

'You don't have an Irish accent.'

'I've been over here too fucken long.'

'So you *are* originally from Ireland?'

'I told you. I'm a leprechaun. We don't come from fucken Moscow.' (Gaiman 39)

'How are you feeling, this fine morning?' asked Wednesday, without turning around.

'What happened to my car?' asked Shadow. 'It was a rental.'

'Mad Sweeney took it back for you. It was part of the deal you two cut last night.'

'Deal?'

'After the fight.'

'Fight?' He put one hand up and rubbed his cheek, and then he winced. Yes, there had been a fight. He remembered a tall man with a ginger beard, and the cheering and whooping of an appreciative audience. 'Who won?'

'You don't remember, eh?' Wednesday chuckled.

'Not so you'd notice,' said Shadow. Conversations from the night before began to jostle in his head uncomfortably. 'You got any more of that coffee?'

The big man reached beneath the passenger seat and passed back an unopened bottle of water. 'Here. You'll be dehydrated. This will help more than coffee, for the moment. We'll stop at the next gas station and get you some breakfast. You'll need to clean yourself up too. You look like something the goat dragged in.'

'Cat dragged in,' said Shadow.

'Goat,' said Wednesday. 'Huge rank stinking goat with big teeth.' (Gaiman 48)