

“Reader, it delighted”

Translating humor in the *Jane Eyre* retelling

My Plain Jane



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Abstract

This thesis explores translation problems that arise when translating humor, using Young Adult (YA) novel *My Plain Jane* by Cynthia Hand, Brodi Ashton and Jodi Meadows as a case study. This novel parodies Charlotte Brontë's classic novel *Jane Eyre* for a teenaged audience. Relevant connections between *My Plain Jane* and *Jane Eyre* will be considered. Additionally, *My Plain Jane*'s status as a Young Adult Novel poses translation problems that will be discussed. Furthermore, an analysis will be conducted on desirable translation solutions for four types of humor that are present in *My Plain Jane*: humorous allusions to *Jane Eyre* and popular culture, wordplay and irony. For this, the General Theory of Verbal Humour by Salvatore Attardo (2002) will be used, as well as literature discussing allusions, wordplay and irony. The analysis shows that each type of humor requires different translation strategies: what works for one type of humor, may not be a desirable solution for another. Additionally, the desirability of translation strategies depends on the nature of the text and the translator's priorities. The thesis will be concluded and illustrated by an annotated translation in Dutch of various fragments of *My Plain Jane*.

Introduction

Young Adult Literature (YA), a literary domain consisting of books aimed at young readers between the ages of 14 and 20, has gained significant traction in the last 20 years.

Originating in the United States, the domain has successfully traveled overseas to the Netherlands, where YA has earned its very own shelf in bookstores and libraries (Ros, 2010). Writers like John Green, Stephenie Meyer and J.K. Rowling have paved the way for new authors of YA literature, resulting in a broad assortment of books aimed at teenagers. From chicklit to fantasy to realistic fiction, there is now a YA book for every young reader.

In the summer of 2018, the whimsical YA novel *My Plain Jane* (MPJ) was published by HarperTeen, an imprint of the successful American publishing house HarperCollins. This book is the second in a series centered on a character named Jane. In the series, authors Cynthia Hand, Brodi Ashton, and Jodi Meadows present a modern retelling of Charlotte Brontë's classic *Jane Eyre*. It has received positive reviews and much praise since its publication. In the novel, Jane Eyre travels to Thornfield Hall to become a governess for Mr. Rochester only to be disturbed by Charlotte Brontë (yes, that Charlotte Brontë) and a ghost hunter named Alexander Blackwood, who want her to become a ghost hunter too. While at Thornfield Hall, Alexander becomes suspicious of Mr. Rochester, whom he suspects of killing his father. In the end, it turns out that Mr. Rochester is possessed by his brother and is plotting with Alexander's mentor, the Duke of Wellington, to have the king possessed so as to rule the entirety of England. Jane, Charlotte and Alexander must work together to put a stop to these mischievous plans.

MPJ is a versatile book. It is part romance, part (urban) fantasy, part mystery and part adventure. It is a humorous novel, parodying *Jane Eyre* in both its narrative and its style. Its intertextual relationship to *Jane Eyre* was highlighted in a review published in the *Bulletin of the center for children's books*, which called it "an uproarious, irreverent homage to *Jane Eyre*" (Coats, 2018). Because of the cheeky play with characters and events belonging to *Jane Eyre*, the book is especially amusing for readers who are familiar with the original novel. References to other literary works and contemporary pop culture also make the reader snicker. In addition to these references, the authors employ witty wordplay to amuse readers. Irony is also a defining feature of the narrative style of the book.

As a lover of classic English literature, I was delighted to read MPJ; it was great fun to experience the unlikely mix of *Jane Eyre* and *Ghostbusters* and to explore where the authors had chosen to leave the beaten path set by JE. I became interested in how a translator could go about translating the humorous elements in MPJ. Therefore, the question I will answer in this thesis is:

Which translation problems regarding humor arise when translating the Young Adult novel My Plain Jane, and what are possible and desirable solutions for these problems?

To answer this, I will first discuss the domain of Young Adult literature in Chapter 1. I will discuss *My Plain Jane* and its storyline and themes, then describe the defining features of YA and the translation problems that are prevalent in the domain.

In Chapter 2, I will explore the nature of humor. I will discuss general theories on humor, then examine the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) first introduced by Salvatore Attardo and Patrick Zabalbeascoa. These two theorists have provided a model for translating and describing jokes and joke texts. I will use their model to guide my translation of humorous elements in MPJ. When needed, I will consult additional literature on humor translation.

In Chapter 3, I will outline my translation strategy and present an annotated translation of parts of *My Plain Jane*.

1. My Plain Jane: a humorous YA-rendition of Jane Eyre

1.1 About the book

My Plain Jane was published in the summer of 2018 by HarperTeen, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers. HarperTeen publishes books for teenagers and young adults, and is the publisher of many popular fantasy YA series. The novel is part of the domain of YA genre. This type of literature will be explored in more depth in section 1.2. The book can be classified as a mix of fantasy, mystery and history, since it contains supernatural elements (Hahn, 2015) and the pursuit and identification of a criminal (Herbert, 2005), and its story is set in a historical period that is (somewhat) accurately described (Stringer, 2005).

Connections between My Plain Jane and Jane Eyre

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is a literary classic in the Anglophone world. First published under the pen name Currer Bell in 1847, the book quickly became the talk of England. In it, Brontë explored age-old themes such as love, class, religion, gender roles and the struggle between feelings and moral judgment. The novel was quite controversial, since it questioned Victorian morals and gender roles. Negative reviews condemning the story for being "anti-Christian" clashed with positive reviews praising Brontë's style and Jane's character (Harrison, 2015, pp. 12-13). Jane is a woman of flesh and blood, who speaks freely and questions her destiny and has her own talents and flaws. She is looking for love, but she struggles with the class divide between her and Mr. Rochester and questions the ways in which women are limited in their actions in Victorian society. These themes still speak to readers today. For this reason, JE has grown to be loved by many readers, and it has acquired a place among the classics of world literature.

MPJ is closely related to JE, but events turn out differently in the YA novel than in Brontë's classic text. In MPJ, we follow Jane Eyre, a penniless orphan who leaves the Lowood School for Impoverished Children to become a governess at the estate of Mr. Rochester, Thornfield Hall. She brings with her the ghost of her friend Helen, who died at a young age. Alexander Blackwood works as a ghost hunter for the Society for the Relocation of Wayward Spirits, an organization that removes troublesome ghosts. He notices Jane at a pub where he has just relocated a ghost and is interested in recruiting her into the ranks of the Society, but Jane will not hear of it. Charlotte Brontë, a friend of Jane's from Lowood, promises that she will help Blackwood persuade her. They follow Jane to Mr. Rochester's

estate. Alexander recognizes Mr. Rochester and becomes suspicious that Rochester might have killed Alexander's father. He starts investigating him. Meanwhile, Jane hears mysterious screams in the house and finds Mr. Rochester's bed on fire, but Mr. Rochester won't tell her what happened. The story continues with a number of ghost possessions, political intrigue, attempted murder and a great fire in London. In the end, it turns out that Alexander's mentor, the Duke of Wellington, is the one who murdered his father. What's worse, the Duke plans to take over England by having the king possessed. Figure 1 provides an overview of the characters:

An overview of characters in *My Plain Jane*

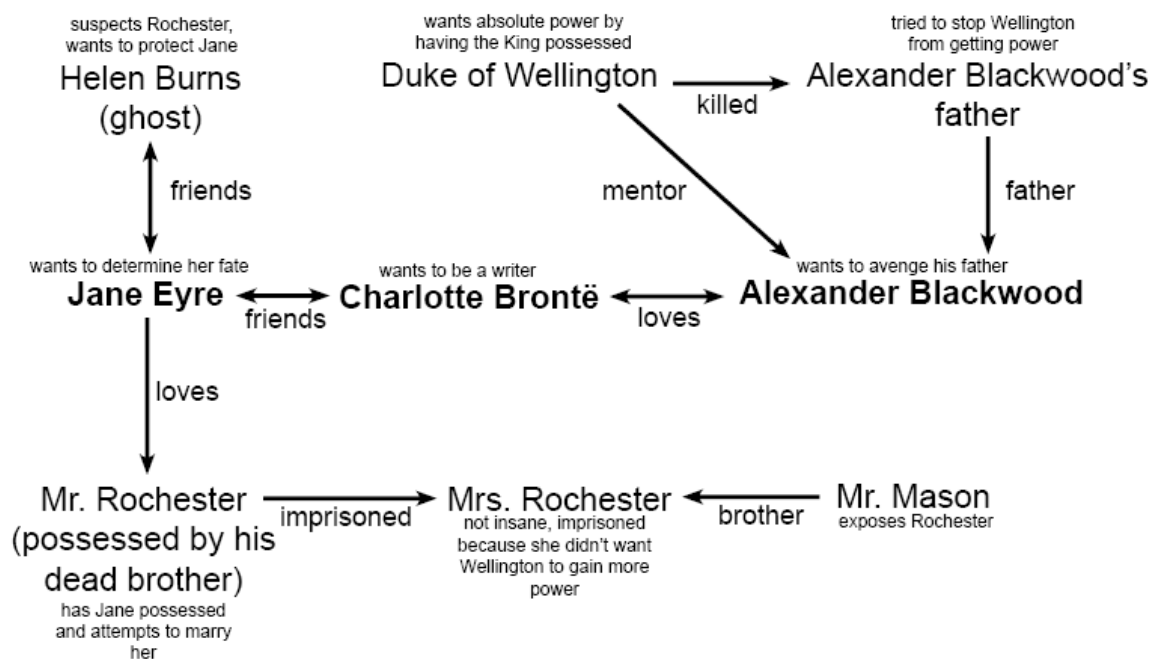


Figure 1: An overview of the characters in *My Plain Jane*

My Plain Jane is a lighthearted retelling of some of the events of *Jane Eyre*. The YA novel could be considered a parody. Dentith (2000) defines parody as “any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice.” He emphasizes that the polemical references of parodies can vary in strength and direction, saying that “many parodies draw on the authority of precursor texts to attack, satirize, or just playfully to refer to elements of the contemporary world” (p. 9). A parody draws on an original (a ‘hypotext’) in order to comment on current society. MPJ parodies JE by using its setting, plot and characters to comment on the conventions and beliefs of the story world,

but by extension, it also comments on the contemporary world. The authors create parody in different ways. First, they have the events work out in a different way, as can be deduced from the summary above. Additionally, the narrators place critical notes in the text, highlighting the difference between the morals of what they call pre-Victorian England and contemporary society. Take, for example, this description of Alexander:

Jane wouldn't call him handsome. (In the pre-Victorian age, a truly handsome man should be pale -- because being out in the sun was for peasants -- with a long, oval-shaped face, a narrow jaw, a small mouth, and a pointy chin. We know. We can't believe it, either.)

MPJ, p. 20

MPJ makes some themes from *Jane Eyre* more explicit while downplaying others. Themes such as class and religion are not present in MPJ. All of the characters are more outspoken than in JE and do not concern themselves with religion. Additionally, the theme of feeling versus judgment is less prevalent, because scenes that enforce this theme in JE are given a different context in MPJ. In *Jane Eyre*, Jane sometimes must choose between love and a respectable life: first, when Mr. Rochester offers to take her as his mistress, and later, when St. John asks her to be his wife. In MPJ, the situations are similar: when Jane is unaware that Mr. Rochester has a wife, Jane must choose between marrying Rochester right away or asking him to give her time because Helen is suspicious of Mr. Rochester's intentions. Helen's suspicions are confirmed when Jane asks Mr. Rochester to let her think about his proposal and he has Jane possessed by another ghost. In the second case, it is Charlotte's clumsy brother Branwell who asks Jane to be his wife. Jane is enraged at the suggestion because Mr. Rochester suggested the same thing before trying to kill her. The thematic significance of these scenes therefore deviates from *Jane Eyre*.

A theme made more explicit in MPJ is that of gender roles. Throughout the story, the narrators' comment on the characters' behavior in explaining and questioning ways. They highlight the differences between gender roles in pre-Victorian times and contemporary society. For example, on page 310:

Reader, you might have noticed there was a propensity at this time to label women as "hysterical". The term was thrown around quite frequently, and, in the humble opinion of your narrators, far too easily. Then it became a vicious cycle. The more they protested, the "crazier" they were labeled. We are going on record here to say that we feel this treatment was completely unfair.

Most notably, at the end of the book, Jane does not "get" Mr. Rochester, because he turns out to have been possessed by an evil ghost. When he is freed, he is reunited with his wife

Bertha, who isn't evil as she was in JE but who in this case has been imprisoned by the possessed Rochester. Jane must come to terms with this, but on the last page of the novel, she meets Rochester's adult son and it is implied that they fancy each other. The authors seem to be sending a message. The age gap between Jane and Rochester, his power over her as her employer and his uneven temper are problematic. Unlike in *Jane Eyre*, there is no character development present to solve these problems. While in the original novel, Jane gains her independence by leaving her master on her own accord and Rochester learns to be humble because of the loss of both Jane and his eyesight, in MPJ Rochester turns out to be truly evil, forcing Jane to flee. In the end, Jane gains her independence by taking up work for the Society and defeating the Duke of Wellington. In this way, the authors solve the unequal relationship between Jane and Rochester by ending it and choosing to create character development through other means.

Readers familiar with *Jane Eyre* will recognize these thematic shifts. It is likely that many English-speaking readers are familiar with the original story since it is a classic. In the Netherlands, however, JE is not as well known. While adult readers may be aware of the book, teenage readers often have not heard of it, as JE is not part of the curriculum in many schools. For this reason, the intertextual references may be lost on younger Dutch readers. This would be detrimental to the reading experience, but it would not make MPJ incomprehensible. As the *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* points out: "While readerly familiarity with *Jane Eyre* will enhance appreciation of the cleverness of the plot twists and language use, there are enough allusions to other pop-culture referents to make for laugh-out-loud moments even for the uninitiated" (Coats, 2018).

1.2 MPJ as a Young Adult novel

What makes MPJ a YA novel? Helkenberg (2018) identifies five defining features of YA literature. These include:

1. YA literature is written for a teen audience

According to Nilsen & Donelson (2009), "the most reliable way to identify a YA book is to see if it has been marketed by publishers as YA. This signals to the reader and/or purchaser that a book has been written or marketed with a specific audience in mind and the content likely follows the conventions of the genre" (Helkenberg, p. 4). MPJ was published by HarperTeen, an imprint of HarperCollins that publishes books for young adults and teens. HarperTeen calls itself the teen division of HarperCollins.

2. YA literature is written about teens

Teen protagonists in YA novels are generally between 12 and 18 years old. They are most often the agents moving the plot forward. The role of parental figures is marginalized. This may serve as a way to give the teenage characters more agency, since authoritative figures would intervene otherwise (Nilsen & Donelson, 2009). When parents are important to the story, their presence usually leads the protagonists to re-evaluate their relationships with their parents. Meanwhile, the protagonists are presented as smart—maybe even smarter than their parents—to support the fact that they are venturing out on their own to tackle big problems.

In MPJ, the three protagonists are in their teens who take matters into their own hands. Jane does so because she wants to see the world outside Lowood school; Charlotte because she wants to be an agent for the Society; and Alexander because he is an agent. In the story, Jane is of age because she is 18, thus making it easier for her to venture out on her own, while Charlotte's escape from Lowood is clandestine because she is underage. The adults that play a role in the story are either minor characters, such as the teachers at Lowood and Mr. Mason, or they are evil, like the possessed Mr. Rochester and the Duke of Wellington. Additionally, Alexander sees the Duke as a father figure, but he reevaluates this relationship when it becomes clear that the Duke murdered his father, effectively turning the Duke into the main villain. In the end, the protagonists shape their own destiny.

3. YA literature is written in a teen voice

According to Helkenberg, YA is mostly written from the first-person perspective and in the immediate past tense, thereby giving the reader access to the innermost thoughts and feelings of the protagonist. This is not the case for MPJ, which is written from a third-person perspective. However, the omniscient narrators allow the reader to experience the story through the eyes of the three protagonists in a similar way, as they have access to the thoughts of the characters:

"Please fall in love with me," Jane whispered. It shouldn't be totally out of the realm of possibility. After all, Mr. Darcy fell in love with the nearly destitute Elizabeth Bennet. It could be like one of those stories Charlotte and the other girls at Lowood were always telling - the ones with rich, handsome suitors, not the ones about murder.
Wait.
Murder.
The bed was still on fire.

MPJ, p. 139

MPJ is written in a voice that is not distinctly teen, but rather a mix of modern and old-fashioned language. This contributes to MPJ's status as a retelling of *Jane Eyre*. Sometimes the style is informal, and the tone is flippant:

(Hey reader, it's us again. We did some digging, and it seems as though burlap wasn't produced until 1855. At least, that's the popular theory. We did a little *more* digging and it turns out that Brocklehurst actually invented burlap just to make his students miserable, but it wasn't widely known about until much later. Now you know.

MPJ, p. 36, original emphasis

Other times, the style is rather more elevated:

Some pages were the budding story of fictional Miss Eyre and fictional Mr. Rochester, while others were beautiful descriptions of people and places. Alexander was certainly no literary expert, but he knew at once that Miss Brontë possessed some faculty of verse. The final entry read: *Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, a little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!*

MPJ, p. 387, original emphasis

Here, an extract from *Jane Eyre* is quoted literally, but even the description of Alexander's reading is more formal than the wording in the previous passage. Stephens (2007, quoted by Helkenberg) has observed that the vocabulary in YA literature is very modern and, as such, does not apply entirely to MPJ. This is not surprising, given the fact that the novel is an homage to *Jane Eyre*, which makes parallels with its predecessor necessary.

Stephens' analysis of the rapid pace and youthful desires that feature in YA books is accurate for the case of MPJ, however. MPJ is very fast paced, with its three protagonists who each have their own experiences which only partially overlap. So many events take place in quick succession that it is difficult to summarize the book.

Additionally, as Nilsen & Donelson (2009) have noted, YA literature is characterized by flowing language which invokes dramatic images. The style of MPJ is sometimes formal. It certainly conjures dramatic images of wild adventures and a plan to save England.

4. Identity and subjectivity are defining themes in YA literature

An important theme in Young Adult Literature is discovering personal identity and determining what one stands for. Pattee (2017) has argued that YA books contain coming-of-age stories that depict a journey which prepares the protagonist for adulthood (p. 221). In MPJ, the protagonists are discovering who they are and who they can be in their era. They deal with timeless topics such as love, grief, revenge and abuse. For example, Jane wants

to see the world outside of Lowood, so she finds a position as a governess at Thornfield Hall. While there, she falls in love with the master of the house, and her notion of romance is challenged when that master turns out not to be who she thought he was. Similarly, Alexander wants to find out who killed his father. In the process, he learns that his father figure, the Duke of Wellington, is not a good person. This forces him to reassess his view of himself and his notion of family. Finally, Charlotte wants to become a writer, but learns that she has many more things to offer the world. Gender roles are an important aspect of the book in this regard. Both Charlotte and Jane learn that they can *be* something even though they are female.

5. YA literature is didactic

YA Literature prepares its young audiences for moral and social participation in society. However, as Helkenberg has noted, even though YA deals with realistic problems drawn from real life, “a simplistic right or wrong answer is often written into the story to school teen readers on how to become good citizens” (Helkenberg, par. 8). As we have seen, MPJ puts the story of *Jane Eyre* in a modern light, contesting gender roles and highlighting the differences between then and now. The narrators frequently interject to give insight into history and regale the reader with their opinions on the events of the story. Additionally, the character of Helen Burns provides often humorous commentary that hints to the reader how they should feel about what is happening. She acts as the voice of reason. Helen questions Jane’s feelings for Rochester throughout the book, especially because of their age difference. When it turns out that Rochester (who by then is no longer possessed) has a wife he loves, Helen remarks:

“They make such a handsome couple,” Miss Burns mused. She was sitting on a crate next to Miss Eyre, tapping her forefinger to her chin. “Look how age-appropriate they are. I just love it.”

MPJ, p. 388

Helen could be interpreted as an opinionated character here, but the plot supports her views. The novel has a classic happy ending. Every character gets what they deserve: for the three protagonists, it is justice and (a hint at) love; for the secondary characters, it is justice; for the villain, it is death. Jane Eyre’s love affair with Mr. Rochester might have been ill-fated, but in the end, she meets his son who is much closer to her age, and they seem to hit it off. Whether or not they fall in love is left uncertain, but the book strongly hints that this younger Mr. Rochester is to be Jane’s new love. While not explicit, these events send a strong message. They suggest that Jane’s relationship with the much older Mr. Rochester is ill-matched, even harmful since Rochester treats Jane quite badly.

To Helkenberg's classification, a sixth characteristic could be added—one that Nilsen & Donelson (2009) have proposed:

6. YA literature includes a variety of genres and subjects

According to Nilsen & Donelson (2009), "YA has been called a 'genre', but there is a tremendous crossover with what are traditionally defined as genres" (p. 31). YA as a category contains everything from chicklit to mystery to fantasy to crime novel because the theme of finding one's identity can take many forms. MPJ is an (urban) fantasy, a history novel, a love story and mystery.

1.3 Translation problems in Young Adult Novels

My Plain Jane's domain of Young Adult novels presents several challenges for translation.

They include:

1. MPJ is written for a teen audience

Readers of YA are roughly between 14 and 20 years old in the Netherlands. This means that they are not yet adults but are no longer children either. YA is essentially a subdomain of children's literature and it is often parents, caretakers or teachers who buy YA books.

Additionally, *Jane Eyre* is not generally compulsory reading in schools in the Netherlands. As a result, the intended audience of MPJ's translation might not be familiar with *Jane Eyre's* story or the popular media referenced in the novel. These factors take away from the reading experience, as MPJ's intertextual relationship with *Jane Eyre* adds thematic depth.

2. Written in a teen voice

The story of MPJ is told from the perspectives of Jane, Charlotte and Alexander. These characters have similar voices, the mix of old-fashioned and modern style mentioned earlier.

For example:

The king had always been able to see ghosts. No big deal, really.

MPJ, prologue, p. x

Additionally, the style is fast-paced and snappy, with many short sentences following each other. It is up to the translator to preserve this style in Dutch, a language that generally needs more words to express itself.

1.4 Conclusion

As shown in this Chapter, *My Plain Jane* plays with the plot, characters and style of *Jane Eyre* in a humorous way. Therefore, familiarity with JE heightens enjoyment of MPJ's parodying elements. The intended audience of MPJ is teenagers, who are likely familiar with Brontë's classic novel. A mix between modern and old-fashioned language is used in the YA novel.

In Chapter 2, I will discuss translating the types of humor in MPJ, considering the elements discussed above.

2. Translating *My Plain Jane*

In Chapter, 1 we discussed *My Plain Jane*, its status as a YA novel, and the translation problems that are prevalent in YA literature. In this chapter, we turn to the concept of humor: what is humor, what forms of humor appear in MPJ and what is the best way to translate that humor? I will begin by discussing Salvatore Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor and Zabalbeascoa's issues with this theory. Then, I will analyze fragments from MPJ in order to determine the best way to translate them.

2.1 What is humor?

Humor is a multi-faceted social phenomenon closely related to laughter that is typically shared by humans (Vandaele, 2010). Unlike laughter, humor appreciation requires a developed and symbolic mind. Humor is a way of dealing with uncertainty, surprise and danger while enhancing group cohesion.

There are two main groups of theories about the origin and working mechanisms of humor: "superiority theories" and "incongruity theories". Superiority theories are based upon the philosophies of Thomas Hobbes and Henri Bergson, who consider humor to be a way of showing aggression. In this view, humor ridicules a certain target, producing a self-esteem boost for the persons who appreciate the humor. By doing this, humor confirms and/or creates inclusion, exclusion and hierarchies among people (Vandaele, 2010, p. 148). By contrast, incongruity theories focus on the cognitive aspects of humor. According to these theories, humor is produced when expectations are flouted, resulting in surprise. However, every joke provides a 'solution' for the created incongruity based on its sometimes far-fetched internal logic. Incongruity theories, too, note that "solving" a joke can result in feelings of superiority over others who do not understand it.

2.2 Humor translation according to Attardo & Zabalbeascoa

Since humor is deeply embedded in language and culture, its translation often proves difficult. According to Vandaele (2010), some have even gone so far as to call it "untranslatable." Despite this, Attardo (2002) created a General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) upon which he based a model to guide translators. The GTVH builds upon the Script-Based Semantic Theory of Humor proposed by Raskin (1985), using the notions of incongruity and superiority.

2.2.1 The Script-Based Semantic Theory of Humor (SSTH)

Raskin created the SSTH to define a universal element that would render any text funny. He found this element in what he calls “script opposition,” a device that invokes an incongruity.

What are scripts? According to the SSTH, our understanding of the world around us depends on lexicon and our knowledge of the world, among other things. Together they form “common sense” cognitive structures in our head that we use to communicate with each other. These “scripts” can be invoked by certain words. For example, the term ‘bachelor’ can invoke scripts such as marriage or academia. Different scripts come into play for every word in a sentence. The hearer determines what script is most compatible to the perceived meaning of the sentence as a whole.

According to Raskin, verbal humor is caused by script opposition: juxtaposing two opposing and (partly) overlapping scripts, both of which must be compatible with the joke-carrying text but incompatible with each other. Raskin uses the following example:

“The Junior String Quartet played Brahms last night. Brahms lost” (Raskin, 1985, p. 332).

Here, two scripts are activated by the word “play”: music and a sports match. The first sentence creates the expectation that the quartet is playing a musical piece by Brahms, while the punch line activates a conflicting meaning and brings home the joke, thereby solving the incongruity. Additionally, the hearer must interpret the internal logic of the joke because it is essential for producing humor that the opposing scripts make pseudo-sense together.

2.2.2 The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)

Proposed by Attardo (2002), the GTVH is “a revision and extension” (Attardo, 2002, p. 176) of Raskin’s SSTH. It expands on the notion of opposing scripts, arguing that it is but one of six parameters that determine the nature of a joke. He calls these parameters Knowledge Resources (KR). The 6 Knowledge Resources are:

1. Language (LA)

Language is the lowest KR. It determines the wording of a joke, allowing for variation without changing the joke’s meaning. Wordplay and puns are the exception to this rule, since their meaning is reliant on their form.

2. Narrative Strategy (NS)

Narrative Strategy is responsible for the narrative organization of the joke. It can be a simple narrative, a dialogue, a riddle, etc. When translating, NS is likely not to pose a problem

because it is language-independent.

3. Target(s) (TA)

This KR determines who or what the butt of the joke is. This parameter is optional, since not every joke has a target.

4. Situation(s) (SI)

Every joke has a Situation KR, which refers to the props of the joke, including the participants, objects and activities. These props are provided by the scripts that are activated in the text.

5. Logical Mechanism (LM)

Logical Mechanism resolves the incongruous situation that is created in the joke by a distorted and playful logic that might not hold up in the world outside of the joke. LM will mostly pose no problems for the translator.

6. Script Opposition(s) (SO) (highest)

Script Opposition is the highest in the hierarchy. Two jokes that differ in SO are different jokes according to Attardo (p. 188). He states that translators can only change this KR if one of the opposing scripts is taboo in the target culture.

The GTVH can be used as a model for translation. Attardo argues in favor of keeping as many of the Knowledge Resources the same in the target text as possible in order to produce a successful translation. This "*metric of similarity*" can guide the translator while providing scholars with a way of systematically assessing translations.

Attardo arranges the KRs in a hierarchy of importance. The lowest can be readily changed, because the resulting joke will be as similar as possible to the original. The highest cannot be changed, since that would mean a total removal of all similarities. Attardo states that translators must strive to keep as many KR's the same as they can: "...If possible, respect all six Knowledge Resources in your translation, but if necessary, *let your translation differ at the lowest level necessary for your pragmatic purposes*" (p.183, original emphasis).

2.2.3 Zabalbeascoa's issues with the GTVH

According to Zabalbeascoa (2005), the GTVH has some flaws. First, Attardo's metric of similarity gives priority to sameness over funniness by assuming that the similarity between jokes means the joke is just as funny in the target text as it was in the source text. Because the target text is placed in a different cultural situation, this cannot be the case. Furthermore,

Attardo's hierarchy of Knowledge Resources is probably not suitable for use as a prescriptive tool for translation of any humorous text. Sometimes, the preservation of a single joke is not the main priority of the translator, who must take the importance of every text element into account. Lastly, Attardo's suggestions for applying the GTVH seem to be geared towards jokes that make up the whole of a text. While he claims that his model will be applicable to longer texts, saying that longer humorous texts are made up out of micro-elements present in joke texts, it is not evident how the GTVH should be applied to longer texts.

For these reasons, Zabalbeascoa proposes a different approach for using Knowledge Resources: mapping and prioritizing. *Mapping* means "locating and analyzing textual items (e.g., instances of humor) according to relevant classifications (e.g., humor typologies)" (p. 187). After this, the translator can prioritize. Zabalbeascoa defines *prioritizing* as "establishing what is important for each case (in the context of translating), and how important each item and aspect is, in order to have a clear set of criteria for shaping the translation in one way rather than another" (p. 187). The KRs can be used for mapping, giving the translator an overview of all possible solutions, while prioritizing provides a direction "by ranking needs and objectives according to a hierarchical set of priorities" (p. 201).

I agree with Zabalbeascoa's analysis of the GTVH. The model is not flexible enough to incorporate all kinds of humor that can be found in texts. Moreover, it does not take into account the constraints put on a translator by the target culture, the position of the genre of the translation in the target culture or agents such as publishing houses, teachers and critics. Therefore, for my translation, I will use Attardo's KRs to map the humorous instances in MPJ. Additionally, I will consult separate sources applicable to the type of humor I am discussing. This will help me prioritize.

2.3 Translating the humor in MPJ

What makes MPJ a funny book? This section explores what types of humor are present in the novel and how to translate them.

There are four primary sources of humor in MPJ:

1. Humorous references to *Jane Eyre*
2. Humorous references to popular culture
3. Wordplay
4. Irony

2.3.1 Humorous references to *Jane Eyre*

Julia Kristeva coined the term intertextuality in 1969 to describe the relationship between texts, past and present. According to Kristeva, a text doesn't exist in isolation; it can only have meaning in relation to other texts, written or spoken, and the meaning of a text depends on the knowledge of books, language and traditions of the interlocutors handling the texts (Wilkie 1999, p. 130). This makes literary texts "just one of the many sites where several different discourses converge, are absorbed, are transformed and assume a meaning because they are situated in this circular network of interdependence which is called the intertextual space" (Wilkie, 1999, p. 130).

There are four constituents to every text: the writer, the text itself, exterior texts and the reader. These constituents work together to grant the text meaning (Culler 1981; Barthes 1970/1975). The reader uses intertextual codes to make sense of literary texts. Consequently, the reader plays an important part in granting meaning.

References to other texts are also known as allusions, which Ritva Leppihalme (1997) has defined as "a variety of uses of preformed linguistic material [...] in either its original or a modified form, and of proper names, to convey often implicit meaning" (Leppihalme 1997, p. 3). By "preformed," Leppihalme means borrowed material from other texts. This material can take many shapes, such as literal quotation, but is more often a modified reference (p. 9). She identifies two types of allusions:

1. Proper name allusions (PN): allusions that include a proper name, such as "I'm no Scrooge McDuck!" This type of allusion is not present in MPJ.
2. Key-phrase allusions (KP): allusions that do not include a proper name, but instead contain a key phrase. For example, the first sentence of Chapter 1 in MPJ references the first sentence of *Jane Eyre*:

There was no possibility of taking a walk through the grounds of Lowood school without hearing the dreadful and yet utterly exciting news: Mr. Brocklehurst had been -- gasp! -- *murdered*.

MPJ, p. 1, original emphasis

This is an example of a modified allusion, since the line in the original novel is:

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further out-door exercise was now out of the question.

Jane Eyre, p. 3

The original line from *Jane Eyre* paints a bleak scene, setting the tone for the novel, while the line from MPJ juxtaposes the serious tone of the first sentence with a lighthearted tone, conveying the seemingly paradoxical message that someone has been murdered and that this news is dreadful but mostly very exciting. This discrepancy invokes humor by subverting the reader's expectations, as discussed above in section 2.1.

There are also cases of unmodified allusions present in MPJ, when *Jane Eyre* is quoted literally. Brontë addresses the reader several times in her novel, most notably at the end of the book when Jane says "Reader, I married him" (*Jane Eyre*, p. 517). However, the instances where the reader is addressed in JE are numerous (pp. 7, 69, 115, 128, 138 are just a few examples). In MPJ, this aspect of Brontë's style is parodied. For example, when Jane has saved Rochester from the fire set to his bed and he leaves her alone in the room:

Jane grabbed the robe and held it to her face, inhaling his scent, as she gazed wistfully out the door.
Reader, it smelled of fire.

MPJ, p. 140

Additionally, in other parts of MPJ, fragments of *Jane Eyre* are imitated:

Mr. Rochester grunted. "Miss Eyre, listen to me. I believe there is a string below your rib, and it stretches across class and age to me, and it is attached beneath my rib. And if you find another suitable position, and leave me, you will pull it out. And I will bleed."

"What do you mean?" Jane said.

"It sounds rather obvious, and slightly disgusting," Helen said. "He'll bleed."

MPJ, p. 273

What is supposed to be one of the most romantic scenes in JE is tainted by Helen's snarky comment with comedic effect. Helen's dry commentary clashes with the seemingly heartfelt

words of Rochester.

The fact that Brontë's style is imitated in this way means that MPJ a pastiche of *Jane Eyre*. The novel imitates certain stylistic features of the classic novel in a parodic way (Claes Fortunately, in my translation, I was able to preserve the original sense of each of the puns in the text, 2011), thereby creating humor.

Functions of the allusions to Jane Eyre

According to Leppihalme (1997), allusions can be like puzzles to be solved by the observant reader, who feels accomplished and part of an in-group when they recognizes the reference (p. 32). This, however, is not the main function of allusions, since they can do multiple things:

1. Thematic allusions.

On the macro level, allusions can be used to give thematic significance to the text, for example by emphasizing the theme.

2. Humorous allusions.

Allusions can be used to create humor in a parodic or ironic way in order to discount a situation or character. Parody can occur on the macro level when a text as a whole is a parody of another text. This is the case for MPJ. The allusions described above are parodic elements on the micro level.

3. Allusions used for characterization

This type of allusion does not appear in MPJ, since the characters are from a world in which *Jane Eyre* does not exist and the media the novel alludes to have yet to be made.

4. Allusions as indicators of interpersonal relationships

This type of allusion is often used in fictional texts to illuminate the kinds of relationship the characters have. This type of allusion is not present in MPJ.

The allusions to *Jane Eyre* in MPJ often have a humorous effect. However, their presence also has a thematic function, demonstrating the indebtedness of MPJ to *Jane Eyre*. By alluding directly to parts of the classic novel, MPJ emphasizes the works' similarities while pointing out their differences as well. As discussed in Chapter 1.1, MPJ's themes differ in some ways from those of its predecessor. The allusions to the classic novel highlight these differences.

Translating the humorous references to Jane Eyre

How is it possible to translate the humorous references to *Jane Eyre*? Analysis of passages containing such references below demonstrates how this kind of translation is possible.

Key phrase allusions make up the entire body of allusions in MPJ. Many of them are modified for humorous effect, as in the case referenced above: "Reader, it smelled of fire" (p. 140). According to Leppihalme, KP allusions are rarely preserved in the target text because the allusion in the source language often would not be understood by target text readers (p. 78).

Example 1: Mr. Brocklehurst's murder

The very first sentence of Chapter 1 in MPJ is an allusion to *Jane Eyre*:

There was no possibility of taking a walk through the grounds of Lowood school without hearing the dreadful and yet utterly exciting news: Mr. Brocklehurst had been -- gasp! -- *murdered*.

MPJ, p. 1, original emphasis

This is the very first sentence of the novel. As discussed in Chapter 1, it parodies the opening line of *Jane Eyre* with humorous effect. This allusion is thematically significant since it sets the tone for the rest of the novel. Recognizing the sentence as a reference to JE is vital for appreciating the joke. Nevertheless, the lighthearted tone of the sentence will make it enjoyable even for readers who are not familiar with JE.

According to the GTVH, Language (LA) is the lowest parameter for translation and can be readily changed. In this case, however, that is not true. The reference is only recognizable because of its wording. This causes problems for translation, since it can be reasonably assumed that the opening line of *Jane Eyre* in Dutch is not as well-known as its English counterpart. What is the translator to do? Since the lowest KR in the hierarchy cannot be changed, it seems that this joke does not readily lend itself to translation using the GTVH, as the model lacks specific instructions for this type of humor. At this point, I do not have enough information to prioritize properly.

Leppihalme (1997) describes many possible translation strategies for key-phrase allusions. She notes in her study of Finnish translations of English literature that many translators opt for strategy B of *minimal change*, which keeps the translation as close to the original as possible. Another word for this could be *literal translation*. Leppihalme does not believe that minimal change always leads to the best translations, since it often ignores the

connotative meaning of the allusion. As a result, she proposes an ordering of strategies for KP allusions (figure 2). I used this ordering for the present translation:

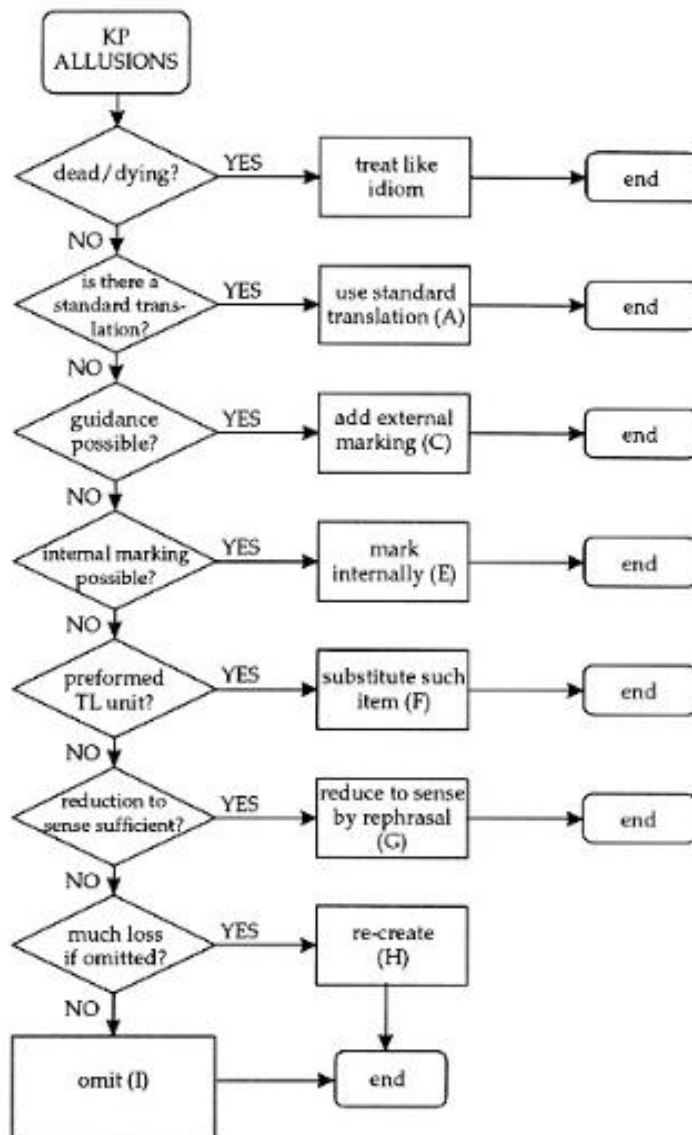


Figure 2: Leppihalme's ordering of strategies for KP allusions (p. 107).

Readers of the source text may not notice dead or dying allusions, so these allusions can be substituted for idioms in the target language. If there is a standard translation, it must be used. This strategy comes after assessing whether an allusion is dead or dying. However, since it is up to the translator to assess whether the reference is dying or whether it still invokes a relationship with another text, in some cases these two strategies overlap. Strategy C, adding extra guidance in the text for the allusion, is followed by Strategy E, adding internal guidance to the allusion. Both are viable strategies for translation according to Leppihalme. In strategy F, for humorous allusions, the translator can choose to substitute a target language allusion. Strategy G, reduction to sense, is applicable for short allusions

that would mean nothing to the target audience (p. 120). Strategy H, re-creation of an allusion, is a viable strategy in cases where omitting an allusion would cause too great a loss of meaning. In this case, the translator can take parts of the original allusion and modify them into a new one (p. 122). Finally, Strategy I, omission, is viable when the loss of meaning the omission causes is negligible (p. 121).

Following Leppihalme's steps to translate Example 1, I came to the following conclusion: the opening line of *Jane Eyre* is not a dead or dying allusion, and even though the classic has been translated into Dutch multiple times, there is no standard translation. As a result, there is no way to assume that many Dutch readers are familiar with the passage. For this reason, it was unwise to follow Strategy C and add external markings such as "as they say," because doing so might take the reader out of the story. This would be a bad thing for an opening line to do. Internal marking by a difference in style would be a better strategy, were it not for the fact that the allusion is so short it leaves little room to paraphrase. It turns out there are few old-fashioned sounding synonyms for the word *onmogelijk*, which presented problems for possible translations. In the end, by using old-fashioned terms like *zeer* (as opposed to the Dutch *erg*) and *lieve hemel!* (a stuffy exclamation), it was possible to add stylistic differences to signal the allusion while simultaneously creating a humorous effect by clashing with the modern tone of most of MPJ. The allusion is lost, but the juxtaposition of old-fashioned and modern language creates a humorous effect:

Het was onmogelijk een wandeling te maken over het terrein van school Lowood zonder het afschuwelijke en toch zeer opwindende nieuws te horen: Mr. Brocklehurst was - lieve hemel! - vermóórd.

The proposed translation omits the allusion, but preserves its perlocutionary effect of creating amusement.

2.3.2 Humorous references to pop culture

The authors do not simply reference classical literature, they allude to pop culture as well. These contemporary references include *Ghostbusters*, *Harry Potter*, *Scooby Doo*, a phrase from an 80's commercial and the inauguration of US president Donald Trump. These allusions are inserted throughout the book, eliciting mirth from the unsuspecting reader who is familiar with the source material. An example:

The ghost glared at him. "You meddling fool. This place was mine. I had everything I wanted. And I would have gotten away with it, too, if it hadn't been for--"

MPJ, p. 320

The quote “And I would have gotten away with it, too, if it weren't for you meddling kids!” is a classic line from the TV show *Scooby Doo*. This allusion is inserted into the climax of the book, when it becomes clear that the Duke of Wellington has had the king possessed by a ghost. Because it is unsuspected, the allusion elicits surprise and amusement in the reader.

Functions of allusions to pop culture

The allusions to pop culture are humorous. They clash with the era in which the book is set, making them anachronistic. Their presence adds to the book's lighthearted tone. For readers familiar with the pop culture media that the novel references, the allusions give the text an extra dimension. Additionally, the allusions are thematic: references to *Ghostbusters* and *Scooby Doo* reaffirm the theme of the supernatural, and references to other literary works like Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* emphasize how centered the story is around classic literature. The Charlotte character in MPJ even writes *Jane Eyre* during the events of the novel, and she presents her story to Jane in the epilogue. MPJ brings all kinds of literature together, from classic books to modern pop culture like *The Princess Bride*. These allusions emphasize that the story world of MPJ is just that: a story. Since their presence has thematic relevance, leaving these allusions out would be a great loss for the translation.

Translating humorous allusions to pop culture

The MJP references to pop culture might prove to be a bigger problem than the allusions to *Jane Eyre*, since Anglophone pop culture in the Netherlands is often subtitled rather than dubbed. Therefore, most tag lines are only recognizable in English.

Example 2: Who you gonna call?

In the prologue, the origin of the Royal Society for the Relocation of Wayward Spirits is explained:

In the years that followed, the Society, as it came to be called, functioned as a prominent and well-respected part of English life. If there was something strange in your neighborhood, you could, um, write the Society a letter, and they would promptly send an agent to take care of it.

MPJ, p. xi

The book references *Ghostbusters*, a popular movie from the eighties that has stayed relevant through continuous references to it in more recent pop culture productions like the Netflix series *Stranger Things*. It is a modified allusion to “If there's something strange in your neighborhood, who you gonna call? Ghostbusters!”

Again, the KR Language poses problems for translation: the allusion is recognizable because of the way it is worded, and the humor stems from the fact that the reference is so anachronistic. Young people in the Netherlands are likely familiar with *Ghostbusters*. However, since subtitling is most common, they only know the phrase in English. Translating the phrase will take away all the humor, and readers might even stumble over the translated sentence. This in turn reduces reading pleasure.

According to Leppihalme's model, the allusion is not dead or dying, so there is no standard translation that would be immediately recognizable for young audiences. Because the allusion is thematic—it introduces the ghost-hunting element of MPJ—it is especially important to preserve it. For this reason, the proposed target language text leaves the allusion untranslated. The justification for this choice is as follows: it is possible that readers unfamiliar with *Ghostbusters* will be confused, but readers who are familiar with the film will certainly catch the reference. It is not unheard of in the Netherlands for young people to read in English. This reduces the chance of putting readers off the book. Moreover, the allusion is too funny to be left out. The proposed translation thus marks the reference internally (Strategy E) by italicizing it. By doing so, readers understand it is a reference:

In de jaren die volgden nam het Genootschap (zoals het genoemd werd) een prominente en gerespecteerde plaats in binnen de Engelse samenleving. *If there was something strange in your neighbourhood*, dan kon je, uh, het Genootschap een brief schrijven en dan stuurden ze onmiddellijk een agent om het probleem te verhelpen...

Example 3: Prepare to die

Another reference in MPJ is to *The Princess Bride*, another cult classic film from the eighties:

Alexander countered Rochester's attack with an Artist's Curse. "*My name is Alexander Blackwood. You killed my father. Prepare to--*"

"Who was your father?"

"Nicholas--"

"I've never met anyone named Nicholas."

A lie. Alexander knew it was a lie. Lots of people were named Nicholas.

MPJ, pp. 318-319, emphasis added

"Prepare to die" is what one of the main characters in *The Princess Bride*, Inigo Montoya, says repeatedly throughout the film. Inigo's journey is similar to Alexander's: both are looking for revenge on their father's murderer. In MPJ, the allusion is modified, since Alexander's name is added to it. Its function is humor, and the allusion seems not to be thematically significant. An additional humorous element is Rochester's denial of knowing a Nicholas and Alexander's indignant reaction for an unexpectedly trivial reason.

These cases demonstrate that the Knowledge Resource Language causes problems for the translation of allusions throughout the text. The GTVH does not give the translator the tools necessary for translating this type of humor. Because the allusion is not thematically significant, the proposed translation uses Strategy B from Leppihalme's model: employing a standard translation. While the chosen translation is not necessarily a standard translation in Dutch, it has been used in the translation of another book by a popular author: '*Mijn naam is Inigo Montoya*,' fluister ik tegen Jacob. '*Jij hebt mijn vader vermoord. Bereid je voor op de dood*' (Picoult, 2011, original emphasis). The translator of this book used Leppihalme's Strategy E to mark the illusion: italics. The present translation does not employ this strategy because the allusion in MPJ occurs in the middle of an exciting duel. Making the reference in italics might take the reader out of the story. The reader who recognizes the Dutch translation of this quote from *The Princess Bride* will derive some amusement from it, while the unaware reader will miss it but be able to read on.

Alexander pareerde Rochesters aanval met een Kunstenaarsvloek. "Mijn naam is Alexander Blackwood. Jij hebt mijn vader vermoord. Bereid je voor op de--"
 "Wie was je vader?"
 "Nicholas--"
 "Ik heb nog nooit iemand ontmoet die Nicholas heette."
 Een leugen. Alexander wist dat hij loog. Er waren zoveel mensen die Nicholas heetten.

2.3.3 Wordplay

In several places in MPJ, there are plays on words, often with humorous effect. Take, for example, this passage:

Charlotte stood and walked over to Jane, who was still furiously darning her sock by the window.
 "Darn," Jane muttered. "Darn. Darn."

MPJ, p. 63

Wordplay, often called punning, is "the general name for the various *textual* phenomena in which *structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with *more or less similar forms* and *more or less different meanings*" (Delabastita, 1996, p. 128, original emphasis). In other words, in word play, linguistic elements with different meanings are placed in contrast with each other based on their formal similarity. In the quote above, the different meanings of *darn* are juxtaposed. Jane is darning her sock, while muttering a corrupted form of "damn." This contrast is made with communicative significance, meaning

that the pun produces some kind of effect—in this case, a humorous one. Jane is both referring to her anger and to her activity of darning.

In MPJ, there are about ten instances of wordplay. Even though they are not the most important source of comedy in the book, they are interesting to analyze. They mostly produce humor, contributing to the lighthearted tone of the book.

Translating the wordplay in MPJ

Delabastita (1996) proposes eight possible translation strategies for wordplay that range from translating a pun with another pun to using editorial footnotes to explain the nature of the pun in the source text. None of the techniques he proposes meet the requirements of *translation equivalence* or *absolute translation* as defined by Attardo: "...a 'perfect' translation that corresponds *in all aspects* to the text in SL" (Attardo 2002, p. 191, original emphasis). Delabastita does not address the desirability of the translation strategies he names. Zabalbeascoa (2005), on the other hand, finds the question of absolute translation a redundant one, since every translation will by its very nature be different from its source text (p. 191). He states that for puns and other humorous linguistic textual elements, compensation of kind (producing the same effect through a different rhetorical device) and compensation of place (placing a pun elsewhere in the text to compensate for removing one) must be considered as viable translation solutions (p. 193). Compensation is one of Delabastita's strategies, too.

The strategy employed for translating wordplay in the present translation is therefore to map the instances where it appears using the GTVH and apply a suitable strategy using Delabastita's model:

1. Pun>Pun: the original wordplay is conserved, but is more or less different from the original in terms of structure, semantic structure or textual function.
2. Pun>Non-pun: salvages both senses of a wordplay but not in a punning way, or selects one of the senses at the cost of the other; it is also possible that both components of the pun are translated 'beyond recognition' (not recognizable as pun anymore).
3. Pun>Related rhetorical device: the original wordplay is replaced by some wordplay-related rhetorical device (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox, etc.) to recapture the effect of the source-text pun.
4. Pun>Zero: the portion of text containing the pun is omitted.
5. Pun ST=Pun TT: the translator reproduces the ST pun and possibly its immediate environment in its original formulation, i.e. without actually translating it.

6. Non-pun>Pun: the translator introduces puns in textual positions where the original text has no wordplay, by way of compensation to make up for source-text puns lost elsewhere or for any other reason.
7. Zero>Pun: the translation adds entirely new textual material containing wordplay but with no apparent precedent or justification in the source text except as a compensatory device.
8. Editorial techniques: explanatory footnotes or endnotes and other similar explanatory devices.

Example 4: Drain on the taxpayers' dime

In the prologue, the narrators explain that the Society eventually fell into discredit:

William was practical. He didn't believe in ghosts. He considered the Society to be nothing more than a collection of odious charlatans who had been pulling the wool over the eyes of his poor disturbed predecessors for many years. *Plus it was a terrible drain on the taxpayers' dime (er, shilling).*

MPJ, p. xi, emphasis added

This joke is a pun which depends on both the expression “drain on the taxpayers' dime” and a knowledge of the kinds of coins that are and were in use. Dimes are an American coin, while shillings were in use in England during the time period in which MPJ is set. The fact that the narrators have to correct themselves produces humor, emphasizing the difference in time and culture between the narrators themselves and the events of the book.

Attardo's KR model indicates that language causes problems for translation since, as part of a pun, it is important for the core of the joke. The other KRs do not directly pose problems, since they are intercultural. Following Attardo, the present translation began by attempting to create puns out of standard Dutch expressions in order to preserve the Narrative Strategy. In the case of the text cited above, for example: “Bovendien was het een vreselijke verspilling van belastingcenten (eh, shillings)”. However, cents existed in England at the time of *Jane Eyre*. As a result, the proposed translation might be funny, but it would be a nonsensical one, and might even distract observant readers from the story. Therefore, it was necessary to search for coinage that was non-existent at the time. One option was Dutch “stuivers,” which is five cents in Guilders. “Belastingstuivers” is not an existing Dutch expression, however, so in order to make the sentence read more fluently and keep the reference to the taxpayer in the text, the following translation is proposed: “Bovendien was het een vreselijke verspilling van de stuivers (eh, shillings) van de belastingbetalende bevolking.” This translation preserves the pun, adapting it so Dutch readers might

understand it. The full translation reads:

William was een praktische man. Hij geloofde niet in geesten. Hij beschouwde het Genootschap als een stelletje ergerlijke charlatans die zijn arme, getroebleerde voorgangers jarenlang zand in de ogen hadden gestrooid. Bovendien was het een vreselijke verspilling van de stuivers (eh, shillings) van de belastingbetalende bevolking.

Example 5: Sleeping... sweeping

In this scene, protagonist Jane goes to a pub to witness how the Society for the Relocation of Wayward Spirits captures the ghost that haunts it. She is afraid that the Society will take her ghost friend Helen away. Of course, pubs are not the place for respectable young women, so Jane tries to hide from the agents. Unfortunately, they spot her, and Jane offers them the following excuse:

“Uh, good evening.” Jane waved. “I was, um... sleeping... sweeping... then sleeping.”

MPJ, p. 22

This joke is language-restricted as all puns are. Zabalbeascoa pushes for translators to inspect the function of a joke within the text. In this instance, the function is to highlight Jane’s clumsiness and add to the awkwardness of the situation. Puns are infamous for being untranslatable, but in this case, it was possible to find a translation that was similar to the pun in the source text. In Dutch, “slapen” (to sleep) and “vegen” (to sweep) do not share any similarities in sound. Therefore, it was necessary to look for synonyms of these words that have more sound commonalities. One possible pair was “dommelen” (slumbering) and rommelen (to rummage through something or fiddle about). Now, rommelen is not exactly a synonym, but it does find itself in the realm of the original word pair, be it messily or without focus. In the source text, Jane wants to make the impression that she belongs at the pub, so “rommelen” fits. The proposed translation is therefore:

“Eh, goedenavond.” Jane zwaaide. “Ik was, ehm, wat aan het dommelen ... rommelen... en daarna dommelen.”

2.3.4 Irony

According to Pelsmaekers & Van Besien (2002), irony is centered around incongruity and superiority (just like humor, as discussed earlier in this Chapter). Irony arises when there is some form of incongruity detectable between what is said and what is observed in a situation. Additionally, an ironic utterance contains some form of criticism. The severity of the

criticism can range from a playful jab to more serious types of criticism. Therefore, irony can be used to chide in a humorous way.

Pelsmaekers & Van Besien approach irony as a speech act. When the utterance is not recognized as criticism, the speech act has failed. This is why the speaker signals that an utterance is ironic by adding verbal and non-verbal cues such as hyperbolic expressions, hyperformality, intensifiers, repetition and interjections.

In MPJ, irony is ingrained in the narrative style: the authors often use ironic footnotes, parenthetical remarks or the words characters speak. Sometimes, these ironic utterances contain the ironic cues outlined by Pelsmaekers & Van Besien. For example:

“You’re definitely not coming with us,” Alexander said. “Not a chance.”
Reader, Miss Brontë definitely went with them.

MPJ, p. 117

In this example, the irony is cued by hyperbole and repetition. The ironic difference can be found between what Alexander states as truth and what actually happens. The second sentence echoes the first, but in a different context, thereby producing humor.

A second example is more subtle:

“They’re coming here.” Jane pressed a hand to her forehead as if she was suddenly feeling faint. Which didn’t alarm Charlotte, as young women of this time period felt faint regularly. Because corsets.

MPJ, p. 11

The irony in this example is that Charlotte is not alarmed by her friend who is feeling faint because that was how women were supposed to feel in the period in which the story takes place. Additionally, in this fragment, repetition is used to bring about humorous irony. What is stated feels incongruous to the reader, who thinks it *is* alarming to feel faint regularly.

Irony plays a large part in MPJ’s style. Both the authors’ asides and the utterances of many of the characters have an ironic and amusing effect. While she functions as the voice of reason, Jane’s ghost friend Helen also has a particular penchant for ironic remarks. Helen’s function in the story seems to be to evaluate the actions of the other characters, especially Mr. Rochester. Irony is therefore very important for Helen’s characterization and must be preserved in translation.

Translating irony in MPJ

Pelsmaekers & Van Besien (2002) have examined the translation of irony from English to

Dutch in the subtitles of the BBC television series *Blackadder*. Their findings are quite specific to subtitling, as this type of translation has its own constraints regarding space and time. Nevertheless, since their study includes a comprehensive list of translation strategies for irony, it is useful for mapping and prioritizing translation strategies for the present translation.

Pelsmaekers & Van Besien find translations of ironic utterances successful when they “[preserve] the locutionary incongruity with the situation, [make] use of the same ‘vehicle’ speech acts as in the original utterances, and [exhibit] a similar intended perlocutionary effect of ridiculing a target” (Pelsmaekers & Van Besien, 2002, p. 263). In other words, when something is ironic, what is said is incongruous with the situation (locutionary); some act is performed through speech, for example a promise or a threat (illocutionary); and the intended effect is ridicule (perlocutionary). Another intended effect of irony is usually to generate amusement in the audience.

The following examples from MPJ highlight the translation strategies for irony employed in the present translation.

Example 1: He’ll bleed

Mr. Rochester delivers a speech that seems heartfelt about his love for Jane. Helen’s disparaging remark betrays her contempt for him:

Mr. Rochester grunted. “Miss Eyre, listen to me. I believe there is a string below your rib, and it stretches across class and age to me, and it is attached beneath my rib. And if you find another suitable position, and leave me, you will pull it out. And I will bleed.”

“What do you mean?” Jane said.

“It sounds rather obvious, and slightly disgusting,” Helen said. “He’ll bleed.”

MPJ, p. 273

As noted above, this emotional exchange between Mr. Rochester and Jane also appears in *Jane Eyre*, be it worded differently. Jane thinks Rochester is going to marry Miss Ingram, so she inquires whether she should find a new position. However, Rochester tries to convince Jane to stay with him as he does not intend to marry Miss Ingram. It is a conversation full of hints towards feelings, but class prevents Rochester from saying what he actually feels. In the end, Jane decides to throw convention aside and Mr. Rochester how she feels directly. In this version, however, Helen is present to add snide remarks to the situation, thereby adding some humor.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this part of MPJ parodies *Jane Eyre* by framing the situation differently. Rochester is not being romantic; he is being manipulative since he is

actually possessed by a ghost. This element of irony poses little problem for translation. The Language parameter can be readily changed, as paraphrase is possible in this case. The irony marker of repetition must be preserved, but this requirement can be met easily. The Logical Mechanism here is that Helen takes Rochester's metaphorical words literally, using them to ridicule him. This provides opposing scripts: metaphorical versus literal. The proposed Dutch translation is as follows:

Mr. Rochester gromde. "Miss Eyre, luister. Ik geloof dat er een draad bevestigd is onder jouw rib die dwars door klasse en leeftijd naar mijn rib loopt en daar bevestigd is. Als je een andere geschikte positie vindt en me verlaat, dan trek je hem eruit. En dan bloed ik."
 "Wat bedoelt u?" zei Jane.
 "Het klinkt vrij voor de hand liggend en nogal smerig," zei Helen. "Dan bloedt hij."

Example 2: Reader, it smelled of fire

In this second example, it is the narrators who place an ironic note in the story. Jane has woken up to some concerning sounds: maniacal laughter and scratching at her door. She goes to Rochester's room, where she finds that his bed has been set on fire with him still in it. She wakes him up, at which point the following interaction occurs:

He grabbed his robe and draped it over himself. "Stay here, Miss Eyre. Stay here and I'll find out what's going on."
 "But..." Jane shivered.
 "Are you cold?" Mr. Rochester asked softly. He took the robe from around his shoulders and placed it on Jane's.
 [...]
 With that, he left.
 [...]
 Helen plopped down on the stool beside Jane's feet. "How odd," she remarked.
 "What's odd?" Jane said.
 "What's odd?" Helen repeated. "Um, maniacal laughter, scratching at our door, bed fire. And now he wants you to just sit here and wait?"
 "Of course he does. It makes perfect sense." Jane grabbed the robe and held it to her face, inhaling his scent, as she gazed wistfully out the door.
 Reader, it smelled of fire."

MPJ, p. 140

The humor in this case stems from an incongruity between Jane's sentimental feelings and the narrators' dry remark. They ridicule Jane's sentimentality. Additionally, the narrators speak directly to the reader, much as Brontë did in *Jane Eyre*. In both novels, this has the effect of drawing readers in and making them part of the in-group that gets the joke. The word *reader* has a standard translation in Dutch, *lezer*. However, this word might not be as

well known to young Dutch readers who are not familiar with *Jane Eyre*. While they might not get the link with the original book, *lezer* will nevertheless have the effect making the reader in on the joke.

None of the Knowledge Parameters pose problems for translation, so the original text can be translated quite literally as “Lezer, hij rook naar vuur.” The full translation reads as follows:

“Hij greep zijn kamerjas en legde hem rond zijn schouders. “Blijf hier, Miss Eyre. Blijf hier terwijl ik uitzoek wat er aan de hand is.”
 “Maar... “ Jane rilde.
 “Heb je het koud?” vroeg Mr. Rochester zachtjes. Hij nam de kamerjas van zijn schouders en legde hem om die van Jane.
 [...]

 Toen verliet hij de kamer.
 [...]

 Helen plofte neer op het krukje bij Jane’s voeten. “Wat vreemd,” merkte ze op.
 “Wat is er vreemd?”
 “Wat is er vreemd?” herhaalde Helen. “Ehm, maniakaal gelach, gekras op onze deur, bed in brand. En nu wil hij dat je hier blijft zitten wachten?”
 “Natuurlijk wil hij dat. Dat lijkt me niet meer dan logisch.” Jane pakte de kamerjas en hield hem tegen haar gezicht. Verlangend keek ze naar de deur, onderwijl de geur van zijn kamerjas inademand.
 Lezer, hij rook naar vuur.”

2.4 Conclusion

I identified four types of humor in MPJ: humorous references to *Jane Eyre*, humorous references to pop culture, wordplay and irony. Most notable were the references to *Jane Eyre* and popular culture, since they are most present in MPJ. Each type of humor brings about its own difficulties, however, often the humorous instances I found were rooted in language. I will use my findings in my translation.

3. Annotated Translation

3.1 Translation strategy

To translate the humorous elements in MPJ, I have mapped them using the GTVH's knowledge resources, after which I consulted additional literature applicable to each of the categories. The additional literature in particular informed my translation, while I kept my translational goal in mind: to create a translation of MPJ that makes readers curious about *Jane Eyre*, while preserving as many of the intertextual as possible to give the Dutch readers a reading experience that is similar to that of the English readers. It was not possible to keep all references in the book because of cultural differences or a lack of prior knowledge of the teenaged audience.

I chose foreignization as my translation strategy to reach my goal of producing a translation that elicits the same reading experience as the source text while introducing the readers to a literary classic. Venuti (1998) has pleaded for foreignization as the ethical choice for translation and in today's globalized world, this is a very suitable strategy. I think foreignness can teach readers about other cultures and ideas; secondly, the nature of MPJ and its funniness lies in its English roots, since it references English literary classics, customs and history, so to remove the book from its target culture would be removing the essence from the novel.

3.2 Prologue

The prologue introduces the subject of the book and the way in which the authors will subvert the prevalent themes of Jane Eyre:

Je denkt misschien dat je het verhaal kent.

O, dat heb je eerder gehoord, zeker? Nou, we zeggen het nog eens: je denkt misschien dat je het verhaal kent. Het is zonder meer een mooi verhaal: een berooid weesmeisje wordt gouvernante in een welvarend huishouden, trekt de aandacht van de rijke en strenge heer des huizes en (zucht) wordt hevig verliefd. Het is allemaal heel hartstochtelijk en romantisch¹, maar voordat ze kunnen trouwen komt er een (o nee!) verschrikkelijk verraad aan het licht. Daarna komt er brand en wanhoop, wat doelloos

¹ The original term 'swoon-worthy' does not have a single-word translation in Dutch. At first I translated it as 'om van te zwijmelen', but that didn't fit properly and made the sentence too long. I chose the related term 'romantisch', because one of the definitions of

gedwaal, honger, wat psychische manipulatie², maar uiteindelijk overwint de liefde. Het meisje (Miss Eyre) krijgt de jongen (Mr. Rochester)³. Ze leven nog lang en gelukkig. Iedereen blij, toch?

Eh... nee. Wij hebben een ander verhaal te vertellen. (Dat is nu eenmaal wat we doen, nietwaar?). En wat we straks onthullen is meer dan een simpele bewerking van een van de meest geliefde romans uit de literatuurgeschiedenis. Deze versie, beste lezer, is wáár. Er was echt een meisje. (Eigenlijk twee meisjes). Er was inderdaad een verschrikkelijk verraad en een grote brand. Maar de rest van het verhaal mag je vergeten. Dit verhaal wordt anders dan alle klassieke romances die je ooit gelezen hebt.

Het begon allemaal, als we helemaal terug in de tijd gaan, in 1788 met koning George III. De koning kon altijd al geesten zien. Niks aan de hand⁴. Hij vond ze absoluut niet eng. Soms had hij zelfs gezellige gesprekken met hovelingen die al lang dood waren en onterecht onthoofde koninginnen die rondom het paleis zweefden.

Maar op een dag sloeg het noodlot toe. De koning maakte een wandeling door de tuin toen een ondeugende geest in de buurt aan de takken van een boom rammelde.

“Wie is daar?” riep de koning, want hij was net die dag zijn bril vergeten.

“Aanschouw mij,” antwoordde de vervelende geest zo deftig mogelijk. “Ik ben de koning van Pruisen!”

De koning maakte onmiddellijk een diepe buiging. Toevallig verwachtte hij juist een bezoek van de koning van Pruisen. “Aangenaam kennis te maken, Uwe Majesteit!” riep hij uit.

Toen probeerde hij de boom de hand te schudden.

Er zou dus⁵ niks aan de hand zijn geweest, ware het niet dat het tiental lords en ladies dat de koning vergezeld had op zijn wandeling door de tuin de geest natuurlijk niet

² There is no Dutch equivalent for the English term ‘gaslighting’, so I have opted to describe the term in a general way. I could have kept the English term in the text, because that happens quite often, but because of the young readership of Young Adult Literature, it is unclear whether they would understand this. In this case a general term gets the point across.

³ In the Anglophone world, it is common to say that ‘the girl gets the guy’ or the other way around, ‘guy’ meaning the male hero. This is a well-known plot point in many types of media and is generally referred to in this casual way. In Dutch, this is not a well-known phrase. I have chosen to translate it literally, however, to remind the reader of this type of plot. Moreover, it signals the informal tone of the novel to the reader.

⁴ ‘No big deal’ is a very colloquial way to say that something is not a problem. I have chosen to translate it with ‘niks aan de hand’, because I think it has the same colloquial feel to it, particularly the word ‘niks’ instead of ‘niets’, which is usual in written language.

⁵ In the source text it says: ‘This, again, would have been no big deal...’. Translating this literally would cause there to be many commas in the sentence, which can trip up the reader, since a sentence structure with many commas is not common in Dutch. The word ‘dus’ is often used for emphasis or to refer back to something, so I chose to use this instead.

kon zien, slechts het feit dat de koning een boom aanzag voor een andere vorst⁶. Vanaf dat moment werd de arme George “George de Waanzinnige” genoemd, een titel waar hij erg verontwaardigd over was.

George verzamelde daarom een team⁷ van allerlei soorten mensen die hem konden helpen om van die hinderlijke geesten af te komen: priesters die gespecialiseerd waren in het uitdrijven van duivels, dokters met kennis van het occulte, filosofen, wetenschappers, waarzeggers, en verder iedereen die zich bezighield met het bovennatuurlijke.

En zo kwam het dat Het Koninklijke Genootschap voor de Verwijdering van Weerspannige Spoken⁸ werd opgericht.

In de jaren die volgden nam het Genootschap (zoals het genoemd werd) een prominente en gerespecteerde plaats in binnen de Engelse samenleving. Dus *if there was something strange in your neighbourhood*, dan kon je, uh, het Genootschap een brief schrijven en dan stuurden ze onmiddellijk een agent om het probleem te verhelpen...

We gaan vooruit in de tijd, net voorbij het bewind van George IV naar de troonsbestijging van William IV⁹. William was een praktische man. Hij geloofde niet in geesten. Hij beschouwde het Genootschap als een stelletje ergerlijke charlatans die zijn arme, getroebleerde voorgangers jarenlang zand in de ogen hadden gestrooid. Bovendien was het een vreselijke verspilling van de stuivers (eh, shillings) van de belastingbetalende bevolking. Zodra hij officieel tot koning gekroond was, schrapte William het Genootschap uit het koninklijke budget. Dit leidde tot zijn beruchte aanvaring en daaruit voortvloeiende twist met Sir Arthur Wellesley, oftewel de Hertog van Wellington, oftewel het hoofd en de Lord

⁶ ‘Royalty’ is a very hard word to translate in Dutch, since there is no direct equivalent for it. The closest would be ‘een lid van een koningshuis’, but this would make the sentence unnecessarily long and that would be detrimental to the snappy style that characterizes MPJ. Therefore, I have translated it as ‘een andere vorst’, making the phrase a bit more explicit. This does not have major consequences for the interpretation of the passage, since the mischievous ghost only comes back once more, at the very end of the book, and therefore does not fulfill a major role.

⁷ The word ‘team’ in Dutch reminds one mainly of (national) sports teams, which would not have been a big deal in the 19th century. Therefore, using this word in the translation is quite anachronistic. However, using anachronistic words and even references to contemporary pop culture is one of the trademarks of MPJ, I have decided to keep it in to compensate for other modern lingo that I wasn’t able to translate properly in Dutch.

⁸ ‘The Royal Society for the Relocation of Wayward Spirits’, or the Society in short, plays a big part in MPJ. In order to make the Dutch term catchy and in the spirit of the book, I have translated it like this. I have added some alliteration: ‘Het Koninklijke Genootschap voor de Verwijdering van **Weerspannige Spoken**’. Additionally, I have chosen for the term ‘spook’ instead of ‘geest’ to keep some variation in the terms used for ghosts. The word ‘spook’ is often associated with ghost stories (spookverhalen), so it is very applicable to MPJ.

⁹ In Dutch the name of this king is Willem IV. I have chosen to maintain the English name, because it is confusing when English and Dutch names alternate, since the setting is in England. Besides, I believe YA readers, who are between 14 and 20, will understand that William is the name of an English king; I even believe they would be annoyed if I translated William’s name, since it would be an obvious translation.

President van het VWS-Genootschap, dat nu geen financiering meer had en geen respect meer kreeg¹⁰.

Daarmee zijn we bij het echte begin van ons verhaal gekomen: Noord-Engeland, 1834, en het bovengenoemde berooide, ouderloze meisje. Plus een schrijfster. En een jongen uit op wraak.

Laten we bij het meisje beginnen.

Ze heette Jane.

3.3 Chapter 1: Charlotte

In chapter 1 the reader meets Charlotte Brontë, a young girl at Lowood who wants to become a writer. She muses about the delicious mystery of the murder on the horrible headmaster of the school:

Het was onmogelijk om een wandeling te maken over het terrein van de Lowoodschool zonder het afschuwelijke en toch zeer opwindende nieuws te horen: Mr. Brocklehurst was - lieve hemel!¹¹ - vermóórd. Dit waren de feiten: Mr. Brocklehurst was langsgekomen voor een van zijn maandelijkse “inspecties”. Hij was meteen begonnen te klagen over alle problemen die kwamen kijken bij het besturen van een school voor arme kinderen en de manier waarop de eerder genoemde kinderen om de een of andere reden altijd om meer eten vroegen - *meneer, mag ik alstublieft wat meer?* Daarna had hij het zich gemakkelijk gemaakt bij het haardvuur in de salon, de overvolle schaal met koekjes verorberd die Miss Temple hem zo vriendelijk had aangeboden, en was vervolgens ter plekke neergestort tijdens de afternoontea¹². Vergiftigd. Het was de thee blijkbaar, niet de koekjes. Waren het wel de koekjes geweest, dan was het volgens de meisjes van Lowood zijn verdiende loon geweest.

De meisjes lieten geen enkele traan om Mr. Brocklehurst. Tijdens zijn leiding over de school hadden ze het erg koud gehad en waren ze erg hongerig geweest, en een groot deel

¹⁰ This sentence ('... which was now underfunded and under-respected') was hard to translate, because neither 'underfunded' nor 'under-respected' have a single-word equivalent in Dutch. Therefore, I had to expand the sentence a bit.

¹¹ English 'gasp' does not have a simple one-word translation in Dutch: according to Van Dale, it can be translated as 'het snakken naar adem', which is simply too long to make an adequate translation in this case. It is more usual in English to use such interjections as 'gasp!' and later on 'sigh'. In order to make the writing style of the translation just as quick and snappy as the original, I have decided to prioritize the meaning of the utterance: according to OED it is "a convulsive intake or emission of breath caused by distress, exertion, surprise, etc. Also: one's last breath." In Dutch, there are other utterances that convey this emotion, I have chosen "o hemel!" because it is slightly old fashioned and it is a pretty mild exclamation that can be associated with young females such as the girls at Lowood.

¹² 'Afternoon tea' is a light meal that is eaten between 4 and 5 in the afternoon. In Dutch we usually call this a 'High tea', but since that is the name for a popular phenomenon that is specific to the 20th and 21st century, I have decided to use the official Van Dale translation of Afternoon tea, which is afternoontea.

van hen was doodgegaan aan de Kerkhofziekte.¹³ (Er zijn veel termen voor deze ziekte gebruikt in de loop van de geschiedenis: de Aandoening, consumptie, tuberculose, etc., maar tijdens deze periode werd er voornamelijk naar de kwaal verwezen met “de Kerkhofziekte”, want als je de pech had om het te krijgen, dan was dat waar je uiteindelijk terecht kwam. Maar goed, terug naar Mr. Brocklehurst.) Mr. Brocklehurst geloofde dat het goed was voor de ziel om alleen verbrande pap te eten te krijgen. (Daarmee bedoelde hij de straatarme, noodlijdende ziel; de deftige ziel uit de bovenklasse gedijde goed, zo oordeelde hij, bij een dieet van rosbief en plumpudding. En koekjes, klaarblijkelijk.) Sinds Mr. Brocklehursts vroegtijdige overlijden waren de omstandigheden op school met grote sprongen vooruit gegaan. De meisjes besloten: degene die Mr. Brocklehurst had vermoord, had hun een groot plezier gedaan.

Maar wíe had Mr. Brocklehurst vermoord?

Hierover konden de meisjes alleen speculeren. Tot nu toe was het niemand - noch de lokale autoriteiten, noch Scotland Yard - gelukt om de dader te ontmaskeren.

“Het was Miss Temple,” hoorde Charlotte een meisje zeggen toen ze door de tuinen liep. Katelyn heette ze. “Zij serveerde de thee, nietwaar?”

“Nee, het was Miss Scatcherd,” bepleitte Victoria, haar vriendin. “Ik heb gehoord dat ze ooit een man had, die Miss Scatcherd¹⁴, en dat hij onder verdachte omstandigheden is gestorven.”

“Dat is maar een gerucht,” zei Katelyn. “Wie zou er nou met Miss Scatcherd trouwen met dat gezicht van d'r? Ik blijf erbij dat het Miss Temple was.”

Victoria schudde haar hoofd. “Miss Temple zou nog geen vlieg kwaad doen. Ze is zo zachtaardig en stil.”

“O, nonsens,” zei Katelyn. “Iedereen weet dat stille wateren diepe gronden hebben.”

Charlotte glimlachte. Ze verzamelde geruchten zoals andere meisjes poppen vergaarden en schreef de sappige details op in haar kleine notitieboekje. (Geruchten waren het enige handelsmiddel dat Lowood in overvloed had.) Als het gerucht goed genoeg was, dan kon ze er misschien later een verhaal van maken om aan haar zussen te vertellen voor het slapengaan. Maar de dood van Mr. Brocklehurst was veel beter dan de slappe roddels van een snaterende groep tienermeisjes. Het was een echt, onvervalst mysterie.

Het allerbeste soort verhaal.

Toen ze eenmaal buiten de ommuurde tuinen van Lowood was, haalde Charlotte

¹³ The term ‘Graveyard Disease’ does not exist in the English language, therefore I have decided to translate it literally. It would be problematic to translate it in a different way, because the term ‘graveyard’ is needed for the joke that follows.

¹⁴ This girl speaks informally in the source text: “I heard she had a husband once, Miss Scatcherd did, who died suspiciously”, which fits her character as a poor orphan. I attempted to recreate this.

haar notitieboekje uit haar zak en liep kordaat de bossen rondom de school in. Het was moeilijk om tegelijkertijd te lopen en te schrijven, maar ze had het al eeuwen geleden onder de knie gekregen. Zoiets onbenulligs als ergens naartoe gaan mocht haar schrijven natuurlijk niet belemmeren, en ze kende de route uit haar hoofd.

Stille wateren hebben diepe gronden. Dat was best een goede zin. Die moest ze binnenkort maar ergens in verwerken.

3.4 Chapter 2: Jane

Jane Eyre is a pub, somewhere it is unbecoming for a young woman to be, because she has heard that the Society for the Relocation of Wayward Spirits is coming there to relocate a spirit. She wants to inspect what they do because she has a ghost as a friend.

Ze hoorde hier niet. Ze boog haar hoofd, kneep stiekem haar neus dicht om de vreselijke mannengeuren buiten te sluiten en vocht zich een weg door de drom mensen naar de toog. (Dat is tenminste hoe Jane het noemde. Wij zouden het eerder omschrijven als omzichtig tussen de mensen door zigzaggen.) Toen ze bij de toog kwam, keek de kastelein op.

“Kan ik je¹⁵ helpen, juffrouw?” vroeg hij. “Ben je soms verdwaald?”

“Nee,” zei ze schor. “Nee. Tenminste, ik denk van niet. Is dit... het etablissement... waar...”

“Waar wat?” vroeg de kastelein. “Praat eens wat harder. Ik kan je niet verstaan.”

Haar korset voelde ondraaglijk strak. (Dat was het ook. Dat was zo'n beetje het doel van korsetten.)

“Hier. Van het huis.” De kastelein schonk een glas vol met brandewijn en schoof het naar haar toe. Even was Jane geschokt dat hij haar zoiets durfde aan te bieden. Toen griste ze het glas van de toog en nam een slokje. Vloeibaar vuur gleed verschroeiend door haar slokdarm. Ze hapte naar adem en zette het glas neer. “Is dit de kroeg waar de...”

Ze was net aan het woord ‘geest’ begonnen toen een huiveringwekkend gekrijs door de kamer galmde. Jane keek met een ruk omhoog om een vrouw in een witte nachtjapon te aanschouwen die boven de toog zweefde. Het haar van de vrouw was ravenzwart en dreef om haar hoofd alsof ze vastzat in een waterstroom. Haar huid was bijna doorzichtig, maar

¹⁵ In Dutch, there is a difference between the personal pronouns ‘u’ en ‘je/jij’, which is not present in English. ‘U’ would be a common pronoun to use during the times of *Jane Eyre*, especially in the higher classes, while ‘je/jij’ would be reserved for people in one’s close relatives and friends. The barkeep, however, is from the lower classes, someone who sees all kinds of people. He meets a scrawny girl of 18 years old in his pub, where sophisticated ladies are not supposed to be. Because of this, the barkeep says ‘je/jij’ to Jane in my translation, because it implies either a lack of respect or the assumption that they are equal in status.

haar ogen gloeiden als kooltjes.

Ze was misschien wel de allermooiste geest die Jane ooit gezien had. En Jane had een hoop geesten gezien.

“Stel je vraag nou maar, juffie,” zei de kastelein, zijn ogen nog steeds op Jane gericht. “Ik heb niet de hele avond, weet je.”

Blijkbaar kon hij de geest niet zien.

“O, laat maar.” Jane nam nog een slokje van de brandewijn en deed een paar passen naar achteren om de ongelukkige schim beter te kunnen gadeslaan.

“Waar hebben ze hem naartoe gebracht?” kreunde de geest. “Waar hebben ze mijn man mee naartoe genomen?”

Jane voelde een steekje van medelijden met de vrouw.

“Waar is hij?” jammerde de geest.

Wat erg, dacht Jane, om gescheiden te worden van je ware liefde, om zo wreed afgesneden te worden van je wederhelft, alsof je een wezenlijk deel van je ziel verliest. Het was verschrikkelijk. Maar ook... verschrikkelijk romantisch.

“Ik weet dat hij hier ergens is!” krijste de geest. “Hij is hier altijd. Ik heb nog een appeltje met hem te schillen. De lallende lapzwans¹⁶!”

O. O hemel.

De geest mepte¹⁷ tegen Janes glas met brandewijn. Het vloog vlak langs Janes linker oor door de lucht en spatte uiteen tegen de achterwand.

“Gossiemitte!” riep de kastelein uit, die het vliegende brandewijn glas dus ook had opgemerkt. “De Krijsende Dame is er weer!” Hij waagde een blik op de klok aan de muur. “Precies op tijd.”

“Geen rooie cent waard!” brulde de geest. “De zuipschuit!” Ze wervelde met een koude windvlaag door de kamer en schoot toen terug naar de toeg, waarbij ze voor de goede orde de klok van de muur stootte. “De heit-jes-pie-jij-zer!”

“Waar is dat verduvelde Genootschap?” kreunde de kastelein. “Ze hadden er al moeten zijn.”

“Ik weet dat jullie dat tuig hier verborgen houden!” De Krijsende Dame greep de fles brandewijn en keilde hem naar het hoofd van de kastelein. Ze kon goed mikken. Hij ging tegen de vlakte zonder nog een woord te zeggen.

¹⁶ The authors used old-fashioned terms of abuse in this passage. The first one ‘good-for-nothing billy-born-drunk’ has alliteration on top of that. This has a comedic effect, because the words are unfamiliar to the modern reader. I wanted to preserve that in my translation, so chose ‘lallende lapzwans’, which I think is a good translation since it preserves the alliteration and because lapzwans is a term not often used in daily life by young people. By doing this, the humorous effect remains.

¹⁷ In English it is usual to describe the motion of limbs: ‘The ghost raised her arm and swatted at Jane’s brandy glass.’ In Dutch one often directly describes an action, which is why I have translated it like this.

Dit verliep heel ongelukkig. Jane dook weg zodat ze minder snel geraakt kon worden en glipte en gleeed en glibberde¹⁸ tot ze veilig achter de bar weggestopt zat, waar ze de bewusteloze kastelein als schild kon gebruiken. (Ze dacht ook altijd aan anderen, die Jane.) De zoom van haar jurk plakte aan de met drank doorweekte vloer, wat jammer was, maar inmiddels onvermijdelijk.

Ze gluurde langs de uitgeschakelde kastelein om te zien hoe de akelige situatie zich ontwikkelde. De Krijsende Dame bleef roepen dat ze haar ontaarde man wilde zien terwijl ze allerlei voorwerpen door de ruimte slingerde. De stamgasten duwden elkaar al vloekend aan de kant om maar uit de buurt van de geest te komen, al leken ze niet buitengewoon veel zin te hebben om de kroeg te verlaten. Ze waren het waarschijnlijk gewend.

Wat een puinhoop, dacht Jane somber terwijl de Krijsende Dame een enorme pot ingelegde eieren op de grond smeed. Onderhand had ze een stuk minder medelijden met de vrouw. Dit spook was overduidelijk vervelend, besloot ze. Dus waar was dat verduvelde -- hemel, excuus voor het taalgebruik¹⁹ -- Genootschap?

Precies op dat moment, alsof ze hem met haar gedachten opgeroepen had, sprong een man met een zwart masker op een tafel midden in de kroeg²⁰. Hij haalde een klein voorwerp uit zijn zak en gooide het tegen de muur.

Het ontplofte met een flits en een knal.

Alle stamgasten²¹ bleven staan. Toen keek iedereen zwijgend en met open mond naar de gemaskerde man²².

Jane merkte dat ze ook aan het staren was, met ingehouden adem -- alhoewel, dat kon dus ook daar haar korset komen. Ze duwde de kastelein opzij om het beter te kunnen zien.

De agent²³ was een jonge man -- zelfs met het masker was dat goed te zien -- ook al

¹⁸ There is no alliteration in the original text, but the informal and humorous writing styles lends itself to added alliteration.

¹⁹ In the original text it says: 'Oh dear, pardon her French'. I have translated 'dear' with 'hemel' because the politeness of this exclamation fits with the setting in England. Moreover, Jane is a young lady who is not supposed to swear. 'Pardon my/her French' is an English expression that does not have a Dutch equivalent, so I made my translation more explicit to convey the same meaning.

²⁰ The word 'room' is often used in this chapter. To add some variation I have sometimes translated it as 'kroeg' (pub).

²¹ Translating 'the crowd' was tough, since 'menigte' indicates too many people. I translated it as 'drom' at first, but that made it very static. In the end I decided to make my translation more dynamic by referring to the people as 'stamgasten' (regular guest). We can assume they are regular guests, since it is mentioned that they are used to the ghost wreaking havoc.

²² In the original it says: 'Then all faces turned to stare in open-mouthed silence at the masked man'. Personification is often used in English, but in Dutch this is unusual. This is why I have made 'de stamgasten' the subjects of the sentence.

²³ The English word 'agent' has a broader meaning than the Dutch word 'agent'. The Dutch word strongly reminds one of police officers. I have searched for different words to indicate Alexander and his friend, but could not find any that accurately described what they do. In a sense, they are police officers, but they arrest ghosts instead of living people. I have consulted the Dutch subtitles of the

kon Jane hem geen jongen noemen. De meeste mannen in deze tijd hadden een snor of op zijn minst bakkebaarden, maar hij had geen van beide. Jane kon hem ook niet knap noemen. (In het pre-Victoriaanse tijdperk was een echt knappe man bleek -- want tijd doorbrengen in de zon was voor het gepeupel -- met een lang, ovalen gezicht, een smalle kaak, een kleine mond en een puntige kin. Ja, we weten het. Wij kunnen het ook niet echt geloven.) De kaak van deze jongeman was ontegenzeggelijk vierkant en zijn haar was te lang. Maar hij behoorde duidelijk tot de hogere klasse met zijn verfijnde wollen jas en duur uitziende leren handschoenen.

“Iedereen naar buiten!” schreeuwde hij, en Jane dook achter de toog.

De stamgasten verlieten de ruimte onmiddellijk en op een ordelijke manier. De kroeg was nu leeg op een andere gemaskerde man na, met een sjofeler pak aan en jonger dan de eerste, duidelijk nog wél een jongen. Blijkbaar werden ze per twee geleverd²⁴.

De jongeman met het ontplofende voorwerp sprong van de tafel af.

“Nu goed opletten,” zei hij tegen de tweede agent. “Eerst zorgen we dat de kamer leeg is. Dan stellen we de identiteit van het spook vast.”

Het spook. Jane was haar bijna vergeten. Ze gluurde naar boven om de geest te zien. De Krijssende Dame was al lang opgehouden met krijsen, omdat ze te druk naar de agenten aan het staren was.

De agent die de leiding had haalde een klein in leer gebonden notitieboekje en een pen uit de binnenzak van zijn jas. Hij opende het boekje voorzichtig, op een manier die Jane aan Charlotte deed denken, en sloeg een pagina op met een bladwijzer erin.

“Vertel me uw naam, spook,” commandeerde hij de geest bijna verveeld.

De Krijssende Dame drukte haar rug tegen het plafond maar weigerde te antwoorden. De andere agent, de kleine met een bril op met de ragebol aan rood haar op zijn hoofd -- die hij over zijn masker héén droeg, zag Jane nu -- stapte naar voren. “U zou er beter aan doen hem antwoord te geven,” zei hij, de geest aankijkend. “Alstublieft.”

De agent met de leiding²⁵ legde hem het zwijgen op. Hij wendde zich weer tot de geest. “U²⁶ bent Claire Doolittle, correct?”

movie *Men in Black*, where the word ‘agent’ is preserved too. This is why I have chosen to keep the word ‘agent.’

²⁴ ‘Apparently they came in pairs’ is reminiscent of the phrase ‘sold in pairs’, which is a funny turn of phrase to refer to humans. This is why I have foregone a literal translation and translated it as ‘blijkbaar werden ze per twee geleverd’, to keep this reference to sales. It additionally conveys Jane’s contempt for the agents, whose activities she condemns.

²⁵ Since the translation of ‘the agent in charge’ is quite long-winded in Dutch (‘de agent die de leiding had’) I have chosen to alternate this phrase with ‘de agent met de leiding’ and ‘de agent die de baas was’ in order to improve the flow of the sentence. I have considered the word ‘hoofdagent’, but unfortunately this only reminds one of Dutch police officers, since it is an actual name of the function of police officer.

²⁶ As Jane remarks, the agent (Alexander Blackwood) is of higher class. Additionally, he is acting in his function as agent of the Society. He would call the people he meets ‘u’.

“Ik ben hem kwijtgeraakt,” fluisterde de geest. Ze klonk plotseling ellendig. “Ze hebben hem meegenomen.”

“Wie?” De agent raadpleegde zijn notitieboekje. “Uw echtgenoot? Ze hebben hem in het schuldenarengewang gegoooid, als ik me niet vergis. Gokprobleem.”

De geest wiegde van links naar rechts, maar zei niets.

De agent keek weer even in zijn notitieboekje. “Hij heette Frances Doolittle.”

“Frank,” snauwde de geest. “Hij was een laaielichter.”

“Frank,” zei de agent, terwijl hij mee schreef. “Laaielichter.”

Hij stak zijn hand weer in zijn zak en haalde er een zilveren zakhorloge uit. “Zo²⁷,” zei hij tegen de andere agent, “kijk goed wat ik doe. Als je een spook vangt...”

De geest stootte een gejammer uit dat zo luid en bedroefd was dat Jane opnieuw een steek van medelijden voelde. Toen griste de Krijsende Dame het horloge uit de hand van de agent. Dat probeerde ze tenminste, maar dat mislukte omdat het door haar ijle hand gleed en op de grond kletterde.

Toen gebeurden er een paar dingen in korte tijd²⁸:

De agent met de leiding wilde het zakhorloge van de grond rapen.

De geest zag een kans om te ontsnappen en schoot vanaf het plafond naar beneden.

“Ze vlucht!” riep de rooie.

De agent met de leiding sprong lenig door de lucht en landde naast de geest. “Pak het horloge! Het is--” Maar hij kon zijn bevel niet afmaken, want de roodharige deed een onhandige uitval naar voren en maakte een duik om de geest onderuit te halen, maar in plaats van haar uit te schakelen²⁹, vloog hij -- natuurlijk -- door haar heen en landde in een hoopje naast Janes verstopplek achter de toog.

Op dat moment sprong Jane op.

Alle blikken richtten zich op Jane, inclusief die van de geest.

“Eh, goedenavond.” Jane zwaaide. “Ik was, ehm, wat aan het dommelen ... rommelen... en daarna dommelen.”

Er was een moment van totale stilte. Niemand bewoog, behalve de jongen met het

²⁷ Initially, I had translated ‘all right’ as ‘oké dan’, until someone pointed out this was anachronistic, since ‘oké’ originates from English ‘OK’, which didn’t appear in English until 1840 and much later in Dutch. *My Plain Jane*, however, takes place before 1840. Since the agent appears to be instructing the other agent, he is using ‘all right’ to indicate that he has finished the interrogation and will now proceed to capture the ghost. This is why I have translated it with ‘zo’, to indicate this.

²⁸ ‘The next events happened in quick succession’ I translated at first as ‘De volgende gebeurtenissen volgden elkaar in korte tijd op’, but I was not happy with using ‘volgen’ twice in a row. I therefore chose to translate this phrase less literally to enhance the flow of the sentence.

²⁹ In English, the word ‘to tackle’ is used. I have chosen not to use the Dutch translation ‘tackelen’ since it is reminiscent of a soccer term and it would be anachronistic for 19th century Dutch.

rode haar, die kreunde en over zijn slaap wreef. Maar de geest zweefde doelmatig naar Jane toe.

“Dommelen,” zei de eerste agent sceptisch.

“Ik... ik...” stamelde Jane. “Ik was dronken. Door het drinken van... de brandewijn.”

“Juist.”

Inmiddels was de Krijssende Dame ongemakkelijk dicht bij Jane gekomen, die uit alle macht probeerde te doen alsof ze het weerspannige spook niet kon zien.

“Hallo,” zei de geest.

Jane voelde de ogen van de gemaskerde man op de hare rusten. Snel richtte ze haar blik op het plafond. Een tafel. Het schilderij aan de muur. Overal behalve op de geest.

“Je bent zo mooi³⁰,” fluisterde de geest.

Janes wangen werden rood. Ze wist nooit hoe ze hierop moest reageren, vooral niet omdat alle levende mensen haar hele leven al tegen haar zeiden dat ze zo ontzettend onopvallend was.

Wat een alledaags meisje.

En...

O hemel. Ik hoop maar dat ze een betrekking kan vinden... ergens.

EN...

Goede genade. Wat gewoontjes. (Ze vroeg zich altijd af waarom mensen, als ze zo gewoontjes was, het nodig vonden om daar opmerkingen over te maken?)

Voor geesten was ze echter het toppunt van schoonheid.

Hieruit had Jane geconcludeerd dat er echt iets mis was in het hiernamaals.

“Je lijkt zo op mijn Jamie,” ging de Krijssende Dame door. “Met de zonsondergang achter hem.” Jane wist niet wie Jamie moest zijn, maar de dode vrouw was duidelijk een heel andere mening over hem toegedaan dan over haar echtgenoot. “Met een zachte bries door zijn rode haar,” kirde ze.

Jane veegde werktuiglijk een paar plukjes alledaags haar uit haar alledaagse ogen, terwijl ze wanhopig en hardnekkig de geest probeerde te negeren.

De agent die de baas was hield zijn hoofd schuin en keek van Jane naar de geest en weer terug.

“O jee, kijk eens hoe laat het al is.” Jane gebaarde naar de plek aan de muur waar de klok een paar minuten geleden nog had gehangen. “Ik moet echt gaan.”

De verdraaide geest dreef nog wat dichterbij. Jane had deze soort spook al eerder

³⁰ In my translation the ghost calls Jane ‘je/jij’ because Jane is a so-called Beacon, a person who is immensely attractive to ghosts (which is why the ghost finds her so beautiful). A Beacon can command ghosts to do things, but Jane does not know that. Besides, the Shrieking Lady is a wayward ghost; she is rude, she knocks things over and calls her dead husband all kinds of names. I would imagine her to be someone to call someone je or jij instead of u.

gezien. Dit zou wel eens een zwaan-kleef-aan-situatie³¹ kunnen worden. En dat kon ze nu niet gebruiken.

Ze deed nog twee stappen achteruit. De geest zweefde twee stappen naar voren. “Ik heb nog nooit zoiets prachtigs gezien,” zei ze zuchtend. “Je straalt gewoon.” Ze sloeg haar armen om Jane heen.

Jane lachte ongemakkelijk naar de mannen. “Ik wil jullie belangrijke werk niet onderbreken. Dus ik blijf hier wel staan. Doodstil.”

De agent met de leiding fronste naar Jane alsof hij in de war was. Toen boog hij voorover en raapte het zakhorloge op. Hij liep voorzichtig naar Jane en de geest. Toen hij de verschijning bereikt had, fluisterde hij, “Spook, bij dezen bent u verwijderd.”

“Wat doet u?” vroeg Jane.

Hij gaf geen antwoord. In plaats daarvan tilde hij het zakhorloge hoog op en gaf de geest een knal voor haar harses³².

(We snappen, lezer, dat dit een buitengewoon platvloerse manier is om het te beschrijven, als een “knal voor haar harses”. Maar na talrijke correcties en verscheidene bezoeken aan het woordenboek blijkt het toch de nauwkeurigste beschrijving te zijn. Hij gaf haar een knal voor haar harses.)

Een ijsskoude windvlaag blies Janes haar uit haar gezicht. Het zilveren zakhorloge lichtte op, en zoog toen, tot Janes grote ontzetting, de geest op. Poef -- Claire Doolittle was weg. Wég. Maar waar was ze heen?³³

Jane staarde naar het zakhorloge en hoopte dat alles goed was met de geest, maar het horloge beefde en schudde en schokte alle kanten op, alsof de geest probeerde te ontsnappen. De agent liet het horloge net zo lang bungelen totdat het niet meer bewoog. Toen leek hij hem naar de rooie te willen gooien, maar op het laatste moment bedacht hij zich en wikkelde het horloge in een lapje stof dat hij in zijn zak stopte.

Het was allemaal zo onheilspellend. “Waar is ze heen? Zit ze in dat ding?” Even verloor Jane haar zelfbeheersing helemaal.

De agent draaide zich om en keek haar indringend aan. “Dus u zag haar wél.”

Verdorie. Sinds de Rode Kamer had Jane zich aan de volgende regels gehouden:

³¹ In the original text it says ‘a fly-on-flypaper situation’, which isn’t a standard phrase. Someone told me about the fairytale of ‘Zwaan-kleef-aan’, which is about a swan that sticks to anyone who touches it. It is a perfect way to describe the situation without resorting to talking about ‘vliegenpapier’.

³² A ‘Bop on the head’ is described as a pedestrian way to indicate what happens to the ghost. This is meant to be a funny way to describe it. When I translated it to ‘een klap op het hoofd’, I was not satisfied, since it sounds so normal. By substituting ‘harses’ for ‘hoofd’ and ‘knal’ for ‘bop’, this problem is solved. It sounds pretty funny and the authors’ commentary fits.

³³ In English, ‘gone’ means that something is no longer there, but it also implies that that thing has travelled to another place, since ‘gone’ is the past perfect tense of ‘to go’. In Dutch, however, this double meaning is not present in the word ‘weg’. Therefore, I have chosen to extend the next sentence into ‘Maar waar was ze heen?’ to make this sentence clearer.

Regel 1. Ze mocht nooit iemand vertellen dat ze geesten kon zien. Nooit. Of. Te. Nimmer.³⁴

Regel 2. Ze mocht nooit contact maken of spreken met een geest in het bijzijn van een levend iemand.

Regel 3. Hoe groot de verleiding ook was, of hoe interessant de geest, ze had zich te houden aan regel 1 en 2.

“Nee, ik -- ik heb haar niet gezien,” stamelde Jane. “Geen geest, bedoel ik. Ik heb niks gezien.”

De agent keek haar met samengeknepen aan. “Wie bent u?”

“Niemand, meneer.”

“Natuurlijk bent u wel iemand,” reageerde hij. “U bent overduidelijk een ziener. En u bent ergens vandaan gekomen. Waarvandaan?” Hij had zijn notitieboekje weer vast. Jane voelde een vlaag van paniek. Ondanks dat ze zich strikt hield aan haar regels omtrent geesten (al waren het eerder richtlijnen), was ze niet goed in liegen.

“Ik verzeker u, meneer, dat ik het opmerken niet waard ben,” zei ze, ook al weerhield dat hem er niet van om een opmerking over haar neer te krabbelen in zijn boekje³⁵. “Neemt u me niet kwalijk, maar ik ben echt erg laat.”

³⁴ ‘Never ever’ is a standard colloquial phrase in English that does not have a direct equivalent in Dutch. In recent years, ‘never nooit’ is sometimes used, and even though it is also colloquial, it is also a very anachronistic phrase which I did not feel comfortable using here.

³⁵ In the source text this is a pun: “I assure you, sir, I am no one worth noting,” she said, although this did nothing to stop his obvious noting of her in his notebook.” (pp. 26) It is based on the two meanings of the word ‘noting’. I made it a pun in Dutch too, but in Dutch more words are needed to convey the same meaning, so the sentence is a bit longer.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I sought to answer the following question:

Which translation problems regarding humor arise when translating the Young Adult novel My Plain Jane and what are possible and desirable solutions for these problems?

Translation strategy

My priority while translating MPJ was to produce a translation that would give young readers the desire to read Bronte's classic novel *Jane Eyre*. To achieve this, I chose to translate as closely to the source text as possible, especially in the case of allusions to *Jane Eyre*. Consequently, my translation strategy was foreignizing.

Translation problems

The translation problems that I encountered while translating the humorous instances in MPJ were often the result of my goal of preserving allusions to *Jane Eyre*. These allusions to the classic novel can only be funny if recognized as such. This made translation difficult, as *Jane Eyre* is less well known in the Netherlands, especially for young people who often are not taught about the book in school. Translating the allusions in Dutch was certain to be less humorous. This was problematic because these allusions are thematically significant since MPJ is a parody of *Jane Eyre*.

The same was the case for allusions to pop culture. These allusions presented an added challenge because they are generally recognizable only in English, especially since media is often presented in English with Dutch subtitles in the Netherlands. Similarly, wordplay caused problems because it is very dependent on a similarity between forms. These forms cannot always be translated literally into Dutch. Likewise, irony is a very subtle form of humor, and is present throughout the book. Unlike the other instances of humor, however, wordplay did not pose many translation problems. English and Dutch culture are not very far apart, which makes irony recognizable to Dutch readers. The informal tone of the style, however, was sometimes hard to translate. Dutch one often needs more words than English does to communicate an idea, and Dutch has fewer synonyms than English does.

Possible and desirable solutions

With respect to the research question presented in this thesis, there are many ways to translate the humorous instances in MPJ. However, the structural differences between the types of humor require diverse solutions.

I found that Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor provided necessary insight into the inner workings of humor. My initial intent was to use this model for translation; however, this was not possible because the GTVH lacks the specific tools needed for the different kinds of humor present in MPJ.

For allusions, Leppihalme (1997) provided a useful overview of possible translation strategies. I found that for my purposes of preserving recognizable references, the strategies concerned with adding guidance within the text were most useful, as this strategy helps to clearly mark the text as an allusion to another work. Such guiding texts signal to the reader that there is an extra layer of meaning to be discovered. Often, I had to conclude that it was not possible to preserve the same level of recognizability. This diminished the humorous effect of the allusion. In these cases, I compensated for the lack of direct reference by contrasting the historical and modern dimensions of the novel. For example, by adding more old-fashioned words into the text in order to invoke images of *Jane Eyre's* era. In the end, I must agree with Zabalbeascoa that the translator must let him or herself be guided by their own assessment of the importance of a humorous element to the text as a whole. Beyond that, the translator should be free to choose the strategy that is right for the text.

The allusions to pop culture exhibited the same problems as those to *Jane Eyre*. However, they occurred more infrequently and generally consisted of only a single sentence. Most of these allusions are well-known in the Netherlands in their English form, as they are famous taglines from popular movies. Translating them to Dutch would result in taking away most of their recognizability, and perhaps even causing the reader who recognizes part of the translation to become annoyed. For these allusions, I first determined their thematic significance. If they were not thematically significant, I translated them to Dutch. In the end, the translator must determine what the best translation strategy is for each individual case. Because I chose to employ a foreignization model, I deemed it undesirable to substitute allusions from the target culture. As mentioned above, MPJ is deeply embedded in England and English literature. As a result, to substitute a Dutch allusion for the original English one would be inappropriate.

In the case of wordplay, Delabastita (1996) proposes several possible translation strategies. Given my goal of preserving as much of the humor as possible in my translation, I concluded that for my purposes, only the strategies that preserved puns were viable. Fortunately, in my translation, I was able to preserve the original sense of each of the puns in the text. The wordplay in MPJ is mostly thematically inconsequential, but it remains an element that causes amusement and adds to the lighthearted tone of the novel. Humor is imbedded deeply in MPJ. However, in the end, the novel can be interpreted as a simple adventure book by an unobservant reader and still be enjoyable to the reader. As a result,

compensation of kind (with a different humorous element) would also have been a viable translation strategy for the instances of wordplay.

Pelsmaekers & Van Besien (2002) proposed an important model for translating irony: preserving the verbal cues. Since these cues were easy to translate in MPJ, irony did not pose many translation problems. Irony was, however, present throughout the book, both in the plot and the style. Analyzing irony gave insight into how it functioned in the text, which is something that the translator needs to be aware of. The best way to translate irony in MPJ turned out to be to make sure the markers of irony stayed intact. In my translation, I mostly encountered repetition and hyperbole. Since these rhetoric devices are language-independent, I could easily preserve them in the target text.

In conclusion, translating the humor in MPJ requires diverse approaches. First, the translator must understand the key aspects of the types of humor found in the novel. Using this knowledge, the translator can then choose the appropriate approach to translation. In my case, I prioritized preserving as much of the original humor as I could. This influenced the strategies I chose. For a translator with a different translation objective, different translation strategies will come into play.

Writing this thesis was a difficult process, but a true labor of love. My appreciation for *My Plain Jane* is as strong as ever and I look forward to the next book in the series!

Anneke Voerman,
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Appendix: source texts

Prologue

You may think you know the story.

Oh, heard that one, have you? Well, we say again: you may think you know the story. By all accounts it's a good one: a penniless, orphaned young woman becomes a governess in a wealthy household, catches the eye of the rich and stern master, and (sigh) falls deeply in love. It's all very passionate and swoonworthy, but before they can be married, a—gasp!—terrible treachery is revealed. Then there's fire and despair, some aimless wandering, starvation, a little bit of gaslighting, but in the end, the romance works out. The girl (Miss Eyre) gets the guy (Mr. Rochester). They live happily ever after. Which means everybody's happy, right?

Um . . . no. We have a different tale to tell. (Don't we always?) And what we're about to reveal is more than a simple reimagining of one of literature's most beloved novels. This version, dear reader, is true. There really was a girl. (Two girls, actually.) There was, indeed, a terrible treachery and a great fire. But throw out pretty much everything else you know about the story. This isn't going to be like any classic romance you've ever read.

It all started, if we're going to go way, way back, in 1788 with King George III. The king had always been able to see ghosts. No big deal, really. He didn't find them frightening in the least. Sometimes he even had amusing conversations with long-deceased courtiers and unfairly beheaded queens who were floating about the palace grounds.

But one day, disaster struck. The king was walking in the garden when a mischievous ghost rattled the branches of a nearby tree.

"Who's there?" called the king, because, as it happened, he was without his spectacles.

"Look at me," answered the troublesome ghost in its most stately voice. "I'm the King of Prussia!"

The king immediately dropped into a bow. Quite coincidentally, he had been expecting a visit from the King of Prussia. "I am most pleased to meet you, Your Highness!" he exclaimed.

Then he tried to shake the tree's hand.

This, again, would have been no big deal, but for the dozen or so lords and ladies who had accompanied the king on his walk in the garden, who didn't see the ghost, of course, only the king mistaking a tree for royalty. From that moment on, poor George was referred to as "Mad King George," a title he greatly resented.

So George assembled a team made up of every kind of person he thought could help him be rid of these irksome ghosts: priests who specialized in exorcisms, doctors with some knowledge of the occult, philosophers, scientists, fortune-tellers, and anybody, in general, who dabbled in the supernatural.

And that's how the Royal Society for the Relocation of Wayward Spirits was established.

In the years that followed, the Society, as it came to be called, functioned as a prominent and well-respected part of English life. If there was something strange in your neighborhood, you could, um, write the Society a letter, and they would promptly send an agent to take care of it.

Fast-forward right past the reign of George IV, to William IV ascending England's throne. William was practical. He didn't believe in ghosts. He considered the Society to be nothing more than a collection of odious charlatans who had been pulling the wool over the eyes of his poor disturbed predecessors for many years. Plus it was a terrible drain on the taxpayers' dime (er, shilling). So almost as soon as he was officially crowned king, William cut the Society out of the royal budget. This led to his infamous falling-out and subsequent feud with Sir Arthur Wellesley, aka the Duke of Wellington, aka the leader and Lord President of the RWS Society, which was now underfunded and under-respected.

This brings us to the real start of our story: northern England, 1834, and the aforementioned penniless, orphaned girl. And a writer. And a boy with a vendetta.

Let's start with the girl.

Her name was Jane.

Chapter 1: Charlotte

There was no possibility of taking a walk through the grounds of Lowood school without hearing the dreadful and yet utterly exciting news: Mr. Brocklehurst had been—gasp!—murdered. The facts were these: Mr. Brocklehurst had come for one of his monthly “inspections.” He'd started right off by complaining about the difficulty of running a school for impoverished children, the way said children were always, for whatever reason, annoyingly asking for more food—more, sir, please may I have some more? Then he'd settled down by the fire in the parlor, devoured the heaping plate of cookies that Miss Temple had so kindly offered him, and promptly keeled over in the middle of afternoon tea. Poisoned. The tea, evidently, not the cookies. Although if he'd been poisoned by the cookies the girls at Lowood school felt it would have served him right.

The girls didn't shed so much as a tear over Mr. Brocklehurst. While he'd been in charge they'd been very cold and very hungry, and a great many of them had died of the Graveyard Disease. (There are many terms for this particular illness over the course of

history: the Affliction, consumption, tuberculous, etc., but during this period the malady was most often referred to as “the Graveyard Disease,” because if you were unlucky enough to catch it, that’s where you were headed. Anyway, back to Mr. Brocklehurst.) Mr. Brocklehurst had believed that it was good for the soul to have only burnt porridge to eat. (He meant the poverty-stricken, destitute soul, that is; the dignified, upper-class soul thrived, he found, on roast beef and plum pudding. And cookies, evidently.) Since Mr. Brocklehurst’s untimely demise, conditions at the school had already improved tremendously. The girls unanimously agreed: whoever had killed Mr. Brocklehurst had done them a great service.

But who *had* killed Mr. Brocklehurst?

On this subject, the girls could only speculate. So far nobody—not the local authorities nor Scotland Yard—had been able to uncover the culprit.

“It was Miss Temple,” Charlotte heard a girl say as she crossed the gardens. Katelyn was her name. “She served the tea, didn’t she?”

“No, it was Miss Scatcherd,” argued Victoria, her friend. “I heard she had a husband once, Miss Scatcherd did, who died suspiciously.”

“That’s just a rumor,” said Katelyn. “Who’d marry Miss Scatcherd with a face like hers? I still say it was Miss Temple.”

Victoria shook her head. “Miss Temple wouldn’t hurt a fly. She’s so sweet-natured and quiet.”

“Oh, tosh,” Katelyn said. “Everyone knows it’s the quiet ones who you have to watch out for.”

Charlotte smiled. She collected rumors the way some girls liked to accumulate dolls, recording the juicier details into a small notebook she kept. (Rumors were the one commodity that Lowood had in spades.) If the rumor were good enough, perhaps she’d compose a story about it later, to tell to her sisters at bedtime. But the death of Mr. Brocklehurst was much better than mere gossip passed around by a gaggle of teenage girls.

It was a genuine, bona fide mystery.

The very best kind of story.

Once outside the walled gardens of Lowood, Charlotte pulled her notebook from her pocket and set off into the woods beyond the school at a brisk pace. It was difficult to walk and write at the same time, but she had long ago mastered this skill. Nothing so insignificant as getting from one destination to another should impede her writing, of course, and she knew the way by heart.

It’s the quiet ones who you have to watch out for. That was quite a good line. She’d have to work it into something later.

Chapter 2: Jane

She did not belong here. She lowered her head, slyly pinched her nose to shut out the dreadful man smells, and barreled through the crowd toward the bar. (At least, Jane would call it barreling. We would describe it as delicately weaving.) At her approach the barkeep glanced up.

“Can I help you, miss?” he asked. “Are you lost?”

“No,” she said hoarsely. “No, at least I don’t think I’m lost. Is this the . . . establishment . . . where . . .”

“Where what?” asked the barkeep. “Speak up. I can’t hear you.”

Her corset felt horribly tight. (It was. That was rather the point of corsets.)

“Here. On the house.” The barkeep poured a glass of brandy and slid it over. For a moment Jane looked utterly scandalized that he should offer her such a thing. Then she snatched up the glass and took a sip. The liquid fire seared down her esophagus. She gasped and put the glass down. “Is this the place where the—”

She had just started to pronounce the word ghost when an unearthly shriek filled the room. Jane jerked her gaze upward to behold a woman in a white nightdress hovering in the air above the bar. The woman’s hair was raven black, floating all around her head like she was caught in an underwater current. Her skin was almost entirely translucent, but her eyes glowed like coals.

She was perhaps the most beautiful ghost Jane had ever seen. And Jane had seen her share of ghosts.

“Just ask your question, miss,” the barkeep was saying, his eyes still fixed on Jane. “I haven’t got all night, you know.”

He obviously didn’t see the ghost.

“Never mind.” Jane took another sip of the brandy and backed away from the bar to better regard the unhappy spirit.

“Where did they take him?” the ghost moaned. “Where did they take my husband?”

Jane felt a tug of pity for the woman.

“Where is he?” cried the ghost.

How awful, Jane thought, to be parted from one’s true love, to be so cruelly severed from one’s other half, like losing a part of your very soul. It was terrible. But also . . . terribly romantic.

“I know he’s here somewhere!” shrieked the ghost. “He always is. I’ve got a few things to say to him, I’ll tell you what. That good-for-nothing Billy-born-drunk!”

Oh. Oh, dear.

The ghost raised her arm and swatted at Jane's brandy glass. It went flying, whizzing past Jane's left ear, and crashed into the back wall.

"Cricum jiminy!" exclaimed the barkeep, because he had obviously noticed the flight of the brandy glass. "The Shrieking Lady's back!" He glanced up at the clock on the wall. "Right on schedule."

"Not worth a rap!" bellowed the ghost. "The boozer!" She swept around the room in a whoosh of cold wind and then back to the bar, knocking the clock off the wall for good measure. "The muck snipe!"

"Where's the blooming Society?" the barkeep groaned. "They're supposed to be here."

"I know you're hiding that ratbag!" The Shrieking Lady grabbed the bottle of brandy and lobbed it at the barkeep's head. Her aim was true. Down he went, without another word.

This wouldn't do at all. Jane ducked so that she would be less of a target, and crawled and slid and scurried until she was safely tucked away behind the bar, where she could use the unconscious barkeep as a shield. (Always thinking of others, that Jane.) The hem of her dress was sticking to the booze-soaked floor, which was unfortunate, but unpreventable at this point.

She peered around the incapacitated barkeep to watch the ghastly scene continue to unfold. The Shrieking Lady kept demanding to see her degenerate husband, all the while hurling things about the room. The bar patrons were cursing and bumping into one another in their haste to steer clear of the ghost, although they didn't seem to be particularly interested in vacating the pub. They were probably used to it.

What a mess, thought Jane glumly as the Shrieking Lady sent a huge jar of pickled eggs crashing to the floor. By now she was feeling markedly less pity for the woman. This ghost is definitely troublesome, she concluded. So where was the blooming—oh dear, pardon her French—Society?

At that exact moment, as if her thoughts had conjured him, a man in a black mask jumped onto a table in the center of the room. He took a small object out of his pocket and threw it against the wall.

It exploded with a flash and a bang.

The crowd stilled. Then all faces turned to stare in open-mouthed silence at the masked man.

Jane caught herself staring, too, her breath catching—although, again, that could have just been her corset. She shoved the barkeep aside to get a better look.

The agent was a young man—even wearing the mask, that much was clear—although Jane wouldn't call him a boy, either. Most of the men of this era had a mustache or, at the very least, sideburns, but he had neither. Jane wouldn't call him handsome. (In the

pre-Victorian age, a truly handsome man should be pale—because being out in the sun was for peasants—with a long, oval-shaped face, a narrow jaw, a small mouth, and a pointy chin. We know. We can't believe it, either.) This young man's jaw was decidedly square, and his hair was too long. But he was obviously of the upper class, wearing a fine wool coat and expensive-looking leather gloves.

"Everybody out!" he shouted, and Jane ducked behind the bar.

The crowd immediately exited in an orderly fashion. The room was now empty save for another masked man, this one younger than the first, definitely a boy, and wearing a much shabbier suit. Apparently they came in pairs.

The one with the exploding thing jumped down off the table.

"Now pay close attention," he said to the second agent. "First we clear the room. Then we confirm the identity of the spirit."

The spirit. Jane had almost forgotten. She glanced up to see the ghost. The Shrieking Lady had long since stopped shrieking, too busy staring at the agents.

The one in charge produced a small, black leather-bound notebook from an inner pocket of his coat, and a pencil. He opened the book gently, in a way that reminded Jane of Charlotte, and turned to a marked page.

"Tell me your name, spirit," he directed at the ghost, sounding almost bored.

The Shrieking Lady pressed her back against the ceiling but refused to answer. The other agent, the short one with the mop of red hair and glasses—which Jane noticed he wore over his mask—stepped forward. "You should really answer him," he said, looking at the ghost. "Please."

The one in charge shushed the redhead. He turned to the ghost again. "You are Claire Doolittle, are you not?"

"I lost him," the ghost whispered. She sounded suddenly forlorn. "They took him."

"Took who?" The agent consulted his notebook. "Your husband? He was thrown into debtors' prison, if I'm not mistaken. A gambling problem."

The ghost swayed from left to right, but said nothing "I lost him," the ghost whispered. She sounded suddenly forlorn. "They took him." "Took who?" The agent consulted his notebook. "Your husband? He was thrown into debtors' prison, if I'm not mistaken. A gambling problem."

The ghost swayed from left to right, but said nothing.

The agent glanced down at his notebook again. "His name was Frances Doolittle."

"Frank," the ghost sneered. "He was a hornswoggler."

"Frank," said the agent, jotting that down. "Hornswoggler." He reached into his pocket again and drew out a silver pocket watch. "All right," he said to the second agent, "now observe this closely. When capturing a spirit—"

The ghost let out a wail so loud and so mournful that Jane's stomach twisted with a new wave of pity. Then the Shrieking Lady snatched the watch from the agent's grasp. At least that's what she tried to do, but failed, as the watch passed through her insubstantial hand and clattered onto the floor.

The next events happened in quick succession:

The agent in charge reached for the pocket watch on the floor.

The ghost sensed an escape window and darted downward from the ceiling.

"She flees!" cried the redhead.

The agent in charge leapt nimbly through the air and landed beside the ghost. "Get the watch! It's—" But he couldn't finish the order because the redhead clumsily lunged forward and dove to tackle the ghost, but instead of tackling her, he—naturally—flew right through her and landed in a pile next to Jane's hiding place behind the bar.

At which point Jane shot to her feet.

All eyes fell on Jane, including the ghost's.

"Uh, good evening." Jane waved. "I was, um . . . sleeping . . . sweeping . . . then sleeping."

A moment of complete silence passed. Nobody moved, except the redheaded one, who groaned and rubbed his temple. But the ghost began to drift purposefully toward Jane.

"Sleeping," the first agent said skeptically.

"I . . . I . . ." Jane stammered. "I was drunk. From the drinking of . . . the brandy."

"Right."

By now, the Shrieking Lady was uncomfortably close to Jane, who tried with all her might to pretend she couldn't see the wayward spirit.

"Hello," the ghost said.

Jane could feel the masked man's eyes on hers. She quickly glanced at the ceiling. A table. The painting on the wall. Anywhere but at the ghost.

"You are so beautiful," the ghost breathed.

Jane's cheeks went red. She never knew how to answer to this, mostly because living persons had been telling her all her life how very plain she was.

What a commonplace girl.

And . . .

Oh dear. I do hope she can secure a position . . . somewhere.

And . . .

Oh goodness. How unexceptional. (She always wondered why, if she was so unexceptional, did people feel the need to comment on it?)

To ghosts, however, she was the epitome of beauty.

This left Jane to believe that something was seriously askew in the afterlife.

“You’re so like my Jamie,” the Shrieking Lady continued. “With the sun setting behind him.” Jane didn’t know who this Jamie person was, but the dead woman obviously felt entirely different about him than she had about her husband. “A soft breeze ruffling his red hair,” she cooed.

Jane’s hand, almost of its own accord, reached up and brushed away a few strands of her unexceptional hair from her unexceptional eyes, as she tried desperately, tenaciously, to ignore the ghost.

The agent in charge glanced from Jane to the ghost and back again, his head tilted to one side.

“Oh my, would you look at the time.” Jane gestured to where, until a few moments ago, the clock had been hanging on the wall. “I must go.”

The dratted ghost breezed even closer. Jane had seen this type before. This could turn into a fly-on-flypaper situation. Which she could not let happen now.

She took another two steps back. The ghost floated two steps forward. “I’ve never seen anything so lovely,” she said in a sigh. “You’re truly radiant.” She wrapped her arms about Jane.

Jane smiled nervously at the men. “I wouldn’t want to interrupt your important work. So I will just stand here. Not moving.”

The agent in charge frowned at Jane in a puzzled way. Then he bent and picked up the pocket watch from the floor. He walked cautiously toward Jane and the ghost. When he reached the apparition he whispered, “Spirit, you are hereby relocated.”

“What are you doing?” Jane asked.

He didn’t answer. Instead he raised the pocket watch high into the air and bopped the ghost on the head with it.

(We understand, reader, this is an extremely pedestrian way to describe something, this “bopping on the head.” But after numerous revisions and several visits with a thesaurus, that really is the most adequate description. He bopped it on the head.)

A frigid blast of air blew Jane’s hair from her face. The silver pocket watch glowed, and then, to Jane’s horror, sucked the ghost in. Poof—Claire Doolittle was gone. Gone. But where?

Jane stared at the pocket watch, hoping the ghost was all right, but the watch vibrated and shook and jerked away like the ghost was trying to escape. The agent dangled the watch by its chain until it stilled. Then he made a move to toss it to the redhead, but at the last moment seemed to think better of it, and wrapped the watch in a scrap of fabric before returning it to his pocket.

It was all so sinister. “Where did she go? Is she in there?” For a moment Jane completely forgot herself.

The agent turned to look at her sharply. "So you *did* see her."

Drat. Ever since the Red Room, Jane had operated by the following set of rules:

Rule #1. Never tell anyone that she could see ghosts. Never. Ever. Ever.

Rule #2. Never interact with or speak to a ghost in the presence of a living person.

Rule #3. No matter how tempted she was, no matter how interesting the ghost, no matter how pressing the situation seemed to be, refer to rules #1 and #2.

"No, I—I didn't see her," Jane stammered. "It, I mean. I saw nothing."

The agent narrowed his eyes. "Who are you?"

"No one, sir."

"You're obviously someone," he countered. "You're a seer, at the very least. And you came from somewhere. Where?" His notebook was in his hand again. Jane felt a surge of panic. In spite of her strict adherence to the rules concerning ghosts (which were more like guidelines, really), she was not a very good liar.

"I assure you, sir, I am no one worth noting," she said, although this did nothing to stop his obvious noting of her in his notebook. "If you'll excuse me, I'm very late."