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Intertextuality in Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman's *Good Omens* as an Issue for a Translator on the Example of its Polish Translation by Juliusz Wilczur Garztecki and Jacek Gałązka (*Dobry omen*)

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Abstract. This article analyzes intertextual elements in *Good Omens*, a novel by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman, and compares the original English text with its Polish translation, *Dobry omen*, by Julisz Wilczur Garztecki and Jacek Gałązka. The study focuses on the use of Christian mythology, British and American pop culture, and satire in the source text, examining how these elements are rendered for a Polish-speaking audience and how their reception may diverge from the original intent. The findings suggest that *Dobry omen* prioritizes fidelity to the source text over adherence to the prevailing translation norms, although the applied strategies appear inconsistent.

Key words: intertextuality, translation, Neil Gaiman, Terry Pratchett, satire, *Good Omens*

1. INTRODUCTION

While translation studies has long explored concepts such as equivalence, fidelity, and the translator's role, comparatively little attention has been given to intertextual elements and their impact on cultural exchange, with some of the scholars to raise this issue being Risto Jukko in *Culture, Translation, and Intertextuality An Exploratory Re-reading of Cultural-religious Southern Elements in William Faulkner's 'Light in August' and its Translations in Finnish* (2016) and Ritva Leppihalme in *Culture Bumps, An Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions* (1997). The name "intertextuality" was coined in the 1960s by Julia Kristeva and it was welcomed in the scholarly community with such an enthusiasm that its meaning began to expand to the point where it turned into more of an umbrella term. The basis of the idea is that every text has been influenced by other texts, and so a certain relationship exists between them. Intertextuality, especially in regard to translation, is therefore inherently tied to culture. Thus, analyzing how intertextual references can be rendered in the target language also entails examining

which cultural elements are shared between the source and target cultures – and which are not. This is exemplified by mythology and folklore, which are frequent sources of intertextuality. Their culture-specific nature makes them particularly challenging to translate and intriguing to analyze. Intertextuality can also be approached from a different, functional perspective, focusing on the purpose it serves within the text. One such purpose is humor, particularly in genres like satire, where intertextuality often consists of mocking references to the subject. Although intertextuality is a common literary device, these two particular approaches are characteristic of Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, authors of the novel *Good Omens*.

This article examines intertextuality from a translatological perspective, using *Good Omens* and its Polish translation *Dobry omen*, by Juliusz Wilczur Garztecki and Jacek Gałązka, as a case study. The analysis first identifies the intertextual elements in the source text and then examines the strategies employed in their translation into Polish. The excerpts selected for this analysis are primarily those in which the intertextual elements relate to the novel's mythological background and its use of humor, though they are not limited to these aspects, given the novel's adaptive nature and its deep roots in popular culture. Some of the excerpts are focused on the names of the characters, which contain references. The selected intertextual elements are analyzed from two perspectives: the culture-based perspective, which highlights similarities and differences between source and target cultures, and the functional perspective, in which intertextuality is treated as a tool serving a specific purpose within the text. The study focuses on selected passages containing prominent intertextual references, including those rendered in particularly unique ways. Additionally, the translation strategies are categorized and compared in order to assess how effectively the Polish translation preserves the meaning, effect, and context of the source text. The analysis also examines the consistency of the two translators and how their choices relate to prevailing tendencies in the translation community, particularly the translators' invisibility, a problem which was analyzed by Venuti in *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995), and omitting references, as suggested by Leppihalme in "Allusions and Their Translation" (1992). The humorous excerpts are classified according to Low's (2011) methodology described in "Translating jokes and puns."

2. *GOOD OMENS* AS AN INTERTEXTUAL NOVEL

In *Good Omens*, the presence of mythological elements is a fundamental component of the narrative. Christian mythology is embedded into the plot, settings and, most of all, characters. Amy Lee Clemons (2017, 86) remarks that the sequence of references to Christian mythology is rather complex – although the novel can be seen as an adaptation of *The Book of Revelation* by John of Patmos, it also mirrors Richard Donner's 1976 *The Omen*, inspired by *The Book of Revelation* as well. The characters of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the Beast, demons and angels, are all borrowed from Christian mythology, with the most important figure being the Antichrist, who plays a central role in both *Good Omens* and *The Omen*. The references to *The Omen* mostly have to do with the early stages of plot. In both works there is a character of an American diplomat and his wife who are having a baby. In *The Omen* they are handed a newborn Antichrist named Damien instead of their own child. Similarly, in *Good Omens* they are supposed to

receive the Antichrist, but as a result of a mistake the two babies end up switched, with the American couple getting a regular baby and the Antichrist going to an average British couple, who names him Adam. Additionally, the plot is approached in a way which presents the events depicted in *The Omen* as the desired outcome. It is clear in multiple scenes, for example when one of the sisters at the hospital suggests names for the Antichrist:

> 'Have you picked a name for him yet?' said Sister Mary archly.
> 'Hmm?' said Mr Young. 'Oh. No, not really. If it was a girl it would have been Lucinda after my mother. Or Germaine. That was Deirdre's choice.'
> 'Wormwood's a nice name,' said the nun, remembering her classics. 'Or Damien. Damien's very popular.' (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 34)

The entire world in *Good Omens* is preparing for the coming of the Antichrist in the same way as presented in *The Omen*, but the actual Antichrist is not the child everyone suspects. From this perspective *Good Omens* can be seen as not only an adaptation, but even a parody of *The Omen*.

Intertextuality appears in *Good Omens* in a way which can be seen as a bridge – it connects the sacred and the profane but also the past and the contemporary. The mythological perspective here focuses on certain aspects of Christianity, such as eschatology, angelology, demonology and the teachings about the Apocalypse, which had been rooted in the pre-Christian religions. What makes the novel's approach unique, and connects it to the human and the profane, is the humor. Clemons (2017, 86) explains that the key difference between *The Omen* and *Good Omens* lies in the shift of focus "from the spectacle of horror to the absurdity of the prophecy". The prophecy is a crucial aspect of the novel, and one of the main subjects of the satire. Everything that could possibly go wrong in bringing about the Apocalypse does go wrong – but none of it actually stops it from happening. The final events still unfold, just as foretold, but in a way that becomes absurdly twisted and nearly impossible to predict.

Prophecies are a recurring theme in the novel, and they are manifested in three major ways. Firstly, with the general realization of the predictions from *The Book of Revelation.* Secondly, with a fictional book, parts of which appear in the novel, written by Agnes Nutter (an ancestor of one of the characters) titled *The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch*, predicting all of the events of the novel with the unique wording of a prophet who saw the future with no understanding of what the world will look like. Thirdly, what can easily be overlooked is that, during the discussion of when the Earth was created, the text includes a fictional astrological prediction for Libras (since the Earth turned out to be a Libra) on the day the Antichrist was born and misplaced, which reads as follows:

> LIBRA. 24 September-23 October.
> You may be feeling run down and always in the same old daily round. Home and family matters are highlighted and are hanging fire. Avoid unnecessary risks. A friend is important to you. Shelve major decisions until the way ahead seems clear. You may be vulnerable to a stomach upset today, so avoid salads. Help could come from an unexpected quarter. (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 14)

The narrator sums it up and adds "This was perfectly correct on every account except for the bit about the salads" (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 14).

There is a constant tension between the prophecies, which are often seen as inevitable in literature (and in societal perception as well), and the lighthearted dismissal of them, even as they are being fulfilled. The characters present varying approaches to prophecies, with figures such as Anathema Device following them religiously or Newton Pulsifer who, being a fearful opportunist, offers no resistance when a prophecy suggests he spend the night with Anathema. At the other end of the spectrum stand three characters who otherwise share little in common: the demon Crowley, who is notorious for experimenting how strongly rules can be bent; the angel Aziraphale, following him apprehensively; and the Antichrist Adam, who ultimately refuses to fulfill the prophecy, consequently defying his father – the Devil himself.

This unique clash of prophecies and absurdity is not something accidental. Daniel Scott presents the phenomenon in the following way:

> *Good Omens* uses its theological backdrop to satirise modern society and humanity in general ... *Discworld* uses a roughly pseudo-Tolkienesque fantasy world to hold a mirror up to our own, whereas *Good Omens* uses the *Book of Revelation* and therefore the idiom of the prophecy fiction narrative. ... *Good Omens* invites its readers to re-examine the presuppositions of its scriptural hypotext, the 'parole' of its fantasy fiction. Pratchett and Gaiman achieve this effect by using the fantastic 'langue' – the basic structures inherent to the fantasy tradition, many of which it shares with the satirical and carnivalesque traditions – to implicitly question Revelation's validity and applicability to our real world. By using it as a fantasy hypotext, *Good Omens* effectively relegates Christian mythology to the realm of the unreal from the outset. The mythological, religious and eschatological elements thereby become subordinated to reality in that they are used to confirm a reality in which they do not exist. (2018, 74)

Scott uses the phrase "our real world" to describe the setting of the novel. Although the intent is clear, such words lose relevance for the readers with every passing year. Furthermore, the setting is divided between London and a small village in Britain, in an unspecified time period that can be estimated, based on the technology present, to be the early 1990s. The children make references to David Attenborough – indicating the cultural context of the setting. Meanwhile, the eldritch creatures, including angels and demons, use modern technology such as cell phones and drive cars, blending the supernatural with the contemporary world. One of the main characters introduced earlier – a demon named Crowley – listens to *Best of Queen* tape in his Bentley when delivering the newborn Antichrist to the hospital. He is also credited for having influenced the creation of M25, a major ring road around London, famous for its traffic:

> In fact, very few people on the face of the planet know that the very shape of the M25 forms the sigil *odegra* in the language of the Black Priesthood of Ancient Mu, and means "Hail the Great Beast, Devourer of Worlds." The thousands of motorists who daily fume their way around its serpentine lengths have the same effect as water on a prayer wheel, grinding out an endless fog of low-grade evil to pollute the metaphysical atmosphere for scores of miles around. It was one of Crowley's better

> achievements. It had taken years to achieve, and had involved three computer hacks, two break-ins, one minor bribery and, on one wet night when all else had failed, two hours in a squelchy field shifting the marker pegs a few but occultly incredibly significant meters. (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 15)

The reality of the created world feels tangible, which is remarkable considering the constant presence of supernatural elements. These are integrated with careful attention to detail, making them seem natural within the setting.

Lucie Housková (2025, 17) remarks that the ability to achieve this effect is a characteristic feature of Gaiman's writing – "he can expertly transform ancient tales to fit into contemporary settings, which in turn creates a sense of timelessness, enabling readers to easily connect with the stories". It may seem that the intertextual elements within the text are also Gaiman's domain. However, such assumption would be wrong on many accounts. Although intertextuality plays an important role in Gaiman's works, it usually provides the underlying structure upon which the plot and characters are built. It is also consistent throughout the text and often crucial in understanding the deeper, subtextual layer of the work. His sources are usually major narratives, often mythological in their nature. On the other hand, Pratchett's use of intertextuality is more frequent – especially in his early novels. From a broad analytic perspective, individual references are less relevant than the overall and the way in which the allusions are arranged and connected by the author. He tends to borrow from various fantasy texts, regardless of their popularity and presence in pop culture, or the academic discourse (Haberkorn 2018, 139). Gideon Haberkorn provided a summary of Pratchett's approach based on two of his earliest *Discworld* novels, *The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic*. According to him, "[t]hese early novels are episodic, picaresque narratives barely held together by the characters of Rincewind and Twoflower, the former a failed wizard, the latter a tourist from the Disc's version of Asia. While these two have goals and motivations, their job is mostly to stumble from one intertextual reference to the next" (Haberkorn 2018, 139). Although it can be argued whether it is a desirable model of a novel, it is undeniably an example of Pratchett's versatility and skill as far as intertextuality is concerned – a topic undertaken in detail by Rzyman (2017) on the example of Pratchett's solo work, the *Discworld* series.

Not only the contents of the novel *Good Omens*, but also its unique authorship can be regarded as an intertextual phenomenon. The two authors are in a constant dialogue and their allusions are constantly cross-referenced and modified, which makes for a fascinating spectacle of two completely different approaches towards intertextuality melting together to create one cohesive and consistent work. Darren Hudson Hick (2014) compared multiple definitions of authorship and eventually concluded that there is an important difference between a work that has been co-authored and a work with multiple authors. He claims that it is a matter of responsibility for the whole: when a work has multiple authors, they are not responsible for parts of it which they did not create. Co-authorship works on an opposite principle – everyone who participated is responsible for the whole (2014, 152). Novels, including *Good Omens*, are most of the time an example of the latter, with the former being a characteristic quality of encyclopedias or collections of essays. Interestingly, the translation of *Good Omens* into Polish, which will be analyzed below, has also been co-authored – by Juliusz Wilczur Gartecki and Jacek Gałązka. There appears to be little to no scholarly literature analyzing this Polish

translation, however online platforms such as Lubimyczytać.pl contain reader reviews which, while not peer-reviewed, offer insight into its reception among Polish readers. Although many readers praise the translation for maintaining the atmosphere of the original, some emphasize the translation mistakes and blame the translators for the chaotic writing, arguably also to be found in the original. Nevertheless, it remains the only Polish translation of *Good Omens* at the time of writing.

3. *GOOD OMENS* AS A TRANSLATOLOGICAL ISSUE

There are several reasons why *Good Omens* is not an easy novel to translate. The two main ones are its extensive use of intertextual references and its humorous, satirical nature. Intertextuality presents a challenge because of its inherent connection with culture, as a reference cannot exist without a context. Newmark defined translation as "Often, though not by any means always, it is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text" (1988, 5). In accordance with this definition translation understood as a form of cultural mediation, usually seeks to recontextualize the text within the target language and culture in a way that evokes a response as close as possible to that of the original. For that reason, the process requires a competent translator who is not only capable of recognizing the intertextual references in the text, but also of predicting the impact such reference will have on the readers from a different culture. More on that topic can be found in Jukko (2016), Kaźmierczak (2019) and Leppihalme (1992). The second major issue – the novel's satirical nature – proves difficult because humor and jokes are often related to either language or culture (Low 2011, 60). In both of these instances the transition from the source language into the target language requires, most of the time, modifications, which would allow the joke to evoke a similar response. This challenge is explored in greater depth by Chiaro (2010) and Venuti (2002), who offer detailed analyses of humor translation.

An additional issue stemming from the intertextual challenge is the fact that in *Good Omens* the country in which the action takes place is a crucial element of the world-building, as the setting is supposed to present a curious mixture of the realistic and the fantastical. This dichotomy can pose many difficulties for a translator, such as a dilemma of whether to domesticize or foreignize the text in the target language. As was explained previously, these contrasting elements are, according to Scott (2018, 74), supposed to make the readers conscious of how Christian mythology, when treated as literal truth, loses relevance in the modern world. For that reason, it is essential to translate the Biblical references clearly, while also preserving the sense of realism, especially in regard to the settings of London and English countryside.

The translation of elements of Christian mythology present in the Bible poses an additional challenge, as the work was originally written in languages foreign to both English and Polish. Nida observes that a major difficulty in Bible translation is that the translator can never be a full participant in the source culture and "not only can the culture not be fully described. but it can most certainly not be reproduced" (1959, 152). Certain words in the original may require lengthy equivalents in the target language, and these equivalents are not universal across languages. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that some Bible translators did not operate on the original text, but rather a preexisting translation. Nevertheless, according to Nida, even translating "directly from

the original languages" does not guarantee an unbiased translation, as most translators are inevitably influenced by their mother tongue (1959, 154). Translating biblical elements from an English text into Polish therefore often involves replacing one imprecise rendering with another, which may have originated in a vastly different cultural and linguistic context, and requires special attention from the translator.

One example of how Christian mythology is present in the text is the process of naming the Antichrist, a scene which has already been quoted above. The nun suggests to Mr Young two names – Damien and Wormwood (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 34). The presence of the name Damien comes from the movie *The Omen*. The second name, Wormwood, refers to a passage from *The Book of Revelation*, saying: "The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many died from the water, because it was made bitter" (Rev. 8:10–11, KJV). In the Polish translations of the Bible the name given to the star is Piołun, the Polish name for this plant. The translators most probably decided that either it is not a noun suited to be a realistic name of a child, or that to the Polish readers it may not be obvious as an Apocalyptic, Devil related name, as they instead presented the name less related to the Apocalypse and more to the Devil – Asmodeusz (Eng. Asmodeus). A later excerpt suggests that they considered not translating the name at all, or at least that Asmodeusz was not the instant choice, as on page 42 the two names are mistakenly recalled again as "Damien i Wormwood," transcribing the original. The same mistake occurred with the character of Sister Mary Loquacious of the Chattering Order of St. Beryl, a nun, who on the page 29 of the Polish translation is referred to as Mary Złotousta (meaning eloquent, silver-tongued), yet on the page 101 becomes Mary Loquacious, same as in the original. However, on the page 112 she becomes Mary Złotousta once again.

An interesting change takes place in the names of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. In the original the names are DEATH, War, Famine and Pollution. The fourth Horsemen replaced Pestilence, apparently after the rise in popularity of antibiotics. The dramatis personae in the Polish translation presents instead characters named ŚMIERĆ, Wojna, Głód and Powietrze (Eng. DEATH, War, Hunger and Air), with a disclaimer added after the fourth one "przeważnie morowe" (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019a, 6) (in Polish *morowe powietrze* is a historical term for plague, suggesting that it is the air that is deadly). The presented translation generated a new joking connection between Pestilence and Pollution, turning the character of Pollution into Air, both polluted and capable of spreading airborne illnesses. It makes use of a rare instance, where wordplay is possible to achieve in Polish but not in English, and seems to be a desirable practice while translating a novel such as *Good Omens*. Nevertheless, later in the text, they are referred to as "Śmierć, Głód, Wojna i Skażenie" (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019a, 294).

In the introductory chapter of the novel, set at the beginning of time in the Garden of Eden, Crowley's name is not yet Crowley, but rather Crawly, as he is the demon who took the shape of a snake to tempt Eve. Only in the following chapters he is referenced to as Crowley, a name which he takes most probably to blend in better as he starts interacting with humans more. His name carries meaning – but only up to a certain point in the timeline, which makes it difficult to classify whether it should be translated or not. Wilczur Garztecki and Gałązka decided to omit that reference, and so the Polish

translation introduces him already as Crowley. Therefore, in the Polish version the change of name does not take place and the wordplay of Crawly, the crawling snake, is omitted. The decision is understandable, as translating the noun and then modifying it into a functional name would not align well with the general attempt to foreignize the content of the novel.

Translating names is a significant topic in translation theory and can be an interesting element in crafting the setting. Bearing in mind the fact that *Good Omens* take place in England, and that this is an important feature of the novel, a dilemma arises with character names signaling their nationality, such as Mr Young, but also other characters whose names are used with the honorific. The decision made by Wilczur Garztecki and Gałązka is vastly inconsistent – in their translation the character's names are sometimes exactly the same, including the English honorific, and sometimes the honorific is translated. Therefore, depending on the scene, Mr Young appears as either Mr Young or Pan Young. Interestingly enough, the former is only present in the narration, never in the dialogues. Moreover, other characters are usually presented with the translated honorific.

Among the cultural references one of the most prominent ones are references to music, similarly as in other Gaiman's novels, such as *American Gods*. In *Good Omens* they begin as soon as the timeline shifts from the beginning of time to eleven years before the main plot. They are mostly centered around Crowley, whose car has a peculiar tendency to turn every tape inside it into a *Best of Queen* tape. Nevertheless, the first musical reference in the novel is neither Queen nor Crowley related. Instead, it is a humorous remark made by the narrator, describing two demon figures, Hastur and Ligur, lurking on a graveyard. The reference here is to Bruce Springsteen's famous album from 1975 titled *Born to Run*:

> Just because it's a mild night doesn't mean that dark forces aren't abroad. They're abroad all the time. They're everywhere.
> They always are. That's the whole point.
> Two of them lurked in the ruined graveyard. Two shadowy figures, one hunched and squat, the other lean and menacing, both of them Olympic-grade lurkers. If Bruce Springsteen had ever recorded 'Born to Lurk', these two would have been on the album cover. (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 14)

Ironically, the album cover does not depict a man running, perhaps because Springsteen was not able to find a model who ran as perfectly as Hastur and Ligur were lurking. Wilczur Garztecki and Gałązka translated this excerpt into:

> Jeśli na dworze jest spokojnie, to w żaden sposób nie należy poddawać się zwodniczej nadziei, że sił ciemności nie ma w pobliżu, bo wyjechały gdzieś do ciepłych krajów. Owszem, tam też są. Wcale nie musiały wyjeżdżać. Ani tam, ani gdzie indziej. Po prostu są wszędzie.
> Zawsze. I w tym cała rzecz.
> Dwie postacie przemykały chyłkiem między zrujnowanymi grobami. Dwa cienie. Jeden zgarbiony i przysadzisty, drugi chudy i budzący grozę. Mistrzowie olimpijscy w skradaniu się i chodzeniu chyłkiem. Gdyby Bruce Springsteen kiedykolwiek nagrał płytę „Urodzony, by chodzić chyłkiem", ci dwaj znaleźliby się na okładce. (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019a, 14)

The title of the album has been translated into Polish, which could be considered a problem, but any reader familiar with Bruce Springsteen's discography would most probably recognize the reference nevertheless, and people who are not familiar with his works can easily check the reference from the provided context clues.

In a scene shortly following the one just analyzed, Crowley is described as listening to a *Best of Queen* tape in his Bentley. "No particularly demonic thoughts were going through his head. In fact, he was currently wondering vaguely who Moey and Chandon were" (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 16). The song which is referenced here is "Killer Queen," by Queen. Moey and Chandon are actually a champagne brand in the song – Moët et Chandon. For a person who is not familiar with elegant sparkling wine brands, or one who just pays them no mind, the brand's name may sound like two names, and naturally it would be confusing to a person listening. In Polish this excerpt reads as follows: "obecnie Crowley wcale nie zaprzątał sobie głowy sprawami par excellence demonicznymi. Prawdę powiedziawszy, leniwie rozważał, kim byli MOEY i CHANDON" (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019a, 16). The names are capitalized, similarly to certain other nouns in the novel, usually grand concepts, such as "good" and "evil". A potential issue with this translation is that Moey and Chandon are not Polish names and may seem confusing to a reader. On the other hand, the joke would be very difficult to convey differently with the Polish phonetics, and additionally it aligns with the general attempt to convey the foreignness of the novel.

The humorous references to music later in the text are not problematic, and can be grouped together, as they follow a similar pattern – a title of a song by Queen and an artist, who is certainly neither Queen nor Freddie Mercury. One such instance occurs during a car ride with Crowley and Aziraphale, when Aziraphale attempts to play some music:

> 'Ah, this is more like it. Tchaikovsky,' said Aziraphale, opening a case and slotting its cassette into the Blaupunkt. ...
> A heavy bass beat began to thump through the Bentley as they sped past Heathrow.
> Aziraphale's brow furrowed.
> 'I don't recognize this,' he said. 'What is it?'
> 'It's Tchaikovsky's "Another One Bites The Dust",' said Crowley, closing his eyes as they went through Slough.
> To while away the time as they crossed the sleeping Chilterns, they also listened to William Byrd's 'We are the Champions' and Beethoven's 'I Want To Break Free'. Neither were as good as Vaughan Williams's 'Fat Bottomed Girls'. (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 85)

The humor in this scene can be classified as neither language nor culture specific, according to Low's methodology (2011, 60), and can be translated easily into the target language. It relies on the juxtaposition of two incongruous elements, in this case popular rock music titles and some of the most famous composers from the past. For that reason, the Polish translation of the excerpt is very similar, which was to be expected:

> – O, to będzie lepsze. Koncert fortepianowy b-moll Czajkowskiego – powiedział anioł, wkładając kasetę do odtwarzacza. ...

> Równe, rytmiczne dudnienie gitary basowej wypełniło pojazd. Mijali Heathrow.
> Azirafal zmarszczył brwi.
> – Co to jest? Nie poznaję!
> – To „Another One Bites the Dust" Czajkowskiego – odparł Crowley, przymykając oczy, gdy przejeżdżali przez Slough.
> Jadąc przez uśpione Chiltern, wysłuchali ponadto „We are the Champions" Williama Byrda oraz „I Want to Break Free" Beethovena, ale żaden utwór nie był tak dobry jak „Fat Bottomed Girls" Vaughna Williamsa. (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019a, 91)

The titles remained in their original English version, as this is the way in which they appear in other countries, and the only thing that was changed is the spelling of the surname Tchaikovsky, as both Tchaikovsky and Czajkowski are transcriptions of the surname from the Cyrillic script into other languages using the Latin script.

Wilczur Garztecki and Gałązka adopted an unusual approach in handling certain references. In contemporary translation, translators typically strive for invisibility, deliberately minimizing the use of footnotes, a problem which was extensively analyzed by Lawrence Venuti in *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995). As a result, some references may become less noticeable, or their source may go unrecognized by the reader, for example in the excerpt from the original:

> It wasn't a dark and stormy night.
> It should have been, but that's the weather for you. For every mad scientist who's had a convenient thunderstorm just on the night his Great Work is finished and lying on the slab, there have been dozens who've sat around aimlessly under the peaceful stars while Igor clocks up the overtime. (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 14)

This passage satirizes the stereotypical Gothic imagery of a mad scientist working with his reliable assistant, and their eventual success at creating an artificial human while the weather is exceptionally gloomy and stormy. While this general satire is clear to most of the readers, no matter the nationality, what may leave some of them puzzled is the character mentioned – Igor. It is a reference to several adaptations of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, as well as other works within the Gothic genre. Although the original novel features neither an assistant nor any character named Igor, this figure has become a recurring element in the cultural portrayal of mad scientists. The assistant – often called Igor – appears in various adaptations, including *Frankenstein* (1931), *Son of Frankenstein* (1939), and *The Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942), though these are just a few of the earliest examples. Over time, Igor has evolved from simply a character into a recognizable archetype. Interestingly, Terry Pratchett later incorporated this archetype into his *Discworld* series. In Pratchett's world, Igor is not a single character, but rather an entire race, blending traits from Frankenstein, his creature – Adam, as well as the stereotypical image of the *Carpe Jugulum*, eight years after the publication of *Good Omens*, and make guest appearances in various novels throughout the series.

The Polish translators made an assumption that the readers of their version of the novel will most likely not be familiar with the character, so they translated this excerpt in the following way:

> Noc wcale nie była ciemna i burzliwa.
> Chociaż właśnie taka powinna być. Ale jest, jaka jest. Zwykle na jednego szalonego naukowca, którego Opus Magnum w rękopisie przesiąka światłością gromu uderzającego w noc zakończenia szatańskiej pracy, przypada około dwunastu tych, którzy siedzą bezczynnie pod rozgwieżdżonym niebem, a Igor nalicza im *overtimy*. (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019a, 14)

The name Igor in the translation has a footnote added, which says "Asystent i służący dr Frankensteina w filmie *Młody Frankenstein*" (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019a, 14), explaining that Igor is an assistant and a servant of dr Frankenstein in the movie *Young Frankenstein*. It references only one of the movies in which the character appears, but the description alongside conveys the general and mostly accurate image of the character even for readers who have never seen this particular movie. *Young Frankenstein* is a parody of earlier works in which Igor appears, which seems to be a good choice – if a reader of *Good Omens*, a satirical novel, is familiar with one of those movies, it is likely to be the one which is also a satire.

The use of footnotes is not limited to clarifying the elements of the novel which may be unfamiliar to Polish readers. They also serve the function of an expanded translation, potentially qualifying as Low's (2011, 60) penultimate method of translating language-specific humor. An example of this can be found in the scene where the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse meet in a café by a motorway. Dressed in Hell's Angels jackets, having arrived on motorbikes, they attract the attention of a group of bikers from the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club, who begin to question their authenticity:

> 'You're Hell's Angels, then?' asked Big Ted, sarcastically. ...
> The four strangers nodded.
> 'What chapter are you from, then?'
> ...
> REVELATIONS, [Death] said. CHAPTER SIX.
> 'Verses two to eight,' added the boy in white, helpfully. (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019b, 264)

The joke relies on wordplay – the chapter is in the context of motorcycle clubs a localized group subordinate to a larger motorcycle club. These chapters operate under the rules and guidelines established by the main club, but they maintain a degree of autonomy within their designated area. The second meaning of chapter is literary, that is one part of a book. Here, the book is the Book of Revelations, as provided by Death, chapter six, verses two to eight, which are the verses introducing one by one the Four Hosemen of the Apocalypse.

Wilczur Garztecki and Gałązka admitted that the joke is too difficult to convey in Polish and omitting it was not an option, so after the word chapter (in Polish kapituła, as the motorcycle related meaning was chosen) they added an asterisk and a footnote, which reads "Nieprzetłumaczalna gra słów. Bandy motocyklowe nazywają się „Kapitułami" – *chapters*. Jest to w języku angielskim słowo wieloznaczne, oznaczające m. in. kapitułę, sekcję większego stowarzyszenia, rozdział w książce, głowicę kolumny itd." (Pratchett and Gaiman 2019a, 277). The footnote explains that the word *chapter* has multiple meanings, and that it is impossible to render this joke into Polish. It lists some of

the meanings, including its use in both motorcycle culture and literature, thus providing context for the upcoming joke about the Book of Revelation. The footnote is vague enough that the reader still has to do the job of figuring out the joke themselves but is provided with all the important information which will aid him in the process.

The use of footnotes throughout the novel, although extensive, does align with the general suggestions for the use of additions in the text as presented by Newmark. According to him there are three typical uses of notes in translation, that is to explain cultural differences, provide additional technical information and explaining linguistic nuances (1988, 91).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The examples discussed above demonstrate a wide range of approaches to translating intertextual references within a single novel. From this perspective, Wilczur Garztecki and Gałązka's translation is certainly unique, as it does not strictly adhere to the conventional rules of novel translation. This can be seen as both a strength and a weakness, and individual instances may be subject to debate. The translation rarely omits references, but this comes at the cost of a noticeable translator presence. For some readers, this may be distracting and immersion-breaking; for others, who wish to experience the content as closely as possible to the original, it may be viewed as an advantage. Similarly, the foreignized setting to some readers may clash with the fantastical tropes and Biblical references.

Pratchett and Gaiman's co-authorship produced a text that is thoroughly intertextual but also, at times, chaotic, with its long-winded sentences, humorous digressions, and large cast of eccentric characters. Contributing to this effect is the frequent use of footnotes, a distinctive feature of Pratchett's writing. In the Polish translation the original footnotes are mixed with the ones provided by the translators. The only distinguishing marker of the latter is a short comment at the end: "translator's note". This aspect contributes negatively to the overall chaos of the text. Nevertheless, the additional footnotes cannot be dismissed as redundant, and their presence can be considered a twofold phenomenon, both beneficial and problematic. Another universally unwelcome flaw of the Polish translation is the lack of consistency. To a less attentive reader, it may create the impression that there are more characters than intended, some of them nonsensical or out of place. Nevertheless, whether this should be attributed to the translator, who made the mistake, or the editor, who did not recognize it as one, is a whole separate issue.

Overall, the translation stands out as a unique example of a work that departs significantly from contemporary translation norms, while also achieving considerable success. Future efforts by translators to render this novel would enable a broader comparative analysis of how the same excerpts are rendered differently depending on the translator. Such study would give an even clearer insight into how intertextuality aids the intercultural exchange, especially in light of the recent screen adaptation of *Good Omens*. Continued research would provide even more insight into intertextuality as a concept and its importance in the literary studies as well as translation studies.

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