



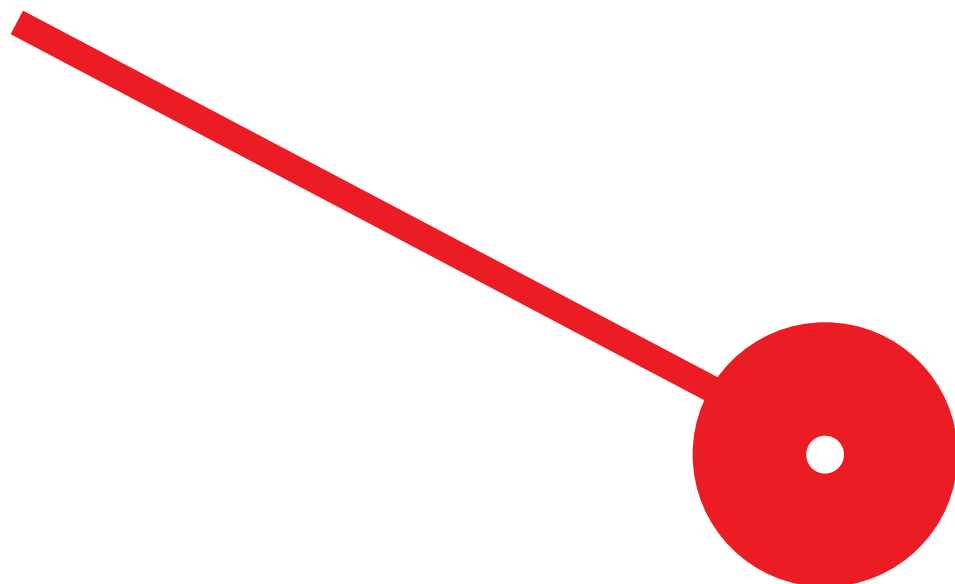
Challenges in Translating Humour and Culture: Comparative Case Study based on *Catch-22*

Pavel Denis Popovici

10/2022

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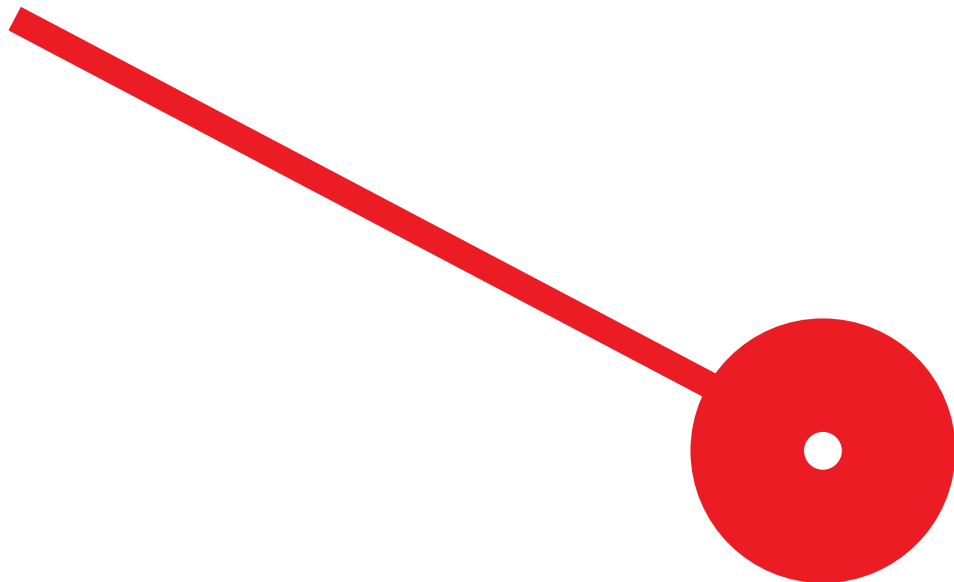
MESTRADO
TRADUÇÃO E INTERPRETAÇÃO ESPECIALIZADAS

Challenges in Translating Humour and Culture: Comparative Case Study based on *Catch-22*

Pavel Denis Popovici

Dissertação de Mestrado apresentada ao Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto para a obtenção do grau de Mestre em Tradução e Interpretação Especializadas, sob orientação da Professora Especialista Laura Tallone

Pavel Denis Popovici. Challenges in Translating Humour and Culture: Comparative Case Study based on *Catch-22*
10/2022



Most of us became interested in humor because of what it could tell us about other subjects.

John Allman

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Resumo

A área do humor foi alvo de estudos ao longo dos anos por diferentes disciplinas pelas peculiaridades e cariz multifacetado que permite que transcenda fronteiras impostas pela academia.

Perante isto, este trabalho tem a intenção de explorar as diferentes perceções que existem do humor e mais especificamente como estas se relacionam com o universo da tradução. Esta dissertação visa apresentar obstáculos e soluções na tradução do humor e verificar quais as eventuais soluções apresentadas pelas traduções em português, espanhol, francês e romeno de um mesmo texto.

A presente dissertação tem como primeiro objetivo analisar a tradução do humor e identificar quais os obstáculos e soluções propostas; em segundo lugar, fazer uma comparação mais específica da tradução de excertos retirados do livro *Catch-22*, redigido em inglês e traduzido em português, espanhol, francês e romeno, para aferir como esses obstáculos foram ultrapassados.

Palavras-chave: Tradução de Humor; Tradução Literária; Cultura; Catch-22;

Abstract

The field of humour has been an object of a high number of studies over the years by different disciplines due to its peculiarities and multifaceted nature, which allows it to cross borders imposed by the academia.

In light of this, the purpose of this research is to investigate the many interpretations of humour and, more particularly, how it ties to the translation universe. The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate challenges and alternatives in the translation of humour, as well as to confirm any variations between translations in Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Romanian of the same text.

The intention of this dissertation is to first analyse the translation of humour and identify what obstacles and solutions were proposed; second, to make a more specific comparison of the translation of excerpts from the novel *Catch-22*, written in English and translated into Portuguese, Spanish, French, and Romanian, in order to determine how obstacles were overcome.

Keywords: Humor Translation; Literary Translation; Culture; *Catch-22*

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List of Abbreviations

ST – Source Text

TT – Target Text

SL – Source Language

TL – Target Language

This dissertation is part of the master's degree in Specialised Translation and Interpreting at the Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto, with the aim of obtaining a master's qualification.

This dissertation has come into being after several brainstorming sessions with Professor Tallone. I confess that initially I was looking for internships and writing a master's thesis was more of a backup plan, but as the deadline to submit a plan started to approach, we opted to talk out what options we had. In the first brainstorming session we compared the ideas we had and what paths we could take. We both concluded that, if I were to write a thesis, my interest was in topics related to fictional literature. Despite this, we were unable to come up with a set topic.

Since it was a race against the clock, after three months of unsuccess in finding a suitable internship, I was ready to move on and find an interesting topic to write about. In the second brainstorming session I had arrived with the idea of comparing subtitles of a comedy series. This is when professor Tallone recommended keeping translation comparison but aim it towards fictional literature, and thus compare the translation of verbal humour of a novel. It was from this moment on that we decided that this would be the topic with which we would continue. However, the only problem was that I did not know any novel that relied on humour, so I requested a book recommendation and Professor Tallone recommended *Catch-22*. After choosing the subject and the novel, all that was left to do was to create a model of what I was going to cover.

In very general terms, the main draft first set that the first chapter would deal with the general theory of humour. I wanted to start by pointing out the origins of humour studies or, at least, theories describing what it was and how it was perceived.

The second chapter would be dedicated to the author and the novel, that is, to present Heller's biography, the socio-political context in which he lived, the novel's characteristics and an overall analysis of the humour in the novel. All this information is meant to check if there are any links between what the topics the novel represents and the times it was written in.

The third chapter would showcase comparisons between the source text and the translations. To these comparisons I would add a critical reflection.

In the fourth chapter I would present the conclusions drawn from the theory and the comparisons.

As time moved on, I made slight modifications to the original draft, without however drifting away from it too much.

Overall, humour will be approached from a historical and philosophical point of view, with a diachronic view from Antiquity. By history and philosophy, we mean historical characters and their perspectives on humour. Some of those perspectives may be based more on belief, like some of those of the ancient philosophers, whereas others may be based on linguistics and the social sciences.

When speaking about humour, and besides the magnitude of the topic, it is possible to rely on two initial facts. First, that humour is universal, and laughter exists in all cultures known to human beings. Since it can be experienced by most, the sound of laughter is set as one of the few non-verbal expressions that remain recognizable from one culture to the other. Second, humour is important for humanity in that it determines who and how we are. Like a mirror, it reflects our personality and the way we deal with our problems (Roberts, 2019, p. 2).

The great classical authors were aware of the relation between humour and health. Aristotle, Cicero and Pliny the Younger, all believed that laughter, under the light and ideals of refined and moderate humours, resulted in pleasure and relaxation (*Ibid.*, p. 9).

During the fourth century B.C, Hippocrates theorised the idea of “humours”, according to which he established that the blood type influences how optimistic, happy, and fun and pleasure lover, one was.

In the present day, we know that humour is exclusively human, and is a stress relief in the most diverse situations, from socialising to those who need humour to cope with hard or traumatic experiences. That is why a good sense of humour is widely accepted as a sign of a healthy life.

Despite all assumptions and common beliefs, what defines humour? Is humour only appreciated when there is a physical reaction triggered by the psyche?

According to Attardo (1994, p. 3) defining humour is no easy task. The problem does not lie in defining humour itself, since that can be done in several ways, but in reaching a consensus. Authors have a tough time deciding how to distinguish humour from other

categories (for example, humour vs. comic or the ridiculous) and even a harder time finding a general definition accepted by all: “Linguists, psychologists, and anthropologists have taken humour to be an all-encompassing category, covering any event or object that elicits laughter, amuses, or is felt to be funny” (Attardo, 1994, p. 4). Some authors are comfortable with a loose definition, as that enables them to move freely, that is, to borrow research from different fields and adapt them to make something of their own, and there are those who criticise it for lacking well-defined boundaries. According to Sinicropi:

The lack of a rigorous, or at least reliable, definition of humour and of its categories causes (...) another difficulty that hinders research; it is represented by the fact that denominations of processes usually considered sources of humour (...)¹ are often used as if they were synonyms or if they shared a semantic space. This denotes that the semantic field to which they belong does not have precise boundaries (as cited in Attardo, 1994, p. 4).

Note that when we are talking about humour, we might be compelled to use different terms like humorous, amusing, funny, however, do they all mean the same thing? According to the Oxford Dictionary, these are the definitions:

humour (noun) - 1. the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing; the ability to laugh at things that are amusing 3. (c.) one of the four liquids that were thought in the past to be in a person’s body and to influence health and character. (p.769)

amusement (noun) - the feeling that you have when something is funny or amusing, or it entertains you. (p. 48)

funny (adj) amusing - making you laugh, amusing (p. 638)

The Oxford dictionary also contains a segment explaining a difference that may be useful to note:

Amusing is the most general of these words because it includes the idea of being enjoyable as well as making people laugh and can be used to describe events, activities and occasions [...]. Humorous is more about showing that you see the humour in a situation, than actually making people laugh out loud. Comic is used especially to talk about writing and drama or

¹ Both ellipsis by the author.

things that are funny in a deliberate and theatrical way. It is not used to describe people (except for comic writers). Funny can describe people, jokes and stories, things that happen, or anything that makes people laugh. (2015, p. 638)

Therefore, defining humour is still a challenge even nowadays. As scholars and philosophers dwell on the concept of what is humorous and what is not, translators face their own set of challenges, as the following pages hopefully illustrate.

CHAPTER I – APPROACHES TO HUMOUR THROUGHOUT HISTORY

1. Humour (History and Philosophy)

Most authors and researchers who study humour in different fields point out that the first to theorise about humour or to characterize it date back to the times of Ancient Greece, Plato being its first grand theoriser. As in many other fields, the great classic philosophers left their imprint on what would be later studied by modern researchers.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that the perception, or perceptions, that the classic philosophers had, drastically differ from the modern approaches. Attardo claims that, according to Plato, humour would be a mixed feeling of the ‘soul’, a combination of pleasure and pain. The philosopher was also a pioneer in correlating excessive laughter with something not virtuous, to be looked at with disdain. Later, Aristotle would also leave his contributions when anticipating the incongruity theories (see section 1.1.2) in a discussion of metaphors and puns (Attardo, 1994, p. 20).

Larkin-Galiñanes (2017, p. 5) points out that no classic book deals exclusively with humour. Some of the few surviving writings that share something about it are Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Poetics*. On the other hand, Attardo reinforces that: “[t]he historical importance of Platonic and Aristotelic thought in the theory of humor cannot be overstated: for example, it establishes the opposition comedy–tragedy which will determine theoretical thought on humor for well over 20 centuries...” (Attardo, 2008, p. 102).

As argued by Larkin-Galiñanes (2017, p. 5), literature confirms that, in general, laughter was perceived as being something suspicious, to be suspected and condemned, especially when excessive and ‘ridiculous’, which would lead to vulgarity. Plato and Aristotle openly condemned the ridiculous, and associated humour with viciousness, offense, vulgarity and foolishness. Therefore, they declared it unworthy of citizens and a matter of concern for higher classes. Due to this elitist vision of humour, laughter was associated with those from a lower class. Nonetheless, even Plato and Aristotle had their differences. Where Aristotle condemned excessive laughter specifically, Plato was much more rigid in his condemnation.

History tells us that much of the Hellenic culture survived thanks to Roman recreations. It comes as no surprise that the classic Greek philosophers highly influenced Roman thinkers and their thoughts carried on. Some of the most popular bodies of work are from Cicero and Quintilian.

Cicero is an important reference because in his essay *De Oratore*, he made a distinction between verbal and referential humour, which is an important division in modern studies. The latter is concerned with jokes and caricatures, whereas the former would be more concerned with ambiguity, paronomasia, false etymologies, proverbs, literal interpretations of expressive figures, allegories, metaphors, antiphrasis, or irony. Cicero presented a criterion to distinguish between the two humour types. That criterion relied on the resistance to translation, which confirmed whether the comical effect depended on the form or the content. That is, humour that resists intralinguistic (paraphrase) translation, interlinguistic and intersemiotic translation, depends exclusively on the semantic content of the text (referential humour). The other texts that cannot be modified, but preserve that humorous effect, depend on the form of the text (verbal humour), which can be related to phonetics, phonology or characters (Attardo, 1994, pp. 27-28).

Quintilian, like Cicero and other philosophers, did not specifically approach humour as an independent topic, but rather in connection with its use as a rhetorical device in the art of oratory. Deeply influenced by the classics, the philosopher shared the classics' thinking and logic, making it impossible not to have a bias. Hence, Quintilian also shied away from exaggerated laughter, considering it pathetic. However, Larkin-Galiñanes (2017, p. 5) points out it is worth noting how one of Quintilian's precursors, Plato, concluded that laughter was an irrational emotion and needed to be repressed as such by reason. For example, in classic comedy, a character who is the target of laughter is someone who considers themselves superior, but is in reality, ridiculous. Those who laugh at that person, do so with some kind malice behind (to boost their ego or to feel better about themselves), which is harmful, hence, wrong (*Ibid.*). Patrick O'Neill points out that:

One might object here that the humour of the English-speaking world, at least, frequently tends rather towards the genial and amiable, gently tolerant of the foibles of others, recognizing ourselves in those we mock, affirming things as they are in spite of everything. But it is easy to forget that this benign type of humour seems by all accounts to be a very modern phenomenon. Some theorists cannot find it before 1789, few can find it before 1700: the dominant mode of the comic until the end of the seventeenth century at least was that of satire and abrasive wit-aggressive, derisive, and frequently savage. (Patrick O'Neill, 1983, p. 87)

Despite their harsh judgement, Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian were aware of the rhetorical power held by humour to capture the audience's attention. Nevertheless, they were extremely careful to draw a distinction between humour that provoked a type of laughter which they considered 'low comedy' and drew crowds in, from that which elicited more controlled laughter or just a smile in the refined and cultivated elite. Thus, it comes to no surprise that they knew and devoted themselves to studying the mechanisms employed to produce laughter. Some of those mechanisms are as mentioned by Larkin-Galiñanes: "homonyms, synonyms, unconventional uses of language, impossible hyperbole and exaggeration in general, puns, irony, ambiguity, unexpected twists (plot-twists), comparisons, metaphors, etc." (Figuerroa-Dorrego, as cited in Larkin-Galiñanes, 2017, p. 12).

Following a Western centred path, with the passage of time, it is a must to mention the role played by Christianity in the weak dissemination in humour studies during the Middle Ages until the Renaissance: "not because the Scriptures or the early Christian Church promoted any systematic analysis of this phenomenon, but because they rejected it and held it back for centuries" (Figuerroa-Dorrego, as cited in Larkin-Galiñanes, 2017, p. 6).

Moreover:

[...]for Christian thinkers laughter was too associated with the body, and the strict regulation of the body was a central issue in their ascetic approach to life on earth... Moreover, humorous laughter was too allied to relativism, subversion, chaos and relax to fit into the agenda of the Church, fully committed to ensuring complete authority in society, very often through the discourse of fear. (Figuerroa-Dorrego, as cited in Larkin-Galiñanes, 2017, p. 6)

Christians from that time frowned upon laughter and humour. According to the authors, this may be given to the fact that the Bible lacks direct references relating to humour, and if there are any, they usually represent God laughing at mankind and the laughter carries a type of omnipotence and superiority. During the Middle Ages, this was the predominant perspective, especially as Monasticism emerged, advocating for obedience, silence, and reverence before God, among other ideals that banned laughter.

In 1576 and 1577, in London, with the appearance of the first 'play houses', a lot of plays were written on humour but this does not mean that they were accepted. More criticism arose and deemed "comedy" (theatrical genre) to be something immoral, 'dirty' and

sinful, since it admitted ways of sinning and opened the gates to immorality (Larkin-Galiñanes, 2017, p. 7).

In subsequent years, many philosophers have written on humour theory. René Descartes, in his 1649 *The Passions of the Soul*, studied the topic thoroughly, diving into its physiological manifestations and causes. Descartes also made a point of highlighting the mockery present in laughter, which can have a heavy negative impact when used maliciously, but when used in moderation it could be used to reprove vices by making them look ridiculous (*Ibid.*).

With the advent of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so began what Michael Billig called the ‘Golden Age’ of the philosophy of humour (*Ibid.*). With the arrival of these centuries, there was greater openness towards humour and laughter. Laughter started to be associated with a good kind of humour and benevolence, and explanations of the phenomenon based on incongruity (opposed to the superiority theory, as described in the following section) emerged and marked it as an acceptable social humour. In spite of this new perception, the idea of laughing aloud was still a characteristic associated with the lower classes.

Staaby (2009, p. 17) notes that in the US, in the nineteenth century, if a presidential candidate tried to use humour, he would be dismissed as incompetent, an attitude that in the mid-twentieth century changed radically, when a candidate had to practically have a sense of humour to appeal to the masses and thus gain popularity.

Our research leads us to how contemporary studies divide humour theories. There are three main types of humour theories that divide them into distinct types of humour according to its ‘nature’ and what it is used for.

1.1.1 Superiority Theory

Also known as depreciation theory, hostility theory, or aggression theory, it sets feelings of superiority as a condition for laughter. Plato was the first to theorise that behind amusement there was malice or envy. The philosopher pointed out how this malice made people laugh at the ridicule in others (Tabacaru, 2015, p.116).

In turn, Thomas Hobbes formulated that this theory arose from the sense of superiority that the one who laughs feels towards the object of laughter. The author stresses how human nature is inclined to power and has a disposition for competitiveness that only

ceases when one dies. This feeling is however not limited to others, as it can also occur between the present and past self, in which a person in the present may feel superior to his/her past self (Roberts, 2019, p. 30).

Zabalbeascoa in turn (2005, p. 193) admits that if the jokes do not involve some sort of victim/target, then we are dealing with childish jokes.

1.1.2 Incongruity Theory

The theories of incongruity, inconsistency and ambivalence are based on contrast (Tabacaru, 2015, p.119). Plato was also the first to note this theory, although it was Aristotle who best described it: “a speaker can make an audience laugh by setting up an expectation and then presenting something that gives a twist” (Roberts, 2019, p. 32). Thus, the incongruity theory claims that fun is born from the unexpected. The joke does not follow an expected trajectory, but makes a change in direction, which can shock the listener. According to Roberts:

James Beattie was the first to articulate a proper incongruity theory in his claim that ‘laughter arises from the view of two or more inconsistent, unsuitable, or incongruous parts or circumstances considered as united in one complex object or assemblage, or as acquiring a sort of mutual relation from the peculiar manner in which the mind takes notice of them. (Roberts, 2019, p. 32)

1.1.2.1 Henry Bergson

Henri Bergson² knew that the comical was connected to inner experiences and was something personal. It can be said that the philosopher best represents this incongruity theory due to his comparison of natural vs. mechanical and the “mechanical encrusted upon the living” (West, 2020, 6:47).

According to the author, a tree cannot be funny and neither it is funny to any other living beings or the non-living. A tree can only be funny to humans. Therefore, it is a human-

² French philosopher born on October 18th, 1859, in Paris. He was one of the most influential philosophers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Initially the philosopher was trained in mathematics, but ultimately choosing letters and humanities over mathematics which was criticised by his professor by saying “you could have been a mathematician; you will be a mere philosopher” (as cited in Soulez & Worms, 2002, p. 35).

like experience. According to Bergson something is funny because it usually reminds us of something mechanical, that is, it reminds us of something that is in a way, imprinted in us. According to West: “Everything that we find funny, ultimately to Bergson, is us seeing something that looks mechanical within human behavior, behavior that is otherwise fluid, elastic, and constantly in flux” (*Ibid.*, 7:19).

In *Laughter*, a three-essay book on humour, released in 1900, Bergson starts by making three observations regarding humour:

1. Humour is uniquely human, a fact we have mentioned before. Bergson argues that what is external to human beings, such as a landscape, can have various characteristics, such as being beautiful, sublime, ugly, however, never laughable.
2. Laughter is accompanied by insensitivity, that is, the superiority theory previously mentioned
3. Laughter needs an echo, that is, it is a social act where there is a group of people who laugh at something, meaning that a social setting may fuel laughter. Laughing alone may be associated with not being sane, of sound mind.

Bergson’s book is divided into three main chapters: the first chapter addresses the forms and movements and what makes them funny, the second chapter is dedicated to the comic element of situations and the comic element of words and the last chapter explores the comic in character.

The three main points may be summed up as:

- a) Situation comic – (light comedy referring to an inversion of roles and repetitions)
- b) Word comic – (comedy of manners) this type of comic is obtained by the insertion of an absurd idea in a set-phrase/expression by focusing on the materiality of a metaphor; by the comical transformation of propositions by the inversion or interference of two systems of ideas in the same phrase, originating puns and word-plays; by the transposition of a natural expression of one idea in another tone, ending up with an exaggeration or hyperbole. (Cura, 2009, p. 9)
- c) Character comic – (absentmindedness is the funniest trait in someone because it makes people fall prey to the comical, like their gestures, mannerisms, movements, attitudes)

Therefore, Bergson does not try to define what is funny, but rather, what are the things that make people laugh.

1.1.3 Relief/Release Theory

This theory is based on the proposition that humour is used to release tension, psychic energy, or that humour frees people from inhibitions, conventions, and laws. Freud created one of the most elaborate and famous theories. Relief theory is based on the premise that laughter happens when a person needs to relieve themselves from a kind of pressure. As Freud put it:

The process in the joke's first person produces pleasure by lifting inhibition and diminishing local expenditure; but it seems not to come to rest until, through the intermediary of the interpolated third person, it achieves general relief through discharge. (Freud, 1905, p. 136)

1.1.3.1 Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud³ is mostly known for his contributions on the unconscious in psychology. To humour researchers, Freud is relevant for his different analysis of humour, that is, whereas Bergson approached humour from the classic philosophical point of view, Freud approached it from a psychological point of view. In *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), Freud connects comical jokes, dreams, and the unconscious. That is how his theory of dreams gives birth to his theory of humour.

As previously mentioned, Freud believed that laughter may have its origins in some kind of pressure building up, inside a person, and that keeps accumulating until the person is unable to hold it in.

Overall, Freud describes different types of techniques, providing a variety of examples in *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905). For the purpose of this paper, however, the most common techniques may be summarised as follows:

³ Born May 6th, 1859, in Freiberg in Mähren (Příbor), Moravia, Austrian Empire (modern Czech Republic) was an Austrian neurologist and best known as the father of psychoanalysis.

- a) condensation - consists of the union of two words or expressions;
- b) displacement - the meaning of an expression is displaced in the discourse;
- c) double meaning - words or expressions that have more than one meaning;
- d) use of the same material - use of words to create a new meaning;
- e) pun or joke by similarity - where one expression refers to another sense;
- f) antinomial representation - when something is affirmed and then denied.

Although Freud gives extensive explanations of the different techniques, he also offers a very structured view, showing a science-based treatment of humour:

I: by condensation:

- (a) with formation of composite word,
- (b) with modification.

II. the multiple use of the same material:

- (c) as a whole and in parts,
- (d) in a different order,
- (e) with slight modification,
- (f) of the same words full and empty.

III. by using double meaning:

- (g) Meaning as a name and as a thing,
- (h) metaphorical and literal meanings,
- (i) double meaning proper (play upon words),
- (j) double entendre,
- (k) double meaning with an allusion.

(Freud, 1905, p. 28)

1.2 The problem of the comical

More contemporary studies are still based on the work of the authors mentioned so far, who have helped create a solid base for the study of humour, which itself is divided into different fields, being a multidisciplinary topic. Humour is the subject of study in Linguistics, Culture, Psychology, Sociology and Translation.

In fact, the mere presence of these two works [*Laughter* and *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious*] in the current debate on humor is proof of their significance: consider the fact that most authors who write on humor still discuss Freud and Bergson, while nobody bothers reading the scores of books on humor published perhaps much less than 90 years ago. (Attardo, 1994, p. 58)

Attardo (*Ibid.*, p. 11-12) summarizes Olbrechts-Tyteca's points, which are important when referring the problem of defining humour:

1. Laughter exceeds humour by far (physiological laughter vs. Laughter originating from humour)
2. Laughter does not always have the same meaning (sign of embarrassment and fascination)
3. Laughter is not directly proportional to the intensity of the mood
4. Humour sometimes evokes laughter, other times a smile
5. Laughter and smile cannot always be directly observed

As already pointed out, defining humour is not an easy task. Most people assume laughter is a necessary reaction that goes hand in hand with humour, but not all instances of humour would be deemed humorous. People react to humour in diverse ways, one of them being laughter, other times it could be a smile, and in some cases, it could be shock. Dark humour is one of those instances when someone may find something funny but be unable to laugh due to the content. Laughter can also be a sign of embarrassment and is not directly proportional to the intensity of humour. A person may just crack a smile, but as previously stated, it may be for reasons other than amusement. In other cases, people cry when laughing, so consequently, if tears cannot be exclusively linked to sadness, then laughter is not a condition for something to be comical.

The problems keep adding up as we delve into ethics and morals, and people begin to question if anything can be an object of laughter. There is no clear line between what is moral and immoral, ethical and unethical, as people appreciate different kinds of humour due to its subjective nature, as well as to the fact that humour is also culture-bound. Some might be offended by particular objects of laughter, that is, not everyone appreciates laughing at tragedies, death, gore, etc. Therefore, when someone tells a joke, the feedback is never clear. Someone might not understand or appreciate it. If the original message already has its set of challenges, then translating, adapting or recreating it brings many others.

1.3 Challenges in Translation

Despite the already known translation issues one may face when translating, such as cultural differences, language limitations or different language systems, verbal humour encompasses all those issues into one single subject.

In translation there are several aspects to pay attention to in order to achieve a good translation. Although linguistics has traditionally focused on puns and wordplay (Attardo, 1994 p. 108), translators must keep in mind the various aspects of language variation, such as dialects or registers in the source language/culture and how that is going to be mirrored in the target text, especially if those features are included for humorous effect. It is crucial to understand the purpose of the translation, what motivated its creation. Then, to be able to work, is it important to look into the nature of the text, delving into such parameters as textuality, genre, style and discourse. Even after knowing all these, the recipient cannot be taken out of the picture. Translators must have an idea as to whom they are translating for (Zabalbeascoa, 2005, p. 187). There are also other factors that a translator must handle, such as audience demands and what the purpose of the text is. For the purpose of this work, however, these factors will not be considered, as they are external factors and are not exclusive to humour translation.

The problem of translating humour arises when we have a combination of people, history, events, and customs from a specific culture that do not resonate with another. Although nowadays, with the proliferation of the internet and social networks where people consume funny content to ‘cool off’, they are mostly dealing with non-verbal humour, such as slapstick, a more universal type of humour that can be easily consumed worldwide. The more neutral a content is, the more views it gets while more cultural content is usually consumed by one specific culture. As an example, in recent years, some people have been translating proverbs, word-to-word, into other languages, showing how little sense those expressions make when taken out of their respective cultures. The same happens with verbal humour, in which the placement/meaning of words makes sense in the source language but none in the target language.

Setting culture aside, one of the issues that can create conflict for the translator is wondering whether one should stick to the original or adapt. This is a debate that many translators have, but when it comes to humour, it is more commonly believed that staying faithful to the original is not the best approach. When translating humour, if one were to

follow the logic of faithfulness to the source text, then they would simply opt for a word-for-word translation and hope that the humour would somehow be maintained. However, that is not the case, which leads many to jump to another extreme and assume that humour cannot be translated, although some claim that there is a possibility of creating a scale of non-translatability.

The author may choose to use humour to make their intentions clearer and more effective, but what to do when in the translated version, the author's intentions are distorted or unperceivable? If the purpose is to be humorous, as is the case with comedy, translating the humorous content risks making it disappear, or on the contrary, translating a joke that has no effect, which creates the dilemma between staying faithful to the original source and risk losing the comical effect or recreating the joke and maintain its final purpose. Zabalbeascoa (2005, p. 191) further remarks that it is important for translators to note whether humour is a part of the authors' intention or if it is caused by other reasons (e.g., the translator/reader is interpreting humour where is not meant to exist or in different ways than the author intended).

The translator, just like any other reader, may not understand certain jokes, either due to lack of context, knowledge, or failure to grasp the intent of a signalled joke. In simultaneous interpreting, an interpreter may point out that there was a joke that failed to get through, and then the audience is left not knowing what was it that did not work, whether it was the author's or the interpreter's fault. However, in translation this is not recommended. Interpreters are forced to move on due to time constraints to which translators cannot relate.

Further, the translator may be so focused on translation that instances of humour could go completely unnoticed. The translator misses the author's goal due to interpretation issues. Failure to interpret the text has always been a problem for translators, and humour is no exception.

Vandaele (2002, p.150) argues that there is a dearth of works on humour translation, therefore suggesting that humour translation is qualitatively different from other areas of translation, therefore, no one can write about humour translation in the same way as they write about other types of translation.

According to the author, from a practice-oriented perspective it is possible to identify four elements. Humour as an effect has a response, an outward manifestation, which we can call laughter or smile. On the other hand, according to Ruch, understanding and appreciating humour, and producing humour are two completely different skills. That is, translators may be able to feel the effect but completely unable to recreate it. (as cited in Vandaele, 2002, p.150). Translating humour is ultimately not the same as translating the contents of a legal document, as it requires more creativity from the translator.

The complexity lies within what makes languages and moods differ, which are: different realities, as each language creates different concepts for different realities (a culture cannot name something it does not know or deal with); the conceptual freedom of language which means, languages may create different concepts for the same reality (think of the differences between the different English variants); sociolinguistic force, meaning different languages attach different meanings to similar definitions; and lastly metalinguistic force that allows different languages to create different ways of melting various realities into one, e.g. wordplay (Vandaele, 2002, p. 164-165).

The problem increases when the subjectivity of humour comes into play. If an author had the intention of making the reader laugh, but the translator considers it not funny, is it the translator's role to correct this failure? Just as beauty varies from person to person, laughter is no exception. Vandaele argues how it can happen that a translator needs to translate a joke that has no effect on them and is in the dilemma between being faithful and getting a humourless joke or recreating the joke so that it can have the effect for which the joke is there:

Some may think we should come, at least, to an ethical consensus on fictional-humour translation (in the sense that we should not censor it). This is what Von Stackelberg's question and answer seem to imply: "Should the translator be allowed to make us laugh at his own ideas rather than at those of the author? We do not think so [...]". (*Ibid.*, p. 166)

Therefore, the author's intentions and the effect of the factual message may differ on the public (*Ibid.*, p.160). The translator may be in fact part of the original audience, but once the message is translated, there is a new sender. In most cases, translators are expected to follow the original, but depending on how 'untranslatable' humour is, in order to maintain the humorous effect new jokes/puns/references may be added. Yet, it all depends on how the translator adapts the humorous effect and how well it is received by the respective

audience. No matter what criteria people might try to use, humour will always be subjective. What the author considers funny might offend others or simply not amuse them. Humour can have offensive, rhetorical characteristics, or it can even be acknowledged but not appreciated and come to show disappointment, disgust, anger, rebellion, etc. Note that humour is not acceptable in all contexts, because it deals exactly with topics that make people uncomfortable. Dark humour may be perceived as comical, yet it may be deemed unacceptable.

In short, the problems in translating humour go beyond the mere translation process. It involves translation, adaptation and interpretation. The translator not only needs to be equipped with a set of skills but must understand the intended audience and the author. Beyond that, the author (and the translator) hope that the audience is able to understand and appreciate the humour, otherwise all the effort goes in vain.

1.4 Culture and Translation

According to Zabalbeascoa: “The translatability of humour, how well humour travels across languages, and the nature of the barriers, these are the kinds of issues that need to be addressed from both sides of the area where humour and translation overlap” (2005, p. 186).

The author argues that in close cultures some texts offer little resistance to translation since both source and target cultures are similar and the cultural systems intersect (*Ibid.*). The closer two cultures are and the more common knowledge, values and tastes they share, the easier it is to appreciate or translate humour. Thus, a translator may not be as challenged because a joke may be binational, that is, a joke that does not require much adaptation or replacements because cultural or linguistic differences are almost irrelevant and can often be translated literally without losing the humour, content, or meaning. (*Ibid.*, p. 190)

In the second category, some jokes and types of humour may be constrained by the characteristics of the audience, thus presenting a greater degree of difficulty for the translator. Specific language choices or encyclopaedic knowledge, or the degree of familiarity with or appreciation of certain themes, genres, and types of humour should be all kept in mind when translating. Thus, a linguistic, or language-restricted joke depends

on knowledge of certain characteristics of a given mood (which words are homonymic, paronymic, alliterative, or rhyming).

Zabalbeascoa (*Ibid.*, p. 192) also presents some ways in which humour can be improvised. Due to context, it is clear that it mostly refers to Interpretation, but some of the points may be applied to translation as well. Humour can be carefully crafted beforehand, or it can be spontaneous. It is expected to have characters with different personalities, backgrounds, knowledge, beliefs, therefore even when it comes to humour, different characters will have variations in the type of humour employed. Both cultured and vulgar jokes have their set of references that must be part of one's dictionary in order to be understood. Both types can be of a high degree of difficulty for different reasons. On the one hand, elaborate humour, or humour that is part of an elaborate rhetorical style, is difficult due to nuances or innuendos as well as other obvious aspects of the text. On the other hand, puns and play on words may be simpler in structure but could provide a bigger challenge due to their dependency on both the meaning and morphology of those words.

1.5 Suggested Solutions

There are no set rules as to how to translate humour, but overall, there are a few conclusions that can be made. Most translators would agree that it is important to stay within what was set in the SL, adapting only the stylistic parts of the joke, i.e. that translators should keep the same joke format. Depending on the content, the translator may need to adapt it to fit the TL, especially when it comes to rhyming jokes, otherwise there is a risk of losing the humorous effect. In other words, Yus (2012, p.16) defends that: “[t]his step is essential if the translator wants to specify the conditions and linguistic choices that make the joke transferrable to the target-language audience with efficiency”.

It is equally crucial to pay attention to cultural information that may play a part in the humorous bit. This step is important because it makes the translator aware of the content and helps locating the challenging bits of information when translating and adapting humour.

After having the information on structure and content, the translator should produce a TL joke that favours the original in relevant ways: “transferring cultural information from the source culture to the target culture and substitute intra-cultural referents when necessary.”

Secondly, the translator will look for semantic choices that allow for a similar coding of information in the source and target languages. Sometimes parallelism will favour a straightforward translation and on other occasions, more severe linguistic choices will have to be made.

The translator is then expected to change, alter, substitute the SL text as much as necessary to obtain satisfactory outcomes. This part of the task is the most relative one as each translator has their own translation techniques, therefore there is no guarantee that duplication of effects and effort will be achieved, despite all the efforts. Ultimately, it is more important to keep the humorous effect than trying to replicate the SL at the risk of losing the humorous effect (Yus, 2012, p. 16-17).

CHAPTER II – JOSEPH HELLER AND CATCH-22

The following chapter is divided into two main areas of focus: the first part aims to present some biographical notes of Joseph Heller and give a historical and political context that is needed to better understand the next part of the chapter. The second part focuses on identifying the specifics of the humour employed by Joseph Heller. Despite this paper's focus being on verbal humour and its challenges in translation, it is relevant to study non-verbal humour since it is so ingrained throughout the novel.

2.1 Joseph Heller

Heller was born on May 1st, 1923, in Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York, to a working-class family of Russian immigrant Jews, Isaac and Lena Heller (Encyclopedia of World Biography).

When Joseph was only five years old, his father died due to complications during a surgery. With his father's death and his mother never having learnt how to speak English proficiently, the family started having financial troubles.

In 1941, after finishing his education in Abraham High School, Heller found a job in an office and started working right away. Later in 1942, once the United States joined the Second World War, Heller joined the army, where he temporarily worked as a file clerk. During that same year he enlisted in the Air Force. Two years later he was sent to Corsica where he flew sixty combat missions as a combat pilot (Encyclopedia of World Biography). This experience presumably gave him the material used in *Catch-22*.

After leaving the war in 1945, Heller enlisted in the University of Southern California, published his first short story, and got married to Shirley Held, with whom he had his two children, Erica Jill and Theodore Michael.

In 1946, Heller transferred to the New York University where after two years he would graduate with an Arts Bachelor and a distinction. That same year he published two more short stories in *The Atlantic Monthly* and another two in the *Esquire*. 1949 was a year of many successes in which he finished his master's degree in American Literature at the University of Columbia and received a Fulbright scholarship to study at the Oxford University for a year.

After a short period of time teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, Heller started working as an advertising manager for Time Magazine.

It was in 1953 when Heller first started to work on what would become *Catch-22*. Heller dedicated a lot of his time to this novel which would only be released in 1961. It can be said that the novel had a slow burn reaction from the public since it was not given much attention in the beginning. In an article that dates to October 23rd, 1961, Orville Prescott declares that the novel was not very successful and according to the conventions, it was not even a good novel. The critic slammed *Catch-22* as being one of the oddest novels on the US Air Force he had ever read but applauds it for its originality, comical brilliance, macabre honesty, and exceptional performance. Prescott (1961) notes that the book is quite funny, but that it was not meant for a female audience.

Between the publication of *Catch-22* and his novel *Something Happened* (1974), Heller was almost exclusively dedicated to writing, having written many scripts and plays, although he did still teach creative writing courses in the Universities of Yale and Pennsylvania.

The following decades were hard on Heller and his health. In 1981, he got divorced from his wife and in that same year he was diagnosed with Guillain-Barré syndrome. Despite all of his suffering, together with his friend Speed Vogel, they wrote about his hardships and documented the rehabilitation process in 1986's *No Laughing Matter*. It was also during the rehabilitation process that Heller met nurse Valerie Humphries, whom he married in 1987 (Famous Authors).

From then on until his death, he dedicated himself to writing. In 1988 he published a memory book, *Now and Then: From Coney Island to Here*.

Just a year later, on December 12th, he died of a heart attack.

2.2 Catch-22

Catch-22 is a satirical novel first published on November 10th, 1961, by Simon & Schuster. The novel follows the life of Yossarian, an aerial bomber that tries to save his own skin at all costs during the Second World War. Nonetheless, the story features a wide range of characters, several of whom have whole chapters named after them.

Despite all his efforts to finish his number of mandatory missions and be sent home, the required number of missions was constantly being raised. What started as twenty-five missions ended up as eighty missions by the end of the novel. The novel revolves around a catch, *Catch-22*, which should have been Yossarian's salvation but ended up being his doom. *Catch-22* defends that all one needs to do to be excused from war is to prove they are insane. But that is the catch, if one is truly insane, then they would not care about their wellbeing, therefore anyone trying to leave the war means they are not truly insane since they realize that their life is at stake. There is no way to win or go around this problem.

2.3 Historical and Political Context

On the one hand, after the Second World War, Europe was in shambles and devastated from two major wars that had happened in less than half a century. Many European countries started working together and finding ways to unite themselves so the mistakes of the past would not be repeated, and their people did not have to live in fear of what would happen. On the other hand, the United States abandoned their non-interventionism and neutrality, thus ending their partial isolation. The Second World War might have ended but tensions were growing between the US and the USSR. This tension is a result of many factors, but the US funding and supporting/financing wars indirectly (or directly) so that in certain countries, the capitalist and democratic faction won, meaning there would be no 'communist threat'. This can be observed in the wars between North and South Korea, the Cuban Missile Crisis or the US' and USSR's 'support' to emerging countries in Africa (Cold War History).

One big controversial war that is contemporary to *Catch-22* is the Vietnam War (1955-1975). The war was highly criticized by those who experienced or had family members that had gone through Second World War or even the First World War: "This minority included many students as well as prominent artists and intellectuals and members of the hippie movement, a growing number of young people who rejected authority and embraced the drug culture" (Lutz, 2010).

The growing tensions between the US and the USSR gave birth to what is known as the Cold War. The two biggest superpowers in the world had the power to annihilate all life on Earth. Although it was not a direct head-to-head war, the fear and tensions could still be felt because of the involvements, the races and contests that were happening. Each 26

country was trying to show the other who was in power by creating deadlier weapons of mass destruction, showing who would be the first to fly to space, who would first land on the moon, etc. (Cold War History).

After many turbulent decades, all these feelings of insecurity end up being portrayed in the arts. Just like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and other philosophers presented life from a pessimistic perspective that influenced many others later on, after both world wars, recession, uncertainty, in the 50's and the 60's emerges a use of a 'new' stylistic device, dark humour. Staaby points out that:

Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* reflects the concerns of the 1960s generation through his use of absurdities to communicate bewilderment and illumination, gallows humor to communicate anxiety, and labyrinth imagery to show the changing times and the uncertainty of a culture that was beginning to question traditional ideals and values. (Staaby, 2009, p. 45)

2.4 The characteristics of the humour in *Catch-22*

The novel is well known for making use of nonsense, satire, *slapstick* (physical humour) and farce (Nagel, 1974 p. 99). It can be easily assumed that the humour in *Catch-22* is not simply used as a form of entertainment, but as a means to an end. Heller applies humour to criticise specific groups from the American society and point at the corruption within. That is not to say that he opposed the military or the US' involvement in the Second World War, but the author calls out and condones the wrongs of the culture and the institutions.

Heller provides the reader with dark humour, irony, absurdity, which aim to shine some light and provide the reader with the necessary equipment to be enlightened and stay above the exaggerated characters and act or identify as an intellectual person who can see the corruption others cannot see.

Heller's criticism focuses on capitalism, bureaucracy, 'craziness', and society's destructive tendencies that end up costing compassion and humanity.

His criticism may well be directed at those on top positions in society, but he also addresses human behaviour and belief. Nagel (*Ibid.*) calls this type of humour ‘crazy humour’, which he identifies as being based on a system of Juvenalian satire that consists in attacking the basic principles and fundamental order in society. Researchers point at the novel as being original in the way it cynically portrays the Air Force and other institutions, which in part explains why the younger generations embraced the novel, knowing that the US were participating in wars, especially the Vietnam War. What called the public’s attention was the way in which he comically criticized the air forces and bureaucracy.

The characters in the novel depict caricatures that represent social practices, traditions, and behavioural patterns. For instance, consider such characters like the Texan, a conservative white man who believes that ‘decent’ people should get more votes than prostitutes, criminals, atheists and ‘indecent’ folks, people without means; Appleby, a boy from Iowa who believes in God, maternity and in the American way of life without ever thinking about them or Major Major’s father who is an individualist and does not agree with the government aiding anyone else besides him.

One of the main characteristics of the humour found in *Catch-22* is the use of dark humour. This aspect makes it one of the most notorious dark humour novels from the 1960’s, in the US. Staaby identifies some main characteristics that aid the humour in it, these being the dark humour, the absurd/ridiculous, repetition and insanity, and labyrinth imagery/déjà vu, which are going to be explored in the upcoming subsections.

2.4.1 Dark Humour

In an article published in 1983, O’Neill highlights how much interest in dark humour had grown in the previous two decades, in the United States. Despite this rise in interest in the genre, as with the definition of humour, dark humour lacks a clear definition and the use of the terminology is random at best. The term could be used to describe the “grotesque, gallows, macabre, sick, pornographic, scatological, cosmic, ironic, satiric, absurd, or any combination between these” (O’Neill, 2010, p. 80).

Defining humour in general is an arduous task but in one way, this could lead some to think that defining a specific type of humour would be much easier since it has some

boundaries. Multiple studies disagree, nevertheless, many authors search for definitions. Green interprets it as “The term ‘black humour’, then, is perhaps most appropriately defined as an unapologetic, unalloyed use of comedy in extreme situations that implicitly raise very large, even profound, questions” (The reading experience).

Defining dark humour becomes even more complicated when encyclopaedias and dictionaries do not present a clear definition or have no definition at all. Both the online dictionary and the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* have no definition for black humour, dark humour or even acid humour. In contrast, the Cambridge Dictionary defines ‘black humour’ as: “a humorous way of looking at or treating something that is serious or sad”, however, this definition is lacking in depth and boundaries, not exploring the concept too deeply. O’Neill argues that the only encyclopaedia that defined black humour was the New Columbia Encyclopaedia, 1975 edition, which states that black humour is “grotesque or morbid humour used to express the absurdity, insensitivity, paradox, and cruelty of the modern world” and proceeds to point out a few authors, including Joseph Heller, although it can be argued that the list is quite misleading, since it mostly presents American authors from the 60’s. Dark humour is not, in fact, that recent and localised, although previous mentions might not have been the same type of dark humour since some references associate it with sick humour, melancholy or even black authors (*Ibid.*, p. 81).

O’Neill believes that people in the US started paying more attention to dark humour, in 1965, after the publication of a volume titled *Black Humour*. The volume compiled a collection of thirteen novels, from which Heller’s *Catch-22* could not be missing. Bruce Jay Friedman, the editor but also one of the selected authors was asked about his definition of black humour but did not provide it, instead commenting that what connected those novels was a: “feeling of insecurity, a fine line of separation between reality and fiction, isolation and loneliness, and above all an element of social satire in a world that had lost its head” (*Ibid.*, p. 82).

It can only be speculated as to what might have compelled American authors to explore dark humour. This type of humour can present topics under a different light, so that readers may be exposed to new perspectives, therefore making better decisions based on that information. As a writing mechanism, it gives the writer the necessary tools to touch on sensible or less comfortable topics using humour to soften them or make them more approachable or less serious. Resorting to black humour has advantages, especially when

dealing with situations of high stress or uncertainty. Works containing black humour usually deal with the issues of a specific time and may help people deal with them. Hence, some argue that dark humour might be a coping mechanism much needed for a healing process.

Staaby (2009, p. 16) points out that black humour goes hand in hand with other characteristics, such as absurdity, satire and it deals with topics of anxiety where the subject matter might be serious or even grim, yet it is handled in a humorous manner.

One of the characteristics mentioned when describing dark humour is the 'grotesque'. Not only is dark humour sometimes unexpected but it also carries a shock value. For instance, when Snowden is hit during one of the missions, Heller describes the sight of the damage done to his body.

A chunk of flak more than three inches big had shot into his other side just underneath the arm and blasted all the way through, drawing whole mottled quarts of Snowden along with it through the gigantic hole in his ribs it made as it blasted out ... Here was God's plenty, all right thought bitterly as he stared--liver, lungs, kidneys, ribs, stomach, and bits of the stewed tomatoes Snowden had eaten that day for lunch. Yossarian hated stewed tomatoes and turned away dizzily and began to vomit, clutching his burning throat. (Heller, 2019, p. 498)

When describing the grotesque scene, Heller pauses the morbid scene for a moment by making Yossarian think of stewed tomatoes, which is what caused Yossarian to vomit.

2.4.2 The absurd and ridiculous

Heller spends a great deal of time criticising the government, the authorities and social norms, but in order to make people listen to what he has to say and not be dismissed straight away, he resorts to humour.

On chapter 30, after a character's tragic death, the responsible aircraft crashes on a mountain. When a list of those who were inside that plane gets released, Doc Daneeka gets told he is dead because his name was on the list. No matter what the Doctor said, the colonel insisted that if the official document stated he was in that airplane, for all he knew, he was dead, and if he was not, he would make sure to kill him. Staaby (*Ibid.*, p.54) points out that Doc Daneeka is stripped from his humanity and is nothing more than just a name.

This dehumanization is very typical of gallows humour, which tries to make serious situations become comical.

*Dear Mrs., Mr., Miss, or Mr. and Mrs. Daneeka: Words cannot express the deep personal grief I experienced when your husband, son, father or brother was killed, wounded or reported missing in action.*⁴ (Heller, 2019, p. 390)

The absurd is a technique employed by Heller to illustrate the incompetent authorities and those who do not think for themselves, although the most absurd and ridiculous are those who are in a position of power and authority. Each colonel, captain, major, doctor or basically any other character has their set of flaws but they are caricaturised to the point that they cannot be taken seriously due to how ridiculous they become:

Heller uses absurdity in his depiction of incompetent military leaders, pointless goals of the military, as well as in the complicated structure of the novel. The reader is bewildered by the absurdities, but ultimately realizes that Heller has a purpose for using them. (Staaby, 2009, p. 14)

Staaby points out that the use of absurdity is there to make the reader laugh at how absurd war and the people participating in it can be. (*Ibid.*, p. 17-18) Ultimately, Heller presents the reader a vision of how war is no more than powerful people looking for fun or a way to achieve even more power.

In a sense, all these actions that the characters have could just be response to trauma, which some characters do show signs of, but most of them simply lack human decency or compassion because for them it is all just another day:

[...] Your job is to bomb the ammunition dumps at Bologna.’
‘But I’m going to be killed at Bologna,’ Yossarian pleaded. ‘We’re all going to be killed.’
‘Then you’ll just have to be killed,’ replied ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen. ‘Why can’t you be a fatalist about it the way I am? [...] And if you’re destined to be killed over Bologna, then you’re going to be killed, so you must just as well go out and die like a man. I hate to say this, Yossarian, but you’re turning into a chronic complainer.’ (Heller, 2019, p. 135)

⁴ Italics in the original.

Every character has some motivation behind: Milo is constantly looking for a way to obtain a profit from the war; Scheisskopf wants to have the best parade possible; Cathcart has low self-esteem and seeks to become a general.

Hence, absurdity and ridiculousness are tools used to ultimately make the readers feel frustrated at the injustice happening throughout the novel.

2.4.3 Repetition

Heller does not shy away from repetition. There are many examples in the novel when the characters are having conversations, but they keep repeating the same lines over and over without adding anything of interest. At first sight, the reader may not feel compelled to laugh, but the constant repetitions make the reader feel uncomfortable and laugh at one point. Such situations are very common and exaggerated and could be compared to slapstick. For example, the Charlie Chaplin movies are a great example of what these conversations exhibit. The characters are caricatured and exaggerated, they speak angrily or excitedly and often speak over each other:

The middle-aged big shots would not let Nately's whore leave until they made her say uncle.

'Say uncle,' they said to her.

'Uncle,' she said.

'No, no. Say uncle'

'Uncle,' she said.

'She still doesn't understand.'

'You still don't understand, do you? We can't really make you say uncle unless you don't want to say uncle. Don't you see? Don't say uncle when I tell you to say uncle.

Okay? Say uncle'.

'Uncle,' she said.

'No, don't say uncle. Say uncle.' She didn't say uncle.

'That's good!'

'That's very good.'

'It's a start. Now say uncle.

'Uncle,' she said.

'It's no good.' (Heller, 2019, p. 398)

The use of repetition ends up revealing how the characters are selfish, irrational, living in their own little worlds, especially those who are in positions of authority. Sometimes even those we hope to be more rational end up being irrational. Usually, a conversation implies attention and a debate between two or more parties, yet the conversations in *Catch-22* lack purpose or lead to frequent disagreements that act as a ‘comic relief’ moment.

The characters are unable to properly communicate, pay attention to conversations or how to continue a conversation, which often leads to conversations without a train of thought that can end up in pointless arguments or misunderstandings. This portrays exactly how corrupted and selfish the characters in *Catch-22* are. For example:

Yossarian answered him slowly in a level voice. ‘They’re burying that kid who got killed in my plane over Avignon the other day. Snowden.’

‘What happened to him?’ Milo asked in a voice deadened with awe.

‘He got killed.’

‘That’s terrible,’ Milo grieved, and his large brown eyes filled with tears. ‘That poor kid. It really is terrible.’ He bit his trembling lip hard, and his voice rose with emotion when he continued. ‘And it will get even worse if the mess halls don’t agree to buy my cotton. [...]’ (Heller, 2019, p. 296)

Captains and Colonels expect their commands and decisions not to be questioned. They do not react very well to opposition and confront those who dare question their decisions, especially Colonel Cathcart. This results in verbal exchanges that lack the basics of a conversation. There are two or more people talking yet the message gets lost. This is of course written this way to be comic because it implies these characters are not of sound mind. Heller could have written these situations in a more serious tone, but they would lack the impact. Using humour makes these scenes funny, whereas a more serious approach could probably annoy the reader, and once one is annoyed, they could refuse to listen. As long as Heller uses humour, the message has a higher chance of getting across. Staaby argues that: “[t]hrough the use of dark humour and absurdity, Heller clearly demonstrates his ideas regarding certain institutions which guide modern society” (2009, p. 46).

‘What did you mean,’ he inquired slowly, ‘when you said we couldn’t punish you?’

‘When, sir? I—?’

‘I’m asking the questions. You’re answering them.’

‘Yes, sir. I—’

‘Did you think we brought you here to ask questions and for me to answer them?’
‘No, sir. I –’
‘What did we bring you here for?’
‘To answer questions.’
‘You’re goddam right,’ roared the colonel. ‘Now suppose you start answering some before I break your goddam head. Just what the hell did you mean, you bastard, when you said we couldn’t punish you?’
‘I don’t think I ever made that statement, sir.’
‘Will you speak up, please? I couldn’t hear you.’
‘Yes, sir. I –’
‘Will you speak up, please? He couldn’t hear you.’
‘Yes, sir. I –’
‘Metcalf.’
‘Sir?’
‘Didn’t I tell you to keep your stupid mouth shut?’
‘Yes, sir.’
‘Then keep your stupid mouth shut when I tell you to keep your stupid mouth shut. Do you understand? Will you speak up please? I couldn’t hear you.’
‘Yes, sir. I –’ (Heller, 2019, p. 81)

Whenever the characters actually listen and do not engage in circular conversations, they still portray characteristics of someone who lacks empathy and is completely self-absorbed. Even characters like Doc Daneeka, which one would expect to be the voice of reason, present selfish qualities. For instance, Doc Daneeka tried to escape war by auto-diagnosing himself because he was afraid of planes:

[...] They had to send a guy from the draft board to look me over. I was Four-F. I had examined myself pretty thoroughly and discovered that I was unfit for military service. You’d think my word would be enough, wouldn’t you, since I was a doctor in good standing with my county medical society and with my local Better Business Bureau. But no, it wasn’t, and they sent this guy around just to make sure I really did have one leg amputated at the hip and was helplessly bedridden with incurable rheumatoid arthritis. Yossarian, we live in an age of distrust and deteriorating spiritual values. It’s a terrible thing.’ Doc Daneeka protested in a voice quavering with strong emotions. ‘It’s a terrible thing when even the word of a licensed physician is suspected by the country he loves.’ (Heller, 2019, p. 40)

2.4.4 Labyrinth Vision and déjà vu

Staaby argues that Jorge Luis Borges and Alain Robbe-Grillet were the first to express this idea: “The labyrinth became a standard image in the works of the authors, as they tried to convey the nebulousness of postmodern values and sense of truth” (2009, p.21). In Borges’ writing, the labyrinth is a recurrent image constantly popping up, especially in his 1962 collection of poems and essays entitled *Laberintos*. Although Borges’ labyrinth goes in much deeper, exploring philosophical questions and concepts like infinity, universality, materiality, and much more, just like Heller, they both represent it as “a complex and maze-like construction” (Interesting Literature).

Labyrinth vision is somehow loosely tied to repetition and the idea of déjà vu. This concept is reflected throughout the novel in its structure and content. Structure wise, it points to the perspective, time, and scenery shifts. *Catch-22* has a structure that can be deemed difficult to follow for it is always going back and forth and presenting different characters. Some of these perspectives are completely disconnected until the very end when the reader finally has all the information that was presented nonlinearly. Content wise, labyrinth vision is related to déjà vu (the experience of reliving things that have not happened) and dark themes like death and war. Note that by déjà vu we do not mean that the readers are reading something that they thought they read before but actually did not, it is more about the shortness of those scenes. Sometimes we only get glimpses of what happened before we get the actual full context.

The nonlinear structure makes the reader re-live certain parts or experience broken parts that do not quite intertwine with the rest of the book, when we are finally able to glue the pieces together. This ‘double vision’ combined with dark humour may at one point make a character’s actions funny, and completely morbid in the other. Thus, the reader is forced to relive the same scene from different perspectives and in different timelines:

Oh, God! Oh, God, oh God, Yossarian had been pleading wordlessly as he dangled from the ceiling of the nose of the ship by top of his head, unable to move.

‘The bombardier, the bombardier,’ Dobbs answered in a cry when Yossarian spoke. ‘He doesn’t answer, he doesn’t answer. Help the bombardier, help the bombardier.’

‘I’m the bombardier,’ Yossarian cried back at him. ‘I’m the bombardier. I’m all right. I’m all right.’ (Heller, 2019, p. 51)

‘Help him, help him,’ Dobbs was sobbing. Help him, help him.’

‘Help who? Help who? Yossarian called back. ‘Help who?’

‘The bombardier, the bombardier,’ Dobbs cried. ‘He doesn’t answer, he doesn’t answer. Help the bombardier, help the bombardier.’

‘I’m the bombardier,’ Yossarian cried back at him. ‘I’m the bombardier. I’m all right. I’m all right.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 253)

For instance, the chapters where Yossarian walks around naked, refusing to get dressed. What seems to be a funny and childish behaviour or a way for him to prove his insanity turns out to be born out of trauma. What previously made the reader laugh makes them feel guilty for laughing.

There was something inherently disreputable about Yossarian, always carrying on so disgracefully about the dead man in his tent who wasn’t even there and then taking off all of his clothes after the Avignon mission and going around without them right up to the day General Dreedle stepped up to pin a medal on him for his heroism over Ferrara and found him standing in formation stark naked. (*Ibid.*, p. 110)

[...] ‘Why aren’t you wearing your clothes, Yossarian?’

‘I don’t want to.’

[...]

‘Why isn’t he wearing clothes?’ Colonel Korn demanded of Captain Piltchard and Captain Wren.

‘A man was killed in his plane over Avignon last week and bled all over him,’ Captain Wren replied. ‘He swears he’s never going to wear a uniform again.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 244)

The labyrinthic structure in *Catch-22* makes it so that certain ghosts from the past come back to haunt the present. Like in real life, choices have consequences and if one does not calculate the possible outcomes, surprises might happen.

He had been told this by Yossarian, who made it possible for Dan Daneeka to collect his flight pay each month without ever climbing back into the womb. Yossarian would persuade McWatt to enter Doc Daneeka’s name on his flight log for training missions or trips to Rome.

‘You know how it is,’ Doc Daneeka had wheedled, with a sly, conspiratorial wink.

‘Why take chances when I don’t have to?’

‘Sure,’ Yossarian agreed.

‘What difference does it make to anyone if I’m in the plane or not?’

‘No difference.’ (*Ibid.*, p. 32)

Note that just a few pages back we presented how Doctor Daneeka was stripped of his humanity. Doc Daneeka was afraid of planes, therefore, with Yossarian's help they managed to write his name to make it look like he was flying, but it ended up backfiring. This situation worked as a 'moral of the story' moment. Despite living in such a chaotic world, there is still place for some justice and possibly hope. For instance, Yossarian's situation. Every time he was nearing the number of missions to be able to leave, the number would be raised, starting back at square one. This kept happening until Yossarian realised he could just run away, thus finishing the novel on a hopeful note.

In the end, Heller's goal is to make people listen and take a look at what he is criticising, even if that presenting war from an absurd perspective which leads the audience to laugh at the bitterness of war, institutions and society, but ultimately learning more about serious topics with a sense of humour (Staaby, 2009, p. 68).

After describing the biographical and historical context within which *Catch-22* may be read and analysed, this chapter has delved into some humorous strategies used by Joseph Heller throughout the novel to ultimately make the reader confront the bitter absurdity of war. Some of those strategies will be broken down to their components in the next chapter, in order to examine the challenges rising before the translator, as well as the solutions found to overcome them.

This chapter, besides presenting and comparing between the original and the translations of a few selected excerpts from the novel, also aims to present some peculiarities found in the translations, such as translations of characters' names.

The first section seeks to provide some evidence proving that non-verbal humour is less challenging to translate than its counterpart. The second section will provide some examples of verbal humour and the respective translations and adaptations. Following each table there will be a personal descriptive commentary.

The translations into the different languages are as follows: Portuguese by Eduardo Saló; Spanish by Flora Casas; French by Brice Matthieussent and Romanian by Sanda Aronescu.

3.1 The title

As a preliminary observation, one should note that the challenges for the translator start right at the beginning, with the title. The Portuguese translation of *Catch-22* to *Artigo 22* (Article 22) loses part of the meaning it is supposed to have. The closest terms to 'catch' in Portuguese would be the expression *senão* (*there is a catch = há um senão*) or *apanhado*. The Spanish translation turned the issue around by adapting it to *Trampa 22* (Trap 22), which is a creative way to solve a problem since the TL lacks a term present in the SL. In the Romanian translated version *Clenciul 22* could be referring to a dispute, a cause, a motive. Besides French, which did not translate the title, all the versions have kept the reference to "the catch", as it is at the root of the absurd, and tragic, situation, which the characters try in vain to escape.

3.2 Non-verbal Humour (Referential Humour)

As previously discussed in the earlier chapters, referential humour is that which does not require the aid of grammar or word sense. It is more related to physical humour or jokes where the main attraction is the content and not the way things are phrased. According to Attardo “The former [referential jokes] are based exclusively on the meaning of the text and do not make any reference to the phonological realization of the lexical items (or of other units in the text)” (1994, p. 95).

Catch-22 is rich in this type of humour, presenting jokes that reflect the character of those characters that were formerly presented as being extremely flawed, and the type of humour employed fulfils their roles, reaching a full 360° character wise.

As we have already presented many of non-verbal humour examples in the previous chapter, this one is only going to present three examples with their respective translations.

Table I: The Texan

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
The Texan turned out to be good-natured, generous, and likable. In three days no one could stand him. (p. 4)	O texano revelou-se um indivíduo bem-disposto, generoso e simpático. A tal ponto que, passados três dias, já ninguém o suportava. (p. 14)	El texano resultó ser generoso, bondadoso y amable. Al cabo de tres días nadie lo aguantaba. (p. 27)	Le Texan s'avéra un brave type, généreux et agréable. Au bout de trois jours, personne ne pouvait plus le sentir. (p. 21)	Texanul se dovedi a fi un tip bun la suflet, generos și simpatic. După trei zile, nimeni nu-l mai putea suferi. (p. 12)

For instance, in table I, the joke lies in the fact that the characters thought that the Texan was different from the stereotypical Texan, lavishing him in compliments, but in the end they realise he was no better than that. This type of joke presents little to no issue when translating, as the meaning carries on, no matter the language.

The Portuguese translation presents an addition *A tal ponto que* which is a redundant addition that takes from the joke. The expression *Passados três dias* itself is enough and does not require the previous addition since the message would have got through anyway. Aside from that, as long as there was a contrast, the segment could have been translated word for word and the humorous aspect would not have been lost.

In French, the verb *sentir* in a different context could have a double meaning (to smell/to stand) but in this context, that would be reaching too far. The other translations do not have anything particular to point out, for they were able to recreate the structure in their own languages.

Table II: Conversation between two doctors

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
<p>[...] He keeps complaining about his liver. His liver looks pretty small on this X ray. ‘That’s his pancreas, you dope. This is his liver.’ ‘No it isn’t. That’s his heart. I’ll bet you a nickel this is his liver. I’m going to operate and find out. Should I wash my hand first?’ (p. 489)</p>	<p>[...] Ele queixa-se muito do fígado. De facto, é muito pequeno, a avaliar pelas radiografias. – Isso é o pâncreas, estúpido. O fígado está aqui. – Enganas-te. Isso é o coração. Aposto que o fígado é o que eu digo. De resto, vou operar para ter a certeza. Vês alguma necessidade de lavar as mãos primeiro? (p. 515)</p>	<p>[...] Siempre se está quejando del hígado. En las radiografías sale muy pequeño. –Eso es el páncreas, idiota. El hígado es esto. –De eso nada. Eso es el corazón. Te apuesto un centavo a que el hígado es esto. Voy a operarlo y a averiguarlo. ¿Me lavo las manos antes? (p. 562)</p>	<p>[...] Il se plaint constamment de son foie. Son foie semble d’ailleurs vraiment petit sure cette radio. – Mais mon, imbécile, c’est son pancréas. Voilà son foie. – Mais pas du tout, c’est son cœur. Je te parie cent balles que son foie est là. En tout cas, je vais l’opérer pour en avoir le <i>cœur</i> net. Dois-je d’abord me laver les mains ? (p. 608)</p>	<p>[...] Se tot plînge de ficat. Ficatul lui pare foarte mic pe această radioscopie. – Țăa e pancreasul, tîmpitule. Țăta e ficatul. – Ba nu. Aia e inima. Pariez pe cinci cenți că ăsta e ficatul. Să mă conving cînd o să operez. Să mă spăl pe mîini înainte? (p. 543)</p>

This excerpt's comical element lies in what has been discussed in the previous chapter about 'rational' characters being incompetent. This segment, just like the previous one, does not provide a challenge, as the comic element lies in the discussion and incompetence of the doctors. The only significant difference we point out is when one of the doctors wants to make a bet. In English, Heller uses "I'll bet you a nickel", to which, each translation came up with a different translation currency-wise. In Portuguese, Saló opted just for the verb *Apostar*, omitting any reference relating to currency, which is a usual expression in Portuguese; in Spanish, Casas translated the sentence to *Te apuesto un centavo*; Matthieussent changed the currency to *balls*, which refers to francs and the number shifted from one to one hundred *Je te parie cent balls*, and finally, in Romanian, *Pariez pe cinci cenți* (I bet five nickles). The most important fact is that all translations kept the bet, which is the focus since the doctors are betting on someone's life as if it was just a game.

Table III: Colonel Cargill

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
<p>It took months of hard work and careful misplanning. A person misplaced, disorganized, miscalculated, overlooked everything and opened every loophole, and just when he thought he had made it, the government gave him a lake or a forest or an oilfield and spoiled everything. Even with such handicaps, Colonel Cargill could be relied on to run the most prosperous enterprise into the ground. He was a self-made man who owed his lack of success to nobody.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(p. 25)</p>	<p>Tornavam-se necessários meses de trabalho árduo e meticuloso planeamento errado. Uma pessoa desorganizava, calculava mal, descurava todos os pormenores e provocava toda a espécie de buracos orçamentais, e quando pensava que alcançara o seu objetivo, o Governo oferecia-lhe um lago, uma floresta ou um campo petrolífero e estragava tudo. Não obstante estes óbices, podia-se confiar no coronel Cargill para dirigir a empresa mais próspera do mundo. Era um autodidacta que não devia a sua falta de êxito a ninguém.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(pp. 37-38)</p>	<p>Llevaba meses enteros de esfuerzos y de mala organización bien planeada. Una persona lo desarticulaba todo, lo desbarataba, descuidaba hasta el último detalle y, precisamente cuando pensaba que lo había logrado, el gobierno le daba un bosque o un lago o unos pozos de petróleo y le estropeaba todo. A pesar de tantos obstáculos, se sabía que el coronel Cargill era capaz de destruir el negocio más próspero. Era un hombre que lo había conseguido todo por sí solo y que no le debía a nadie su fracaso.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(p. 51)</p>	<p>Cela prenait des mois de travail acharné et de fausses estimations. Un individu pouvait faire des erreurs, désorganiser les services, se tromper dans ses calculs, tout négliger, choisir délibérément des voies de garage, mais juste au moment où il croyait toucher au but, le gouvernement lui donnait un lac, une forêt ou un gisement pétrolifère, et gâchait tout. Malgré de tels handicaps, on pouvait compter sur le colonel Cargill pour couler l'entreprise la plus prospère. C'était un <i>self made man</i> qui ne devait ses échecs à personne.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(pp. 46-47)</p>	<p>A fost nevoie de luni întregi de muncă asiduă și de o proastă planificare bine gândită. O persoană prost plasată, dezorganizată, necalculată, trecea peste toate și deschidea fiecare porțiță și, tocmai când credea că reușise, guvernul îi dădea un lac, o pădure sau un teren petrolifer, stricînd totul. Dar în ciuda acestor handicapuri, te puteai bizui pe colonelul Cargill pentru a falimenta cea mai prosperă afacere. Era un om care se ridicase prin propriile mijloace și care nu datora nimic nimănui nereușita lui.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(p. 36)</p>

Table III is a mixed example that shows both non-verbal and verbal humour. It is mostly comical because it is written in a contradictory way. Usually, people are hard workers, and they work hard for everything, but Major Major's dad does the complete opposite. According to some authors mentioned in the first chapter, this contradiction is believed to be verbal humour since the expected structure is switched, however, translation-wise, it does not provide much challenge to the translator, which it would deem it as non-verbal. The important part in this excerpt though, is the mistranslation of "Even with such handicaps, Colonel Cargill could be relied on to run the most prosperous enterprise into the ground." In Portuguese, the sentence has completely lost its meaning by the simple omission of the expression "[run] into the ground". Instead of running an enterprise into the ground, the idea of collapsing, Colonel Cargill is seen as fit to run the most prosperous enterprise. Whether this was done on purpose or not, it is a mistranslation. The expression might not be translated exactly into the other languages, but the use of verbs such as *destrózar*, *couler*, *a falimenta* manages to maintain the idea that the expression in English set.

3.3 Verbal humour

Verbal humour is that which relies on the unique perks of a language, playing with the meaning of words or sounds or by twisting grammatical rules. Unlike referential humour, it is not related to physical humour or jokes where the main attraction is the content. This type of humour can be found in puns, which are one of the hardest instances of humour to translate. According to Laurian (1992) “[...] the translation of the latter [verbal humour] is either impossible or must rely on unsystematic correspondences between the codes, or on sophisticated recreations of the same kind of meaning/sound correlation.” (as cited in Attardo, 1994, pp. 95-96).

Table IV: Insults

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
<p>‘That dirty goddam midget- assed, apple-cheeked, goggle-eyed, undersized, buck toothed, grinning, crazy sonofar-bitchin-bastard!’ Yossarian sputtered.</p> <p>(pp. 168-169)</p>	<p>- O grandessíssimo, alternadíssimo e alucinado filho da mãe de dentes saídos!</p> <p>(p. 186)</p>	<p>-¡Ese cerdo hijo de puta enano, loco, maricón! – bramó Yossarian.</p> <p>(p. 212)</p>	<p>– Ce salaud de nabot aux joues en pomme d’api, aux yeux globuleux, ce sous- développé, ce couillon d’enfant de putain ! marmonna Yossarian.</p> <p>(p. 223)</p>	<p>– Ticăloșitura asta, nebunul astă rînjit, stîrpitura asta cu cur de pitic, cu obraji ca merele, cu ochii scoși din orbite, cu dinții zîmbați ! șuieră Yossarian.</p> <p>(p. 193)</p>

English is known for being able to make long descriptions using adjectives only, without the need to resort to connectors, which is not possible to recreate in the other four languages. The other languages may resort to comparisons and the use of connectors. As the next table portrays, not all translations followed the insults from the original or the order is mixed.

Table IV – 1: Insults (Side to Side)

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
1. dirty goddam midget-assed	-	cerdo, enano	salaud de nabot	ticăloșitura, cu cur de pitic
2. apple-cheeked	-	-	aux joues en pomme d'api	cu obraji ca merele
3. goggle-eyed	-	-	aux yeux globuleux	cu ochii scoși din orbite
4. undersized	-	-	ce sous-développé	stîrpitura
5. buck toothed	de dentes saídos!	-	-	cu dinții zîmbați
6. grinning	-	-	-	rînjit
7. crazy sonofar-bitchin-bastard	alucinado, filho da mãe	loco, hijo de puta	ce couillon d'enfant de putain	nebunulastă
8. -	-	maricón	-	-
9. -	grandesíssimo	-	-	-
10. -	alternadíssimo	-	-	-

According to numbers 1 through 7, the Romanian translation is the only one that maintained the insults or adapted them to a similar variation that would sound more natural in Romanian, although the structure sounds satirical, almost theatre-like. Not all the expressions are exactly accurate, such as ‘this shorty with a midget ass’ and the repetition of the preposition ‘with’ (*cu*) which takes from the natural flow. As it can be seen, French omitted the ‘buck toothed’ and ‘grinning’ references and like in Romanian, it repeats ‘that’ (*ce*). Portuguese is probably the only one that comes closer to recreating the same intensity and structure that does not need to resort to connectors. By using the superlative, it adds to the intensity lacking in the other translations. The use of the superlative adds to the frustration that Yossarian feels, but overall, so does the Spanish translation, despite having regular insults that can be heard in a day-to-day situation, Overall, this one of the examples where a translator probably focused on making the insults sound natural instead of trying to recreate the SL format.

Table V: Rhymes

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
<p>‘Oooh!’ screamed Hungry Joe. ‘Oh! Oooh! Ooooooh!’ ‘It sure is a pleasure not having Flume around in the mess hall anymore. No more of that “Pass the salt, Walt.”’ ‘Or “Pass the bread, Fred.”’ ‘Or “Shoot me a beet, Pete”’ ‘Keep away, keep away,’ Hungry Joe screamed. ‘I said keep away, keep away, you goddam stinking lousy son of a bitch.’</p> <p>(p. 143)</p>	<p>– Oooh! – voltou a uivar Joe Faminto. – Oh! Oooh! Ooooooh!</p> <p>– Não haja dúvida de que é agradável já não contarmos com a presença de Flume na messe. Acabou-se o «Passa o sal, animal».</p> <p>– Ou «Atira-me uma beterraba, crava».</p> <p>– Ou «Passa o pão, comilão».</p> <p>– Não te aproximes, não te aproximes! – gritava Joe Faminto. – À distância, à distância, tinroso filho da mãe!</p> <p>(p. 160)</p>	<p>–¡Aaaaah! -chilló Joe el Hambriento- ¡Ah! ¡Aaaah! ¡Aaaaaah!</p> <p>–No cabe duda de que es una alegría no ver a Flume en el comedor. Se acabó lo de «Pásame la sal, chaval».</p> <p>–Y «Pásame la pimienta, parienta».</p> <p>–Y «Pásame ese plato, jabato».</p> <p>–¡Vete de aquí! –bramó Joe el Hambriento–. ¡He dicho que te vayas de aquí, cerdo, hijo de puta, mamón!</p> <p>(p. 184)</p>	<p>– Oooh! brailla Hungry Joe. Oh ! Oooh ! Ooooooh !</p> <p>– Mais quel plaisir de ne plus voir Flume au mess Finis, tous ces “Passe-moi le sel, Marcel”.</p> <p>– Ou “Envoie-moi le pain, Firmin”.</p> <p>– Ou “File-moi une betterave, Gustave”.</p> <p>– Tirez-vous ! Tirez-vous ! rugit Hungry Joe. J’ai dit tirez-vous, espèces d’ignobles raclures de fils de pute.</p> <p>(p. 192)</p>	<p>– Oooh! urlă Joe Flămîndul. Oh! Ooh! Oooooh!</p> <p>– Oricum, e foarte plăcut să nu mai dăm ochii cu Flume la popotă. N-o să mai auzim „Dă-mi sarea, Walt!”</p> <p>– Sau „Pescuiește-mi o bucată de sfeclă, Pete!”.</p> <p>– Sau „Dă-mi pâinea, Fred!”.</p> <p>– Dă-te la o parte, dă-te la o parte! urlă Joe Flămîndul. Am zis să te dai la o parte, dă-te la o parte, lepădătură mizerabilă și împuțită!</p> <p>(p. 167)</p>

Heller's use of rhyme is supposed to evoke a funny feeling by making the food rhyme with the names.

In the SL the format is ingredient-proper noun rhyme: 'salt', 'Walt'; 'bread', 'Fred'; 'beet', 'Pete'. Therefore, it can be assumed that the intent here was to make it comical by making them rhyme. Hence, this kind of rhyme is expected to be present in the translation. The Portuguese translation keeps the ingredient names 'sal', 'pão', 'beterraba', but adapts the second part to words that rhyme, hence giving up on people's names. 'Sal', 'animal'; 'pão', 'comilão'; 'beterraba', 'crava'. Note that the last two rhymes are inverted since the beet was supposed to be the third rhyme but here appears in second. The translation also maintains the SL verbs, which is not mandatory.

The Spanish translation maintains 'salt', but the other ingredients were switched to pepper (*pimienta*) and plate (*plato*). As for the names, those were changed for Spanish informal slang, *chaval*, *parienta* and *jabato*. The translation repeats the same verb for all three actions.

The French translator decided to switch the verbs but kept the same ingredients. By choosing to keep the ingredients, Matthieussent had to adapt the names to maintain the rhymes, therefore changing them to *Marcel*, *Firmin* and *Gustave*.

The Romanian translation is the only translation that completely ignored the rhyme. The translator chose to keep the names in English and translating most of the content, adding few changes, mostly visible in the second example 'fish me a piece of beet, Pete.'

Table VI: References (Proper Names)

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
<p>A lesser man might have wavered that day in the hospital corridor, a weaker man might have compromised on such excellent substitutes as Drum Major, Minor Major, Sergeant Major, or C. Sharp Major, but Major Major's father had waited fourteen years for just such opportunity, and he was not a person to waste it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(p. 91)</p>	<p>Um homem de vontade menos forte teria sucumbido à emoção naquele dia no corredor do hospital e talvez preferisse outros nomes, como Drum Major, Minor Major, Sergeant Major, ou C Sharp Major⁵, porém, o pai de Major Major aguardara catorze anos para que surgisse aquela oportunidade e não se achava na sua índole desperdiçá-la.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(p. 108)</p>	<p>Un hombre menos entero o más débil podría haber llegado a un compromiso con sustitutos tan excelentes como Segundo, Secundino o Primitivo, pero el padre del Digno Coronel llevaba catorce años esperando semejante oportunidad, y no era de las personas capaces de desperdiciarla.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(p. 125)</p>	<p>Un homme d'une trempe inférieure à la sienne aurait pu hésiter ce jour-là, dans le couloir de l'hôpital, un homme plus faible aurait pu s'accommoder d'approximations acceptable, telles que Tambour Major, Mineur Major, Sergeant Major, mais le père de Major Major avait attendu quatorze ans ce jour, et il n'était pas homme à le laisser sans agir.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(pp. 127-128)</p>	<p>Un bărbat mai slab din fire poate că ar fi ezitat în ziua aceea pe coridorul spitalului, un bărbat mai nevolnic ar fi făcut poate un compromis, cu substitute precum Tambur Major, Minor Major, Sergeant Major sau Do Diez Major, dar tatăl maiorului Major aşteptase paisprezece ani o asemenea ocazie și nu era omul care s-o rateze.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(p. 108)</p>

⁵ [The Portuguese edition contains a footnote that states the following:
Major Tambor, Major Inferior, Sargento-Ajudante e Dó Sustenido Maior, respectivamente (*N. do T.*)]

This extract plays on the fact that Major Major could have been named anything else, then introducing the joke that ties Major to music or the military. On the one hand Sergeant Major and Drum Major are military references, the first being a rank and the second someone who leads a military band. On the other hand, Drum Major could also be referring to a marching band leader. Minor Major and C. Sharp Major are clear references to the respective music scales.

For this reference-type joke to work, Major Major's name could have been translated to the equivalents (Maioir, Mayor, Majeur, Major) since the beginning of the book for consistency purpose. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the joke was 'doomed' to not work from the beginning. In Portuguese and in French the name was kept exactly as it is in English, and in Spanish it was changed to *Digno Coronel*, consequently, which meant the translator had to come up with another solution to express any kind of joke that is name related.

Romanian had an easier task this round as Major/Minor are the same as in English and *Tambur Major* is an old term for someone who leads a marching band, and C. Sharp Major was adapted to the Romanian version. As a result, the translation does not appear to have been difficult for the translator, as the joke comes out quite naturally.

The Portuguese translator opted to keep the name variants in English. This may be the same case as seen in most Portuguese translations, where names are kept from the source language and thus the joke is explained in a footnote. The only name in the novel that was translated to Portuguese is Hungry Joe's, which is more of a nickname.

The Spanish translation presents *Segundo*, *Secundino*, both meaning 'Second', and *Primitivo* meaning 'Primitive'. The choice of these names portrays a dysfunctional relationship between Major Major and his father as it is assumed that no loving dad would name their son 'Primitive'. This not the first time that the Spanish translation diverges from the English while trying to maintain the comic aspect.

The French translator was able to mimic three of the names but omitted 'C. Sharp Major'.

Table VII: Set Phrase 1

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
<p>‘Darling, we’re going to have a baby again,’ she would say to Yossarian every month. ‘You’re out of your goddam head’ he would reply. ‘I mean it baby,’ she insisted. ‘So do I.’ ‘Darling, we’re going to have a baby again,’ she would say to her husband. I haven’t the time,’ Lieutenant Scheisskopf would grumble petulantly. ‘Don’t you know there’s a parade going on?’</p> <p>(p. 74-75)</p>	<p>– Vamos voltar a ter um filho, querido? – propunha a Yossarian, todos os meses. – Estás doida. – A sério, amor. – Vamos voltar a ter um filho, querido – sugeria ao marido. – Não tenho tempo – grunhia o tenente Scheisskopf, em tom petulante. – Não sabes que vai haver uma parada?</p> <p>(p. 90-91)</p>	<p>–Vamos a tener un niño otra vez, cielo –le decía a Yossarian un mes tras otro. –Estás de los nervios – replicaba él. Lo digo en serio, amor mío –insistía ella. –Y yo. –Vamos a tener un niño otra vez, cielo –le decía a su marido. –No tengo tiempo -rezongaba malhumorado el teniente Scheisskopf-. ¿Es que no sabes que se está preparando un desfile?</p> <p>(p. 108)</p>	<p>« Chéri, nous allons de nouveau avoir un bébé, disait-elle tous les mois à Yossarian. – T’es complètement cinglée, répliquait-il. – Je ne plaisante pas, mon chou. – Moi mon plus. » « Chéri, nous allons de nouveau avoir un bébé, disait-elle à son mari. – J’ai pas le temps, grommelait alors le lieutenant Scheisskopf sur un ton énervé. Tu ne sais donc pas qu’il y a un défilé aujourd’hui ? »</p> <p>(p. 108)</p>	<p>– Scumpule o să avem iarăși un puiuț, îi spunea ea lui Yossarian in fiecare lună. – Ești nebună de legat, îi răspundea el. – Vorbesc serios, puiuț, insista ea. – Și eu. – Scumpule o să avem iarăși un puiuț, îi spunea soțului ei. – N-am timp, mormăia iritat locotenentul Scheisskopf. Nu știi că are loc o paradă?</p> <p>(p. 91)</p>

Heller seems to enjoy playing with the reader's mind as he shows a preference for set phrases that create in the reader a certain expectation but end up completely different. In this case, the reader expects Lieutenant Scheisskopf to say, "Don't you know there is a war going on?" only to end up having him worry about the parade. Notice how the comic element is in the little aspects. Indirectly, Heller is criticising Lieutenant Scheisskopf for caring more about the parade than the actual war, or even his wife. This subtlety is very difficult to capture and is reflected in the translations.

In Portuguese, *Não sabes que vai haver uma parada?* (Don't you know there is going to be a parade), the verb tense does not match the one in English. Despite this difference, the sentence allows the change between war and parade. In order to correct the time tense, the translation would need slight adaptations because then it would be harder to accommodate both 'parade' and 'war' in one single sentence. The translation could have been, *Não sabes que estamos a meio de uma guerra/ Não sabes que estamos a meio de um desfile.*

In Spanish *¿Es que no sabes que se está preparando un desfile?* 'Don't you know that a parade is being prepared?' does not prepare the reader to expect something relating to war. Perhaps finding a verb that allows the shift between both terms would be a solution *¿No sabes que se ha desatado un desfile?/¿No sabes que se ha desatado una guerra?*

The French translation needs a slight modification in order to fit both war and parade, as the addition of *aujourd'hui* conflicts with war, since no war is referred as 'happening today'. Therefore *Tu ne sais donc pas qu'il y a un défilé ? Tu ne sais donc pas qu'il y a une guerre ?*

Nu știi că are loc o paradă?/ Nu știi că are loc un război? is the only translation that work both ways without needing any type of adaptation and conveys the same as in English.

As it was mentioned, this little aspect was not taken in mind by most translations, showing what an important role interpretation plays.

Table VIII: Set Expression

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
<p>On long winter evenings he remained indoors and did not mend harness, and he sprang out of bed at the crack of noon every day just to make certain that the chores would not be done.</p> <p>(p. 90)</p>	<p>Nos longos serões de Inverno, conservava-se em casa, para saltar da cama ao romper da alvorada, a fim de se certificar de que as tarefas não seriam executadas.</p> <p>(p. 107)</p>	<p>En las largas tardes de invierno se quedaba en casa y no arreglaba las herramientas, y saltaba de la cama al rayar el mediodía un día tras otro para asegurarse de que no se realizaran las tareas cotidianas.</p> <p>(p. 124)</p>	<p>Pendant les longues soirées d’hiver, il restait chez lui, les doigts de pied en éventail, et sautait du lit sur le coup de midi pour s’assurer que les travaux quotidiens de la ferme ne seraient pas effectués.</p> <p>(p. 126)</p>	<p>În serile lungi de iarnă, stătea în casă, nu repara hățuri, sărea din pat in zorii zilei la amiază, ca să se asigure ca nu făcuse nici o treabă.</p> <p>(p. 107)</p>

Table VIII presents an excerpt from a long running joke about Major Major's dad. The highlighted expression is 'crack of noon' which is a play on 'crack of dawn', used to emphasise how late Major Major's dad woke up to not work on the alfalfa.

The Portuguese translation mistranslated the SL by reading 'crack of dawn' instead of 'crack of noon'. Instead of waking up at noon, Major Major's dad wakes up early, just like other farmers but does nothing about his chores.

The Spanish and French translations employed their equivalents of 'noon' (*mediodía*, *midi*) but adjusted the verbs: in Spanish, *al rayar el mediodía* could be translated as 'at the crack of noon' or more creatively as 'as soon as the first sunrays shone at noon' and in French, *coup* could be translated as 'hit'.

In Romanian, the translator played with the words dawn and noon and by mixing them together presented an informal expression that sounds like a saying that parents like to use when their kids wake up late: *in zorii zilei la amiază* which translates to 'the crack of dawn at noon'.

Table IX: Alliteration

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
<p>He was a proud and independent man who was opposed to unemployment insurance and never hesitated to whine, whimper, wheedle, and extort for as much as he could get from whomever he could.</p> <p>(p. 90)</p>	<p>Era um homem orgulhoso e independente que se opunha ao seguro do desemprego e nunca hesitava em gemer, choramingar e extorquir até onde podia de todos os que se lhe deparavam.</p> <p>(p. 107)</p>	<p>Era un hombre orgulloso e independiente que se oponía al seguro de desempleo y que no dudaba en lloriquear, lamentarse y engatusar con tal de sacarle lo más posible a quien le fuera posible.</p> <p>(pp. 124-125)</p>	<p>C'était un homme fier et indépendant, ennemi déclaré des assurances contre le chômage, et qui n'hésitait jamais à gémir, pleurnicher et se lamenter pour extorquer un maximum à n'importe qui et à tout le monde.</p> <p>(p. 127)</p>	<p>Era un bărbat demn și independent, care se opunea fondului de șomaj și nu pregeta niciodată să se văicărească, să se tînguiscă și să se lingușescă, pentru a stoarce cât mai mult de la oricine putea.</p> <p>(pp. 107-108)</p>

Table IX presents an instance of alliteration (whine, whimper, wheedle). According to the Oxford Dictionary, an alliteration is “the use of the same letter or sound at the beginning of words that are close together [...]”. The use of this rhetorical device sets the translator a challenge as these are not only particular to each language but they also have different stressed syllables. In English the stress is in the first syllable (Whi-ne, whim-per, whee-dle).

Saló presents ‘gemer’ and ‘choramingar’ and omits one of the enumerations. The challenge is clearly not in the portrayal of the emotions but in the recreation of the alliteration.

In Spanish, there was an attempt to make the words rhyme by using them in the infinitive but the verb *lamentarse* needs an auxiliar, like ‘to lament’ in English, that comes after the the -ar. Therefore, only two of the three verbs rhyme and stress on the same syllable, ‘lloriquear’ and ‘engatusar’.

French presents ‘gémir’, ‘pleurnicher’ and ‘se lamenter’ which also lack an alliteration and do not completely rhyme like in the previous two translations.

Aronescu is also unable to recreate the alliteration present in the SL but presented two solutions to the problem: the repetition of the auxiliar verb *să se* to create a similar effect at the beginning of each verb and making all the verbs rhyme: *să se văicărească*, *să se tînguiscă* and *să se lingușescă*, all of which have the stress in the last syllable. The list like presentation of the things Major Major’s dad was ready to do adds to the comical character. The Romanian translation seems to be the only one that focused on other aspects than just translating the verbs. Although it is not a necessary step to achieve the comical effect, it is important to share the issues that translators are faced with.

Table X: Homonym

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
‘Where were you born?’ [...] ‘On a battlefield,’ he answered. ‘No, no. In what state were you born?’ ‘In a state of innocence.’ (pp. 487-488)	– Onde nasceu? [...] – Num campo de batalha – respondeu a meia voz. – Não é isso. Em que estado veio ao mundo? – Num estado de inocência. (p. 514)	¿Dónde nació? [...] –En un campo de batalla – contestó. –No, no. ¿En qué estado nació? –En estado de gracia. (p. 561).	« Où êtes-vous né ? » [...] « Sur un champ de bataille, répondit-il. – Non, non. Dans quel Etat êtes-vous né ? – Dans un état d’innocence. (p. 606)	– Unde te-ai născut? [...] – Pe un cîmp de bătălie, răspunse el. – Nu, nu. În ce stat te-ai născut? – În statul pe pat. (p. 542)

Table X presents an example of a homonym, words that share the same spelling and pronunciation, but with different meanings. Here, we can read ‘State’ as a country or government or a part of a larger country and ‘state’ as an emotion, usually presented as ‘being in a state of...’.

In the excerpt, a colonel was clearly asking Yossarian in which of the 50 States he was born, but either by wittiness or miscommunication, Yossarian answers in what state of emotion he was born in. The issue that may arise for translations is a cultural one, and the way they adapt the phrase, either to make it look closer to the source text or try to adapt the joke. The bigger problem would be if one of the translations does not the same double meaning for the word ‘state’, thus being unable to play the same way the SL managed.

All translations started by asking the same question: where he was born. The differences begin to surface when asking about the State. In the ST, when the first miscommunication takes place, the colonel corrects himself and asks more specifically in what state was Yossarian born, which once again, it is clear he refers to which of the 50 states. In the Portuguese translation, Saló’s TT is less ambiguous and points immediately towards the state of mind ‘In what state did you come to the world’. To keep the misunderstanding, then it should have chosen a more word to word translation: *Em que estado nasceu?*

Casas opted to keep the same ambiguity in Spanish but changed Yossarian’s answer. The translator chose to adapt the answer to ‘a state of grace’ whereas the original and the Portuguese translation kept ‘a state of innocence’. Despite being able to translate it literally, Casas chose to adapt the answer, but still prioritised humour and managed to keep the miscommunication, the latter being a must for the humour effect to take place.

French by far is the only translation that by capitalising the word ‘Etat’, made it obvious to the reader what Major Major was referring to but in the end it makes no difference to the characters because that translation choice is only visible to those reading it.

Aronescu kept the same question and answers, only adapting the last part relating to *statul* which on its own means ‘the state’ but in the specific context means ‘staying’, the last answer being ‘staying in bed’.

Table XI: Word Creation

English	Portuguese	Spanish	French	Romanian
<p>There was a urologist for his urine, a lymphologist for his lymph, an endocrinologist for his endocrines, a psychologist for his psyche, a dermatologist for his derma; there was a pathologist for his pathos, a cystologist for his cysts, and a bald and pedantic cetologist from the zoology department at Harvard who had been shanghaied ruthlessly into the Medical Corps by a faulty anode in an I.B.M. machine and spent his sessions with the dying colonel trying to discuss <i>Moby Dick</i> with him.</p> <p>(p. 10)</p>	<p>Havia um urologista para a sua urina, um linfologista para a linfa, um endocrinologista para as endócrinas, um psicólogo para a psique e um dermatologista para a derme; isto sem falar no patologista para os patos, um quistologista para os quistos e um calvo e pedante cetologista do Departamento de Zoologia de Harvard, que fora raptado impiedosamente para o corpo médico por um ânodo deficiente de uma máquina IBM e passava sessões com o coronel moribundo tentando trocar impressões sobre <i>Moby Dick</i>.</p> <p>(p. 21)</p>	<p>Tenía a su disposición un alergólogo para la alergia, un linfólogo para linfa, un reumatólogo para el reúma, un psiquiatra para la psique, un dermatólogo para la derma y, por si fuera poco, un neurólogo para sus neuras, un traumatólogo para sus traumas y un cetólogo calvo y pedante del departamento de zoología de la Universidad de Harvard a quien un ánodo defectuoso de una IBM había desterrado cruelmente a los servicios sanitarios y que dedicaba sus visitas a intentar discutir con sobre <i>Moby Dick</i> con el coronel moribundo.</p> <p>(p. 34).</p>	<p>Il y avait un urologue pour son urine, un lymphologue pour sa lymphe, un endocrinologue pour ses endocrines, un psychologue pour sa psyché, un dermatologue pour son derme ; plus un pathologue pour son pathos, un cytologue pour sa vessie, et un cétologue chauve et pédant, du département de zoologie de Harvard, qui avait été impitoyablement embarqué dans le service de santé par l’anode défectueuse d’une machine IBM, et profitait de ses visites au colonel agonisant pour tenter de discuter de <i>Moby Dick</i> avec lui.</p> <p>(p. 29)</p>	<p>Veneau la el un urolog pentru urina lui, un limfolog pentru limfa lui, un endocrinolog pentru glandele lui endocrine, un psiholog pentru psihicul lui, un dermatolog pentru derma lui; mai veneau un patolog pentru patosul lui, un chistolog pentru chisturile lui și un cetolog de la departamentul de zoologie al Universității Harvard, care fusese recrutat mișelește cu forța în serviciul medical militar din cauza unui anod defect dintr-o mașinărie I.B.M. și își petrece timpul cu colonelul muribund, încercînd să comenteze cu el romanul <i>Moby Dick</i>.</p> <p>(p. 19)</p>

In this final table, Heller makes an enumeration of things that Yossarian has at his disposal at the hospital. This enumeration is made by listing a profession and linking it with the respective job's expertise. In the first few examples this enumeration works, as the job is associated with (usually medical related) etymologically related words with its respective expertise (urologist-urine; lymphologist-lymph; endocrinologist-endocrines). As the enumeration keeps dragging on, the job and specialisation do not match as well (psychology-psyche) and in the end there is no relation between both of them as the job and specialization do not match (pathologist-pathos) or the job does not exist or is not called that (cystologist-cysts).

In Portuguese, four of the enumerations were transposed with little effort (*linfologista-urologista-endocrinologista-psicólogo-dermatologista-cetologista*). The problems start to surface with *quistologista*, which is not a job title as *quistologia* is not a field that exists, cysts being related to a dermatologist's job. The next translation choice reveals a sense of humour in Saló's translation choice as *no patologista para os patos* can be read as equivalent to 'the pathologist for the ducks'.

In the Spanish translation, as already expected, there are some divergences in the terms used since *linfólogo* and *dermatólogo* are the only ones that were kept. The new professions are *alergólogo* (allergist), *reumatólogo* (rheumatologist), *neurólogo* (neurologist) and *traumatólogo* (traumatologist). *Cetólogo* is a term that is not found in RAE's (Real Academia Española) regular entries, although it can be found in RAE's *Diccionario histórico de la lengua española* but does not seem to be commonly used. We would also point out that 'psychologist' has become 'psychiatrist'.

The French translation is the only one that benefits, as most of the terms have equivalences and are in use. The only term that is marked as being dubious is *lymphologue*, which on the one hand it is not present in some dictionaries but on the other hand does seem to be used in written texts. Just like the two previous translations have at least one irregularity, *un cytologue pour sa vessie* translates to 'a cystologist for his bladder'.

In Romanian 'lymphologist', 'urologist', 'endocrinologist', 'psychologist', 'dermatologist' and 'pathologist' and 'cetologist' are all present in the translation. In contrast, *chistolog* is non-existent in the Romanian language.

3.4 The issue of translating proper/fictitious names

One of the most debated issues in the field of translation is the translation of proper or fictitious names. There are scholars who are completely against translating names, and there are also those who advocate translating and even transcribing names to adapt them to the target culture. These theories depend mostly on the culture where they are implemented. However, there is a consensus that names used to be more frequently translated than they are today. Some translators took the more creative route, while today most choose to transcribe the original names.

La historia de la traducción [...] ayudaría poco: ha habido épocas en que se ha tendido a traducir algunos nombres y otras en que el traductor, hipnotizado por la magia del nombre propio, los dejaba sin traducir. (Moya, 1993, p. 233)

In *Catch-22*, not many names are translated, if they are translated at all. The specific case we are referring to is the name Chief Halfoat. The name in English gives the impression of being an expression like “not right in the head”. Of the three translations, only the Spanish one translated the name, thus creating "Jefe Avena Loca". The French, Portuguese and Romanian translations chose to keep the name in English.

The big question that arises is: what to do in this type of situation? Although the section we are alluding to refers to the translation of humour, it fits the problem perfectly, as many of the characters' names have a humorous intention. Is it an oversight or a translator's choice? Is choosing not to translate names that have meanings or jokes depriving the reader of content? Or did the translators not realize or give importance to the name?

The main factor that seems to determine whether the PN should be retained in the target text or an alternative strategy is to be adopted is clearly whether the referent of the PN is assumed to be identifiable by the target audience or not. (Antonopoulou, 2004, p. 220)

Since the Spanish version is being commented on, it is relevant to present studies in the Spanish case. Moya (1993, pp. 235-238) points out that names that belong to real people are generally not translated, except in some cases such as:

- a) the Pope's name;
- b) the names of members of the royal family;
- c) some names of Israeli politicians;

- d) names of sportsmen;
- e) names needing a translation in a certain context, i.e. names from distant cultures that have a meaning;
- f) eponyms.

The names of fictional characters fall into two categories:

- a) names with an unperceivable load of meaning;
- b) names with a transparent load of meaning;

and one important distinction:

- c) names of native Americans in American literature.

Thus, we have the explanation why Chief White Halfboat's name was translated. The Spanish translation takes advantage of the tradition in which it is acceptable to translate Native American names because they have transparent, i.e. obvious, translations (name + adjective).

Así pues, si tuviéramos que establecer una fórmula translatória de nombres propios de ficción de cara al alumno, se podría decir que a mayor carga simbólica del signo del nombre mayor es la obligación de traducirlo. (Moya, 1993, p. 239)

One name that has not been translated but has a symbolic meaning is Scheisskopf's. Those who do not speak German, nor understand it, might not know that the name is translated as 'shit head' or 'stupid'. This is particularly relevant since Scheisskopf is a German sounding name, and the novel takes place in the Second World War. Given that the name has not been translated in the ST nor given any context, it could be that Heller wanted it to be a hidden pun relating to the character. Whether Heller had no intention in revealing the meaning behind the name, the translators had a choice of their own. None of the translators translated the name nor gave any comment about it. It does not impact the story as a whole, but since this paper deals with humour, it would have been interesting to point out the existence of the pun.

The last challenge to point out is Major – de Coverley's case. Despite not being a translation, the dash is an important characteristic in de Coverley's character. Whenever de Coverley's name is mentioned in the original, it is accompanied with a dash. There is no explanation as to why this might be, but we assume that people simply do not know

his name and hesitate for a moment as if waiting for him to fill in the gaps, but it never happens. In Portuguese and Spanish this dash was changed to an ellipsis which still has the same value as the dash. In French and Romanian however, there is no dash nor ellipsis. The name is simply ‘Major de Coverley’ which removes the comic effect every time someone mentions or addresses him.

Therefore, reinforcing what has already been said, the more symbolic meaning a name has, the more a translator should at least signal the meaning of such name that can act as an inside joke, like in Scheisskopf’s case, especially when in this paper we have been commenting on the importance of humour.

Trying to adopt a descriptive approach as much as possible, this chapter has reviewed and compared some strategies chosen by the translators to deal with different types of comic effect. From unusual collocations to polysemy or neology, this selection of excerpts shows the painstaking efforts made by the translators to solve the multiple challenges encountered. Whether they get the prize, i.e. making the reader laugh, depends, as already argued, on the delicate balance between insightful reading and creative rephrasing.

CHAPTER IV – CONCLUSION

This dissertation had the objective to provide an insight towards humour translation and the role that translators and culture play in it. This paper first dove into the roots of humour and the evolution of its perception throughout the centuries. We aimed to bring forth the different fields that study humour and connect them with the translation field. Whilst presenting these, we revealed the many problems in defining humour and its branches and the issues that a translator might face. Heller's novel serves as a bridge between the theory and the practical aspect, allowing us to describe some of the issues one can meet.

The main point to take from all this is that the translation of humour presents two main problems: it needs to be understood and it needs to be successfully recreated. If we do not understand the comical reference, then we are at risk of ignoring it. If we understand it but are unable to recreate it, then the whole point is lost. Thus, translators must be able to interpret codes and be able to (re)create them.

This is by no means an exhaustive research of the subject matter, as it is a small and specific sample focused on one literary work. Despite that, we brought forth four different translations which would ultimately explore different approaches to humour translation. Given all four translations have one thing in common, their Latin roots, it comes to no one's surprise that they shared some similarities in the way they structured their ideas or translation choices. Nonetheless, they also got to showcase their own individualities. Therefore, the more two (or more) SL and TL share, the easier it is finding a common ground and a solution.

By analysing Heller's novel, we were given the chance to look into dark humour, which here represents referential humour, the 'universal' type of humour, but then showing some restrictions because of its negative connotations. Dark humour might be easier to translate because it is rooted on a shock factor and not so much on the semantics, although it could. On the other hand, despite being a novel filled with humorous and comical bits, it might not be filled with puns or cultural jokes that might be the first thing one expects. Nonetheless we were able to find some peculiarities in Heller's writing. The author's twist to day-to-day expressions is recurrent throughout the book, providing us with some material to work with.

Essentially, the conclusions drawn are that humour translation requires a set of skills and attention like any other subfield of translation does, but it requires from the translator a sense of humour and creativity.

These two years at ISCAP have given me some of the tools I needed to be able to learn more on my own. I have used skills taught in all courses, despite Intersemiotic Translation being the closest to creative writing. Translation shares common values to which we only need to add the individualities of each subfield. By being taught the basics we are able to use and adapt those tools for our own use.

When it comes to future research, it would be interesting to see more focus given to creative writing, focused on humour. There is a scarcity in humour related material in the Translation field unlike in the Linguistics field. Translation lacks material and Linguistics focuses a lot on puns. If both fields worked together, they could expand humour research. Linguists have been studying humour for a long time and possess a lot of material, and the translation section is quite lacking, mostly focusing on specific authors or stories, like this dissertation did. Translators would benefit from a general theory of translation of humour that would allow them to have more insight and tools to properly translate humour, which would also benefit other subfields in translations, since all translations skills help somehow. We hope to see humour translation as a more meaningful part of creative writing.

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