

Translating Death:

The personification of Death in translated fiction

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Abstract

Among natural phenomena and abstract concepts, Death is one of the best represented in art and literature. Death has many names and many faces which change from culture to culture as so does its gender. Due to this wide variety of representations, an issue in translation might arise when a translator is asked to translate a character who already has a pre-conceived portrayal in the target culture. At the very least, grammar related issues will definitely make an appearance since, as Roman Jakobson mentions on his essay *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* (1959), “Der Tod”, German for death, is a male gendered noun while in Russian the word for Death is feminine thus creating two very different personifications. The same happens when translating from Germanic languages into Romance languages and vice versa.

The aim of this thesis is to evaluate how the issue regarding the gendering of Death tends to be solved through an analysis of literary texts and its respective translations, all of them with Death as a character.

Keywords: Death; literary translation; gender; anthropomorphic personification

Resumo

De todos os conceitos abstratos e fenómenos naturais, a Morte é um dos mais representados na arte e na literatura. A Morte possui vários nomes e tem várias caras que se alteram de cultura para cultura, sendo que o mesmo acontece com o seu género. Devido à grande variedade de representações, facilmente se cria um problema relativo à sua tradução, ao tentar traduzir uma personagem que já tem uma imagem pré-concebida na cultura de chegada. No mínimo, problemas de natureza gramatical deverão surgir pois, tal como Roman Jakobson menciona no seu ensaio *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* (1959), “Der Tod”, morte em alemão, é um nome do género masculino, enquanto que na Rússia a palavra para morte é feminina, criando, desta forma, duas personificações bastante diferentes. O mesmo acontece quando se traduz de línguas germânicas para línguas românicas e vice versa.

Com esta tese, pretende-se avaliar como foram resolvidos os problemas relacionados com o género da morte, através da análise dos textos literários e respectivas traduções, todos eles com a morte como personagem.

Palavras-chave: Morte; tradução literária; género; personificações antropomórficas

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

Death is inevitable and it happens to everyone, ergo, it is not at all surprising that, among natural phenomena and abstract concepts, Death is one of the best represented in art and literature around the world. However, the way it is represented changes from culture to culture and can therefore constitute a problem to its translation as a character. The aim of this thesis is precisely to analyse how these cultural differences affect the translation of Death as a character in literature. The goal is to find if there is a certain tendency to foreignize or domesticate the character in terms of the gender attributed to it and to discuss the strategies used by the translators to solve any issues that may appear due to the discrepancy in gender between the source and the target cultures.

But first let us consider how Death has been represented throughout history. Beginning with the cradle of western civilization, the ancient Greeks saw Death personified as a male god named Thanatos, the Greek word for Death; however, Death was also represented in female form as Atropos, the third fate sister responsible for cutting the thread of life. If Death can be represented with two different genders in one single culture, it comes as no surprise that different cultures use different representations.

Female Deaths seem to be very popular in eastern Europe. In Slavic culture the goddess of Death is known as Morana (Abel, 2009), in Latvian mythology, Death is personified as Veļu māte, mother of the dead, (Lurker, 1984) and as Nāves māte, mother Death, who some believe are the same goddess (Mikhailov, 1996) and in Lithuanian mythology the goddess of Death is called Giltine (Abel, 2009). Female personifications are also found in Norse mythology with Hel, the goddess of Death and the underworld (Abel, 2009) and with Pesta, a personification of Death by the plague created during the Black Death. Death is also often female in Polish, French and Spanish cultures (Guthke, 1999) and, in Spanish speaking countries like Mexico, Death is represented by female skeletons like Doña Sebastiana (Guthke, 1999) and Santa Muerte (Chesnut, 2011). In Romania, Death is represented as an old woman (Guthke, 1999), a representation which is also popular in Portugal.

Male Deaths are more common in Germanic cultures, for example the euphemism coined by Matthias Claudius's "Freund Hein" and the Dutch equivalent "Magere Hein" (Guthke, 1999), but are also present in the Celtic and Anglo-American cultures. For the Celts, the Ankou was the representation of Death and its origin is explained in two different tales. One of them says that the Ankou was once an evil prince who lost a bet to Death and the other says that the Ankou is whoever

dies last on New Year's Eve (Abel, 2009). According to the former tale, the Ankou is undoubtedly male, but the latter does allow for a female Ankou, suggesting that a male Ankou might be the norm but is not necessarily the rule. Regarding the Anglo-American culture, the Grim Reaper is most likely the most popular personification. The origins of the Grim Reaper are said to date back to the 14th century C.E as a result of the fatalities caused by the Black Death in a world already hardened by famine (Vovelle, 1986). Around that time, a fascination with the decaying body arose. Despite being less common in funerary art than one might think, representations of mummies and partly decayed corpses called the "transi" or "charogne" started to make an appearance in eastern France and western Germany. The transi later became represented as full skeletons completely past the decaying process (Ariès, 1974). This skeleton figure, which unlike the transi became popular all throughout western Europe, is most likely what's behind the bony figure of today's grim reaper. The transi spread through Europe alongside the Danse Macabre movement. The Danse Macabre was a literary and art movement of Franco-Germanic origins which started around the 14th century C.E. The Danse would start with the transi walking up to the living and leading them away to dance the Danse Macabre. The dead would then dance around the living who would be standing rigid following their respective transi reluctantly (Vovelle, 1986). Each living had their own transi partner for the Danse Macabre, it was an individual death, but in the 15th century, around the year 1460, a great mutation took place in Europe (Vovelle, 1986), a new theme born in Italy changed the way death was portrayed in art and literature. The dead from the Danse Macabre gave way to the Death, a singular character that personifies a more abstract and less aggressive death. This new theme was called the Triumph of Death. The first images from the Triumph of Death are from the 14th century, before the turning point. In these first images Death would take a monstrous form such as a dragon or a demon (Vovelle, 1986), but later it evolved to the transi and then to the skeleton. Male Death personifications are also common in religious representations such as the four horsemen of the apocalypse, the fourth horseman being Death, and the angel of death in Abrahamic religions, who goes by many different names including Azrael, Gabriel and Samael (Abel, 2009). However, Death's representation as an angel can be ambivalent as stated by Guthke, since starting from the Renaissance a trend to depict angels as females was born (Guthke, 1999).

Throughout the years Death has often been also linked with love and lust perhaps more famously expressed by the "Death and the maiden" motif. This motif would portray Death, usually male, seducing a young woman, but the reversing of the roles became popular in the 19th century where Death became female and the seduced party a young man (Ferreira, 2012). It is also relevant to note that female Deaths when in the role of lovers are often depicted in a negative manner as a

seductive and dangerous femme fatale (Ferreira, 2012) which contrast greatly with some of the more calm and welcoming Death personifications.

With such a wide range of different representations it is difficult to pinpoint what the rule is when it comes to gendering Death, especially taking into account that some cultures even have multiple representations of different gender to the same phenomena. Some scholars like Roman Jakobson believe that grammatical gender is what prompts the gendering of the personification of nouns. He believes that the meaning of things is assigned to linguistics and to the word itself (to the sign) instead of the object the word represents and that importance should be given to grammatical categories when trying to define meaning. Regarding gender, Jakobson states that “Even such a category as grammatical gender, often cited as merely formal, plays a great role in the mythological attitudes of a speech community. In Russian the feminine cannot designate a male person, nor the masculine specify a female. Ways of personifying or metaphorically interpreting inanimate nouns are prompted by their gender.” (Jakobson, 1959) This logic seems to apply to Vovelle’s description of the Death personifications from the Triumph of Death movement to which he claims that since the movement was born in Italy and “la morte”, death in Italian, is grammatically female, the personifications as a transi and as a skeleton were seen as female. The transi form would even retain her hair. He adds that Death’s gender was also female in France for the same reason as in Italy, but for the Germanic countries, in which the grammatical gender for the word death is male, the skeleton was male. (Vovelle, 1986)

But others like Guthke, despite recognizing the influence grammatical gender might have on the personification process, believe that it is not the only deciding factor involved. To illustrate his point, he mentions a few examples from various cultures in which Death is portrayed with a gender that goes against that language’s grammatical gender (e.g., Calderón de la Barca’s *La cena del rey Baltasar*). To Guthke, a more interesting question is “how and why words signifying nothing specifically male or female (such as “death”) are endowed with masculine or feminine grammatical gender in the first place?” (Guthke, 1999). He then cites the historian Morton W. Bloomfield to link personifications with primitive animism. Guthke agrees with the historian and concludes that the gender attributed to abstract concepts such as Death are most likely determined by primitive animism instead of “the lingering effect of defunct or obsolescent grammatical gender”. (Guthke, 1999)

The following chapters will show some examples of how Death has been personified in literature and, more importantly, how it was translated, taking into consideration the issues created by the gender itself as well as a consequence of the decisions made by the translators. Now that this introduction i.e., chapter 1, is nearly finished, the methodology used will be explained in chapter 2.1, followed by the introduction of the corpus in 2.2. After that, the general results will be shown in the

form of a table in chapter 3.1 and in 3.2 an individual analysis for each text will be made where the results and the issues found in the translations will be discussed more in depth. In chapter 4, there will be a more thorough discussion of the issues created by the translations, this time regarding all the texts at once. Chapter 5 finalizes the thesis with a conclusion summarizing the issues discussed and highlighting the most interesting findings.

Chapter 2. CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Methodology

To properly achieve the goals set for this thesis, a small corpus was gathered of literary texts in which Death features as a character. It was important to have a wide range of languages in order to be able to generalize from the results. The focus was on western European languages, since these are the languages that I as the author can more easily understand as well as find more information on. English was chosen as the main source language present in the corpus for two reasons: firstly, due to the amount of material available, and secondly, due to the influence of Anglo-American literature and culture in the western world.

As for the translations, German was chosen for being a western European language with grammatical gender and a matching male Death to the source texts. Portuguese, Spanish and French were chosen for the opposite reason. They are all grammatically gendered languages with a traditionally female Death. Since it is more interesting to compare male-to-female translations than male-to-male translations, Romance languages appear in a bigger number compared to the Germanic ones.

It was relatively easy to have access to all the source texts and the same can be said to the majority of the translations, since eBook versions were readily available online. However, the Portuguese translations were much harder to find, as some of them were not even being sold anymore. They were all found in the Portuguese National Library, however, and, unlike the eBook versions which all provide a single translator, for some of the source texts, two different Portuguese target texts were found, from two different translators.

Easier to find were the Brazilian Portuguese translations, some of which will be also studied in this thesis, either due to the lack of a European Portuguese translation or because they offer an interesting solution to the issues being discussed.

2.2. Corpus

The corpus consists of ten different works and their respective translations in up to four different languages. Most of the source texts are in English, and in this case, the translations studied are in Portuguese, Spanish, French and German. In one case where English is not the source language, the English translation is included alongside the others.

The main condition for a book to be selected as part of this corpus was that Death itself needed to be a character, regardless of the importance of its role. For that reason, the list is limited to a small number of source texts, due to many Death characters being a servant of Death and not Death personified, usually humans tasked with the role of the grim reaper.

Another reason for the relatively small size of the corpus is that not all books with Death as a character have been translated (perhaps due to the type of difficulties that will be described here).

The first source text is *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak. This particular text is different from the rest of the corpus, because it is the only one where Death is also the narrator. The reason this text was chosen lies precisely in the differences that might arise between Death as a simple character and Death as a narrator.

The second source text is J.K Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. In this case Death is not an actual character in the main plot of the *Harry Potter* series. Instead, he makes an appearance in a story within the book. Being such a minor character, this Death should be quite straightforward to translate and that is exactly why this text was chosen. It is to provide a view on how Death is translated between cultures without complicated grammatical gender-related issues.

From the third source text until the sixth, all texts belong to the same book series, *Discworld* by Terry Pratchett. The reason is to analyse the evolution of the translations along the series. Will the character of Death remain consistent, or will the gender change depending on the book or the translator? That is the question these four source texts will answer. In order of publication, the four books are *The Colour of Magic* (1983), *Mort* (1987), *Wyrd Sisters* (1988) and *Reaper Man* (1991). There are other books in the series where Death plays a part, some of them with an even more recurring role, but, due to the lack of translations, those books were not selected.

The seventh source text, *Good Omens* is by Neil Gaiman in collaboration with the *Discworld* series author Terry Pratchett. The reason this text was chosen is because Death in *Good Omens* is very similar to the Death from the *Discworld* and so it would be interesting to see if this similarity had any kind of influence in the subsequent translation. Another reason is that in this text all four horsemen of the apocalypse have been personified and not just Death.

Paradise Lost by John Milton is the eighth source text of this thesis. Besides being an epic poem written in blank verse, it is also a much older text with consequently much older translations, it will hopefully offer a different perspective from the other texts which are comparatively more recent.

The ninth source text, and the only one in Portuguese, is *As intermitências da Morte* by José Saramago. Naturally, the importance of this text to this thesis is linked to the source language it was written in, providing a reversed view to all translations mentioned above, which have been translated from a language with no grammatical gender and that typically genders Death as a male.

Unlike the rest of the corpus, the tenth source text, The Sandman series, also by Neil Gaiman, is in comic-book format, and therefore a multimodal text. This means that, in addition to the usual issues regarding translation, there is also the use of image as an extra factor that needs to be considered.

These are the reasons behind the formation of the corpus. Some of the issues found will most likely be common between most of these texts, but each one should bring something new to the table.

Having thus disclosed the reasons behind the texts chosen, an overview of the full corpus is provided below in Table 1.

The abbreviations ST and TT are used to refer to source text and target text respectively. The translations are referred to as TT preceded by its respective language code, resulting in the DETT, ESTT, FRTT and PTTT for the German, Spanish, French and Portuguese translations in that order. The same format will be used to the source texts but with ST instead of TT.

ST	DETT	ESTT	FRTT	PTTT	ENTT
The Book Thief; Markus Zusak (2005)	<i>Die Bücherdiebin</i> ; trans. Alexandra Ernst (2008)	<i>La Ladrona de Libros</i> ; trans. Laura Martín de Dios (2007)	<i>La Voleuse de Livres</i> (2007)	<i>A Rapariga que Roubava Livros</i> ; trans. Manuela Madureira	
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows; J.K Rowling (2007)	<i>Harry Potter und die Heiligtümer des Todes</i> ; trans. Klaus Fritz (2007)	<i>Harry Potter y las Reliquias de la Muerte</i> (2015)	<i>Harry Potter et les Reliques de la Mort</i> ; trans. Jean-François Ménard (2007)	<i>Harry Potter e os Talismãs da Morte</i> ; trans. Alice Rocha Et. al. (2007)	
The Colour of Magic; Terry Pratchett (1983)	<i>Die Farben der Magie</i> ; trans. Andreas Brandhorst (1992)	<i>El Color de la Magia</i> ; trans. Cristina Macía	<i>La Huitième Couleur</i> ; trans. Patrick Couton (1996)	<i>A Cor da Magia</i> ; trans. Mário Dias Correia (2003)	
Mort; Terry Pratchett (1987)	<i>Gevatter Tod</i> ; trans. Andreas Brandhorst (1998)	<i>Mort</i> ; trans. Cristina Macía	<i>Mortimer</i> ; trans. Patrick Couton (1994)	<i>Mort</i> ; trans. Mário Dias Correia (2004) <i>Mort</i> ; trans. Paula Reis (1992)	
Wyrd Sisters; Terry Pratchett (1988)	<i>MacBest</i> ; trans. Andreas Brandhorst (1992)	<i>Brujerías</i> ; trans. Cristina Macía	<i>Trois Soeurcières</i> ; trans. Patrick Couton (1995)	<i>As Três Bruxas</i> ; trans. Mário Dias Correia (2005) <i>As Três Bruxas</i> ; trans. Paula Reis (1991)	
Reaper Man; Terry Pratchett (1991)	<i>Alles Sense!</i> ; trans. Andreas Brandhorst (1994)	<i>El Segador</i> ; trans. Cristina Macía (1993)	<i>Le Faucheur</i> ; trans. Patrick Couton (1998)	<i>O Senhor da Foice</i> ; trans. Ludimila Hashimoto (PT-BR)	
Good Omens; Neil Gaiman, Terry Pratchett (1990)	<i>Ein Gutes Omen</i> ; trans. Andreas Brandhorst (1997)	<i>Buenos Presagios</i> ; trans. María Ferrer	<i>De Bons Présages</i> ; trans. Patrick Marcel (1995)	<i>Bons Augúrios</i> ; trans. Carlos Grifo Babo (2004)	

<i>Paradise Lost</i>; John Milton (1667)	<i>Das Verlorene Paradies</i>	<i>El Paraíso Perdido</i> ; trans. Esteban Fontrodona (2009)	<i>Le Paradis Perdu de Milton</i> ; traduction; trans. Chateaubriand	<i>Paraíso Perdido: poema heróico</i> ; trans. José Amaro da Silva (1789) <i>O Paraíso Perdido</i> ; trans. António José de Lima Leitão (1938)	
<i>Death: the high cost of living (The Sandman series)</i>; Neil Gaiman (1993)	<i>Death (at mycomics.de)</i>	<i>La casa de Muñecas</i> (2001)		Morte; trans. Pedro Vieira de Moura (2018)	
<i>As Intermittências da Morte</i>; José Saramago (2005)	<i>Eine Zeit ohne Tod</i> ; trans. Marianne Gareis (2014)	<i>Las Intermittencias de la Muerte</i> ; trans. Pilar del Rio	<i>Les Intermittences de la Mort</i> ; trans. Geneviève Leibrich (2008)		<i>Death with Interruptions</i> ; trans. Margaret Jull Costa (2008)

Table 1: Overview of the Corpus

The first column lists all ten source texts. The second column lists the German translations. Since most source texts are in English and English and German share the same traditional gender for Death, it made sense to keep these languages next to each other. The third, fourth and fifth columns list the Spanish, French and the Portuguese versions, in that order. In the French and Portuguese columns, some spaces have been left empty and coloured in yellow. This means that a translation for the source text indicated in the corresponding line couldn't be found or is non-existent. As was already mentioned, for some of the source texts there are two different Portuguese translations. Therefore, in lines 4, 5 and 8, two spaces were lined up with one corresponding source text. Also in the Portuguese column, in line 6, a Brazilian Portuguese translation was used, since there isn't a European Portuguese version. The sixth and final column lists the English translation. Since only one of the source texts is in a language other than English, most of the column is filled with the same empty yellow space that represents the inexistence of a translation.

The next chapter will provide the analysis for all of the works present in the table above, beginning with a preliminary analysis in order to ascertain how the character of Death is gendered in all versions. The objective was to determine if Death was represented in the same way in the translations as it was in the source text, or if the gender was changed in order to suit the language and expectations of the target culture. In the case of the Discworld series, there was interest in knowing if the policy was maintained consistently, or if it changed with different translators; and in the case of the multimodal text (*The Sandman*), whether the decision was affected by the visual images. In the case of *As intermitências da Morte* the focus was on the Germanic translations.

After that, a close textual analysis was done of specific cases in order to isolate the various issues regarding the translations as well as the solutions used in each text.

Chapter 3. RESULTS

3.1. Preliminary results

After a first analysis of the corpus, where the intent was to ascertain which gender each source text and each translation attributed to the character Death, the results were as follows:

	ENST	DETT	ESTT	FRTT	PTTT	PTST	ENTT
<i>The Book Thief</i> ; Markus Zusak	male	male	female	female	female		
<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i> ; J.K Rowling	male	male	female	female	female		
<i>The Colour of Magic</i> ; Terry Pratchett	male	male	female	male	female		
<i>Mort</i> ; Terry Pratchett	male	male	female	male	male		
<i>Wyrd Sisters</i> ; Terry Pratchett	male	male	female	male	female		
<i>Reaper Man</i> ; Terry Pratchett	male	male	male	male	male (BR)		
<i>Good Omens</i> ; Neil Gaiman, Terry Pratchett	male	male	male	male	male		
<i>Paradise Lost</i> ; John Milton	male	male	female	male	male		
<i>The Sandman</i> ; Neil Gaiman	female	female	female	N/A	female		
<i>As Intermittências da Morte</i> ; José Saramago		female	female	female		female	female

Table 2. Genders of death in the source texts and their respective translations

The yellow empty squares in this table mean that a translation is not applicable and the N/A means a translation couldn't be found.

Regarding the source texts, almost all gendered Death according to tradition. Seven out of the eight English source texts used a male Death, the exception being the comic series *The Sandman*, where it is female. The reason as to why *The Sandman's* Death is female has most likely to do with the inspiration behind the character, the late model Cinamon Hadley, a friend of Mike Dringenberg, the artist behind Death's design. However, Neil Gaiman has stated in an interview that before seeing Mike's drawings of the character, he imagined her similar to the singer Nico or the actress Louise Brooks (AOL, 1996), which means that the author also had a female Death in mind from the beginning. As for the Portuguese source text, Death is portrayed as a female, as would be expected.

As for the translations, there seems to be a tendency to keep the same gender as the source texts regardless of what tradition suggests. The only language here present that breaks that tendency is Spanish: in six out of the ten cases, the Spanish version switched the character's gender to female. After Spanish, the language with the most gender switches is Portuguese with five out of ten times. Even though the Iberian languages seem to give at least some importance to their traditional rendering of the personification of Death, the gender switch only accounts for around half the translations which suggest that making this change can be very difficult, if not impossible, without altering the source text completely. The reasons for these choices will become clearer while looking into each text individually.

3.2. Textual Analysis

3.2.1 *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

Analysing the texts in the same order they were introduced in the corpus, the first one to be discussed is *The Book Thief*.

As the table of results show, in *The Book Thief* all TTs have gendered Death according to what is more traditional in their cultures.

Death's role in Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* has no speaking lines and no direct interactions with the rest of the characters, however, it is the character who interacts the most with the reader due to its role as narrator of this particular story. Being the narrator, the only dialogues in which Death participates in are interactions with the reader, and, naturally, those are monologues instead of dialogues. One of the implications of this can actually be advantageous for the translator. By interacting with the reader, the narrator will almost always speak in first-person¹ while talking about themselves. This means that pronouns such as "he, she, him, her, his and hers", which are all indicators

¹ unless for some reason the narrator chooses to speak in third-person, but it's very unusual.

of a character's gender, will never be mentioned by the narrator in order to auto-address. To speak about oneself, the narrator's only options are the pronouns "I, my, mine" or the first-person plural pronouns "we, our, ours", as can be seen in the following excerpt:

<p>I could introduce myself properly, but it's not really necessary. You will know me well enough and soon enough, depending on a diverse range of variables.</p> <p>ENST (pg. 14)</p>
<p>Podia apresentar-me devidamente, mas não é de facto necessário. Vocês conhecer-me-ão suficientemente depressa, dependendo de um amplo leque de variáveis.</p> <p>PTTT (pg. 11)</p>
<p>Ich könnte mich ganz förmlich vorstellen, aber das ist gar nicht nötig. Ihr werdet mich schon bald recht gut kennen; wie bald – das hängt von einer Reihe von Umständen ab.</p> <p>TTDE (pg. 10)</p>
<p>Podría presentarme como es debido pero, la verdad, no es necesario. Pronto me conocerás bien, todo depende de una compleja combinación de variables.</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 8)</p>
<p>Je pourrais me présenter dans les règles, mais ce n'est pas vraiment nécessaire. Vous ferez bien assez tôt ma connaissance, en fonction d'un certain nombre de paramètres.</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 5)</p>

Even if the narrator does interact with other characters, as happens in the following excerpt, if there is no dialogue, the result will be the same. That is to say, there will still be hardly any clues as to what the narrator's gender might be.

<p>The second eye jumped awake and she caught me out, no doubt about it. It was exactly when I knelt down and extracted his soul, holding it limply in my swollen arms.</p> <p>ENST (pg. 27)</p>
<p>O Segundo olho acordou sobressaltado e ela apanhou-me, não há a menor dúvida. Foi exactamente no instante em que eu me ajoelhei e extraí a alma dele, segurando-a molemente nos meus braços inchados.</p> <p>PTTT (pg. 24)</p>
<p>Das zweite Auge schrak auf, erwachte und erwischte mich, gerade als ich niederkniete, seine Seele heraustrennte, in meine geschwollenen Arme nahm, wo sie schlaff lag.</p> <p>DETT (pg. 22)</p>

El segundo ojo se despertó de golpe y me vio, no hay duda. Fue justo cuando me arrodillé y arrebaté el alma a su hermano, mientras la sostenía, exangüe, entre mis brazos hinchados.

ESTT (pg. 19)

Le second oeil s'ouvrit brusquement et elle me surprit, cela ne fait aucun doute. J'étais à genoux, en train d'extraire l'âme du petit garçon que je recueillais entre mes bras enflés.

FRTT (pg. 19)

These examples show that, regardless of the language used, a narrator's monologue is unlikely to disclose the narrator's gender. This is advantageous to a translator because if the gender of an anthropomorphic personification is not explicit in the source texts, it means the translator is completely free to attribute whatever gender they think best, which will probably be based on the TT's language grammatical gender, thus erasing any issues concerning the gender of this character.

In order to guarantee that the narrator's gender remains undisclosed, a series of conditions must be met. First, the narrator's gender must be flexible or uncertain, named narrators with gender-specific names, for example, can hardly remain genderless. Second, the gender cannot be directly disclosed by the narrator themselves or by any other character and the narrator should not be an active participant in the story or at least not have any dialogues with the other characters. Third, physical descriptions of the narrator are also to be avoided as well as the overall use of adjectives. If all these conditions are met, there is a good chance that the translator might successfully avoid gender related issues in their translation.

That being said, Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* is not such a case, for it breaks two of these conditions. The first one is direct disclosure by the narrator. Even though Death, throughout the whole text, has never directly stated his gender by saying, for example, "I am a man", there is one instance where very briefly he speaks of himself in third-person:

Still, it's possible that you might be asking, why does he even need a vacation? What does he need distraction from?

ENST (pg. 16)

Ainda assim, é possível que vocês estejam a perguntar: porque é que ela precisa sequer de férias? Precisa de se distrair *de* quê?

PTTT (pg. 12)

Dennoch fragt ihr euch möglicherweise, warum ich überhaupt Urlaub brauche. Ihr wollt wissen, wovon ich mich ablenken muss?

DETT (pg. 12)

<p>Casi siempre consigo salir ilesa. Encuentro un color, aspiro el cielo. Me ayuda a relajarme.</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 9)</p>
<p>Mais, penserez-vous peut-être, pourquoi donc a-t-elle besoin de vacances ? De quoi a-t-elle besoin d'être distraite?</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 6)</p>

This use of “he” by the narrator forces the translator to make a decision. Usually, the immediate question is “what gender shall be attributed to Death”. For German the answer is simple. Since both the source text’s, which is in English, and the target text’s cultures share the same tradition of gendering the personification of Death as a male, the translator should not have any objections to keeping the “he”. However, for languages such as Portuguese, Spanish and French, all of which traditionally gender Death as female, the translator must opt to either keep the original gender intended by the author of the book or to change it in order to accommodate the translation’s target readers, to whom an untraditional male Death could cause some unfamiliarity and unrelatability.

As the excerpts above show, both in the Portuguese and the French target texts here studied, the translator has decided to switch Death’s gender from male to female. The Spanish translator, however, has opted to omit this particular section altogether. Occupying a space, in which in the source text amounts to seven paragraphs, there is a simplified summary of what those paragraphs entailed.

Omission is a valid strategy in translation and one that could be useful to avoid attributing a gender to a certain character. Were this the only instance in the whole text where gender was an issue, the problem could have been solved this way. Still, if the objective was to avoid mentioning a specific gender, there was no need to cut so much of the source material, especially because avoidance by omission is pointless at this point in the text since the narrator’s gender has already been revealed much earlier on. The only effect this omission has is perhaps that, by cutting words such as “work”, “job” and “vacation”, all present in the paragraphs omitted, Death in the Spanish version becomes slightly less relatable, less human, keeping some of that mystical nature that is usually reduced by the personification of phenomena. In comparison, the Death figure in the source text and other translations gives off the idea that they see their task as a job and even express the desire to take some time off, if it were possible, making it seem as if, even if for only a few short paragraphs, Death is not so different from humans.

There is another way around revealing the narrator’s gender. Curiously, the translator who did so was the one that didn’t need to – the German one. As stated before, both the German and the English language have a tradition of personifying Death as a male, so there is no need to avoid

gendering the narrator. However, in this particular excerpt, the translator has decided to ignore the switch to third-person narration and so instead of a revealing “he”, the ambiguous “I” remains. Despite being an effective strategy, the reason for this change was most likely a stylistic one, since not only was the narrator’s gender already revealed by this point in the story, just like in the Spanish version, it also matched the source text’s gender.

The second condition that *The Book Thief* breaks is the use of adjectives.

In the English language, adjectives are not indicators of gender. However, in Portuguese, Spanish, French and even German, adjectives agree with the noun they are qualifying not only in number but in gender as well.

<p>Please, trust me. I most definitely can be cheerful. I can be amiable. Agreeable. Affable. And that’s only the A’s. Just don’t ask me to be nice. Nice has nothing to do with me.</p> <p>ENST (pg. 14)</p>
<p>Por favor, confiem em mim. Eu <i>posso</i> definitivamente ser prazenteira. Posso ser amável. Agradável. Afável. E isso é só nos A’s. Só não me peçam para ser simpática. Simpatia não tem nada a ver comigo.</p> <p>PTTT (pg. 11)</p>
<p>Bitte glaubt mir: Ich kann wirklich fröhlich sein. Ich kann angenehm sein. Amüsant. Achtsam. Andächtig. Und das sind nur die Eigenschaften mit dem Buchstaben »A«.</p> <p>Nur bitte verlangt nicht von mir, nett zu sein. Nett zu sein ist mir völlig fremd.</p> <p>DETT (pg. 10)</p>
<p>Por favor, confía en mí. De verdad, puedo ser alegre. Amable, agradable, afable... Y eso sólo son las palabras que empiezan por «a». Pero no me pidas que sea simpática, la simpatía no va conmigo.</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 8)</p>
<p>Faites-moi confiance. Je peux vraiment être enjouée. Je peux être aimable. Affable. Agréable. Et nous n'en sommes qu'aux «A». Mais ne me demandez pas d'être gentille. La gentillesse n'a rien à voir avec moi.</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 5)</p>

It is important to point out that not all adjectives create an issue to the translation. In the excerpts above, the narrator uses plenty of adjectives to describe himself, some of them with zero consequence to the matter of the narrator’s gender. In the same way that “amiable”, “agreeable”, “affable” all end with “-able”, the French and Spanish translations to these adjectives all end in the same way, and in Portuguese these adjectives all end in “-vel”. The importance of these endings to a

translator is that they are all gender neutral, and are therefore useful in situations where gender indication is to be avoided. Unfortunately, adjectives such as “nice” usually imply that a decision has once again to be made regarding the gender of the character.

From the beginning has the German translation stated that Death is male, same as the source, and the Portuguese, Spanish and French translations have likewise identified Death as female very early on. For this reason, “Nice” has been translated as it normally would, with its most direct match in the target language: “Simpática”; “gentille”. Agreeing the adjective with the gender of the noun as it was previously stated.

However, it is still possible to avoid gendering a character in Romance languages despite having multiple adjectives characterizing it. A translator only has to be fortunate enough to only encounter adjectives with gender neutral translations. Naturally, that will not always happen, but in situations where keeping the gender of a character hidden is imperative, there are still a few solutions. Take the Portuguese translation of this excerpt as an example. “Cheerful” has been translated as “prazenteira” which is a gendered adjective. However, a synonym could’ve been used: “alegre”, as was used in the Spanish translation and which is gender neutral, could have easily replaced the gendered adjective.

If a gender-neutral synonym can’t be found, the translator could try and find a different adjective with a similar enough meaning. For example, later on, the narrator describes himself with the sentence “I’m nothing if not fair”. “Fair” is another adjective that is usually translated with a gendered adjective, “justa” as was used in the Portuguese and Spanish translations. However, “razoável”, for example, despite not being an exact synonym, still portrays the same message with the advantage of being gender neutral. What is more, the number of adequate adjectives available to a translator can be drastically reduced by other factors. In this excerpt, for example, by saying “And that’s only the A’s” limits the translator’s options to only adjectives that start with the letter A. If neither of the options mentioned is viable, there is always omission as a last resort.

Like adjectives, nouns and nicknames can sometimes also be linked to a certain gender. Throughout the source text, the words “saumensch” and “saukerl” can often be found. These are pejorative German nouns that Liesel’s (the main character’s) foster mother often uses to refer to other characters. They are also gender specific: “Saumensch” only refers to women and “Saukerl” to men. The appearance of these type of nouns in the text can only become an issue if the objective is to keep the gender of a certain character undetermined in a translation. If the gender has been already revealed, there is no issue, the translator will simply use the gender appropriate term, just like the translators for *The Book Thief* have done. At the end of the ENST, Death claims Rosa’s soul and mentions that had Rosa seen him she would call him a “saukerl”. In all the translations analysed, the pejorative noun has been kept or changed according to the gender assigned to Death in each TT. In

this way, “saukerl” can be found referring to Death in ENST and in DETT, while the noun has been changed to “saumensch” in PTTT, ESTT and FRTT.

The final point to consider in this analysis of *The Book Thief* has to do with the following excerpt:

<p>“When death captures me,” the boy vowed, “he will feel my fist on his face.”</p> <p>ENST (pg. 187)</p>
<p>— Quando a Morte me capturar — prometeu o rapaz — vai sentir o meu punho na cara.</p> <p>PTTT (pg. 164)</p>
<p>Wenn der Tod mich einfängt, schwor sich der Junge, wird er erst meine Fäuste zu spüren bekommen.</p> <p>DETT (pg. 167)</p>
<p>— Cuando la muerte venga a por mí, sentirá mi puño en su cara — juró el chico.</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 153)</p>
<p>«Quand la Mort viendra me prendre, se jura Max, je lui enverrai mon poing dans la figure. »</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 178)</p>

The phrase “he will feel my fist on his face”, “he” being a male Death, has a violent undertone to which some readers and even translators might feel uncomfortable associating with a female character. Violence, despite its horrific nature, is a common theme in literature. Of course, feminism has come a long way towards gender equality, but some double standards still stand. Physical violence is something that, even today, appears more tolerable when linked with male characters, so reading about a male character threatening to punch a female character in the face is not something the reader would be used to. In this particular case, all translators kept this line of dialogue. Perhaps the fact that the female character in question is not a normal human female, but an anthropomorphic figure helps diminish some of the hesitancy. Punching Death in the face is not so much an act of aggression towards a female, but a metaphorical message representing resilience and will to live. However, even if it was a human female in the place of Death, the dialogue would probably still be kept. Values have changed and the new strive for equality has erased most issues related with what would be considered gender appropriate.

It is unlikely that any translator would find an issue with this excerpt, but this example can still be used to warn against possible differences between genders that will have to be adapted as well, in order to maintain social norms if the gender of a character has been switched.

3.2.2. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* by J.K. Rowling

With regards to the preliminary results, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* has gathered the exact same results as *The Book Thief*: the German translation used its traditional male Death while the Romance languages all changed the character to female.

This is not surprising. Death in *Deathly Hallows* has a much smaller role compared to every other text in the corpus. The anthropomorphic personification only appears in one small part of the text, in the tale of the three brothers, which is a children's tale in the *Harry Potter* fictional universe. As a character from fiction inside fiction, it is arguable if this Death should be even considered a character at all. However, for the purpose of this thesis, Death is considered a character in order to show how, without the interference of certain factors, the norm for translating Death in its simplest state is to do so according to the TT's cultural tradition.

Reading the tale of the three brothers, it is clear that Death's gender has no relevance to the story whatsoever. The same happened with *The Book Thief*, and, for that reason, both texts have been changed to accommodate the TT's reader's expectations.

There are two main reasons as to why translators will favour tradition and choose to domesticate the gender of Death in the TT's. The first one is familiarity. If one culture is used to perceiving Death in a certain way and with a certain gender, it is normal for a translator to wish to accommodate the character's image to that of what their readers are used to. The second reason has to do with text cohesion. Arguably, the reason as to why Death is female in the Romance languages is because grammatically the noun is gendered as feminine. Roman Jakobson has commented on the influence of grammatical gender stating "Even such a category as grammatical gender, often cited as merely formal, plays a great role in the mythological attitudes of a speech community." (Jakobson, 1959).

Grammatically, this creates an issue. If Death is changed into a male, would the articles preceding it also change? Would the TT's read "o Morte", "el Muerte" and "le Mort" instead of "a Morte", "la Muerte" and "la Mort"? Any translator would most likely avoid this solution since it doesn't sound very natural. Even if Death is written as a male, most translators will still keep the agreement between the article and Death's female grammatical gender, making Death's biological male gender clear in a different part of the text.

However, if throughout the text there aren't many instances where Death's gender is stated as a male, or if it is only revealed in a later part of the text, the continuous reading of feminine articles, without any clues that the character might be male, might end in slight confusion if suddenly a reference to a male Death appears. For example, in the next excerpt, Death is angry, an adjective that when translated is usually indicative of the characters gender. It has been translated as such:

And Death spoke to them. He was angry that he had been cheated out of the three new victims, for travelers usually drowned in the river.

ENST (pg. 407)

Und der Tod sprach zu ihnen. Er war zornig, weil er um drei neue Opfer betrogen worden war, denn für gewöhnlich ertranken Wandersleute in dem Fluss.

DETT (pg. 372)

E a Morte falou-lhes. Estava zangada por ter sido defraudada em três novas vítimas, pois normalmente os viajantes afogavam-se no rio.

PTTT (pg. 333)

Y la Muerte les habló. Estaba contrariada porque acababa de perder a tres posibles víctimas, ya que normalmente los viajeros se ahogaban en el río.

ESTT (pg. 291)

— C'était la Mort et elle leur parla. Elle était furieuse d'avoir été privée de trois victimes car, d'habitude, les voyageurs se noyaient dans la rivière.

FRTT (pg. 334)

Because Death's gender was changed and it now corresponds to the grammatical gender of the noun, all these translations sound fluent. However, picturing Death as a male and having decided that the articles should remain in agreement with the grammatical gender instead of the biological one, what other changes could've been made in order to specify the characters gender? One option would be to change the endings of the adjectives. "E a Morte falou-lhes. Estava zangado por ter sido defraudado (...)", although, having a masculine adjective in such proximity to a female article creates the same feeling of lack of cohesion that changing the articles would cause. Not omitting the pronoun in the second sentence could help reduce this feeling of displacement. The French translation has already done so, although with the female pronoun. By substituting "Elle était furieuse (...)" with "Il était furieuse", it makes it clearer that this Death is supposed to be a male and that the adjectives' masculine endings are not a mistake. The alternative would be to apply the same rule to both articles and adjectives, but to a first-time reader that would transmit the idea of a female Death when it is really a male.

Finally, there is also the issue of nouns agreement. At the end of the tale of the three brothers, the youngest brother meets Death as an old friend. It has been translated as such:

And then he greeted Death as an old friend, and went with him gladly, and, equals, they departed this life."

ENST (pg. 409)

Und dann hieß er den Tod als alten Freund willkommen und ging freudig mit ihm, und ebenbürtig verließen sie dieses Leben.

DETT (pg. 373)

E então acolheu a Morte como uma velha amiga, e foi com ela satisfeito e, como iguais, abandonaram esta vida.

PTTT (pg. 335)

Y entonces recibió a la Muerte como si fuera una vieja amiga, y se marchó con ella de buen grado. Y así, como iguales, ambos se alejaron de la vida.

ESTT (pg. 292)

Puis il accueillit la Mort comme une vieille amie qu'il suivit avec joie et, tels des égaux, ils quittèrent ensemble cette vie.

FRTT (pg. 336)

Old friend is also grammatically gendered in Romance languages. Considering Death is a male, there are three different outcomes when translating both of these excerpts into a Romance language. The first is to gender "old friend" in the male form having already done the same to the articles and adjectives relating to Death in the first excerpt. This solution has consistency, Death is identified as a male throughout the text, but the text won't read as natural in the target language as it would if there was cohesion between articles and the noun. The second is to gender "old friend" as male, but keep the articles in the female form. This solution manages to confine that unnatural feeling to the very end of the text which results in, for the most part, a natural read. However, it is not consistent and the fact that the only clue that Death is male comes at the end means that the reader, who most likely has been picturing Death as a female, might end up surprised or even confused. The third is to keep everything in the female form. This solution would be consistent and it would read naturally, but it doesn't work in this particular context because then there would be no way for the reader to know that Death is in fact male.

What this shows is that there is not a perfect solution to switch a grammatically female personification to male, which means that if the character's gender can be accommodated to fit in with the target culture and target grammar then it should be. Since *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, as well as the majority of the corpus' texts, are contemporary fiction, the objective of the translations is simply to provide entertainment to the reader as well as to make profit. Usually, this

type of literature is aimed at the general public and therefore fluency is an important element that should characterize the final product. For a TT to reach this degree of fluency it has to follow the target's language's norms, which explains the tendency to change Death's gender when it is not relevant.

3.2.3. *The Colour of Magic* by Terry Pratchett

Moving on to the *Discworld* series, *The Colour of Magic* is the first source text in the corpus to show some variance within the Romance languages' target texts. The Spanish and Portuguese translations still opted to change Death's gender to female but the French translation has decided to keep it as male, like the source text. This change is not yet visible in the instance where Death is first mentioned:

<p>It is said that when a wizard is about to die Death himself turns up to claim him (instead of delegating the task to a subordinate, such as Disease or Famine, as is usually the case).</p> <p>ENST (pg. 63)</p>
<p>Diz- se que quando um feiticeiro está para morrer, a Morte se apresenta em pessoa para o reclamar (em vez de delegar a tarefa numa subordinada, por exemplo, a Doença ou a Fome, como geralmente faz).</p> <p>PTTT (pg. 33)</p>
<p>Wenn ein Zauberer stirbt, so heißt es, kommt der Tod höchstpersönlich, um ihn ins Jenseits zu geleiten – anstatt, wie so oft, einen Untergebenen damit zu beauftragen, zum Beispiel Krankheit oder Hunger.</p> <p>DETT (pg. 25)</p>
<p>Se dice que, cuando un mago está a punto de morir, la Muerte en persona se presenta a recogerle, en vez de dejar la tarea a un subordinado, como la Enfermedad o el Hambre, que es lo más corriente.</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 22)</p>
<p>On raconte qu'à l'instant de la mort d'un mage, la Mort vient le réclamer en personne (au lieu de confier la tâche à un subalterne tel que la Pestilence ou la Famine comme c'est souvent le cas).</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 27)</p>

If the gender of Death was to be decided by this excerpt alone, it would seem that all TTs have chosen to use their cultures' traditional gender for the character. This is because, in this excerpt, the only indicator of gender are the articles preceding the noun, all of which have been translated

according to grammatical gender instead of biological gender, including the FRTT, which, as shown in Table 2, has a biologically male Death in this text.

Before advancing to the next excerpt, another interesting element has to do with the translation of “subordinate”. In the PTTT, the word “subordinate”, which is gender neutral in English, has been translated as “subordinada” which is feminine in Portuguese. The reason behind it is that the subordinates mentioned in the excerpt are Disease and Famine. “A Doença” and “A Fome” both have a feminine grammatical gender and neither are mentioned again in the text nor are they characters in this story, thus making their gender irrelevant to the plot, and so the same tendency to change biological gender to match grammatical gender that has been seen so far happens to these two concepts as well. The Spanish translation keeps “subordinate” as male because the word for “Famine”, “El Hambre”, is also grammatically masculine, and when both genders are present, the masculine article is usually used. The French translation, however, could have changed “subordinate” to female as well seeing that both “La Pestilence” and “La Famine” are grammatically female, but since the two concepts are only being used as examples of subordinates, implying that there are others, some of which could possibly be male, it is the translator’s choice to change the gender or in this case keep it, since both ways are grammatically correct.

The next excerpt is where the translator’s choice regarding the gender of Death has been made clear:

<p>I WAS SURPRISED THAT YOU JOSTLED ME, RINCEWIND, FOR I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THEE THIS VERY NIGHT.</p> <p>ENST (pg. 130)</p>
<p>- FIQUEI SURPREENDIDA QUANDO CHOCASTE COMIGO, RINCEWIND, PORQUE TENHO UM ENCONTRO CONTIGO ESTA NOITE.</p> <p>PTTT (pg. 65)</p>
<p>ICH BIN ÜBERRASCHT, DASS DU MICH ANGESTOSSEN HAST. WEISST DU, HEUTE NACHT HABE ICH EINE VERABREDUNG MIT DIR.</p> <p>DETT (pg. 53)</p>
<p>—Me sorprende que hayas tropezado conmigo, Rincewind, porque tengo una cita contigo esta misma noche.</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 47)</p>
<p>— J’AI ÉTÉ SURPRIS QUAND TU M’AS BOUSCULE, RINCEVENT, PARCE QUE J’AI RENDEZ-VOUS AVEC TOI CE SOIR MÊME.</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 59)</p>

Since adjectives can be used to determine gender in the Romance languages, the translation of “surprised” means that a literal translation of the excerpt in the PTTT, ESTT and FRTT would mean attributing a gender even though in the ST this excerpt is actually gender neutral. PTTT has done so, translating “surprised” as “surpreendida”, thus implying a female Death. FRTT has done it as well, although keeping the masculine form. By using “surpris” instead of the feminine form “surprise”, the French translator is without question identifying this Death as male.

One of the main points this thesis is trying to make is that changing Death’s gender to the opposite of what is traditional in a certain culture may result in the TT sounding foreign to that culture’s readers. This argument is supported by a translator’s note that the translator of the FRTT left for his readers regarding the use of “surpris”. The note says “At the risk of surprising the reader, Death is male”², which shows that the translator was well aware that the TT’s target readers were expecting a female Death and that his translation would go against that expectation.

Regarding the Spanish translation, even though it was not necessary, since Death has been identified as a female in this TT, the Spanish translator managed to avoid gendering the character in this particular excerpt. This strategy could be used as a solution in cases where the gender cannot be revealed. What the Spanish translator has done is change the gender-indicative adjective into a verb. Verbs are not indicative of gender, therefore, by translating “I was surprised” with “Me sorprende” the gender neutrality within this excerpt remains intact in the translation as well.

The final confirmation of Death’s gender comes from the next excerpt:

<p>“Mayhap our necrotic friend was loath even to go near this one,” ENST (pg. 173)</p>
<p>- É possível que a nossa necrótica amiga tenha receado aproximar-se sequer deste PTTT (pg. 92)</p>
<p>Vielleicht fand unser nekrotischer Freund Ihn zu abscheulich, um sich um ihn zu kümmern. DETT (pg. 73)</p>
<p>—Quizá ni nuestra gangrenosa amiga quiso acercarse a éste ESTT (pg. 67)</p>
<p>— Peut-être que même notre nécrotique ami répugnait à s’approcher de celui-ci FRTT (pg. 85)</p>

So far, only articles and adjectives have been translated in agreement to Death’s gender, but this excerpt presents a noun, “friend”. Out of these three classes, articles are the least likely to be changed to demonstrate a gender switch. Between nouns and adjectives, they are both often used for

that purpose, especially when they appear together in one sentence, and this excerpt is an example of that. However, if alone with the noun Death, adjectives might still show a tendency to agree with grammatical gender while other nouns less so.

The best way to be certain of a character’s gender is to find examples of all three classes, articles, adjectives and nouns. Even though the articles remained tied to the grammatical gender, the previous excerpts show that adjectives were representative of the biological gender, at least in the French translation. In this excerpt, the translation of “friend” as “ami” instead of “amie” reenforces that notion and the use of “amiga” in PTTT and ESTT confirms that Death’s gender is indeed female in these last two versions.

The confirmation that Death in the German translation is male comes not only by the use of “Freund” instead of the female form “Freundin”, but also from the adjective declension in “nekrotischer”. Following a possessive pronoun, in this case “unser”, an adjective in the normative position must end with -er if relating to a male noun. For female nouns the ending would have been an -e, so if Death was female, it would have been translated as “nekrotische” instead of “nekrotischer”, leaving no space for ambiguity.

Having fully determined Death’s gender in all the translations, what the next excerpt comes to exemplify is yet another difference between the English and Romance languages.

Death screamed a curse in his cold crypt voice. ENST (pg. 280)
A Morte gritou uma praga na sua fria voz de cripta. PTTT (pg. 143)
Mit der für ihn typischen Grabesstimme knurrte Tod einen Fluch. DETT (pg. 117)
Muerte gritó una maldición con su voz de cripta helada. ESTT (pg. 107)
La Mort poussa un juron de sa voix de crypte gelée. FRTT (pg. 135)

The difference has to do with possessive adjectives. While nouns and adjectives force Romance languages to attribute gender, possessive adjectives are the opposite. In Romance languages, possessive adjectives agree in gender and number with the item that is being possessed and not the possessor, so they will always be the same³. In English, the possessive adjective agrees with the

³ o João comeu a sua bolacha – the use of “seu” or “sua” depends on the object and not on the subject.

possessor instead, so if the subject of the sentence is male, the adjective will have to be masculine (i.e. 'his') and if it is a female, it will automatically have to be feminine (i.e. 'her'). In German, the possessive adjective agrees with both the possessor and the possessed, so, regardless if Death is the subject or the object, it will always be indicative of gender.

To put it in simpler terms, apart from German that is always indicative, possessive adjectives only indicate the gender of the object in Romance languages, and only indicate the gender of the subject in English.

For a translator trying to avoid gender-related issues, this contrast can be either favourable or unfavourable depending on the source text. For example, in this excerpt, Death is the subject of the possessive adjective, which means that its gender is determined in the source text, but when translated into a Romance language the gender remains ambiguous. This is favourable to the translator since translating from a determined gender into an undetermined gender doesn't create any issues. However, if the situation were to be reversed and one of the Romance translations was instead the source text, the English and the German translations would have no other choice but to attribute a gender. An issue would also be created if Death were the object in this excerpt instead of the subject, since once again the translator would be in a position where they would have to translate an undetermined gender into a determined one.

3.2.4. *Mort* by Terry Pratchett

Moving on to the second book of the *Discworld* series, the results table (Table 2) shows a significant change. The Portuguese translation, which so far has changed Death's gender to female, including in the first instalment of this same series, is now portraying Death as a male. The translator for *The Colour of Magic* and *Mort*, Mário Dias Correia is also the same and the translations are only a year apart, which indicates that some aspect present in the ST *Mort* was powerful enough to cause such a sudden change. Meanwhile, all the other languages have kept the same gender used in the source text including the Spanish translation that still insists in portraying Death as a female.

But before discussing the translation of Death, there is another character that should be mentioned – Mort. Mort (short for Mortimer) is the title character and Death's apprentice in this text. Romance language speakers will most likely recognize the association of the name with Death. For French speakers the relation is even more obvious since "mort" is the exact word for death in this language. This creates an issue since it would be very confusing if two characters went by the same name. Therefore, the French translator has opted to name the apprentice as "Morty" in order to distinguish between him and "la Mort". As for Spanish and Portuguese, even though the word "Mort"

is recognizable as death, there is no confusion between the characters since “la Muerte” e “a Morte” are different from “Mort”, which means that the name was kept as it is in these translations.

Regarding Death’s gender, it is revealed immediately at the start of the text for all languages.

<p>This is the owner of the room, stalking through it with a preoccupied air. His name is Death.</p> <p>ENST (pg. 7)</p>
<p>E este é o proprietário da sala, caminhando por entre as filas de prateleiras com um ar preocupado. Chama-se Morte.</p> <p>PTTT (Mário Dias Correia) (pg. 7)</p>
<p>E este aqui é o dono da sala, percorrendo-a como uma assombração e com um ar preocupado. O seu nome é Death.</p> <p>PTTT (Paula Reis) (pg. 7)</p>
<p>Dort ist der Herr des Zimmers; er wandert durch die Kammer und wirkt recht nachdenklich. Sein Name lautet Tod.</p> <p>DETT (pg. 6)</p>
<p>He aquí a la propietaria de la habitación; se pasea majestuosa por ella con cara de preocupación. Es la Muerte.</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 6)</p>
<p>Voici le propriétaire qui la traverse d’un pas raide, l’air préoccupé. Il a pour nom la Mort.</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 5)</p>

Between demonstrative adjectives (este - PTTT), possessive adjectives (sein - DETT), personal pronouns (Il- FRTT) and the noun “owner”, there isn’t one target text in which the excerpt above hasn’t revealed Death’s gender. Therefore, the next excerpts and the majority of this text analysis are going to be focusing on the consequences the translators’ choices have on the whole text. However, before advancing towards these consequences, it is important to point out that *Mort* in this corpus has two different Portuguese translations. Both of these translations agree that Death is male, but the one by Paula Reis offers an interesting solution to the disagreement between Death’s biological gender and the grammatical gender of the articles associated with the noun. She has opted to keep Death in English. This solution works because since Death is not part of the Portuguese language it has no grammatical gender associated with it, and so “o Death” or “a Death” grammatically would have the same effect to a Portuguese reader, almost as if Death became just a name instead of a concept. However, Death being such a recognizable noun even to readers who are not fluent in English, it is possible that the non-translation of the term can still have a foreignizing effect on the target readers.

Returning to the consequences of the translators' choices and starting with the excerpt below, it is clear that the Spanish translation, being the only one that has a different gender to that of the source text, has had to make an immediate change.

<p>“Excuse me, sir, but are you Death?” ENST (pg. 30)</p>
<p>Peço que me desculpe, senhor...é...a Morte? PTTT (Mário Dias Correia) (pg. 17)</p>
<p>Desculpe, <i>sir</i>, mas é o Death? PTTT (Paula Reis) (pg. 16)</p>
<p>Entschuldige bitte, Herr... Bist du der Tod? DETT (pg. 17)</p>
<p>Discúlpeme, señora, pero... ¿es usted la Muerte? ESTT (pg. 14)</p>
<p>Excusez-moi, m’sieur, mais vous êtes la Mort? FRTT (pg. 15)</p>

“Sir” is a strictly male addressing form and, therefore, if a character’s gender has been changed, a term such as this has to be changed accordingly.

It is not just addressing terms that need to be changed, some adjectives and nouns as well. As it is known, certain nouns and adjectives are traditionally linked with one gender. For example, “beautiful” or “pretty” are much more often used related to a female than to a male, which is more often described as “handsome”. In this text, Death is sometimes referred to as “old chap” and “fellow”, both terms linked to the male gender. Naturally, the Spanish TT couldn’t keep such terms and so the Spanish Death in *Mort* is referred to only as “chica”. Of course, such a simple matter as this won’t create an issue, as long as the gender has been already determined; however, it is crucial that these small terms don’t go unnoticed by the translator in order to keep the text consistent.

Speaking of consistency, the Portuguese translator Paula Reis has also decided not to translate the word “sir”. This, despite being an unnecessary measure, it is consistent with the decision of referring to Death with English vocabulary. It happens again when, in this PTTT, Death is referred to as *Mr.*

Regarding the next excerpt, all translators decided to translate it very close to the source. The excerpt is as follows:

(...) he pushed his hood back and glanced up at the barber's apprentice, who tied a towel around his neck in that unseeing, hypnotized way that Mort was coming to recognize

ENST (pg. 56)

(...) baixou o capuz e olhou para o aprendiz do barbeiro, que lhe pôs uma toalha à volta do pescoço com aquela expressão hipnotizada, alheada, que Mort começava a reconhecer.

PTTT (Mário Dias Correia) (pg. 29)

(...) empurrou o capote para trás e deitou um olhar ao aprendiz do barbeiro - que lhe atou uma toalha ao pescoço - daquela maneira disfarçada, hipnotizadora que Mort viria a reconhecer depois

PTTT (Paula Reis) (27)

(...) schlug er die Kapuze zurück und sah zum Lehrling des Barbiers auf, der ihm gerade ein Handtuch um den knöchernen Hals schlang.

DETT (pg. 31)

(...) se quitó la capucha y echó un vistazo al aprendiz del barbero, quien le colocó una toalla alrededor del cuello con ese aire hipnotizado y ausente que a Mort comenzaba a resultarle familiar

ESTT (pg. 23)

(...) il repoussa son capuchon et leva les yeux sur l'apprenti du barbier qui lui noua une serviette autour du cou avec cet air aveugle, hypnotisé, que Morty commençait à reconnaître

FRTT (pg. 27)

The issue with this excerpt does not have to do with grammar, but with semantics instead.

A barber is by definition someone who cuts men's hair and shaves or trims beards. It is therefore associated with the male gender. This definition is extended to the correspondent term in the target languages. For this reason, having the female Death from ESTT as a client for a barber doesn't work as well as it does in the source text and in the other translations where Death is still male. One way to solve such situations, could be to find an equivalent term associated with the female gender, or a gender-neutral term. For this case in particular, there was an option to use a gender-neutral term since Mort, a male character, is also a client. "Peluquero", for example, could have been used as a gender-neutral alternative for barber.

So far, the changes needed to be made are small and without much implication to the overall text. However, the next excerpt might be what justifies the Portuguese translation's switch from female to male.

Father told me you must have something to eat.

ENST (pg. 62)

O pai disse-me que precisas de comer. PTTT (Mário Dias Correia) (pg. 32)
O pai disse-me que tens de comer qualquer coisa. PTTT (Paula Reis) (pg. 29)
Vater meint, du brauchst etwas zu essen. DETT (pg. 34)
Me ha dicho mi madre que debes comer. ESTT (pg. 25)
Père m'a dit qu'il fallait que tu manges. FRTT (pg. 29)

The biggest difference between *The Colour of Magic's* Death and *Mort's* Death is that in the latter Death's family is mentioned. Until now in the *Discworld* series, Death has been an isolated character, with a job to do but without deep relations with the rest of the characters. In *Mort*, Death becomes not only a master but is also a father.

The excerpt above shows the first time Death has been referred to as "Father", with the introduction of Ysabell, Death's daughter. The insertion of Death in a family dynamic means that from now on changing the gender also means changing a family relation, from father to mother. This is, of course, possible, as can be seen from the Spanish translation's use of "madre"; however, changing a family relation can arguably be a bigger change to the plot than a simple change of gender. Changing it can mean changes to that character's relationship with the others in the text. For this reason, it is likely that it was Death's role as a father that caused the Portuguese *Discworld's* female Death to turn into a male in *Mort*.

The next issue is once again related with context and semantics instead of grammar. The excerpt is the following:

Your lady thrown you out, has she? ENST (pg. 361)
A patroa pô-lo fora, não foi? PTTT (Mário Dias Correia) (pg. 160)
A sua dama correu consigo, não foi? PTTT (Paula Reis) (pg. 142)
Deine bessere Hälfte hat dich rausgeworfen, stimmt's? DETT (pg. 182)

Un desengaño amoroso, ¿no? ESTT (pg. 124)
Vot'dame vous a fichu dehors, c'est ça ? FRTT (pg. 157)

This excerpt is from an interaction between a drunk Death and a barman. The expression “your lady thrown you out” asked by the barman is part of a double standard where a man being “kicked” out of the house by his wife is usually not taken as seriously as if the opposite were to happen. This expression, along with others such as sleeping on the couch, are sometimes used as a figure of speech for relationship problems and are often used sarcastically or in a very light-hearted manner; they can be even seen as humorous in the right circumstances. However, the same doesn’t happen in relation to a female.

The Spanish translator seems to have been aware of this nuance, since the expression has been replaced with “desengaño amoroso”. The Spanish translation has managed to keep the same meaning of relationship troubles, but without the darker undertones of a female being thrown out of the house. This does not mean that a male being thrown out of the house is not equally as serious, it is simply that the frequent use of the expression has taken some of its impact away.

Finally, the last excerpt in this analysis of *Mort* is the following:

Well, you're doing a damn fine job in there, boy. ENST (pg. 419)
Bem, está a fazer um excelente trabalho. PTTT (Mário Dias Correia) (pg. 184)
Bom, estás a fazer um optimo trabalho aí, rapaz. PTTT (Paula Reis) (pg. 164)
Nun, du machst da drin wirklich verdammt gute Arbeit, Junge. DETT (pg. 210)
Lo estás haciendo estupendamente bien, chica. ESTT (pg. 142)
Ben, tu fais du sacré bon boulot, mon gars, dit-il. FRTT (pg. 181)

Mort, Death’s apprentice in the text, is often referred to by the other characters as “boy”. Almost every time that happens throughout the text, Mort reacts and rectifies that his name is Mort, not “boy”. This is a long running joke throughout the text.

Another plot point that is relevant to know is that as the story develops there is a subtle suggestion that Death and Mort are changing roles. Mort becomes more and more similar to Death, even starting to speak like him IN CAPITAL LETTERS, and Death begins to show a more human side to him.

The reason this is relevant is because in the excerpt above, the sentence is not being addressed to Mort, as the “boy” at the end might suggest. Instead, the receiver of this line is Death. This creates a parallel between Death in this sentence and the nickname given to Mort throughout the whole text, which also reinforces the idea that their roles are being switched.

It seems that one of the Portuguese translators, Mário Correia, has missed or chosen to ignore this link and eliminated the expression “boy” in this particular sentence. However, all the other translators made sure to use the same expression that Mort so vehemently hated being called in the respective texts. The French translation might have lost some of the parallelism since Death, unlike the other characters who did indeed call Mort “gars”, always called Mort by “petit”.

Another exception is, of course, the Spanish translation. Since Mort is a male character and Death has been changed to female, they can’t possibly share the same nickname “boy”, and so “chica”, that had already been used to replace “chap” and “fellow”, has been used instead, naturally at the cost of this small connection.

3.2.5. *Wyrd Sisters* by Terry Pratchett

Wyrd Sisters is the third of the four texts belonging to the *Discworld* series chosen to be part of this corpus and the last one to be translated into European Portuguese. As mentioned above, the reason behind this choice was to analyse how the same character in the source text has been translated in a continuous fashion. The results were interesting.

Due to being part of the same series, we might expect that all translations in the same language would share the same character, especially if written by the same translator. However, only the German and the French translations managed to be consistent from the first book to the last. The logic behind the German translations is obvious. German and English share the same traditional gender for Death and so it was only natural that the target texts would follow the source directly when it comes to that matter.

As for the French translations, their translator, Patrick Couton, has made the conscious decision that Death should be male in all four texts. As the analysis of the previous texts has shown, the gender of Death was not particularly relevant until *Mort*, and even then, it could’ve been overlooked as the Spanish TT has done. There is a great likelihood that if the first instalment of the series, *The Colour of Magic*, had been written as a standalone book, the French translator would have followed the same

path as his Portuguese and Spanish counterparts and changed the character of Death to female. The only reason they wouldn't do so, would be if the translator had opted for a more foreignization style of translation, disregarding French culture, customs and expectations in order to remain closer to the source text. However, ever since French began gaining status as a language, French translation culture has been much more associated with domestication than foreignization, one needs only to remember *Les belles infidèles*⁴.

The fact that Death in the French translation of *The Colour of Magic* had already been translated as a male, instead of changing suddenly in the middle of the series like in the Spanish and Portuguese translations, shows planning on the part of the French translator, or publisher. It is always possible that the decision to change Death's gender was a request by the publishing company. Regardless of whose decision it was, it seems that the French translation was written with a bigger picture in mind. *The Colour of Magic's* Death was already part of a whole series and its translation had, most likely, been made already taking into account the issues related to it that only appear in the following books. The time of the translation, 1996, makes it certainly possible, since *The Colour of Magic* and *Mort* were originally written in the 80's and the latest of the texts here studied, *Reaper Man*, in 1991.

The Spanish and the Portuguese translations, on the other hand, do change the gender of Death between texts. However, the Spanish translation only does so on *Reaper Man*, the last text here studied from *Discworld*. The only change regarding gender in *Wyrd Sisters* comes from the Portuguese translations. The most interesting thing about it is that this change is different from the change in *Mort*. As the table of results shows, *Mort* was the first time the Portuguese translator, Mário Correia⁵, indicated that Death was male. The change, as explained in the analysis under *Mort* by Terry Pratchett, was most likely due to the prioritization of family relations between characters over Death's assigned gender in the target culture. The increased use of typically masculine terms like "Sir" and "fellow" might also have influenced the translator's decision. The point is, this was a change motivated by circumstances within the plot of the source text. However, the *Discworld's* Death is a character that appears in multiple books, but is ultimately always the same character, so even if the circumstances that changed Death's gender in *Mort* were no longer relevant in *Wyrd Sisters*, it would still be logical to expect the same character and gendered in the same way. *The Colour of Magic*, the first text of the series to be translated, is the only one that could be justifiably different, since there is a chance that at the time it was being translated, the translator didn't have any of the sequels in mind. Usually, for

⁴ A trend in French translation born in the 17th century. *Les Belles Infidèles* were translations that have been "corrected" by the translator in order to accommodate the taste of French culture at the time. In order to show the superiority of the French language, the French translators didn't feel the need to be "loyal" to the source text. See more in *Anthologie de la manière de traduire : domaine français* by Paul A. Horguelin (1981)

⁵ Paula Reis, the other Portuguese translator, has not been included since there is no available translation of *The Colour of Magic* from her.

the sake of continuity, characters remain the same from text to text and so, ever since Death's gender was finally determined beyond doubt, the expectation would be for the gender to remain male. Instead, the translator reverted Death's gender back to female. If Death's gender was truly something of so little relevance that it could be switched back and forth, why hasn't the translator simply domesticated *Mort's* target text and make Death consistently female? This level of inconsistency is unusual in a book series.

Truth is Death has barely any role in *Wyrd Sisters* and between the few appearances Death makes there isn't much room for the translator to indicate to the reader that Death's gender might be something else other than the traditionally expected. Even if Death is male, the analysis of the previous texts shows that there will still be a preference for agreeing articles with Death's grammatical gender, and that adjectives and nouns were the best indicators of Death's biological gender. The process of revealing Death's true gender complicates even more if taking into account that even adjectives and nouns will most likely agree with the feminine form if immediately preceded by "A Morte", "La Muerte" or "La Mort".

Looking at the following excerpt there is another situation where the noun Death has been replaced by some other term.

<p>The tall figure appeared to reach a decision. THIS IS VERY IRREGULAR, he went on, apparently to himself.</p> <p>ENST (pg. 6)</p>
<p>A alta figura pareceu ter chegado a uma decisão. ISTO É MUITÍSSIMO IRREGULAR -prossegiu , aparentemente para si mesma.</p> <p>PTTT (Mário Dias Correia) (pg. 15)</p>
<p>Die hochgewachsene Gestalt rang sich zu einer Entscheidung durch. DIES IST HÖCHST UNGEWÖHNLICH, fügte er wie im Selbstgespräch hinzu.</p> <p>DETT (pg. 11)</p>
<p>La alta figura pareció tomar una decisión. Todo esto es muy irregular —siguió, al parecer Todo esto es muy irregular —siguió, al parecer hablando consigo misma</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 9)</p>
<p>La grande silhouette parut prendre une décision. « C'EST TRÈS IRRÉGULIER, poursuivit-elle comme pour elle-même.</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 9)</p>

In this excerpt, Death is being referred to as a tall figure. Once again, tall figure doesn't have an associated gender in English, but for the Romance languages the noun is grammatically female.

At first glance it would seem that all Romance language TT's have decided to gender Death as female due to the translation of "himself" into "si mesma", "misma" and "elle-même". However, this can be deceiving. As the table of results shows FRTT's Death is male and not female. Since these terms are agreeing with the grammatical gender of "figure" and not the gender of Death itself, Death's gender remains undetermined. Also, there is a tendency in Portuguese and Spanish to omit personal pronouns, which takes away yet another opportunity to define Death's gender. The excerpt shows "he went on" being translated as "prosseguiu" and "siguió". The same happens frequently with expressions like "he said" that end up being translated as simply "disse". Without the pronoun there is no way of knowing Death's gender from these excerpts alone.

There is a chance that the choice of reverting Death's gender back to female by the Portuguese translator could have been less of a choice and more of a consequence of the lack of opportunities to do so throughout the text. That being said, this next excerpt contradicts this possibility.

<p>Are you Death, fellow?' he ventured. ENST (pg. 6)</p>
<p>És a Morte? – arriscou PTTT (Mário Dias Correia) (pg. 15)</p>
<p>Olha lá, pá, tu és a Morte? - aventurou ele. PTTT (Paula Reis) (pg. 10)</p>
<p>Bist du der Tod, Bursche? - fragte er. DETT (pg. 11)</p>
<p>—Oye, tú, ¿eres la Muerte? ESTT (pg. 9)</p>
<p>Êtes-vous la Mort, l'ami ? hasarda-t-il. FRTT (pg. 9)</p>

In this excerpt, the term "fellow" provides the Romance language translators with a very good opportunity to reinforce the idea that Death in the *Discworld* is indeed male. The French translator has taken that opportunity by translating "fellow" as "ami". "Ami" is the masculine version of "amie" and the use of one over the other is enough to ensure that this Death's gender can't be mistaken as feminine. Not to mention the French translator's note in the previous text where he says Death is masculine "once and for all", implying that this note would be valid for the sequels as well. The German translator, despite not needing to, also has translated "fellow" with an equivalent masculine noun. The only translations where "fellow" hasn't been translated are the Spanish and both of the Portuguese.

Once again, omission is a valid strategy in translation, however it is also always a conscious one. The only reason “fellow” hasn’t been translated is because the translator chose not to. The conscious nature of this decision implies that changing Death’s gender back to female was deliberate. Could this mean that this translator considers more important to preserve the target culture’s expectations of how Death should be than to preserve consistency within the series? It is possible, but if it is the case, the translator has done so in a very subtle manner. Instead of omitting “fellow” completely, the translator might have used a similar term with a feminine grammatical gender, “amiga” or “senhora” for example. If one such term had been used, the fact that this Death is female would have become much more explicit. Without it, it is still possible to wonder if this Death is truly biologically female or if it is secretly a male and just there aren’t enough clues to transmit that information. Of course, the hypothesis of Death being an unrevealed male is only possible in a context such as this, where the information that is missing can be found by the readers in a different book of the same series. It would not work if it was a standalone text. It is also possible that the reasoning behind the change is due to Death appearing so infrequently in this particular text. The translator could have decided that such a limited amount of presence didn’t justify the foreign feeling a male Death would have on a reader that wasn’t already familiar with *Discworld’s* Death. This would also align with the above idea that the translator might be trying to avoid committing his TT’s Death to one gender.

Moving on from one Portuguese translator into the other, the same ideas apply. Paula Reis has also changed Death’s gender to female in *Wyrd Sisters* after having decided this character was a male in *Mort*. She also has chosen to omit the word “fellow”. In her case, however, it is even more astonishing that Death should be gendered as female. Since a translation of *The Colour of Magic* by this translator can’t be found, and in *Mort* Death is male, Death being female in *Wyrd Sisters* means that the translator is knowingly breaking the consistency of this character’s gender. All the other translators that have initially gendered Death as female only to later in the series change it to male, did so because gender was not yet relevant until at least the second instalment. In Paula Reis’ case, however, gender was already relevant in her first translation for the series, so much so that she opted to go against Portuguese tradition in *Mort*.

Another point that is worth mentioning regarding Paula Reis’ translation is that she is no longer referring to Death by the English noun. Changing “Death” to “Morte” breaks the consistency of the character even more. It breaks it to the point that one might even wonder if this is the same character at all. The answer is yes, it is, but the way it has been translated makes it almost seem as if these two texts belong to different fictional universes.

It seems that Paula Reis, as well as Mário Correia, have only translated Death as a male in *Mort* because the text forced them to and as soon as they were free of the bounds created by family

relations and certain key words that are no longer present in *Wyrd Sisters*, their translations reverted back to a more familiar and domesticated approach.

3.2.6. *Reaper Man* by Terry Pratchett

As has already been mentioned, the text *Reaper Man* does not have a European Portuguese translation. In fact, many of the books from the *Discworld* series do not. The way *Discworld* has been constructed by Sir Terry Pratchett allows for selective translation. Even though the stories are linked they are not co-dependent and the big array of characters allows for different main characters and different story arcs.

Perhaps due to lack of popularity in Portugal, only a few selected texts have been translated into European Portuguese and perhaps the difficulty of the translation was the reason some of these texts were left untranslated. If difficulty of translation was indeed a factor, then *Reaper Man* was most likely one of the excluded.

That being said, some of the texts that haven't been translated in Portugal have been translated in Brazil, and so the Brazilian Portuguese translation has been used in replacement of the European Portuguese one. However, it is important to point out that the Brazilian translations are quite different from the Portuguese. Regarding the *Discworld* series, the Brazilian translator has taken a similar approach as that of the French translator. Death has been consistently male throughout all of the texts. Also, like the French translator, the Brazilian translation of *The Colour of Magic* begins with a translator's note mentioning how difficult it was to translate Death and that, even though it might sound foreign to the Brazilian readers, the male gender of the character has been kept.

Another translator that has also openly mentioned the issues regarding Death's translation is the Spanish translator. In *Reaper Man*, the Spanish translator has finally switched Death's gender into male, but not without leaving a translator's note explaining that in the previous texts Death was arbitrarily given the female gender, but from this text forward his Gender will be male like in the ST. Despite the choice of having a female Death being most likely not arbitrary, since it was probably influenced by grammatical gender, the most interesting point is that something in this text had enough relevance that has managed to break the gender consistency of the Spanish translations.

The following excerpts will provide insights on some of the hardships of this translation.

The first excerpt can be found at the beginning of the text and immediately reveals what gender has been assigned to Death.

One said, That is the point. The word is him. Becoming a personality is inefficient. (...).
Supposing gravity developed a personality? Supposing it decided to like people?

ENST (pg. 3)

Um deles disse: “Essa é a questão. O pronome é lo. Tornar-se uma personalidade é ineficiente.
(...) Imaginemos que a gravidade desenvolva uma personalidade? Imaginemos que ela decida gostar
das pessoas?

PT-BRTT (pg. 4)

Einer sagte: Genau darum geht’s – um das Er und Ihn und so weiter. Wer zu einer Person wird,
ist auf dem besten Wege zur Inkompetenz. (...) Angenommen, die Schwerkraft entwickelt eine
eigene Persönlichkeit. Angenommen, sie beschließt plötzlich, die Leute zu mögen...

DETT (pg. 6)

Uno dijo: De eso se trata. Al tipo. Tener personalidad implica inmediatamente falta de eficacia.
(...) Imaginemos que la gravedad empezara a desarrollar una personalidad. Imaginemos que
empezara a gustarle la gente.

ESTT (pg. 5)

L’un dit : Tout le problème est là. Dans le pronom « lui ». Acquérir une personnalité, c’est déjà
mal. (...) Imaginez un peu, si la gravité s’octroyait une personnalité ? Qu’elle décidait d’aimer les
gens?

FRTT (pg. 5)

Because the pronoun “him” is such a key word in this excerpt there is no way to avoid gendering Death, and so this excerpt alone confirms that in *Reaper Man* the *Discworld’s* Death is male to all translations.

However, it is not Death’s gender that makes this excerpt interesting. Naturally, Death is the main topic of this thesis but there are other similar gender-related issues present in this text that deserve to be mentioned. The translation of the word “it” for example.

Death in English has no associated gender and therefore it could be rendered as an “it” as easily as a “he”. Had the corpus for this paper been more extensive there might have been a possibility that one of the Deaths studied would be an “it”. There isn’t one in this corpus but in *Reaper Man* there is a group of characters whose main characteristic is not having a personality nor a gender. In this excerpt, they are referred to as “one”. “One”, like “it”, is gender neutral in English, but in Romance languages even indefinite articles can’t be gender neutral. For that reason, all three of the Romance language translators were forced to use a gendered article, “um”, “uno” and “un”.

Supposedly, German indefinite articles also have to agree with one of the three genders “der, die, das”, and “einer”, as it has been translated, in normal circumstances would refer to either a female dative or a female genitive. However, this sentence is in the nominative case which means that the infinite article would have to be either “ein” or “eine”. Despite what this might seem, the use of “einer” was not a mistake, because in the nominative case, “einer” can be used to indicate anonymity, which makes the German translation the closer to the source text in terms of gender neutrality.

Another “it” that appears in this excerpt is the one referring to gravity. As the excerpt shows, all translators have gendered gravity in two ways. First by giving it a definite article and then with a personal pronoun. Both the article and the pronoun match the grammatical gender of the word gravity in the target language cultures. Gendering gravity, in this case, represents a problem, for it creates a contradiction within the text that is not present in the source text. The main plot for *Reaper Man* is that Death has been fired from his position because throughout the years he gained a personality. Being referred to as a “he” is one of the big indicators of this personality, that’s why “him” is used as proof in the excerpt above. In the source text, gravity is given as an example of an entity that works as it should, and is therefore referred to as an “it”. In the TT’s, by referring to gravity as a “her”, the translators are ultimately placing this character in the same situation that made Death lose his job, ergo she shouldn’t be used as an example anymore. However, the Spanish translation has somewhat resolved this issue while still gendering gravity. The solution was to translate “him” for “al tipo”. By translating “him” with a noun, the emphasis in the pronoun as the core of the issue is removed. If “tipo” is used as the example for Death’s misconduct instead of the pronoun, there is still the possibility that grammatical gender in articles and pronouns can still be used without automatically implying the birth of personality.

The next excerpt refers once again to the genderless characters, this time with a more direct translation of “it”.

It told him that No, it was right. ENST (pg. 6)
O vulto lhe disse que “Não, estava certo” PT-BRTT (pg. 6)
Das Wesen wies darauf hin, eine andere Ansicht zu vertreten. DETT (pg. 9)
Eso le dijo que no, que no estaba bien. ESTT (pg. 6)
La silhouette lui répond que si, c’est normal. FRTT (pg. 7)

Because they are fictional, unlike gravity, these “it” characters also don’t have an associated gender in the target languages. However, all the target languages demand grammatical gender for them. The solution found by most translators was to use a generic noun such as “figure” or “creature”. These terms work because they can be used to refer to both male and female characters. The Spanish translation goes with a different approach and translates “it” as “Eso”. This solution works as well if not even better, because not only is “eso” gender neutral it also implies that these characters are a thing and not a person, which is an essential part of these character’s design. Terms like “vulto” and “silhouette”, despite being gender neutral, unless more information is given to suggest otherwise, they are often associated with the human form. The German solution, on the other hand, is similar to the Spanish one. “Das Wesen”, besides using the neutral gender “das”, also distances the character from the human form, since the term can be understood as creature, but also simply as “being”.

Moving on to a different topic, another plot point of *Reaper Man* is that Death that was once universal has been separated into multiple individual Deaths. This creates the question: are these new Deaths also male? Or do they have different genders? The answer, at least for the source text, is neither. Since the problem with the previous Death was that he was a “he”, these new Deaths are now all called “it”. As for the translations, it should be clear by now that they have to assign grammatical gender to these new Deaths.

<p>In the stream, black-scaled, swam the new Death of Mayflies (...) the Death of Trees. (...) the Death of Tortoises.</p> <p>ENST (pg. 124)</p>
<p>No riacho, com escamas pretas, nadava o novo Morte das Efeméridas (...) o chop-chop-chop do Morte das Árvores (...) o Morte das Tartarugas.</p> <p>PT-BRTT (pg. 83)</p>
<p>Mit dunklen Schuppen ausgestattet, schwamm der neue Tod der Eintagsfliegen im Bach (...) der Tod für die Bäume (...) der Tod der Schildkröten.</p> <p>DETT (pg. 114)</p>
<p>En el arroyo, con sus escamas negras, nadaba la nueva Muerte de las cachipollas efímeras (...) la Muerte cortante de los árboles (...) era la Muerte de las tortugas.</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 79)</p>
<p>Dans les cours d’eau nageait la nouvelle Mort aux écailles noires des éphémères (...) la Mort des arbres (...) la Mort des tortues.</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 89)</p>

It appears that, except for the Brazilian translator, all translators have attributed the traditional grammatical gender associated with Death in each respective culture. However, biological gender cannot be known for certain from this excerpt alone. As this study so far has indicated, articles are usually in agreement with the grammatical gender even if the biological gender is the opposite.

The only language that so far has translated articles according to biological gender is Brazilian Portuguese. This means that the Brazilian translation is the one translation that has clearly gendered the individual Deaths. The reason for keeping all individual Deaths as a male instead of using this as an opportunity to incorporate some traditionally gendered Deaths into the translation is probably due to the plot of the text. Since the text states that all these smaller Deaths were once part of the *Discworld's* original Death, the Brazilian translator might have decided that it makes more sense if they all shared the same gender as their source.

Besides the individual Deaths above mentioned there is also a new Death for humans that is seen in the text as the true replacement of *Discworld's* Death and is the antagonist of this story. This new Death has, of course, to be referred to as an “it” as well, despite the tendency of some of the characters to call it a “he”.

<p>IT, said Bill Door. IT WON'T BE A HE YET. ENST (pg. 253)</p>
<p>— AQUILO AINDA NÃO É ELE. PT-BRTT (pt. 168)</p>
<p>Es, verbesserte Bill Tür. Es IST NOCH KEIN ER. DETT (pg. 232)</p>
<p>ESO –la corrigió Bill Puerta-. AÚN TARDARÁ UN TIEMPO EN SER UN “ÉL”. ESTT (pg. 155)</p>
<p>— C’EST PARTI, rectifia Pierre Porte. CE N’EST PAS ENCORE UN INDIVIDU. FRTT (pg. 177)</p>

With the emphasis on the “it” it seems that this time all translators have opted for a solution similar to the Spanish one in the second excerpt for this analysis. “C’est”, “es”, “eso” and “aquilo” are all gender neutral and, more importantly, they take away the idea of an individual and replace it with a “thing”.

The translation of “HE” is also interesting. There is no information on the text that makes it mandatory that this new Death should have the same gender as the old one. In the source text the other characters call it a HE simply because, like with the first Death, Death’s gender is traditionally

male in English. Going by the same logic, it was absolutely possible for the TT's translators to refer to this new Death as female, except of course for the German translator. The fact that none of the Romance language translators has done so, seems to imply that once a gender has been determined for this type of character, even if more characters of the same type appear, the gender will be the same for all of them.

Having thus analysed all selected excerpts for this text, it is still not yet clear what was so relevant about *Reaper Man* that successfully made the Spanish translator change her Death into male. The answer has most likely to do with another element present in this last excerpt. The character claiming that the new Death is not yet a HE goes by the name of Bill Door. What someone that has not read the full text might not realise is that Bill Door and the *Discworld's* Death, the old one, are one in the same. Bill Door is the name that Death has adopted after losing his position.

As it can be seen from the excerpt, the name has been freely translated into the target languages. The use of a common noun for a surname has apparently awoken a domesticating nature in all of the translators. Truth is the reason all translators have translated Door is probably because it is implied in the text that the name was chosen because Death was looking at an actual door. Bill Door has been translated as Bill Tür in German, Bill Puerta in Spanish, and in French, Pierre Porte, the translation went as far as translating the first name as well. As for the Brazilian translation, the name has been omitted in this particular excerpt but the translator has once again followed the same path as the French translation and changed both names into José Porta.

However, it is one thing to domesticate a name. In *Reaper Man's* case, the task is actually quite simple. Door is a common object and Bill is one of the most common names a person can think of, thus being easily switched to Pierre and José, both standard names in the respective cultures. Meanwhile, the Spanish translator must have felt that having Death going by the name Bill, a typical male name, distances the character too much from the traditional Death that has been used in the Spanish TT's until now. The change is not about articles, nor adjectives and not even about common nouns. It is a proper noun that would need to be changed were the character's gender to be switched, and seeing that the Spanish translator hasn't even domesticated the first name, like in the French and Brazilian TT's, it is plausible that she didn't feel comfortable with making such an alteration to the source text.

3.2.7. *Good Omens* by Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett

Good Omens is a novel co-written by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, the author of the last four books analysed.

As in the *Discworld* series, Death is a prominent character, but it is not the only one. *Good Omens* has also personified the concepts of War, Famine and Pollution. Traditionally, Death is assigned the male gender when personified in English and so are War, Famine, hence they are usually known as horsemen of the apocalypse. Pollution is not personified as often and so it is not bound to any gender; however, since Pollution is clearly replacing pestilence, another biblical horseman, its gender can be easily assumed as male for an English reader. In this source text, War has been attributed the female gender, and the group are therefore called the apocalyptic Horsepersons.

The gendering of War as female and the use of “Horsepersons” instead of “Horsemen” could very well be an attempt towards political correctness and gender equality, especially taking into account the authors of the text. Neil Gaiman’s works often feature strong female characters with autonomous stories of their own⁶, and Terry Pratchett’s works are a reference in gender equality literature, especially the Witches section of the *Discworld* series, more particularly his *Equal Rites* novel (a wordplay on “equal rights”).

APOCALYPTIC HORSEPERSONS	CAVALEIROS APOCALÍPTICOS	JINETES DEL APOCALIPSIS	Cavaliers apocalyptiques
DEATH (Death)	MORTE (Morte)	MUERTE (La Muerte)	MORT (La Mort)
War (War)	Guerra (Guerra)	GUERRA (La Guerra)	Guerre (La Guerre)
Famine (Famine)	Fome (Fome)	HAMBRE (El Hambre)	Famine (La Famine)
Pollution (Pollution)	Poluição (Poluição)	POLUCIÓN (La Polución)	Pollution (La Pollution)
ENST (pg. 9)	PTTT (pg. 16)	ESTT (pg. 11)	FRTT (pg. 11)

The use of “Horsepersons” instead of the traditional “Horsemen” is also by itself an indicator that the riders are mixed in gender in the ST, even though the genders are not yet explicit in this part of the text. As for the Romance languages, the equivalents used are more ambiguous. Since the male form is also used to indicate a group where both genders are included, there is no clue to indicate if the horsepersons are all male or mixed in gender in these languages. Without such indication, it is possible that Portuguese and French readers might imagine these characters as all female, due to grammatical gender, only to have to change that initial idea later on in the text. The Spanish readers might already have a mixed gender group in mind, since Famine is grammatically masculine.

One thing that stands out in this excerpt stylistically is that Death is the only character whose name appears written in all capital letters. This is most likely a nod to *Discworld’s* Death, to whom it shares many similarities. However, it is important to rectify that despite being very similar and by the

⁶ See *Gender re-balancing in the works of Neil Gaiman* by Gwendolyn Grove Soden (2017)

same author, these two characters are not the same Death. The translation of one should not be influenced by the translation of the other.

One last element to point out is the almost redundant repetition of the names of the characters. The characters are introduced by their name and after, within parenthesis, the concept they represent. The fact that they are the same is what makes it seem redundant, especially in the ENST and the PTTT that have omitted the articles that would precede the concept. The ESTT and the FRTT, on the other hand, have included the articles. However, these articles should not be used as indicators of the biological gender of the characters for two reasons. First, the article is only preceding the concept's name and not the character's, two very different things; and second, as the previous analyses have shown, articles are usually not translated in agreement with biological gender, but instead seem to be always in accordance to what grammar dictates. For these reasons, it comes as no surprise that the articles used by the French and Spanish translator match the grammatical gender of these concepts in the respective language.

Lastly, the reason the German translation is absent from this excerpt is because the introduction of the characters has been omitted in the DETT.

Moving on to each character's individual analysis and starting with the only female horseperson, War was translated as female in all TTs.

<p>She rode a red motorbike. ENST (pg. 196)</p>
<p>Ela montava uma mota vermelha. PTTT (pg. 253)</p>
<p>Sie fuhr ein rotes Motorrad. DETT (pg. 270)</p>
<p>Su moto era roja. (...) la mujer de rojo se alejaba haciendo un ruido infernal. ESTT (pg. 207)</p>
<p>Elle chevauchait une moto rouge. FRTT (pg. 246)</p>

If going by grammatical gender, the German translation would be the only one to have a reason to change War's gender, since "Der Krieg" is grammatically masculine. However, the female pronoun "Sie" shows that the translator has opted to keep the same gender as it is in the source text.

Meanwhile, Famine's gender is grammatically opposite to the one attributed in the source text in two of the languages being studied. Yet, as the excerpt bellow reveals, Famine has been described as a male in all languages.

a man dressed all in black leather, with a short black beard, walked over to the table, sat next to the woman in red.

ENST (pg. 197)

Um homem, todo vestido de couro preto, com uma pequena barba preta, encaminhou-se para a mesa, sentou-se ao lado da mulher de vermelho.

PTTT (pg. 257)

Ein Mann – er trug schwarzes Leder und hatte einen kurzen schwarzen Bart – trat an den Fenstertisch heran und setzte sich neben die Frau in Rot.

DETT (pg. 273)

un hombre con barba negra, todo vestido de negro, se dirigió a la mesa de la mujer de rojo y se sentó junto a ella.

ESTT (pg. 208)

un homme entièrement vêtu de cuir noir, avec une courte barbe noire, alla directement vers la table et prit place auprès de la femme.

FRTT (pg. 248)

As for Pollution, the concept is grammatically female in all target languages.

Farther down the riverbank sat a young man dressed all in white.

ENST (pg. 139)

Mais abaixo, na margem, estava sentado um homem ainda jovem e todo vestido de branco.

PTTT (pg. 257)

Einige Dutzend Meter vor ihm saß ein junger, ganz in Weiß gekleideter Bursche;

DETT (pg. 191)

Ribera abajo se veía un hombre sentado, vestido de blanco.

ESTT (pg. 147)

Un peu plus loin sur la rive était assis un jeune homme, tout de blanc vêtu.

FRTT (pg. 177)

However, just like with the rest of the horsepersons, the character has been translated with the same gender that was given to him in the source text.

There could be multiple reasons as to why the gender has remained unchanged in these personifications. That being said, there are two factors within the text that are likely to have had the biggest influence. Number one is physical description. So far, the physical appearance of Death hasn't been appointed as a potential issue, because skeletal figures can be both male or female and usually

the difference is only noticeable through the hair or clothing. Other than that, Death personifications can look very similar in western culture, the gender being the biggest difference. The other three horsepersons, besides their representations in biblical inspired art, do not have a physical appearance that is as embedded in human culture as Death is. Yet, it is easy to imagine that their appearance would most likely carry elements related to the concept they personify, for example a sickly thin Famine and a dirty Pollution. In *Good Omens* the horsepersons took on the appearance of modern bikers and their looks are well described in the text. War is a seductive red-headed woman who wears red leather and rides a red motorcycle with a matching red helmet. Famine is described as a tall dark-haired man with a trimmed beard. Pollution is young, with fair hair and a very pale complexion. Death, on the other hand, keeps the skeletal look, but covers it with a black coat and a helmet over his head.

It is inevitable that when changing the gender of a heavily described character there is a great likelihood that the translator would have to alter some elements of the characters design to match what is in today's society conceived as male or female. Of course, society has advanced to a point where many of the elements that would have to be changed years ago can now remain unaltered since they are no longer exclusive to one gender. However, beards and skirts, for example, have not yet reach that point of inclusivity and would therefore need to be altered. The reason this creates a possible issue in translation is because, to some translators, changing so much of the original design of a character might signify that they are dispersing too far from the source text. Naturally, if a text is more domesticated or foreign depends on the translator's or the publisher's preference, and so it is not a universal issue, but it is an issue none the less.

Number two are the names of the characters. The same issue happened in *Reaper Man* when Death became Bill Door. As was stated in the respective analysis, it is possible that the existence of a male name in relation to the character has finally caused the Spanish translator to gender Death as male. In *Good Omens*, the four Horsepersons, except for Death, go by different alias. War is called Scarlett or Carmine, Famine is famously known in the story as Dr. Raven Sable and Pollution is known as Chalky, Mr. White and by many other variations of white. The issue with names is the same as the physical description one. It creates a line between translation and adaptation that some translators might not be willing to cross (although, there are many examples of translated literature where names have been adapted into the target culture, which suggests that the issue with names is not translating the name itself but changing it from a male to female name or vice versa).

Death does not have an alias in this text. However, the name Death is itself an alias. In *Good Omens*, Death's real name is Azrael. Azrael is in some religions known as the angel of Death and it is also a character in the *Discworld*, although in the series Azrael and Death are two separate characters.

The link with Azrael, a recognisable male religious figure, should be reason enough to keep Death's gender as a male in the translations, but it is not the only one.

Despite the fact that the physical description issue mentioned above does not concern Death, since his appearance remains more or less the same, it still has some influence over the decision regarding Death's gender. After all, if the gender for all the other personifications was kept the same as in the source text, why would Death be different? All complications created by having a character with different grammatical and biological genders would have to be dealt with already, due to the other horsepersons keeping the same gender as the source. Changing Death's gender under these circumstances, only to suit the target culture's tradition, would not ease the difficulty of the translation, nor would it make it sound more natural. Therefore, it is perfectly reasonable for the translator to wish to be consistent and either change all the horsepersons gender to match the grammatical one, or keep them all as they are in the ST.

That being said, there is one exception. Pestilence is a minor character only mentioned once in the text. Being a personification, it was also assigned a gender. In the English source text, he is a male. However, not all translators have kept this gender.

<p>He had taken over when Pestilence, muttering about penicillin, had retired in 1936. If only the old boy had known what opportunities the future had held...</p> <p>ENST (pg. 201)</p>
<p>Tomara o lugar em 1936, o ano em que Pestilência, resmungando qualquer coisa acerca de penicilina, o abandonara. Se ao menos o velhote tivesse sabido prever as oportunidades que o futuro lhe reservava...</p> <p>PTTT (pg. 259)</p>
<p>Er hatte die Nachfolge von Pestilenz angetreten, als sie sich im Jahr 1936, nach der Erfindung des Penizillins, in den Ruhestand zurückzog. Er hielt die Zukunft für recht vielversprechend und bedauerte fast, daß sie so schnell enden sollte.</p> <p>DETT (pg. 278)</p>
<p>Él había reemplazado a Pestilencia que, protestando entre dientes contra la penicilina, se retiró en 1936. Si hubiera sabido cuántas posibilidades tenía el futuro...</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 212)</p>
<p>Il avait assuré la relève quand Pestilence, bougonnant on ne sait quoi à propos de pénicilline, avait pris sa retraite en 1936. Si seulement le pauvre avait connu les opportunités que recelait le futur...</p> <p>FRTT (253)</p>

As can be seen from the excerpt above, German has translated the male Pestilence as a she, “als sie sich im Jahr 1936”. Both “die Pestilenz” and “die Peste” are grammatically female in the German language, which means that there was no way to match the grammatical and the biological gender of the previous horseperson. The Spanish language by omitting “old boy” and without the introduction of any personal pronouns creates a Pestilence whose gender is uncertain. Once again, articles are usually not enough to determine biological gender. As for the French translation, Pestilence was translated the same way as the other horsepersons and the male gender was kept despite the word being grammatically female in the French language. The same is true in the Portuguese translation that has identified Pestilence as male with “o velhote” while also avoiding agreeing the noun “Pestilência” with the female gender by omitting the preceding article.

The reason some of the translators have decided to change Pestilence’s gender, despite having not done the same to the other personifications, is most likely because, being a character that it is only mentioned once and only very briefly, none of the factors proposed on this analysis as reasons for keeping the source text’s gender, apply to this character. Pestilence has no physical description, has no aliases and it has no part in the story of the text. Changing its gender has no effect on the translations, which means there is no reason as to why the translator shouldn’t match grammatical and biological gender.

3.2.8. *Paradise Lost* by John Milton

John Milton’s epic poem focuses on biblical characters such as Satan, Adam and Eve, but it also personifies certain concepts such as Death and Sin and introduces them as minor characters.

Death in *Paradise Lost*, despite being personified, it is still very much the representation of a concept and it is far from the more humanized roles that Death has taken on in some of the contemporary texts that have already been analysed. Death’s lingering conceptual nature along with the very small size of its role in the text are perfect conditions to justify changing Death’s gender into the gender that feels more natural to the target culture. It is, therefore, surprising that, once again, only the Spanish translation has made this change.

The reason most translators kept the source gender is most likely the same one seen in *Mort*. That is family relations. In the poem, Death is introduced as the incestuous son of Satan and Sin, Satan’s daughter.

Before mine eyes in opposition sits Grim DEATH my Son and foe, who sets them on, And me
his Parent would full soon devour For want of other prey

ENST (pg. 38)

<p>A mórte sempre presente a meus olhos, a hedionda mórte, meu filho, e meu inimigo, desafia contra mim os meus algozes; e posto que eu seja sua Mãi, quizera o seu furor devorar-me por falta de outra preza</p> <p>PTTT (José Amaro da Silva) (pg. 90)</p>
<p>Senta-se o Monstro-Morte a mim fronteiro: D’ali, sendo meu filho e meu contrário, Dos féros cães açula-me a matilha; mesmo a mim, de outras vítimas em falta</p> <p>PTTT (António José de Lima Leitão) (pg. 110)</p>
<p>Mir gegenüber sitzt der grasse Tod, Mein Sohn und Feind, der jene hetzt, und mich, Die eigne Mutter längst verschlungen hätte, Aus Mangel andrer Beute</p> <p>DETT (pg. 50)</p>
<p>Sentada ante mis ojos, y siempre enfrente de mí, mi hija y enemiga, la horrible Muerte, azuza a esos perros, y ya me hubiera devorado, a falta de otra presa, aunque soy su madre</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 39)</p>
<p>Devant mes yeux, assise en face de moi, l’effrayante Mort, mon fils et mon ennemi, excite ces chiens. Et moi, sa mère, elle m’aurait bientôt dévorée, faute d’une autre proie</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 80)</p>

The excerpts show how only the Spanish Death has switched from Son to “hija”. German shares the same grammatical gender as the source for both Death and Sin, but to the remaining two languages, French and Portuguese, it seems that this family dynamic, although twisted, might have been enough to ensure that these character’s gender would remain as they are in the source.

That being said, if it is family relations that are responsible for the gendering of Death, the strategy used should remain consistent for all the other characters. German, as has been already stated, didn’t have any gender-related issues. For the French, Portuguese and Spanish languages, on the other hand, it is not only Death’s gender that is mismatched with the English source language, but also Sin, that has been attributed the female gender in the ST. Sin’s gender is grammatically male in all Romance target texts.

The French and the Portuguese texts are consistent in their gendering: both Death and Sin have been translated biologically the same as the source despite going against grammatical gender. However, the Spanish translator, despite having decided to change Death’s gender into female, has not done the same for Sin, which remains female even though “el pecado” is masculine in Spanish. This means that the reasoning behind the translation of Death and Sin must be different.

Before taking a more in depth look at Sin’s character, there is one Portuguese translator that also took a different approach when translating Death. Except for in Dr. António José de Lima Leitão’s

translation, the articles have been translated according to grammatical gender in exactly the same way it has been done in all the previous texts. However, António Leitão has not only used the male gender for Death, he used it for the articles as well.

The problem with gendering articles according to biological gender instead of grammatical is, as has been stated earlier in this thesis, that the readability of the text won't be as natural as if articles were in grammatical agreement with the noun. Leitão must have been aware of this issue and so he found a different type of solution. Instead of simply calling Death "Morte", the translator used the monstrous description of the character within the text and started referring to it as "Monstro-Morte". "Monstro" is grammatically masculine and so by aggregating the two nouns, with "Monstro" in first place, the articles preceding this character should now also be grammatically masculine, thus solving the readability issue. On the same note, Sin has received the same treatment. The translator has aggregated the feminine noun "Fúria" to the male noun "Sin" thus creating the noun "Fúria-Pecado", in order to refer to the female character with corresponding feminine articles.

Still on the matter of Death's translation. *Paraíso Perdido* translated by Dr. António José de Lima Leitão also features illustrations by Gustave Doré. One of the illustrations depicts the moment when Satan encounters Sin and Death at the gates of Hell.



Figure 1: GUSTAVE DORÉ. Satan Talks to Sin and Death (Paradise Lost)

Depicted in the image above, Satan is the one seen standing and Sin is easily recognised on the right by the serpent body with which she is described in the text. That means that Death, being the only one that remains, must be the figure on the left. Death in *Paradise Lost* is supposed to be a dark

shadowy figure, but in this illustration the character has wings, a cloak and long hair. The wings are reminiscent of an angel, which makes this depiction very similar to the ones of the Angel of Death from Abrahamic religions. The cloak is reminiscent of the traditional garments of the grim reaper, but there is nothing about this image that indicates that Death is male. In fact, even the posture of the character seems more feminine. There seems to be a discrepancy between the character's description in the text and the illustration that accompanies it.

The image comes from a collection of 50 plates painted by Gustave Doré in 1866 in order to illustrate Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The illustrator must have been inspired by his own image of Death, since both Milton's source text and the French translation by Chateaubriand describe a different death from the one depicted. Instead, his illustration seems to be heavily influenced by traditional depictions of the anthropomorphic figure. Both artists and translators have a preconceived notion of how Death should look like. The difference is translators have to work based on a source text that can contradict this notion, while artist usually have more freedom of expression. Of course, there are also instances where artists are restricted by instructions and illustrating a text should be one of these instances, since illustrations should match the text they are representing. Why then doesn't Doré's illustration match Leitão's translation? It is because the illustration was not made to illustrate Leitão's translation. As the preface of the PTTT mentions, the addition of Doré's illustrations is to put together three master-pieces⁷. The use of an illustration that does not match the text is not something contemporary publishers would normally do regarding contemporary fiction, but since *Paradise Lost* is an epic poem, it is natural that normal rules do not apply and the appreciation of the text itself as well as of art and other interpretations by it inspired are deemed more important than readability and cohesion.

Having finished discussing the translation of Death it is time to focus on the translation of Sin. The interesting thing regarding Sin's translation is that all translators have kept it with the same gender as the source, even the Spanish translator that has changed Death's gender to better suit the target text. The reason has most likely to do with the one big difference between genders that can't be ignored. That is biological differences.

So far, the issues discussed have been related to terms of address, family relations, physical descriptions and even behaviour, like going to a barber instead of a hairdresser. However, behaviour and basic physical descriptions such as hair and even clothes are only gender binding due to social constructions and can be easily adapted to fit the target text's narrative, that is if they need to be changed at all. Terms of address and family relations have a stronger connection with biological

⁷ Brindar a literatura portuguesa, publicando ilustrado com as esplêndidas gravuras dos originais desenhos de Gustavo Doré o monumental poema de Milton magistralmente vertido pelo dr. Lima Leitão, – é englobar um tríptico conjunto de obras-primas em que dignamente rivalizam a inspiração genial do poeta inglês, a sua conscienciosa interpretação pelo tradutor português e o lápis mágico do artista francês que tão surpreendentes arrojados fantasiou. *O Paraíso Perdido* (1938); prefácio (pg.8)

gender but, as long as the biological physiology of the character doesn't impact the development of the story, these can also be changed into the opposite gender's equivalent if the translator chooses to do so. Harder to change without interfering with the story, however, is basic biology.

In the text, Sin tells the story of how she gave birth to Death in a gruesome but detailed way.

(...) till my womb Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes. At last this odious offspring whom thou seest Thine own begotten, breaking violent way Tore through my entrails.

ENST (pg. 37)

(...) senti prodigiosos movimentos, e dôres de ventre insupportaveis. Em fim esta odiosa vergonhea, que tu vês, teu próprio filho, sahindo á luz com violencia, me despedaçou as entranhas.

PTTT (José Amaro da Silva) (pg. 89)

(...) meu seio em breve, Mui grande já, por ti grávido, sofre Abalo enorme, lúgubre agonia. Por fim, essa progênie truculenta Que ali notando estás, teu próprio filho, Com fúria ardente rompe-me as entranhas.

PTTT (António José de Lima Leitão) (pg. 110)

(...) Als sich mein Leib von Dir befruchtet trug, Bewegung fühlte, so wie grause Wehen. Zuletzt brach dies verhaßte Wesen sich, Du siehst Dein eigen Kind, gewaltsam Bahn

DETT (pg. 50)

(...) pues fecundado por ti mi vientre, y cercano ya el trance extremo, experimentó movimientos prodigiosos y dolores insupportables. Por fin ese aborrecible vástago que ves, hechura tuya, abriéndose paso violentamente, desgarró mis entrañas

ESTT (pg. 38)

(...) mes flancs fécondés par toi, et maintenant excessivement grossis, éprouvèrent des mouvements prodigieux et les poignantes douleurs de l'enfantement. Enfin, cet odieux rejeton que tu vois, de toi engendré, se frayant la route avec violence, déchira mes entrailles

FRTT (pg. 79)

Siring children is related to both genders and it is for that reason that changing the family ties of certain characters can be possible under de proper circumstances, as it was proven by the ESTT of *Mort*. However, the mentioning of a womb and the indication of pregnancy are something that only

pertains to the female gender⁸. Together with the fact that, in the text, Sin gave birth to Death while she was all alone, it makes it nearly impossible for the translator to gender Sin as anything but female.

Had Sin been changed into a male, then Death would have two fathers and no womb to develop in. Gendering Satan as female is also not a viable option, since his concept, and consequently his gender, are even well more defined than Death and Sin in all of the cultures studied. The only solution in sight that could possibly allow for Sin to also be male is to avoid the words “womb” and “pregnant” and make it seem as if Death was sired from Sin by another mean other than pregnancy. It is possible since these characters are more fantastic than human. *Paradise Lost* itself makes a suggestion of one such method. The translator could have given Death a similar birth to that of Sin, that was born from her father’s head much like the goddess Athena from Greek mythology. However, for the translator to do so would mean a much bigger alteration to the plot of the story than what would be required were Sin’s gender to remain as it is. These plot-modifying alterations come hand in hand with the thought that just because a change can be made, it does not mean it should. Not to mention that this excerpt is not the only one where Sin is mentioned along with pregnancy.

The hounds that have also been born out of her womb are described as still being connected to Sin’s abdomen in both the text and in many paintings portraying the character. The connection to the womb makes it harder for the translator to avoid the topic of pregnancy and, in order to go around it, more significant changes would have to take place. It seems that all the translators have agreed that Sin’s gender was not worth such complications and have thus decided to keep it as it is in the source text. It is also very likely that these complications were the reason as to why the Spanish translator has opted to differentiate Death and Sin and translate these characters with opposite methods.

Gender-related biological functions might very well be the most difficult hardship that a translator must face if they wish to change a character’s gender.

3.2.9. *As Intermitências da Morte* by José Saramago

The next text that shall be analysed is Saramago’s *As Intermitências da Morte* and, as one can tell by the title, for the first time in this thesis, the source text is not in English. Instead, it has been written in Portuguese, a Romance language and one that traditionally genders Death as female.

The use of a different source language is the first of many interesting factors that this text provides. The interest lies in the fact that so far, with all the source texts being in English, only the Romance languages have faced difficulties regarding gender in the translations. English, of course, has

⁸ For simplicity reasons, this statement is in regards to cis-gender only.

not been studied as a target language until now, while German, because it shares the same traditional gender for Death as English, does not typically see the gender of the character as an issue when English is the source language.

This text will offer a small insight into how Germanic languages deal with characters that have been gendered against the target culture’s expectations. The results, as shown in the table of results and better represented by the excerpt bellow, indicate that neither English nor German take issue with keeping an unfamiliar gender in order to stay as close to the source text as possible.

<p>A cada passo que vai dando, se lhe chamamos passo é apenas para ajudar a imaginação de quem nos leia, não porque ela efectivamente se movimenta como se dispusesse de pernas e pés, a morte tem de pelear muito para reprimir a tendência expansiva que é inerente à sua natureza (...)</p> <p>PTST (pg. 106)</p>
<p>Cada paso que va dando, si le llamamos paso es para ayudar a la imaginación de quien nos lea, no porque ella efectivamente se mueva como si dispusiese de piernas y pies, la muerte tiene que pelear mucho para reprimir la tendencia expansiva que es inherente a su naturaleza (...)</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 96)</p>
<p>À chaque pas qu’elle fait, et si nous parlons de pas c’est uniquement pour aider l’imagination de notre lecteur et non parce que la mort se déplace réellement comme si elle était dotée de jambes et de pieds, elle doit beaucoup lutter pour réprimer la tendance expansionniste inhérente à sa nature (...)</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 121)</p>
<p>With each step she takes, and we only call it a step to help the reader's imagination, not because she actually requires legs and feet to move, death has to struggle hard to repress the expansive tendency inherent in her nature (...)</p> <p>ENTT (pg. 101)</p>
<p>Bei jedem Schritt, den sie tut, und wenn wir hier von Schritt sprechen, dann nur, um der Vorstellungskraft unserer Leser auf die Sprünge zu helfen, und nicht, weil sie sich tatsächlich so fortbewegte, als hätte sie Beine und Füße, muss tod heftig gegen die expansive Neigung, die ihrer Natur eigen ist (...)</p> <p>DETT (pg. 158)</p>

Unsurprisingly, the Spanish and French translators have written Death as a feminine character. German and English have done so as well, German by using “sie” and English with the pronouns “she” and “her”.

It is important to note that English, out of all these languages, is the one that has less reason to change Death’s gender. The other languages have two factors that may influence the translator’s

choice. One is the preconceived image and gender of the personification of Death in the respective culture, and the other is the grammatical gender of the noun. Grammatical gender does not apply to the noun Death in English and so the only factor the English translator has to consider is the expectation of the target readers. However, because this expectation is solely based on social construct, it is easy to imagine that in cases where Death's gender is at least minimally relevant to the story, the translator won't have any difficulties in breaking that expectation in order to portray the character as the source author intended to. As *Intermitências da Morte* is one such case. At the same time, one must not forget that the English language has a very powerful standing in globalized society and it wouldn't be surprising to see such a dominant language and culture opt for more domesticating strategies regarding translation. In the words of Lawrence Venuti, the imbalance between Anglo-American publishing culture and the rest of the world has given rise to "cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States that are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other." (Venuti, 1995), in other words, extreme domestication. Had the source text been one where Death's gender has no consequence to the story, there is a great likelihood that the English, as well as the German language, would follow the same tendency of their Romance counterparts and adapt the gender to what best suits the target culture. Unfortunately, this corpus is not large enough to verify this hypothesis and so the results are mostly concerning the Romance languages only.

The next excerpt suggests that the English translator might have a bigger tendency to stay close to the source text than the German translator, possibly due to the noun's lack of grammatical gender, as mentioned above.

<p>um dia virão a saber o que é a Morte com letra grande, nesse momento, se ela, improvavelmente, vos desse tempo para isso, perceberíeis a diferença real que há entre o relativo e o absolute</p>

PTST (pg. 80)

<p>un día llegarán a saber qué es la Muerte con letra mayúscula, en ese momento, si ella, improbablemente, les diese tiempo para eso, comprenderían la diferencia real que existe entre lo relativo y lo absolute</p>

ESTT (pg. 72)

<p>un jour vous saurez ce qu'est la Mort avec une majuscule et alors, si elle vous en laisse le loisir, ce qui est plus qu'improbable, vous percevrez la différence réelle entre le relatif et l'absolu</p>

FRTT (pg. 92)

one day you will find out about Death with a capital D, and at that moment, in the unlikely event that she gives you time to do so, you will understand the real difference between the relative and the absolute

ENTT (pg. 77)

eines Tages werdet ihr den großgeschriebenen Tod erfahren, und dann begreift ihr, falls er euch, was unwahrscheinlich ist, die Zeit dazu lässt, den wahren Unterschied zwischen dem Relativen und dem Absoluten

DETT (pg. 119)

Death in *As Intermitências da Morte* has explicitly stated that her name should be written with a lower case “d”, because she is only one of the many small deaths and that the capital “D” is reserved to the bigger universal Death.

The mentioning of a bigger Death can actually be helpful to a translator in the same position as the English and German ones, because it gives them an opportunity to gender the smaller death with the same gender as in the source, while gendering the bigger Death, whose gender has no influence on its role within the story, with the gender that matches the target culture’s expectations. The German translator has decided to take this approach. Even though she has referred to the smaller death as a “sie”, in this excerpt the bigger Death is introduced with the male form “er”, despite being feminine in the source text. This supports the theory that languages with grammatically gendered nouns tend to gender personifications of different concepts accordingly to the target text’s grammar in cases where gender is not relevant to the plot.

Meanwhile, the English translator has opted to gender the bigger Death as female. Grammatically, there is no reason as to why the English Death should be one gender or the other. Had the English translator changed Death’s gender the same way the German translator did, there would be no doubt that the reason behind it would be the traditional image of the male Grim Reaper. Could the fact that Death has remained female in this text be an indication that, regarding the translation of Death’s gender, grammar has a bigger influence than the target culture’s expectations? Possibly. After all, grammar, despite slowly changing throughout the years, has a fixed set of rules that must be followed, while the reader’s expectations are based on social constructs that, no matter how deeply ingrained they are on people’s mind, are not set in stone.

It is clear that, in this text, the bigger Death’s gender can be flexible, however, Saramago, the source text author, describes the smaller death in such a way that makes it harder for this character to have the same flexibility. In the ST the following citation appears: “A morte, em todos os seus traços, atributos e características, era, inconfundivelmente, uma mulher.”. For context, the other characters

in Saramago's work were trying to find death and, despite having failed to do so, the forensic scientist hired for the task has determined through the analysis of skulls and medieval paintings that Death was indeed female.

Of course, in the translations, this discourse could have been easily domesticated to fit a male Death narrative if need be. However, it is once again up to the translator, or publisher, to decide if grammar or the reader's expectations are enough to justify the switch or if it is too big a change.

The following excerpts provide some more reasons as to why the gender has been kept the same as the source:

<p>Meia hora teria passado num relógio quando a porta se abriu e uma mulher apareceu no limiar. A gadanha tinha ouvido dizer que isto podia acontecer, transformar-se a morte em um ser humano, de preferência mulher por essa cousa dos géneros</p> <p>PTST (pg. 132)</p>
<p>Media hora habría pasado en un reloj cuando la puerta se abrió y una mujer apareció en el umbral. La guadaña había oído decir que esto podría suceder, transformarse la muerte en un ser humano, preferiblemente mujer por esa cosa de los géneros</p> <p>ESTT (pg. 119)</p>
<p>Une demi-heure d'horloge devait s'être écoulée lorsque la porte s'ouvrit et une femme apparut sur le seuil. La faux avait entendu dire que la mort pouvait se transformer en être humain, de préférence en femme, à cause de cette question de genre</p> <p>FRTT (pg. 148)</p>
<p>Only half an hour of clock time could have passed when the door opened and a woman appeared. The scythe had heard that such a thing was possible, that death could transform herself into a human being, preferably female, this being her normal gender</p> <p>ENTT (pg. 123)</p>
<p>Vielleicht eine halbe Stunde später ging die Tür auf, und eine Frau trat über die Schwelle. Die Sense hatte bereits davon gehört, dass tod sich in ein menschliches Wesen verwandeln konnte, bevorzugt in eine Frau wegen dieser Sache mit dem grammatikalischen Geschlecht</p> <p>DETT (pg. 194)</p>

Death has now taken a human form, which means that her physical appearance is no longer an ambiguous androgenous skeleton, but a biological-looking woman. As was seen in the previous analysis, gender-coded physical appearances, just like gender-coded names, are usually hindrances to any translator that chooses to alter Death's gender to fit their culture. This change in appearance,

together with the constant reminders that Death is female by the ST's author are two of the main reasons as to why Death's gender is significant to the development of the story and will therefore most likely remain the same as the source text. However, there is an even bigger reason that justifies why all translators have gendered this Death as female. The keyword is "seduce".

(...) a gadanha havia acertado em cheio no alvo quando, em certa altura da conversa com a morte, se perguntou sobre o tipo do homem a quem ela pretendia seduzir. Esta era a palavra-chave, seduzir.

PTST (pg. 134)

(...) la guadaña acertó de lleno en el objetivo cuando, en determinado momento de la conversación con la muerte, se preguntó sobre el tipo de hombre a quien pretendía seducir. Esta era la palabra clave, seducir.

ESTT (pg. 121)

(...) la faux avait mis en plein dans le mille quand, à un certain stade dans sa conversation avec la mort, elle s'était demandé quel type d'homme celle-ci voulait séduire. Séduire était le mot clé.

FRTT (pg. 151)

(...) the scythe had hit the nail on the head when, at one point in its conversation with death, it had inquired as to what kind of man she hoped to seduce. That was the key word, seduce.

ENTT (pg. 126)

(...) hatte die Sense ins Schwarze getroffen, als sie in ihrer Unterhaltung mit tod die Frage nach dem Typ Mann stellte, den diese verführen wollte. Das war das Schlüsselwort, verführen.

DETT (pg. 198)

With *As Intermitências da Morte*, a new factor that is not present in the previous texts is introduced: Romantic relationships.

In Saramago's text, the reason behind death taking a female human form is so that she could get close to a man who didn't die when he was supposed to. Their relationship eventually grows and death falls in love. The two even became intimate by the end of the book. Theoretically, this relationship could be translated into a Germanic language in three ways. The first is to keep everything as it is in the source text, including death's gender. The second is to change both characters' gender, resulting in a male death and a female love interest. The third is to change death's gender, but keep the same male love interest as the source.

To change both genders would mean that the translator would have to take over the role of the writer and come up with an equivalent female character to the male cellist. Once again, despite this

being doable, big changes like this are not usually what is expected in a translation, neither by the publisher nor the target readers.

Changing death's gender while keeping the male love interest creates an even bigger change of a different kind. This change would turn a heterosexual relationship into a gay one. In a situation where death and the male character are not romantically involved, changing only death's gender would lessen the number of alterations made by the translator, but since they are romantically involved, the translator is changing both the character's gender and sexuality. Changing a character's sexuality is also something that the translator is not usually expected to do. At the moment, the only circumstances in which this would be a viable solution were if the translation had been commissioned with the LGBT community in mind, which would turn the gender and sexuality change into a necessity instead of a hardship.

Finally, the last topic to be discussed regarding this text concerns the source text's author's awareness of the differences between languages regarding Death's gender. In fact, the main premise on which this thesis is being built is stated in *As Intermitências da Morte* by Saramago himself.

(...) mas isso talvez tenha sido consequência do simples hábito, dado que, à excepção de alguns idiomas, poucos, em que, não se sabe porquê, se preferiu optar pelo género masculino, ou neutro, a morte sempre foi uma pessoa do sexo feminino.

PTST (pg. 92)

(...) pero eso tal vez haya sido la consecuencia del simple hábito, dado que, excepto algunos idiomas, pocos, en que, no se sabe por qué, se prefirió optar por el género masculino o neutro, la muerte siempre ha sido una persona de sexo femenino.

ESTT (pg. 83)

(...) mais c'était peut-être simplement l'effet de l'habitude, car à l'exception de quelques rares idiomes qui avaient préféré, allez savoir pourquoi, opter pour le masculin ou le neutre, la mort a toujours été une personne de sexe féminin.

FRTT (pg. 105)

(...) but that might have been pure habit, given that, with the exception of a very few languages, which, for some unknown reason, opt for the masculine or the neuter, death has always been a person of the female gender.

ENTT (pg. 87)

(...) doch kann das auch einfach der Macht der Gewohnheit entsprungen sein, da ja im Portugiesischen, im Gegensatz zu anderen Sprachen, in denen man sich aus unerfindlichen Gründen

für den männlichen oder sächlichen Genus entschied, das Substantiv morte, Tod, von jeher weiblichen Geschlechts war.

DETT (pg. 137)

Saramago states that most languages portray Death as feminine and that in only a few exceptions is Death masculine. This is a biased statement that places Romance languages as the norm and Germanic languages as the exception. The author also claims that the reason as to why some languages use the male form is unknown, but this thesis has already stated that the reason has to do with the grammatical gender of nouns. The way this excerpt has been constructed makes it transparent that it was written from the perspective of a Romance language speaker, and so its translation into a Germanic language can easily sound foreign.

The English translation is very literal. A literal translation of a statement such as this can seem strange to the target reader, because the way it is written makes it seem almost dismissive to the languages that are seen as the exception. The author leaves no room for argument, Romance languages have it right and death is indeed female. From the perspective of an English or German reader, seeing their language and culture being so easily dismissed might seem odd and the fact that the statement is being read in one of the exception languages makes it even more out of place. Had the source text been written in English instead of Portuguese, the structuring of this sentence would have been much different, and the exception languages' way of gendering Death would probably have been given more regard.

German, on the other hand has specified Portuguese as the language that genders death as female in opposition to other languages that gender death as male. The specification of the Portuguese language together with the expression "im Gegensatz zu anderen Sprachen" meaning "unlike other languages" makes it seem as if Portuguese is being presented as the exception, although, the claim stating that the reason as to why any language would gender death as male has been kept. This translation is not as dismissive as the English one and there is a balance between the two groups of languages in a way that none of them is being clearly stated as an exception. However, the foreign feeling is also present here, this time for a different reason. The source text does not mention the name of the country in which the story takes place, although similarities can be found with Portugal, the source text's author's country. Despite the similarities, the country in the story remains fictional and so it is natural for some readers to imagine a country that is also familiar to them and in which the language being spoken is the same as them. In some people's opinion, this universality is a good characteristic for a translation to have, for it creates an illusion in which the reader forgets they are reading a translation and that the text they are reading has been originally written in their own

language. By specifying the Portuguese grammar rules, the German translator breaks this illusion and reminds the target reader that the source text has been written in a whole different language, thus the foreign feeling.

3.2.10. *The Sandman* by Neil Gaiman

The next and final text to be analysed is actually a comic book series called *The Sandman*, by *Good Omens'* author Neil Gaiman. The main protagonist is Dream and he is the anthropomorphic personification of his name. The series also personifies other concepts such as Death, Delirium, Desire, Despair, Destiny and Destruction. As Death is the main topic of this thesis, this is the only one of these characters that will be analysed in depth.

The most interesting aspect regarding *The Sandman's* Death is that, even though the source language is English, the character is female. Throughout this thesis, there has been a constant reminder that Death is traditionally male in English and German, and female in the Romance languages. So far, all source texts have followed tradition, and *Sandman* is the first and only source text in this corpus that goes against the reader's initial expectations. However, the previous analysis has shown that reader's expectations, which are all based in social constructs, are the only existing factor regarding Death's portrayal in Anglo-Saxon literature. Since grammar has no influence on the noun's gender in the English language, Death can be represented with a much wider range of possibilities than people might expect. *The Sandman* is proof of this by portraying Death as a gothic young-looking woman instead of the stereotypical male grim reaper with a skeleton body and a black cloak. It is also interesting how the same author has portrayed Death so differently in two different books. In *Good Omens* Death is male and physically more stereotypical. Of course, the portrayal of Death in *Good Omens* might have been due to the influence of the book's co-author Terry Pratchett, as, after all, *Good Omens'* Death and the *Discworld* series' Death are very similar. However, that doesn't erase the fact that two different books by the same author have two completely different representations of Death, and if it is possible for one single author to portray Death in different ways, then it is even more likely to find different representations of this character among source texts all written by different authors.

This flexibility works in favour of the Romance languages, because, for once, the gender of Death in the TT's matches the English ST and there are no grammatical agreement-related issues that need to be solved. However, for the German translator, an issue that usually doesn't apply to English-German translation suddenly makes an appearance. After all, if the English source text decides to

portray Death as female, then the German traditional Death will no longer match the source and the issues discussed regarding the Romance languages will suddenly apply to the German language as well.

That being said, there is an extra factor in *The Sandman* that limits the solutions available to the German translator. *The Sandman* is a comic book, and, in a comic book, actions and characters are depicted through images instead of descriptions.

The use of pictures in place of text descriptions creates a big disadvantage for a translator in a situation where the target reader's idea of Death does not match the source. Had *Sandman* been an illustrated novel instead of a comic book, it would still be possible for a translator to change a character's gender if needed be. The target publisher could easily publish a translated version without illustrations. However, since, in a comic book, illustrations are not a secondary element and cannot be erased from the final product, the option to change a character's gender ceases to exist. In fact, illustrations can be as important as the main text depending on the type of interaction between the two elements. Martinec and Salway have described three ways this interaction can be done. The first is "elaboration", in which the text and the illustrations both transmit the same information and in the same amount. The second is "extension", in which the text presents information that is not visible in the illustrations. The third is "enhancement", in which the illustrations provide more information than the one mentioned in the text (Martinec; Salway, 2005) (Borodo, 2013). Between the three, the extension relation is the one that creates the least issues to the translator, seeing that if most of the information is transmitted to text and not through image it is easier for the translator to alter said information without the translation becoming incongruent, however, the same cannot be said to the other two.

If the visual element is equivalent in relevance to the text, changing a character's design through pictures is as hard to ignore as textual level changes, if not more, and even though it is possible to alter the comic book's images and thus transform Death into a male, it would still not only be a very significant difference from the source text it would also mean a higher publishing cost for the publisher. This type of localization is not unheard of, but, since the investment of more money is involved, it is usually done by big companies such as Disney, with the different news anchors in Zootopia, for example, in marketing or even for censorship. Normally, localization is used to solve issues created by images that are culture specific, for example the tooth fairy turning into a mouse in Spanish children's picture books (Quesada, 2021). Since Death is also a culture specific image, it would not be surprising to see it being localized. Perhaps the reason it wasn't has to do with the size of *The Sandman* series (75 issues, not counting spin-offs) in combination with the publishing costs mentioned above, but if Death is illustrated as a character in a stand-alone book or even a children's book, the use of localization is definitely likely.

Having now discussed how changing the gender is not a viable option in this particular case, it is time to analyse how *The Sandman* has been translated.

Obviously, there is nothing to discuss regarding the translations into the Romance languages. Since the ST's Death is also female, there were no changes that needed to be made and all translations were very literal. The German translator, on the other hand, has opted for a solution that has also been used on one of the previous texts.



The strategy also used by the Portuguese translator Paula Reis in *Mort* consists of leaving the noun Death untranslated. The reason this strategy works is because the noun Death is being used as a name instead of just representing a concept. Some cultures adapt character's names in books to make them more familiar to target readers, but it is also very common to keep them as they are in the source text. The difference between the use of Death as an abstract noun and the use of it as a proper noun in German is that as an abstract noun it needs to be preceded by an article, while the same doesn't happen if it is being used as a proper noun. Actually, this can be seen in *As Intermitências da Morte* as well. In one of the excerpts studied, the following citation appears: "als sie in ihrer Unterhaltung mit tod". The word for Death "tod" does not have an article preceding it simply because it is being used as a proper name. Had it been a common noun such as woman, for example, the sentence would demand an article, "als sie in ihrer Unterhaltung mit der Frau", thus forcing the translator to attribute a gender to the noun. This strategy helps the German translator to successfully avoid gender agreement issues, but in *The Sandman's* case there is also an extra advantage. In the

comic there are seven anthropomorphic personifications and their names all start with the letter “D”. By applying the same strategy to all of them, the parallelism between the names is kept, while in the Portuguese and the Spanish version is lost.

Chapter 4. DISCUSSION

Now that the individual analysis of each corpus's text is finished, it is time to discuss all the findings.

Between all the texts studied, a plethora of issues related to the gender of Death has been found. However, no matter how hard they are to solve, no issue is relevant if Death's gender has no actual significance to the story. This means that the first question the translator needs to answer is "does Death's gender matter to the overall plot?", because if the answer is no, then the tendency in translation of contemporary fiction seems to be to change the gender to one that matches the target culture's traditional representation of the character. After all, if gender is of no consequence to the development of the story, then the only issues that may appear can only be of a grammatical nature.

Grammar may not influence the storyline but it does change the degree of readability of a certain text. A translator's job is not to simply transfer information from one language to another, they have to do so according to the purpose of the translation. For most of the corpus, the translations were commissioned for entertainment of the masses and so most readers will expect the translator to transfer the information in a way that is as recognizable to them as the source text is to the source readers. This usually includes writing according to the target language's standards and following its grammar rules, otherwise the final product won't read as naturally as it would have if the text had been originally written in the target language.

The grammar issues found in the texts all come down to the same grammar point, which is gender agreement. The agreement can be between the noun Death and corresponding articles, between Death and adjectives that characterize the noun, or between Death and other nouns.

The samples gathered from the corpus show that, out of these word classes, definite and indefinite articles are usually in agreement with the grammatical gender of the character they are referring to, regardless of the biological gender. However, adjectives and nouns are more often seen agreeing with Death's biological gender.

When a translator opts to translate Death using the opposite gender of what is traditional to the target culture, at least one of these word classes will most likely agree with biological gender even though it may sound grammatically incorrect. This is because if all of them agree with grammatical gender, then there won't be any indication to the characters true gender and it would be as if the translator has simply translated Death according to tradition. What this ultimately means is that if the goal is to actively portray a Death of untraditional gender, then it is unlikely that the target text will sound 100% natural.

However, there are ways to diminish the foreign feeling. To make the target text sound as natural as possible, the translator has to avoid instances where gender agreement doesn't follow grammar. This can be done by use of pronouns. Once the referent is identified as "a Morte", "la Muerte", or "la Mort", the following sentences can use male pronouns in its place, and in that way not only is Death's biological gender specified, but male nouns and adjectives can characterise the character while still being grammatically correct. Of course, the passage from the female article + noun into a male pronoun is still in grammatical disagreement, but that is the above-mentioned necessary sacrifice to define Death's gender as opposite to the traditional one.

In some languages, like Portuguese, the use of pronouns is not as systematic as in English and so replacing the noun with a pronoun in order to make the text sound more natural won't be as effective as a translator might hope. Instead, the translator could use omission. Spanish and Portuguese are null-subject languages, which can be very useful if one is trying to avoid translating gender. In English, expressions such as "he said" are often seen, but in Spanish and Portuguese it is possible to translate this expression in a gender-neutral way by leaving the subject elliptical. As, with omission, the gender of the character is not specified, this strategy can be used to reduce the instances in the text where gender agreement is necessary, and, because null-subject sentences are very frequent in both Spanish and Portuguese, for these two languages, omission is often an easier solution than using pronouns.

However, there is another way to make gender agreement match grammatical gender without interfering with the selected biological gender, and often this possibility is offered by the source text itself. It is not unusual to find other nouns used in the text to refer to Death. The most common one is "figure". The word "figure", in the Romance languages, is grammatically feminine, but it can refer to both a male and female individual. More importantly, unlike Death, the word does not have associated a pre-determined culturally-shaped representation and can't, therefore, impose, by itself, an idea on the readers mind of what the character looks like. By using "figure" instead of "Death", it's possible to use feminine articles on a male subject without sounding grammatically incorrect.

That being said, there are still other alternatives for translators who in no instance wish to go against standardized grammar, or, in other words, translators who wish to create a text where all word classes, including articles, are always in agreement with the grammatical gender of Death as a noun.

One of the alternatives works very similarly to the usage of the word "figure". The strategy was used by Portuguese translator António José de Lima Leitão and it consist of turning the noun Death into a compound noun. This way, the noun that appears first is the one that is in agreement with the other words and its gender is completely up to the translator to decide.

Another alternative, also used in the corpus, is to leave the word Death in English. This way the word distances itself from the target culture and is therefore easier to interpret as a proper noun instead of the abstract concept it represents. Not to mention that one language's standard rules do not apply to foreign words, and because Death in English has no gender, the word, when inserted into a language with grammatical gendered nouns, is not automatically bound to any gender, and so, from a grammatical perspective, the translator is free to attribute the gender that best complies with the objectives of the target text.

One last alternative can be used in situations where the translator wishes to always gender Death according to the respective grammatical gender in the target language, despite the character's biological gender being different. This means no instances within the text where the reader can be informed of Death's true gender, therefore, the information must be given through paratext, in this case, through a translator's note. Some of the texts present in the corpus do have translator's notes stating Death's biological gender. However, this information was never given only through the notes. Instead, there were also instances within the main text where nouns or adjectives agreed with the biological gender of the character. The fact that translator's notes were never used alone, shows that perhaps leaving the information regarding Death's gender in paratext only might not be the preferred solution, and it is easy to understand why. After all, some readers might not pay much attention to paratext, and, even if they do, they will be given the information only once, and possibly very early, instead of it being evident throughout the whole text. Even if a note informs the reader that Death is a certain gender, if said gender doesn't manifest within the main text, then it is easy for the reader to almost forget about this small detail, and once the gender is suddenly relevant to the story it might still create some confusion.

Another paratext that can be used to reveal Death's biological gender are illustrations, although its use is also not the most effective. First of all, Death's traditional physical appearance is by itself very ambiguous. There are few things that can be done to transmit one certain gender through the skeletal figure. If the biological gender is female, the addition of long hair could be used as an indicator, but if the gender is male, adding facial hair, for example, adds the risk of making the character seem comedic. Secondly, even if the gender is successfully reflected in an illustration, the reader is expecting the illustration to match the main text and if it does not then it creates the same feeling of displacement that was found in one of the Portuguese translations for *Paradise Lost*.

It is precisely this expectation that image and text should match that makes the comic book format a limitation to translators. One should not forget that literary translation is mostly under the control of publishing companies, and, as it is for almost every business, cost-effectiveness is always a factor to consider. Adapting the picture to the text would mean paying for different illustrations and

so it would be much cheaper to adapt the text to the picture instead. For this reason, translators often have to work with limited options regarding comic books, and domestication techniques such as altering anthropomorphic personification's gender cannot be used in this context.

The same is true with film and TV adaptations of literary works. In fact, altering character's designs in animated pictures would be even more expensive and live action adaptations are simply impossible to change. It is most likely for this reason that, in the film adaptations of Zusak's *The Book Thief*, Death is actually male unlike in the literary translations where Death is female in all the Romance languages. The Portuguese version of the film was even more limited than the other two. Since the norm in Portugal is subtitling instead of dubbing, the original narrator's voice, who is also Death, can still be heard. This means that the subtitles were made in order to accommodate the male narrator's voice and were gendered accordingly. The French and the Spanish versions, both being from dubbing cultures, could have easily chosen a female voice actor to represent Death, however, both films have a male narrator. The cause is most likely the appearance on screen of a mysterious male silhouette at the exact time when the narrator is talking about his physical appearance and how normal-looking he is, alluding to the possibility that the mysterious figure is Death himself. This short appearance seems to have been enough to attribute an on-screen physical form to the character and thus making it unchangeable.

Speaking of films and TV adaptations, these often appear following the success of a literary work; however, not all widely successful books have been adapted to other forms of media. It is often the case that, when books reach a certain level of success, they gain fans and followers that together constitute a community where they share their love and appreciation for the book. Thanks to the internet and globalization, these types of communities have members from all different cultures, and if one of these culture's version has made significant changes to the source text, it is nearly impossible for this change to pass by unnoticed by the target readers that belong to this community. The change might be well understood by the target readers, especially because it must have been made for a reason, but others might not agree with the change, since they also have access to the source, each alteration made by the translator becomes obvious and to some it might mean that the target text has drifted too much from the source. All this to say that perhaps another factor that should be taken into account when deciding on a character's gender translation is the popularity of the source text and if it has the possibility to form a large global community.

So far, in this discussion, grammar has been the main issue. However, grammar alone is not enough to create difficulties regarding the translation of Death's gender. As stated before, Death's gender is only an issue if it has any relevance to the story, and this relevance is created by context and semantics and not grammar.

Starting with the most obvious one, physical descriptions, in Death's particular case it is not much of an issue. Small additions, such as long hair, to the stereotypical skeleton figure can turn the usually male character into a female one, that is unless Death takes a human form as in *As Intermittências da Morte*. To completely change the design of a character is a level of creative freedom that many translators would not deem appropriate to the task given by the publisher. The same thing is true when Death takes an alias for a name. Even though it is normal in many cultures to domesticate character's names, the name change together with gender change and possibly physical appearance change may result in a completely different character from the source that if it wasn't inserted in the books plot it would be completely unrecognizable.

However, perhaps even more significant than changing a character's design is to change the character's role within the story and its relationships with the other characters. That's why, when faced with the word "Father" as a referent for Death, most translators have opted to use the same gender as the source. Family relations, just like most things in society, are associated with socially constructed pre-notions and even though in today's age these pre-notions are not taken as seriously, some older translations might have been influenced by them. Nowadays, family relations alone might not be enough to force a translator to attribute one gender and not the other, the Spanish translation of *Mort* is proof of that, but they are still a factor to be considered.

Romantic relationships, on the other hand, are harder to ignore. To change the gender of one character that is in a romantic relationship means to change the relationship's dynamic as well. In today's society, LGBT rights and representation are in a much better place than only a few years back, but heteronormativity is still the dominant faction in literature and the media. In fact, books with gay pairings are still categorized as LGBT and are often found in separate sections of a bookshop or in a different search category on online sales. This means that by changing one character's gender, the translator changes not only the gender, not only the type of relationship said character is in, but it also changes the way the book is marketed. Not to mention that if the character was in a gay relationship in the source text, and due to gender related issues their gender was changed and consequently their relationship became a heterosexual one, this act could be seen as a form of repression of gay representation and this one simple choice could result in massive amounts of backlash from the target readers and society in general.

Having thus discussed grammar and character-related issues, there are still two more things that a translator should be cautious around.

The first one is parallelisms. Parallelism is a stylistic element that is present in some of the texts from the corpus. They are the repetition of the word "boy" in *Mort* and the use of the letter "D" as the starter letter of all the Endless' names in *The Sandman*. Both of these have been erased in at least

one of the translations of the respective source text. The reason for their erasure has to do with the fact that by changing the gender of Death, or in *The Sandman's* case, Death's name, some wordplays and word references might not work anymore. For example, if Death is female in *Mort* then it wouldn't make sense to call her "boy", the term that has been continuously used for Mort, Death's apprentice. The biggest issue with parallelisms is that they can be quite subtle, and small changes during the translation process can be enough to stop them from being present in the target text, all without the translator's notice. Optimally, the source text must first be read attentively before the translation begins, and the translator should be looking for these small nuances so that they can find a way to keep them in the target text as well.

The second and final one to be discussed, has to do with consistency. Consistency is key between books of the same series; characters will progressively develop, but will still remain the same, story development also has to be coherent and even the way the story is narrated should ideally remain consistent. Naturally, a consistency of this level is also expected from the translations. However, the corpus' texts belonging to the *Discworld* series are not all consistent, and Death's gender changes from one book to another. One possible reason has already been suggested in the respective analyses, that it could be due to the fact that even though the books have a certain order and there is progression when read in that order, each book has its own individual story with a beginning and an end, the protagonist is not always the same and, overall, each book gives off an almost stand-alone feeling. Perhaps this is why some translators didn't feel that it was imperative to make sure that Death was gendered the same in all the series texts. This would also help explain why only some books have been translated into Portuguese, seemingly at random.

Another possibility, although most likely not the one for the *Discworld's* case, is that the first translation for the series was made under the assumption that the book would not have any follow-ups, or it could also be that the translator knew there would be more books in the series, but Death's gender is only revealed or made relevant in a later book. In a situation like this the options are to add a translator's note, like the Spanish and French translators have done, or publish a new revised edition of the first translations in which the gender has been corrected in order to be consistent with the later translations.

The point of the matter is the gender of a character such as Death is not always easy to translate and that issues will most likely arise not only during the process of the translation but also after the translation is published in the case of book series.

Chapter 5. CONCLUSION

As this thesis is finally reaching its conclusion, the goal has been achieved; the study has shown what the tendencies are when it comes to translating Death's gender in this particular corpus of texts.

The general rule for translating from Germanic languages to Romance languages seems to be to keep the character's gender as it is in the source text, and the same seems to apply to translations from Romance languages to Germanic languages. However, in both cases, the decision to keep or change the character is usually related with the relevance the character has in the main text. In short, if the gender is not at all relevant and could have easily been omitted from the source text, then the tendency is to use the gender in the target text that best suits the target culture, or in other words, the gender that is traditionally attributed to Death in the respective culture. However, if Death's gender seems in some way relevant to the development of the story, the tendency seems to be to disregard the target culture's traditional perception of Death in favour of the gender represented in the source text.

That being said, whatever the method the translator chooses, they will most likely be consistent in its use, therefore, it was surprising to find books belonging to the same series portraying Death with different genders. In the beginning of this study, the expectation was for all translators of the *Discworld* to choose one gender for Death and keep it consistent throughout the whole series. If the inconsistency was due to the unawareness of the translator in regards to the relevance of Death's gender in future works, then the expectation was to find re-editions correcting the issue. Revised editions could not be found and by the lack of translations to European Portuguese the reason might very well be due to weak reception by the public, at least in Portugal. Inconsistencies between translations of different books from a series are bound to happen, especially if the translation is made shortly after the source text's release, leaving the translator without any idea of what might happen next in the series. By publishing revised editions, the problem is easily solved, but once again the cost-effective mentality, no doubt present in many publishers, will be the determinant factor as to whether a book gets revised or not.

Regarding the multimodal texts, Lima Leitão's *Paradise Lost* is an example of how sometimes the image does not match the text. Often this is seen as a problem, but in this particular case the addition of Doré's illustrations was not to depict precisely the words of the translator but to complement the translation with renowned art work already related to the theme, even if the interpretations are different. The translations for Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* series were also interesting in the sense that the German translation has not tried to localize the character despite Death being culture specific

and of male gender in German tradition. Instead, Death has kept her gender and the conclusion reached was that it was most likely due to the costs of hiring a different illustrator.

In the cases where the translators have opted to change the character's gender, it is only natural that this change would not be done without raising some issues and among the issues found there seems to be a hierarchy regarding the level of difficulty they impose. First there are the grammar-related issues, of which a conclusion has been reached that they can't be completely solved if the goal is to portray Death in an untraditional gender. Despite not being able to be completely solved, grammar issues don't seem to be much of a problem. Since the solution found appears to be the same in all the texts, there seems to be a standardized method of dealing with them. As an alternative there is also the option to keep Death in English or to turn Death into a compound noun.

Instead, the hardest issues to solve are the ones that have to do with the character's design and their relation to the other characters and the overall plot. It is important to note that these factors are not considered issues because they are hard to translate. The reason they are issues is because they limit the translator's options and usually force the translator to opt for the source's gender. However, if a translator insists on changing Death's gender according to the target culture tradition, then the target text will have to face significant changes and possibly omissions in order to accommodate the new portrayal.

In conclusion, the gender chosen will influence how the rest of the text is translated and so the choice must be done carefully, taking into account not only every characteristic relating to the character, including the way they act, but also external factors such as popularity and the possibility for future sequels. In the end, most translators have decided to sacrifice the target culture's tradition in order to stay close to Death's portrayal in the source text, sometimes at the cost of consistency and even readability. But as there are multiple interpretations of Death, there are also multiple ways to solve the issues created by its gender and hopefully some of them have been revealed in this thesis.

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