The Challenges of Translating Fantasy Fiction from English into German:

Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, and Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire: A Game of Thrones*

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1. Introduction

At a time when all of humanity spoke the same language, people agreed to build a city with a tower tall enough to reach heaven, as a symbol for how great they have made their nation. God, angered by this endeavor and mankind’s arrogance, confuses their speech so they can no longer communicate with each other in the building of the tower, and they ultimately scatter across the whole Earth. This is the story of the Tower of Babel, a myth that is related in the Book of Genesis (11: 1-9, cf. Online 1) and that is meant to explain why different languages are spoken by the different peoples of the world. This curse that was placed on humankind, the curse of not understanding each other’s languages, can be defeated by only one way: by translating. Robert Wechsler states that:

Thus translation is ultimately a clever form of blasphemy, the building of many little bridges instead of one big tower. Mankind has invented numerous ways to overcome the part of the curse that spread us across the face of the earth: ships, roads, airplanes, the Internet. But translation is the only way that has been invented to overcome the curse of a profusion of languages. (1998: 56)

According to Hatim and Mason (1997: 2), translating can be seen as “an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication.” ‘Communication’ is the common thread in this definition, independent from the text type: spoken or written, literary or non-literary, technical or non-technical, source text or target text. The translator thus becomes a special type of communicator, a sender and receiver. While spoken and written translations of different texts (oftentimes for scholarly and religious purposes) have played a crucial role in interhuman communication throughout history, the study of translation as an academic subject has been largely dismissed and has only really begun in the last part of the twentieth century. Even though it is increasingly necessary in our globalized world, translation as a profession is still undervalued, no matter if it is literary or non-literary translation, and problems of low pay or lack of recognition are still current issues (cf. Wright 2016: 2). “A translation is a text that has originated in a culture other than the reader’s own, but which has now entered a new Kulturkreis and as such is operating outside the boundaries of the context in which it was created,” Chantal Wright explains in her Literary Translation (2016: 7). As a result, translation is what makes world literature possible and what enables us to read beyond the border of our native language.

The literary genre of fantasy fiction has been frowned upon and not been taken seriously until a man named John Ronald Reuel Tolkien penned his The Lord of the Rings and has heralded
the triumph of fantasy literature, a rise that also started in the second half of the twentieth century. This master’s thesis seeks to investigate what problems and challenges for translators are raised by particular elements in the translation of works of fantasy fiction, and what means translators have found of solving them. The first chapter of the thesis gives a general overview on the history of translation and the development of Translation Studies, and takes a look at literary translation and the important role of the literary translator. The second chapter then discusses the literary and transmedial genre of fantasy fiction, outlining narrative characteristics and origins of the genre. In the practical part of the thesis, the third and fourth chapter, the translation process is examined in more detail, and seven challenges are explained that may pose special difficulties in the translation of fantasy fiction. Finally, three popular and well-known works of fantasy fiction are used for analysis: J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, and George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire: A game of Thrones*. Select pieces of text from and information on the chosen novels are compared and discussed in order to demonstrate individual translators’ solutions to specific translational challenges.

2. Translation Studies

Even though the practice of translating has long been established, the research area of Translation Studies is a relatively new one, and there has been a boom in recent years (more precisely, in the second half of the twentieth century) when it expanded explosively (cf. Munday 2001: 4ff.). In short, the new academic discipline of Translation Studies is related to the theory and phenomena of translation and is by its nature “multilingual and interdisciplinary” (Munday 2001: 1) as its exploration crosses a number of different academic disciplines. Among them are, for example, Linguistics, Literary Criticism, Cultural Studies, Communication Studies and many more. When it comes to a definition of the term ‘translation,’ one finds that it has several meanings, but a relatively clear subject matter.

[Translation] can refer to the general subject field, the product (the text that has been translated) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating). The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL). (Munday 2001: 4ff.)

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1 As in Munday’s 2001 *Introducing Translation Studies. Theories and Applications*, this master thesis focuses on written rather than oral translation, commonly known as interpreting or interpretation, which is why I will refer to written work only.
Considering that communication between people of different mother tongues has been necessary long before the twentieth century, we can ask what the developments were that led to the establishment of translation studies as a new academic field? According to literary translator and professor of translation Chantal Wright (cf. 2016: 41), *The Translation Studies Reader* (2000/2nd edition 2004) by US translator and theorist Lawrence Venuti, who has played a crucial role in shaping the academic field of Translation Studies as it is today. It has become the textbook of choice for many MA and PhD translation programs, and gives a survey of the most important and influential concepts and approaches in translation theory and research since the beginnings of recorded history. In his book, Venuti provides the reader not only with an extensive overview of the emergence of translation studies as a new academic field, accompanied by diverse forms of research in different disciplines, but starts centuries earlier when the subject of translation had not yet been systematically mapped out, but rather occasionally mentioned in passing remarks. In order to show what translation studies have been and what they might be, Venuti argues (cf. 2004: 2) that it is crucial to enable a historical perspective. “"A translator without a historical consciousness,” wrote the French translator and translation theorist Antoine Berman, remains “a prisoner to his or her representation of translating and to those representations that convey the ‘social discourses’ of the moment” (Berman 1995: 61, my translation).” (Ibid.). Therefore, based chiefly on *The Translation Studies Reader*, let us have a closer look at the practice of translation throughout history.

2.1. A Brief Overview of Translation Studies then and now
Translation as a means of enabling communication between people from different cultures and native tongues must be as old as humankind itself, and first comments on the practice of translation can be found starting as early as classical antiquity, for example by Horace and Cicero in the first century BCE. Back then, however, translational theory as we know it today did not exist and translation was discussed rather in short remarks than in systematic arguments. It was situated in the academic discipline of rhetoric, as it was seen as a pedagogical exercise for the study and imitation of rhetorical models and the improvement of one’s own speeches (cf. Venuti 2004: 13). In the ancient Roman Empire, translating texts was thus implemented in language learning and literary study and was subordinated to the academic disciplines of rhetoric and grammar.

What came to dominate the discussion in modern Translation Studies and has been a central recurring theme in translation for centuries starting with Cicero and St. Jerome is the debate
surrounding free (i.e. sense-for-sense) vs. literal (i.e. word-for-word) translation of texts. Connected with this is the concept of equivalence\(^2\), which moved to the center of thinking about translation in late antiquity, rather than the free translations of poems and epics of Greek origin that dominated before. The reason for this was that the foreign texts in question were now often important religious documents (cf. Venuti 2004: 14), and the Church insisted on truthful and literal translations. Early Christian commentators such as the priest, theologian and historian St. Jerome, however, flouted this approach and adopted the sense-for-sense style of their early Roman predecessors for the Biblical exegesis. In the fourth century CE, St. Jerome translated most of the Bible into Latin (a translation that came to be known as the Vulgate) and throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, the majority of commentators followed St. Jerome’s example of a sense-for-sense translation practice (cf. Venuti 2004: 15). The aim was to increase access to the sacred text and make it more intelligible, rather than composing a complicated and inaccessible word-for-word translation. Even Martin Luther in his translation of the Bible into High German (1522, 1534) applied St. Jerome’s sense-for-sense strategy, for example through adding words to better convey the sense of the text (cf. Venuti 2004: 16). During the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, poets produced free versions of translations that were not always distinguished from their originals and would today be called adaptations. Hence literature, for example “versions of Petrarch’s sonnets written by Tudor courtiers like Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, are not identified as translations when they initially circulate in manuscript or finally see print in Richard Tottel’s Miscellany (1557).” (Ibid.).

In the meantime, translation came to be regarded as a useful tool in constructing a national culture and educating people by making classical and contemporary texts available to audiences that previously did not have access to them due to language barriers. However, rather than confronting audiences with the exoticism of a translated text from another culture, translation was still done very freely and sense-for-sense, with translators defending this approach, arguing that translations need to be allowed to breathe so that the translation can work as a literary text in its own right within a specific cultural and social reality (cf. Ibid.). As a result, foreign literature was being assimilated to the linguistic and cultural values of the target culture. The first systematic treatise on translation in English was Alexander Fraser Tytler’s *Essay on the Principles of Translation* in 1791 and he defines a good translation as one that “transcends the differences between languages and cultures” (Venuti 2004: 18) and produces the same effect

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\(^2\) “Equivalence has been understood as “accuracy,” “adequacy,” “correctness,” “correspondence,” “fidelity,” or “identity”; it is a variable notion of how the translation is connected to the foreign text.” (Venuti 2004: 3).
on the reader of the translation as on the reader of the original text by creating a paraphrastic and fluent translation that seems untranslated.

An alternative to this rather free approach that adapted a source text to target language conventions in translation emerged in Germany during the eighteenth century. In 1813, the German theologian, philosopher and biblical scholar Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote a groundbreaking treatise on translation, Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens (‘On the different methods of translating’), in which he assigned importance to a sense of foreignness when reading a translation, achieved through the deliberate break of target conventions. Schleiermacher rejected the sense of paraphrase and imitation that had long dominated translation practice in the centuries before and instead revived literalizing strategies in order to build a German language and literature that can set itself apart and overcome the cultural and political dominance by other nations such as France and England (cf. Venuti 2004: 19). For Schleiermacher, translation was not about literal vs. free and word-for-word vs. sense-for sense, but about how to bring the writer of the source text and the reader of the target text together. Asking this central question, he introduced a translation theory based on the opposites of alienating vs. naturalizing translation. The alienating translation method moves the target text reader closer to the source text writer by “valorizing the foreign and transferring that to the target language” (Munday 2001: 28) while the naturalizing translation method moves the source text writer closer to the target text reader by reducing the foreignness of the translated text. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe also commented on this new development in translation practice and valued the foreignizing translation as the final and highest, as it preserves the linguistic and cultural differences that account for the foreignness of a text.

The new German tradition that surfaced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries marks an important watershed in the history of Western translation theory, as it brought a new self-awareness to translation and foregrounded it as a crucial encounter with the foreign (cf. Venuti 2004: 19). Based on Schleiermacher’s ‘alienating vs. naturalizing’ translation strategy, Lawrence Venuti formulated and coined another very influential approach to translating (The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation, 1995: 20): the translation strategies of ‘domestication’ (i.e. minimizing the strangeness of the foreign text for the target language reader by adapting it to the cultural standards of the target audience; in this case, the translator moves the source text writer closer towards the target text reader) vs. ‘foreignization’ (i.e. confronting the target language reader with the foreign text’s strangeness by deliberately breaking target conventions, and making them realize the cultural and social differences of the
culture in which the source text was written; here, the translator moves the target text reader closer towards the source text writer). These binary translation strategies have since dominated the discussion in modern Translation Studies and add a different viewpoint to the much earlier discussion of free/sense-for-sense vs. literal/word-for-word translation.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the main trends in translation theory were rooted in German literary and philosophical traditions and in the assumption that language is not so much communicative as “constitutive in its representation of thought and reality. […] An important assumption in this development is the autonomy of translation, its status as a text in its own right, derivative but nonetheless independent as a work of signification.” (Venuti 2004: 71). By the end of the 1930s, translation came to be regarded as a distinctive linguistic practice and had attracted the attention of leading writers and thinkers, as well as literary critics and philologists, while generating a range of theoretical issues that are still debated today (cf. Venuti 2004: 73). One of these fundamental theoretical issues in translation theory was the question of translatability, which especially dominated the 1940s and 1950s. Literary critics, philosophers and linguists remarked on the obstacles of translation, namely the differences that separate languages and cultures, and the resulting discrepancies among cultural discourses, and judged them as either being insurmountable or negotiable (cf. Venuti 2004: 111). “The most influential work of translation studies in this period is first published in 1958 by the Canadian linguists Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet,” (Venuti 2004: 14) who encourage the translator to see meaning as a cultural construct rather than a given and unshakeable truth.

Even though some progress was made towards establishing translation as a respected academic field, in the first half of the twentieth century it was still predominantly seen as a language learning activity. “[…] From the late eighteenth century to the 1960s,” Jeremy Munday writes in his Introducing Translation Studies (2001: 7), “language learning in secondary schools in many countries had come to be dominated by what was known as the grammar-translation method.” The grammar-translation method was used for the study of the grammatical rules and structures of a foreign language, and series of usually unconnected and artificially constructed sentences were to be translated in order to improve one’s language skills. According to Munday (2001: 8), this “may partly explain why academia considered it to be of secondary status” for such a long time. During the 1960s and 1970s, the grammar-translation method was replaced in many countries with a more direct and communicative approach to language teaching and learning, and translation mainly became restricted to higher-level language courses and professional translator training (cf. Munday 2001: 8). At the same time, translation – especially
literary translation – was promoted in universities in the United States and other Western
countries and the construction of the new discipline, independent from language teaching and
learning, became foreseeable. “This more systematic and ‘scientific’ approach in many ways
began to mark out the territory of the academic investigation of translation. The word ‘science’
was used by Nida in the title of his 1964 book (Toward a Science of Translating),” (Munday
2001: 9) and the German equivalent, ‘Übersetzungswissenschaft’, was soon taken up by
German linguists and translators.

The 1960s and 1970s were shaped by a revival of the concept of equivalence and many new
typologies were published by theorists based on equivalence, often informed by linguistics-
oriented approaches in translation research and recommending translating that is pragmatic,
functional and communicative (cf. Venuti 2004: 147f.). This expansion of translation research
raised awareness for the subject and at the same time represented an emerging academic
discipline. The most widely known work in translation theory since World War II, according
to Venuti (2004: 150), is George Steiner’s 1975 study After Babel, which opposed modern
linguistics with a literary and philosophical approach in defining translation not so much as
functional communication, but as “an interpretation of the foreign text that is at once profoundly
sympathetic and violent, exploitive and ethically restorative. For Steiner, language is not
instrumental in communicating meaning, but constitutive in reconstructing it.” (Venuti 2004:
150)

The 1980s opened with the publication of another widely circulated work on translation, namely
Susan Bassnett’s Translation Studies. In the book, Bassnett explains and unites various trends
of translational research while heralding the emergence of translation studies as a separate
discipline, “overlapping with linguistics, literary criticism, and philosophy, but exploring
unique problems of cross-cultural communication.” (Venuti 2004: 221) Bassnett’s book
supports one of the most common theoretical assumptions of that time: regardless of the many
different approaches to translation, they all agreed that translation is an independent form of
writing and the translated text autonomous and distinct from the foreign text. One of the theories
that stand out during that period is for example Justa Holz-Mänttäri’s (1984) concept of
‘translatorial action’ (‘translatorisches Handeln’) that includes various forms of cross-cultural
communication (translating, paraphrasing or adapting, but also editing and consulting) and sees
the translator as an expert who designs a product (i.e. target text) that fulfills the client’s needs
and fulfills a particular purpose in the target culture rather than seeking an equivalence with the
source text (cf. Venuti 2004: 222). Linguist and translation scholar Hans Vermeer, on the other
hand, highlights the translator’s aim, or, as he calls it, the skopos, as the most important factor in a project in order to be successful and reach the intended target audience. While translation theory is remarkably fruitful and wide-ranging during the 1980s, and is taken up in a variety of discourses, fields, and disciplines, most scholarly work still “harbors an instrumental conception of language as primarily communicative, if not of a univocal meaning, then of a formalizable range of possibilities.” (Venuti 2004: 224). This changes with the rise of poststructuralism, when language comes to be seen as endlessly ambiguous and uncontrollable, and translation is reconceived not only as transforming the original foreign text but ‘deconstructing’ it, a notion coined by French philosopher Jacques Derrida. Concepts of semantic unity, authorial originality, and copyright are starting to being questioned in the wake of poststructuralism (cf. Ibid.).

The developments and research in the area of translation studies during the last half of the twentieth century have led to a certain institutional authority of the subject starting in the 1990s. This was evidenced by a sharp increase in translator training programs and scholarly publications such as training manuals, encyclopedias, journals, etc., issued by commercial as well as university presses (cf. Venuti 2004: 325). Through think-aloud protocols, interviews and questionnaires that focused on the translator, increasing attention was also given to the mental activities involved in the translation process (cf. Venuti 2004: 328). At the same time, another academic inter-discipline emerged that had influence on other fields such as Literary Studies, Film, Anthropology, and also Translation Studies, namely Cultural Studies. In Translation Studies, this new research area linked translated texts and translation processes to cultural and political issues such as the identity-forming and representative power of translation in Anglo-American colonialism (cf. Venuti 2004: 326ff.). Another decisive development that took place in the 1990s was the rise of corpus linguistics, which works with extensive computer-stored collections of text that provided powerful tools for translation analysis, such as computerized corpora of translations (cf. Venuti 2004: 327). In the following, modern technology brought new possibilities to translating and in the twenty-first century, it is not unusual for a translator to rely on the help of a computer. Naturally, computers cannot replace translators, but CAT-tools (computer-aided translation) offer a range of technologies that assist the translator in the translation process, such as translation memory databases, spell check and grammar check software, terminology managers and electronic dictionaries.

Thus, translation remains “a house of many rooms” (Albrecht Neubert and Gregory Shreve (1992), quoted in Hatim 2001: 8) and twenty-first century translation theory is colorful and
informed by a broad range of fields and approaches, such as different varieties of Linguistics, Literary Criticism, and Cultural Theory, as well as experimental studies, translator training and translation practice (cf. Venuti 2004: 2).

2.2. Literary Translation
“The most basic rationale for literary translation must be that it expands the range of literary texts available to us, whether canonical, populist, contemporary or temporally distant,” argues Chantal Wright in *Literary Translation* (2016: 20). This facilitates a world literature: works that circulate beyond their country of origin, either in translation or in their original language (cf. Wright 2016: 20). World literature is a concept that has been present for a long time and was coined by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. It embraces the notion that literature and translation build bridges between cultures and thus give a face to the foreign, the ‘other,’ in order to help us understand it in a more differentiated way (cf. Wright 2016: 22), additionally enriching our own culture’s literature, language and thought.

Theorists have puzzled over the question of ‘What is literature?’ for decades. Features that distinguish a literary from a non-literary text, as identified by Christiane Nord in her 1997 *Translating as a Purposeful Activity. Functionalist Approaches Explained*, can be (cf. 80ff.):

| The sender or author of the text | With literary texts, the sender is usually identical with the author or text-producer, while a non-literary text, e.g. a manual for a vacuum cleaner, may be written by someone commissioned to write it, not by the sender (company that sells vacuum cleaners) themselves. According to Nord, the knowledge of the author can have a strong influence on the reader’s expectations and may cause problems if the author of a literary text is well-known in one culture and is translated into a culture community in which he is completely unknown. |
| Intention | While non-literary texts are mostly written with the intention to inform and describe the ‘real world’ (as seen and acknowledged in the corresponding culture community), literary texts are written to express, to “motivate personal insights about reality by describing an alternative or fictional world.” (Nord 1997: 80) |
| Receivers | Reading and fully understanding literary texts, to a certain extent requires experience in reading and competence in interpreting |
literature, so that the receiver can make the text significant for themselves. This is not necessary when reading non-literary texts; instruction manuals, for example, often even feature pictures and illustrate instructions to make them even more accessible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Literary as well as non-literary texts can be transmitted orally or in writing.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place, Time and Motive</td>
<td>Although these situational factors “may not be relevant for the distinction between literary and non-literary texts, they do play an important part in literary translation in that they convey the culture-specific features of the source and the target situations.” (Nord 1997: 81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Message</td>
<td>Most literary texts refer to fictional objects, places, or phenomena that are not in 100% accordance with reality, but this should not be regarded as a defining feature that distinguishes a literary from a non-literary text. Literary language rather sets itself apart by having a particular connotative, expressive or aesthetic meaning of its own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect or Function</td>
<td>A literary text can produce a particular aesthetic or poetic effect on its readers, which gives the text a specific value of its own and affects the relationship between author and reader.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surprisingly, none of these features is adequately defining which texts are literature and which are not, as all of them can also be found in a non-literary text. In combination, however, they can contribute to finding an explanation for the concept of literariness: the sender’s intention and the receiver’s expectations play a crucial role in the function and effect of texts. Therefore, it can be concluded that literariness is “first and foremost a pragmatic quality assigned to a particular text in the communicative situation by its users” (Nord 1997: 82), when the sender includes intra-textual features that function as signals of the author’s intention to the readers. These signals are then interpreted by the receivers, depending on their own culture-specific expectations. As Nord puts it (Ibid.): “The reader thus decides to read a text as literature. The decisive factor is that they are willing to take part in the game.”

As mentioned, interpretation of the signals sent by the authors to convey their intention is culture-bound. How, then, can literary communication work across cultural and linguistic boundaries? This is where the literary translator comes into play. Nord (1997: 84ff.) points out the following elements that have to be taken into account in cross-cultural communication: The
literary translator has to indicate the intention (i.e. the author’s intended effect on the reader produced by the text) in an appropriate way in the target language based on their interpretation of the source text. Since the textual features and code elements in literary communication, as opposed to non-literary communication, can often be ambiguous and vague in order to allow every reader their own interpretation, this can be very challenging for the translator. “Given this situation, what is actually translated is not the sender’s intention but the translator’s interpretation of the sender’s intention.” (Nord 1997: 84). This is accepted by the majority of target receivers, as many are not aware of reading a translation or do not care much about translation and the processes involved.

Another important point the literary translator must be aware of when producing a text in translation, is that the target audience’s world and cultural knowledge, as well as their sociocultural environment and previous reading experience, might differ greatly from that of the source text’s audience. Sometimes, additional information or adaptations need to be introduced by the translator to bridge the gap between the cultural and world knowledge of source-text receivers and target-text addressees and create coherence. The literary translator must also be aware that literary codes such as stylistic features (rhythm, prosody, syntax, macrostructure, metaphors and symbols) as well as characters, ideas, expressiveness and atmosphere of a text are culture-bound and not necessarily the same for the source and the target culture. Traditional stylistic features often acquire new or different meanings when transferred to another literary environment and can create a different effect. This balance of function and effect is very delicate when it comes to cross-cultural literary communication. The translator is expected to transfer:

not only the message of the source text but also the specific way the message is expressed in the source language (cf. Reiss 1971: 42). This would ideally establish equivalence between source and target text with regard to both text function and text effect." At the same time it should be "an independent, parallel work of art (cf. Fitts 1966:33], or a kind of metamorphosis of the original (cf. Benjamin 1923), able to live on in another culture. Further, the translation should reproduce the literary structure of the original (cf. Dedecius 1986: 144), informing the target readers about the genre, artistic value and linguistic beauty of the original (cf. Reiss 1986: 214), enriching the target language (cf. Friedrich 1965: 8) and making the target readers understand why the original text was worth translating (cf. Nord 1989: 55). (Nord 1997: 89)

These are a lot of different demands literary translation should fulfill, and it seems impossible to fulfill them all at the same time without neglecting at least one of these demands. In order to solve this dilemma of literary translation, Nord suggests a purpose-oriented approach (Skopos)

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3 Italics here and in all following quotations are in the original
that gives the translator freedom to adapt the text and its function (after thorough research, of course) according to the target readers’ needs and the intended effect of the text (cf. Nord 1997: 92f.). In the words of Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, “it is [the translator’s] infidelity, his happy and creative infidelity, that must matter to us.” (*The Translator of 1001 Nights*, 1935; quoted in Venuti 2004: 74)

With all these demands placed on the literary translator, one would think that literary translation is a prestigious and well-paid profession. This, however, is not the case. Quite on the contrary, literary translation is marginalized through strict copyright laws, the concepts of authorship and originality that limit the translator’s flexibility, and the economic value, or rather, the financial risk, publishers see in it (cf. Venuti 1998: 124). Over the past few decades there has also been a trend to focus on publishing books in translation that were commercially successful in their native culture in the hope of a similar performance in a different language and culture. However, a bestseller in the source text culture does not automatically result in a bestseller in the target text culture, and a lot of the responsibility regarding the success of a book in translation rests on the translator’s shoulders.

### 2.3. The Role of the Literary Translator – A Performer without a Stage?

Around the middle of the sixteenth century, the French humanist Etienne Dolet was burned at the stake for adding, in one of his translations of Plato’s dialogues, the phrase *rien du tout* (‘nothing at all’) to a passage about what existed after death. He was charged with blasphemy for contradicting the Roman Catholic Church’s doctrine of immortality. This famous example, as mentioned by Jeremy Munday (2001: 22) in *Introducing Translation Studies*, illustrates the potentially dire fate in store for translators noncompliant with standard discourse in the past. Even though the consequences of miscarried or nonconforming translations are by far less extreme nowadays, translators still carry a lot of responsibility and can have considerable influence on the reader and the perception of the translated work. Their role is often overlooked, but it is an important one:

> Through translation writers can escape the prison house of their language, but they are then dependent on translators for the perception of their work in the wider world. Books which are translated may carry the original writer’s name on the cover, but the actual words between the covers are written by the translators. (Hermans 1999: 1)

Literary translation is an elusive subject matter, and there is no simple ‘how to.’ The personal reasons that make people decide to become a translator can differ greatly; giving other readers
the chance to experience the same enjoyment they get from reading, being intellectually stimulated and challenged as well as extending the audience for certain texts and authors, and spreading ideas and foreign literature are only some of the possible motivations mentioned by Chantal Wright (cf. 2016: 17f.). For many translators, the belief that books from other cultures can transform the way we see the world, is at the center of what they do. Where, then, can one learn and practice the art of literary translation? Strangely, there are not a lot of places to do this, and before the advent of Translation Studies in the 1970s, most literary translators were self-taught or have learned informally from experienced translators or editors (cf. Wechsler 1998: 186). Even today it is still possible to be an accomplished literary translator without a postgraduate education. But, as Chantal Wright points out, “theory can be a powerful tool when correctly understood and channeled” (2016: 2) and there have been improvements in professional translator training, even though the focus is still mostly on technical and non-fiction translation. The University of Applied Languages in Munich (SDI München) for example offers professional and accredited Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree programs centered around languages and translator/interpreter training, also in combination with degrees in business administration or technology and media know-how (cf. Online 2).

According to Robert Wechsler (cf. 1998: 24), foreign language and literature professors are the ones most likely to be translators, since they live at the intersection between language and literature. They are the readers that read literature for pleasure, as most people do, but, much more than that, also care about how it is composed more than about what it is when reading a work of literature. They pay attention to fine details such as the way a text is written, the style, the structure, and the “intelligence of the stringing together of words, lines, sentences, paragraphs, stanzas, chapters, poems, the challenge involved in bringing all this into” another language (Wechsler 1998: 26). Translators are also “the only readers to weigh every single word in a text.” (Wright 2016: 18); usually, they are the ones to find typing and logical errors in source texts, as their reading of the text will likely be as close as possible. Wechsler even claims that this ability to read well and closely is what differentiates the excellent translator from the merely competent one, as it results not only in smooth and fluent translations (which is enough for most publishers), but in translations that also capture the feeling of the original, its power, humor, and beauty (cf. 1998: 270f.). Besides attention to detail and extensive knowledge of the foreign language and culture, translators should also possess characteristics such as patience and persistence, self-discipline, and a willingness to subordinate themselves to another’s creative work (cf. Wechsler 1998: 30f.).
Even though hardly anybody would challenge the necessity of literary translation, it still holds a marginalized and belittled position in research, commentary, and debate, as well as on the market. As already mentioned, there are numerous reasons for this, among which are copyright laws that place strict limitations on the translator’s control of the translated text and subordinate the translator’s rights to the author’s (cf. Wechsler 1998: 47), thus not acknowledging the translator as an own species of author. Another problem is the prevailing conception of authorship that gives translations a secondary status in quality and importance compared to the original. There also is not much money in publishing literary translations, except perhaps for source texts that are well-known bestsellers in their original language. The marginalization of translation in the modern literary market is closely linked to the aforementioned translation strategies of domestication and foreignization. Venuti (1995: 21) sees (especially Anglo-American) translation culture as dominated by domestication, which is when translators choose to remove or replace culturally specific elements, replace unusual lexical items, or eradicate foregrounded stylistic features of the source text (cf. Wright 2016: 43) in order to create a translation that is transparent and fluent, and minimize the foreignness of the target text. In publishing, this is commonly acknowledged as a prerequisite for readability and thus the route for a text’s commercial success. By creating this “illusion of transparency” (Munday 2001: 146), translators also make themselves invisible.

Translator’s invisibility is a concept used by Lawrence Venuti (1995: 1), and the fact that the translator remains invisible to the readers of a target text results in the translator’s nearly nonexistent public image. In his Performing without a Stage: The Art of Literary Translation, Robert Wechsler compares literary translation to other performing art forms that place the performer on a stage (acting, singing, dancing, or playing an instrument). To him, literary translation is an art form as well, one in which a literary work is performed in another language. But since the translator’s performance looks just like the original, appreciation for the art form is meager and their performance is only seen when the translator slips up and makes a mistake (cf. Wechsler 1998: 7ff.).

In general, a translator is expected to be ‘faithful’ and ‘do justice’ to the original work and its author. The term for this basic ethical notion in translation is ‘fidelity,’ and the notion is a complicated one that goes far back in the history of translation, as it is connected with the binary oppositions of free vs. literal translation. Before the advent of Romanticism, translators were much more artists with the intention and role to entertain, express, and expand their culture and language through foreign works, and translations were done rather freely, with the exception of
religious texts, as mentioned in chapter 2.2. However, Romanticism brought up a new concept of authorship, and translating an author’s words came to be seen as an enormous responsibility and a duty to the original’s author rather than to the target language and culture (cf. Wechsler 1998: 69f.), and this attitude regarding fidelity still dominates the literary translation market today. This, according to Wechsler, “makes translation a question of authenticity, content and duty – getting it right – rather than a question of judgement, knowledge and competence – doing it well.” (1998: 94) What he proposes instead, is a focus on the balancing a translator is obliged to do:

The translator must choose not only what in the original to preserve and what to give up, but also what to add. All the elements I’ve been talking about – rhythm, sound, vision, allusion, humor, effect, syntax, familiarity vs. foreignness, ease vs. difficulty, ambiguity vs. clarity, meaning vs. form – not only have to be dealt with, but they have to be balanced against each other, one preserved, the other lost, two given up to keep one that is more important in the particular context. (Wechsler 1998: 139)

It can be argued, therefore, that rather than fidelity, balancing is the central ethical act of translation, relieving the translator from the pressure of being called a traitor⁴ and giving them the freedom to make controversial (while still thoroughly considered) choices and enjoy the decision-making process and the journey that translating is. Since the average reader only sees the words and sentences of a translation, and not what the translator did or what the original was like, it would also help the public image of translators worldwide to “get out there” (Wechsler 1998: 287) and explain their approach to the work at hand (e.g through writing prefaces or afterwords to their translations or provide readers with background material and a context so they can better appreciate the translation). In addition, translators can become more visible as literary experts, for example through public readings, panel discussions and other events and projects (cf. Wright 2016: 2), which is already done in some countries and will hopefully change the appreciation of the art of literary translation in the future.

### 3. Fantasy as a literary and transmedial Narrative Genre

Similar to the late recognition of translation as an academic field and a respected profession, appreciation of fantasy fiction used to be modest and restricted to a selected few. “For a long time, fantasy has been seen either as silly stories about monsters or a genre packed with stories so mammoth and dense that viewers or readers needed an encyclopedia of that world to

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⁴ As in the famous Italian expression and pun “Tradduttore, traditore,” which can be translated into ‘to translate is to betray’
understand what is going on.” (Howden 2012: 57) In his guide Game of Thrones A-Z, Martin Howden sets out to explain the subordinate role fantasy as a genre has played within the literary canon for many years. Alternative worlds that feature fantastical and sometimes even magical characters were frowned upon and not taken seriously, or dismissed as children’s literature. This was changed by Peter Jackson’s movie trilogy The Lord of the Rings (the first part, The Fellowship of the Ring, was published in 2001), which is based on the also very successful books by J.R.R. Tolkien (cf. Howden 2014: 57). “It changed fantasy overnight and was the start of making fantasy mainstream,” Howden states (2014: 58). The Lord of the Rings series trained viewers in watching fantasy on the big screen and enticed them to read epic fantasy novels; it thus proved to producers that fantasy could be a lucrative genre and appeal to a large audience. In this respect, it paved the way for the other bestselling series that are discussed in this thesis: Joanne K. Rowling’s Harry Potter and George R.R. Martin’s series A Song of Ice and Fire.

3.1. What is Fantasy Fiction? A Definition

The Oxford English Dictionary (1989: 722f.) offers several definitions for the term ‘fantasy;’ among them are the following: “imagination; the process or the faculty of forming mental representations of things not actually present; extravagant or visionary fancy; a product of imagination, fiction, figment; an ingenious, tasteful, or fantastic invention or design; a genre of literary compositions.” With regard to fantasy as a genre of literary composition, Tzvetan Todorov, author of The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, characterizes fantasy fiction as texts that produce a disruptive presence that is fluctuating around a narrative and blurring the boundaries between the real and the imaginary (cf. 1975: 25). What is disruptive is the non-realistic subject matter; fantasy fiction foregrounds magical, mythical, and supernatural elements, and includes motifs from old myths, legends, folktales and fairy tales. The stories often feature characters like dwarves, giants, witches and wizards, or fantastical animals. The plot usually takes place in a fictitious world that more or less differs from our reality, and is therefore often characterized by a departure from the accepted rules by which we perceive the world around us. Fantasy fiction has many overlapping sub-genres and neighboring genres, for example Romance Fantasy, Fairy Tales, Alternative History, Dark Fantasy, Epic Fantasy, Magical Realism, etc., and the line between fantasy and Science Fiction can be very thin.
3.2. Characteristics

The defining trait of fantasy fiction is that the author does not have to rely on history or natural laws of reality in order to be coherent, but rather creates a coherence between the imaginary elements of the story. Supernatural elements are not necessary but are often part of the plot. An important difference to the neighboring genre of Science Fiction is that in fantasy, unlikely narrative elements do not need to be explained or even scientifically possible. The author rather has to rely on the readers’ willing suspension of disbelief; the reader has to accept the unbelievable or impossible in order to enjoy the text and immerse themselves completely in another world. As mentioned, there are certain elements of the plot, theme or setting in a fantasy fiction narrative that can be interpreted as typical genre markers (cf. Online 3 and 4):

- The Setting: the backdrop for fantasy fiction stories can be our real world; a lot of times, however, the plot will take place in an imaginary realm (e.g. Middle Earth in The Lord of the Rings or Westeros and Essos in A Song of Ice and Fire) or characters will enter the fantastic realm through a portal (e.g. the Hogwarts Express that takes the witches and wizards in Harry Potter from London to Hogwarts, or the wardrobe that serves as a portal between the ‘real’ world and the magical kingdom of Narnia in The Chronicles of Narnia). Often, the fictitious world is reminiscent of past historical epochs such as the Middle Ages. This results in worlds that often seem archaic and out-of-date to the modern reader due to political, cultural and technological conditions.

- Peoples and Races: most fantasy worlds are inhabited by humans but can also be populated by a large number of different magical and mythical beings and creatures such as dragons, angels, demons, the undead, witches, unicorns, mermaids, dwarves, or giants. The non-human fantasy races used by J.R.R. Tolkien in The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, i.e. dwarves, elves and orcs, are especially popular in fantasy fiction. They are inspired by old folk and fairy tales about fays, elves, dragons and goblins; their specific character traits and mannerisms, however, have been defined largely through fantasy literature. Additionally, some fantasy novels feature undead characters such as zombies or vampires, human-animal hybrids such as centaurs or minotaurs, taken from Greek mythology, as well as halflings and many more.

- Motifs and Narrative Structure: fantasy fiction often relies on classic tropes from adventure fiction, e.g. sword fights, encounters with monsters, journeys to exotic places, epic battles, and the fight between good and evil (hero vs. a dark power). The narrative is mostly linear and often evolves in the form of a quest; a quest is a difficult journey towards a goal, during which the hero has to overcome many obstacles before
he or she can reach their goal and grow personally through the challenges and the journey, which shows the influence of the classical Bildungsroman on the genre of fantasy.

Besides the characteristics concerning plot, theme, and setting, fantasy fiction can also be characterized by its complexity and the vast alternative universes created by many authors of fantasy. Fabrizi (cf. 2016: 2) argues that it is quite difficult for the modern reader to comprehend a magical world so different from our own, where the physics within the literary representation are not shared and automatically understood by the reader, where witches, trolls or dragons exist and words have the power to change reality. All this may happen in the reality of the text, and it forces readers to read the text more closely and participate more actively in the author-reader transaction “in order to understand this foreign world which may not conform to the literary or mundane conventions they have become used to.” (Fabrizi 2016: 2). Additionally to these unknown worlds, readers of fantasy fiction must familiarize themselves with the old-fashioned and archaic language the works are often using in order to signal that the story is taking place at a different time and place from ours.

Lawrence Venuti argues that in order to create bestselling fiction, which relies on the reader’s sympathetic identification with the characters, “the narrative must be immediately comprehensible, and so the language must fix precise meanings in simple, continuous syntax and the most familiar lexicon” (cf. 1998: 126). However, the success of fantasy fiction proves this to be a limited point of view, since many works of fantasy that are known for their archaic, complex and intricate language have become bestsellers. In this case, identification is still possible for the modern reader because of the easily-identifiable values represented by the characters, proving to be more important than simple and familiar language. Still, the readers will only be able to construct meaning if they engage actively, intellectually and reflectively with the text (cf. Fabrizi 2016: 2). As a result, works of fantasy fiction can be very engaging and tend to draw the reader into the fantasy universe created by the author, even long after they have finished the novel(s). This can especially be seen when we take into account the hype created around fantasy series such as The Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, and A Song of Ice and Fire. All three series have amassed faithful and devoted fandoms that have carried the story out of the novels into fan-written fan fiction archives, social networks specifically targeted at the fans of a certain series, or conventions and cosplay events that allow fans to dress up as their favorite characters and further explore the fantastical world of the novels. This very intense engagement with a literary work at hand is typical of the genre of fantasy fiction and encouraged
by authors who tend to interact very closely with their fans such as George R.R. Martin and Joanne K. Rowling do on Twitter.

3.3. Origins and the Rise of Fantasy Fiction
In his *Fantasy Literature: Challenging Genres*, editor Mark Fabrizi explains that fantasy fiction, while often derided as superficial and escapist, is still one of the most enduring genres of fiction worldwide, and has been received over the past decades with rising popularity. As already mentioned, fantasy fiction has roots in and is inspired by old legends and heroic epics, for instance Homer’s *Iliad*, the *Nibelungenlied*, or versions of Arthurian Legend. Due to humankind’s fascination with the supernatural, there is a long tradition of legends and fairy tales in most cultures, many of which were passed on from generation to generation, orally or in writing; this contributes to the factor of timelessness that can be felt in fantasy fiction. During the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century, adventure and horror stories such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* proved to be popular. Fantasy as the literary genre we know today, however, was only established in the twentieth century and became known to a wider audience in the 1960s, when Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* sparked the first fantasy boom. Since then, works of high fantasy have gradually entered the mainstream, with popularity peaking in the twenty-first century, evidenced by the bestselling status of the *Harry Potter* and the *A Song of Ice and Fire* series. In addition to the novels, several fantasy fiction film adaptations have achieved blockbuster status over the past twenty years, and television adaptations have been done very successfully. The so-called ‘spreadability’ (cf. Jenkins 2013: 3) of fantasy works is a major factor that contributes to the current market boom of the genre: it is multimedial (i.e. there is the possibility for transmedial storytelling), and a lot of crossovers are taking place – fantasy is not only represented in literature and films but in other areas of pop culture as well, such as music, art, comics, board games, roleplaying or computer games.

The reasons for this new appreciation of the genre are numerous. For instance, Fabrizi argues, that the genre of fantasy occupies such a significant role in Western culture because it has a great deal to offer for the critical modern reader in terms of complexity and relevance. “One of the most interesting aspects of fantasy literature is that it tends to ask the ‘big’ questions of life,” making readers reflect on and consider such topics as “the nature of good and evil, universal morality, the afterlife, heroism and the quality of one’s character, the role of the individual in society, and the importance of cultural diversity.” (Fabrizi 2016: 1) All these issues are addressed in rich and compelling narratives that capture the reader’s attention.
There is a strong tendency for the classic fantasy fiction narrative to be located in a vague past, often using characteristics typical of medieval times. Stories take place in a pre-industrialized, pre-technological, and pre-democratic world where society is largely relying on agriculture, and is organized in a feudal system. The rural countryside dominates the setting, peppered with Gothic or Romanesque architecture (castles and stone buildings rather than glass and metal). The implied norms are those of honor, courage, chivalry, fellowship, and a patriarchal society. It can be argued that the rising popularity of fantasy fiction is also connected with a desire to return to ‘simpler’ times and to establish previously dominant and important notions that have been lost due to civilization and changes in society over the past centuries. The tendency to glorify the past certainly also plays a role. There are those who criticize fantasy fiction for promoting ‘escapism,’ but this does not necessarily have to be a bad aspect – fantasy fiction entertains the reader, spreads morality, and provides release from banality into the supernatural (cf. Fabrizi 2016: 2). Or, as John Mullan, talking about the triumph of fantasy fiction, puts it in a 2015 article for The Guardian: “Fantasy should interest us because it enacts in some fundamental way the dream of all fiction: the creation of a new and singular world in the telling of a story.” (cf. Online 5)

4. Challenges and Problems in the Translation of Fantasy Fiction

The first challenge in the translation process is usually the obstacle of getting the process started. As already mentioned, the copyright law nowadays ensures that translation projects are driven by publishers, rarely by translators themselves, as Venuti points out in The Scandals of Translation (cf. 1998: 48). A reason for this is that the exclusive translation right of a novel is given to its author, and it is them or their publishers who initiate translations in order to create foreign language markets for their work by approaching foreign publishers who then commission translators. As publishers pursue the maximum profit for their investments, they will choose promising works that have been successful in their country of origin, thus shaping cultural developments at home and abroad through the commissioning of certain translation projects (Ibid.). Publishers will also focus on works that are easily adaptable to the cultural values and prevailing tastes of the target market. The reading audience of a certain literary market consists of several distinct constituencies, each characterized by specific values; a bestseller, by definition, has to reach a mass readership, so it has to be intriguing to these different constituencies, “and so it inevitably crosses the cultural borders between them. When the bestseller is also a translation, the border crossings increase. […] Hence, the translation will
put to work discursive strategies that facilitate its appeal to a mass readership.” (Venuti 1998: 125)

Once a translation becomes a bestseller, it often motivates the translation of similar kinds of foreign works\(^5\). However, bestsellers from one culture do not always repeat their success in a foreign country when translated, which can be partly explained by the fact that the “significance of a foreign novel in the foreign literature where it was produced will never be exactly the same as the significance of that novel in a translation for circulation in another language and literature.” (Venuti 1998: 61f.) While fantasy fiction has surely been considered a ‘risky’ genre for publishers in the past, due to its appeal only to a certain and rather small segment of the reading audience, the current popularity and appreciation of such works has led to a rising number of fantasy translations entering the market, and their success can often be repeated in other cultures. What certainly helps this development are foreign texts that have already been adapted in other forms of mass culture, such as films, TV series, plays, and musicals; these adaptations can pave the way for further translations as they possess the potential for garnering a large readership on a foreign market. Other influential factors in creating bestsellers are electronic media as well as elaborate promotion and marketing schemes (cf. Venuti 1998: 152f.).

4.1. The Translation Process

As already mentioned, the translator’s position is a demanding one, as he is the one sitting in the middle and having to please several ‘masters’ at the same time: the original work and its author, the language and culture in which the original work was written, the literary culture of the translator’s target language and, most importantly, the translation’s ‘handicapped’ audience (cf. Wechsler 1998: 108; 113). The obligations translators face with regard to their target audience and culture are numerous, with one that is especially crucial when it comes to the translation process: the translator has an obligation to understand the source text and, more than that, communicate his understanding of the original to the target readers through the many decisions he or she is making in the translation process. Wechsler argues that it also is not

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\(^5\) While the *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy took almost fifteen years to be published in German (the original novels were published in 1955, the German translation in 1969 and 1970 (cf. Online 5)), the hype surrounding works of fantasy fiction has arguably made it easier for new fantasy books to enter the market in translation. The first novel of the *Harry Potter* series, for example, appeared in translation in 1998, one year after the original was published. The second novel was published in English in 1998, in German 9 months later. The third novel was already published one month after it was published in English, and the practice of publishing German translations in quick succession after the publication of the English original was maintained for the rest of the series, due to its enormous success.
enough for the translator to just “get it right,” but that they have to “communicate the original at the level at which it was intended to be understood.” (1998: 109) That is, if something in the source text is easily understandable for the original language reader, it should be easily understandable for the reader of the translation. If something is difficult or ambiguous in the original language, it should be difficult or ambiguous in translation. This tightrope walk is what translators face on a daily basis, which is why it is important to acknowledge the enormous balancing act that is involved in translating literature from one language into another. However, writing a translation (just as writing a novel) should and can not be seen as a series of conscious decisions. “It’s a constant process of making decisions, solving problems, partly conscious and partly not,” as Wechsler argues (1998: 115). Those decisions can be about aspects of a text such as characters, plot, imagery or theme, but also about intent, consistency, essentiality, and accuracy (cf. Ibid.). Since translation is a pattern of decisions, it is impossible to criticize a translation simply by pointing out isolated mistakes, since those ‘mistakes’ might be the result of the balancing the translator had to do in the process of translating. Since it can be the smallest pebbles that trip up even careful translators (e.g. articles, prepositions and punctuation), a translator always needs to be on his or her guard, and “what he has to guard against is his very own medium: words.” (Wechsler 1998: 117)

What is certainly helpful in the translation process is having a clear goal or purpose in mind that you would like the translation to achieve. Whether one prefers to follow the dichotomy of ‘free’ and ‘literal’ translation, Nida’s ‘formal equivalence’ and ‘dynamic equivalence’6, or Newmark’s (1981: 39) ‘semantic translation’ and ‘communicative translation,’ it is important to see them as representing the opposite ends of a continuum, with much room left in the middle to adapt one’s translation strategy to the translation situation at hand. According to Hatim and Mason (The Translator as Communicator, 1997: 11), what especially challenges long-standing dichotomies in translation theory is the notion of skopos, or purpose of translating. Having a clear skopos by specifying the task at hand, including the purpose and status of the translation and the likely readership, aids the translator in making appropriate choices in the course of the translation process (cf. Ibid.). Another key point to consider in determining the purpose of a translation is the function of the text. “Function has been understood as the potentiality of the translated text to release diverse effects, beginning with the communication of information and the production of a response comparable to the one produced by the foreign text in its own

6 “Nida’s (1964) ‘formal equivalence’ and ‘dynamic equivalence’ sought to distinguish between the aim to achieve equivalence of form between source and target texts and the aim to achieve equivalence of effect on the target language reader.” (Hatim and Mason 1997: 11)
culture.” (Venuti 2004: 3) Naturally, there will always be ‘shifts’ between the foreign and the translated text, and deviations can occur on different linguistic levels, e.g. phonology, grammar, graphology, and lexis (cf. Venuti 2004: 148). Translators use different compensation techniques to achieve a translated text that conforms to their purpose or goal for the translation, and equivalence can be accomplished in many different ways. Being aware of the goal or function a translated text is setting out to achieve can also help assess the ‘success’ of a literary translation when discussing and reviewing those special texts (cf. Wright 2016: 83).

The question of ‘How do translators translate?’ is closely related to the question ‘How do translators read?’ In general, an attentive translator reads texts extremely closely and is likely very sensitive to the style of a literary text and to its poetic effect(s). “Regardless of what a literary translator understands the purpose of literary translation to be, he or she must be an accomplished reader. Translators translate on the basis of their reading experience, and target texts are written reflections of those source-text encounters.” (Wright 2016: 120) The challenge in this, however, is that there is no such thing as a neutral reading of a text. In addition to paying attention to the style and content of the work while reading source text material, translators also have to read with an eye to the prominence of cultural markers and be aware of culturally sensitive themes. Culturally specific markers such as food, place names and national holidays and traditions either have to be adapted and localized, or can be seen as an opportunity to introduce the target audience to another culture, depending on how one wishes to translate (cf. Wright 2016: 133). Generally, translators will also be quite attuned to the effects their translating has on their specific source culture and language as well as on the receiving culture. We need to be aware that translators are no unmotivated agents but rather “participate in very decisive ways in promoting and circulating narratives and discourses of various types.” (Baker 2005: 12)

In his 2005 survey Translating Tolkien, Allan Turner, based on a translation model by George Steiner (1998/1973: 312), describes the literary translation process as follows:

A. Before a translation can even begin, there must be a belief that there is something which is of value for the target culture, otherwise it would be pointless to translate it in the first place.
B. Next, the translator must penetrate to the depths of the source text in order to appropriate the whole meaning, which is the in-depth reading stage.
C. This meaning must then be brought home, that is to say, assimilated to the linguistic and ideological structures of the target language.
D. Finally, balance must be restored as the foreign object is assimilated; the target text ceases to stand out as something exotic and becomes a part of the target culture.

(Turner 2005: 55)
While one could think that stage C, the actual translation and the effort of transferring the text into the target culture in a meaningful way, is the most challenging step in the translation process, an important prerequisite is happening much earlier: the translator must understand the source text in all its different depths and backgrounds. This can be especially challenging when it comes to the translation of fantasy literature, due to the complexities that are typical of the genre. Very few translators have the talent and experience for ‘sight translating,’ i.e. translating while reading the text for the first time. For the majority, however, the translation process starts by reading the entire text at least once and then doing any research that seems necessary in order to aid understanding. Landers (cf. 2001: 33) also advises dealing with possible ‘roadblocks’ at an early stage by underlining sentences, words, or passages that may present a problem. This can be sections the translator understands in the source language but is unsure of how to translate them best into the target language, sections for which the translator needs help from a native speaker, or even parts that need consultation with the original’s author to resolve ambiguities. Negotiating a reasonable deadline and working closely with a proof reader whose native language is the source language of the translated text are also important steps in the translation process. All these steps naturally require experience and the willingness to learn and improve. Translators are lifelong learners by necessity and “since neither language nor the world are static, the translation of literary texts and the textual products that emerge from this process will always be in a contingent state of flux. The task of the translator is therefore as endless as that of the reader” (Wright 2016: 163), and the challenges they face are plentiful.

4.2. Challenges in the Translation of Fantasy Fiction

In his essay “Translation is at best an echo,” published in the German reader Literaturübersetzen: Englisch (1992: 133-149), Albert-Reiner Glaap lists some of the problems translators might encounter when translating from English into German. He claims that there are gaps in every language and that there are limits to what can be translated. While there are some clear equivalences between English and German (‘hot’, ‘warm’, and ‘cold’, for example, can in most cases be translated to a straightforward ‘heiβ’, ‘warm’ and ‘kalt’), other terms will lack a distinct equivalent in different languages (the German ‘gemütlich,’ for example, will be translated into ‘comfortable,’ ‘sociable,’ ‘leisurely,’ ‘pleasant,’ or ‘cozy,’ according to the situation). In English, the language of homophones, homonymes, and seemingly endless possibilities for creating new words due to its flexibility (take, for example, the creative compound ‘unputdownable’ as an accepted description for a book), puns and wordplays are easily constructed. Due to the shared roots of German and English, so-called false friends
abound and can trip up the inobservant translator (‘konsequent’ does not translate into ‘consequently’ but into ‘consistent,’ to name just one example). Glaap also notes that English literary texts frequently rely on dialects, idiolects, sociolect and register-specific use of language. Due to the status of English as a global language, English-speaking (and -writing) authors have abundant varieties at their fingertips, and these language varieties also change over time (e.g. youth slang), which can be trying even for experienced translators. The effect of the text on the reader always needs to be considered and should be, if not exactly the same, at least similar in the source and target text. Fixed expressions such as figures of speech need to be taken into account, as well as the underlying connotations of an utterance as opposed to the actual words uttered. Sentences and words have to find their way into a language in which they did not originate, and considering all these various challenges, one can understand how grammatical differences, for example in sentence structure, might seem like a translator’s smallest problem.

The following subsections further describe specific challenges translators of fantasy fiction face, namely the translation of culture; of a text’s style and register; of characters’ names as well as place names; of poems and songs; of fantasy languages; of a work’s title; and, lastly, the potentially challenging relationship with the original’s author. Naturally, not all of the challenges mentioned are exclusive to the translation of fantasy fiction. Difficulties with regard to cultural transfer and the translation of style and register, for example, apply to other literary genres as well. However, some aspects mentioned in the following still pose particular difficulties when it comes to fantasy texts, such as the typically very descriptive names for characters and places, as well as other peculiarities inherent in the genre of fantasy fiction.

4.2.1. Cultural Transfer

Irrespective of the translator’s approach, certain texts will have a foreignizing effect on the receiving culture, as Chantal Wright points out in *Literary Translation* (2016: 50). These texts might belong to a genre that does not exist in the target culture, or foreground themes that are unknown there. Fantasy fiction is special, in that it has a foreignizing effect both on the readers of the source culture text as well as on the readers of the target culture text. This is connected with the concept of cultural distance: the information verbalized in a text needs to be coherent with the particular model of reality stored in the text receiver’s mind, especially when reading a non-literary text. With a literary text, readers will accept information that contrasts with their own reality (cf. Nord 1997: 86f.). They will acknowledge talking trees and animals or mythical
creatures as part of the story and as a signal of literariness. “What they expect in this case is not coherence between the text world and reality but coherence between the elements in the text world.” (Ibid.) This especially applies to fantasy fiction and greatly affects the target readers’ comprehension of the text.

Christiane Nord describes three possible varieties of cultural distance in translation (cf. 1997: 87): first of all, the text world can fully correspond to the source culture reality. In this case, the translator has to enable his target language audience to match it with the reality they know. Secondly, the text world can not correspond to source culture reality and the author has to give explicit descriptions, which also serves the target language reader. Thirdly, the text world can “correspond to source-culture reality, but is ‘deculturalized’ by explicit references to another (unspecific) time and/or place.” (Ibid.) In this particular case, which applies to many works of fantasy fiction, the source text and target text readers are at more or less the same distance from the text world. While some parts of the Harry Potter series are set in London, for example, which will be well-known to a large part of the original source text audience, the wizarding world and Hogwarts, the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, are set in an unknown location with rules and creatures not known to both the source text and the target text audience.

One could then assume that for translators of fantasy fiction, knowledge of extra-textual context and background of the source text culture (historical, socio-cultural, etc.) is secondary. This, however, is not necessarily the case. Even though most fantastic novels feature their own – often very detailed – history, geography, and socio-cultural background (which also means that the reader, no matter in which language, can come to the novel without any previous knowledge about the fantasy world they are about to enter), many of them are inspired by real historical events. George R.R. Martin’s series A Song of Ice and Fire, for example, is loosely based on events and (royal) characters from British and French history; the military order of the Night’s Watch resembles the medieval Knights Templars, the Wall that separates Westeros from the North was inspired by Hadrian’s Wall, and the fight for the Iron Throne by the English Wars of the Roses. In order to aid the translator’s in-depth reading and understanding of a source text, it is therefore more than helpful to be familiar with the historical events that inspired the work. For a successful translation it is also necessary for translators of fantasy fiction to have read other fantasy novels before, in order to be familiar with genre conventions and be more attuned to implied references to real events and people. It is also helpful if they enjoy reading fantastic novels and are interested in the genre. When it comes to translating fantasy, translators are not simply building a bridge between the source text culture and the target text culture, as is the
case with realist fiction, but additionally, they are also building a bridge to the culture of the self-contained fantasy world, and this bridging requires a high degree of creativity, alertness, and also patience.

4.2.2. Style, Register, Tone, and Language Varieties

As has been established, the alternate worlds of fantasy fiction frequently feature their very own rules, for example with respect to their history, geography, culture, weather conditions and laws of physics. Often, those parallel worlds also abound with magical creatures such as dwarves, giants, dragons, witches etc. Naturally, then, there are also certain rules for language use. There is a fine line between capturing the readers’ attention with the fantastical details and providing them with just the right amount of ‘everyday’ information in order to understand the fantasy world and be able to accept it as realistic. This has to be considered in translation as well, and translators have to be especially aware of a work’s style, tone, and register. Expressions and terms have to fit the context, cannot be too modern in many cases, and dialects and idiolects have to match the characters that speak them.

4.2.2.1. Style

*The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989: 1008f.) defines style as a “manner of writing (hence also of speaking); the manner of expression characteristic of a particular writer (hence of an orator), or of a literary group or period.” *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (Fourth Edition, 1998/1977: 872) takes the characterization of style one step further:

The analysis and assessment of style involves examination of a writer’s choice of words, his figures of speech, the devices (rhetorical and otherwise), the shape of his sentences (whether they be loose or periodic), the shape of his paragraphs – indeed, of every conceivable aspect of his language and the way in which he uses it. Style defies complete analysis or definition because it is the tone and ‘voice’ of the writer himself; as peculiar to him as his laugh, his walk, his handwriting and the expressions on his face. […] However, styles have been roughly classified and these crude categories are sometimes helpful: (a) according to period: Metaphysical, Augustan, Georgian, etc.; (b) according to individual authors: Chaucerian, Miltonic; Gibbonian; Jamesian, etc.; (c) according to level: grand, middle, low and plain; and (d) according to language: scientific, expository, poetic, emotive, referential, journalistic, etc.

As can be seen from the definitions, style is a very individual and elusive aspect of a text. Defining style in works of literature can be deceptive and imprecise, which is why it has been neglected in translation studies (cf. Jin 2003: 148). And yet, however subtle or ambiguous the style is that dominates a text, it fulfills varying purposes and has an effect on the reader, which is why it is an issue that deserves translators’ close attention.
In *Literary Translation*, author Di Jin states that good writers usually have their own consistent style, easily recognizable by their reading audience (cf. 2003: 131). This is where the challenge lies for translators who are writers themselves, producing texts in their own style; as Landers so aptly observes, “in theory, at least, ‘style’ in a translator is an oxymoron.” (2001: 90) In an ideal scenario, it is the translator’s objective to have no style at all and fully submit to the style of the source-text author, faithfully copying it into the translation. In practice, however, this is not possible, because it is impossible for the individual translator to abandon his or her own style of writing. “Style, after all, can be defined as a characteristic mode of expression, and consciously or unconsciously the translator displays one. In this respect, style is inextricably intertwined with one’s idiolect, the way an individual normally speaks.” (Landers 2001: 90)

People use language differently, and there will always be minor variations in the use of grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, etc. It is very hard if not impossible to avoid this, and trying to write in a style that is fundamentally different from one’s own (especially if this is done in another language) may result in sounding artificial and stilted (cf. Landers 2001: 90).

This, however, does not mean that every translator should just write in his or her personal style. Instead, the aim should be to invisibly transmit the original author’s style while being consistent with one’s own:

> As translators we have neither the right to ‘improve’ the original nor to impose our style – as opposed to our idiolect, which is at the very heart of our being – on the authors we translate. A book-length translation is made up of literally thousands of decisions, some as tiny as the choice between a comma and a semicolon, others as momentous as whether to render proper names into the TL or leave them in the SL. Over time, an experienced translator will tend to make similar decisions when facing decision points; the result, for better or worse, is a style. This is not to imply, of course, that a given translator will invariably make the same choices each and every time. (Landers 2001: 91)

The style in which a translation is written should also aim at producing an effect on the target-language reader that is as close to the one on the source-language reader as possible (cf. Jin 2003: 134). For example, if an author writes in short and clipped sentences (e.g. to create an impression of urgency and fast pace), the translation should not present complex and long-winded sentences.

4.2.2.2. Register

According to the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (Johnson & Johnson), “linguistic variation across accents and dialects is described as variation ‘according to the user,’
whereas different registers reflect variation ‘according to the use’” (1998: 272). There are different factors that play a role in the choice of register, such as degree of formality or professional settings. The situation determines how we speak and what register or style we choose, if, for example, it is formal speech, baby-talk, or simplified language. This variation in register is also closely related to style shifting; in general, speakers are aware as to what and how to speak in different contexts, and will adjust their speech to their audience or conversational partner (cf. Johnson & Johnson 1998: 272).

This is also the reason why *The Oxford English Dictionary* includes in its definition of the term ‘register’ that it is used “to produce the desired effect, to make an appropriate impression on the person intended.” (1989: 514) In other words, register varies according to the social situation in which it is used. The register employed by the author of a literary work provides the reader (often on a subconscious level) with considerable information about a character, their background, and the social setting they find themselves in; it therefore also matters greatly in translation.

“Different communicative situations trigger different phonetic and lexico-grammatical choices. This is an undeniable fact, all-pervasive in human language. We do not speak in the same way in court, at work or at home,” Maria del Mar Rivas Carmona writes in her essay on register in literary translation (in: Parra-Membrives et al. 2012: 123). The translation should adequately reflect the author’s choice of register in his or her work in order to produce an equivalent ‘fictional space’ that not only takes into account the particular conditions of the social setting in the novel, but also the social context of the source audience and target audience (cf. del Mar Rivas Carmona in Parra-Membrives et al. 2012: 122). What sounds formal or acceptable in one language, for example, might be taken as rude or offensive in another language. Word choice matters, and so does the particular context that conditions our linguistic choices, influencing the variations and choices available to the speaker as well as the variations and choices expected by the listener (cf. del Mar Rivas Carmona in Parra-Membrives et al. 2012: 126).

Since the same effect on communicator and receiver applies when reading a literary translation, the literary translator must be cautious, and keep in mind that “in all […] languages, virtually every word falls into a register,” (Landers 2001: 59) if not into more than one register, depending on context (cf. Ibid.). According to Landers (cf. Ibid.), register should be imagined as a continuum ranging from low to high rather than as binary categories such as technical/non-technical, formal/informal, urban/rural, vulgar/proper etc. Since the classification is culturally determined and learned and not a linguistic given, which often depends of the dominant political
Consciously and unconsciously, human beings equate words and expressions, grammatical constructions, even intonation patterns, with socially-defined non-linguistic characteristics such as class, status and educational level. The same underlying meaning can be expressed various ways, normally along a spectrum of register. (Landers 2001: 59f.)

It is therefore easier for the translator the more internal clues the author provides with regard to the social status, background, or educational level of a speaker. If these clues are not given, it is very challenging if not impossible to translate adequately and give the utterance the same implied meaning in the target language as in the source language. “What the reader unconsciously perceives as the ‘correctness’ of a translation hinges on many elements, including the crucial choice of the appropriate word, both denotatively and connotatively. Register matters.” (Landers 2001: 61)

Decisions regarding register can be very challenging in the translation of fantasy fiction, since the language used in those works is mostly an archaic one, and word choice matters even more than in contemporary novels. An aspect that requires special attention is the unintentional use of anachronisms, which should be avoided. Language evolves and includes different concepts and references that were once specific and have since become part of everyday language in a symbolic or generic sense. The English as well as the German language are littered with words and phrases that refer back to particular objects, places, or people, for example calling someone a ‘narcissist’ (which refers back to Greek mythology’s Narcissus), or mentioning ‘the labors of Hercules.’ Those phrases and words are, strictly speaking, inappropriate in a secondary fantasy world with its own history and language developments. A character calling out ‘For Christ’s sake!’ might be very inappropriate in a fantasy novel and threatens the reader’s suspension of disbelief, therefore interrupting the reading flow. We call these problematic terms that lie beyond the fantasy world’s boundaries anachronisms (= chronological inconsistencies), and authors as well as translators have to be very careful not to unintentionally use them in the text.

4.2.2.3. Tone

A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory defines ‘tone’ as “the reflection of a writer’s attitude […], manner, mood and moral outlook in his work; even, perhaps, the way his personality pervades the work. The counterpart of tone of voice in speech, which may be friendly, detached, pompous, officious, intimate, bantering and so forth.” (1998/1977: 920) Clifford Landers claims that the conscious perception of tone in a text is “one of the most useful
tools a translator can possess” (2001: 67). Even though such a textual feature as tone can be hard to grasp and pin down, giving tone a high priority can help translators avoid translations that are too literal and distort the author’s intent. Focusing more on recreating the overall feeling conveyed by an utterance or passage (i.e., its tone) instead of on translating single words correctly can also be useful when dealing with puns, allusions, and slang (cf. Landers 2001: 67f.). “Tone can comprise humor, irony, sincerity, earnestness, naïveté, or virtually any sentiment,” writes Landers (2001: 68). Even though it is interrelated with style, tone is more than just style, and a writer can vary greatly in tone within the space of a few lines without changing the overall style of the text. Paying close attention to reproducing tone can therefore help the translator in being more flexible in his or her translation of the source text, while at the same time it is possible to remain faithful to its style.

4.2.2.4. Dialect and Idiolect

According to the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages* by David Crystal (cf. 1992: 409), any system of linguistic expression governed by different factors such as regional, occupational, or social class variables, can make a language variety. These varieties can show themselves for example in the register used, but also in dialects and idiolects.

Dialect is a “language variety in which the use of grammar and vocabulary identifies the regional or social background of the user” (Crystal 1992: 101), i.e. regional dialects convey information about the speaker’s geographical origin, while social dialects tell the listener about the speaker’s class, social status, educational background, occupation, etc. A distinction can also be made between rural and urban dialects (cf. Ibid.). Peculiarities of vocabulary, pronunciation, and idiom can not only be heard in spoken communication, but can also be represented in writing. While written dialect in literature used to be quite common, especially in literature created in the earlier stages of a country’s civilization, this has decreased with the development of standard varieties (cf. Cuddon 1998/1977: 217f.). However, some authors still use written dialect in order to enhance characterization. As Clifford Landers notes in *Literary Translation*, translating and conveying dialect is “a challenge unique to literary translation” (2001: 116), and it is a frequently encountered problem. The standard version of a language, for example standard British English or standard American English, is a dialect as well, but it is the dialect that has gained the most prestige in an area and is spoken by a privileged segment of society. It is therefore considered the ‘good’ or ‘correct’ variety in most cases, and it is always easier to translate ‘good’ and ‘correct’ language (cf. Ibid.). As soon as speech patterns
in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, or syntax vary from the accepted norm and contain strong regional and social markers, the translator has to make the difficult decision if and how to translate the dialect. While the translator is familiar with many variants of his or her source language and is likely striving for conveying every nuance that distinguishes the dialect they are translating in the target language, this is hardly ever possible, because, as Landers warns, “no dialect travels well in translation. However reluctantly, the translator must recognize that dialect, at least at the level of one-to-one transference, is untranslatable.” (2001: 117) If only done occasionally, it is possible to hint at unusual ways of speaking in a translated text; it is, however, not advisable for translators to attempt to recreate whole speech patterns, since dialects are unconsciously associated with a region, social group, or chronological period, and vary completely from culture to culture and language to language:

Where extended passages in dialect are the case, the best we can hope for is a kind of generalized adaptation to spoken discourse – e.g. a plausible reproduction of non-specific rural […]. Any rendering of SL dialect that consciously or unconsciously evokes an existing TL dialect is probably self-defeating. Whether or not it ‘reads well,’ it still falls short of the original by introducing an element markedly different from that in the SL. More calamitous still is the invented dialect. […] An invented dialect, except perhaps in the hands of some James Joyce of translators, is almost certain to be both ephemeral and off-putting to all but the most forgiving and open-minded of readers. (Landers 2001: 117)

Thus, the general advice for translating dialect is to only hint at deviances in a character’s speech, rather than translating the whole speech pattern into an existing dialect of the target language or into an invented dialect. A good solution to this challenge can be be to portray a character who speaks in dialect in the original text by translating their speech into a variation that does not exactly coincide with any dialectal variety of the target language but shows non-standard features on all or some of the linguistic levels (phonetically, lexically, and grammatically) that can be noticed in the original text. This way, the intended image of the original is not being distorted.

As opposed to dialect, idiolect (which is, put simply, a person’s unique way of speaking) can and should be translated carefully. Idiolect is a user-related aspect of a message, it is “the individual’s distinctive and motivated way of using language at a given level of formality or tenor.” (Hatim & Mason 1997: 98) In other words and according to The Oxford English Dictionary (cf. 1989: 624), idiolect is an individual’s linguistic system that differs in some details (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and style) from the linguistic system of other language users that speak the same dialect or language. Informal and idiolectal use of language is a common problem in literary translation. The reason for this is that “in a novel with
characters as big as real life, the way each of them thinks and speaks is a part of his or her personality. It forms a very important part of the text. Any failure to keep that essential fact in sight, to feel the force of a consistent personality, is bound to result in misjudgements [sic!] of the source message.” (Jin 2003: 137) Oftentimes, characters in a novel are particularly defined and portrayed by the way they talk, and simple non-adaptation of an idiolect can take authenticity from a character and reduce, to a greater or lesser extent, the original context or ‘mood’ of a text. Information about the character can thus get lost in translation and leave gaps between the source and target text that readers have to fill in themselves.

Another important aspect that translators of literature need to be aware of with regard to idiolect are words and phrases that Clifford Landers calls ‘landmine words’ and ‘hidden traps’ (cf. 2001: 133). These traps can either be found in first-person narratives or in dialogue, not in third-person narration. While in third-person narration the level of discourse is usually ‘standard’ and conforms to conventional norms of syntax and vocabulary, the language in dialogues and first-person narratives can diverge from the standard. In these cases, the translator needs to be aware of who is speaking and find a way to represent this character’s specific idiolect. Unlettered or uneducated characters, for example, could not be expected to speak very formally, and there is the danger of translating a character into something they are not; “allowing for regional variation and accent, the highly educated, the intelligent, the articulate tend to speak a fairly homogenized version of the Queen’s English, while there is a rich spectrum of non-standard usage that delights linguists as much as it horrifies purists.” (Landers 2001: 135f.) Common markers of idiolectal variation in English are for example the double negative (‘She doesn’t do nothing right.’), adverb/adjective confusion (‘He’s doing good.’), or failure of subject/verb agreement (‘She don’t work today.’). Being aware of these ‘landmines’ in texts will keep a translator from putting words into the mouth of someone unlikely to speak this way. Luckily, features of idiolect are not restricted to one language and its varieties only, but counterparts can be found in other languages as well, even though there might be slight differences in what is perceived as e.g. formal/informal in the target culture, and how formality or informality are linguistically realized.

If a character in the original text speaks with bad grammar and no punctuation, for example, this should not be corrected in the translated version of the text but represented as best as possible. When the two languages involved in the translation process are not or only little related (such as translations into Mandarin Chinese, for example), this becomes an especially demanding task if one strives for authenticity. After ensuring that the translator has understood
what exactly the effect is that the original text and language use produces on the source-text reader, “one has to find the appropriate stylistic means from a repertoire of stylistic resources in the target language, which are fundamentally different from those of the source language.” (Jin 2003: 134) Sometimes, for example, translators have to resort to the use of dialectal expressions to make up for the loss of slang carried by some expressions in the original.

4.2.3. Names and Places

One of the biggest challenges in translating fantasy fiction is probably recreating an author’s intricate and elaborate fantasy world without any loss for the target text reader of another language. A large part or even all of the action is taking place in a world unknown to the reader, a world with its own rules and beings. Therefore, works of fantasy fiction mainly use names and terminology unfamiliar or ‘strange-sounding’ to the modern reader, in order to highlight the otherness of this fantasy world. Translators thus constantly have to make the difficult decision whether to leave a character’s name or a place name as it is in the original or whether to adapt it to the target language. “When it comes to the names of people and places, most translators want to ‘preserve the flavor’ of the original, keep it feeling foreign. But is this best done by preserving the foreign name or by translating it?” Wechsler asks in Performing without a Stage (1998: 125). Translating the names must come with the understanding that in fantasy fiction, authors frequently use telling names that are catchy and often evoke an immediate mental image when reading and hearing them. One obvious example for a telling name from the Harry Potter series is Harry’s godfather Sirius Black, who is, to most of the magic world, wrongly known as a dangerous murderer. ‘Black’ like the color black, provokes a dark and sinister impression of the character, while ‘Sirius’ is the brightest star in the Earth’s night sky, implying the character’s true nature. In the first edition of the Harry Potter novels’ translations into German, Sirius Black was translated into ‘Sirius Schwarz,’ which was then changed back to the original ‘Sirius Black’ in all following editions.

In some countries, as Wechsler points out, the decision whether to change character or place names or retain the original names is not even the translator’s to make: “[…] a translator’s decision-making is limited by reasonably strict convention: English-language translators, for example, rarely translate characters’ names. Keeping names in the original language, usually complete with accent marks, is one of the principal ways English-language translators give their work a foreign flavor.” (1998: 126) However, conventions differ. When it comes to translating literature from other languages into French, for example, it is very common to translate all
character names. Translators into German who get to make the choice themselves need to consider the immediate context of a character or place name, as well as what works best throughout the book.

4.2.4. Poems and Songs

Poems and Songs play an important role in fantasy fiction and are used to create authenticity in a text, as the additional dimension of poetry in prose can enhance story telling. Even if the novel’s characters only use snippets of songs, poems, or sayings, those markers of historical distance further readers’ immersion in the fantasy world. Songs and poems are also included to add an archaic tone to a fantasy novel (this can be seen especially in J.R.R. Tolkien’s series *The Lord of the Rings*) and generally round off the richness of the text by utilizing poetry.

Translators have to make the decision whether they aim to translate the form (the aesthetic function) or content (the expressive function) of a poem and song into the target language, as translating both is close to impossible. As Clifford Landers puts it (2001: 97): “Translating poetry well is so difficult as to be called impossible by most experts; […] If literary translation itself is a leap of faith, poetic translation puts that faith to the severest of all tests.” It lies in the nature of poetry to use language in a figurative and metaphorical manner, which naturally results in ambiguity and polysemy. This also represents the greatest challenge for the translator when dealing with poems and songs in a text (cf. Landers 2001: 97). One does not necessarily have to be a poet in order to translate poetry (especially when it is rare pieces of poetry in a fantasy novel); a certain poetic sensitivity is, however, needed. This ‘poetic sensitivity’ can encompass “an appreciation for nuance, sonority, metaphor and simile, allusion; the ability to read between and above the lines; flexibility; and, ultimately, humility.” (Landers 2001: 99)

What is important to keep in mind when it comes to translating poetry, is that there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong.’ What translators should strive to avoid, though, is disrupting their readers’ reading flow and immersion in the story and fantasy world. Wright states that “the basic fact that there is no exact equivalence between any two given languages means that aural features such as alliteration, sibilance and consonance will almost certainly not translate one to one in any text.”(2016: 124). Translations of songs and poems are therefore often done rather freely, focusing more on the content and (assumed) intended meaning and on ‘recreating’ the poetry rather than presenting a close translation.
4.2.5. Fantasy Languages

Many works of fantasy fiction take place in worlds that are either entirely or in large parts recognizable as not being ‘our’ world, the reason why a certain group of novels within the genre is sometimes called ‘secondary world fantasy’ (as opposed to urban fantasy or historical fantasy, for example). It can therefore be assumed that this alternate world is not only historically, geographically, or culturally distant from our own world, but linguistically as well. Many authors ignore this problem, since constructing a whole new language is a mammoth task, and novels written entirely in a fictitious language hardly sell well.

Besides making up a few words and phrases in a fictitious language for the sake of authenticity and flavor in a fantasy novel, inventing a complete language system with its own grammar, syntax, and vocabulary is not done very frequently, as it is a tremendously complex and elaborate effort. One of the rare authors up for this task is J.R.R. Tolkien, who was not only a writer but also a linguist and philologist. For his works he invented fourteen fictitious languages, spoken for example by the hobbits and elves of Tolkien’s fantasy world. Tolkien even included appendices to his works in which he discusses in detail the pronunciation and spelling of words and names in his series. The translation of invented fantasy languages, words, and phrases can be a major obstacle for the literary translator if they set out on translating the fictitious language as well. The common practice in these cases, however, is to adopt this extra layer of language from the original into the target language without any or with only little changes.

4.2.6. The Title

One of the most important challenges in the translation of a fantasy fiction novel is translating the work’s title in a way that is as recognizable and fitting in the target language as it is in the source language. While some translators decide to adopt the original name of a work and leave the title as is, other translated titles are altered beyond recognition or are outright mistranslations, such as Albert Camus’s The Stranger, which should really be The Foreigner (cf. Landers 2001: 140). As Landers puts it, “sometimes the most seemingly insignificant word can affect the rightness of a title,” (Ibid.) and being given the task of choosing a work’s title in translation can be a heavy responsibility for the literary translator.

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7 Of those fourteen languages, two are usable, i.e. sufficiently developed to be used in conversation, while the rest of the languages are of a more limited corpus (cf. Honegger 2004: 2).
There are different approaches to the translation of a novel’s title. Landers, author of a guide on literary translation, is of the opinion that a title should only be changed when it cannot be left unchanged, for example due to “cultural, linguistic, historical, or even geographical disparities” (2001: 140) between source language and target language. What should be on the translator’s mind when choosing a title for a work of fiction in translation, should be to grant target language readers easier access to the work; to this end, “a clever, appealing title adds to attraction and saleability of a work.” (Ibid.) What can help in the decision-making process can be not to settle on a title too early in the translation process. Sometimes, a title will be straightforward and better be left alone or translated word-for-word, such as Terry Pratchett’s Discworld series which was called Scheibenwelt in German, and Tolkien’s The Silmarillion that was simply copied into the German Das Silmarillion. In these cases, the decision comes almost automatically. However, other titles may prove more elusive, especially those alluding to cultural or literary referents. In these cases, the ones that demand a translator’s flexibility and imagination, it is a good technique to wait with the selection of a translated title “for last or until inspiration strikes, whichever comes first.” (Landers 2001: 141)

Choosing a fitting title for a work of fantasy (or really, any novel) is critical because it conveys the first impression of a work. If it is inaccurate, this wrong impression is very hard or impossible to set right after publication of the translation, and could only be adjusted by retranslation and publication of a new edition with a different title. While readers might overlook inaccuracy in the text, errors in the title are long-ranging. A badly chosen title can also falsify reader’s perception of the meaning and theme of a book. When it comes to translating a book’s title, there simply is the need to get it right the first time:

If anything, the responsibility for translators is greater than for authors, who normally have only themselves to blame if the SL title is less than perfect. But unlike the author, the translator has the existing title as a guide, with the option to retain, modify, or (the last resort) discard it in accord with the exigencies of taste and the marketplace. Just as a brilliant work can be enhanced by an astute title, an ill-chosen title can act as an anchor on the finest masterpiece, and absent overriding considerations the translator owes it to the author to preserve the sense of the original. (Landers 2001: 143)

What do we then look for in a title? The title in translation has to be at the same time catchy, thematically relevant, spark curiosity, resonate with a large part of the potential readership, and be as concise as possible, in order to be remembered more easily. Finally, a dynamic, action-implying title is preferable to a more static one. Titles with local place names unknown abroad,

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8 “This rule can sometimes be broken with telling effect. A deliberately long, rambling title may be the right choice, as when evoking the almost encyclopedic titles of past eras.” (Landers 2001: 143)
fragments of little-known proverbs, plays on words, or any cultural referent familiar to the source language reader but meaningless or confusing to the target language audience should be avoided. Regardless of how much thought a translator has put into the translation of a work’s title, in many cases it is the publisher who has the last word concerning translated titles, and they usually opt for a title that is the most saleable and accessible one for the target language audience.

4.2.7. A Translator’s Relationship with the Source Text Author

In his *Literary Translation. A Practical Guide* Clifford Landers asserts that “authors can be a translator’s greatest aid or biggest hindrance.” (2001: 88) He advises that wherever possible, a translator should try to build a reasonable relationship with the source text author of his or her current translation. Why reasonable? According to Landers, the decision to involve the original’s author in the translation process is one that should not be taken lightly, and that can have far-reaching consequences. An offer by the author to ‘help out’ by looking at the manuscript should not be agreed to simply out of courtesy, and translators have to keep in mind that there are authors that are more easy-going and some who are more ‘high maintenance,’ and who like to interfere in the translation process (cf. Landers 2001: 81). Sometimes, there will also be publishers who demand the writer’s active involvement in the translation process. This in itself is no problem and can sometimes even be very helpful, for example in the case of ambiguities and ‘dead ends’ in translation. The problem, however, “arises when an author thinks he or she is sufficiently fluent in the TL to judge the translation and even to propose changes in it. This is a situation fraught with danger for the translator, who must proceed with tact” (Landers 2001: 82f.), as any criticism of the work can be taken as an offense.

Regardless of the many pitfalls, fostering a good relationship with the source text author can be very beneficial for the translator, and conferring with them on their work can be a rewarding experience. The most effective encounter with the source text author would be a face-to-face meeting. Due to reasons of time, distance, and expense, however, this is not always possible. In those cases, contact via phone or mail can also be helpful, because “more than any dictionary, native informant, or Internet search, direct contact with the author can prove invaluable in an often arduous task” (Landers 2001: 86) and shed light on passages the translator is having difficulties with. To establish a personal relationship with the source text author means to be able to brainstorm together, carry out negotiations about the translation and avoid translation errors, and to acquire a feeling for the author as a human being; after all, “when creator and re-
creator hit it off on the human level, lasting and mutually rewarding lifelong friendships can result.” (Landers 2001: 87)

5. Analysis and Examples

In *Literary Translation*, author Chantal Wright asks questions that are also essential in the context of this thesis: “How do we, or should we, review translations?” (2016: 88) and “How do we assess the ‘success’ of a literary translation?” (2016: 83) It is very hard to define what makes a good translation a good translation, and there are many different opinions on this issue. Some may think that a good translation “is smooth and fluent and does not draw attention to itself” (Wright 2016: 90), and might criticize a translation for being ‘too contemporary’, ‘too British’, essentially you could say ‘too everything.’ What is important for the critical reader (and, of course, for the analysis and literary criticism of a translation) to keep in mind, is that ‘errors’ in a translation do not automatically point towards an incompetent translator. Mistakes also do not necessarily have to be without literary value. They could stem from the translator’s unconscious attitude towards the text (cf. Wright 2016: 94), or be the result of the careful balancing that is necessary in literary translation and that this thesis discusses in chapter 2.3. Wright points out that “‘translated textuality’ is a complicated beast” (2016: 98), and advises not to make value judgements when reading and analyzing translations for scholarly purposes, but to accept that in our post-Babel world translation is all we have to give us access to otherwise inaccessible texts, and that it is inevitable for the foreign text to be altered on its way to the target culture and audience (cf. 2016: 99). She states that “even though translated texts may be flawed, they can nonetheless be formative.” (Ibid.)

The average reader of a translated novel, in many cases not to a great extent familiar with the source text and the source text culture, is unlikely to notice minor translation errors. The observant reader might spot them because they appear out of place or nonsensical, and interrupt the reading flow of the text (cf. Wright 2016: 99f.). When reading and analyzing translated texts for scholarly purposes, however, readers have to be aware of the unique demands and benefits of translated textuality and of certain facts:

[T]hat the text in the reader’s hands has come from another place, culture and language and has been made accessible through the agency of the translator; that the translator is embedded in the translated text and that it therefore has multiple authors; and that there is no simple equivalence between languages – and, finally, that for these reasons the translation process will inevitably bring with it transformations, refractions, errors, distortions, implicit or explicit commentary, insights, gain and loss. (Ibid.)
Wright claims that we will only be able to truly identify these ‘deviant’ elements if we are adequately familiar with the source text, and urges not to construct an argument around the translated text on one single word, as there are many reasons why a translator might have chosen this word instead of another that might seem more fitting (cf. 2016: 100). “Textual evidence from a translation needs to be used with greater sensitivity, and where multiple translations are available it will always be beneficial to draw upon them. This is not to say that one cannot construct an argument on the basis of a translated text.” (Ibid.)

As has been established, a translation can contain errors and still have great literary merit, as long as the number and severity of errors does not reach a critical mass from which the text will suffer. It can be assumed, however, that the majority of professional literary translators (especially those commissioned to translate bestsellers) are more than adequately competent in both their source and target language and will acquit their task well (cf. Wright 2016: 109); “Thus the ‘success’ of a translated text, rather than being a matter of accuracy – minor hiccups and miscomprehensions notwithstanding – has to do with its success as a particularly complex type of literary text rather than in terms of its relationship to its source.” (Ibid.) Thus, solely focusing on the relationship between a translation and its source text is not the best basis on which to judge the success of a translated novel.

If we cannot assess the success of a literary translation based on its individual mistakes and errors, or on its relationship with the source text, what other option do we have? Chantal Wright proposes to be more attentive to a translation’s complex literariness, the unique context of the individual translator, as well as the unique cultural framework in which the translation is published, rather than focusing on its individual errors and the equivalence between source and target text (cf. 2016: 110). For this thesis, it is more important to ask how the translation of a particular source text makes its meaning, and less important to look for its possible shortcomings. The focus is therefore on the solutions chosen by the translators for certain problems in translation.

This final chapter uses the challenges in the translation of fantasy fiction that have been identified in the previous chapter and analyses how these challenges and problems have been met and solved (more or less successfully and creatively) in the German translations of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, Joanne K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, and George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire: A Game of Thrones*. In order to provide more than fleeting summaries, not every challenge will be applied
to every work, but to the work where it is most applicable and relevant. Another reason for this is that not every category applies to every novel; the extensive use of fantasy languages, for example, was utilized most prominently by Tolkien, and is not relevant for the translations of the other two authors and fantasy novels. Tolkien’s novel will not only be used to look more closely at the challenge of translating fantasy languages, but also at the translator’s perhaps challenging relationship with the source text author, as well as the appropriate translation of style and register and of poems and songs. Rowling’s work will help us analyze cultural transfer in translation as well as the translation of dialects and idiolects, and Martin’s novel will serve as an example for translating tone and a novel’s title. The challenges that will be applied in the analysis of all novels are the translations of names and places. At the beginning of each subchapter, a brief introduction to the respective novel and its author can be found.

5.1. *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*

J.R.R. Tolkien’s epic high-fantasy novel *The Lord of the Rings* has been continuously in print for almost half a century and has sold millions of copies world-wide (cf. Turner 2005: 11). It has inspired a great number of imitations, and has provided one of the main impulses for the “emergence of the genre of fantasy fiction as a recognized field of publishing.” (Ibid.) The story of *The Lord of the Rings* originally began as a sequel to Tolkien’s earlier book *The Hobbit* (published 1937) but developed into a much larger (and stand-alone) work that has been published in three parts: *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), *The Two Towers* (1954), and *The Return of the King* (1955). The German translations were only published fifteen years later, in 1969 and 1970. In 2001, 2002, and 2003, the movie adaptations were released, and have won a total of seventeen Oscars at the Academy Awards. Since the original publication of the novel, *The Lord of the Rings* has been reprinted numerous times, and has been translated into 38 languages, becoming one of the most popular works in twentieth-century literature (cf. Online 9).

In a biographical sketch for the Tolkien society, David Doughan writes that:

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) was a major scholar of the English language, specialising in Old and Middle English. Twice Professor of Anglo- Saxon (Old English) at the University of Oxford, he also wrote a number of stories, including most famously *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), which are set in a pre-historic era in an invented version of our world which he called by the Middle English name of Middle-earth. [Tolkien] has regularly been condemned by the English literary establishment, with honourable exceptions, but loved by literally millions of readers worldwide. (Online 6)
As a student of English language and literature at Exeter College, Oxford, Tolkien immersed himself in the Classics, and due to his passion for foreign languages he studied Latin, French, German, Welsh, Finnish, Russian, Gothic, and all forms of the English language (cf. Carpenter 2002: 80f.). He also started working on poetry and invented new languages, before being sent on active duty to the Western Front in France during World War I in 1916. At the end of the year, Tolkien contracted trench fever and was sent back to England. Tolkien then began to put his stories into shape and continued refining his fantasy languages. During his time as a professor at the University of Oxford, starting in 1925, Tolkien played an important but unexceptional role in academic politics and administration, while in his private life he and his wife Edith had four children. Tolkien told his children numerous bedtime stories, which helped in the continuous development of his mythology and, most notably, in the tale that was later published in *The Hobbit*. Due to the success of the novel, Tolkien was asked to write a sequel, which soon developed into something more than a children’s story. More than ten years after *The Hobbit*, Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* was published, and it soon became apparent “that both author and publishers had greatly underestimated the work’s public appeal.” (Online 6). What followed were reviews ranging from ecstatic to damning, and the work garnered great public attention. Tolkien was on the one hand extremely flattered by this, on the other hand, the sudden attention also came with gawping fans gawping and calling him in the middle of the night to inquire about his novels. “Meanwhile the cult, not just of Tolkien, but of the fantasy literature that he had revived, if not actually inspired (to his dismay), was really taking off.” (Ibid.)

*The Lord of the Rings*, just like its precursor, *The Hobbit*, takes place during the Third Age of Middle-Earth, a continent on the fantasy world Arda, which is filled with magical places, people, and events. Peoples and creatures such as hobbits, elves, men, dwarves, wizards, orcs, and dragons populate the realm. The story centers on the Dark Lord Sauron and on the Ring of Power that he has created and lost, and that he desperately wants back in order to conquer and rule all of Middle-Earth. At the beginning of the first volume of *The Lord of the Rings*, due to several coincidences, the ring lands in the hands of the young hobbit Frodo, who is then sent on a mission to destroy the ring once and for all in the Fires of Mount Doom in Mordor, where it was forged. On his journey through Middle-Earth, Frodo is helped by different allies and traveling companions, and at the same time hunted by Sauron’s evil forces. Tolkien put a great amount of detail and realism into his story, and things like weather, climate, geography, even phases of the moon, are mapped out very precisely. In addition to the provided maps, the main story is followed by six appendices that provide even further insight into the historical and
linguistic background of Tolkien’s work, as well as an index listing every character, place, song, and sword. Due to the wealth of material, Tolkien’s novels have been subject to extensive analysis into the literary themes and origins of his stories. Influences on Tolkien’s work include philology, mythology, and religion, as well as earlier fantasy works, the author’s distaste for the effects of industrialization, and his experiences in World War I., even though these inspirations have often been denied by Tolkien himself (cf. Online 7). With The Lord of the Rings and his other works, “Tolkien has succeeded in developing a world which contains its own history of creation, its own mythology and legendary figures and which, although only existing in our fantasy, feels as real as our own.” (Dallasera 2010: 8) This is only one of the reasons why translating Tolkien’s work must seem like a life-task for a single translator, and why it comes with many challenges.

5.1.1. J.R.R. Tolkien and his Translators

As a philologist and professor of linguistics, capable of many European languages beside English, Tolkien himself was always very interested in translations. For his translators, this equaled an author exceedingly involved with the translations of his own work. As already mentioned, Tolkien not only mapped out and described his fantasy world in minute detail, which alone can be a considerable challenge to a translator, he went a step further and created a thorough geographical and historical background, as well as a linguistic background for all names and places. At the back of the third volume of The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien provided an extensive appendix on these detailed backgrounds, including the hobbit family trees, the languages of Middle-earth, and comments on translation; these comments on translation were later extended with his 1967 Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings.

Following the publication of The Lord of the Rings in 1954/1955, the work was soon translated into other languages. In letters to his publishers Allen & Unwin throughout the following years, Tolkien repeatedly offered to aid translators in their endeavor to adequately transfer his secondary universe into another language: “The translation of The Lord of the Rings will prove a formidable task, and I do not see how it can be performed satisfactorily without the assistance of the author. That assistance I am prepared to give, promptly, if I am consulted.” (Carpenter 2006: 248f.) Still, Tolkien was not directly consulted in the translation of the novels into Swedish and Dutch, and was highly unhappy with both results, especially with the translation of proper names: “May I say now at once that I will not tolerate any similar tinkering with the personal nomenclature. Nor with the name/word Hobbit.” (Carpenter 2006: 251) Out of this
frustration, the idea to Tolkien’s *Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings* was born, and after it was completed, it was sent to all translators working on Tolkien’s texts (cf. Dallasera 2010: 12). The guide was introduced with the following words:

> All names not in the following list should be left entirely unchanged in any language used in translation (LT), except that inflectional –s, -es should be rendered according to the grammar of the language. It is desirable that the translator should read Appendix F, and follow the theory there set out. [...] The names in English form should [...] be translated into the other language according to their meaning as closely as possible. (Hammond & Scull 2008: 751)

These are just some of the rules given by Tolkien to his translators. These rules meant a deep insight into Tolkien’s intentions and thoughts during the writing process of *The Lord of the Rings*, but also put shackles on translators’ creativity; thus they were help and restraint at the same time.

Margaret Carroux was the translator of the first German translation of *The Lord of the Rings*. It remained her most famous translation. Carroux had the fortune of being able to work together closely with Tolkien, in addition to drawing on the appendices and the name guide for reference. She visited him in Oxford during her work on the book and they also corresponded via mail (cf. Online 8). Presumably, Tolkien was so pleased with Carroux’s efforts because she kept closely to Tolkien’s translation rules and stuck closely to the novel’s archaic language. “However, her translation does not transfer the different forms of style and register for the individual protagonists of the story.” (Dallasera 2010: 15) Wolfgang Krege, the translator commissioned with the re-translation of *The Lord of the Rings*, on the other hand, took more liberties with the original text, while trying to closely translate the different forms of register. As opposed to Carroux, Krege was not able to seek the counsel of Tolkien, because the author was no longer alive when Krege started to work on the new translation. He had to rely on his own understanding of the text, and it will forever be unknown whether Tolkien would have approved of the result. At the same time, this gave Krege the freedom to present a translation according to his own interpretations, and allowed more room for creativity.

5.1.2. The Re-Translation of *The Lord of the Rings* as an Example for Differences in Translating Style and Register

Wolfgang Krege’s re-translation of *The Lord of the Rings*, as commissioned by the German publisher Klett-Cotta, was published in 2000 and has been regarded as very controversial ever since. Krege was at the disadvantage that the first translation by Margaret Carroux had been well received and was, by then, perceived by the readers as THE German version of the novels.
As Wright puts it, “the longer the period of time during which a particular translation holds sway, the more likely it is that the reception of that text will be heavily influenced by those translations and that new translations will be seen as audacious challengers and/or as vehicles of great innovation.” (2016: 109) Therefore, Krege was under the pressure of justifying the necessity of the re-translation and breathe new life into the text, adding new aspects to it. He did this by trying to adhere close to the original’s language with regard to presenting different dialects and register, while taking more liberties with the text’s general style. A large portion of the readership and critics, however, were not in favor with this.

As already mentioned, Carroux, in her translation of *The Lord of the Rings*, remained “as ‘loyal’ to the text as was possible without sacrificing the need to create a readable German text (cf. Nagel 2004: 25). Krege commented on this and on his own translation as follows:

Die Übersetzerin Margaret Carroux hat also an etlichen Stellen die auch aus meiner Sicht richtigen Worte schon gefunden. [...] Dennoch wird der Leser auch ohne peniblen Textvergleich Unterschiede bemerken. Die alte Fassung ist nachvollziehend; sie bildet den fremden Text in der eigenen Sprache getreu ab, wobei als unvermeidlich in Kauf genommen wird, dass der Ausdruck ein wenig blasser, das Tempo langsamer, der Stil gleichförmiger wird. Die neue will das Fremde assimilieren. (Nagel 2004: 26)

While this is, all in all, not a bad proposition, finding the right balance and choosing the appropriate linguistic means are essential in Krege’s endeavor, as Nagel points out in his essay “The ‘Old’ and the ‘New’ German Translation of LotR” (in: Honegger 2004: 21-52). The following examples highlight Krege’s attempt at modifying Carroux’s translation of *The Lord of the Rings* and bringing a new aspect to it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Text</th>
<th>Target Text 1</th>
<th>Target Text 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘All right! You and Pippin know your way; so I’ll just ride on and tell Fatty Bolger that you are coming. We’ll see about supper and things.’ (131)</td>
<td>‚Gut. Du und Pippin wißt ja den Weg; also reite ich voraus und sage Dick Bolger, daß ihr kommt. Wir kümmern uns ums Abendessen und dem Dicken, dass ihr bald da seid. Wir kümmern uns ums</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a linguist and philologist, Tolkien tried to “distinguish the different peoples of Middle-earth by attributing an individual language to each of them.” (Dallasera 2010: 31) To this end, he used style and register as powerful tools. The three utterances above, delivered by three different characters, have been translated into German very differently by the two translators. While Carroux remains close to the original’s style and archaic register, the underlined words in the second translation highlight only some of the liberties that Krege took in his pursuit of adding ‘more color’ to the text and the individual characters. Unfortunately, as the examples show, the language in the second translation has become rather modern due to this, and words and phrases such as ‘Chef’, ‘dem Dicken’, or “Kusch, du Köter!’ sound rather youthful and playful, which interrupts the reading flow and seems inappropriate for the archaic setting of the novel. “In the end it would appear that Wolfgang Krege approached his translation not merely as a translation, but as a modernization of Tolkien’s text to make it acceptable for what he believed to be a ‘new’ generation of readers.” (Nagel 2004: 28) However, aiming at reflecting the speech patterns of the younger generation as the re-translation’s main target group and thus heavily altering the text’s style is violating the boundaries of a translation adequate to the source text. This not only distorts “the original linguistic intention of the text” but also “makes the translation dated, since the speech patterns reflected here are sure to go out of style in the foreseeable future.” (Nagel 2004: 47f.) Still, we should “resist the temptation to rank translations from best to worst.” (Wright 2016: 110) The question when comparing different translations of one and the same source text should not be ‘Which is the better one?’, but rather ‘How does this version make its meaning?’

As has been stated, we will never know what Tolkien himself would have thought of Krege’s modern rendition of his work. However, taking the following statement into account that

| ‘Listen, Hound of Sauron!’ he cried. ‘Gandalf is here. Fly, if you value your foul skin! I will shrivel you from tail to snout, if you come within this ring.’ (392) | ‘Höre, Saurons Hund!’ rief er. ‘Gandalf ist hier. Fliehe, wenn dir deine stinkende Haut lieb ist. Ich werde sie dir vom Schwanz bis zur Schnauze runzlig machen, wenn du in diesen Ring hereinkommst.’ (362) | ‘Kusch, du Köter Saurons!’ rief er. ‘Gandalf steht hier. Verschwinde, wenn dir dein räudiges Fell lieb ist! Ich versenge dir’s vom Schwanz bis zur Schnauze, wenn du dich in diesen Kreis wagst.’ (387) | Abendessen und so weiter.’ (139) |
Tolkien made in his 1940 essay “On Translating Beowulf”, it is unlikely that he would have approved:

A warning against colloquialism and false modernity has already been given by implication above. Personally, you may not like an archaic vocabulary, and word-order, artificially maintained as an elevated and literary language. You may prefer the brand new, the lively and the snappy. [...] If you wish to translate, not re-write, Beowulf, your language must be literary and traditional: not because it is now a long while since the poem was made, or because it speaks of things that have since become ancient; but because the diction of Beowulf was poetical, archaic, artificial (if you will) in the day the poem was made. (Tolkien 2006a: 54)

In the same essay, Tolkien argues that the opposite, namely using words in translation simply for the fact that they sound old-fashioned or obsolete, should also be avoided. Instead he advises to use words that, though sounding archaic, still remain in literary use (cf. Tolkien 2006a: 55). It is therefore very important for the translator to find the right balance between choosing words only for the sake of staying close to the original and taking too many liberties and completely altering the style a work was written in.

5.1.3. The Translation of Names and Places in The Lord of the Rings

As has been said, Tolkien left specific instructions and rules for the translation of proper names in the appendices to The Lord of the Rings as well as The Guide to the Names in The Lord of the Rings. This proved helpful in transferring Tolkien’s use of telling names for the illustration of different facets of the plot in the best way possible, or at least, in the way the author intended.

In his essay “The Treatment of Proper Names in the German Edition(s) of The Lord of the Rings as an Example of Norms in Translation Practice” (in: Honegger 2004: 93-113), Rainer Nagel summarizes four different solutions that have been chosen for the German translation of proper names and places in The Lord of the Rings:

- Firstly, a large number of names were translated directly (i.e., they were domesticated) and according to Tolkien’s rules. Nagel states that “due to Tolkien’s extensive norming, direct, literal translation is the most commonly used procedure. It is most often applied with morphologically complex names and works by translating each component individually to form a new, German compound.” (2004: 102) Some of the examples he lists for direct translation are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Name</th>
<th>German Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle-earth</td>
<td>Mittelerde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treebeard</td>
<td>Baumbart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wormtongue</td>
<td>Schlangenzunge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Secondly, etymologizing translation was used for some names. Here, “a name which can no longer be morphologically analysed into its component parts, is translated into components that may still be analysed by speakers of the target language (an etymological simplification by translation, if you will).” (Nagel 2004: 104) Prominent examples of this translation technique are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwarrowdelf</th>
<th>Zwergenbinge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rivendell</td>
<td>Bruchtal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowfax</td>
<td>Schattenfell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thirdly, Nagel mentions the use of hybrid translation, with names compounded of elements “from more than one national language into one complex term.” (2004: 105) Different forms of hybrid formations are used in the novel, such as combinations of English words with words from other real-life languages, but also combinations of English words with one from Tolkien’s invented languages. In these cases, only the English word is translated into German and compounded with the untranslated second element, according to Tolkien’s wishes (cf. Ibid.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ithilstone</th>
<th>Ithilstein</th>
<th>Ithil is the name of a city in Tolkien’s invented language Sindarin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breehill</td>
<td>Breeberg</td>
<td>‘Bree’ being the Celtic word for ‘hill’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chetwood</td>
<td>Chetwald</td>
<td>‘Chet’ being the Celtic word for ‘wood’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fourth solution to translating names and places that we encounter in the German translation of *The Lord of the Rings*, is adoption, either unchanged adoption or adoption with adaptation(s) to the target language. Direct adoption was only used for monomorphemic names not of (Modern) English origin, for example ‘Ent’, ‘Hobbit’, and all names of Elvish origin. Adoption with graphemic adaptation(s) to the orthography of the target language can be found in names such as ‘orc’, ‘Gamgee’, or ‘Oliphant’, that became ‘Ork’, ‘Gamdschie’, and ‘Olifant’ to adapt their written form to German while retaining the pronunciation as closely as possible (cf. Nagel 2004: 108).

In most cases, Margaret Carroux paid meticulous attention to the translation of names and places and closely followed the suggestions (or rather, rules) of Tolkien’s guide. On several
occasions, however, she departed from Tolkien’s instructions and from the most often used literal translation of names. The German translation of the ‘Shire’ is a prominent example for this. Tolkien’s preference for translating ‘Shire’ was the use of the word ‘Gau’:

Shire, Old English sceār, seems very early to have replaced the ancient German word for a district, found in its oldest form in Gothic gawi, surviving now in Dutch gouw, German Gau […] The Dutsch version used Gouw; Gau seems to me suitable in German, unless its recent use in regional reorganization under Hitler has spoilt this very old word. (in: Nagel 2004: 106)

Being German, Carroux decided that this was indeed so, and felt the urgent need for not using ‘Gau’ in translation for ‘Shire’. Instead, she opted for the more artificial name ‘Auenland’, sacrificing the wealth of associations that are made with the word in the English original.

While there are great differences in style and register between Carroux’s translation and Krege’s translation of The Lord of the Rings, there are only slight differences in naming. Krege has stated:


Thus, the majority of names remained the same for both the first and the second translation of the novel.

5.1.4. The Translation of Poems and Songs in The Fellowship of the Ring

One of the striking features of Tolkien’s work is the large number of verses distributed throughout the text. The embedded songs and poems add to the authenticity of the fantasy world and enhance readers’ immersion, giving even more depth to the story. “The particular use of the verses […] is to characterise a society in which the individual’s relationship to the society and its tradition is through songs rather than history books,” Allan Turner explains in his Translating Tolkien (2005: 155). Thus, in addition to adding depth to the story, the poetry also serves to characterize the individuals and cultures with whom the songs and poems are associated and by whom they are sung:

In Book I the rustic Hobbit songs, with their simple, ordinary subject matter that just hints at higher things, are contrasted with Strider’s much more complex song of Beren and Lúthien, which is intended to reflect the culture of the Elves with its memory stretching back to mythological times, while the metre of the poetry of Rohan, based on Old English models, implicitly underlines the archaic, heroic nature of the society. (Turner 2005: 156)
Most cultures in *The Lord of the Rings* are predominantly oral ones, in which wars and fallen men are immortalized in song, as has been done in our pre-industrial times for example with the *Nibelungenlied* (cf. Turner 2005: 155). The characters are constantly talking about songs and poems, and sometimes important plot details are relayed in verse as well.

The presence of the verses proves to be an additional difficulty for the translator, “since literary translators tend to specialise either in poetry or in prose.” (Turner 2005: 156) Translating even a short poem tends to require a large amount of effort, unproportional to the small space it takes up in the narrative. In the first German translation, this challenge was solved by commissioning a second translator for the translation of the poems and songs, namely the poet Ebba-Margareta von Freymann. The verse translations paid a lot of attention to detail and were well received, since von Freymann attempted to preserve both Tolkien’s verse forms and sound effects, as well as the surface meaning of the poetry as much as possible (cf. Ibid.). The second translation by Krege took over the verse translations from his predecessor largely unchanged (cf. Ibid.).

### 5.1.5. Translation and Tolkien’s Web of Languages

As already mentioned, J.R.R. Tolkien had a passion for inventing languages for his works of fantasy; some of these languages comprise only the necessary words and phrases while others are so elaborately developed, with their own syntax, grammar, and vocabulary, that they can be used in conversation. What makes matter even more complicated for translators, is Tolkien’s claim that it was not himself who had written the novel, but that he has merely found a manuscript (the fictitious *Red Book of Westmarch*) and translated it into English (cf. Dallasera 2010: 21). According to Tolkien in Appendix F (‘On Translation’), the *Red Book* provides a detailed account of the War of the Rings and was written in Westron or the ‘Common Speech’ of Middle-earth in the Third Age (cf. Tolkien 2002: 506). He thus translated the ‘found manuscript’ into modern English, leaving only those languages in their original form that were alien to the Common Speech (cf. Tolkien 2002: 515). In this, Tolkien “considered himself merely a humble sub-creator who re-constructs the lost ales and chronicles of an older age.” (Honegger 2004: 2) As part of this creative project, Tolkien presented a complex pedigree for the major languages of Middle-earth.

Fortunately, Tolkien has provided his readers with an explanation for his web of languages. The languages spoken in Middle-earth beside Westron (Common Speech) are for example the
Elvish languages (Eldarin tongues) Quenya and Sindarin; Rohirric, the language of Rohan; the tongue of Dale; Dwarvish or Khuzdul, the language spoken by dwarves; or the Black Speech, created by Sauron, to name only a few. Westron serves as a lingua franca and equals modern English. We may ask ourselves how this is important for the translation of *The Lord of the Rings*. In any case, translators are expected to leave the words and quotations from the languages alien to the Common Speech unchanged, which is common practice for translators dealing with invented languages in fantasy fiction. Even though translators do not have to face the task of translating the constructed languages, they should still take an interest in them: “since the foundation of Tolkien’s world is basically linguistic, a translator is well advised to take into consideration the linguistic setting as outlined and illustrated by Tolkien himself.” (Honegger 2004: 3)

What does, however, require a translator’s close attention is the translation of Westron and its related languages. Tolkien claimed that he used different styles in order to represent dialectal differences in Westron (cf. Carpenter 2006: 175); hobbits, for example, spoke a more rustic dialect than the people of Gondor or Rohan, whose diction was loftier and more formal (cf. Honegger 2004: 4). “A careful translation into another language must take this difference in tone and register into account and dialectal markers as typical elements of Hobbit speech may be used to achieve this purpose.” (cf. Ibid.) Interestingly, this was one of the major points of critique for Krege’s re-translation of the novel, as discussed in chapter 5.1.2.

5.2. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*

’A letter?’ [...] ’Really, Dumbledore, you think you can explain all this in a letter? These people will never understand him! He’ll be famous – a legend – I wouldn’t be surprised if today was known as Harry Potter Day in future – there will be books written about Harry – every child in our world will know his name!’ (Rowling, 2011: 15; my emphasis)

Professor McGonagall’s prediction at the beginning of Joanne K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* is not far from the truth – in the world of the Muggles (as non-magic people are called in the Harry Potter universe) as well as in our world. The Harry Potter series is a worldwide phenomenon and is relevant in modern culture. The main themes in the first novel, in which 11 year old Harry finds out that he is a wizard and goes to attend the wizarding school of Hogwarts, are the fight good vs. evil as well as growing up and overcoming obstacles. The latter also gives a clue as to the genre of the series: even though the novel incorporates many genres such as children’s book, adventure story, fantasy, mystery, and quest romance (cf.
Heilman 2009: 199 f.), it can also be seen as a Bildungsroman, in which Harry is led to his destiny and matures while passing different tests.

Harry Potter has become more than a series of books for young adults since the first part was published by Bloomsbury in 1997. Worldwide, four hundred fifty million copies of the books are in print. The seventh and last volume of the series, which was published in 2007, sold eleven million copies within the first twenty-four hours of release in the U.S. and the U.K. Worldwide, the books are in print in seventy-three different languages. Next to the books there are video games, movies, sweets, and more than four hundred other Harry Potter products, and the estimated value of the Harry Potter brand is at fifteen billion dollars (cf. Online 9). Harry Potter has become engrained in popular culture and has had a major impact in stimulating the translation of children’s literature from English into other languages (cf. Landers 2001: 108).

Even though read widely by adults as well, the Harry Potter series has always been classified as children’s and young adults’ literature. While most of the translation challenges of translating literature for adults (such as fluency, accuracy, register, etc.) are also present when translating children’s literature, there are additional needs in translating works aimed at children, as Landers points out in Literary Translation (cf. 2001: 106). Those special needs that need to be taken into consideration can be (cf. Landers 2001: 106f.):

- The age-level: “What is right for a ten-year-old will usually be beyond the grasp of a seven-year-old” and translators need to make sure to recreate the right tone and level of vocabulary appropriate for the age group the work is aimed at in the target language. Some publishers even provide a list of ‘suitable' words, and a translator may have to consciously reduce their range of words.
- Appropriate illustrations in picture books or for a book’s title page; sometimes, illustrations from the source culture can be used, other times they will not be fitting for the target culture.
- Issues regarding political correctness can be a major concern, especially in the United States: “Nothing capable of offending any racial, religious, or ethnic group can be included, and gender bias is also an issue. […]Sexuality in any form is a no-no. Death and illness must be handled with extreme care. Family strife and divorce are touchy subjects.”
Some of these points mentioned by Landers are of course more marketing concerns than translational issues; however, translators still need to be aware of these possible pitfalls (cf. Landers 2001: 107).

All parts of the Harry Potter series were published by Carlsen Verlag and translated by Klaus Fritz. Fritz did not study English or Translation Studies, but had translated books (mostly non-fiction) before being commissioned by Carlsen with the translation of the first volume of the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (cf. Online 10). Already back then, the translation had to be done under time pressure and as quickly as possible. In a 2003 interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* about his work (cf. Online 10), Fritz says that he and everyone else at Carlsen was flying blind prior to the publication of the German translation of the first part. No one knew what to expect in the beginning, no one knew how big the phenomenon ‘Harry Potter’ would become. Often, decisions had to be made in translation, that had far-reaching consequences in later volumes of the series and, most importantly, that had to be kept consistent. The biggest translation challenge for Fritz was relating J.K. Rowling’s dry and sometimes drastic humor appropriately, as well as her many jests with inventing new words, alliterations, and telling names. Fritz thinks it was an advantage that these had to be translated while he was still in blind flight; this way he was able to translate them more playfully and unselfconsciously, e.g. ‘Trolltreppe’ for ‘escapator’ or ‘Irrwicht’ for ‘boggart’. It also helped him make the (some call it brave) decision of leaving most proper names in their English form, if possible, while translating the telling names used for magical creatures and objects into German. It was always Fritz’ goal to produce a German translation that is just as fluent and effective as the original text, which for him meant to sometimes choose the more fitting word in translation rather than the more correct word.

### 5.2.1. Transferring Rowling’s Universe to another Culture

Compared to the other works analyzed, cultural transfer in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* stands out because the novel does not take place in a confined world clearly marked as different from our own, but takes place both in the ‘real’ world – the reader’s world – and the magical world that is still in Europe, more specifically, the United Kingdom (as opposed to Tolkien’s Middle-earth or Martin’s Westeros and Essos). As mentioned in chapter 4.2.1. on cultural transfer, works of fantasy fiction are special in that they have a foreignizing effect both on the readers of the source text culture and the readers of the target culture. In the cases of Tolkien’s and Martin’s novels, the text world does not correspond with source culture reality,
neither does it correspond to any of the target culture realities for whom the novels are translated. Therefore, the culture of the secondary fantasy world is at approximately an equal distance to both groups of readers – the authors have to explicitly explain the rules and customs that govern their world, which benefits the translation process. In the Harry Potter series, the majority of the plot takes place in the magical wizarding world, which is also governed by its very own rules. However, the cultural setting is still very British, and reminiscent of English boarding school adventure novels for children and young adults. The text also contains a large number of cultural terms such as food terms, proper names, terms from the English boarding school system, currency, and measurement system, traditional celebrations and holidays, and idiomatic expressions. Naturally, this results in information gaps for the readers from other cultural backgrounds, who are not as accustomed to British culture and language as, say, a reader from London would be.

Since international readers could be assumed to be unfamiliar with many nuances of British culture in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, careful and creative translating was required. Even more so, the main target group were children and young adults, who, according to Landers, “are less likely than adults to find attraction in the customs of other cultures. [They] are most comfortable with the familiar, and adaptations may have to be made if the goal is commercial success.” (2001: 108) Therefore it can be necessary for the translator to exercise much greater freedom in the translation of a text for a younger audience. What is important in the translation issue of cultural transfer, is the concept of ‘culture-specific items’ (CSI), which was coined by Javier Franco Aixelà in his 1996 essay. Franco Aixelà defines CSI as follows: CSIs are “those textually actualised items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the non-existence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text.” (1996: 58) CSIs are always a challenge for the translator, as they fulfill a certain function in the text and are perceived differently by the text’s source and target culture. Franco Aixelà notes:

> Within the text, the treatment of a CSI also depends on the textual function it plays in the source text, as well as its situation within it. The function of the translated item in the target text need not, obviously, be the same as in the original (beginning with the possibility of deletion), but there is a tendency that way, and the margin of freedom enjoyed by the translator will no doubt be influenced by it, mostly due to reasons involving the credibility and internal coherence of the translation. (1996:69)
In order to translate CSIs accordingly, scholars have suggested various methods to compensate for the lack of equivalence. Newmark (1988), for example, proposes the following translation procedures for culture-specific items: loan translation or calque, transference, use of a cultural equivalent, neutralization, literal translation, accepted standard/recognized translation, naturalization, addition/paraphrase, or deletion (cf. 1988: 145). In translation practice it is likely that a translator will have to adopt different strategies for translating culture-specific items in one text, or even combine them when dealing with one particular term.

The biggest challenge with regard to cultural transfer in the Harry Potter series might be the clashing needs of creating a convincing and authentic British background to the story, while at the same time making this background accessible for the young readers from another culture. The following examples show the different translation techniques Klaus Fritz resorted to when translating culture-specific items:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Text</th>
<th>Target Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dudley had a place at Uncle Vernon’s old school, Smeltings. [...] Harry, on</td>
<td>Dudley hatte einen Platz an Onkel Vernons alter Schule, Smeltings. [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the other hand, was going to Stonewall High, the local comprehensive. (28)</td>
<td>Harry dagegen kam in die Stonewall High School, die Gesamtschule in der</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[...]</td>
<td>Nachbarschaft. (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smelting boys wore marron tailcoats, orange knickerbockers and flat straw</td>
<td>Die Jungen in Smeltings trugen kastanienbraune Fräcke, orangefarbene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hats called boaters. (29)</td>
<td>Knickerbocker-Hosen und flache Strohhüte, die sie Kreissägen nannten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(39)</td>
<td>(58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2                                                                 | 2                                                                 |
| ‘But yeh must know about yer mum and dad,’ he said. [...]           | ‘Aber du must doch von Mum und Dad wissen’, sagte er. [...] |
| ‘What? My – my mum and dad weren’t famous, were they?’               | ‘Was? Mum und Dad waren doch nicht berühmt!’ |
| [...]                                                                 | [...]                                                             |
| ‘Stop right there, sir! [...]’ (41f.)                                | ‘Hören Sie sofort auf, Sir! [...]’ (58)                             |

| 3                                                                 | 3                                                                 |
| ‘So what is Quidditch?’                                              | ‘Also was ist jetzt Quidditch?’}
‘It’s our sport. Wizard sport. [...]’
‘And what are Slytherin and Hufflepuff?’
‘School houses. There’s four.’ (61)

Harry had never in his life had such a Christmas dinner. A hundred fat, roast turkeys, mountains of roast and boiled potatoes, platters of fat chipolatas, tureens of buttered peas, silver boats of thick, rich gravy and cranberry sauce – and stacks of wizard crackers every few feet along the table. […] Flaming Christmas puddings followed the turkey.

[...]

After a tea of turkey sandwiches, crumpets, trifle, and Christmas cake, everyone felt too full and sleepy to do much before bed [...].
(149f.)

‘Das ist unser Sport. Zauberersport. [...]’
‘Und was sind Slytherin und Hufflepuff?’
‘Schulhäuser. Es gibt vier davon.’ (89)


[...]

(222f.)

In the first part of the first example, the name of an institution (Smeltings) is transferred from English into German without alteration or additional information. The method for translating the CSI chosen here is that of ‘transference’ (cf. Newmark 1988: 81). In the second part of the example, the school Harry is meant to attend is explained in more detail, in order to give the readers from the German cultural background needed information about the British school system. While British readers will know that what is meant by “comprehensive” is a secondary state school that takes all students and does not select on the basis of their academic achievement, the German translator had to translate this with “Gesamtschule,” adding “School” to the original’s “Stonewall High” to make it even more intelligible for the German target audience. However, he still chose to keep the English flavor by not translating the terms literally, which would have perhaps resulted in ‘die örtliche Steinmauer Gesamtschule’, and would have been a nonsensical domestication. The translation techniques used here are on the one hand ‘transference’ (Stonewall – Stonewall), ‘addition’ (Stonewall High – Stonewall High.
School), and ‘recognized translation’ (Gesamtschule is the generally accepted translation for comprehensive school). The CSI translation techniques in the third part of example one are also a combination of different methods: while the translator kept the culture-specific term “knickerbockers” (trousers particularly popular in English-speaking countries in the 20th century), he complemented it with the German “-Hosen”, since knickerbockers are not very well known in the German culture, at least not under this term. It was also necessary to add information about the hats, since the recognized term “Kreissägen” for “boaters” is also likely not known to a majority of the German-speaking audience. If it had been, the additional information “flache Strohhüte” could have been omitted. Therefore, this example again combines the methods of ‘transference’ (knickerbocker – Knickerbocker), ‘addition’ (knickerbockers – Knickerbocker-Hosen), and ‘recognized translation’ (boaters – Kreissägen).

Example two shows other instances of ‘transference’ that were kept consistent throughout the novel; instead of translating ‘mum’, ‘dad’, and ‘sir’ into the common German ‘Mama’, ‘Papa’ and ‘der Herr’, keeping the original terms from English again contributes to the exotic flavor, making the reader of the German translation aware of the cultural context of the story.

In the third and next example it becomes evident that source and target text readers are at almost the same cultural distance to the text in all things magical. While German readers might need more information on terms specific to British culture, both groups of readers can relate to Harry in that they are also new to the world of wizards and witches, and slowly have to learn about the rules and customs. This also benefits the translator; once one has decided on whether to translate invented words such as ‘Quidditch’, ‘Hufflepuff’, or ‘Slytherin’, they can continue to translate close to the target text, including the explanations given in the original, and without worrying about having to add context for the target text reader.

Food and traditional dishes are usually taken for granted and seen as understood by people from the culture where they are common; there can, however, be quite some cultural differences in cuisine, and translating food names can be problematic. We can see this in the fourth example, where the translator has tried to keep an English flavor while at the same time making it intelligible for the German reader what it is that Harry is eating at the Hogwarts Christmas dinner. It is also in this passage, where Fritz has taken quite a few liberties in translation, either consciously or unintentionally. ‘Cranberries’ and ‘Preiselbeeren’, for example, are two different types of fruits, and the ‘flaming’ before ‘Christmas pudding’ refers to the fact that the desert is flambéed, not colorful (‘farbenfroh’). While the translator kept some of the culturally specific
dishes (e.g. Christmas pudding – Plumpudding), he translated others with a cultural equivalent (chipolatas – Cocktailwürstchen) for easier understanding. What is, however, an obvious translation error, is the beginning of the second part of the quote: ‘after a tea of’ was translated into ‘nach dem Tee’. In this context, when Harry and his friends are eating sandwiches before going to bed, the British ‘tea’ clearly refers to dinner, not to drinking tea, as the German version suggests. It is also interesting how in this passage some culture-specific words were translated literally from English into German (Christmas cake – Weihnachtskuchen) while others were transferred into something more relatable for the German readers (turkey sandwiches – Brot mit kaltem Braten), seemingly without any tangible system. This lack of consistency with regard to translation methods has also been one of the points of critique for Fritz’ translations of the Harry Potter series.

5.2.2. The Translation of Names and Places in Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone

For her novels, Rowling has invented many names and terms unknown in the English and German language; these terms sometimes have origins in other languages (mainly Latin) and are composed in a very playful manner. They can be names for:
- Groups of people, e.g. Muggle, Animagus, Squib, Mudblood;
- Magical creatures, e.g. Veela, blast-ended screwts;
- Potions and their ingredients, e.g. bicorn horn, boomslang skin, polyjuice potion;
- Magical objects, e.g. portkey, put-outer, sneakoscope, or the names for the balls used in Quidditch (snitch, bludger, quaffle);
- Locations, e.g. Knockturn Alley, Diagon Alley, Come and Go Room; and
- Spells, e.g. accio, alohomora, expelliarmus, etc.

It can be said that proper names, the names of individual characters and places were chosen with much attention to detail in the original Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone. Some stem from other works of literature, others were invented or taken from real people in history or in Greek or Roman mythology. Since Rowling worked with alliterations, anagrams, palindromes, and acronyms, many names also worked on a phonetic level (cf. Pieringer & Pieringer 2012: 29f.). This is one of the reasons why translating proper names in Harry Potter was very challenging for the translator, and Fritz worked with different translation strategies, mixing domesticating and foreignizing translations.
Fritz’ main strategy in the translation of proper names in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* has already been mentioned above. He left most English names in their original form while translating the very telling names of magical creatures and objects into equally telling names in German. Since he was working under time pressure, it was not always possible for him to do intensive research on the names in the source text, which is likely why some mistakes occurred and why some names were changed in later editions of the novel (e.g. the character Sirius Black was named Sirius Schwarz in German in the first edition of the novel; this was later revised and his name changed back to Sirius Black). In general, the following translation strategies have been used for proper names of characters and places in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Text</th>
<th>Target Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Potter</td>
<td>Harry Potter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Weasley</td>
<td>Ron Weasley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albus Dumbledore</td>
<td>Albus Dumbledore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogwarts</td>
<td>Hogwarts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal Translation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astronomy tower</td>
<td>Astronomieturm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Who Must Not Be Named</td>
<td>Er-dessen-Name-nicht-genannt-werden-darf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform nine and three-quarters</td>
<td>Gleis neundreiviertel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muggle</td>
<td>Muggel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermione Granger</td>
<td>Hermine Granger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirror of Erised</td>
<td>Der Spiegel Nerhegeb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagon Alley</td>
<td>Winkelgasse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Leaky Cauldron</td>
<td>Zum tropfenden Kessel (literal translation+substitution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sorting Hat</td>
<td>Der Sprechende Hut (literal translation+substitution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of a Cultural Equivalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Room</td>
<td>Gemeinschaftsraum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 The categorization is inspired by Newmark’s translation strategies for culture-specific items (1988)
Some translation errors that occurred were for example with translation of ‘vault seven hundred and thirteen’ into ‘Verlies siebenhundertundneunzehn’, or the name of ‘Newt Scamander’ that became ‘Lurch Scamander’. In general, it can be said that the translator Klaus Fritz found creative solutions for the difficult translation of proper names in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, he has, however, been criticized for the lack of consistency, as some names are transferred from the original while others are translated literally for no apparent reason (cf. Pieringer & Pieringer 2012: 11f.).

### 5.2.3. The Translation of Language Varieties in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*

In addition to giving her story depth by inventing a host of creative names, spells, and magical beings, Rowling also characterized her protagonists through the way they speak: professors’s way of speaking differs from the students’, house-elves, who are first introduced in the second part of the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, speak English with an incorrect grammar, and the visiting students from other wizarding schools who are part of the plot in the fourth volume, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, speak English with a distinct French and Eastern-European accent. In dialogue, Rowling makes all these different speech styles visible in her story. The characters thus become more authentic and credible.

In the first part of the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, it is especially Hogwarts’s gamekeeper and Harry’s friend, the semi-giant Rubeus Hagrid, whose specific speech pattern attracts the reader’s attention. In the original English text, Hagrid speaks in a strong dialect/idiolect that cannot be clearly marked with regard to the region it stems from. Rowling did not follow strict conventions in writing Hagrid’s speech, but there are still patterns to his slang that become obvious in the no-standard spelling Rowling uses for Hagrid’s dialogue. On a website for Harry Potter fans interested in writing fan fiction story, the following advice is given: “If one wishes to be true to the way Hagrid was written in canon, some adjustments to spelling need to be made. A study of Hagrid's speech patterns in HBP reveals some general rules to follow when attempting to reproduce canon-accurate dialogue for him.” (Online 11) These rules are, for example, to drop the final ‘g’ in ‘-ing’ (e.g. bein’, goin’), to drop the final ‘t’ after a consonant and contractions but leave it after a vowel (e.g. firs’, wan’, didn’, shouldn’, but let, eat), to contract common expressions (e.g. dunno, lemme, gotta, outta), and to make changes to common words by dropping consonants or moving vowels (e.g. to – ter, for – fer, and – an’, them – ‘em, you/your – yeh/yer, my/myself – me/meself, of – o’, him – ‘im, etc.). These characteristics are the most salient features of Hagrid’s idiolect/dialect, and
in translation, the decision had to be made whether some way can be found to represent these speech patterns in the target language or whether to ignore them and depict the character without an indication of the dialect/idiolect. In the German translation, Fritz made the decision of almost completely omitting Hagrid’s unusual speech pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Text</th>
<th>Target Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Borrowed it, Professor Dumbledore, sir,’ [...]. ‘Young Sirius Black leant it me. I’ve got him, sir.’</td>
<td>‘Hab es geborgt, Professor Dumbledore, Sir’ [...]. ‘Der junge Sirius Black hat es mir geliehen. Ich hab ihn, Sir.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘No, sir – house was almost destroyed but I got him out all right before the Muggles started swarmin’ around. He fell asleep as we was flyin’ over Bristol.’ (16)</td>
<td>‘Nein, Sir – das Haus war fast zerstört, aber ich hab ihn gerade noch herausholen können, bevor die Muggel angeschwirrt kamen. Er ist eingeschlafen, als wir über Bristol flogen.’ (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Las’ time I saw you, you was only a baby,‘ said the giant. ‘Yeh look a lot like yer dad, but yeh’ve got yer mum’s eyes.’</td>
<td>‘Letztes Mal, als ich dich gesehen hab, warst du noch’n Baby’, sagte der Riese. ‘Du siehst deinem Vater mächtig ähnlich, aber die Augen hast du von deiner Mum.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Anyway – Harry, […] a very happy birthday to yeh. Got summat fer yeh here – I mighta sat on it at some point, but it’ll taste all right.’ (39f.)</td>
<td>‘Dir jedenfalls, Harry, […] einen sehr herzlichen Glückwunsch zum Geburtstag. Hab hier was für dich – vielleicht hab ich zwischendurch mal draufgesessen, aber er schmeckt sicher noch gut.’ (55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Jus’ lookin […]. An’ what’re you lot up ter?’</td>
<td>‘Nur mal schauen […]. Und wonach schaut ihr denn?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Listen – come an’ see me later, I’m not promisin’ I’ll tell yeh anythin’, mind, but don’ go rabbitin’ about it in here, students aren’ s’posed ter know. They’ll think I’ve told yeh – ‘ (168)</td>
<td>‘Hört mal, kommt später rüber zu mir, ich verspreche euch zwar nicht, dass ich irgendwas erzähle, aber quasselt bloß nicht hier drin rum, die Schüler sollen’s nämlich nicht wissen. Nachher heißt’s noch, ich hätt’s euch gesagt.’ (251)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The way Hagrid speaks distinguishes him from other Hogwarts teachers who speak standard British English; Hagrid speaks English with a strong accent and deviant grammar, which can be linked to his identity as a semi-giant and his marginal and uneducated social status – as the gamekeeper, he lives in a cabin on the grounds, not in the castle, and as Harry learns in the second volume, he was expelled from school during his time as a student at Hogwarts. Therefore, Hagrid’s idiolect at the same time tells the reader about the character’s social and class background (giants are not very popular with the general wizarding population), but also about his current social status within the story in relation to the other teachers at Hogwarts. Hagrid’s speech in the translation by Fritz, on the other hand, is much more into standard German: the grammar is correct, there is very little elision of consonants, and barely any words are combined; this difference in speech leaves the reader with an information gap about the character. By raising Hagrid’s register and standardizing his speech, unique characteristics and personality traits that readers of the source text associate with the character are lost in translation.

5.3. A Song of Ice and Fire: A Game of Thrones

An uncomfortable chair, forged out of swords into a hard seat surrounded by sharp blades and jagged edges, is the object of desire in George R.R. Martin’s epic fantasy fiction series *A Song of Ice and Fire* and led to the publication of (to date) five volumes that were published between 1996 and 2011. In the epic fantasy saga, the death of King Robert Baratheon triggers a fight for the Iron Throne, and it is this fight, which is called the Game of Thrones, that furthers the story of the books. In recent years, this fight for the Iron Throne has spread across several different media platforms, rapidly gaining popularity: the TV series launched in 2011, video and online games have been released as well as graphic novels, board and card games, and several online websites based on the books. There are numerous branded merchandise products available as well as a role-playing game and costumes.

No matter the stance one takes when it comes to *A Song of Ice and Fire*, one cannot help but acknowledge the work’s detailed descriptions and complex plot lines. Martin, who was born in New Jersey in 1948, turned to writing fantasy out of frustration that most of the scripts he wrote for television as a screenwriter were turned down or had to be cut because they were too long, or realizing them would have been too expensive (cf. Howden 2012: 63). According to Martin,

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10 An example of what media scholar Henry Jenkins calls ‘spreadable’ content (cf. 2013: 3). His catch phrase ‘spreadability’ applies to works that are easily transferable to other media platforms, which has become more and more important throughout the last decade for the success of texts that are aimed at a mass audience.
there were always too many characters and too complex story lines, so he decided to stop writing screenplays and instead “write a story that’s going to be as gigantic a story as I want. I’m going to have hundreds of characters, gigantic battles, magnificent castles and vistas; all the things I couldn’t do in television, I’m going to do in these books, and I hope people like it.” (Howden 2012: 63) At this point, Martin, who has since been called the “reigning laureate of Fantasy Fiction,” (Online 5) started writing what would eventually become *A Game of Thrones*. The author kept true to his word; the five parts of the series that have been published to date amount to the impressive number of 5059 pages (Bantam paperback editions), not counting the numerous pages of appendices added to each volume which give the reader an overview over the story’s different families and the associated characters.

As mentioned, the transmedial world of Martin’s series is fleshed out in much detail, and was inspired by Hadrian’s Wall, Medievalism, and the Wars of the Roses (cf. Howden 2012: 174ff.). After growing tired of fantasy novels that seemed like Tolkien imitators writing ‘Disneyland Middle Ages’ to him, Martin said he wanted to “capture these two threads to get some of the magic and the wonder and imagination of fantasy and combine it with some of the grittiness and realism and complexity of historical fiction.” (Howden 2012: 174)

The first part of the series, *A Game of Thrones*, was published in 1996. It is told from various third-person points of view that are in each case limited to the geographical setting the characters find themselves in. For example, for the majority of the novel, the chapters about the situation on the Wall surrounding the Night’s Watch are told by Jon Snow in the continent Westeros, just as Daenerys Targaryen serves as the focalizer for the plot line taking place on the continent of Essos. In the following parts of the series, some viewpoint characters are being omitted while others are added.

The bestselling books of the series *A Song of Ice and Fire* have spawned a dedicated fan base over the last years, and the endless thirst of fans for new information about the realm they already know so well. Therefore, next to spreading the story across as many media platforms as possible, translations into other languages simply seemed like an obvious step in order to broaden the audience. *A Game of Thrones* was published by Blanvalet for the German-speaking market in two parts, *Die Herren von Winterfell* (1997) and *Das Erbe von Winterfell* (1998). The translator for these two parts was Jörn Ingwersen, for all following books Andreas Helweg. In 2010, Blanvalet published a new edition, revised by translators Sigrun Zühlke and Thomas Gießl.
5.3.1. The Translation of Tone in *A Game of Thrones*

As explained in chapter 4.2.2.3., the general tone of a work can be seen as the reflection of a writer’s attitude, the mood and moral outlook of his or her work. As opposed to Tolkien’s and Rowling’s novels, *A Song of Ice and Fire* is emphatically fantasy fiction for grownups, and the violence and sex scenes abound and are very explicit. While other works of fantasy still have at least some aspect of idyll, and of a simpler world prior to industrialization, Martin’s characters fight for their lives on a daily basis, and for the poor there is mainly dirt, hunger and fear while the powerful are constantly struggling to keep or expand their power, no matter the means. In *A Song of Ice and Fire*, the story does not boil down to a simple ‘good versus evil’; characters are morally complex and ambiguous, and even the best can be ruthless. “There are no Aragorns and Gandalfs, with their uncompromised nobility,” as John Mullan notes in his 2015 article for *The Guardian*. He states that:

JRR Tolkien, who may not have invented AU [alternative universe] fantasy but certainly was its most influential exemplar, gave weight to his imagined world with invented languages, legends, genealogies, poetry. Martin provides some of this, but devotes most of his energies to convincing the reader of the entirely human fears and ambitions of his leading characters. Tolkien gave us hobbits, orcs, elves and dwarves. Martin deals in men and women. (Online 5)

Another interesting aspect that sets Martin’s novels apart from other works of the genre and has an influence on the novel’s general tone is the fact that magic is more limited. Yes, the prologue introduces the reader to the undead ‘Others’, but after that, there are hardly any instances that point to the supernatural in the first part of the series, *A Game of Thrones*. However, when three dragons are born on the very last page of the novel, “the characters accept their existence without surprise.” (Ibid.) The reduction of all things magical to a minimum perhaps also forces the reader to take Martin’s world more seriously than other works of fantasy fiction, as does the detailed and abundant depiction of violence and the promise of bad things to come – ‘Winter is coming’ is a phrase uttered repeatedly be different protagonists. The translator’s detection and reconstruction of this general gloominess is crucial in creating a translated text that has the same effect and overall feeling on the German-speaking reader than on the English-speaking reader.

With a text as explicit as Martin’s series, it is also important that the translator does not apply his or her own moral standards to the text. The following example is one of the scenes happening at Daenerys Targaryen’s wedding to Khal Drogo, the leader of the Dothraki, a race of nomadic horse-mounted warriors. At the time of the wedding, Daenerys is thirteen years old, and she is forced to marry the older Drogo by her brother Viserys, who uses his sister as a pawn in his scheme to conquer the Iron Throne.
Drums were beating as some of the women danced for the khal. Drogo watched without expression, but his eyes followed their movements [...]. The warriors were watching too. One of them finally stepped into the circle, grabbed a dancer by the arm, pushed her down on the ground, and mounted her right there, as a stallion mounts a mare. Illyrio had told her that might happen. “The Dothraki mate like the animals in their herds. There is no privacy in a khalasar, and they do not understand sin or shame as we do.” Dany looked away from the coupling, frightened when she realized what was happening, but a second warrior stepped forward, and a third, and soon there was no way to avert her eyes. Then two men seized the same woman. She heard a shout, saw a shove, and in the blink of an eye the arakhs were out, long razor-sharp blades, half sword and half scythe. A dance of death began as the warriors circled and slashed, leaping toward each other, whirling the blades around their heads, shrieking insults at each clash. No one made a move to interfere. It ended as quickly as it began. The arakhs shivered together faster than Dany could follow, one man missed a step, the other swung his blade in a flat arc. Steel bit into flesh just above the Dothraki’s waist, and opened him from back bone to belly button, spilling his entrails into the dust. As the loser
died, the winner took hold of the nearest woman - not even the one they had been quarreling over - and had her there and then. Slaves carried off the body, and the dancing resumed. Magister Illyrio had warned Dany about this too. "A Dothraki wedding without at least three deaths is deemed a dull affair," he had said. Her wedding must have been especially blessed; before the day was over, a dozen man had died. (102f.)


This is only one of the instances where Martin does not mince his words. His characters use strong coarse language, there is graphic description of sex and violence, and rape, murder, incest, or child abuse are mentioned openly. This material can of course shock or offend a part of the readership. In *Literary Translation*, Landers notes that when dealing with a text like that, the translator has two options: tell the publisher or author that they are unwilling to translate this sort of text or translate it as conscientiously as any other text (cf. 2001: 151).

What you cannot do is apply your own standards of decency and morality, or those of any hypothetical audience, to the task. This would be as unjustifiable as ‘improving’ the SL text. Bowdlerization as a common approach to ‘improper’ texts may be a thing of the past, thankfully, but the danger of self-censorship still exists. A prissy or sanctimonious translator, or an unscrupulous one, can totally skew the TL reader’s perception of a writer; as translators we do not have that right. (Ibid.)

Thankfully, the translator of Martin’s series has taken this advice to heart, and the translation’s language is as frank and uncompromising as Martin’s original.
5.3.2. The Translation of Names and Places in *A Game of Thrones*

As mentioned before, it is a typical feature of works of fantasy fiction to star characters with unusual and telling names and introduce place names that immediately evoke a picture in the reader’s mind and create an atmosphere. Martin’s series *A Song of Ice and Fire* is no exception in this regard. The translator Jörn Ingwersen faced the decision between transferring the names as they appear in the original text and translating them into German or finding a suitable equivalent that carries the same subtle meaning. While the original German translation of *A Game of Thrones* adopted the English original names to a large extent, the revised translation from 2010 used a different approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Text</th>
<th>Target Text</th>
<th>Revised Target Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ser Waymar</td>
<td>Ser Waymar</td>
<td>Ser Weymar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Black</td>
<td>Castle Black</td>
<td>Schwarze Festung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Cerwyn</td>
<td>Lord Cerwyn</td>
<td>Lord Cerwyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Landing</td>
<td>King’s Landing</td>
<td>Königsmund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mance Rayder</td>
<td>Mance Rayder</td>
<td>Manke Rayder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Nan</td>
<td>Old Nan</td>
<td>Alte Nan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackwater</td>
<td>Blackwater</td>
<td>Schwarzwasser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theon Greyjoy</td>
<td>Theon Greyjoy</td>
<td>Theon Graufreund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maester Aemon</td>
<td>Maester Aemon</td>
<td>Maester Aemon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ser Alliser Thorne</td>
<td>Ser Alliser Thorne</td>
<td>Ser Allisar Thorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haunted Forest</td>
<td>Verwunschener Wald</td>
<td>Verfluchter Wald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night’s Watch</td>
<td>Nachtwache</td>
<td>Nachtwache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winterfell</td>
<td>Winterfell</td>
<td>Winterfell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casterly Rock</td>
<td>Casterly Rock</td>
<td>Casterlystein</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is striking is that the revised translation uses a mix of translation strategies for names. While a majority of names have been translated into German literally (Castle Black – Schwarze Festung), others have remained English (Maester Aemon – Maester Aemon), and others still have become German-English hybrids and partial translations (Old Nan – alte Nan). In some names, only one or two letters were changed to make the name look more natural and easier to read and/or pronounce for the German reader (Ser Waymar – Ser Weymar). The revised translation also seized opportunities for correcting translation errors: while ‘haunted forest’ evokes threatening and gloomy associations, ‘verwunschener Wald’ sounds more like part of a
Grimm’s fairy tale; this was later altered, and ‘verfluchter Wald’ comes closer in creating the same associations in the target text reader as in the source text reader.

While Ingwersen’s translation tends towards foreignizing translation and keeps the names in English, confronting German target text readers with the ‘other’ of Martin’s universe, the revised text contains quite literal translations for proper names and places with the presumable goal of creating a more fluent and transparent text for the target audience, preferring the technique of domesticating translation (cf. Reisenhofer 2015: 83ff.). It must be pointed out, however, that the revised translation is not consistent in the translation of names and places. Compare, for example the following castles who have all been translated with a different technique: Castle Black – Schwarze Festung (literal translation), Casterly Rock – Casterlystein (partial translation), and Winterfell – Winterfell (transference). While Ser Waymar becomes Ser Weymar, Mance Rayder becomes Manke Rayder, as opposed to Mance Reyder, which would have been in line with making the names look more ‘German.’ The translation of Mance into Manke produces a name that sounds completely different from its English original. Lacking a consistent concept and strategy for the translation of names and places can lead to an interruption of the reading flow; this again can influence the effect the text has on the target reader, since consistency with the alternate universe is especially important in fantasy fiction for reader immersion, as Nina Reisenhofer points out in her master’s thesis A Game of Tones (2015: 25f.).

The revised translation has been criticized for its inconsistency in the translation of names, which sometimes even results in a complete change of meaning: while the city of ‘King’s Landing’ marks the place where the first king of the Seven Kingdoms landed ages ago, the German translation ‘Königsmund’ completely misses this piece of information, instead adding the information that the city lies at the mouth of a river. A telling name thus becomes a random name, which interferes with the text’s meaning and the author’s intention. The major name changes must have been especially strange to readers who started reading the series in German and suddenly had to get used to utterly different names used in the editions printed after 2010.

5.3.3. A Game of Thrones as an Example for Misleading Title Translation

As already mentioned in chapter 4.2.7., finding the fitting translation for a novel’s title is crucial, because it conveys the first impression of the work. A badly chosen title can also falsify readers’ expectations and their perception of the books’ theme, which is what happened in the
translation of *A Game of Thrones*. George R.R. Martin’s series is called *A Song of Ice and Fire*, which was translated very literally into German as *Das Lied von Eis und Feuer*. To date, the series has been published by three different publishers, all with the translation by Jörn Ingwersen:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher: Bantam Spectra</th>
<th>Publisher: Blanvalet (Paperback edition, splits the English volumes into half for reasons of brevity)</th>
<th>Publisher: Ulisses Medien und Spiel Distribution (1000 volume limited hardcover edition)</th>
<th>Penhaligon (Hardcover edition)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Until the 2016 publication of the Penghalion hardcover editions, the books by Blanvalet used to be the more widespread one. Ulisses is the only publisher that keeps close to the originals’ titles and translates them as directly as possible into German. It can be assumed that the Penghalion edition makes use of the TV series’ fame that is based on the books, which is also
called *Game of Thrones*, and uses it for easier recognition. The biggest changes with regard to title have been made in the Blanvalet edition.

The most striking title deviation in the Blanvalet edition of *A Song of Ice and Fire* appears in *Die Herren von Winterfell* and *Das Erbe von Winterfell*. ‘Winterfell’ is the ancestral castle and seat of power of House Stark in the North of the Seven Kingdoms, close to the Wall that separates and guards the Kingdoms from the land and Wildlings beyond the Wall. The mention of ‘Winterfell’ in the titles of the first two volumes automatically shifts the reading focus of the German audience on the Stark family, who live in Winterfell. The Stark’s story is indeed part of the novel, but since Martin’s alternative universe is told by multiple focalizers and from different viewpoints, the focus shifts on other families and houses frequently, and parallel plots are just as important as the Stark family’s story line. From the original’s title, the source text audience, on the other hand, immediately understands that the focus of the novel is on the beginning to the long fight surrounding the Iron Throne, thus *A Game of Thrones*. Throughout the novels, characters also continuously refer to this game of thrones, to this power struggle between different houses in the kingdom. All this does not and cannot occur to the reader of the German title, as the German translation of the title is simply misleading.

### 6. Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, it was the goal of this thesis to investigate the problems and challenges translators face when translating fantasy fiction from English into German. The challenges that have been identified are problems with regard to cultural transfer, i.e. making the source text culture graspable for the target text audience; the translation of style, register, tone, and language varieties; the translation of proper names and places; recreating songs and poems in another language; transferring invented fantasy languages; finding a fitting translation for a work’s title; and the translator’s relationship with the source text author, which can be fruitful as well as limiting.

In addition to identifying the seven translational challenges mentioned, the thesis has analyzed the means individual translators have found for solving them. On the basis of three novels of fantasy fiction, namely J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, Joanne K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, and George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire: A Game of Thrones*, the thesis has taken a closer look at the extent to which the different German translators have altered certain aspects of the source text, and at the
resulting effect on the translation and target reader. Since works of fantasy fiction generally abound with newly invented names, places, and cultural concepts, translating these novels requires a high degree of creativity. The analysis has shown that in all translations examined, translators have taken many liberties in the creation of the target text, with regards to both content and style. In some instances, this resulted in a change of meaning, which also has an influence on the text’s effect on the target reader. The only exception is Margaret Carroux’s German translation of *The Lord of the Rings*. This translation is very close to its source text, since Carroux closely followed the translation rules put forward by Tolkien. At the same time, this has restricted her in translating the text as freely as she saw fit. While the other translators, Wolfgang Krege, Klaus Fritz, and Jörn Ingwersen, might have taken translational decisions that are at times questionable, they still were able to translate freely and without restrictions.

The process of writing this thesis has revealed that there is a substantial amount of secondary literature on Tolkien and his *The Lord of the Rings*, while there has been less academic research on Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, and even fewer on Martin’s series *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Still, these works of fantasy fiction are more than worth to be investigated, and their alternative universes have a lot to offer for literary scholars. One thing is for certain: there is something timeless about stories of fantasy fiction, from the oral myths and legends that have always shaped and influenced cultures to the genre’s sudden rise in the twentieth century. Today, works of fantasy entertain and inspire mass-followings of fans, and are beloved by old and young audiences around the world. In our post-Babel world, this entails that “the task of the translator is […] as endless as that of the reader.” (Wright 2016: 163)
7. Bibliography

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**Secondary Literature**


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- **Online 8:**
- **Online 9:**
- **Online 10:**
- **Online 11:**
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