*J.K. Rowling (cover TIME magazine)*

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# THE NAMES IN HARRY POTTER

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## Abstract

This article discusses the translation of some of the names in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter books into five languages. It is argued that these names are found in different dimensions, viz. (a) a British one where the author addresses a British audience, (b) the translator's perception and interpretation of this British universe, and (c) one in which readers respond to the realisations of the names in the target culture. The names are loosely divided into four categories. The first concerns the main characters, for which there is virtually only direct transfer, and the second concerns English student names that present few problems. The third comprises characters connected with the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and the last group comprises names of other characters, including some descriptive names. The article notes that translators were obliged to use the names of the main characters from the British original in order to promote the sale of merchandise. It is concluded (a) that the main characters' 'Britishness' is realised only as British names without any overtones in translation, (b) that even with different target languages, it is possible to document that each translator has used individualised and highly different approaches to the translation of the names, and (c) that the author's exploitation of adult Britons' knowledge of English literature and Latin probably elicits a different response from that of readers of translations, whereas the main narrative linearities (e.g. plot, the whole Harry Potter saga) are not affected by the different strategies for translation of names.

## Introduction

J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter books have gained immense popularity, first and foremost among children and juveniles, but they have also captured a sizeable adult audience – and more than a passing eye from the Translation Studies community. The books have given rise to a monumental cult and the contributions by translators are dwarfed by the commentary in books and on websites on Harry Potter. Much material is uncritical if not downright wrong, and one certainly has to tread the territory with care. In this article, we shall confine ourselves to a discussion of the translation of some of the names in the Harry Potter books into five languages - Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, German, and Italian. The books to be discussed have been translated as follows:

// …. 57//

***Table 1***

***The Harry Potter books: English titles, languages, name of translators, and year of publication***[1]

| **British title and year of publication** | **Danish translator Year** | **Swedish translator Year** | **Norwegian translator Year** | **German translator Year** | **Italian translator Year** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (Stone) 1997* | Hanna Lützen 1998 | Lena Fries-Gedin 1999 | Thorstein Bugge Høverstad 1999 | Klaus Fritz 1998 | Marina Astrologo 1998 |
| *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (Chamber) 1998* | Hanna Lützen 1999 | Lena Fries-Gedin 2000 | Thorstein Bugge Høverstad 2000 | Klaus Fritz 1999 | Marina Astrologo 1999 |
| *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (Prisoner) 1999* | Hanna Lützen 1999 | Lena Fries-Gedin 2001 | Thorstein Bugge Høverstad 2000 | Klaus Fritz 1999 | Marina Astrologo 2000 |
| *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (Goblet)* 2000 | Hanna Lützen 2000 | Lena Fries-Gedin 2001 | Thorstein Bugge Høverstad 2001 | Klaus Fritz 2000 | Beatrice Mansini 2001 |

**Harry Potter and the translators**

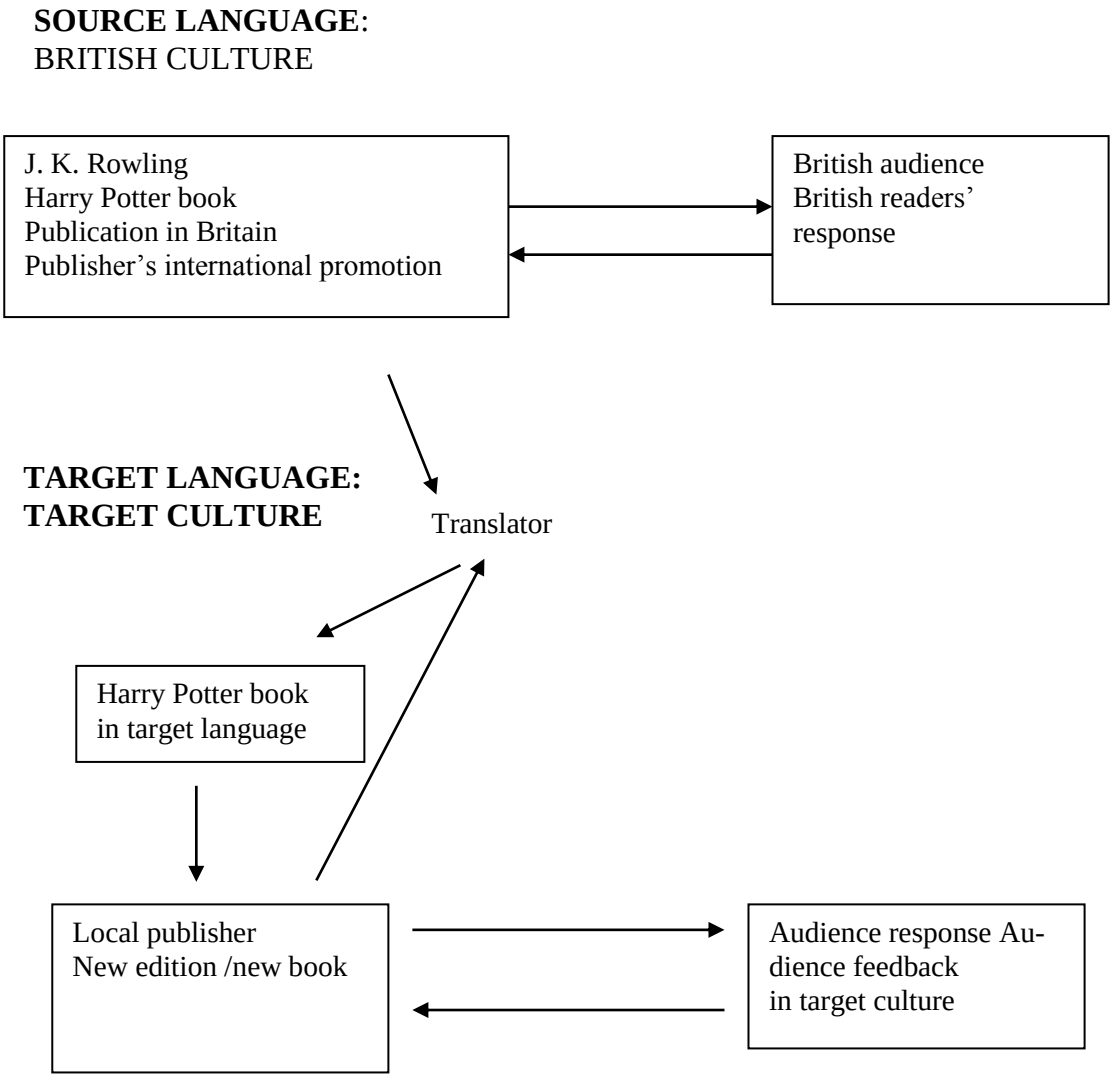
Given the fact that the books have been translated into forty languages, and still counting, in itself would merit attention from translation scholars. The most obvious sign of such interest is that 'The International Federation of Translators' had a round table at which ten translators of the books discussed the translations (www1). Anybody who has read the books in English with an open mind (and some general knowledge) will appreciate that for translators there are many features that pose delightful challenges, ranging from the author's use of linguistic features (e.g. alliteration), via elusive and multiple allusions, to the use of Latin. There are references to British and // ….59// European history, to literature, folklore, tradition, and magic. Small wonder that translators are absorbed with the problems of translation – much as has been the case with Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, but perhaps for other reasons. Rather than trying to cover as many aspects of the translations as possible, we shall look at the translation of some names in five translations and then discuss the issues that they raise and that go far into both translation practice and principles.

**Premises**

In order to make for a cogent discussion, it is useful to state what we are talking about. In order to provide an overview of the components of the main features in the translation of a Harry Potter book, we shall modify an illustration of translations of successful children's books (from Dollerup 2003), which is given on the opposite page.

The books were written by J. K. Rowling who is a British woman. To the best of our knowledge, she was at no stage concerned with translation when she was writing the first volume. Thus, she was writing a book that was primarily for 9-12 year-old British children (Wyler 2003: 6, 10), but one that would also appeal to and be fun to read for adolescents and adults. After the first volume appeared in 1997, she wrote a sequel thanks to a Scottish Arts Council Grant. and from then on she has been riding on a wave of international success with prizes and translations. Warner Bros. became distributors of the books and merchandise developed from the books as of 2001.

Translators in various countries have, we may assume, all been relatively well-known and perhaps even been experienced translators of children's books. They have all been picked by a national publisher (hence the arrow in the diagramme) They have, however, not entered




the game at the same time. This makes for some differences. Thus, the Brazilian translator comments:

"I was not aware though that there would be a second book until I had finished the translation of *The Philosopher's Stone*, a fact that would certainly have influenced my reinvention of certain proper names" (Wyler 2003: 9). But then this translator had had a relatively free hand coining new terms and names – the list was approved by Rowling in 1998 (Wyler 2003: 9).[2] On the other hand, in 2002, the Swedish translator reported that translators of the Harry Potter books have to sign a contract "… agreeing to keep the original names, so Warner Brothers can distribute the films, computer games and // … 59// other merchandise all around the world with the names everyone recognizes" (www2).

*Harry Potter merchandise*

Thus, it might seem that translators of the Harry Potter books have moved from a position of much creative freedom to being constrained to an exact transfer of the names in the books. In the above diagram, we also imply a chronological linearity in the real-life translation processes of the Harry Potter books: It is not until the English version of a new book is released that translators receive it for translation. There are narrative linearities at various levels in the Harry Potter universe, such as the fact that (a) each volume is self-contained, (b) volumes 2, 3, etc. are all sequels, and (c) Harry Potter is moving from childhood to adolescence and possibly adulthood through the whole saga (five of the seven books have been published at the time of this writing). As noted, it would have affected the work of the Brazilian translator // … 60// if she had known this. It goes without saying that once a translator has made a choice, he or she will usually have to stick to it: the first translation constitutes a basis for a translational tradition, which subsequent translations will follow (Dollerup 1999: 231-234). It is, however, even more to the point that the audience will respond to the names of the characters within the cultural confines of the target culture, that is, the culture with which they are familiar and in which they read the Harry Potter books.

The Harry Potter universe therefore exists in three different dimensions or worlds: (a) a British one, (b) in the translator's perception of this world, which is, in this case, his or her interpretation of the names in that universe, and (c) the realisations that the names have in the target-language culture and the response of its readers. In the present context, in which we discuss the translation of the names, there is, furthermore, a subjective element, since we have to interpret the names in a British context as well as in various target-language cultures.

**The different levels**

In order to keep the translations in focus, we shall divide the names into four categories. The first comprises the three main characters, the second includes minor characters with Eng-

lish-sounding names, the third comprises characters who are somehow connected with the Hogwarts' school environment, and the fourth names with meanings ranging from the obscure to obvious description. Especially the dividing line between the two last-mentioned categories is especially fuzzy, but by setting a limit, we attempt to make a systematic approach.

**The first category: the main characters**

***Table 2***
***The names of the main characters***

| BRITISH | DANISH | SWEDISH | NORWEGIAN | GERMAN | ITALIAN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Harry Potter | Harry Potter | Harry Potter | Harry Potter | Harry Potter | Harry Potter |
| Ronald Weasley | Ronald Weasley | Ronald Weasley | *Ronny Wiltersen* | Ronald Weasley | Ronald Weasley |
| Hermione Granger | Hermione Granger | Hermione Granger | *Hermine Grang* | *Hermine* Granger | Hermione Granger |

These are regular British names. "Harry" and "Ronald" are common British Christian names for boys. Conversely, "Hermione" is fairly rare and most adult, educated Britons will probably associate the name with the virtuous wife of the king of Sicily, who is wronged in William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale.* Both "Potter" and "Granger" are surnames reminiscent of craftsmen or (slightly archaic) ownership (of either a barn or a farm). "Weasly" is close to 'weaselly', 'deceitful', but the first association – if any – of a Briton will be to the carnivore 'weasel' itself. In sum, these names convey an overall atmosphere of slightly rural, peaceful and 'old' Britain with reassuring homey characters and trades, small animals, and a slight dash of Shakespeare. Most of this atmosphere will be perceived by a British audience, nearly independent of age. // …61//

Most translators have transferred the British names directly and thus made it impossible for readers without a knowledge of English to recognise the 'Britishness' pervading the names.[3] Hermione's name is adapted or naturalised in Norwegian and German, which makes for easier pronunciation – but harder to relate to Shakespeare. The Norwegian translator chose Ronny as the Norwegian equivalent of the British abbreviation of Ronald and chose to have the surname sound a bit odd ("Wilter-") and added the typical "-sen" to this. "Hermine" is a name found among upper-middle class people (just as in Britain) and "Grang" was an adaptation to Norwegian phonetics (Høverstad p.i).[4]

**Category two: minor characters with English names**

The second category comprises minor characters with British-sounding names, of which we single out only the names of three schoolboys (all at Gryffindor House).

***Table 3***
***Names of minor characters***

| BRITISH | DANISH | SWEDISH | NORWEGIAN | GERMAN | ITALIAN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Seamus Finnigan | Seamus Finnigan | Seamus Finnigan | *Jokum Finnimann* | Seamus Finnigan | Seamus Finnigan |
| Lee Jordan | Lee Jordan | Lee Jordan | *Laffen Styx* | Lee Jordan | Lee Jordan |
| Dean Thomas | Dean Thomas | Dean Thomas | *Tommy Ding* | Dean Thomas | Dean Thomas |

Once again, the names seem to be all-English. Educated adult Britons, surely, will associate the first one with James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* – especially since the boy's first name is also Irish. In other words, the author is winking to the adult over the head of the reading children. But although, taken one by one, the other names are fairly frequent in British literature (Freeman 1963), they have no similarly strong literary echoes and only a vaguely clerical one in 'Dean'. So they merely cement the impression of Britishness. By transferring them directly, most translators preserve Britishness by dint // … 62// of the names, but without easy references to Joyce and church hierarchies. The Norwegian translator makes it very hard for Norwegian readers to have literary associations by using a Norwegian first name, "Jokum", but at the same time this is a localisation since the name is a bit rural and "Jokum" speaks a dialect from Eastern Norway. Laffen is the pet form of "Olaf". Styx is an association to the Greek river in the underworld inspired by the fact that 'Jordan' is also the name of a river in the real world. "Tommy Ding" is an inversion of the original, the Christian name (like "Ronny") given a more common Norwegian form and the surname is adapted to Norwegian phonetics. (Høverstad p.i.)


*The way to get to the Ministry and the bottom of the mystery*

**Category three: semi-transparent names in the Hogwarts universe**

The next group of names are semi-transparent, at least to adult Britons:

***Table 4***

***Semi-transparent names in English***

| **BRITISH** | **DANISH** | **SWEDISH** | **NORWEGIAN** | **GERMAN** | **ITALIAN** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albus Dumbledore | Albus Dumbledore | Albus Dumbledore | *Albus Humlesnurr* | Albus Dumbledore | *Albus Silente* |
| Minerva McGonagall | Minerva McGonagall | Minerva McGonagall | *Minerva McSnurp* | Minerva McGonagall | *Minerva McGranitt* |
| Severus Snape | Severus Snape | Severus Snape | *Severus Slur* | Severus Snape | *Severus Piton* |
| Sirius Black | Sirius Black | Sirius Black | *Sirius Svaart* | Sirius Black | Sirius Black |
| Remus Lupin | Remus Lupin | Remus Lupin | *Remus Lupus* | Remus Lupin | Remus Lupin |
| Argus Filch | Argus Filch | Argus Filch | *Argus Nask* | Argus Filch | *Argus Gassa* |
| Mrs. Norris | *Madam Norris* | Mrs. Norris | *Fru Hansen* | Mrs. Norris | *Mrs. Purr* |
| Durmstrang | Durmstrang | Durmstrang | Durmstrang | Durmstrang | Durmstrang |

The meaning of the first name of Hogwarts' formidable headmaster, "Albus", in Latin is "white". It is transparent for people with some Latin and can be interpreted in terms of his white beard, and – less obviously - his 'white' (that is, 'good') magic as opposed to the 'black' magic of the dark powers opposing him. "Dumbledore" is a local variant of 'bumblebee' (*OED* citing examples 1787-1880) and Rowling is reported to have said that "she would like to think that Dumbledore, being a lover of music, from time to time becomes self-forgetful humming away as he walks in the Hogwarts corridors" (Chiu 2002: 1). All of the translators resort to direct transference of the headmaster's first name, which is, in all likelihood, the only choice, since it is hard to see any 'lexical equivalents with the same overtones' as 'Albus'. Most translators use the same strategy with his surname. Thus, they do not realise the potential 'bumblebee' association, a solution that is adequate given that the 'bumblebee' sense is rare and unlikely to ring a bell even with Britons. However, the Norwegian translator must have known about it and decided to make this more obvious by using the word "Humlesnurr", which is common in Norwegian for 'bumblebee'. The Italian translator seems either to have misinterpreted the name or used the Hogwarts headmaster's calm and serenity in times of crisis for the rendition "Silente" (= 'silent'), although it has also been suggested that this is based on the initial letters of the name, "Dumb-" (Davies 2003: 88). // … 63//

Minerva McGonagall, the head of Harry's house, has the name of the Roman Goddess of Wisdom for her Christian name and no translator has any problem with a direct transfer. Her surname, McGonagall, sounds Scottish in Great Britain and is transferred into most languages we are concerned with here and in which 'Mc-' will evoke Scottish associations as well. In Norwegian, the name is rendered as "McSnurp", using the Norwegian verb "snurpe" (= 'to purse (up)'), which is in line with her way of making students quiet and, in Norwegian, is often associated with strict supervision by elderly women (Høverstad p.i.). The Italian translator seems to have used some kind of association along the same lines, but has gone a bit further by an association to 'granite', a stone well-known for its solidity. Both translators render the Scottish "Mc". // … 64//

The strict teacher of potions, "Severus", has the Latin word for "stern" as his first name - and it reflects his personality. Attested by the *OED* with the dialectal meaning of 'rebuke' or 'taper off' in shipbuilding, "Snape" will, again, not ring any bells with British readers. But Rowl-

ing's statement that it is a name of town (Davies 2003: 79) is supported by the existence of a relatively unknown town by that name in Suffolk, UK. At all events, most translators have transferred both names directly. The Norwegian translation "Slur" combines the Norwegian words 'slu' and 'lur', 'cunning' and 'sly', and thus provides a twist to the name, whereas it seems that the Italian translator either misread the surname as 'snake' (='python') or created it from the context.

"Sirius" is the name of the brightest star in the constellation of Canis, the Great Dog, and the name is transferred without any demur by all of the translators. The surname of this – somewhat sinister - godfather of Harry's is translated directly only into Norwegian as "Svaart" ('black') which, in this case, is nearly an explicitation and makes for a better understanding of the contradictions in the original English name for the Norwegian audience.

"Remus" was one of the two founders of ancient Rome who were raised by a wolf. A "lupin" is a plant, but may associate with the adjective 'lupine' deriving from the Latin 'lupinus'(='like a wolf'), which again is related to 'lupus' (='wolf'). In this case, the Norwegian translator changed the name into "Lupus" to make sure that Norwegian readers would associate the name with wolf, if anything, rather than with the plant (Høverstad p.i.). This is, then, a personal interpretation.

There are several characters named "Argus" in antiquity, the best known being a giant with a hundred eyes, as all-seeing as the caretaker at Hogwarts, whose surname is "Filch", "to steal". All of the translators take over "Argus". Most also transfer the surname, but it is translated by the lexical equivalent in Norwegian, 'nask' (Høverstad p. i). The Italian "Gassa" means 'eye' in the specialised nautical sense of 'a round loop', and is therefore most likely to have been caused by poor dictionary usage rather than creativity inspired by "Argus".

Adult British readers will probably associate Filch's cat, "Mrs Norris", with its namesake, a nosy woman in Jane Austen's celebrated novel *Mansfield Park* (1814) (www3). In the novel, "Mrs. Norris" has a social standing as a preacher's wife, but in Danish her title is "Madam", which associates with lower-class persons. The Norwegian "Fru" is the lexical equivalent in Scandinavia. // … 65//The Italian translation uses the English title, but renders the name by an English verb imitating the sounds of a contented cat. This is not consistent with the cat's unpleasant character in the books and it seems unlikely that the substitution of the name with the English onomatopoeia is illuminating to Italian readers.

"Durmstrang", another European school of witchcraft and wizardry competing with Hogwarts in *Goblet*, is an allusion to a German literary movement in the late 1700s, "Sturm und Drang". It is probably only educated adults who make the connection, but then, for once, continental readers may even have an advantage over British ones in so far as they are more likely to know about German literature. All of the translators have merely transferred the name from the original and may all have been aware of the allusion.

Overall, most of the people connected with Hogwarts have first or family names that are Latin and thus have associations to antiquity and with scholarship. Great Britain – and notably public schools that Hogwarts is moulded from - has a stronger tradition for Latin teaching as well as a more marked orientation towards ancient Rome than do most continental cultures. There is thus a

subtle overtone that cannot be recreated in the translations discussed here.[4] In addition, most of these overtones are in all likelihood – even in Great Britain – bound to be more evident to adults than to young readers: the author and grown-ups smile at one another, allied by a knowledge that is theirs alone. There are many levels of communication and many levels of mutual understanding in the books in English.

**The fourth category: the descriptive names**

The names in this group have meanings which English-speaking children can 'figure out' at least in part.// … 66//

***Table 5***
***Descriptive names in English***

| BRITISH | DANISH | SWEDISH | NORWEGIAN | GERMAN | ITALIAN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ludo Bagman | Ludo Bagman | Ludo Bagman | *Ludo Humbag* | Ludo Bagman | Ludo Bagman |
| Cornelius Fudge | Cornelius Fudge | Cornelius Fudge | *Kornelius Bort-forklar* & *Kornelius Bloef* | Cornelius Fudge | *Cornelius Caramell* |
| Professor Sprout | *Professor Spore* | Professor Sprout | *Professor Stikling* | Professor Sprout | *Professoressa Sprite* |
| Gilderoy Lockhart | *Glitterik Smørhår* | *Gyllenroy Lockman* | *Gyldeprinz Gulmedal* | Gilderoy Lockhart | *Gilderoy Allock* |
| Madam Pomfrey | Madam Pomfrey | Madam Pomfrey | *Madam Pomfrit* | Madam Pomfrey | *Madam Chips* |
| Fang | *Trofast* | Fang | *Hogg* | Fang | *Thor* |
| Moaning Myrtle | *Hulkende Hulda* | *Missnöjda Myrtle* | *Stønne-Stine* | *Die Maulende Myrte* | *Mirtilla Malcontenta* |
| Nearly Headless Nick | *Næsten-Hovedløse Nick* | *Nästan Huvudlöse Nick* | *Nesten-Hodeløse Nick* | *Der Fast Kopslose Nick* | *Nick-Quasi-Senza-Testa* |
| Lord Voldemort | Lord Voldemort | Lord Voldemort | *Voldemort den store* | Lord Voldemort | Lord Voldemort |

"Ludo" is Latin for "I play", which is appropriate for the Head of the Department of Magical Games and Sports, but, once again, this will probably only be obvious to people with some Latin knowledge. A "Bagman" is a travelling salesman in Britain, but since Ludo is a bookmaker at the World Cup (*Goblet*), it may allude to the US and Australian sense of 'the moneyman in illicit businesses'. At all events, most of the translators have transferred the name, except for the Norwegian translator who has created "Humbag" as an ad-hoc word echoing "humbug" (Høverstad p.i.).

In English, "Fudge" has several meanings, one being a 'sweet' and others 'fake', 'evade', and 'dealing dishonestly or incompetently'. Again, most of the translators transfer the name, thus making it hard for readers to get the overtones. The Norwegian translator opted for 'explain away' in the first book, but then decided to go in for "Bloef", 'fake', in subsequent ones. On the other hand, the Italian translator chose to interpret the name as a sweet: "Caramell". In this case, all strategies have either limited the implications in the name or made it hard to see any at all.

The botanist professor's name "Sprout" is easily identifiable as 'a shoot of a plant'. The Swedish and German translators transfer the English word, the Norwegian translation renders it by the lexical equivalent "Stikling", whereas // … 67// the Danish translator stays in the world of botany and micro-organisms with the one-syllable 'Spore' (= 'spore'). The Italian "Sprite" is a mysterious ad-hoc word.

Colbert explains the charlatan teacher of magic's first name, "Gilderoy", as "being gilded (covered in a thin gold foil) to make him seem intelligent and attractive" (Colbert 2001: 149). The ending "–roy" smacks of royalty and Lockhart may refer to his beautiful hair ('lock') and charming ways with women ('lock heart'). In this case, the German translator is the only one to transfer the full name directly. The Danish first name plays on the noun 'glitter' ("glitter") and a traditional ending in male names ("-rik", which etymologically speaking means 'rich') and the translator opts fully for the hair interpretation with the surname 'Butterhair'. In Swedish "Gyllen-" carries the golden overtones, whereas "-roy" is transferred as is the first part of his surname. In Norwegian, the golden tinge is found in "Gylde-", while "-prinz" smacks of a royal title – which should correctly be spelled "-prins". "Gulmedal" merely carries on the idea of gold. The Italian solution is a transfer of the first name, while 'Allock' is either a word play on the colloquial Italian 'alloco' (='fool', 'simpleton') or somehow inspired by English word ('all lock(s)').

Most of the translators do not meddle with Madam Pomfrey's name, but it seems as if its visual similarity to "pomfrit" (= 'french fries') on the European continent has functioned as a 'false friend' with the Norwegian translator, who, in our opinion, wrongly translates the name into "Madam Pomfrit". The Italian translator, who uses another potato product in English and makes her "Madam Chips", seems to have had associations along the same lines.

"Moaning Myrtle" is an example of Rowling's extensive use of alliterations, and all the target languages have preserved this feature, with Swedish, German, and Italian rendering the girl's plant name by lexical equivalents. The Norwegian rendition of the descriptive adjective is the lexical equivalent, whereas the Swedish and the Italian translators consider Myrtle 'unhappy' or 'disaffected', the Danish has her 'sobbing' and the German 'sulking'. The rendition of an alliteration has thus called for different near-synomyms in the target-language realisations.

Implying some ferocity, "Fang" is the ironic name of Hagrid's cowardly dog in English. The Swedish and German translations transfer the original name, thus conveying no irony to the target-language readers. "Trofast" (='loyal') is a common dog's name in Danish and it can be argued that the irony is therefore also realised in Danish. The lexical equivalent of "fang" is "huggtann" in Norwegian and "hogg" is a variant of "hugg" (strike), thus retaining the ferocity. // … 68 // The Italian rendition is the name of the Nordic thunder god, "Thor". This is appropriate in so far as it implies that he is unlikely to be intimidated, on the other hand, we doubt that most Italian readers are versed in Norse mythology.

"Nearly Headless Nick" is another alliteration, which is rendered with the same letter as the original in the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian translations. Otherwise all translations retain the name Nick and calque the rest of the name so that readers in all target languages know what the ghost looks like.

It has been argued that the lord of the dark forces, "Voldemort", relates to French "vol de mort", "flight of death" (www3). In the present context, we note that only the Norwegian translator has adapted or localised the term. There are no lords in Norway, whereas powerful rulers in Europe have often been termed "the Great".

**Other media and merchandise**

So far, we have discussed only written translations. But the books have also been used for films and there is a host of merchandise in the Harry Potter industry. In some cases, the written translation may serve as the basis for all other translations: "when the first film of the series was shown in Brazil, my four translations had sold a million copies, so Warner Bros. felt compelled to pirate them for their film, video and DVD" (Wyler 2003: 6). In Denmark, things are different and the subtitling of the film and DVD was undertaken by Henning Silberbrandt. He had been instructed by Warner Bros. to use the names as translated by Hanna Lützen in the book translations.[5]

In terms of merchandise, we checked the use made by LEGO and the computer games (Playstation 2). All the Harry Potter LEGO products (which are distributed world-wide) use the original British names of the characters.[6] The computer games have a few of the names that have been translated in the Danish book translation, but they are all minor characters unlikely to appear often in the game.

**Conclusion**

At the beginning, we pointed out that the Harry Potter books have various narrative linearities. The names as translated do not, in themselves, affect the plots of the individual narratives, nor of the saga as a whole. This bears testimony to the resilience of prose narratives in translation.

We also pointed out that the author may have had some specific intentions or allusions in some of the names. Many of our interpretations of these intentions // … 69// are purely speculative, but it is obvious that the descriptive names of, e.g., "Moaning Myrtle", are those that are rendered most faithfully and consequently as closely as possible to what the author 'meant'. It is noteworthy that these names are also largely devoid of any special British overtones. The translators also show creativity and imagination in their renditions of these names. But much of the subdued talk from the author to the British reader referring to common ground is, in most cases, rendered only by the Norwegian translator, whose readers on such occasions may respond more like British readers, e.g. by the name of "Filch"-"Nask". Or perhaps get a description more obvious than it is in English, e.g. "Humlesnurr"-"Dumbledore".

Despite the limited size of the sample, it is sufficient for making some comments on the strategies of the individual translators and thus to stress that this study also reveals that in 'cultural texts' at least, the translator's individuality will tell in the end product (Gullin 1998; Dollerup 1999: 199-236; Baker 2001). These studies have concerned translations by different translators into

one target language. To this, we add the dimension of translations by different translators into different target languages.

As mentioned, Warner Bros. imposed limitations on the translators' inventiveness, and in this respect, both the German and the Swedish translators seem to have toed the line and stuck largely to a policy of direct transfer. They agree in translating only the descriptive names and the Swedish translator also used "Lockman" for "Lockhart".

The Italian translator – whose name one might suspect of being a pseudonym – has a somewhat curious track record. For two names, she has searched for renditions within the same 'semantic sphere' – not in Italian, but in English – viz. "Mrs. Purr" and "Madam Chips" (and possibly "(Gilderoy) Allock"). In one case, she appears to have misread the English "Snape" for 'snake'. "Argus Gassa" was most likely created by poor dictionary work and "Professoressa Sprite" is an ad-hoc invention. The name of the Norse god of thunder for Hagrid's dog is curious. The translation is not consistent and therefore, in our view, not optimal.

The Danish translator has localised or adapted quite a few names, such as the name of the dog and brought out the glib character of Gilderoy Lockart. With "Professor Spore", she renders a one-syllable British name with a one-syllable Danish one within the same general semantic sphere. But with "Madam Norris", she *a priori* interprets the admittedly unfriendly cat as lower-class.

The Norwegian translator takes by far the greatest liberties and is certainly the most creative and imaginative among the translators discussed. He is // … 70// also the only one who dares go against his own 'translational tradition' by supplanting "Kornelius Bort-Forklar" with "Kornelius Bloef", thus making for a minor inconsistency in the saga. The only rendition we disagree on is "Madam Pomfrit". It appears that his main objective was not to make the names all Norwegian, but rather to present names that, although they do not exist in Norwegian, sound like names. Many of his solutions are particularly well targeted towards young children and we suggest this is the crux of the matter, because many of the names in English are also evocative with adults. There is thus a conflict between the targeting of the British original and the Norwegian translation. The Norwegian translator appeals to a younger audience than the author of the original.

The main discrepancies to be expected between the response of readers of the British original and of the translations are in the cultural sphere and they are virtually all understandable only to educated and mostly adult readers. Only the allusion to "Durmstrang" is likely to be transparent to non-British adults readers to the same extent as to grown-up Britons. Conversely, the literary allusions to *Mansfield Park* and *A Winter's Tale* will reach smaller segments of non-British readers.

And then there are the all-pervasive Latin references, which – as hinted – are more familiar to a British audience than to a Continental one. The undercurrent of a British upper-middle class public school with its system of houses, internal competition, its general atmosphere of intimacy, and at the same time scholarship and learning, is much less pronounced in the translations. This is not the fault of the author, the translators, or even the audiences: it is a difference due to the

fact that the original and its translations exist in their separate cultures and are read by audiences relating to their own, different cultures.

As a kind of hypothetical ideal, one might consider translating the Harry Potter books into two different versions; one for young children, which would be much like the Norwegian one, and another one for adults, which would merely transfer to British names. The first obstacle would be that the audience that would get all the points of the English names would differ from country to country depending on the knowledge of English and the familiarity with Great Britain. Furthermore, it would be difficult to realise for marketing reasons, financial implications, etc., but in some way, it might still give readers at all levels a better chance of enjoying the adventures of Harry Potter to the full.

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**Notes**

1. Information from www. gyldendal.dk; www. tiden.se; www. damm.no; www. carlsenkids.de; www. salani.it

2. Wyler does mention that she must not change Harry Potter's name, but does not inform readers as to whether this also applied to other characters (Wyler 2003: 12). She had the names she created for the Brazilian translation approved by Rowling who speaks Portuguese (Wyler 2003:9).

3. The terms 'direct transference', 'explicitation', and 'calques' are used as by Leppihalme (2001).

4. We are indebted to Thorstein Bugge Høverstad for information about his work on the Norwegian translation. This is acknowledged by 'p. i.' = personal information.

5. Davies makes the point that Italian and Spanish children may find it easier to crack the Latin names (2003: 76-77).

6. We are indebted to Mr Henning Silberbrandt for information on the Danish subtitling. There is a point where the Danish subtitling of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* deviates from the book translation. This is when Harry buys his wand. In the English original, the content of the wand is "a phoenix tail feather". This is also the case in the Danish subtitles, but in the Danish book translation it is "a horn from a chimera". We believe this is an example of misplaced creativity since it later transpires that the tail feather is from Dumbledore's phoenix and important to the plot.

7. We are indebted to Ms Kirsten Sørup for information about LEGO. She also informed us that there were no restrictions concerning the names, but that the figures of the characters cannot be sold individually.

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*The Minister of Magic, Mr Rufus Scrimgeour, cordially shaking hands with the Muggle Prime Minister.*