YAL in translation
Translating fantasy names in *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*
Translating names is considered a fundamental process in the translation of *speculative literature*.

Bucher and Hinton (2013:188) define ‘*speculative literature*’ as an umbrella term used to refer to all the ‘unrealistic’ genres of literature, including fantasy, science fiction and horror.

In these genres, especially in fantasy, Fernandes (2006: 46) argues that the presence of invented names makes the translator's task much more complex since names often have an obvious semantic load.
In children's and young adult literature, where the authors try to help younger readers to appreciate the story through the use of names that can function as guides, clues or physical descriptions of the characters.

In real life, proper names are considered as simple labels, whose task is to indicate a referent.

As both Nord (2003) and Fernandes (2006) point out, proper names are mono-referential (since they identify a single referent) but not mono-functional. In fact, especially in literary works, names can acquire a semantic load that makes them bearers of ‘semantic, semiotic and/or sound symbolic meanings’ (Fernandes 2006:44).
Names are somewhat **informative**: they can indicate the sex of the referent, sometimes also the age and the geographical origin.

Jaleniauskienė and Čičelytė (2009: 32) → ‘proper names may mean something: be semantically, historically, geographically or culturally loaded’

Fernandes (2006: 46) → proper names are used as ‘dense signifiers in the sense that they contain in themselves clues about the destiny of a character or indicates of the way the storyline may develop’
- **Semantic meanings**: Semantically loaded names can describe a certain quality of a narrative element and/or create comic effects.

- **Semiotic meanings**: Fernandes (2006: 46) → "names in many cultures act as signs, indicating gender, class, nationality, religious identity, intertextuality, mythology and so on".

- **Phonosymbolic meanings**: sometimes authors can use phonosymbolism (onomatopoeia and phonesthemes) to create names whose sound recalls the qualities that characterize the bearer.
Fernandes (2006: 49) suggests dividing them into two categories: 

_conventional names and loaded names._

Conventional names are ‘unmotivated’ for translation since they have no semantic load or simply refer to internationally known names.

Loaded names are not simple labels but something else: thanks to their cultural value, they become _content-specific items_ (CSI) (Davies 2003: 69).
As Aixelá (1996: 57) argues,

in translation a CSI does not exist itself, but as the result of a conflict arising from any linguistically represented reference in a source text which, when transferred to a target language, poses a translation problem due to the nonexistence or to the different value of the given item in the target language culture.
Fernandes (2006: 50-55) proposes a list of ten translation strategies that help the translator deal with the translation of names:

- **Rendition**
- **Copy**
- **Transcription**
- **Substitution**
- **Recreation**

- **Deletion**
- **Addition**
- **Transposition**
- **Phonological Replacement**
- **Conventionality**.
**Rendition** is a procedure used in relation to names loaded with semantic meanings.

These names tend to be transparent, and their correspondent in the target language is easily identifiable.

It corresponds to what Vinay and Darbelnet define literal translation and is usually the preferred method when it comes to translating motivated names.
A Copy corresponds to what Vinay and Darbelnet call a loan.

It is the simplest type of translation, as the author merely leaves the original name unaltered in the target language.

Nord (2003: 187) underlines how some names acquire a different pronunciation in the target language, partially modifying their original characteristics.
Transcription is a procedure by which one tries to transcribe the name with the corresponding letters in the target language.

It is apparently used in languages that use different alphabetic codes different from those of the language of origin.

(Gorbačëv > Gorbaciov).
A *Substitution* takes place when a name is arbitrarily rendered with another term that is completely disconnected from that of the language of origin.

As Fernandes (2006: 52) explains, the name of the language of origin and the target language "exist in their respective referential worlds, but are not related to each other in terms of form and/ or semantic significance".

A name could therefore have its counterpart in the target language, but also in this case it is arbitrarily replaced with another term for translational choices (*Henry VIII* > Vittorio Emanuele II).
Recreation takes place when the translator encounters a term invented in the language of origin.

Not being able to find a correspondent in the target language, the translator is therefore forced to invent a new one to fill the lexical void.

This phenomenon reflects the concept of adaptation expressed by Vinay and Darbelnet.

(mockingjay> ghiandaia imitatrice).
Deletion is the most drastic practice a translator can rely on while dealing with the translation of a name, but it is nevertheless often used by translators (Fernandes 2006).

In this case, the original name is omitted entirely from the translated text.

Addition is a process that involves the insertion of additional information to the original name to disambiguate its meaning or make it more understandable.

According to Davies (2003), even a footnote can be considered a type of addition.
Transposition occurs when a class of words is replaced with another without altering the original meaning of the name (Amity > Pacifico).

A Phonological Substitution takes place when a translated name tries to imitate the phonological characteristics of the original one (Rowena Ravenclaw > Corinna Corvonero).
Conventionality indicates the practice of translating an original name with its conventionally accepted correspondence in the target language.

This strategy is usually used with names of historical and literary figures and geographical locations;
Methodology and corpus

The present case study has been carried out on the original version of two YA dystopian novels and their Italian translations:

*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (2008)
*Divergent* by Veronica Roth (2011)

and their Italian translations by

F. Paracchini and S. Brogli (*The Hunger Games*, 2009)

“Primrose” ➔ “Primula”

“Katniss” ➔ Sagittaria plant ➔ “Erba Saetta”.

In Italian, of course, these botanical references are lost, as translators tend to preserve the names of the characters in order not to distort the original context of the work.

Moreover, in Italian, the use of botanical terms such as “Sagittaria” and “Erba Saetta” as proper names would be very marked and estranging, unlike in English.

➔ the translator has kept the original names through Copy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Hunger Games (2008 - ENG)</th>
<th>The Hunger Games (2009 - ITA)</th>
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<tr>
<td>I knelt down in the water, my fingers digging into the soft mud, and I pulled up handfuls of the roots. Small, bluish tubers that don’t look like much but boiled or baked are as good as any potato. «Katniss», I said aloud. It’s the plant I was named for. And I heard my father’s voice joking, «As long as you can find yourself, you’ll never starve» (p. 60)</td>
<td>Mi inginocchiai nell’acqua, scavando con le dita nella melma morbida, e strappai le radici a piene mani. Erano piccoli tuberi bluastri che non assomigliano granché alle patate, ma sono altrettanto buoni se bolliti o cotti al forno. «Katniss, erba saetta» dissi ad alta voce. È la pianta di cui porto il nome. E sentii la voce di mio padre dire scherzando: «Finché riuscirai a trovare te stessa, non morirai mai di fame» (p. 55)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Hunger Games (2008 - ENG)</td>
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<td>«Hey, <em>Catnip,</em>» says Gale. My real name is Katniss, but when I first told him, I had barely whispered it. So he thought I’d said <em>Catnip.</em> (p. 7)</td>
<td>«Ciao, <em>Catnip</em>» dice Gale. Il mio vero nome è Katniss, ma quando glielo dissi per la prima volta lo sussurrai appena, così lui capì che mi chiavamo <em>Catnip.</em> (p.13)</td>
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</table>

Since in Italian the reference to katniss (*erba gatta* in Italian) is lost, the translator decides to add a footnote in which he explains that ‘Catnip è l’erba gatta. Il gioco di parole con Katniss è intraducibile’ (Collins, 2008/2009: 13). → The translator, in this case, uses *Addition* to add a note to disambiguate the word-play between the two names.
Nord (2003) points out that different pronunciations of a name between the source and the target language can create ambiguities.

*Beatrice* in English (ˈbɪərɪs/)  
*Beatrice* in Italian (ˈbeaˈtritʃe/).

**TRIS**

*Beatrice Prior*  
‘Tris’

The author takes care to clarify the origin of the nickname of its protagonist, helping the translator by clarifying the origin of the nickname also to a foreign audience that might miss the link between the two names of the protagonist:
<table>
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<td>&quot;Beatrice?&quot; demands a nasal voice next to me. Molly folds her arms and laughs. «Is that your real name, Stiff?» I glance at her. «What did you think Tris was short for?» (p. 127)</td>
<td>«Beatrice?» ripete una voce nasale dietro di me. Molly incrocia le braccia e ride. «È questo il tuo vero nome, Rigida?» Le lancio un’occhiata. «E secondo te, Tris era l’abbreviazione di cosa?» (p. 127)</td>
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</table>
Translating the name of the cat directly into Italian, the translator immediately clarifies the connection between the colour of the flower and the hair of the animal, without having to resort to an Addition as it happened with the name Catnip.

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<td>Prim named him <em>Buttercup</em>, insisting that his muddy yellow coat matched the bright flower. (p. 3)</td>
<td>Prim l’ha chiamato <em>Ranuncolo</em> perché dice che il suo pelo giallastro ha lo stesso colore di quel fiore. (p. 9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
District 1 has the task of producing luxury goods for Capitol City, and the English word *glimmer* can be translated as “*baluginio* or *barlume*”, which somehow recall the brilliance of jewels and gold.

The names of the remaining Tributes have all been preserved in their original form in the Italian translation, except that of *Glimmer*, replaced with the name *Lux*. 

**Glimmer ➔ Lux**
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<td>The girl with the arrows, <em>Glimmer</em> I hear someone call her – ugh, the names the people in District 1 give their children are so ridiculous. (p. 213)</td>
<td>La ragazza con le frecce... sento qualcuno che la chiama <em>Lux</em>, però quanto sono ridicoli i nomi che la gente del Distretto 1 dà ai propri figli. (p. 183)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Katniss repeatedly identifies the people around her by means of nicknames.

The old woman who sells stew on the black market becomes *Greasy Sae*, a girl in District 5 becomes *Foxface*, and the man from whom she bought the goat for Prim becomes the *Goat Man*.

For names that in some way evoke a characteristic of their bearer, a translation is needed that can render their meaning transparent in Italian.
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<tr>
<td><em>Greasy Sae</em>, the bony old woman who sells bowls of hot soup from a large kettle, takes half the greens off our hands in exchange for a couple of chunks of paraffin. (p. 12)</td>
<td><em>Sae la Zozza</em>, la vecchia ossuta che vende ciotole di zuppa calda presa da un gran pentolone, ci strappa di metà delle erbe in cambio di un paio di pezzi di paraffina. (p. 17)</td>
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<td>No, it’s <em>Foxface</em>, standing in the rubble of the pyramid and laughing. She’s smarter than the Careers, actually finding a few useful items in the ashes. (p. 265)</td>
<td>No, è <em>Faccia di Volpe</em> che ride, ritta sulle macerie della piramide. È più furba dei Favoriti, e infatti ha trovato qualche oggetto utile tra le ceneri. (p. 226)</td>
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Peeta
<table>
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<tr>
<td>«Yes, I don’t think you’ll have much use for your lips any more. Want to blow Lover Boy one last kiss?» she asks.” (p. 335)</td>
<td>«Sì, non penso che le labbra ti serviranno più a molto. Vuoi mandare un ultimo bacio al Ragazzo Innamorato?» chiede. (p. 286)</td>
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<tr>
<td>And while I was talking, the idea of actually losing Peeta hit me again and I realized how much I don't want him to die. [...] And it's not just that I don't want to be alone. It's him. I do not want to lose the boy with the bread. (p. 349)</td>
<td>E mentre sto parlando, l’idea di perderlo davvero mi colpisce di nuovo e mi rendo conto che non voglio assolutamente che muoia. [...] Non è solo che non voglio restare sola. È per lui. Non voglio perdere il ragazzo del pane. (p. 297)</td>
</tr>
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The translation of *girl on fire* in Italian is a bit problematic, as it has been rendered in two different ways whereas in English the term remains the same.

In the first book, it has been translated as ‘*ragazza in fiamme*’ (‘*a girl on fire*’), while in the title of the second book - which differs from the original English *Catching Fire* - has been translated into ‘*La Ragazza di Fuoco*’ (‘*The Girl made of Fire*’).
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<tr>
<td>«Ooh. Scandalous! A Stiff’s flashing some skin!» I lift my head. Stiff is slang for Abnegation, and I’m the only one here. (p. 56)</td>
<td>«Oh, scandalo! Una Rigida che mostra un limbo di pelle!» Sollevo la testa. In gergo i Rigidi sono gli Abneganti, e qui io sono l’unica. (p. 56)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\textit{stiff} \rightarrow \textit{rigido} \ [\textit{Rendition}] \\ 
\textit{Abnegation} \rightarrow \textit{gli Abneganti}\]
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<td>«Well, <em>Christina</em>, if I wanted to put up with <em>Candor</em> smart-mouths, I would have joined their faction», he hisses. «The first lesson you will learn from me is to keep your mouth shut. Got that?» (p. 62)</td>
<td>«Bene, <em>Christina</em>, se fossi stato disposto a sopportare l'impertinenza dei <em>Candidi</em>, avrei scelto la loro fazione» sibila. «Lezione numero uno: impara a tenere la bocca chiusa. Chiaro?» (p. 62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>«Pretty smart of you... like Erudite smart,» Marlene says. «I’m Marlene.»</td>
<td>«Che idea intelligente. Un’idea quasi da...Erudita» fa notare lei. «Mi chiamo Marlene.» «Tris» dico io. [...]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| «Tris,» I say. […] «Yeah, I know who you are,» she says. «The first jumper tends to stick in your head.» (p. 155) | «Sì, so chi sei. Non si dimentica facilmente il nome della prima che ha saltato.» (p. 154) }
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<tr>
<td>«Those were your worst fears? Why do you only have four...» My voice trails off. Only four fears. «Oh.» I look over my shoulder at him. «That’s why they call you— » (p. 330)</td>
<td>«Erano queste le tue peggiori paure? Come mai hai solo quattro...» La frase rimane a metà. Solo quattro paure. «Ah.» Mi volto verso di lui. «Ecco perché ti chiamano...» (p. 325)</td>
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</table>
In conclusion…

The technique labelled *Rendition* seems to have been the preferred choice by both translators.

The second most frequent technique in *The Hunger Games* is *Substitution*, while the translator of *Divergent* seemed to prefer *Transposition* → ‘domesticating’ approach to make the meaning of the names more transparent for the target reader.

*Recreation* allows translators to replace names entirely invented by authors with names explicitly created for the occasion. This often happens in *The Hunger Games*, where the vast presence of animals invented by the author forces the translator to recreate a correspondent in the Italian language.
Addition can also be considered a highly estranging technique since it maintains the original name by adding an explanation that helps render the meaning of the name more transparent for the reader.

Deletion instead is to be considered neutral since it directly deletes the potentially problematic name. In the presence of problematic names, these techniques were seldom used, since they risked creating an effect that was too estranging for the target reader.

This suggests that in the dystopian literature for young adults, understanding the author’s message is more important than being faithful to the original text, as can be inferred from the significant use that translators make of ‘taming’ techniques such as Rendition, Recreation, Transposition and Substitution.
However, it should be emphasized that while in children's literature there is a tendency to translate any name that may be foreign or difficult to read for its young audience, in YA literature the translator intervenes only in the presence of semantically loaded names, whose comprehension is fundamental for the plot.

3 techniques were not found in these two texts:

- *Transcription*, which was not necessary given the use of the same alphabetic code in both languages;
- *Phonological Substitutions* were also not found, probably because it was felt that the receiving public of the two texts was able to recognize and understand English names
- *Conventionality* has not been utilized since there are no exonyms present in the two works analyzed here.
The balanced between foreignizing and domesticating approaches in the two translations demonstrates that the translation of names into YA literature is a perfect meeting point between children's and adult literature.

Unlike children's literature, where ‘domesticating’ approaches are more desirable given the ‘special’ audience to which they are addressed, YA literature seems to place itself a step closer to adult literature, since names are translated only when strictly necessary.