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3 **Crossing the Channel: Publishing Translated German**
4 **Fiction in the UK**5 **Corinna Norrick-Rühl¹ · Melanie Ramdarshan Bold²**

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8 **Abstract** In a review of Hans Fallada's novel *Alone in Berlin*—finally translated
9 into English after 62 years—Sam Jordison stated, “[I]t’s an important book that no
10 English writer could have written—and so another resounding argument for the
11 importance of taking in translations. It makes me wonder what else we’ve been
12 missing.” Translated fiction plays a minimal role in the UK. Scholars are increas-
13 ingly directing their attention towards this deficit. This paper will consider the
14 culture of translation in the UK and Ireland, with a particular focus on translated
15 German fiction.

16

17 **Keywords** Translation · Publishing · Independent publishing · Literary prizes ·
18 Germany · UK

21 In his book *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? The Amazing Adventure of Translation* [4]
22 David Bellos based some of his observations on the UNESCO's *Index Transla-*
23 *tionum* [62], which has collected worldwide translation data since 1932.¹ Bellos
24 shows that while English is the most frequently used language, there is a clear
25 imbalance regarding English as a source and English as a target language for
26 translations. While one-tenth of the translations recorded in the *Index* are
27 translations into English, two-thirds are translations from the English. As Bellos

1FL01 ¹ The *Index Translationum* is a unique resource for translation research. It has certain limitations, since
1FL02 the data is not collected by UNESCO, but rather delivered to UNESCO by the countries themselves,
1FL03 usually via the national trade organizations. However, since there is no comparable database, it is a very
1FL04 valuable go-to-resource for scholars as well as industry practitioners.

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28 showed, “Nearly 80 per cent of all translations done in all directions between these
 29 seven languages [Swedish, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic, French, German, English] over a
 30 decade [2000–2009]—104,000 out of 132,000—are translations from English.
 31 Conversely, barely more than 8 per cent of all translations done in the same set are
 32 translations into English”. Translations from English, Bellos continued, “are all
 33 over the place; translations into English are as rare as hen’s teeth” [5]. While the
 34 asymmetrical structure of the global translations market is firmly embedded in our
 35 system of economic hierarchy, as Norbert Bachleitner and Michaela Wolf stated in
 36 2010, and the translation flow mirrors the commodity flow [2], Bellos warned that it
 37 is “neither accurate nor interesting to pin the responsibility for our lop-sided
 38 translation world on the Almighty Dollar alone” [6].

39 Being published in English is a prestigious accolade for foreign authors, even if
 40 they usually make more money on royalties from other countries. As Lepape
 41 maintained:

42 Frankfurt [Book Fair] reflects the increasingly one-way flow of trade between
 43 the United States and its sidekick, Britain, and the rest of the Western world.
 44 French, Spanish, Italian and German publishers all go to the fair with a single
 45 and near-impossible dream: to sell a book to the Americans even for a derisory
 46 amount, or to a British publisher as a first step to the paradise of the US
 47 market. They all know that this is a false hope [41].

48 Although Lepape portrays British publishers and the readers as ‘junior partners’
 49 in the global market for translations, in this case study, we would like to focus on the
 50 culture of translation between Germany and the UK nonetheless. There is already
 51 some research available on the relationship between Germany and the English-
 52 speaking world more generally, in particular the US book industry, for instance
 53 Bender [7], Jahnsen [34], Rectanus [51], Smerillo [54, 55] and Kessel [36], though
 54 this certainly merits further attention as well. We believe that the special
 55 relationship between the UK and Germany, defined by antagonism and cooperation
 56 in the past, present, and future, make this case study particularly worthwhile. The
 57 German and British publishing industries are also two of the largest, most active,
 58 and most established in Europe, as evidenced by their output, amongst other things.
 59 According to the most recently published European book publishing statistics, the
 60 British and German book industries are the “largest markets in terms of publishers’
 61 turnover” (Germany coming in first, UK second), the two “countries reporting the
 62 largest availability” of titles in stock (UK coming in first, Germany second) and the
 63 “largest new titles output” (UK, then Germany) [24]. Additionally, the London and
 64 Frankfurt book fairs are two of the biggest book fairs in the world and are both very
 65 important in the international trade of rights [46]. These internationally-established
 66 book fairs are evidence that the UK and German publishing industries are
 67 committed to participating in the international publishing industry, and thus to
 68 communicating on a global scale. Finally, both countries also have a rich literary
 69 and publishing history, and are dynamic contributors to the global cultural economy.
 70 In her recent monograph *Förderung literarischer Übersetzung in Deutschland*,
 71 Slávka Rude-Proubská notes that there are serious shortcomings regarding research
 72 on translation in general, but especially on the promotion of literary translation. She

73 elaborates that there is hardly any empirical data, there are no systematic studies or
 74 parameters for analysis of the existing funding instruments and so far, research has
 75 all but ignored the principles and policies behind the funding bodies involved [53].
 76 This contribution (and our larger project) aim(s) to better understand the actors,
 77 institutions and stakeholders in the market for translations between the UK and
 78 Germany.²

79 **Statistics and Status Quo**

80 “The role of English is that of a bottleneck and a driving force,” and English, but
 81 also German and French, can be considered the most important “transfer
 82 language[s]” [37]. German, however, is more than just a transfer language for
 83 literature from other languages into English. It is also an important and successful
 84 source language in its own right. The most important genres for rights sales are
 85 children’s and young adult books (in 2014, 36.7 % of all translations from the
 86 German came from this genre) and fiction (18.6 % in 2014) [10]. China reigns
 87 supreme as the main buyer of German rights with almost 1000 contracts in 2014
 88 alone. Chinese publishers are especially interested in buying German children’s and
 89 young adult literature. France trails behind in second place with only 334 contracts
 90 in 2014. No English-speaking country has made it into the top ten for years, but
 91 English as a target language placed second in 2014 with 450 contracts in 2014 (as a
 92 comparison: Spanish had 426 contracts in 2014) [13]. The high level of detail that
 93 *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* offers regarding translation statistics shows that
 94 translations are highly regarded and much sought-after in the German book industry.
 95 On the other hand, the British equivalent, the *Publishers Association Statistics*
 96 *Yearbook*, only discusses translations in regards to the percentage of complete
 97 industry rights income that translation rights income makes up. In 2014, 36 million
 98 GBP were generated by translation contracts, which accounted for 31 % of the
 99 complete industry rights income [50]. However, the *Publishers Association*
 100 *Statistics Yearbook* does not differentiate between genres, so the proportion of
 101 fiction, children’s literature, textbooks, etc. remains unclear, as do the target
 102 countries and languages. This is a further sign that translations are considered less
 103 important in the UK than in Germany, for instance.

104 This will come as no surprise to scholars of publishing and book history as well
 105 as industry practitioners. For native English speakers, or those who do not read
 106 translations, this can have serious implications because it can perpetuate, as Edith
 107 Grossman states, “our tendency toward insularity and consequent self-imposed
 108 isolation” [28]. Translations can, Grossman continues, help readers “explore
 109 through literature the thoughts and feeling from another country or another time. It
 110 permits us to savor the transformation of the foreign into the familiar and for a brief

2FL01 ² What this contribution will not and cannot do, however, is introduce readers to German literary trends.
 2FL02 We highly recommend Katharina Gerstenberger and Patricia Herminhouse’s introduction to *German*
 2FL03 *Literature in a New Century* for this purpose [26].



111 time to live outside our own skins, our own preconceptions and misconceptions”
112 [30].

113 Despite a general consensus that translations can fulfill a significant role,
114 mediating between cultures, languages and translations in an increasingly global-
115 ized world, “The UK bestseller market is [...] by far the most averse against
116 translations” [38]. But this does not only apply to the UK bestseller lists, but rather
117 to the industry more widely. Regarding actual numbers, there is a metaphorical
118 number which crops up repeatedly: only 3 % of books in the English-speaking
119 world are translations. Sometimes, the dearth of translations in the English-speaking
120 world is called the “Three Percent Problem” [49]. In 2013, in order to understand
121 more precisely where this number came from and whether it was correct, Jasmine
122 Donahaye from the initiative “Literature Across Frontiers” put together the
123 feasibility study *Three percent? Publishing data and statistics on translated*
124 *literature in the United Kingdom and Ireland* [17]. The objective of the study,
125 Donahaye explained, “was to recommend a solution to the problem of lack of
126 translation statistics in the UK and Ireland in the form of a proposal concerning the
127 collection, processing, sharing and analysis of data on published literary transla-
128 tions, in order to facilitate future research and assessment of trends” [18]. Thanks to
129 Donahaye and the “Literature Across Frontiers” initiative (funded in part by the EU
130 and the Arts Council England), we finally have substantive data on translations in
131 the UK. The study is based on British National Bibliography and British Library
132 catalog data for 2000, 2005 and 2008. Using this data, Donahaye was able to show
133 that circa 2.5 % of all publications in the United Kingdom and 4.5 % of published
134 literature (that is, fiction, poetry and drama) are translations [20]: “As the data
135 clearly indicates, literary translation in the UK and Ireland—whether assessed
136 according to its broader definition or restricted to the genre categories of poetry,
137 fiction and drama—is a little higher than the often-cited 3 % figure. Indeed it is
138 consistently greater than 4 %, and, over the sample years, consistently increases.”
139 Nonetheless, even 4 % is significantly lower than the percentages in Germany, for
140 instance, where roundabout 25 % of fiction titles are translations (2014: 26.6 %
141 [12]). Donahaye was also able to show that the most frequent source languages are
142 French, German, and Spanish [19, 21]. Whereas we know from *Buch und*
143 *Buchhandel in Zahlen* that roundabout 70 % (2014: 70.2 % [11]) of literary
144 translations in Germany come from English (AE, BE, other variants), we do not
145 have comparable figures for the proportion of German-language books amongst
146 literary translations published in the UK and Ireland.

147 **Categories of Translated German Fiction**

148 In her 2010 article “A New Great Wall: Why the Crisis in Translation Matters”,
149 Grossman explained:

150 The dearth of translated literature in the English-speaking world represents a
151 new kind of iron curtain we have constructed around ourselves. We are
152 choosing to block off access to the writing of a large and significant portion of

153 the world, including movements and societies whose potentially dreadful
154 political impact on us is made even more menacing by our general lack of
155 familiarity with them. Our stubborn and willful ignorance could have—and
156 arguably, already has had—dangerous consequences. The problem starts in the
157 Anglophone publishing industry, where translated books are not only avoided
158 but actively discouraged [32].

159 In her case study of the translation of award-winning novels, Susan Pickford
160 noted the issue of the dominance of the English language in the global marketplace:
161 “[T]he place allotted to literature in translation in a given culture depends on the
162 relative degree of cultural dominance between the two languages.” She also
163 commented that the costs involved in translation inhibit publishers from commis-
164 sioning foreign titles: “Increasing concentration and competition in the publishing
165 world mean that mainstream UK–US publishers are turning their backs on
166 translation, which inevitably involves costs in terms of rights acquisition and
167 translation fees, while the sales potential of translated titles is perceived as being
168 limited” [48]. According to numbers put forth by John Thompson, an Anglophone
169 publisher must sell 5000 copies of a translated title to cover rights and translation
170 costs in addition to the regular production costs. Yet Thompson claimed that
171 translations only sell about 1500–6000 copies; he also noted that even 5000 copies
172 sold are considered niche publishing in the Anglophone world and would be written
173 off as a bitter disappointment by conglomerates [59].

174 In *Publishing Perspectives*, Esther Mallm, foreign rights manager at S. Fischer
175 Verlage (Holtzbrinck), recently stated, “One of the greatest obstacles in finding
176 partners to publish German books [...] is the simple fact that very few editors read
177 German themselves so they have to rely on the opinion of a third party in order to
178 make a favorable decision” [52]. Connie Hsu, editor at Little, Brown and Company
179 in the US, confirmed that the “discoverability of a title” is the problem for her: “It’s
180 hard to consider a foreign title without reading the manuscript in full, and
181 unfortunately, foreign publishers are understandably wary of investing in a full
182 translation without a guarantee of a sale” [52].

183 Grossman emphasizes the fact that publishers like to pretend that translations are
184 not marketable. Most English-language publishers will argue that there is no
185 demand for these translations and that “English-language readers are put off by
186 translations” [29]. Grossman’s explanation for this phenomenon is in the form of a
187 chicken-and-egg situation: is the limited readership for translations the reason so
188 few translated books are published or is the readership limited because so few
189 translated books are published? She underlines the fact that availability and
190 visibility are key factors in determining the marketability of a product. If publishers
191 do not show interest and make translated literature available, where are the readers
192 going to find it? Peter Ayrton, the founder of the independent publisher Serpent’s
193 Tail, concurred with Grossman’s analysis, “There’s a general perception in the trade
194 that these books can be difficult to sell [...] and as long as that persists it’s a self-
195 fulfilling prophecy” [39]. Christopher MacLehose (MacLehose Press) said that
196 mainstream publishers have a particularly asinine argument for not publishing



197 translations, “The idiotic notion is that there’s enough being written in English”
198 [39].

199 In order to better understand which types of books are able to cross the channel
200 from Germany to the UK, a corpus of relevant titles has been identified and
201 collected on the basis of the British Library’s British National Bibliography
202 (BNB) database. The British Library is one the UK’s legal deposit libraries; so all
203 books published in the UK should be registered here. The research corpus includes
204 all works of fiction that fall under BIC classification ‘F: Fiction and Related
205 Items’, irrespective of genre. The BNB database was searched for German fiction
206 published by in the UK (or a publisher with an office in the UK) since 2000. The
207 list was then examined for duplicates and titles that did not fit within BIC
208 classification F. This ongoing collection of titles provides an overview of the key
209 titles, trends, publishers, and translators involved in the transfer of German fiction
210 into the UK market.

211 So far, we have identified these different main categories of translated German
212 fiction:

213 1. Steadysellers and classics

214
215 Esther Allen, the executive director of Columbia University’s Centre for
216 Literary Translation, said about the crisis of translation in English “The number of
217 novels being published in translation is ridiculously small [...]. If you sort out the
218 authors who are already globally validated—Nobel winners and so on—and the
219 retranslations of the classics, then it’s absurd.” [39] The first group of translated
220 titles are exactly these steadysellers and classics which have been canonized and
221 are thus made available over and over again, republished on the occasion of
222 anniversaries, birthdays, and the like. “All general translation data demonstrate
223 how little is translated in[to] English, if compared to other target languages; and
224 yet more of the ‘elite’ authors are available in English than generally assumed”
225 [37]. For German fiction in translation, this applies to modern classics like
226 Siegfried Lenz as well as the 20th- and 21st-century Nobel Prize winners Heinrich
227 Böll, Günter Grass and Herta Müller. Classics naturally include Schiller and
228 Goethe. Since these texts are out of copyright, there are multiple editions by a
229 variety of publishers.

230 2. Bestsellers

231
232 Often—and more surprisingly—German fantasy and thriller authors make their
233 way across the channel. In our database, names such as Markus Heitz with his
234 Dwarf novels (German publisher: Piper, Orbit; UK publisher: Little, Brown Book
235 Group) or Sebastian Fitzek (German publishers: Lübbe and DroemerKnaur; UK
236 publisher: Atlantic Books) and Frank Schätzing (German publisher: Kiepenheuer &
237 Witsch; UK publisher: Quercus) with their highly readable but probably rather
238 short-lived bestselling thrillers pop up regularly. Crossover authors, whose writing

239 appeals to young adults³ as well as not-so-young adults, are also well-represented in
 240 the list: “The crossover phenomenon has [...] helped to bring some foreign authors
 241 to the attention of the English-speaking world and even to put them on bestseller
 242 lists, one of the most notable examples being Cornelia Funke” [3]. Funke with her
 243 *Inkworld* trilogy (German publisher: Oetinger; UK publisher: ChickenHouse
 244 Scholastic) and countless other books has successfully tapped in English markets
 245 and even into Hollywood. Historically speaking, an author who falls into this
 246 category is Michael Ende with his book *The Neverending Story*. Contemporary
 247 authors who also belong to this category are Walter Moers with his *Zamonia* books
 248 (German publisher: Knaus; UK publisher: Harvill Secker/Penguin Random House)
 249 and Kai Meyer with his fantasy trilogies (German publishers: Carlsen, Heyne,
 250 Loewe and Fischer Jugendbuch/FJB; UK publisher: Egmont).

251 3. “Do mention the war!”

252

253 A clearly identifiable theme is what we like to call “Do mention the war!” books,
 254 a tongue-in-cheek reference to the famous line from the classic BBC comedy sitcom
 255 *Fawlty Towers*: “Don’t mention the war!” There is an obvious preference of British
 256 readers for fiction dealing with the World Wars and Nazi Germany. Anthea Bell
 257 OBE, one of the most prominent translators from German into English, is a keen
 258 observer of the market for translations in the UK. She has repeatedly shared her
 259 impressions on British readers’ tastes. “If you translate from German, you get a lot
 260 of material to do with the Nazi period and the Holocaust,” she said in 2011 [40].
 261 Marion Löhndorf also confirmed this longstanding trend in the *Neue Zürcher*
 262 *Zeitung* in 2012 [42].

263 A recent and particularly interesting example is the better-late-than-never
 264 translation of Hans Fallada’s book *Everyman Dies Alone/Alone in Berlin*, which
 265 depicts the everyday working-class life in Nazi Germany and incorporates the true
 266 story of Otto and Elise Hempel, who wrote and distributed dissident postcards and
 267 were eventually caught, tried and beheaded for their resistance to the regime. The
 268 book was published in Germany in 1947 and never translated into English—until
 269 2009. Michael Hofmann’s translation was well-received and the book’s status as a
 270 re-discovery from the past made it a surprising runaway bestseller in the UK and
 271 even in the USA with hundreds of thousands copies sold. In the *Guardian*, Sam
 272 Jordison wrote “it’s an important book that no English writer could have written—
 273 and so another resounding argument for the importance of taking in translations. It
 274 makes me wonder what else we’ve been missing” [35].

275 Timur Vermes’ satirical novel *Er ist wieder da/Look Who’s Back* (German
 276 publisher: Eichborn; UK publisher: MacLehose Press) is a premier example of this
 277 category. In the novel, Adolf Hitler wakes up in 2011 in Berlin and becomes a

3FL01 ³ There has been an unprecedented boom of children’s and young adult books in translation in the last
 3FL02 few decades, paired with a rise in scholarly interest in the area. The wide range of literature available on
 3FL03 the topic presents the numerous advantages of translations put forward by scholars. One of the most
 3FL04 recognized values of children’s and young adult translations is that they create new settings for children’s
 3FL05 and young adults’ imaginations to develop and are important tools in promoting cultural understanding.
 3FL06 Regarding translation of children’s literature [27, 44, 45, 57].



278 comedian and YouTube star with a reputation for never breaking character as a
 279 Hitler impersonator. The book has been translated into roughly 40 languages and
 280 even recently appeared in Israel [33]. The “sassy translation” by Jamie Bulloch
 281 appeared in 2014, following much international media attention [60]. For instance,
 282 even before the English translation was available, the BBC asked in response to the
 283 publication of the original German version in 2013, of which over 2 million copies
 284 have been sold, “Can the Führer be funny?” [25]. *Guardian* writer Philip Olterman
 285 stated, “there’s no question that the novel has hit upon the key paradox of our
 286 modern obsession with Hitler”. In the meantime, the book has been made into a film
 287 in Germany and has sold extraordinarily well for a book that Olterman says is “a bit
 288 of a slog” [47].

289 4. A potpourri of contemporary German fiction

290
 291 Contemporary German fiction can offer UK readers insight into contemporary
 292 German society. These books can share new perspectives on post-reunification
 293 Germany. Contemporary German fiction in translations can help readers surpass the
 294 stereotypes: past WWII, beyond bratwurst, Christkindelmarkt, Oktoberfest, and
 295 Angela Merkel. Thus, contemporary German fiction can be an important puzzle
 296 piece towards understanding in a changing Europe and world. Names that come to
 297 mind are, for instance, Clemens Mayer, who was born in the German Democratic
 298 Republic in 1977 or Jakob Arjouni, with his crime novels featuring a second-
 299 generation immigrant from Turkey as a detective.

300 But what sorts of German fiction make it across the channel besides the
 301 aforementioned classics, steadysellers, bestselling thrillers, fantasy novels, and
 302 fiction about Nazi Germany? Katy Derbyshire, a translator specialized in German
 303 fiction, recently pinpointed the gender inequality in translated fiction in the
 304 *Guardian*, “Translated novels by female writers are the palomino unicorns of the
 305 publishing world—not just unusual, but a small subset within a subset. Not only do
 306 translations make up a tiny fraction of the books brought out in the UK and US, but
 307 only about a quarter of them are by women” [15]. Contemporary German female
 308 writers such as Monika Held, Karen Duve or Julia Franck have crossed the channel,
 309 but as our preliminary findings show, they are few and far between. In her insightful
 310 article, Derbyshire looked for reasons for this imbalance and noted that until
 311 recently, novels translated from the German “tended to be cerebral literary novels”,
 312 which was often (incorrectly) associated mainly with male authors, and “more
 313 commercial or accessible writing simply wasn’t crossing the language barrier” [15].
 314 She is not the only book industry observer who has identified a recent shift in
 315 content and style in translated fiction. In 2005, Carter Dougherty wrote in the *New*
 316 *York Times* that the new German novel was becoming “less weighty and more
 317 exportable”, naming for instance Sven Regener or Daniel Kehlmann. “Having
 318 eschewed the traditional model of heavy, politics-laden prose in favor of light, even
 319 lively storytelling, German authors are in the midst of a breakthrough that is
 320 propelling their work to hitherto unfound success abroad” [22].

321 There are a number of actors involved in this process, if indeed we can consider it
 322 as a breakthrough. The German authors themselves have become active players in

323 the translation market: “Once content to write for a small circle of readers at home,
324 they have tuned their antennae toward the rest of world, testing out ideas on
325 publishers with an eye toward eventual sales abroad” [22]. Translators are
326 advocates for books in translations, out of idealism and, naturally, out of good
327 business sense. Besides Anthea Bell OBE, other renowned British translators of
328 German fiction are Sally-Jane Spencer, Michael Hofmann, John Maxwell Brown-
329 john, Jamie Bulloch, and Katy Derbyshire. Derbyshire lives in Berlin and writes
330 about her work as a translator and scout of new German fiction on her blog called
331 *Love German Books* [16]. Together with the British indie publisher And Other
332 Stories [1], she has conducted reading groups in Berlin, which can be considered
333 “editorial crowd-sourcing” for translations [14].

334 Indie publishers such as And Other Stories have proven to be safe havens for
335 novels in translations from all sorts of languages. In the past 10 years, British indie
336 publishers have welcomed literature from a variety of backgrounds into their
337 programs. Donahaye [17] lists publishers (conglomerate and indie) that publish
338 translations more generally. As regards to German fiction, there are some that have a
339 special connection, such as Haus Publishing, founded in 2003 by Barbara
340 Schwepcke, a German-born journalist. So far, however, no UK indie publisher
341 has been founded that only specializes in German(-language) fiction, whereas there
342 is a specialized UK publisher for French books: Gallic Books, founded in 2007 by
343 two former Random House editors, Jane Aitken and Pilar Webb.

344 Whether conglomerate or indie, both types of publishers are happy to accept
345 translations subsidies from the Goethe Institute [61] and the London-based initiative
346 “New Books in German” (NBG) [43]. NBG, founded in 1996, functions as an
347 independent intermediary addressing publishers in the UK and the US to encourage
348 them to commission more translations of books written in German by providing an
349 overview of the thousands of new titles published in Germany, Austria and
350 Switzerland each year. Consisting of a periodical and a website (launched in 1999),
351 NBG offers impartial orientation and guidance for readers of English, not only
352 focusing on private consumers or editors from publishing houses, but also trying to
353 generate attention for the selected titles among participants from every branch of the
354 UK and US book trade, such as translators, literary critics and journalists,
355 booksellers, German departments in universities and libraries [43]. The magazine
356 introduces an average of 35 titles per issue to give a preselected overview of the
357 German-language book market covering fiction, non-fiction, and young-adult
358 titles—many of them standing out as highbrow literature due to either winning the
359 German Book Prize or being short-respectively longlisted for the award. Published
360 twice a year by the British Center for Literary Translation, the spring issue coincides
361 with the London Book Fair and the autumn issue appears just in time for the
362 Frankfurt Book Fair. The magazine, distributed primarily throughout the Anglo-
363 phone language area by the London-based office, the Goethe-Institut, the Austrian,
364 German and Swiss embassies, the Frankfurt Book Fair and the German Book Office
365 in New York, contains reviews of contemporary German-language books, that are
366 chosen and reviewed by the editorial committee, consisting of different guest
367 members or editorial advisors, such as UK editors, publishers, booksellers, scouts or
368 agents, but mostly of representatives of NBG’s sponsors. Financial support is



369 afforded by institutions from all three countries—the Foreign Ministries of Austria,
370 Germany and Switzerland, Pro Helvetia, the Arts Council of Switzerland, the
371 Goethe-Institut in Munich and London, the German Book Office in New York, the
372 International Division of the Frankfurt Book Fair and the German Publishers &
373 Booksellers Association. Besides these funds, a contribution to the magazine costs
374 is made by German publishers for each book featured.

375 In addition to actual funding, prizes function as symbolic capital, which make
376 books more marketable and attractive for translation [8, 23, 58]. As Rebecca Braun
377 stated, the German Book Prize, founded in 2005, “explicitly aims at being used as a
378 promotional tool to help an author move beyond the German frame of literary
379 valuation” [9]. Braun argued convincingly that “unlike the many named regional
380 and national prizes that seek to tie an author to a geographical place and/or a
381 cultural tradition, the award [the German Book Prize] deliberately does not reward
382 authors for fitting in with a pre-existing, normative understanding of German
383 culture. Instead, it aims to construct both authors and their work as cultural
384 ambassadors, who, in their anticipated international success, will help shape an
385 understanding of German culture as inherently embedded in wider global
386 discourse” [9]. In her analysis of the impact of the prize on German-language
387 fiction abroad Sally-Ann Spencer confirmed that the award had a positive effect on
388 overseas adoptions “not least through its assertion that German-language fiction
389 deserves international prizing” [56].

390 As Ghesquire [27] stated, a number of factors influence the decision for the
391 purchase of translation rights, including the popularity of a book in the original
392 language. And of course, the German Book Prize winners are not all equally
393 successful in the original language and regarding translations. While the Book Prize
394 guarantees media attention and the books normally sell quite well, not all of them
395 become immediate bestsellers. Krechel’s complex and very long novel *Landgericht*
396 (2012), for instance, has not been translated into any language, whereas Franck’s
397 *Die Mittagsfrau/The Blind Side of the Heart* (2007, transl. 2009) has been translated
398 into roughly two dozen languages in a multitude of editions.

399 Analysis of the current translation statistics for the German Book Prize, based on
400 the data in the German National Library catalog and on information on publishers’
401 websites, showed that 46 % of the prizewinners haven been or will appear with
402 publishers based exclusively or with a base in the UK. Over 60 % of the
403 prizewinners have been translated into English or the English-language rights have
404 been sold. Considering the low percentage of translations into English in general,
405 over 60 % is an impressive quota.

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408

409	Year	Author, short title, original publisher	Translator, UK/US publisher, year of publication
412	2005	Arno Geiger, <i>Es geht uns gut</i> , Hanser	Maria Poglitsch Bauer, Ariadne Press (CA/USA), 2011
413	2006	Katharina Hacker, <i>Habenichtse</i> , Suhrkamp	Helen Atkins, Europa Ed. (NY/USA), 2008
414	2007	Julia Franck, <i>Die Mittagsfrau</i> , S. Fischer	Anthea Bell, Harvill Secker, 2009
415	2008	Uwe Tellkamp, <i>Der Turm</i> , Suhrkamp	Mike Mitchell, Allan Lane, 2014



Year	Author, short title, original publisher	Translator, UK/US publisher, year of publication
2009	Kathrin Schmidt, <i>Du stirbst nicht</i> , Kiepenheuer & Witsch	still available
2010	Melinda Nadj Abonji, <i>Tauben fliegen auf</i> , Jung und Jung Verlag	Tess Lewis, Seagull Books, 2014
2011	Eugen Ruge, <i>In Zeiten des abnehmenden Lichts</i> , Rowohlt	Anthea Bell, Faber and Faber, 2013 (and Graywolf Press, Minneapolis/USA)
2012	Ursula Krechel, <i>Landgericht</i> , Jung und Jung Verlag	still available
2013	Terézia Mora, <i>Das Ungeheuer</i> , Luchterhand	still available
2014	Lutz Seiler, <i>Kruso</i> , Suhrkamp	English-language world rights sold to Scribe (Melbourne and London)
2015	Frank Witzel, <i>Die Erfindung der RAF...</i> , Matthes und Seitz	still available

Conclusions and Outlook

As the British publishing industry becomes increasingly concentrated into the hand of fewer, large conglomerates, more niche (and unprofitable) areas of publishing, such as translation, tend to be overlooked. Translation in the book publishing industry is an interesting and evolving area of research, despite its comparatively marginal economic significance in the UK market. Nonetheless: although the British publishing industry falls well below its German counterpart with regards to the number of translations it publishes, it does publish (slightly) above the oft-quoted 3 %.

This paper, primarily based on the preliminary findings of our research and literature review, gives a broad overview of the relationship between the British publishing industry and German books: a field that has been hitherto ignored and not treated sufficiently. Our preliminary research identified four main categories for German fiction translated into English. As this paper has shown, the Anglo-American publishing industries continue to fall behind their non-English-language colleagues in terms of language diversity in cultural output. This homogenization of the market has many implications for a nation's readers, for example many scholars have argued that translations are a tool for cultural awareness and understanding [27, 28, 44, 57]. There are, however, a number of structures and mechanisms in place that support and promote translated (German) books, some of which [i.e. literary prizes, dedicated websites and magazines, funding etc.] have been discussed in this paper. The director of the British Centre for Literary Translation, Amanda Hopkinson, has said that she detects "positive signs" in the UK, identifying a "groundswell of opinion from the grass roots [...] which we should be taking notice of". For Hopkinson, translation is a crucial tool for promoting mutual understanding. "We shouldn't be discussing other cultures through English culture," she

454 emphasized, in 2007, “we should be discovering their own cultures, what they have
455 to say for themselves” [39].

456 Grossman [31] has argued that translations are important for all parties involved
457 (author, publisher and consumer/reader); therefore more extensive research
458 (including interviews with the key actors involved in the publication, distribution
459 and reception of German books in the UK) will be conducted to treat the topic more
460 thoroughly. Our forthcoming research will explore these issues and concepts in
461 more depth.

462 This case study can be understood as one stepping-stone towards a more
463 comprehensive understanding of the culture of translation in the UK. A logical next
464 step within the framework of our German-British case study will also be a
465 comparison of the cultural and literary exchange between the two countries, that is,
466 an analysis of the types of English-language books translated into German and the
467 actors involved in this process. Beyond this particular case study, with a view
468 towards understanding the subtle and not-so-subtle differences in European
469 culture(s) of translation, we would welcome a comparison of our results with data
470 on the types of French, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Swedish etc. books which make
471 their way into British bookstores in translation.
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