

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**The Translation of Tolkien's Poetry**

'Far over the Misty Mountain Cold' and "Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel"

**BA thesis**

**EVELIN JÕEMAA**

**SUPERVISOR: *Lect.* KATILIINA GIELEN (PhD)**

**TARTU**

**2019**

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the translation of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's poem 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold' from his book *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*, which was published in 1937. The thesis will analyse the English version of the poem and compare it to its Estonian translation "Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel" by Harald Rajamets, which was published in 1977 in Lia Rajandi's translation of *The Hobbit* called "Kääbik, ehk, Sinna ja tagasi".

The first part of the thesis will give an overview of the role of poetry in Tolkien's writing, discuss the key aspects of translating poetry and introduce Harald Rajamets as a translator. The empirical part consists of the analyses of 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold' and its Estonian translation "Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel" concentrating on the comparison of the differences between the source text and the translation regarding the narrative structure, metre, rhyme, and repetitions. A summary of the analysis will be presented in the conclusion.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	2
INTRODUCTION .....	4
1 TOLKIEN, POETRY AND THE TRANSLATION .....	5
1.1 Role of Poetry in J. R. R. Tolkien’s Writing .....	5
1.2 Translating Poetry .....	8
1.3 Harald Rajamets as a Translator .....	11
2 ‘FAR OVER THE MISTY MOUNTAINS COLD’ .....	13
2.1 The Analysis of the English Original Poem .....	13
2.1.1 Narrative .....	13
2.1.2 Metre and Rhyme Scheme .....	14
2.1.3 Repetitions .....	16
2.2 The Analysis of the Estonian Translation of the Poem .....	17
2.2.1 Narrative .....	17
2.2.2 Metre and Rhyme Scheme .....	18
2.2.3 Repetitions .....	21
2.2.4 Changes to the Contents in the Estonian Translation .....	22
CONCLUSION .....	26
REFERENCES .....	28
Appendix 1: ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’ and “Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel”. 31	
RESÜMEE .....	32
Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks .....	33
Autorsuse kinnitus .....	34

## INTRODUCTION

The process of translation is a complex task and some genres have added difficulties that make it more laborious. Poetry translation can be regarded as more complex since the translator has to take into consideration formal constraints, such as meter and rhyme.

Harald Rajamets (1924-2007), an Estonian translator who specialized in translating verse, has translated the poems in J. R. R. Tolkien's novel *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* (1937), including the well-known song 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold'. In addition to the difficulties that translators face when translating poems, 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold' is set in a fictional fantasy world, meaning that the translator is expected to translate the source text in a way that fits into the fictional world it is a part of.

This thesis will focus on the difficulties surrounding poetry translation in general, including the translation norms in the target language through Harald Rajamets' translation of 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold'. The first part of this thesis gives an overview of poetry translation in general, the role poetry plays in Tolkien's writing, and introduces Rajamets as a translator. The second part of this thesis focuses on the analysis of Harald Rajamets' translation of 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold'.

# 1 TOLKIEN, POETRY AND THE TRANSLATION

## 1.1 Role of Poetry in J. R. R. Tolkien's Writing

J. R. R. Tolkien's novels about Middle-earth, with the most notable works being *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* (1937; hereinafter referred to as *The Hobbit*), and *The Silmarillion* (1977), include many songs and poems that enrich the texts, making the fictional world more complex and varied. Some of the best-known poems from the Middle-earth stories are, for example, 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold' (*The Hobbit*), 'The Ring Verse', and 'All That is Gold Does Not Glitter' (*The Fellowship of the Ring*).

Verse is used for various reasons in Tolkien's fictional universe and it varies in content, form, and quality, depending on which character performs the song or the poem (Donnelly 2015: 139). For example, hobbits, who value a simple life, have more rustic songs, for example drinking songs that have a simple rhyme and monosyllabic rhythms, while the more sophisticated elves have more complex songs and ballads (Turner 2005: 156-157). Some poems, especially popular among the hobbits, are work or marching songs, and they are used to set the rhythm for the activities or pace for walking for the characters on their journey.

Another reason that Tolkien's writings include poems is that the events take place in a fictional world and time when not everyone was literate, for example, some of the members of the hobbits (Turner 2005: 155). Poems and songs, therefore, are used to talk about past events and fallen heroes, serving as an ancient form of collective memory. What is more, the characters from both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are on different journeys and the

word of mouth is the easiest way to tell stories and it is easier to remember stories that rhyme or have a melody.

There are also many poems which talk about history and mythology, which is a way for Tolkien to introduce his readers to the history of his fictional universe in a way that fits into his writing (Straubhaar 2005: 236), for example the poem 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold', which introduces the reader to the history of the dwarves and their battle with the dragon Smaug. That way, by having one of his fictional characters recite a poem about the past, Tolkien has seamlessly made it clear to the reader what the thriving force of the characters is without long history lessons. Using poetry in the construction of the past adds an extra virtue elevating the fictional history and celebrating it as something heroic.

However, in the fictional universe of the Middle-earth, an interesting double layer of description is constructed by poems that for one species are the history and for another, mythology. This is due to many of the difference in the nature of characters: some characters, such as elves, are immortal and thousands of years old and what is mythology for the mortal species, such as humans and hobbits, is perceived as history for the immortal species. An example of that is from *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), where a poem called 'Namárië', or 'Goodbye' in English, talks about events and lands that can be considered history for the immortal elf Galadriel who recites it but is mythology for those mortals who have not had any contact with elves. Poems like 'Namárië' are meant to reflect the fictional elvish culture that goes back to the mythological times that no one but them would remember (Turner 2005: 156).

One of the functions of verses in Tolkien's writing is its use in everyday conversation, creating thus a different type of reality, fictional reality. For instance, in the Middle-earth universe, some of Tolkien's fictional characters use verse when saying goodbye to a family member and it is used to create heightened dramatic tension (Straubhaar 2005: 236). Using both prose and verse in one piece of writing was not common during the time when Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Old Norse literature in particular can be considered an inspiration for the use of verse in conversation, since it was used in Old Norse literature (Straubhaar 2005: 237). Tolkien was interested in philology since he was very young, and he was interested in how languages were constructed and the language that appealed to him the most was Anglo-Saxon, or Old English (Carpenter 1977: 34). That is where his interest in languages began and he went on to study English Language and Literature and became more interested in Germanic literature and other Germanic languages (Carpenter 1977: 55), which includes Old Norse and Norse literature. Therefore, it is not surprising that he included aspects of Old Norse literature in his writings, such as the aforementioned inclusion of verse in conversation.

Verse has another important role in Tolkien's writing, especially in *The Hobbit*. It is used in riddles. An encounter between the main character of *The Hobbit* and a character called Gollum plays an important role in the storyline of both *The Hobbit* as well as *The Lord of the Rings*. Their encounter includes the use of short riddles, all of which are structured as poems with an end rhyme. Despite their short encounter, the characters exchange eight riddles and it elevates the fictional culture and is another example of how texts are easier to remember when they have a rhyme and rhythm.

Poems in Tolkien's writing play an important part in altering the emotional state of the reader and many poems can actually be categorized as work songs that are used to coordinate the timing and rhythm of an activity between workers who need to be synchronized. One of those songs, for example, is 'Chip the Glasses and Crack the Plates' in *The Hobbit*, which is used to set the rhythm for cleaning and washing the dishes. Tolkien has emphasized that it is important to imagine the melody while reading the songs (Jorgensen 2006: 3). The reason for that is that one of the main purposes of a work song is to set a rhythm of an activity and imagining the rhythm gives the reader a better grasp of the storyline. Therefore, rhythm is important to the work songs, more precisely, it is important for them to have a repetitive rhythm. Thus, we can say that the formal plain is the dominant in such songs meaning that it has a strict metre and rhyme scheme ('Chip the Glasses and Crack the Plates' follows ABAB rhyme scheme) while being quite simple and direct in meaning.

## 1.2 Translating Poetry

Translating can be defined in several different ways depending on the type of text and target audience, among other things. Susan Bassnett (2002: 12) defines translation as the: "...rendering of a source language (SL) text into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted." Although this definition limits translation into a process that takes place only between two languages, it expresses the goal of the most widely known purpose of

translation, which is to convey the meaning of the source text in the target language, where the source text is often prose, rather than poetry.

Bassnett's definition of translation, however, also applies well to the translation of poetry, since in addition to the importance of the surface meaning, Bassnett mentions that it is important to preserve the structure of the source language text as closely as possible and in poetry formal features often support the meaning or give it a double layer. Applying the metrical system of the original has also been important in Estonian poetry translation tradition for several different reasons. According to Tafenau and Lotman (2016: 10), one of the reasons why the formal features of the original were considered important is that early poetry translators in Estonia regarded highly and were fascinated by the theories of a German poet Martin Opitz (1597-1639). Opitz laid down a system of rigorous and strict rules concerning poetry. He believed that in German poetry, verse has to consist of alternating stressed and unstressed syllables (Tafenau and Lotman 2016: 10). Another important historical reason for the development of strict formal requirements in poetry and poetry translation in Estonia is the work of early Estonian literary societies, especially *Noor Eesti*. A group of poets and translators of poetry called *Arbujad*, active during the 1920 and 1930s, who valued the perfection of strict and more complex rhyme schemes and opposed poetic freedom in form (Oras 1984: 174) also contributed heavily to the purity of form in both Estonian poetry as well as in translations.

According to Selver (1966: 21), the main components of poems, and therefore also poetry translation, are the contents, rhythmic structure, and the verbal effects, such as musical qualities. Therefore, the translation can, to an extent, also be analyzed by evaluating how well the translation conveys the original content, rhythmic structure, and verbal effects from the

source language into the target language. Poetry translation norms in Estonia at the time when *The Hobbit* was translated were focused on conveying the form and structure of the source text, owing to Ain Kaalep, an influential Estonian poet and translator who enriched the Estonian literary scene by introducing new forms of poetry through translations (Lotman and Lotman 2008). Heavily influenced by Kaalep, it became a norm to follow the metrics of the source text in poetry translation. However, in the case of poetry translation, using the same rhythmic structure as the source text can be challenging, especially if the source language and the target language are very different and, for example, come from different language families. This is often the case when translating from Germanic languages into Finno-Ugric languages. Hendrik Sepamaa, a prolific Estonian translator, has said in 1967 that: "...translation must be literary and, in both form and content, so adequate as if the author had written it in Estonian in the first place." (Sepamaa 1967: 66)<sup>1</sup>. This explanation includes, in a way, a recognition that languages are different, and the way author wrote, for example, a poem in English, maybe would have been different to a way they would have written it in another language.

André Lefevere, a translation theorist, has proposed that there are seven different strategies of translating poetry: phonemic translation, literal or word for word translation, metrical translation, verse to prose translation, rhymed translation, blank/free verse translation and interpretation (Lefevere, cited in Kolahi 2012: 460). The aim of phonemic translation is to reproduce the sounds of the source text in the target language (Lefevere, cited in Kolahi 2012: 460). With metrical and rhymed translations, the aim is to use the same metre and/or rhyme respectively in translation as the source text (Lefevere, cited in Kolahi 2012: 460). Both verse

---

<sup>1</sup> Translations provided by the author of this thesis.

to prose and blank/free verse translations aim to replicate the semantics of the source text by distorting the form, either by converting verse to prose or, in case of blank/free verse translation, by translating the source text into the target language as free verse (Lefevere, cited in Kolahi 2012: 460). Lefevere's last strategy for translating poetry is through interpretations, where the translator, in essence, creates their own text or poem that has been inspired by the source text (Lefevere, cited in Kolahi 2012: 460).

### **1.3 Harald Rajamets as a Translator**

Harald Rajamets was an Estonian translator and editor, who translated works from Lithuanian, Swedish, Polish, Danish, Ukrainian, Russian, Italian, German and English into Estonian, but he is probably best known for translating works of William Shakespeare from English into Estonian, especially Shakespeare's sonnets (Kaevats 2000: 403). In addition to that, he has also translated poems in literary works translated by other translators, such as Kristina Uluots' translation of Ransom Riggs' novel *Hollow City* and Lia Rajandi's translation of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*. Rajamets studied Finno-Ugric languages at the University of Tartu from 1947 to 1950 and in 1958 he became a freelance translator (Kaevats 2000: 403).

In 1994, he said in a radio interview that his relationship with poetry took a direction towards translation already in school and that despite writing his own poems occasionally, he had no desire to be a poet, because he felt that he had nothing to say (Rajamets 1994). For him, it was very important to choose poems and texts that he enjoyed. He preferred lyrical and more romantic poetry over rational poetry and in his translations, he wanted to stay as close to the form of the source text as possible (Rajamets 1994). That is something that Tolkien, the

author of 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold', would have approved of since according to Turner (2005: 45) when Tolkien himself translated poetry, he also chose to use the original metre of the poems when translating Old English and Middle English poems into contemporary English. Harald Rajamets has said that it is easy to come up with new words in Estonian in a way that everyone understands the new word even if they have never seen it before (Rajamets 1994). Rajamets has said that "...translation is, first and foremost, a game. There is some kind of special charm and glamour to the fact that I have been able to make this game into my career and remain a player." (Rajamets 1994).

In the following chapter, I am going to analyse Tolkien's poem 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold' translated by Rajamets. I have first studied the English original, looking especially at the narrative structures of the poem, the poem's metre and rhyme scheme, and instances of repetition. What follows is the analysis of the same components of the poem's Estonian translation and a discussion on the similarities and differences between the source text and the translation as well as the effects the changes have on the translation.

## 2 'FAR OVER THE MISTY MOUNTAINS COLD'

### 2.1 The Analysis of the English Original Poem

#### 2.1.1 Narrative

'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold' is a narrative poem, which talks about the history of the dwarves, fictional humanoids that exist in the novel *The Hobbit*. The narrative time of the poem is not consistent, it alternates between the historical present, where the narrator talks in the present tense about upcoming plans, and past simple tense during the flashbacks, also known as analepses, to the historical events. 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold' also alternates between a first-person and a third-person narrative point of view. Some parts of it are written in the first-person plural form, meaning that the character telling the story was part of the events that the poem describes, along with most of the other characters listening to him. It is a temporary first-person narration since the rest of the novel it is a part of is written in third person.

Although there are not many lines in the poem that clearly refer to its narrative point of view, there is one in the first stanza: *We must away ere break of day*. Here the narrator is referring to himself and his companions. Another reference to the narrative point of view comes from the fifth and tenth stanzas, where the narrator talks about *our long-forgotten gold* and *our harps and gold*. However, there are some exceptions to that. Although the narrator talks about he and his companions having to win back their gold, he tells the rest of the poem in the third-person narrative mode. When talking about the events of the past, the narrator uses the third-person narrative, despite being a part of the events he describes. For example, in the ninth stanza, the narrator describes the dwarves fleeing from the dragon: *The dwarves, they*

heard the tramp of doom. **They** fled their hall to dying fall. Despite it not being mentioned in the poem, the narrator himself was one of the fleeing dwarves.

### 2.1.2 Metre and Rhyme Scheme

The metre of a poem shows its rhythmic structure and how stressed and unstressed syllables alternate. Laurence Perrine (1956: 163) has said: “To measure something we must have a unit of measurement. /.../ For measuring verse, we use the foot, the line, and (sometimes) the stanza.” ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’ is composed of iambic feet. Iambic feet are common in English and they contain an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (Wallace 1996: 4). In the following example, the stressed syllables will be marked in bold, while the unstressed ones will be left unchanged. Since the first stanza has an exception in the first line that makes it slightly different from the rest of the poem, the following example is from the sixth stanza of the English version of the poem.

Goblets || they **carved** || there **for** || themselves  
 And **harps** || of **gold**; || where **no** || man **delves**  
 There **lay** || they **long** || and **many** || a **song**  
 Was **sung** || **unheard** || by **men** || or **elves**.

Each line consists of four unstressed and four stressed syllables, meaning that they consist of four iambic feet, constituting iambic tetrameter. In the example above the iambic feet have been separated by a caesura. Iambic tetrameter has been a preferred metre by many famous poets in the English language, such as Andrew Marvell and Jonathan Swift (Hobsbaum 1995: 3).

However, there are three exceptions in the poem to the regular iambic feet, where the lines have a mix of anapaests and iambs and they have nine syllables instead of eight and the

first metrical foot is an anapaest, meaning that it consists of two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed one. The first and the fifth stanza start with the same line: “Far **over** || the **mis** || ty **moun** || tains **cold**.” In that line, there are nine syllables, owing to the word *far* at the beginning of the line. Another example of this is in the tenth stanza, where the first line is “Far **over** || the **mis** || ty **moun** || tains **grim**.” Once again, the extra syllable is due to the word *far* at the beginning of the line.

The rhyme scheme is uniform throughout the whole poem. The English version of the poem has both an end and an internal rhyme, and the whole poem follows the AABA rhyme scheme. The first, second, and fourth lines form the end rhyme, with the last words of all three lines rhyming. For example, in the first stanza, which can be seen below this paragraph, the last words of the first, second, and fourth line are as follows: *cold, old, gold*. The third lines of each stanza also have an internal rhyme. For example, the third line in the first stanza is *We must away ere break of day* where the words *away* and *day* rhyme, and the third line in the second stanza is *In places deep, where dark things sleep* where the words *deep* and *sleep* rhyme. In addition to the whole poem following the same rhyme scheme (AABA), Tolkien has also used a masculine rhyme, meaning that the rhyme occurs on the stressed last syllable of the line.

Far **over** || the **mis** || ty **moun** || tains **cold**  
 To **dun** || geons **deep** || and **ca** || verns **old**  
 We **must** || away || ere **break** || of **day**  
 To **seek** || the **pale** || enchant || ed **gold**.

The rhyme occurs in the following syllables: cold, old and gold. All these syllables are the last syllables of the line in addition to being stressed, meaning that they are masculine. The third

line has an internal rhyme with masculine endings. The internal rhyme in the third line occurs in the following stressed syllables: *way* and *day*.

### 2.1.3 Repetitions

‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’ is rich in repetitions, meaning that there are certain syllables or sounds which repeat throughout a line or a stanza. Repetitions can help add rhythm to the poems, making them more melodic. In some cases, repetition can also be used to emphasize a word or a phrase.

One type of repetition is alliteration, which is the repetition of initial consonant sounds (Perrine 1956: 149). In the following stanza, the instances of alliteration will be underlined. In this stanza, alliteration is used to emphasize the words *misty mountains* and *dungeons deep*. It brings out the primary destination of the planned journey that the poem describes, a journey over the misty mountains to the deep dungeons under the Lonely Mountain.

Far **o**ver || the **m**is || ty **m**oun || tains **c**old  
 To **d**un || geons **d**eep || and **c**a || verns **o**ld  
 We **m**ust || **a**way || ere **b**reak || of **d**ay  
 To **s**eek || the **p**ale || **e**nchant || ed **g**old.

Another type of repetition that occurs in this poem is assonance, which is the repetition of vowel sounds (Perrine 1956: 149). In the following stanza, the occurrence of assonance will be underlined. The following stanza exemplifies the use of repetition to add rhythm and make the poem more melodic. For example, the repetition of the sound /ei/ in the third line creates a repetitive pattern that makes the poem seem to have a melody when read out loud.

Far **o**ver || the **m**is || ty **m**oun || tains **c**old  
 To **d**un || **g**eons **d**eep || and **c**a || verns **o**ld  
 We **m**ust || **a**way || ere **b**reak || of **d**ay  
 To **s**eek || the **p**ale || **e**nchant || ed **g**old.

The third most commonly occurring type of repetition is consonance. Consonance is, similarly to alliteration, the repetition of similar-sounding consonants. However, as opposed to alliteration, consonance is the repetition of final consonant sounds. In the following stanza, the occurrence of consonance will be underlined. In this stanza, there are two different uses of consonance. The primary use of consonance is in the plural form of the words, such as *dwarves*, *spells*, *hammers*, *bells*, *places*, *things*, *halls* and *fells*. It is unusual in this poem to have so many plural forms in one stanza, meaning that the use of them emphasizes those words, for example how the hammers sound like bells. The second use of consonance is in the internal masculine ending in the third line, there the words *deep* and *sleep* rhyme.

The **dwarves**  || of **yore** || made **might** || y **spells**   
 While **ham** || mers **fell** || like **ring** || ing **bells**   
 In **plac** || es **deep**, || where **dark** || things **sleep**,  
 In **hol** || low **halls**  || beneath || the **fells** .

## 2.2 The Analysis of the Estonian Translation of the Poem

### 2.2.1 Narrative

Similarly to the English version, the narrative time of the poem is not consistent in the Estonian translation, and it alternates between the historical present when the narrator talks in the present tense with his listeners, and simple past tense during the flashbacks to refer to the events that happened before the narration. However, in the Estonian translation Rajamets has also used first-person plural present imperative with the word *mingem* in the first line of the poem, which is not used in the English language. Another similarity between the English and Estonian versions is the alternating narrative point of view. Some parts of the Estonian

translation are written in the first-person plural form and are, similarly to the English version, a temporary first-person narration within a novel that is written in third-person.

There are many examples of the first-person plural narration, such as the first stanza where the first line *Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel*, the second line *On udused külmad mäed me teel*, and the fourth line *me võlukuld meid ootab veel* all refer to the first-person plural narrative. The third-person narrative point of view is used during the narrator's flashbacks to the historical events he describes. For example, in the second line of the eighth stanza, the narrator talks about the people watching the destruction in horror: *kõik rahvas vaatas, hirmust hell*. This means that the narrator is describing the events that he himself was not a part of, since, as the reader finds out from the novel, he was not a part of the crowd in the dale that this line describes.

### 2.2.2 Metre and Rhyme Scheme

Estonian translation of the poem follows the same metre as the English version. Previously, to exemplify the metre of the English version of the poem, the sixth stanza was used and therefore the following example comes from the sixth stanza of the Estonian translation of the poem. Stressed syllables are marked in bold and unstressed syllables are left unchanged. The iambic feet are separated by a caesura.

Ka **kau** || neid **peek** || reid **teh** || ti **seal**  
 ja **kul** || last **kand** || leid, **kee** || led **peal**;  
 ei **leid** || nud **viis** || neilt **kuula** || jaid **siis**,  
 kus **ini** || me **maad** || ei **kae** || va **eal**.

As can be seen from the example, unstressed syllables are followed by stressed syllables, the same way as in the English version of the poem. In each line there are eight

syllables in total, four unstressed and four stressed ones, meaning that each line has four iambic feet. Therefore, the Estonian translation is written in iambic tetrameter, just like the English version. However, the Estonian version of the poem does not have any exceptions to the metre like in the English version. The Estonian translation has eight syllables in each line, and the first lines of the first, fifth, and tenth stanzas do not have nine syllables as they do in the English version. The English version of the poem has the word *far* at the beginning of the aforementioned lines, emphasizing the length of the journey. In the Estonian translation, the reference to the distance has been relocated to the third line with the word *kaugemal*. Although the translator has not omitted the reference to how far the dwarves have to journey altogether, he has moved it to a much later part of the poem, meaning that the length of the journey is not as emphasized as it is in the English version.

In the Estonian translation, the lack of deviation in the aforementioned lines is likely because of the translation norms of that time. According to Kaldjärv (2016: 75), the role of translation in Estonia has been to enrich and develop the Estonian language and because of that, consistency and also using the same metre and rhyme as the source text was sometimes considered more important than the contents or the accuracy of the descriptions. This method of verse translation, where the translator follows the metre and rhyme scheme of the source text, also called the equiprosodic translation of verse, gained popularity in the 1950s with the equiprosodic translation of Homer's works into Estonian and maintained its popularity until the middle of the 1970s when other methods of translation were introduced, and it became the translator's decision to choose between different methods (Pöldmäe 1977: 567-568). The Estonian translation of *The Hobbit* was first published in 1977, meaning that the equiprosodic translation of verse was still a widely used method of verse translation. Furthermore, in 1994,

Rajamets said in a radio interview that he is more comfortable with translating verse with a strict rhyme scheme rather than a slant or imperfect rhyme (Rajamets 1994). Owing to that, Rajamets chose to follow the same metre but omitted the deviations in the first, fifth and tenth stanza.

In his translation of ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’, Rajamets has kept the structure of the poem the same as the original English version, with the poem having ten stanzas and each stanza having four lines. However, the number of words in each line is significantly lower in the Estonian translation. Rajamets wrote the translation in the same metre as the original author, Tolkien. Therefore, the Estonian translation has the same number of syllables per line, the only exceptions being the first lines of the first, fifth, and tenth stanza. However, the words in the Estonian language are generally longer, meaning that there could be fewer words per line. Due to that, the overall number of words is very different when comparing the source text to the translation. The combined number of lexical and grammatical words in the English version is 228, while the Estonian translation only has 164, meaning that the word count has decreased by approximately 28,1%.

Harald Rajamets has retained the same AABA rhyme scheme in his translation of the poem. In Estonian, the poem also has both end and internal rhymes, like in the English version. The first, second, and fourth lines create the end rhyme and the third line has an internal rhyme. For example, the Estonian translation has the following words forming the end rhyme in the first, second, and fourth lines of the first stanza: *eel*, *teel*, *veel*. The vocabulary is different, but the rhyme scheme and metre has been kept the same and the original meaning of the stanza has been altered slightly to achieve that. The third line, like in the English version, has an internal rhyme. For example, the third line of the first stanza is *kuid kaugemal ürgkalju*

*all* with the words *kaugemal* and *all* forming the internal rhyme, and the third line of the second stanza is *kus päev kui öö, virk sepatöö* with the words *öö* and *sepatöö* forming the internal rhyme.

### 2.2.3 Repetitions

Similarly to the English version, the Estonian translation is rich in repetitions. The sixth stanza of the Estonian translation, for example, is a good example of the occurrence of alliteration, more specifically the repetition of the letter [k] three times in a row, which adds rhythm to the poem.

Ka **kau** || neid **peek** || reid **teh** || ti **seal**  
 ja **kul** || last **kand** || leid, **kee** || led **peal**;  
 ei **leid** || nud **viis** || neilt **kuula** || jaid **siis**,  
 kus **ini** || me **maad** || ei **kae** || va **eal**.

The same stanza can be considered a good example of assonance as well, the repetition of the vowel sounds. The occurrence of assonance will be underlined. The repetition of vowel sounds, for example the repetition of the letter [a] in the last line, adds a melody to the poem when read out loud.

Ka **kau** || neid **peek** || reid **teh** || ti seal  
 ja **kul** || last **kand** || leid, **kee** || led **peal**;  
 ei **leid** || nud **viis** || neilt **kuula** || jaid **siis**,  
 kus **ini** || me maad || ei **kae** || va **eal**.

Consonance, or the occurrence of repetitive consonants in the final syllables, can also be seen in the sixth stanza of the Estonian translation of ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’. The occurrence of consonance will be underlined. In this stanza, the primary use of consonance is in the use of the plural form of words, such as *kauneid*, *peekreid*, *kandleid* and

*keeled*, with the first three being in the partitive case. The second use of consonance is in the internal rhyme of the third line.

Ka **kau** || neid **peek** || reid **teh** || ti **seal**  
 ja **kul** || last **kand** || leid, **kee** || led **peal**;  
 ei **leid** || nud **viis** || neilt **kuula** || jaid **siis**,  
 kus **ini** || me **maad** || ei **kae** || va **eal**.

#### 2.2.4 Changes to the Contents in the Estonian Translation

In translation, translators have to convey both the narrative and the intonation of the literary work in the target language. Retaining the intonation of the source text in the target language can be a challenging task, especially in the case of the translation of verse, where the translators are usually expected to follow a rhyme scheme. To achieve that, translators use the compensation strategy. While the translation of one certain aspect of a poem or text is important, it is even more important to convey the content and the intonation of the literary work as a whole (Sepamaa 1967: 72). This means that translators may have to omit the use of an idiomatic expression or colloquial language in one place, but they would then compensate it by using an idiomatic expression or colloquial language in another place of the literary work. This is what Rajamets has done in his translation of ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’, with the added difficulty of having to translate and re-create the poem in a way that would fit into “Kääbik” and use suitable vocabulary that would not seem out of place in a fantasy novel. For example, Rajamets has translated the word *fire* in the seventh stanza with a metaphor *punane kukk* in one place while the archaic word *ere* in the first and the fifth stanza was translated into a more commonly used word *eel* in Estonian.

The most common changes in the Estonian translation of the poem are the changes to the narrative structure, meaning that the order of the given information has changed within the stanza, with the lines being in a different order than in the original. The reason behind this is the metre and rhyme being considered more important than the narrative structure of the poem (Kaldjärv 2016: 75). The first change in the narrative structure is already seen in the first stanza, where there is a line referring to the need to leave early in the day: *We must away ere break of day*. In the English version, it is the third line. However, in the Estonian translation, the line referring to that event is the first one: *Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel!* This change has made the Estonian translation seem more action-oriented, meaning that it seems as if the poem is first and foremost a call for action to leave as soon as possible. In the English version, however, there are two lines before that which explain where they have to go and the call for action and the call to leave early the next day, does not come until the third line. Another example of the same change comes from the sixth stanza, where a change of this nature occurs twice. The first one is a line referring to a place where no one lives. In the English version, it is in the second half of the second line: *And harps of gold; where no man delves*. In the Estonian translation, however, it is not mentioned until the last line of the stanza: *kus inime maad ei kaeva eal*. In the same stanza, there is a line talking about a song that no one will hear. In the English version, it is divided between two lines, the second half of the third line and the fourth line: *and many a song, was sung unheard by men or elves*. However, in the Estonian translation, the idea of an unheard song is given in only the third line: *ei leidnud viis neilt kuulajaid siis*. In the Estonian translation, the men and elves, who would have listened to the song, have been replaced by a much broader term *kuulajad*, which takes away some of the fantastical elements of the poem.

In addition to switching the order in which the information is given, that is breaking the narrative structure of the poem, the Estonian translation also changes or omits some information. A good example of a part of a stanza being omitted comes from the third stanza. The English version of the poem has a line *For ancient king and elvish lord*, where there are two people being talked about. However, the Estonian translation of the same line omits the elvish lord completely and only mentions the king: *Sai kuningas neilt aardeid häid*. Once again, Rajamets had to take into consideration the rhyme scheme and metre he followed. The combined number of syllables in the English words *king* and *elvish lord* is four, while the Estonian word *kuningas* has already three syllables and *haldjaisand* would have another four syllables. Because both *king* and *elvish lord* are used in the English version to refer to a person in power receiving gifts made in the dungeons, it is possible that Rajamets considered those words as repetitive and chose to not include the *elvish lord* in his translation to avoid exceeding the number of syllables per line and stanza. Additionally, this is not the only time that Rajamets has made the decision to not include elves in his translation. The second example of this is from the sixth stanza, where the English version mentioned *men or elves* but in the Estonian translation, the men and elves are replaced by a broader term *kuulajaid*. This means, that an entire humanoid species, who played an important part in both the fictional historical events that the poem describes and the rest of *The Hobbit*, have been removed from the Estonian translation of 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold'.

Another example of missing information is from the ninth stanza. In the English version, there is a line describing the sound of the dragon's steps: *The dwarves, they heard the tramp of doom*. There is no such line in the Estonian translation, instead, there is a line describing the serpent (dragon) gaining power: *Mäest lahkus hõim, jäi Maole võim*. The changes are likely

done in order to keep the original metre and rhyme scheme. However, omitting the description of the approaching steps of the dragon as it destroys and kills, takes away some of the dread that the English version describes. To compensate for the missing description of the steps, Rajamets has instead described that the serpent (dragon) gained power over the mountain, which was not specifically mentioned in the English version but is evident from the context of the poem as well as from the rest of *The Hobbit*.

## CONCLUSION

Translating poems is a challenging task and there are many different ways to approach it, depending on the context, the aim of the translation, and whether it is more important to convey the original metre and rhyme scheme or the contents. Translators have to make the decision between different translation methods, depending on their personal preference and they might be influenced by the translation norms of the time. Additionally, the purpose of the source text plays a role in the choice of the translation method, whether it is a rhythmical work song or a simple way to say goodbye to a friend.

Harald Rajamets was a well-established translator of poems and he preferred lyrical and romantic poems over realistic ones, making 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold' a suitable choice, since it is a narrative poem that gives an overview of the history of the dwarves. Rajamets has said that he is more inclined to translate poems with a strict metre and rhyme scheme. 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold', with its consistent AABA rhyme scheme and iambic tetrameter fit that criteria. Rajamets followed the rhyme scheme and metre of the source text as closely as possible, using the equiprosodic translation method which was common during that time and aligned with his personal preference of strict rules and forms in poetry. By doing that, he has achieved a translation that is similar in form to the source text and does not seem out of place in the fantastical setting of *The Hobbit*, since he has attempted to convey the contents of the poems as closely as possible as well, despite being restricted by the strict rhyme scheme and the set number of syllables.

Both the English original and the Estonian translation are rich in repetitions, have an AABA rhyme scheme, and are written in iambic tetrameter where an unstressed syllable is

followed by a stressed one. Rajamets followed the English original as closely as possible but had to make some alterations to the contents in order to retain the original metre and rhyme scheme. He had to change the narrative structure of the poem as well as omit some of the information that was given in the English original. This shows the translation norms during that time and exemplifies the equiprosodic translation method where the metre and rhyme scheme are important above all else and the contents and the narrative structure come second.

## REFERENCES

### Primary Sources

Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel. 1937. *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*. United Kingdom: George Allen & Unwin.

Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel. 1977. *Käabik, ehk, Sinna ja tagasi*. Trans. by Lia Rajandi and Harald Rajamets. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat (Original work published in 1937).

### Secondary Sources

Bassnett, Susan. 2002. *Translation Studies*. London and New York: Routledge.

Carpenter, Humphrey. 1977. *Tolkien: A Biography*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Donnelly, Phillip J. 2015. A Portrait of the Poet as an Old Hobbit: Engaging Modernist Aesthetic Ontology in The Fellowship of the Ring. In Ralph C. Wood (ed). *Tolkien Among the Moderns*, 131-170. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Hobsbaum, Philip. 1995. *Metre, Rhythm and Verse Form*. London: Routledge.

Jorgensen, Estelle R. 2006. Myth, Song, and Music Education: The Case of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Swann's *The Road Goes Ever On*. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 40: 3, 1-21.

Kaevats, Ülo. 2000. Harald Rajamets. *EE: Eesti entsüklopeedia. Eesti elulood*. 14, 403. Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus.

- Kaldjärv, Klaarika. 2016. Tõlkija kui nähtamatu maag: näiteid hispaaniakeelse kirjanduse tõlgetest Jüri Talveti tõlkemõtte valguses. *Methis. Studia humaniora Estonica*, 14: 17/18, 70-93.
- Kolahi, Sholeh. 2012. Application of Lefevere's Seven Strategies in English Translation of Shorab Sepehri's Poems. *International Journal of Linguistics* 4: 4, 450-467.
- Lotman, Maria-Kristiina and Rebekka Lotman. 2008. Ain Kaalepi luulekool. *Vikerkaar*. Available at <http://www.vikerkaar.ee/archives/11696>, accessed April 20, 2019.
- Oras, Ants. 1984. Tagasipilt eesti luulele. *Tulimuld*, 4: 171-174.
- Perrine, Laurence. 1956. *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Põldmäe, Jaak. 1977. Tõlkijaantoloogia ja tõlkemeetod. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 9: 563-568.
- Rajamets, Harald. 1994. Radio Interview. *Tõlkijad: Harald Rajamets*. Eesti Raadio. Interviewed by Vilma Jürisalu. Available at <https://arhiiv.err.ee/vaata/tolkijad-tolkijad-harald-rajamets>, accessed April 20, 2019.
- Selver, Paul. 1966. *The Art of Translating Poetry*. Boston: The Writer.
- Sepamaa, Henrik. 1967. Pilk ilukirjanduse tõlkimise küsimustesse. *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 2: 65-73.
- Straubhaar, Sandra Ballif. 2005. Gilraen's *Linnod*: Function, Genre, Prototypes. In Anderson, Douglas A., Michael D. C. Drout and Verlyn Flieger (eds). *Tolkien Studies*, Volume II: 235-244. Morgantown: The West Virginia University Press.

Tafenau, Kai and Maria-Kristiina Lotman. 2016. *Raamat saksa luulekunstist*. Tallinn: Tallinn University Press.

Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. 2013. *The Lord of the Rings. Deluxe Edition*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Turner, Allan. 2005. *Translating Tolkien: Philological Elements in The Lord of the Rings*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Publishing Group.

Wallace, Robert. 1996. Meter in English. In David Baker (ed). *Meter in English: A Critical Engagement*, 3-42. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas press.

## Appendix 1: ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’ and “Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel”

### ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’

Far over the misty mountains cold  
To dungeons deep and caverns old  
We must away ere break of day  
To seek the pale enchanted gold.

The dwarves of yore made mighty spells  
While hammers fell like ringing bells  
In places deep, where dark things sleep,  
In hollow halls beneath the fells.

For ancient king and elvish lord  
There many a gleaming golden hoard  
They shaped and wrought, and light they caught  
To hide in gems on hilt of sword.

On silver necklaces they strung  
The flowering stars, on crowns they hung  
The dragon-fire, in twisted wire  
They meshed the light of moon and sun.

Far over the misty mountains cold  
To dungeons deep and caverns old  
We must away, ere break of day,  
To claim our long-forgotten gold.

Goblets they carved there for themselves  
And harps of gold; where no man delves  
There lay they long, and many a song  
Was sung unheard by men or elves.

The pines were roaring on the height,  
The winds were moaning in the night.  
The fire was red, it flaming spread;  
The trees like torches blazed with light.

The bells were ringing in the dale  
And men looked up with faces pale;  
The dragon’s ire more fierce than fire  
Laid low their towers and houses frail.

The mountain smoked beneath the moon;  
The dwarves, they heard the tramp of doom.  
They fled their hall to dying fall  
Beneath his feet, beneath the moon.

Far over the misty mountains grim  
To dungeons deep and caverns dim  
We must away, ere break of day,  
To win our harps and gold from him!

### “Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel”

Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel!  
On udused külmad mäed me teel,  
kuid kaugemal ürgkalju all  
me võlukuld meid ootab veel.

Seal muiste päkapikusool  
käis sügaval koopais igal pool,  
kus päev kui öö, virk sepatöö  
ning nõidust appi võttis hool.

Sai kuningas neilt aardeid häid,  
mis kuldselt sädelema jäid,  
nad ehteid löid, mis valgust tõid,  
ja pärlikirevaid mõõgapäid.

Ning suutis mõnigi meistermees,  
et tähti õitses hõbekees  
ja kroonikuid—see pildus tuld,  
sel kuu ja päike särased sees.

Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel!  
On udused külmad mäed me teel,  
kuid kaugemal, ürgkalju all  
me ununud kuld on alles veel.

Ka kauneid peekreid tehti seal  
ja kullast kandleid, keeled peal;  
ei leidnud viis neilt kuulajaid siis,  
kus inime maad ei kaeva eal.

Lõi künkal mühama männitukk,  
öös tuule oigeis kostis hukk.  
Lõõsk oksi sõi, lõõm laotust löi,  
leek rapsis puil kui punane kukk.

All orus kumises häirekell,  
kõik rahvas vaatas, hirmust hell,  
kuis lohe raev—oh õud ja vaev!  
seal möllas majadel, tornidel.

Mäel tossas suits. Mis hukk ja rikk!  
Nüüd pageda paistis ainulik!  
Mäest lahkus hõim, jäi Maole võim,  
sai surma mõnigi päkapikk.

Nüüd mingem kähku, kõigest väest,  
ning üle mitmest süngest mäest,  
kus udud maas, et võita taas,  
me kuld ja kandleid lohe käest.

## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

### **Evelin Jõemaa**

Translating Poetry from English into Estonian. ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’ and “Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel. / Luule tõlkimine inglise keelest eesti keelde. ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’ ja “Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel.”

bakalaureusetöö

**2019**

Lehekülgede arv: 34

Annotatsioon:

Bakalaureusetöö eesmärk on anda ülevaade John Ronald Reuel Tolkieni luuletuste tõlkimisest inglise keelest eesti keelde ning selle raames analüüsida Harald Rajametsa tõlget J. R. R. Tolkieni luuletusest ‘Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold’. Eesmärgiks on analüüsida Harald Rajametsa tõlkemeetodit ning võrrelda Rajametsa tõlget ingliskeelse luuletusega.

Töö koosneb teoreetilisest osast ning analüüsist. Teoreetiline osa annab ülevaate luule tõlkimisega seotud probleemidest, luule eesmärgist J. R. R. Tolkieni teostes ning Harald Rajametsast kui tõlkijast. Töö teises osas analüüsitakse nii eesti- kui ka ingliskeelset luuletust ning tuuakse välja erinevused ning nende oletatavad põhjused.

Analüüsist selgus, et Harald Rajamets on säilitanud algteksti vormi, ehk ta eelistas ekviprosoodilist värsitõlget, mille käigus säilitatakse algteksti meetrum ja riim.

Märksõnad: tõlketeadus, luuleanalüüs, tõlkeanalüüs, eesti tõlkijad, Harald Rajamets, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien

## **Lihlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks**

Mina, Evelin Jõemaa,

1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihlitsentsi) minu loodud teose

Translating Poetry from English into Estonian. 'Far Over the Misty Mountains Cold' and „Nüüd mingem siit, veel koidu eel“

mille juhendaja on Katiliina Gielen,

reprodutseerimiseks eesmärgiga seda säilitada, sealhulgas lisada digitaalarhiivi DSpace kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse lõppemiseni.

2. Annan Tartu Ülikoolile loa teha punktis 1 nimetatud teos üldsusele kättesaadavaks Tartu Ülikooli veebikeskkonna, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace kaudu Creative Commons'i litsentsiga CC BY NC ND 3.0, mis lubab autorile viidates teost reprodutseerida, levitada ja üldsusele suunata ning keelab luua tuletatud teost ja kasutada teost ärieesmärgil, kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse lõppemiseni.
3. Olen teadlik, et punktides 1 ja 2 nimetatud õigused jäävad alles ka autorile.
4. Kinnitan, et lihlitsentsi andmisega ei riku ma teiste isikute intellektuaalomandi ega isikuandmete kaitse õigusaktidest tulenevaid õigusi.

Evelin Jõemaa

23.05.2019

## **Autorsuse kinnitus**

Kinnitan, et olen koostanud käesoleva bakalaureusetöö ise ning toonud korrekselt välja teiste autorite panuse. Töö on koostatud lähtudes Tartu Ülikooli maailma keelte ja kultuuride kolledži anglistika osakonna bakalaureusetöö nõuetest ning on kooskõlas heade akadeemiliste tavadega.

Evelin Jõemaa

Tartus, 23.05.2019

**Lõputöö on lubatud kaitsmisele.**

Katiliina Gielen, PhD

Tartus, 23.05.2019