LITERARY ONOMASTICS AND INTERTEXTUAL HUMOUR IN CHRIS RIDDELL'S *GOTH GIRL* SERIES AND ITS ROMANIAN TRANSLATION

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Résumé : *La série* Goth Girl *de Chris Riddell (composée jusqu'à présent de cinq livres, parus entre 2013 et 2017) offre aux jeunes lecteurs (mais pas seulement) une histoire tout à fait simple, mais rédigée dans un style des plus sophistiqués. Les trois premiers livres de la série (*e.g. Goth Girl and the Ghost of a Mouse, Goth Girl and the Fete Worse than Death, Goth Girl and the Wuthering Fright) *ont été déjà traduits en roumain (2017-2018) par Mihaela Doagă chez Corint Junior. Notre analyse vise un des défis posés par le texte anglais et la manière dont il a été géré en traduction, à savoir l'humour intertextuel, ainsi qu'il ressort d'un réseau onomastique assez complexe créé par Riddell. Un autre aspect tient du paratexte, plus exactement des notes du traducteur, censés restituer tout calembour et toute allusion que le texte omet d'enregistrer.*

Mots-clefs : *onomastique, jeu de mots, traduction, paratexte, double destinataire, compensation.*

Introduction

Conceptualised in the 1960s by Julia Kristeva (based on work by Mikhail Bakhtin), *intertextuality* is by and large applied to "the prominent allusions made in one literary work to another work, which serve to create counterpoint, continuity, or irony, or draw on authority, or increase artistic richness or resonance" (Trask, 2007: 125) It has also often been noted that interrelatedness is in fact the condition of any text whatsoever:

> ...any text is an intertext: other texts are present in it, at varying levels, in more or less recognisable forms: the texts of the previous and surrounding culture. Any text is a new tissue of past citations. Bits of codes, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages etc. pass into the text and are redistributed within it, for there is always language before and around the text. (Barthes, 1981: 39).

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A book for children that is so suffused with allusions that it is often difficult to discriminate between text and intertext is, however, a rare occurence, and a risky endeavour at the same time. Paradoxically though, this seems to have been Chris Riddell's recipe for success in producing not one book, but an entire series in which almost everything is an intertext. The said series (conceived in fact as a follow up to the *Ottoline* series) comprises so far five books, published between 2013 and 2017:

- *Goth Girl and the Ghost of a Mouse* (2013);
- *Goth Girl and the Fete Worse than Death* (2014);
- *Goth Girl and the Wuthering Fright* (2015);
- *Goth Girl and the Pirate Queen* (2015 World Book Day edition);
- *Goth Girl and the Sinister Symphony* (2017).

The first three out of the five volumes have already been translated into Romanian by Mihaela Doagă (a professional translator and former English teacher) and published in the "Aventură şi mister" collection issued by Corint (Junior) Publishing House in 2017 and 2018):

- *Domnişoara Goth şi fantoma şoricelului* (2017);
- *Domnişoara Goth şi festinul cel sinistru* (2018);
- *Domnişoara Goth la răscrucea groazei* (2018).

The main aim of this paper is to draw attention to the way in which an English literary text with an addressee explicitly mentioned on the back cover (9+: nine-year-old children and above), imbued with British cultural references, and brimming with linguistic creativity, is dealt with in Romanian translation. We intend to focus mainly on the techniques employed by a translator faced with numerous intertextual challenges, among which the colourful and elaborate onomastics can be seen to rank topmost. The comparative analysis will incorporate various ideas from semantics, onomastics, structuralism, and will loosely dwell on an eclectic translatological model with elements from Delabastista (1993), Henry (2003), Zabalbeascoa (2005), Măciucă (2009-2010) etc. Back-translation (from Romanian to English) written between brackets is always mine.

The 'Foreign' Author and Text

A text such as the one we have here under debate undoubtedly questions the true nature of the addressee (with its countless allusions, the series obviously targets not only children, but first and foremost adult readers, more liable to comprehend and enjoy the various hints) and threatens to shatter what is commonly perceived as a basic dichotomy in translation (*i.e.* the contrast between foreignness as represented by the so-called 'source text' and the familiarisation, which is supposed to be delivered by the 'target text'). Chris Riddell may be constantly alluding to British literature (*e.g.* Gothic and mock-Gothic authors, Romantic poets), but he also targets pop culture (*e.g.* film: Dick Van Dyke[1], Mary Poppins, King Kong, 007, *Frozen*; television: Simon Cowell, implicitly also Pop Idol, The X Factor, Britain's Got Talent; music: Simon & Garfunkel, ABBA etc.), as well as history (*e.g.* Henry 8th, Anne Boleyn, Lucrezia Borgia etc.) and mythology (*e.g.* centaurs, minotaurs, harpies, cyclops, gorgons, fauns, the three Graces etc.), all of which have in time acquired an important coefficient of universality. A multi-awarded illustrator and cartoonist, Riddell

[1] In Chris Riddell's series, there is a character named "Van Dyke, the chimney caretaker" (not Bert, as the character Dick Van Dyke plays in *Mary Poppins*); we are thus dealing with a fusion between the name of the actor and the character's occupation.

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successfully embraces drawing as a perfect global language, but he at the same time manages to fuse British and non-British elements into an utterly harmonious text(ure).

The *Goth Girl* series offers young readers a simple yet memorable story told (and retold, with slight variations) in an unexpectedly sophisticated, self-conscious literary style. Ada Goth, the series' protagonist, Lord Goth's twelve-year-old daughter, lives with a flock of servants (some friends, some enemies) and quite a few successive governesses in a Gothic castle (Ghastly-Gorm Hall), in a supposedly Gothic epoch. Each of the five volumes offers an independent tale that could very well stand on its own, but at the same time the main characters, the domain and some of the previous events are constantly reiterated as the series unravels, as are many of the illustrations, serving thus as binding agents for the entire series. There is also little progression from one book to another: if at the beginning of *Goth Girl and the Ghost of a Mouse* Ada Goth is introduced to the reader as an orphan girl in need of a friend, she will, by the end of it, have joined the Attic Club and befriended quite a few people (including the ghost of a mouse symbolically called Ishmael), whereas the other books see her at a country-house party at Ghastly-Gorm Hall hosted by Lord Goth (*Goth Girl and the Fete Worse than Death*) or taking part in a Literary Dog Show (*Goth Girl and the Wuthering Fright*) where "the most esteemed authors in the world are coming to show off their pampered pooches". The foolproof linearity of the plot is occasionally punctuated by an unparalleled array of secondary characters with a purely decorative purpose which, as I mentioned elsewhere, rarely goes beyond making an entrance and an impression (Hăisan, 2020).

Using the gothic as a pretext for toying at leisure with literary conventions, genres, figures and types, Riddell makes good use of classic Gothic tropes (*e.g.* an orphaned maiden, an eerie setting, an attic, villain(s), ghosts, vampires, night journeys etc.) while casually reinterpreting classic characters, events and even sayings. The highly allusive cultural elements are unequivocal starting from the very titles (*Goth, Wuthering, Ghost* etc.). The scandalous extent to which Riddell exploits and recycles previous (mock-)gothic texts as well as the series' own material demonstrates not only that "Gothic signifies a writing of excess" (Botting, 1996: 1), but also that it has an inexhaustible power to reinvent itself and adapt itself to fit all ages, all environments, and please all kinds of readers (from nine-year-old consumers of fiction to their parents, grandparents, teachers etc.). Brazenly demystifying two major myths about children's literature (*i.e.* that it addresses children exclusively and that it is simple in both style and language), the *Goth Girl* series offers a story with several layers of meaning, more or less graspable, depending on the reader's insight (see Constantinescu, 2009: 63).

Mention must be made that Riddell's use of intertexts is meant as praise rather than criticism, and that what may at first sight be perceived as mere mockery is often in fact a nod towards this or that character, personality or event. It is not as much a parody or a satire, as it is a concern for generating humour. The *Goth Girl* series is a text in which the language (*i.e.* the style) stands out to the point of outshining both the narrative and the extraordinarily lavish illustrations. It is language for the sake of language, language which never takes itself seriously, language used for the sole purpose of amusing the reader, not form without substance but rather form which ends up being substance. Or, as suggested by Vivi Edström (1992), this strategy might ensure a text's longevity:

> The 'double life' of the text is realised in the language play. The jokes, wordplays, allusions and parodies spring from the conventional but at the same time create new

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> foreign meanings. By taking part in this kind of 'carrollesque comedy', the reader becomes extremely aware of the means of form. (22) [Bertill's translation] (Bertills, 2003: 66-67)

The primary source of linguistic playfulness in the *Goth Girl* series is ambivalence, which works on a number of levels. We often encounter *lexical ambiguity* which, Trask claims, is "the simplest type of ambiguity" and "results merely from the existence of two different meanings for a single word" (Trask 2007: 14), but also *structural ambiguity*, "in which the words have the same meanings, but quite different structures can be assigned to the entire string of words, producing different meanings" (*ibidem*).

Linguistic and semantic puns are conspicuous in the *Goth Girl* series in both the text (especially in the literary onomastics Chris Riddell creates) and the paratext (*e.g.* the actorial footnotes). In both cases, as shown in a previous study (Hăisan, 2020), wordplay humour is based on substitution, literality or concretisation (*i.e.* giving a literal interpretation when a figurative one is in order, or using a concrete, proper meaning of a given word instead of its abstract, figurative one), and very often appears in the form of (highly allusive) portmanteau words. In onomastics, humourous effect relies above all on phonetic and lexical changes, which may occur either on the paradigmatic axis (*in praesentia*) or on the syntagmatic axis (*in absentia*) (see Guiraud, 1976). Semantically loaded, with a semantic content perceived as more or less opaque[2], Riddell's coined names are often phonaesthetic (*e.g. The Harrow Harrumph; The Dear Deer Park; The Lake of Extremely Coy Carp* etc.) and always culturally connotative (being based on literary or historical names, places or titles).

The table below presents selectively examples taken from the very abundant category of literary onomastics. Out of four major categories that can be considered (personal names, names of animals or mythic humanoids, magic plants and, last but not least, places), only two will be emphasized here (*i.e.* people, on the one hand, and animals and mythic humanoids on the other). The third column indicates what the pun is based on.

PEOPLE	*Anne Bowl-In*	homophony
	Mary Huckleberry	rhyme
	William Wordsworthalot; Sir Cristopher Riddle-of-the-Sphinx; Lady Caroline Lambchop; Mary Shellfish *Alfred Lord Tennislesson;*	composition tmesis
	Dean Torville; Georgie Eliot; Mr. Darcy-Bussel; *Nanny Darling* *Tristram Shandygentleman*	merging
	The Glum-Stokers: Vlad, Glad, Mlad, Blad; *The Gormless Quire (the four Gabriels): Gabriel Beech, Gabriel Acorn, Gabriel Chestnut, Gabriel Sycamore*	splitting
	Elizabeth Bonnet; Charlotte, Emily and Anne Vicarage; William Flake; William Timepiece Thackeray; Sir Walter Splott; Homily Dickinson; *the Vulnerable Bede; Elsa, the Show Queen; Anne of Peeves;* *Julius Sneezer; Martin Puzzlewitt;* "*Hands" Christmas Andersen; Jane Ear;* *Becky Blunt; Countess Pippi Shortstocking*	(lexical / phonetic paronymic / antonymic) substitution

[2] *Semantically loaded names* are, according to Theo Hermans (1985), invented names in which some kind of semantic content is obvious. They can be classified into *expressive names* (in which the semantic content is transparently evident) and *suggestive names* (in which the semantic content is opaque).

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ANIMALS / MYTHIC HUMANOIDS	*Mopey Dick; Maddening Claude, the Stubborn Donkey*	phonetic substitution
	Darren, the Memory Goat	alliteration, misspelling
	The Little Barmaid, half girl, half herring	paronymic substitution

Table 1. *(Allusive) Literary Onomastics*

We can see the numerous phonetic and lexical changes operated on classic names. Most of the newly-created names are essentially malapropistic or paronomastic, and all of them have an obvious creative function which is far more important in the (con)text than the informative function[3]. Among the humour-engendering mechanisms we can see homophony (*e.g. Anne Bowl-in* vs. *Anne Boleyn*), tmesis (*e.g. Alfred Lord Tennislesson* vs. *Alfred Lord Tennyson*), rhyme (*e.g. Mary Huckleberry*, a fusion between Mary Jane and Huckleberry Finn, but also a hint at food writer Mary Berry), various phonetic substitutions (*e.g. Elizabeth Bonnet* vs. *Elizabeth Bennet*, which mocks at Victorian bonnets while nodding at the *Pride and Prejudice* female protagonist; *Jane Ear*, graphically represented with enormous ears, hints at the often mispronounced *Jane Eyre*), antonymic substitution (*e.g. Pippi Shortstocking* vs. *Pippi Longstocking*; *Becky Blunt* vs. *Becky Sharp*), even merging allusions to two different people in one name (*e.g. Dean Torville*, a hint at English ice dancers Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean) or splitting the reference to a character into four (*e.g.* the four *Glum-Stokers: Vlad, Glad, Mlad, Blad*, clearly pointing to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as well as to Vlad the Impaler; the four Gabriels making up the Gormless Quire: *Gabriel Beech, Gabriel Acorn, Gabriel Chestnut* and *Gabriel Sycamore*, a clear reference to *Gabriel Oak* from *Far From the Madding Crowd*, a novel also echoed through another character's name, *Maddening Claude*).

However delightful these puns may be, it is a well-known fact that "[v]erbal humour travels badly" (Chiaro, 2010: 1), and that "[l]inguistic playfulness is common in children's literature, but it is also one of the hardest issues to cope with in translation." (Bertills, 2003: 209). The ambivalence contained in these puns involves a good amount of extra-linguistic knowledge, which the young reader might (not) possess, and which needs to be somehow supplemented and compensated for in translation. As pointed out by Cristina Chifane, translators today should be "constantly aware that one of the aims of the translation is to develop a multicultural child who can start having a wider perspective upon the different cultures of the world" (Chifane, 2016: 231). Nevertheless, two questions remain: to what extent should translators clarify these puns, these cultural allusions, and to what extent should they use footnotes to this end, given that this is, after all, children's literature?

Intertextual Humour in Interlingual Translation

Patrick Zabalbeascoa (2005: 189) lists *inter-/bi-national* jokes among the ones offering very little or no resistance to translation if the source and target cultural systems have much in common and if the text users of both communities have the same shared knowledge, values and tastes. Or, in Riddell's text, a nine-year-old (or above) may well recognize Elsa from *Frozen* in *Elsa, the Show Queen*, or Hans Christian Andersen in "*Hands" Christmas Andersen*, but they will probably miss the Dean and Torvill reference, or even the *Anne Bowl-in* or *William Flake* puns. It is even less probable for a reader to grasp all the allusive connotations in what Jakobson labels *interlingual translation*. According to Gina Măciucă (2010: 59), translating intertextual humour usually leads to "the least true-to-punchline renditions" which often refashion the text beyond recognition. There is definitely not enough in common between the British and the Romanian cultural systems

[3] See Van Coillie's "Character Names in Translation: A Functional Approach" (2006).

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so as to leave the readers of this text completely on their own when they have to decipher this or that reference. On the other hand, according to Zabalbeascoa (*op. cit.*), a major challenge in translation has to do with metalinguistic humour (copious in Riddell's text) and with audience profile traits:

> Some jokes and types of humor are challenging for the translator due to specific difficulties (restrictions) that have to do with the text users' linguistic or encyclopaedic knowledge, or their degree of familiarity or appreciation for certain subject-matters, themes, genres, and types of humor. So, a language-restricted, or linguistic, joke is one that depends on the knowledge of certain features of a given language (*e.g.* which words are homonymic, paronymic, alliterative or rhyming); an ethnic joke is one that depends on the knowledge of certain features of a given ethnic group for its understanding)... (Zabalbeascoa, 2005: 190)

To all these aspects, we should add another one that makes the translator's job even more difficult when tackling the *Goth Girl* series: the fact that in these books the formidable intertextual side is actually surpassed by an even more intricate paratextuality, with numerous actorial footnotes (supposedly added by characters, in Genette's terminology, 1997) as well as authorial footnotes (explanatory observations, enlarging upon imaginary characters or activities mentioned in the story). Having to add allographic (translator's) notes to all these inevitably burdens both the layout and the text. Nevertheless, faced with a text which so lavishly exploits the ludic function of language in order to create humour, with a significant cultural load brought by the numerous intertexts, with an ambivalent addressee which requires a layered semantics in the target language, and with an outrageous paratext, the translator cannot possibly use a unified strategy.

Our comparative analysis of the two texts (source and target) shows that though some of the witticisms are inescapably lost in translation, many of them are nevertheless deftly reconstructed in the text, while others are explained in footnotes or translated in footnotes or both. Most of the puns recuperated in the Romanian text involve, just like in the original, swapping words or parts of words around and obtaining a very similar or identical pun, as in the *isomoprhic translation* described by Henry (2003), or preserving the original pun by applying a freer translation (*heteromorphic translation*).

As follows, we will rely on Dirk Delabatista's approach to pun translation strategies (1993) in order to organise the techniques employed by translator Mihaela Doagă in transposing the literary onomastics in the *Goth Girl* series in Romanian. Briefly put, Delabastista's strategies are pun to pun (*i.e.* the ST pun is transferred into a TT pun, which may or may not have exactly the same properties as the original pun), pun to non-pun (*i.e.* the ST pun is transferred into a non-punning TT word or phrase which preserves one or more senses of the original pun), pun to punoid (*i.e.* the effect of the original pun is recreated by other rhetorical devices), zero translation (*i.e.* omitting the original pun altogether), direct copy (*i.e.* reproducing the ST pun in its original form, with no explanation), transference (*i.e.* using or coining a TT word or phrase which is a semantic calque of the original), addition: non-pun to pun (*i.e.* the TT contains a pun that does not exist in the ST), addition: zero to pun (*i.e.* the TT contains a pun which is newly added material), editorial technique (*i.e.* footnotes, endnotes, introduction, epilogue, parentheses within the text,signed by the translator).

As the table below shows, neither omission nor addition is resorted to by the Romanian translator. Instead, she extensively uses editorial techniques, more precisely in

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the shape of two types of translator's notes. Our modest contribution to Delabatista's inventory consists in a classification of the types of footnotes, as found in our corpus, into exegetic[4] (meant to reveal the intertext), and metatextual-exegetic (meant to both explain the pun and clarify the allusion).

Translation Strategy (Delabatista, 1993)	***Goth Girl* Series. English Version**	***Goth Girl* Series. Romanian Version**
1. Pun > Pun	the Little Barmaid, half girl, half herring	Micuţa Cârciumreană, pe jumătate fată, pe jumătate mreană
	Julius Sneezer	Iulius Bizar
	Anne Bowl-In; Anne of Peeves	Anne Bol-In; Anne de Plebes
2. Pun > Non-Pun	Darren, the Memory Goat	Darren, ţapul care nu uită nimic
3. Pun > Punoid	Maddening Claude, the Stubborn Donkey	Lu Meadezlănţuită, Măgăriţa Căpoasă
	Elsa, the Show Queen	Elsa Crăiasa *fantaisie*
4. Pun > Zero	-	-
5. Direct copy: Pun S.T. = Pun T.T.	Mary Huckleberry	Mary Huckleberry
	Nanny Darling	Nanny Darling
	William Flake	William Flake
	Jane Ear	Jane Ear
6. Transference: Pun S.T. = Pun T.T.	The Vulnerable Bede	Vulnerabilul Bede
7. Addition: Non-Pun > Pun	-	-
8. Addition: Zero > Pun	-	-
9. Editorial techniques, *e.g.* footnotes (signalled by asterisks): [E] – exegetic footnotes; [M-E] – metatextual-exegetic footnotes	Mary Shellfish	Mary Shellfish* [M-E]
	Martin Puzzlewitt	Martin Puzzlewitt* [M-E]
	Tristram Shandygentleman	Tristram Shandygentleman* [E]
	William Wordsworthalot; Alfred, Lord Tennislesson	William Wordsworthalot; Alfred, Lord Tennislesson* [M-E]
	Mopey Dick	Mopey Dick* [M-E]
	The Gormless Quire: Gabriel Beech, Gabriel Acorn, Gabriel Chestnut, Gabriel Sycamore	Gormless Quire: Gabriel Plopu', Gabriel Ghindă, Gabriel Castan, Gabriel Platan* [E]
	The Glum-Stokers: Vlad, Glad, Mlad, Blad	Familia Glum-Stoker: Vlad, Glad, Mlad, Blad* [M-E]
	Elizabeth Bonnet; Mr. Darcy-Bussel	Elizabeth Bonnet; Domnul Darcy-Bussel* [E]
	Georgie Eliot	Georgie Eliot* [E]
	William Timepiece Thackeray	William Timepiece Thackeray* [E]
	Homily Dickinson	Homily Dickinson* [E]
	Countess Pippi Shortstocking	Contesa Pippi Shortstocking* [E]
	"Hands" Christmas Andersen	"Hands" Christmas Andersen* [M-E]
	Dean Torville	Părintele-Paroh Torville* [E]
	Charlotte, Emily and Anne Vicarage	Charlotte, Emily şi Anne Vicarage* [M-E]
	Sir Walter Splott	Sir Walter Splott* [E]
	Sir Cristopher Riddle-of-the-Sphinx	Sir Cristopher Riddle-of-the-Sphinx* [M-E]
	Lady Caroline Lambchop	Lady Caroline Lambchop* [M-E]
	Becky Blunt	Becky Blunt* [E]

Table 2. Translation Strategies Employed in Dealing with Literary Onomastics

[4] *Cf.* Sardin (2007).

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Perhaps the best example of pun-to-pun is "Micuţa Cârciumreană, pe jumătate fată, pe jumătate mreană," which deftly reconstructs the original pun (*i.e. The Little Barmaid, half girl, half herring*). While the hint at Andersen's *Little Mermaid* is perhaps less obvious than in the source text, it is, however, easily retrievable from the latter part of the pun, where the hybrid nature of the being is clearly indicated (*i.e.* "pe jumătate fată, pe jumătate mreană" [half girl, half barbel]). *Barmaid* is implicit in the portmanteau "cârciumreană" (made up of "cârciumă [pub, tavern] and "mreană" [barbel, lamprey]) and the rhyme created by *Cârciumreană – mreană*, as well as the rhythm of the entire phrase, could be considered an example of what Hervey & Higgins (1992) call *compensation in place* (*i.e.* where the effect in the target text is in a different place from that in the source).

"Iulius Bizar" is used to render *Julius Sneezer* (an obvious comic distortion of *Julius Caesar*), a good choice but not quite as humorously effective as the original, partly because "Bizar" offers an approximate rhyme to "Cezar" (irrespective of the way it is pronounced, with a stress on the first syllable or on the second). "Ştezar" [craftsman who supervises a machine used to press felt] might have offered a perfect rhyme for a "Cezar" stressed on the second syllable (as, for instance, used in "daţi Cezárului ce-i al Cezárului" [give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar]. It is, however, too rare a term to consider in a translation for children.

"Anne Bol-In" and "Anne de Plebes" cleverly transpose *Anne Bowl-In* and *Anne of Peeves*, which obviously hint at Henry 8th's wives. "Darren, ţapul care nu uită nimic" [Darren, the billy-goat who never forgets anything] is a fairly straightforward, explicit rendition of *Darren, the Memory Goat*, which fails to signal (either in the text or in the paratext) the allusion to Derren Brown, mentalist and memory master. It is, therefore, a pun-to-non-pun example.

"Lu Meadezlănţuită, Măgăriţa Căpoasă" probably contains the most creative pun in the whole series, but we placed it here under *punoid*, because the effect of the original pun is recreated by slightly different rhetorical devices in the target text. The pun is also, as it often happens, somewhat more explicit than the original one (*Maddening Claude, the Stubborn Donkey*), which contains a more subtle reference to Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Nevertheless, the ingenious nod to the poetic Romanian title of this novel (*i.e. Departe de lumea dezlănţuită*) is one of the ways in which Mihaela Doagă manages to infuse an otherwise culturally-suffused text with a (laudable, in the context) target-oriented touch.

"Elsa Crăiasa *fantaisie*" for "Elsa, the Show Queen" is another example of pun-to-punoid transformation, by means of which the translator mitigates the unorthodox connotations of *show queen* (*i.e.* gay man afflicted with an unhealthy obsession with Broadway musicals and cast recordings) and sticks to hinting at both the 2013 computer-animated fantasy film *Frozen* (Elsa, *fantaisie*) and Andersen's *Snow Queen* ("Crăiasa *fantaisie*" recuperating part of the Romanian title of Andersen's tale, namely *Crăiasa Zăpezii*). The target reader is thus incited to make the necessary connections between the various intertexts and enjoy the reconstructed pun.

Direct copy is applied to *Mary Huckleberry*, *Nanny Darling*, *William Flake* and *Jane Ear*, which means transfer without any kind of addition in the text or in footnotes (with the possible exception of William Flake, referred to in a distant footnote as mocking poet William Blake, but indirectly, and after being mentioned quite a few times). The target readers (whether children or grown-ups) are in these cases left to decipher the encapsulated meaning on their own. While the allusion to Huckleberry Finn in *Mary Huckleberry* is fairly transparent, the one to Mary Berry (British food writer, chef and television presenter) will only be known to British life connoisseurs. Chris Riddell's

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technique of merging at least two allusions into one name is also to be found in *Nanny Darling*, which refers to specific characters in Dodie Smith's novel, *100 Dalmatians* (*i.e.* Nanny Cook and Nanny Butler), but at the same time, by using *Darling* for a surname, it points to the Dearlys, the family employing the two housekeepers. As for *Jane Ear*, it is surprisingly left unexplained in both the relation with Charlotte Brontë's character / novel and the humour-engendering minimal pair behind it (*i.e. eyre* – pronounced as *air* – and *ear*).

"Vulnerabilul Bede" recuperates *The Vulnerable Bede* by means of transference (according to Delabatista's 1993 classification), with no mention of the Venerable Bede alluded to.

Most of the other literary names are explained in footnotes, as shown in the table above. Some of them offer a metalingual reflection on the wordplay contained in the names as well as a piece of encyclopedic knowledge, clarifying the innuendo. *Mary Shellfish*, for example, is explained as a pun upon the name of Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*; at the same time, the footnote clarifies the meaning of *shellfish* ("crustaceu"). The footnote on *Martin Puzzlewitt* mentions Charles Dickens and his Martin Chuzzlewit, while also providing a "free translation" of the pun in the surname (*i.e.* "spirit curios" [curious spirit]).

William Wordsworthalot and *Alfred, Lord Tennislesson* are both dealt with in one footnote which indicates the correct names of the poets being mocked at (*i.e.* Wordsworth and Tennyson) and breaks the pun down by providing a literal translation (*e.g.* Wordsworthalot = "cuvinte valoroase" [valuable words]; Tennislesson = "lecție de tenis" [tennis lesson]). *Mopey Dick* is explained as an allusion to Herman Melville's white whale and freely translated as "Dick Mofluzul" [Surly Dick]. *The Glum-Stokers* (*Vlad, Glad, Mlad, Blad*) are also elucidated as evoking Bram Stoker's Dracula, and the family name as such is freely translated as "Îmbie la ursuzlâc" [tempting to moroseness or sheer bad luck], a very interesting pun based on the polysemy of "ursuzlâc," a word of Turkish origin, which may express either moroseness or some kind of jinx. "Hands" in *"Hands" Christmas Andersen* is simply translated in the footnote ("mâini"), but there is no mention of the near-homophonic relation between the English pronunciation of *Hans* and the noun *hands*. *Charlotte, Emily și Anne Vicarage* are 'deconspired' in another footnote, which speaks about the Brontë sisters, but also translates *vicarage* ("casă parohială"). *Sir Christopher Riddle-of-the-Sphinx* is presented as the author's alter-ego, and a literal translation ("Ghicitoarea Sfinxului") is also provided. Finally, *Lady Caroline Lambchop* is disclosed as an allusion to Lady Caroline Lamb, famous for her liaison with Lord Byron (portrayed as Lord Goth in Chris Riddell's series). At the same time, *lambchop* is given due translation ("cotlet de miel").

Not all puns in Riddell's gallery of invented names are deconstructed (nor can they be in the limited space of a book for children which is supposed to mirror the original, in both illustrations and general layout). In the following examples, only the hints are explained, not the puns: *the four Gabriels* (hilarious hint at Thomas Hardy's Gabriel Oak), *Georgie Eliot* (combination of George Eliot, the writer, and Billy Elliot, protagonist of the eponymous 2000 British dance drama film), *William Timepiece Thackeray* (a nod to Makepeace Thackeray), *Homily Dickinson* (meant as a nod to Emily Dickinson), *Pippi Shortstocking* (as opposed to Pippi Longstocking), *Dean Torville* (hinting at the Torvill and Dean couple), *Sir Walter Splott* (a reference to Sir Walter Scott) and *Becky Blunt* (revealed as a hint at Thackeray's Becky Sharp, protagonist of *Vanity Fair*). *Tristram Shandygentleman* is equally dismissed with a reference to Laurence Sterne, when in fact the essence of the pun lies in the fusion of two words from the very title of Sterne's novel: *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. Another wordplay, resulting from the phonetic and lexical subtitution operated in *Elizabeth Bonnet* (vs. Elizabeth Bennet) is left to the reader to

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decipher and enjoy. The footnote, however, does point to Elizabeth Bennet and also clarifies *Mr. Darcy-Bussel* (nod to a former Royal Ballet prima ballerina Darcey Bussel, as well as to Mr. Darcy from *Pride and Prejudice*).

Conclusions

As pointed out by Gina Măciucă (2010: 56), the translators' creativity and context-sensitivity is vital when dealing with intertextual humour. After analysing the first three books in the Goth series (the only ones so far in Romanian translation), we came to the conclusion that the Romanian version finds the right balance between foreignness and target-orientedness. The translator made a fairly good selection of the numerous cultural linguistic issues in the source text (which could have never been entirely elucidated, especially given the format and the type of edition). The culturally-pertinent extratextual notes make the translator more visible, without ever tiring the reader, whereas what is left implicit is an excellent way of drawing that particular reader in. An open invitation to interpret the text, this translation manages to be almost as ambivalent as the source text, in that it offers layers of meaning (from the literal to the more sophisticated). And even if the punchline only rarely survives intact, what is lost in translation is definitely compensated for by the fact that it challenges the readers to cooperate, to anatomize the puns, and relish the numerous double entendres.

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