"GOD'S THUMBS!" - TRANSLATING HUMOUR IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: KAREN CUSHMAN'S *CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY*

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Abstract
Cushman's Catherine, Called Birdy imagines how life in medieval England might have looked like for a fourteen-year-old girl. Written as a diary, the book challenges the translator with its many instances of humour. The translator is faced with the task of recreating a witty register which includes, among other things, ingenious curses, nicknames for her suitors, meditations on her misfortunes, or funny comments on some saints' claim to fame. The present article looks at the Romanian translation of the novel with a view to investigating the translator's choices in transposing the linguistic nuances, wordplay, and cultural references that contribute to the humour in the original work. It also assesses the strategies employed to maintain the comedic timing, tone, and intent, while considering cultural adaptation and domestication necessary for the Romanian-speaking public.

Keywords: curses; diary; domestication; humour; nicknames.
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1. Introduction

"I would do worse things to escape the foolish boredom of spinning. So I will write. What follows will be my book – the book of Catherine called Little Bird, or Birdy, daughter of Rollo and the Lady of Aislinn, sister to Thomas, Edward and the abominable Robert, of the village of Stonebridge in the shire of Lincoln, in the country of England, in the hands of God. […] Picked off twenty-nine fleas today." (Cushman, 2014: 2-3)

Writing books for children is a greatly underappreciated art. Many view crafting such stories as a simple task, but producing good children's books can be as demanding as writing for an adult audience. Translating such stories is even more challenging as most translators soon discover the deceptive simplicity of this genre that dwells on the good spirit, humour, and mischief of the childhood years. Studies on the translation of children's literature have generally focused on cultural adaptation, in particular domestication strategies (Venuti, 1995). According to Lathey (2015), problems may arise from the translation of names, cultural markers and references (such as food, money, clothes, etc.), dialogue, and dialect. The translation of humour (wordplay and other stylistic figures), too, may pose some difficulties.

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Humour is, indeed, an important ingredient in children's literature as it often helps deliver the moral of the story in a light and entertaining tone. O'Sullivan (2005, 25) speaks about the social and psychological functions of humour in this type of literature, as techniques and themes or subjects of humour varying across cultures. For instance, visual humor dominates in countries like Spain and France, while puppet theater humour is central in Turkey. Additionally, some forms of humour, such as black humour, are more prevalent in certain traditions, like British children's literature, and may be less accepted in others, such as Germany. Questions about the universality, cultural specificity, translation, and historical evolution of humour in children's literature highlight its complexity and diversity.

Norberg (2018) dwells on minor forms of humour, such as contrasts, irony and exaggerations, and their translation. He emphasizes the difficulty of translating humour in such children's books due to cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target texts. What is considered acceptable humour for children may vary between cultures, and differing views on the age when children understand parody or irony only complicate the picture. Linguistic factors, such as ambiguity or polysemy, can make translating wordplay particularly difficult. Achieving similar comedic effects in the translated text often requires creative and culturally sensitive adaptation. A "very visible narrator" often serves as the source of humour in children's literature, as they use their "verbal theatre" as a key element, in which linguistically based jokes usually play a prominent role (Norberg, 2018, p. 101).

This article looks at a less known children's book - Karen Cushman's *Catherine, Called Birdy* – and its Romanian translation, with an emphasis on how the numerous instances of humour have been successfully rendered into the target language.

2. Karen Cushman's Catherine, Called Birdy

Karen Cushman is an acclaimed American author known for her historical fiction books, particularly for young readers. Her works often feature strong, independent female protagonists and are set in historical contexts which are richly detailed (she holds a master's degree in museum studies). Cushman is best known for *The Midwife's Apprentice* (winner of the 1996 Newbery Medal), *Catherine, Called Birdy* (a Newbery Honor book), *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple* (winner of the John and Patricia Beatty Award), and several other prize-winning novels published by Clarion Books. Her latest book is *War and Millie McGonigle* (2022). Cushman is not well known to the Romanian audience as only *Catherine, Called Birdy* was translated in 2016 for YoungArt Publishing House by Alina Popescu. This lack of availability may be attributed to the niche appeal of historical fiction in the Romanian young adult book market or publishing trends favouring more contemporary themes. However, the 2022 film adaptation of *Catherine, Called Birdy*, directed by Lena Dunham and starring Bella Ramsey as Birdy, may spark interest in Cushman's work among Romanian audiences.

In an interview, Cushman confesses that she took the inspiration for *Catherine, Called Birdy* after having listened to somebody who said that the hero in a children's book should always "find what's lost, fix what's broken, solve the mystery, make everything right again". So she wondered what if the reverse happened: "What happens if you can't change whatever it is? All you can deal with is yourself. And then I thought how much truer that might have been in a time like the Middle Ages when children had much less value than they do now" (Hendershot et al., 1996: 198). And so Catherine's story was born.

Catherine, Called Birdy is written in the form of a diary which covers one year and follows Catherine (nicknamed Birdy because she keeps many birds as pets), a 14-year-old girl living in 1290 England. The novel provides a humorous and insightful look at medieval life, particularly the challenges faced by young girls.

Catherine is the daughter of a minor English nobleman who wants to marry her up to a wealthy suitor, thus improving the family's status. But Birdy has other plans and has no interest in any of her suitors whom she finds repulsive—too old, too cruel, or simply too boring. Determined to avoid marriage, she comes up with clever (and often funny) schemes to scare them off. Her mother tries to teach her how to become an accomplished lady (i.e., sewing, spinning, hemming and counting linen), but she dreams of going off to fight in the Crusades or maybe to become a writer, or anything other than a nobleman's obedient wife. Meanwhile, Birdy documents her daily life in her diary, describing medieval customs, household chores, religious practices, and social expectations.

Catherine's narrative voice is candid, forthright, and filled with humour. Her observations about daily life, her family, and the people around her are often spiced with sarcasm and wit, offering readers a humorous insight into her world.

3. On the Romanian translation of humorous instances in Catherine, Called Birdy

Apparently not very complicated, the title of the book does not translate easily. As a result, different languages have adopted varied approaches: in French, *Le Livre de Catherine*; in Italian, *Catherine. Uno Straordinario Inno ala Liberta* (i.e., Catherine. An Extraordinary Hymn to Freedom)*;* in Spanish, *El Libro de Catherine*; in Portuguese, *Catarina, a Menina Chamada Passarinha***;** in German, *Catherine. Lady wider Willen* (i.e., Lady against Her Will); in Dutch, *Dat nooit!* (i.e., Never Again). The Romanian title—*Catherine cea îndărătnică*—alludes to Katherine from Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, the headstrong, reluctant lass who does not fit within the societal standards of what a good wife should be.

Since the book is written as Birdy's diary, her personality shines through in her observations. She is sharp, opinionated, and full of sarcastic remarks about the people, the situations and the customs around her. Her humour is obviously unintentional and comes in various shapes and forms: black humour (for instance, when she expects to find the hanging of a thief entertaining); the nicknames for her suitors; situational comedy (the tricks she resorts to in order to scare off her suitors), commentaries about everyday life, slapstick, foul language, etc.

The Romanian translation generally domesticates the text and brings the child-reader closer to the book. As opposed to foreignisation which preserves elements of the source culture, domestication is a translation strategy in which the translator adapts the text to make it more natural, familiar, and accessible to the target audience. This strategy seems very appropriate especially when translating children's literature.

3.1 Creative curses and playful insults

Birdy is constantly frustrated with her father, her suitors, and medieval life in general. Instead of expressing anger in a conventional way, she invents creative curses and playful insults, often involving parts of the body, animals or medieval imagery, but also Latin curses, as in the following examples:

Catherine, Called Birdy	**Catherine cea îndărătnică**
(1) "Tangled my spinning again. Corpus bones, what a torture!" (2014:1)	"Iar am încurcat firul. *Corpus bones*, ce cazană e torsul!" (2016:7) Footnote: "O exclamaţie în limba latină care înseamnă *Oasele corpului*, referindu-se la trupul lui Cristos. Aici mai degrabă cu sensul de *La naiba*" (2016:7)
(2) "Looking as innocent as I was able, I kicked the baskets over and the cocks escaped. Deus!" (2014: 20)	"Mi-am luat o privire cât mai nevinovată şi, ca din întâmplare, am tras un picior răsturnând coşurile şi eliberând cocoşii. *Deus*!" (2016: 23) Footnote: "Doamne! (în latină) (2016: 23)
(3) "Thomas says the king and the people of his court have chosen each his own special profanity so that they don't have to say "Deus!" or "Corpus bones!" or "Benedicite!" as we ordinary folk do. The king says "God's breath!" His son says "God's teeth!" I, not being ordinary, shall choose one also. I will try one on each day and see what fits me best. Today it is: God's face! (2014: 71)	"Thomas spune că regele şi curtenii săi şi-au ales fiecare câte o sudalmă, ca să nu înjure "*Deus*!" sau "*Corpus bones*!" sau "*Benedicite*!", ca oamenii de rând. Regele spune "Pe răsuflarea Domnului!" Fiul său spune: "Pe dinţii Domnului!" Nefiind om de rând, voi alege şi eu o sudalmă. Am să încerc una în fiecare zi, până găsesc ceva potrivit. Astăzi este: "Pe obrajii Domnului!" (2016: 61) Footnote: "Binecuvântează! (o expresie de mirare sau surpriză în latină) (2016: 61)

The three Latin curses—*Corpus bones*, *Deus*, and *Benedicite*—are italicised in the Romanian translation and explained in the footnotes. While they are generally considered instances of foreignisation, as they preserve elements of the source culture, these footnotes actually come midway between foreignisation and domestication. On the one hand, they are in Latin in the original, signaling to the reader that these expressions belong to a different linguistic and cultural context, thus maintaining their medieval flavour. On the other hand, the footnotes act as a form of domestication, providing explanations that make the terms comprehensible to the Romanian reader without fully adapting them. In this way, the translator preserves the original's authenticity while offering the necessary cultural context for clarity.

Fragment (3) also contains other curses which people might have used at that time according to one character in the book (most probably invented): "God's breath!", "God's teeth!" and "God's face!". There are other instances of such curses which appear to invoke God's body parts:

Catherine, Called Birdy	**Catherine cea îndărătnică**
"God's ears, it is cold!" (2014: 71)	"Pe urechile Domnului, ce frig e!" (2016: 61)
"God's knees!" (2014: 72)	"Pe genunchii Domnului!" (2016: 62)
"God's nails" (2014: 72)	"Pe unghiile Domnului!" (2016: 62)
"God's chin!" (2014: 73)	"Pe bărbia Domnului!" (2016: 62)
"I have chosen. God's thumbs!" (2014: 73)	"Am ales. Pe degetele mari ale Domnului!" (2016: 62)

Swear words often carry a formalised character, typically following fixed formulas, but Catherine's curses are distinctly creative. The Romanian translations retain the essence of the English expressions and the body parts invoked (except for *face* which becomes *obrajii*, i.e. cheeks) but shift in tone due to the linguistic structure which uses the preposition "pe" (on/upon). These swear words reflect Catherine's irreverent voice. Her use of divine body parts—parts not typically associated with God in any traditional religious sense—as part of her arsenal of curses which she thinks any girl should possess, creates a humorous effect which is aptly rendered in Romanian as well.

3.2 Clever nicknames

Besides creating her own curses, Catherine is fond of employing nicknames. These nicknames are not just informal substitutes for proper names, but they show the way she regards various individuals, in particular her suitors. Whether describing physical traits, personality, or behaviour, these nicknames are "cultural markers" (Pascua-Febles, 2014: 116). According to Pascua-Febles, "names that tend to enrich the text with a particular connotation or whose meaning is relevant for the

narration process are to be translated or adapted, so that the reader of the translation can access their semantic content" (2014: 116). Certain names which the translator considers not to have a meaning that is relevant for understanding the story remain untranslated. Such is the case of Ralph Littlemouse, Joan Proud, or Marjorie Mustard. However, in many other instances, they are translated, preserving the comic connotations of the original. Here are some examples:

Catherine, Called Birdy	**Catherine cea îndărătnică**
Birdy	Vrăbiuţa
"My father's crack still rings my head but *Master Lack-Wit* left without a betrothal." (2014: 8)	Palma tatei încă-mi mai răsună în urechi, însă *jupânul Netot* a plecat fără logodnă." (2016: 13)
William the Steward	William Vechilul
"*Pinch-Fist* and *Miser*" (2014: 25)	"*Scârţar* şi *Zgârie - Brânză*" (2016: 27)
"Fire Eyes" (2014: 76)	"Ochi Scăpărători" (2016: 65)
"John Over-Bridge" (2014: 82)	"John Podarul" (2016: 70)
"Peppercorn the dog" (2014: 100)	"Boabă de Piper căţeluşa" (2016: 84)
"Shaggy Beard" (2014: 122)	"Barbă Neţesălată" (2016: 101)
"Odd William" (2014: 133)	"William Ciudatul" (2016: 109)

Catherine's own nickname which also features in the title, *Birdy*—she keeps birds as pets—, is translated into Romanian as *Vrăbiuţa* (little sparrow). The translator opts for an equivalent which is no longer generic as the original but designates a specific class of birds. By using the Romanian equivalent in its diminutive form, the translator manages to convey her spirited and playful personality.

Catherine enjoys giving humorous nicknames to her suitors, whom she skillfully outwits and sends away. One such suitor is Master Lack-Wit, a middle-aged, unattractive wool merchant. His nickname in the original suggests a lack of intelligence. The Romanian translation, *jupânul Netot*, preserves the meaning while adding an extra layer of antiquity by using *Netot*, a rather archaic term, enhancing the historical feel of the text. Another suitor, Fire Eyes, is described as "friendly and good-tempered, with all his teeth and hair" (2014: 76). Catherine gives him this nickname after noticing his keen interest in her dowry. The Romanian translation, *Ochi Scăpărători*, uses an adjective to describe his eyes, drawing on the Romanian expression *a-i scăpăra/sclipi ochii după bani*, which refers to someone driven by greed. This choice effectively conveys the suitor's materialistic nature while maintaining the humorous tone of the original.

Finally, there is the dreaded Shaggy Beard, the worst of them all. Catherine gives him this nickname based on his unkempt appearance and repulsive manners: "He blew his red and shiny nose on the table linen, sneezed on the meat, picked his teeth with his knife, and left wet, greasy marks where he drank from the cup we shared" (2014: 121). His lack of hygiene makes him a truly revolting character. In the Romanian translation, *Barbă Neţesălată*, the nickname is adapted to emphasise

his dishevelled look. The phrase conveys the same sense of uncleanliness and neglect while maintaining the derogatory tone of the original. By choosing *Neţesălată* (meaning "uncombed" or "unkempt"), the translator effectively preserves Catherine's disgust and sharp wit, ensuring that the humorous tone is preserved in the target language.

Catherine also gives nicknames to various people her parents interact with, such as William the Steward, who keeps records and collects rents for her father. Since his nickname directly reflects his profession, the Romanian translation uses the archaic term *Vechilul* to describe his role. Similarly, other characters are named in the same manner: Thomas Baker becomes *Thomas Brutarul*, and Cob the Smith is translated as *Cob Fierarul*, preserving the occupational-based naming convention while enhancing the medieval atmosphere of the text. Other nicknames reference a person's place of origin, such as John Over-Bridge and John At-Woods. Interestingly, the Romanian translation shifts the focus from location to profession, rendering them as *John Podarul* and *John Pădurarul*. These translations suggest that John is not merely from a bridge or the woods but rather associated with a trade—*Podarul* referring to a ferryman or bridge keeper and *Pădurarul* to a forester. This choice reflects a broader strategy in the translation: rather than preserving the literal geographic references, the translator adapts the names to preserve medieval Romanian naming conventions, where professions were commonly used as identifiers.

Other nicknames highlight personality traits, particularly behavioural characteristics. For example, *Odd William* (*William Ciudatul*) is a relative on her mother's side, known for his eccentricity—he is writing a history of the world in Welsh. His Romanian nickname, *Ciudatul*, effectively captures his peculiar nature. Her father's stinginess is referred to with names like *Pinch-Fist* and *Miser*, which the Romanian translation renders as *Scârţar* and *Zgârie-Brânză*. These terms are well-chosen, as they are common Romanian expressions for extreme frugality, with *Zgârie-Brânză* literally meaning "cheese-scraper," a vivid metaphor for someone excessively miserly.

3.3 Diary entries

An important source of humour in the novel comes from Catherine's diary entries, where she includes the day and month (e.g., "12th Day of September"). In the Romanian translation, this element is rendered by using the traditional names of the months—*răpciune*, *brumărel*, *brumar*, *undrea*, *gerar*, *făurar*, *mărţişor*, *prier*, *florar*, *cireşar*, *cuptor*, and *gustar*—which are no longer commonly in use in everyday speech but can still be found in Christian-Orthodox calendars. This translatorial choice is consistent throughout the novel as the translator usually opts for a more archaic vocabulary even if the original uses everyday English words:

Kitchen = cuhnie; horse = bidiviu; writing room = scriptoriu; letters = slove, banker = vechil (p. 32), *doctor = felcer, law = pravilă, profanity =* sudalmă, etc. These choices evoke a sense of time grounded in the rural traditions of the past. By employing these obsolete terms, the translator also enhances the authenticity of the medieval setting.

After Catherine receives "a marvellous small book of saints, their feast days, and their great works" (2014: 27), she completes the entries with the saints' days and what she considers to be relevant about their lives.

Catherine, Called Birdy	**Catherine cea îndărătnică**
(1) "Feast of Saint Frideswide, virgin, though why that should make someone a saint I do not know" (2014: 36)	"praznicul Sfintei Frideswide, fecioară, desi nu cunosc pricina pentru care asta te face sfânt" (2016: 35)
(2) "Feast of Saint Colman, an Irish bishop who taught a mouse to keep him awake in chapel" (2014: 44)	"praznicul Sfântului Colman, un episcop irlandez care-a învăţat un şoarece să-l ţină treaz în biserică" (2016: 41)
(3) "Feast of Saint Birstan, who once when praying for the dead heard them answer 'Amen'" (2014: 49)	"praznicul Sfântului Birstan, care, pe când se ruga pentru morţi, i-a auzit odată răspunzând Amin" (2016: 45)
(4) "Feast of Saint Henry, who became a hermit rather than marry" (2014: 95)	"praznicul Sfântului Henric, care s-a făcut pustnic ca să nu se însoare" (2016: 80)

The source of humour is Catherine's innocent commentaries about the saints and their lives. The word *praznic*, which means a religious celebration, is an appropriate choice for *feast* in Romanian. In example (1), Catherine questions the concept of sainthood, suggesting that Saint Frideswide became a saint simply because she was a virgin. The Romanian translation closely mirrors the original English in both structure and meaning. While the phrasing may not carry the same colloquial flavour as the English version, the intent and humour are faithfully preserved. In example (2), Catherine continues to reflect on sainthood, this time describing the absurd situation of an Irish bishop teaching a mouse to keep him awake in chapel. The choice of *biserică* (*church*) instead of *capelă* (*chapel*) represents a slight alteration, likely driven by a domestication strategy. The term *capelă* tends to evoke a Catholic context, so *biserică* serves as a more neutral term, potentially making the scene feel more relatable to the Romanian audience. Examples (3) and (4) follow the same pattern, describing bizarre and comical situations. The translation remains faithful to the original, preserving the humour and ensuring the comedic impact carries over into the Romanian language.

3.4 Other instances of humour

Catherine is fond of all kinds of remedies for various conditions and takes pride in putting her cures to good use. Here are two such examples:

Catherine, Called Birdy	**Catherine cea îndărătnică**
"He is infested with boils and blotches and sought the aid of my lady mother. […] I thought the best remedy was to throw himself in the river, but aloud I advised an ointment made of oil of bay and a bath once in a while." (2014: 49)	"E plin de buboaie şi pete şi-a venit la mama mea să-i ceară ajutorul. […] După mine, cel mai bun leac ar fi să se arunce în râu, însă cu glas tare l-am îndemnat să folosească o alifie din ulei de dafin şi să mai facă o baie din când în când." (2016: 46)
"My father suffering from a sore throat, I made him a gargle of strawberries, water, vinegar and the dung of a white dog. Because of how he cracked me yesterday, I put in extra dung." (2014: 157)	"Tata suferă de durere de gâtlej, aşa că i-am pregătit o gargară din căpşune, apă, oţet şi murdărie de câine alb. Pentru că ieri m-a pocnit rău de tot, am pus ceva mai multă murdărie." (2016: 128)

Example (1) refers to Father Hew who apparently suffers from a skin condition. Catherine immediately understands that the problem is his lack of personal hygiene. She muses to herself that "the best remedy was to throw himself in the river" which has a double meaning: on the one hand, it suggests that he is so dirty he needs a bath, and on the other, it subtly conveys Catherine's opinion of him as a useless character who might as well drown himself. Yet, she does not voice what she thinks, instead she advises him to use an ointment and take a bath every once in a while. The Romanian translation preserves both the structure and the humour of the original. An element which adds to the humour is the use of the Romanian adverb *mai* in "să *mai* facă o baie din când în când" which expresses the idea of accumulation, of adding some actions or elements to something already existing, when in fact it ironically suggests that Father Hew does not bathe at all in actuality.

In example (2), Catherine shows her feelings for her authoritarian father who wants to marry her off against her will. This passage is an example of Catherine's dark and sardonic humour, as she prepares a bizarre gargle for her father's sore throat, adding an extra amount of dog dung in retaliation for how he treated her the day before. The humour here is rooted in the absurdity of using dog dung as a remedy and Catherine's malicious decision to add "extra" dung out of spite. In the Romanian translation, however, the word *dung* is downplayed. Instead of the more direct *rahat*, the translator opts for the euphemistic *murdărie* (dirt). This choice likely reflects an attempt to make the language more appropriate for a younger audience. The term *gâtlej* for "throat" is a slightly more formal or old-fashioned term than the more common *gât*, but works well within the medieval context of the story, while also maintaining the humour of the original.

Another instance of humour occurs when one of Catherine's suitors struggles to speak properly due to a stuffy nose: "Good fordood to you, by lord, and to you, Lady Aislidd. I ab hodored to bisit your bodest badder and beet the baided" (2014: 8). The humour in this passage comes from the character's nasal congestion, which distorts his speech through letter substitutions and deliberate misspellings. The Romanian translation preserves the comedic effect by using similar phonetic distortions: "Bună seaba, domnul beu şi dumitale, doamnă Aislibb. Sunt oborat să bă bizitez în mobestul conac şi s-o salub be domniboară" (2016: 12).

There are instances where the translator cannot adhere strictly to the original text and must improvise to preserve elements such as rhyme. One such example occurs when Catherine attempts to compose a Lenten song: "I wanted to end with lines about hope but can think of no rhymes but rope, soap, pope, and mope, and none of these seem to fit the song" (p. 134). The humour in this passage arises from Catherine's frustration with the limited and inappropriate rhyming options. In the Romanian translation, the passage is shorter, using only two words instead of four to maintain the rhyme: "Am vrut să închei cu versuri despre speranţă, însă nu-mi vin alte rime decât clanţă şi cloanţă, care nu prea se potrivesc în cântec" (p. 110). While *clanță* (door handle) and *cloanță* (a slang term for mouth or beak) have nothing to do with the meaning of the original words, they successfully replicate the playful tone and sense of mismatch that Catherine expresses. This adaptation shows how the translator prioritises preserving the humorous effect over strict lexical equivalence. Since direct translations of *rope*, *soap*, *pope*, and *mope* would not have worked rhythmically or semantically in Romanian, the chosen words offer a similar sense of absurdity while maintaining the overall impact.

A similar challenge arises in the translation of "No one will agree to call me Aelgifu except Gerd the miller's son who cannot pronounce the name and says Ugly-foo" (2014: 166). The humour in this passage stems from the mispronunciation of *Aelgifu*, which becomes *Ugly-foo*, a distortion that turns the name into an unflattering version. In the Romanian translation, this is rendered as "Nimeni nu se învoieşte să mă strige Aelgifu în afară de Gerd, care nu poate să rostească numele cum se cuvine şi zice 'Ei fir-ar tu'" (p. 136). Instead of attempting a direct phonetic equivalent of *Ugly-foo*, the translator opts for a Romanian phrase that sounds similar to *Aelgifu* ("*Ei fir-ar tu"*), an expression which shows mild annoyance. This adaptation preserves the humour by maintaining both the mispronunciation element and the unintended comedic effect. In this instance, the translator adapts the wordplay and phonetic humour, and the joke is preserved in the target language.

4. Conclusion

According to Lathey, "When the narrator of the story is a child, the translator faces the challenge of recreating the illusion of a child addressing directly to their peers" (2016: 20). The translation of *Catherine, Called Birdy* is an example of how a skilful translator manages to preserve this illusion. By domesticating the text, the

translator brings the child-reader closer to the book. She does that by resorting to a multitude of strategies the translators have at their disposal: wordplay, phonetic distortions, archaic terms, creative rewording, etc. Whether in Catherine's sarcastic observations, her humorous nicknames for suitors, or the playful manipulation of language in rhymes and mispronunciations, the Romanian version manages to maintain the humorous effect while making necessary adjustments for readability and cultural relevance. The essence of Catherine's humour—her sharp wit, rebellious spirit, and keen observations—remains intact, allowing Romanian readers to enjoy the same charm that defines the original novel.

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