Gulliver's Adventures on the Romanian Children's Literature Shelf

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Abstract: This paper complements previous research on the impact of Jonathan Swift's work on the Romanian literary culture (Bogdan, 1958; Mudure, 2005). It documents and analyses the transition of Gulliver's Travels to the Romanian children's literature shelf by looking into the translations, translated adaptations, Romanian adaptations, rewritings, and sequels, published over the twentieth century. The results reveal that the best translations, rewritings, and adaptations were published in the decades following WWII, while the last decade of the century is marked by little to no editorial attention to the versions of the Swiftian novel that were published as children's literature.

Keywords: Gulliver's Travels, Jonathan Swift, children's literature, literary adaptations for children, literary translation.

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Jonathan Swift did not intend *Gulliver's Travels* as children's literature, but, in the spirit of English Augustanism[1], as a satire on the social and political behaviour of his time.[2] However, as M. Sarah Smedman points out, it "has for more than two and a half centuries been a book read for pleasure by children."[3] The appeal to a young readership is, of course, fairly easy to understand. Brian Tippett explains that the fairy-tale imagination, influenced by the story of Tom Thumb, the stimulation of fear and fantasy in a comic note, and the topsy-turvy world that allows both identification and role reversal in the adult-child relation through the changes in size and proportion in the first two voyages facilitate the transition of Swift's novel to the children's bookshelf.[4] In some cases, placing *Gulliver's Travels* on the children's literature shelf seems to go beyond educational and entertainment functions and veers towards serving political agendas. As Elinor Shaffer noted, "[t]ranslators of *Gulliver's Travels* hid their intentions behind apparently innocuous 'children's versions', often actually aimed at 'young men' or adolescents, and often laden with political implications, whether on the left or on the right."[5] Herman J. Real is fairly critical of the political misuses and abuses that Swift's novel has been subject to. In Real's words, "in fascist and totalitarian countries, both right and left, *Gulliver's Travels* has frequently fallen prey to government propaganda [...]. Such bowdlerization plays havoc with

1. In English literary history, *Augustanism* is a term applied to the literary culture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. It describes the work of English writers such as John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Matthew Prior, or John Gay, who emulated and even attempted to surpass the work of the classical poets of the Roman Augustan Age (Virgil, Ovid, Horace). The English Augustans share a fondness for wit, satire, urbanity and are particularly interested in reappropriating classical forms of poetry and putting them to use for satirical purposes.

2. This paper develops findings previously published in the Romanian, as "Jonathan Swift" in *O istorie a traducerilor în limba română din secolul al XX-lea. Domenii literare și non literare*, vol. II., ed. Muguraș Constantinescu, Daniel Dejica, and Titela Vîlceanu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2022), 880–887. The English version includes the theoretical and critical discussion and a more detailed analysis of the corpus.

3. M. Sarah Smedman, "Like Me, Like Me Not: Gulliver's Travels as Children's Book", in *The Genres of Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Frederik N. Smith (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 75.

4. Brian Tippett, *Gulliver's Travels* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1989), 67–73.

5. Elinor Shaffner, "Series Editor's Preface" in *The Reception of Jonathan Swift in Europe*, ed. Hermann J. Real (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), xiii.

Swift's intentions which, by what is known of them, advocated the very opposite, always kicking against the pricks of some orthodoxy and challenging prevailing assumptions, conventions, and norms."[6]

In the Romanian culture, *Gulliver's Travels* has gained popularity due to its being promoted as a book for children.[7] As Mihaela Mudure points out, even if "Swift and Defoe are the two English authors most beloved by Romanians ... their Romanian fame was linked to their fame as children's authors rather than to their Enlightenment credentials."[8] Besides the above-mentioned features that encourage its publication as children's literature, Swift's novel was further infantilized in Romania by the abridged, often negligent translations of the first decades of the twentieth century, most likely from the French, which, according to Mihail Bogdan, appeared to have confined Swift's novel to the children literature shelf, "depriving it of its true social significance."[9] With this in mind, the purpose of this paper is to document and discuss the journey of Swift's novel as children's literature in the twentieth-century Romanian literary culture, through translations, translated adaptations, Romanian adaptations, rewritings, and sequels with a view to understanding the intentions behind the inclusion of the English canonical text in the repertoire of Romanian young readers.

It has become something of a truism in the scholarship on adaptations for children that adapting canonical texts, originally written for the adult reader, has an important role in "initiat[ing] young readers to a literary canon that is deemed essential for sharing a common cultural heritage."[10] Canonical texts and their adaptations often transition to other literary cultures by translation, as part of a complex transcultural process of sharing and propagating a common literary heritage. Children's adaptations tend to subject the original text to an expurgation procedure guided by a set of "assumptions about the child reader, notions of suitability and an acute awareness of the moral implications of a text."[11] Transcending cultural and linguistic borders can also be regulated by sets of rules, derived either from editorial or from cultural expectancies, which leads to further textual transformations.[12] Zohar Shavit proposes that we understand this process as a "semiotic concept", a "transfer mechanism [...] by which textual models of one system are transferred to another" resulting in "products [...] within the target system, which relate in various and complex ways to products of the source system."[13] According to Shavit, "the final product of the act of translation is the result of the relationship between a source system and a target system, a relationship that is itself determined by a certain hierarchy of semiotic constraints."[14] Benjamin Lefebvre sees adaptation in terms converging to a similar model, as "textual transformation" that appears to be the result of an ongoing "conversation with the adapted text" guided by "generic, pedagogical, and ideological underpinnings that drive

6. Hermann J. Real, "Introduction" in *The Reception of Jonathan Swift in Europe*. ed. Hermann J. Real (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), 1.

7. The Romanian case is by no means singular. Many European literary cultures manifest a somewhat similar incorporation of *Gulliver's Travels*, sometimes starting from abridged and expurgated translations, not always from the English, which would assist in the consolidation of the novel's reputation as literature for children. See, for instance, Flavio Gregori, "The Italian Reception of Swift," *The Reception of Jonathan Swift in Europe*, ed. Hermann J. Real (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), 17-56, for the Italian, or Jose Luis Chamosa Gonzalez, "Swift's Horses in the Land of the Caballeros" in the same volume, 57-78, for the Spanish.

8. Mihaela, Mudure, "From the Infantile to the Subversive: Swift's Romanian Adventures." In *The Reception of Jonathan Swift in Europe*. ed. Hermann J. Real (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), 248.

9. In the original: "lipsind-o de adevărata semnificație socială." Mihail Bogdan, "Despre traducerile românești ale operei Călătoriile lui Gulliver de Jonathan Swift," *Revista de filologie romanică și germanică* 1 (1958): 110. All the translations from the Romanian were made by the author of this paper.

10. Anja Müller, "Introduction: Adapting Canonical Texts in and for Children's Literature," in *Adapting Canonical Texts in and for Children's Literature*, ed. Anja Müller (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 2.

11. Elizabeth Thiel, "Downsizing Dickens: Adaptations of Oliver Twist for the Child Reader," in *Adapting Canonical Texts in Children's Literature*, ed. Anja Müller (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 154.

12. Efrain Kristal discusses Camille Fort's study on the strict rules imposed by some French publishing houses on translators of books for children. In Kristal's words, "In France, for example, some publishing houses insist on the following strictures: (1) stories must be told in the present tense to facilitate the child's identification with a story; (2) proper names and toponyms must be Gallicized; and (3) foreign sociocultural contexts must be recontextualized as French. Rules of this kind account for the fact that in the French translation the heroine of the Nancy Drew mysteries is called Alice Roy, the English seaside becomes the French coast, and lunch boxes or school uniforms disappear from stories that take place in a school." Efrain Kristal, "Philosophical/Theoretical Approaches to Translation," in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter (Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 38.

13. Zohar Shavit, "Translation of Children's Literature," in *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader*, ed. Gillian Lathey (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 25.

14. Shavit, "Translation," 25.

both the process and the product."[15] Consequently, the questions of fidelity and accuracy lose authority when it comes to translations and adaptation for children. Therefore, the theoretical discussions around translations and adaptations for children invite the hypothesis that sanitized sections, simplifications or abridgements in the Romanian versions of *Gulliver's Travels* are to be expected, and the logic governing the transformative forces that act upon the original text should be informed by what was deemed appropriate for the young reader over the twentieth century.

The choice of the time span examined in this paper is legitimized by three important aspects. First and arguably most relevant, Gulliver's journey on the Romanian children's literature shelf starts at the beginning of the twentieth century. Secondly, according to Mihai Iovănel, "a relatively professional children's literature begins to develop" in Romania "[a]long with the economic development of the first half of the twentieth century."[16] Thirdly, Romania's transition through several political systems during the twentieth century (monarchy, communism, democracy) allows insights into whether the children's versions of *Gulliver's Travels* show any sign of political appropriation.

Mihail Bogdan identifies the first translation addressed to young readers as that of Radu D. Rosetti, published in 1905 by Socec Publishing House, under the tutelage of the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction.[17] The title is *Călătoriile lui Gulliver* [*Gulliver's Travels*], although it only includes the first two journeys. According to Bogdan, this translation is "made from the French and is expurgated, all indecent parts being omitted."[18] A few years later[19], a translation by Ludovic Dauș of Gulliver's first journey, entitled *Guliver în țara piticilor* [*Gulliver in the Land of Dwarfs*], appeared in the *Biblioteca pentru toți* [*Library for All*] collection of the Alcalay publishing house, accompanied by the illustrations that J. J. Grandville had made for the French translation of 1838, but without mentioning the name of the illustrator. Dauș's translation, based, most likely, on the French version of Desfontaines, is pleasant to read and poeticized by the passing of time. Nevertheless, it is, at times, negligent and abridges the original, summarizing or randomly excluding fragments. The logic of shortening the text – difficult to understand – does not reflect clear intentions to adapt by omitting or cosmeticizing potentially problematic sections, which might indicate that it was not intended for children. On the other hand, even if the literary historian might be indignant at learning, from Dauș's translation, that the Lilliputian lady-in-waiting because of whom the queen's palace caught fire fell asleep while reading "a Blefuscian epic" ("o epopee blefusciană")[20] when Swift makes it clear that it was "a Romance", the young or uninformed reader would still be able to enjoy Gulliver's adventures even in the absence of a complex and complicated discussion on the development of the modern English novel.

Chances are that the summarized and abridged translation made by Ludovic Dauș was not originally intended for the school-age reader. However, it seems to have become one of the most popular texts with the Romanian publishing houses, particularly in the last decade of the twentieth century; they have frequently republished the text in children's literature series, with or without credit to the translator, in more or less negligent editions. Dauș's translation is often published together with fairly problematic translations by Haralamb G. Lecca (1909-1920?), which continues Gulliver's adventures. There are at least two versions of Lecca's translation, probably none of them intended for children. Although entitled *Guliver în țara uriașilor* [*Gulliver in the Land of the Giants*], one of them features no giant; it includes only the third and the fourth voyages of Gulliver's original adventures. There are,

15. Benjamin Lefevre, "Introduction. Reconsidering Textual Transformations in Children's Literature, " in *Textual Transformations in Children's Literature: Adaptations, Translations, Reconsiderations,* ed Benjamin Lefebvre (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 2.

16. Mihai Iovănel, "Children's Literature in Romania," *Transylvanian Review* 31, supplement no. 1 (2022): 42. Also, the interwar period witnessed the emergence of the children's novel as a subgenre of the novel. See Andrei Terian et al. "Genurile romanului românesc (1901-1932). O analiză cantitativă," *Transilvania*, no. 10 (2020): 55–56.

17. This edition was not available for direct consultation at the time this study was written.

18. In the original: „făcută din franțuzește și este expurgată, toate părțile indecente fiind omise". Bogdan, 109.

19. The edition of the translation by Ludovic Dauș consulted for this paper does not specify the year of publication, but the copy enters the library in 1929 and corresponds to the description of an entry in the catalogue of the Romanian Academy Library, dated 1928. In his work, Mihail Bogdan discusses two editions of this translation, placed before that by Radu D. Rosetti in the chronological arrangement of his study, without specifying the year of publication for any of them. On the other hand, according to the study by M. Mudure, Dauș's translations were published in 1908 and 1920 (252). The publishing house of the volume consulted here is Libr. „Universală" Alcalay, which took over the *Biblioteca pentru toți* [*Library for All*] collection in 1923, and this indicates that the volume was most likely published between 1923 and 1928.

20. Jonathan Swift, *Guliver în țara piticilor*, trans. Ludovic Dauș (Libr. „Universală" Alcalay & Co., 1928?), 86. All the translations from the Romanian were made by the author of this paper.

however, three black-and-white illustrations inspired by Gulliver's experiences in Brobdingnag.[21] The other version, most likely published at a later date because of the revisions and corrections, begins with Gulliver's last two travels, assembling some of his experience in Brobdingnag in the last five of the volume's twenty-five chapters.[22] Lecca's text is a paraphrastic and abbreviated translation from the French, with numerous inadvertences and considerable personal input. For example, on the lowest gallery of Laputa, Gulliver sees "People fishing with long Angling Rods."[23] in the Swiftian original. In Lecca's first version, these people were fishing birds ("Pe cea mai joasă din ele, erau mai mulți oameni; unii *pescuind păsări*"[24]), while in the second they were catching birds ("prinzând păsări"[25]). This mistake can also be noted in the French translation by Desfontaines ("plusieurs hommes qui *péchaient des oiseaux* à la ligne")[26], which must have been the source of Lecca's Romanian version.

The first edition that reunites the translations by Dauș and Lecca was published by Cultura Românească in the 1930s,[27] under the title *Pățaniile lui Gulliver în țara piticilor și a uriașilor* [*Gulliver's Adventures in the Lands of Dwarfs and Giants*]. This volume does not mention the name of the translators, but features some corrections to Lecca's translation. However, it still preserves fragments that seem to have been Lecca's personal contribution to the Swiftian text, for reasons rather difficult to understand. For instance, while in Glubbdubdrib, Gulliver asks to see Lucretia, who has committed suicide after being raped by Tarquinius, which does not happen in the Swiftian original, nor is it a strategy for adapting the text for a young readership – quite the contrary.[28] Unfortunately, this inappropriate addition will have a fairly long career in children's editions, given the indiscriminate reprinting in the last decade of the century of these early twentieth-century Romanian versions.

Dauș's and Lecca's texts were republished together – both slightly modernized – in a volume entitled *Călătoriile lui Guliver în țara piticilor și a uriașilor* [*Gulliver's Travels in the Land of Dwarfs and Giants*], published in 1997, when the English original had become much more accessible to Romanian readers, translators, and editors than it had been before 1989. This volume was published in the *Piccolino* collection – clearly intended for children – of the Tedit FZH publishing house, without the names of the translators. Despite the note on the title page specifying that this edition was curated by the publisher, the volume seems to have been in the care of no one, because it retains many of the errors of Lecca's first version, including Lucretia's misfortunes. It preserves the incorrect association of the title with the text, thus promising giants, but featuring none. The translations by Dauș and Lecca in joined format were also published by Corint publishing house in 1995, in a volume that credits only the first translator, but at least corrects the titles of the journeys. The tradition of publishing Dauș's and Lecca's translations together, in children's editions, was carried on by Regis (1998), with an edition proudly advertising the illustrations by J. J. Grandville, but without acknowledging the translators; and by Cartex (2000), which attributes the entire text to Ludovic Dauș. These last two editions at least insert the second voyage in its proper place. The negligence that marks the publication of these volumes in the last decade of the century is, most likely, linked to the larger social,

21. The edition to which I am referring here does not mention the year of publication. It is, however, published in the *Biblioteca pentru toți* [*Library for All*] collection by Editura Librăriei Leon Alcalay [The Publishing House of Leon Alcalay Bookstore]. The collection was sold to another publishing house in 1920, so it must predate this year. Moreover, the volumes in the collection were numbered, and on the title page of this copy it writes: "Sequel to no. 198 of the Library". Number 198 was the translation by Ludovic Dauș of Gulliver's first voyage, the first edition of which was published in 1908, according to M. Mudure (see note 17), so this might be the 1909 version of Lecca's translation.

22. This volume was also published by Editura Librăriei Leon Alcalay, but the title page no longer mentions the collection. It must have been published after the 1909 edition and before 1920.

23. Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 144.

24. Jonathan Swift, *Guliver în țara Uriașilor*, trans. Haralamb G. Lecca (București: Editura Librăriei Leon Alcalay, 1909?), 9. Italics added.

25. Jonathan Swift, *Guliver în țara Uriașilor*, trans. Haralamb G. Lecca (București: Editura Librăriei Leon Alcalay, 1909-1920?), 6.

26. Jonathan Swift, *Voyages de Gulliver*, trans. Pierre-François Guyot Desfontaines, La Bibliothèque électronique du Québec, Collection *À tous les vents,* Volume 393, 258. Italics added.

27. Mihail Bogdan estimates the publication between 1932 and 1934 of a volume whose description largely corresponds to the one consulted for this paper and referred to here (117). The consulted volume does not specify the year of publication but entered a personal collection in 1946.

28. This intervention is also analyzed by Mihail Bogdan (110-111), but he could not come with an explanation for the addition either. The only justification that comes to mind for Lecca's insertion of Lucretia's story is that, in the original, Swift writes that Gulliver met Junius. Even if Junius only appears in a list of names, he did lead an uprising to oust the Tarquins from Rome following the rape of Lucretia, so this series of (fairly Sternean) associations might be the reason for such an alteration of the original.

economic, and political context of the 1990s, that presented serious challenges to the Romanian book market.[29]

In 1956, *Gulliver's Travels* translated by Leon D. Levițchi was published by Editura Tineretului (Youth Press).[30] It was the second complete translation directly from the English, after that of Vera Călin, from 1947.[31] Its being published by Editura Tineretului, featuring illustrations by Al. Alexe in grey and red, and its frequent presence in the children's sections of various libraries indicate that this edition was intended for the advanced young reader. The fidelity to the Swiftian original, without interventions, sends to John Rowe Townsend's claim on the relativity of the distinctions between children's and adult literature, which ultimately leaves to the publisher the inclusion of a title in one list or another.[32] The translation captures the satirical undertones of the Swiftian text and keeps the sexual and political allusions, most of which might, admittedly, elude the young reader. However, some timid expurgation efforts can still be noticed; for example, Gulliver's bowel movement in Lilliput is omitted.[33] Since it cannot be found in Levițchi's 1985 adult edition either, it is unclear whether this omission was part of the translator's expurgation strategy or an unintentional mistake. There are also a few fragments that might raise some difficulties in understanding the text, such as: *„crescătoriile* pentru băieții coborâtori din părinți de viță nobilă sau cu rang înalt"[34] for the original "The Nurseries for Males of Noble or Eminent Birth."[35] The Romanian word *crescătorie* is a general term for places where non-human animals are raised (e.g. stock farm). In addition, the translation includes a few sections that unwillingly potentiate the Swiftian grotesque. One such example comes from the Romanian use of the word *foot*, which is associated with the anatomic region,[36] and not commonly used as a unit of measurement. This becomes problematic in the fragment describing the nurse's breast, suckling a baby in Brobdingnag. In the original, it reads: "I must confess no Object ever disgusted me so much as the Sight of her monstrous Breast, which I cannot tell what to compare with, so as to give the curious Reader an Idea of its Bulk, Shape and Colour. It stood prominent six Foot, and could not be less than sixteen in Circumference."[37] In Levițchi's version, "stood prominent six Foot" is translated by "ieșeau afară cu vreo șase picioare,"[38] which can mean both that they stuck out about six feet, but also that they were getting out using their six legs. The (young) Romanian native speaker might instinctively go for the latter meaning, especially because of the use of the verb *a ieși*, which means *to get out*, *to exit*. While it might be true that the monstrosity of the nurse's breast reaches a new level because of this ambiguity, Levițchi's decision makes sense, as the alternatives for the translation of this particular section are fairly limited.

In 1973, Ion Creangă Publishing House publishes Leon Levițchi's translation in an edition that is, certainly, much more attractive to readers younger than those envisaged by the 1956 edition. Although entitled *Călătoriile lui Gulliver* (*Gulliver's Travels*), only the voyages to Lilliput and to Brobdingnag are included. This edition, in large format, features lively coloured illustrations by Desideriu Iacob, which often cover more space on the page than the text. The large fonts and the generous line spacing are intended to facilitate reading by a beginner. The text is, for the most part, faithful to the English original and identical to that of the 1956 edition discussed above, but for some small changes meant to make it more poetic and seemlier to very young readers. It was exposed to a gentle process of expurgation; for example, the above-discussed section on the size of the nurse's breasts was excluded, and so were the paragraphs in chapter V of the same voyage, describing how the ladies in Brobdingnag lasciviously play with Gulliver. Other sections, alluding to sexuality, adultery, or physiology, but which generate comic effects and might have consequently been considered inoffensive, have been kept.

Levițchi's is arguably the best translation of Swift's text into Romanian, to this date. The 1956 edition was

29. See Adriana Stan and Cosmin Borza, "Deetatization of Culture, Privatization of Politics. The Case of the Publishing Houses in Postcommunist Romania," *Romanian Political Science Review* 20, no. 3 (2020): 382-397. See also Sebastian-Raul Pavel, "Revoluție și competențe Literate: România Postcomunistă," *Transilvania*, no. 3 (2021): 12-20.

30. The same text was also published in collections for the adult reader.

31. Vera Călin's translation was not advertised as a book for children. For a detailed discussion of this translation, see Mudure, 254.

32. Townsend qtd. in David Rud, "Shirley, the Bathwater, and Definitions of Children's Literature", *Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature* 5, no. 2-3 (1994): 88.

33. Out of the fifty-four English adaptations that include the voyage to Lilliput, surveyed by M. Sarah Smedman, only five keep this paragraph (85). Leaving out this section seems to be common practice across various literary cultures.

34. Jonathan Swift, *Călătoriile lui Gulliver*, trans. Leon Levițchi (Bucharest: Editura Tineretului, 1956), 66, italics added.

35. Swift, 2005, 54.

36. The Romanian equivalent of *foot* as a unit of measurement is *picior*, which means also means *leg.*

37. Swift, 2005, 82.

38. Swift, *Călătoriile*, 1956, 100.

reprinted several times, by Editura Tineretului in 1959 and 1964, by Cantemir publishing house in 1993, with cover and illustrations by Valentin Tănase, and by Allfa, in their *Picollino* collection, in 1997. The same text was published in the Republic of Moldavia by Falac in 1992 and attributed to another translator, namely Mosolova T. It is identical to Levițchi's Romanian version, but for the footnotes. The 1973 version was reprinted in 1983, without any further changes, and it became the best Romanian children's edition of the twentieth century.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, children's adaptations of *Gulliver's Travels* were translated from the German or the English. In 1992, *Gulliver în Țara Piticilor* [*Gulliver in the Land of Dwarfs*] comes out in the translation of Gustav Wahl from the German, at Editura Fundației Culturale Române (the Publishing House of the Romanian Cultural Foundation) in the *Little Prince's Books* collection. The cover was designed by Vasile Olac, but the illustrations were reproduced from the German edition, namely the Loewes Verlag Ferdinand Carl edition of 1963. This text presents an expurgated and abridged version of the English original, contracting the eight chapters of the first voyage into five. The style is lively, and its orality is frequently enhanced by interjections. The text reimagines some of the incidents that were kept after the abridgement, remodelling them for playful or didactic purposes. In addition, this adaptation acquired an unexpected religious substratum completely foreign to the English original. For example, Gulliver says to the emperor of Lilliput: "– Binecuvântarea Domnului asupra *casei* și a *frunții* Voastre, Majestate Imperială, strigai eu, îngenunchind în fața suveranului, pentru mine nu poate exista o dorință mai mare decît redobîndirea libertății!" ("– God's blessing onto Your house and Your forehead, your Imperial Majesty, I cried, kneeling before the sovereign, for me there can be no greater wish than to regain my freedom!").[39] The education of Lilliputian children includes mandatory religious education, as „părinții și dascălii își dau toată osteneala să le întipărească virtuțile fricii de Dumnezeu" ("parents and teachers make every effort to instil in them the virtues of the fear of God").[40] Using Swift's text for religious purposes takes the text very far from the original, but the case can still be made that the transformation might have been designed for educational purposes.

Another translated adaptation from the German is that of Petronela Negoșanu, its source being an 1844 edition published in Leipzig, by Bernhard Tauchnitz. The Romanian translation of this adaptation came out in 1995 at Corint publishing, with black-and-white illustrations by Walter Riess. Much closer to the English original than Wahl's translation, this edition includes the journeys to Lilliput, Brobdingnag, and Laputa. This version is also abridged and partly expurgated – some sections tackling sexual aspects and those that transform the physiological into the grotesque have been cosmeticized – but the interventions are not as invasive to the original as in the previous translation from the German. However, we can still read that the ladies of Laputa "erau mângâiate de iubiții lor în prezența soților" ("were caressed by their lovers in the presence of their husbands").[41] The first adaptation translated directly from the English is published as late as 2000 by Crișan publishing house. It is a volume generously illustrated by Tony Wolf, entitled *Gulliver și multe altele* (*Gulliver and many others*), including seven other stories in addition to the adaptation of Gulliver's first journey by Peter Holeinone, translated by Horea Crișan.

One of the first Romanian adaptation for children appeared in the 1920s[42], at Socec Publishing, entitled *Guliver în țara piticilor și a uriașilor* [*Gulliver in the Lands of Dwarfs and Giants*], without specifying the author of the adaptation, nor that it is an adapted version. The text is short and very lively; it reworks the Swiftian original through massive abridgement (the second voyage is reduced to two pages) and expurgation (the fire at the palace is put out with water brough by Gulliver in his hat, from a puddle). The orality of the text is enhanced by rhetorical questions and direct address to the young readers, using common endearment formulae: "dragi copii", "copilași" ("dear children," "little children"). The volume is beautifully illustrated in colour and black-and-white, but in the second half, the illustrations seem to have been inserted randomly, as they no longer accompany the fragments of text by which they were inspired. Another version of *Gulliver's Travels* that was supposed to have been adapted for children came out in the late 1930's, signed by Ad.Z.[43] It appeared in a volume that includes two other stories, by Charles Guyon and Guy de Maupassant, respectively, and a jokes section at the end. Even though it retains more of the original and is slightly longer than the earlier adaptation, Ad. Z.'s version, entitled of *Gulliver în țara piticilor* [*Gulliver in the Land of Dwarfs*], includes interventions in the text that can hardly be explained by adaptations strategies. In addition, it contains illustrations that have little to do with the text. For instance, a drawing of cannibals dancing around the cauldron accompanies the fragment in which Gulliver puts out the

39. Johathan Swift, *Gulliver în Țara Piticilor*, trans. Gustav Wahl (Bucharest: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1992), 42.

40. Swift, 1992, 59. All the translations from the Romanian were made by the author of this paper.

41. Jonathat Swift, *Călătoriile lui Gulliver*, trans. Petronela Negoșanu (Bucharest: Venus, 1995), 150.

42. The volume consulted here entered the collection of "Lucian Blaga" University Library in Cluj-Napoca in 1922.

43. Probably Adrian Zăhăreanu, whose full name appears in the header of the jokes section at the end of the volume.

fire at the palace by urinating on it. This erroneous association probably stems from mistaking *Gulliver's Travels* for *Robinson Crusoe*, the irony of which will not escape the reader familiar with Swift's intentions of parodying Defoe's novel in *Gulliver's Travels*. It also reveals the carelessness with which children's literature was treated. Another adaptation, based on the translation of the Swiftian text from the French by Panait Nicolae is signalled by Mihail Bogdan as having been published in 1938 by Ioan Călineanu publishing house, under the title *Gulliver în țara piticilor. În românește de Panait Nicolae* [*Gulliver in the land of Dwarfs. In Romanian by Panait Nicolae*].[44] According to Bogdan, this adaptation is "free", expurgated, straying from both the English original and its French source.[45]

The series of Romanian adaptations and rewritings continues with the versions proposed by Mihail Drumeș, who uses the pen name Moș Ene (Sandman). Drumeș retells Gulliver's first two voyages in individual volumes that came out in 1942, at Bucur Ciobanul publishing house. The texts are slightly modernized and later included in *10 cărți celebre repovestite de Mihail Drumeș* (*10 Famous Books Retold by Mihail Drumeș*), published in 1978 by Dacia, with illustrations by Deac Ferenc. Fidelity to the original is far from being a concern here. The story features a Scottish Gulliver, who sets out on his second journey from Wales; the inhabitants of Lilliput are five centimetres tall, and the trees on their island reach a height of one meter. On the other hand, Drumeș employs the Swiftian imaginary for ludic and comic purposes, in an attempt to meet the expectations of the young reader. Thus, one of the main concerns of Drumeș's rewriting seems to be the transposition into the familiar, with invitations to situational identification. For example, the speech given by the Lilliputian commander is delivered by alluding to the child-adult relationship: "Mi se urcă pe piept, se apropie de bărbie și cu mîna întinsă îmi ține un discurs, din care nu înțelesei o boabă. Dar, după cum se înălța și cobora glasul, care suna asemenea unui cîntec subțire de greier, înțelesei că se purta întocmai ca oamenii mari. Îmi făgăduia nu știu ce, dacă mă purtam nu știu cum, iar altminteri... mă amenința cu tot felul de pedepse, pe care nu reușii să le înțeleg."[46] ("He climbed on my chest, came close to my chin and, hand outstretched, he gave me a speech, of which I could make neither head not tail. But as his voice raised and lowered, sounding like the chirping of a cricket, I could figure that he behaved just like the grown-ups. He promised me I don't know what, if I behaved I don't know how, or else ... he threatened me with all kinds of punishments, which I couldn't understand").[47]

The chapter on Liliputian laws and customs insists on parties and games, to increase the reader's sense of familiarity and avoid potential boredom with such sections. In a similar vein, the voyage to Brobdingnag becomes a pretext for comically reflecting and sympathizing with the hardships of children in the world of adults. For instance, the transformation of Gulliver into a fair attraction in the land of giants is associated with the practice of encouraging children to recite poems or the multiplication table for the amusement of the adult, wearisome as it might be for the child. Although traces of the Swiftian satire can still be identified, the text favours playfulness and entertainment. The case can easily be made that this is one of the most appropriate Romanian rewritings for children.

In 1958, writer Gellu Naum, one of the foremost representatives of Romanian surrealism, borrows Gulliver for an intertextual dialogue in prose and verse, entitled *Cel mai mare Gulliver* (*The Tallest Gulliver*). The book, illustrated by Jules Perahim, is the result of Naum's penchant for the playful and the experimental. It introduces Matei, a "grumpy and angry"[48] little boy, dissatisfied with the rate at which he grows and impatient to become as tall as possible. His wish is granted in a dream that carries him through a series of adventures meant to teach him about responsibility, altruism, and empathy. Naum does not attempt to replicate the adventures imagined by Swift; what he proposes is the exploration of an entanglement of child psychology and quixotic drives, and the outcome is admirable.

Another rewriting, as a mock-epic, entitled *Călătoriile lui Gulliver repovestite în versuri de Sterie Ciulache* [*Gulliver's Travels Retold in Verse by Sterie Ciulache*], but featuring only the first voyage, was published by Litera in 1989. It includes illustrations in black and white by Eugenia Hagiu-Andrei. The first lines are reminiscent of Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, but Ciulache's rewriting soon veers toward Swift's text, introducing the reader to a patriotic and pacifistic Gulliver. Ion Pas also attempts a rewriting adapted for children, entitled *Povestea lui Gulliver* [*Gulliver's Tale*] and published in 1991, in the *Prichindel* [*Hop-o'-my-thumb*] collection of Făt-Frumos publishing house, accompanied by two black and white illustrations. The result is a story that lacks coherence and cohesion, due to the inexplicable narrative shift from the first person to the third person and to the lack of

44. This text could not be found in library catalogues when this paper was researched.
45. Bogdan, 111-112.
46. Mihail Drumeș, "Călătoriile lui Gulliver," in *10 cărți celebre repovestite de Mihail Drumeș* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1978), 111-112.
47. Translated from the Romanian by the author of the paper.
48. Gellu, Naum. *Cel mai mare Gulliver* (Bucharest: Editura Tineretului, 1958), 3.

consistency in narrative development. The reader plunges right into the middle of a conflict between dwarfs and giants, and a flying Gulliver ends up in the land of talking ants in what reads as a gratuitous exercise of imagination.

Besides the improvident reprintings of the Dauș-Lecca translations and the unfortunate rewriting by Ion Pas, the last decade of the twentieth century also witnessed the publication of an equally questionable sequel. An attempt at continuing Gulliver's adventures by forced infantilization appeared in 1994, by Sorin Anghel, entitled *Noile Călătorii ale lui Gulliver* (*Gulliver's New Travels*). In a generously illustrated book designed for the elementary school, Anghel borrows Gulliver for a rudimentary story with Toto the Bear and Pooh the Elephant that are annoyed by Pli-Pli the Dragon and the waves he makes when he splashes around. Apart from the name of the main character and the faint echo of the conflict between Lilliput and Blefuscu, Anghel's story has no connection to Swift's text. This reinvented Gulliver actually resembles Robinson Crusoe more than the Swiftian character, due to all the references to Defoe's text that Anghel forces into his story. Moreover, it is fairly difficult to believe that the young reader, imagined as already familiar with Gulliver and Robinson Crusoe and understanding words such as "utopia"[49] or "to succumb"[50], finds much pleasure in the story of Toto the bear and his friends.

Gulliver's journey on the children's bookshelf in the Romanian twentieth-century context is fairly sinuous and testifies to the marginal status of children's literature in the twentieth century (and beyond).[51] The Swiftian text ends up on this shelf, in many cases, through negligent reprinting of problematic translations from the early decades of the century, with additions and omissions that fail to reflect the logic of a programmatic adaptation, be it cultural or age-related. These situations both contradict David Damrosch's claim that "established classics usually gain a degree of protection by their cultural prestige"[52] and reveal the negligence by which children's literature is often treated. The decades when questionable editions are more frequently (re)published (i.e. the first four decades and the last decade of the twentieth century) cannot use the communist political agenda and censorship excuses. On the contrary, it is under the communist regime that some of the best translations, adaptations and rewritings for children appeared (Levițchi, Drumeș, Naum). Returning to Herman J. Real's claim that totalitarian regimes tend to misappropriate the text for political propaganda among young readers, no such intentions have been noticed in communist Romania, apart from Sterie Ciulache's introduction of a patriotic Gulliver in 1989. This might have to do with the effort of scholars such as Mihail Bogdan, Virgil Nemoianu, Andrei Brezianu, Leon Levițchi, who have contributed to getting *Gulliver* "through the stifling barriers of Communist politics."[53]

If the problematic translations of the first decades of the century might not have been addressed to a young readership, what happens in the last decade of the twentieth century is, with some notable exceptions, rather unfortunate and defies expectations of identifying any programmatic educational and aesthetic directions in children's literature. Despite the availability of the English original after the Romanian Revolution of 1989 and of good translations from the English, by Vera Călin or Leon Levițchi, many editions published in the '90s are reprintings of problematic translations from the first decades of the century. Decent translated adaptations were published, but the Romanian contributions by Ion Pas and Sorin Anghel are, as discussed above, simply inadequate.

In terms of expurgation, one cannot help noticing that physiological needs and sexuality (except for sexual violence in editions that republished Lecca's translation as such) are generally deemed in need of omission or cosmeticizing, while the war is always kept, which speaks for the naturalness of educating the young generation in the spirit of some kind of prudish belligerence, throughout the entire century. The presence of both problematic and admirable translations, adaptations, and rewritings in the Romanian literary culture is, of course, not a singular case. In her analysis of a considerable number of English editions of *Gulliver's Travels* for children, Sarah Smedman noted that among the many "abridgements, expurgations, retelling, textbook editions, shorthand editions" surveyed for her study, there are "some which can only be called prostitutions."[54] However, Smedman argues that "each abridgement or retelling reflects an adult's conception of childhood and of what is or is not suitable material for children"[55], which, if true for the Romanian versions of *Gulliver's Travels* that ended up on the children's literature shelf, might raise some serious questions about how this suitability to young readers must have been understood by many publishers, especially over the last decade of the twentieth century.

49. Sorin Anghel, *Noile călătorii ale lui Gulliver* [*Gulliver's New Travels*] (București: Bursucel, 1994), 4.
50. Anghel, 14.
51. For a complex discussion on the marginalization (and the subversive potential) of children's literature see Iulia Maria Vîrban, "Strategii literare subversive în lupta dintre o literatură marginalizată și canon: o lectură a romanului Europolis," *Transilvania*, no. 2 (2024): 38-51.
52. David Damrosch. *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 24.
53. Mudure, 259. See Mihaela Mudure's contribution for an extensive discussion on the reception of Swift in Romania, including rewritings that were censored under communism and led to the arrest of the author.
54. Smedman, 83.
55. Smedman, 83.

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