

THE TRANSLATION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE:
IDEOLOGY AND CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS. CAPTAIN
UNDERPANTS AS A CASE STUDY

Teresa Asiain

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Declaration and Published Work

This thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university. All references contained within this thesis have been correctly cited, and the original authors acknowledged. Some ideas contained throughout this thesis have been previously explored in several conference papers and in a forthcoming book chapter¹; however, for the purpose of this thesis, these works have been expanded and ideas have been developed further.

Translations

Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

¹ Asiain, Teresa. "Playing with Language, Food, and Pictures: Ideology and Cultural Adaptations in the Spanish Translation of the Captain Underpants Series." *The Early Reader in Children's Literature and Culture*. Eds. Jennifer Miskec and Annette Wannamaker. N.p: Routledge, 2016. 277-298. Print.

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore cultural differences in the children's publishing industry in the USA and Spain and the impact these have on translation, and to develop a case study of the translation of Dav Pilkey's Captain Underpants series into Spanish from a cultural and linguistic perspective. The main aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate the ways in which ranges of meaning are narrowed, expanded or refracted in children's literature translation and how they affect early readers' understanding of the text (as more or less subversive), modelling all this as a dynamic rather than static system. Bakhtin's concept of *dialogism* is applied to the Captain Underpants texts to show that the translation process is a continuum, never a finalized project, which can - and does - change with time.

This dissertation explores the ways in which the translator of the Captain Underpants series, Miguel Azaola, negotiates the pressures and constraints, be they political, historical, cultural, editorial, commercial, or linguistic, which are imposed upon him via ideology, commissioning editors and the publishing industry. All translations imply a certain level of manipulation of the original text, and the translation of a subversive text written for a younger audience is even more vulnerable to change, due to the existing power imbalance between adults and children and the potential of humour as a tool for undermining or reinforcing social control. The Captain Underpants books mock and challenge authority-figures and the structures of the adult world (parents, teachers, political and religious institutions). These books provide a carnivalesque context that enables children to establish a dialogue with the text through which to question societal norms that

have been learnt in school and at home. This dissertation examines how humour and references to food have been translated into Spanish in this context. It also points out the dilemmas posed by retaining the original pictures in the translated text, and how the lack of a supporting cultural peritext affects not only the visual meaning of the text as a whole but also children's reading experience and their perception of the books as cultural artefacts.

Translation loss in children's literature can be attributed to linguistic difficulties of capturing meanings or stylistic features. However, it may also reflect societal attitudes towards childhood and cultural differences. The history of publishing for children in Spain and the didactic mission of the publishing house (SM, and especially the collection *El Barco de Vapor*) have had a strong impact on the translation of this series. Examples of the manifestation of this impact include domesticated names, loss of word-play, discrepancies between pictures and texts, and the almost complete deletion of the dual readership (adult and child). Translation has diminished the potential subversive elements of the target text, resulting in a significant reduction of humour.

By adopting an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, in which theories from children's literature, translation studies, reader response and studies on recent Spanish publishing trends are integrated, this thesis aims to make a scholarly contribution to the hitherto neglected study of the translation of contemporary children's literature into Spanish. Highlighting throughout the differences in the textual content and children's responses to the translated texts, this thesis explores the editor's and translator's decision-making processes and the challenges posed by translation for younger readers.

Abbreviations

CC1 - Las Aventuras del Capitán Calzoncillos

CC2 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y el Ataque de los Retretes Parlantes

CC3 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Invasión de los Pérfidos tiparracos del Espacio

CC4 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y el Perverso Plan del Profesor Pipicaca

CC5 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Furia de la Supermujer Macroelástica

CC6 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Gran Batalla contra el Mocososo Chico Biónico (I): La Noche de los Mocos Vivientes

CC7 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Gran Batalla contra el Mocososo Chico Biónico (II): La Venganza de los Repugnantes Mocorobots

CC8 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Dramática Aventura de los Engendros del Inodoro Malva

CC9 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y el Contraataque de Cocoliso Cacapiipi

CC10 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Repugnante Revancha de los Calzones Robótico-Radiactivos

CC11 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Venganza del Tiranico Retre-Turbotrón 2000

CC12 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Saga Sensacional de Sir Oinks Apesta-A-Lot

CU1 - The Adventures of Captain Underpants

CU2 - Captain Underpants and the Attack of the Talking Toilets

CU3 - Captain Underpants and the Invasion of the Incredibly Naughty Cafeteria Ladies from Outer Space (and the Subsequent Assault of the Equally Evil Lunchroom Zombie Nerds)

CU4 - Captain Underpants and the Perilous Plot of Professor Poopypants

CU5 - Captain Underpants and the Wrath of the Wicked Wedgie Woman

CU6 - Captain Underpants and the Big, Bad Battle of the Bionic Booger Boy, Part 1: The Night of the Nasty Nostril Nuggets

CU7 - Captain Underpants and the Big, Bad Battle of the Bionic Booger Boy, Part 2: The Revenge of the Ridiculous Robo-Boogers

CU8 - Captain Underpants and the Preposterous Plight of the Purple Potty People

CU9 - Captain Underpants and the Terrifying Re-Turn of Tippy Tinkletrousers

CU10 - Captain Underpants and the Revolting Revenge of the Radioactive Robo-Boxers

CU11 - Captain Underpants and the Tyrannical Retaliation of the Turbo Toilet 2000

CU12 - Captain Underpants and the Sensational Saga of Sir Stinks-A-Lot

RHW - Rabelais and His World

SDB1 - The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby

SP1 - El Capitán Calzoncillos y las Aventuras de SuperPañal

ST – Source text

TT – Target text

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Introduction

In this thesis, I have two particular goals regarding the translation of children's literature. The first is to understand to what extent cultural differences in the children's publishing industries in the USA and Spain reflect societal attitudes and ideologies, and how these can affect translation. The second is to analyse how translation loss, although usually attributed to the linguistic difficulties of capturing meanings or stylistic features in the target text, can also be due to more subtle cultural differences, for example in the domains of food, humour, and the use of intertextuality. On a secondary level, I am also interested in analysing contemporary children's texts translated into the Spanish language and the main issues faced by translators, especially when it comes to taboos and ideological differences.

I suspect that there is a dichotomy when translating children's texts. On the one hand, adults insist that children should be exposed to texts from other cultures in order to stimulate and introduce them to the foreign and, by doing so, promote tolerance and acceptance. On the other hand, translators - and we may also include here editors, publishers, and other adults involved in the production process of the book - often question and challenge the linguistic usages, cultural references, and appropriateness of certain topics or pictures because they underestimate children's ability to comprehend and understand the unknown. Therefore, translators often take more liberties with literature for children than they would for adults. Given the importance of children's literature (children are, after all, embedded in ideology) in shaping the minds of the young generation, the issues of how we write and, more relevantly for this thesis, how we translate, are worthy of study.

In this dissertation, together with the texts I have chosen to analyse, I also use a variety of previous research on translation studies, children's literature, reader response theory, humour theory, and expressive language usage in different contexts to tackle these issues. There is a gap in literary research when it comes to analysing the translation of contemporary English language children's texts into Spanish, especially for younger audiences. I have found no books that address all these issues together, at least not related to the specifics of Spanish language and culture.² There are, however, a number of studies that take an historical approach,³ although they are not necessarily relevant for analysing contemporary children's texts. The children's books I focus on are Dav Pilkey's Captain Underpants (CU) series written in English, a language in which I am fluent, and on their translations into Spanish, my native language. Although I am only analysing the translations into one language (Spanish) by two translators, Miguel Azaola (Spain) and Nuria Molinero (USA), I hope that some of my conclusions can be applied to other texts, and therefore that the constraints faced by translators could be applied to other languages in

² The only book I found that addresses translations into Spanish is *Whose Story? Translating the Verbal and the Visual in Literature for Young Readers* edited by Riitta Oittinen and Maria González Davies, based on two seminars held at the University of Vic (Spain) in 2003 and 2005. However, the majority of the articles focus on classics of children's literature, such as Beatrix Potter, fairy tales retellings, or translating the Bible for children.

³ Marisa Fernández López's article "Translation Studies in Contemporary Children's Literature: A Comparison of Intercultural Ideological Factors" and doctoral theses such as Ian Craig's "Children's Classics Translated from English under Franco: The Censorship of the William Books and the Adventures of Tom Sawyer" or Mónica Domínguez Pérez's "Las Traducciones de Literatura Infantil y Juvenil en el Interior de la Comunidad Interliteraria Específica Española (1940-1980)" are good examples of the translation scholarship on Spanish children's literature developed recently from an historical point of view.

order to identify effective translation strategies, thereby contributing to the general knowledge of translation theory and its relation to children's literature.

There are a number of reasons why I have chosen the CU series as my case study. The rationale for this choice is due, mostly, to a personal experience. When I was studying for my MA in children's literature at Eastern Michigan University I took a course on illustrated texts. One of the required readings for this course was the first book of the series *The Adventures of Captain Underpants*. Back then, in 2008, CU books were extremely popular and controversial in the USA. They were frequently included in the list of most challenged books, and many schools and libraries refused to incorporate them in their recommended reading lists. When I went back home for Christmas that year my cousin, who was nine years old, was reading the same book in Spanish. However, this was a recommendation his school had made for reading over the Christmas holiday. This made me aware of the different perception these countries had of the books. I decided then to write my final assignment paper on the differences between the American and the Spanish versions, and this was my first approach to translation theory and the challenges of translating for children. The focus was initially on language and wordplay, but I soon realised how complex translating, and especially translating for children, can be. There were many different approaches I could have chosen: names of characters and all kinds of wordplay, use of food, use of humour, taboo breaking, children's behaviour towards authority, the relationship between the text and pictures, the different format both books were presented in to the public, etc. It was just not possible to include them all in a short paper. Later, as I completed other assignments for other courses, I kept looking at translation and the difference between English and Spanish books in other texts (especially the Harry Potter series and a number of picture books) but I found no other text that offered

me so much to discuss, so many possible variants to include. That's why when I decided to pursue my PhD in English my first instinct was to choose the CU series as my case study, so I could study in depth the specific challenges of translating for children.

In order to do so, I plan to subject the translation of the CU series to a methodology that interrogates its dynamic intersection with cultural, ideological, and societal frames of reference in both the target and the source languages. To do so, I address six key and interrelated questions. First, what is the current direction in relation to the translation of children's literature in the publishing industry in Spain and how has it changed historically? Second, to what extent does the interpretation of child images of the source books affect the role that translators, publishers, and other mediators play as active or passive agents whose decisions may be projected in the target texts? Third, how can a series of books be perceived as subversive and in what ways may this subversiveness be affected by translation? Fourth, can humour be translated and what translation strategies are the most appropriate to do so? Fifth, to what extent is the translation of food in the CU series a linguistic or a cultural issue, and can references to food be translated to have the same effect in the target text? And sixth, what specific challenges do pictures and visual content pose to translation, and more importantly, how do these and other visual aspects such as paratext (and cultural peritext) affect reception of the texts and their perception as cultural artifacts?

In order to answer these research questions, this thesis is organised in two parts: one is theoretical (Chapters One, Two, and Three) and one is empirical (Chapters Four, Five, and Six). Chapter One focuses on definitions of children, childhood and children's literature, and the nature of these definitions. The purposes of children's literature are also considered, as well as the benefits of reading for children. A general overview of children's

literature in America, Britain and Spain is provided, with special emphasis on translations, to briefly show how much these countries have translated, and why, in recent history.

Finally, basic approaches to translation theory will be introduced.

Chapter Two focuses on the particular challenges of translating for children. It deals with the unequal relationships between the adult writer (Dav Pilkey) – and/or the translators (Miguel Azaola and Nuria Molinero) – and the child audience. On a theoretical level, applying Bakhtin's theories about the carnivalesque to children's literature, Oittinen's dialogical views based on this author, and Venuti's ideas about domestication and foreignization, I develop a close reading of the texts to illuminate the existing gap between the source text and the target text. I examine Emer O'Sullivan's narrative process, in which she expands existing models of narrative communication to include the implied child reader in the target culture and the "implied translator," whose voice can be found in the target text.

Chapter Three interrogates the extent to which the CU series is a subversive text and why. This chapter develops an analysis of carnivalesque features of the CU books and their subversive content, such as the inversion of hierarchies, the material lower stratum and its close relation to scatology, and grotesque realism and the grotesque body in both the target and source language. It aims to highlight the differences between Spanish and American cultures in term of attitude to carnival and subversion of authority, and how these cultural differences can affect the translation of a subversive text.

This thesis sets out to achieve some responses to my investigation through a mixed methods approach in the last three chapters, where I develop a detailed comparative linguistic analysis of the source and target texts. One neglected area in the field of translation studies is the study of children's responses to translation. Therefore, I have also

carried out a survey with 26 Spanish children.⁴ Finally, I have also conducted several interviews with the Spanish translator, Miguel Azaola, to gain a better understanding of the decision-making process involved in translation not only with reference to his work, but also to the publishing house he works for.

Bearing in mind the findings of these methods, Chapter Four explores humour in the Spanish translation of the CU series, focusing mainly on linguistic but also cultural features, such as the translation of parody, satire, sarcasm, and irony, the translation of cultural allusions and intertextuality, the translation of expressive language and word play, and the translation of names.

Chapter Five focuses on the uses of food in the CU series and its translation into Spanish. The chapter first explores the relationship between food and culture and the different national visions of food in children's literature in Spanish, British and American contexts. It also comments on current concerns around healthy eating and body image in these three countries and how these are mirrored in literature for young readers. In a detailed textual analysis the chapter explores the way food is used in the CU series to achieve different goals, and how this can change in translation due to linguistic and cultural differences in the source and target cultures.

In the last chapter, I focus on the difficulties of translating visual content into another language, and show how this aspect can be very influential and can even change the

⁴ This survey was conducted on December 2014 in the school Escuelas Pías de Tafalla (Spain). All children belonged to the same year group (Year 3) and there were 14 boys and 12 girls. It is important to mention that this school is Catholic, which may have influenced the children's perception of some of the questions and their answers. These children were asked to judge a number of features, including the level of humour or their inclination for certain items of food, using a literal translation (word by word) of the source text, Miguel Azaola's version and, when available, Nuria Molinero's translation. They were also asked about the visual content of some of the pictures and their feelings towards paratexts. For a copy of the survey (both in Spanish and in English) see Appendices 1 and 2.

overall perception of the text. Chapter Six also deals with the specific challenges of translating the homemade comics featured in the books and the limitations comics impose, especially when it comes to the delimited space they provide and the translation of onomatopoeia and interjections linked to the linguistic creativity of comics. I also explore the translation – or lack of translation - of the other elements that form a book (paratext), and the effect that the lack of a cultural peritext equivalent to the world surrounding a multivolume series, such as CU in America, has on Spanish readers' perception and reception of the text.

Finally, I summarize a number of translation strategies for handling all the different constraints and, I hope, shedding some light on the general discussion of translating children's texts. To a lesser extent, I also underline the current trends that exist in Spain when translating for children, analysing which source texts are favoured and why, and highlighting the lack of (or delay in) translation as a hidden censorship in order to avoid existing taboos present in the Spanish publishing landscape.

Captain Underpants: A case study

The Captain Underpants series is very successful, having been translated into 20 languages and sold more than 70 million copies, of which over 50 million were in the United States. The series features the adventures of George Beard and Harold Hutchins, two boys who enjoy writing and reproducing their own comic books "The Adventures of Captain Underpants," which they later distribute in their school. They are often in trouble for being silly, pulling pranks on teachers and other children, changing the lettering on signs, and for selling their own comics in which adults (especially teachers and the principal of their

school, Mr Krupp) are ridiculed. In the first book of the series, the reader finds out how the boys think that most superheroes look like they are wearing underpants, and they decide to literally name and dress their home-made hero in tighty-whities underwear. Therefore, when their principal is hypnotised, he transforms himself into Captain Underpants, stripping off all his clothes and taking off his toupée, becoming a parody of a hero: a bald, overweight adult that wears tighty-whities and a red cape and fights for truth, justice and “all that is pre-shrunk and cottony.”

The Adventures of Captain Underpants was the first book of the series. It was published in 1997 and achieved immediate success in the USA. Almost all the books in the series follow the same pattern: introduction of the main child characters Harold and George; a comic telling “the top-secret truth about Captain Underpants, by George and Harold, who deny everything”; introduction of a menacing character whom Captain Underpants fights; an incredibly graphic violent “Flip-O-Rama” chapter; the defeat of the menace and the saving of the world; a chapter on how to make a long story short; and an ending in which Captain Underpants becomes again Mr. Krupp, and by accident, someone snaps his/her fingers and Captain Underpants flies out of the window with Harold and George following him. All the books are pretty traditional when it comes to their narrative structure: they introduce a society, an evil force disrupts the established order, the hero fights against the villain and succeeds, and social order is re-established. So far, twelve books have been released in the American market by Scholastic. The first ten have been translated by Miguel Azaola into Spanish (SM, El Barco de Vapor), and the ninth and tenth have also been translated into Spanish by Nuria Molinero (Scholastic Español) for Spanish speakers in America. Due to the time frame of this research, the last two books, not yet published in the Spanish market, are not being considered.

Criticism of the books

The Captain Underpants series is consistently listed as being among the most challenged and censored books in the USA. It is number 13 in the most banned books list of the decade, and the most complained about in America in 2012 and 2013. The reasons provided are varied, from enticing children to disobey authority, incorrect spelling and language usage, anti-family content, unsuitability to age group, and violence.⁵ There are numerous examples of parents, teachers and librarians who criticise these books for their content and define them as “rubbish.” The series’ offensive language, violence, and unsuitability for age group are the grounds for the complaints filed by parents, teachers, and even some librarians (ALA). However, author Dav Pilkey states that he is surprised “that a series with no profanity, no sex, no nudity, no drugs, no smoking, no alcohol, no guns, and no more violence than a children’s superhero” offended so many people (Scholastic Canada).

In the Spanish landscape, however, the books have not received any criticism at all from parents, librarians or teachers, and they are frequently included in the “recommended books list” that schools provide to their students. Only one sector has made a complaint in Spain: la Asociación Valenciana de Directores de Infantil y Primaria (Valencian Association of Pre-School and Primary Schools Principals) complained that an excerpt from one of the Captain Underpants books was not suitable material for examining children’s communication skills. It was the Spanish Education ministry who selected the text but the Valencian principals and teachers believed that the excerpt chosen for the examination “discredits teachers” and they recommended that it should not be used because

⁵ According to the official blog of the Association for Library Service for Children in an article published in September 2012: <http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2012/09/why-was-that-challenged/>.

they considered it “tendentious, degrading and absolutely inadequate” (El País). However, the Association acknowledges that the Captain Underpants books can be used “for other occasions... but not to evaluate the pupils’ reading comprehension” (ibid.). Even when the Valencian teachers believed that the text was not optimal to test their students, they still acknowledged its value as an entertainment tool. It could be argued that the two countries possess different attitudes toward the books. Spain, at first sight, could be declared more welcoming and less judgmental when it comes to subversive texts. However, as the following analysis shows, a history of these books’ translation highlights significant linguistic and cultural differences between the English and Spanish versions, including a revision of the dual readership (adult and child), the mistranslation of humour, misrepresentations of foods, and an unavoidable gap that exists between the Spanish text and American pictures. The CU books may have met with a very different reception in Spain because, in many ways, they are very different books. This thesis looks specifically at the way the CU series has been translated into Spanish in order to highlight the aspects of the children’s publishing industry in Spain that may have had a strong impact on translation.

Chapter One

Children's Literature, Translation Theory and the Spanish Context

This chapter focuses on definitions of children, children's literature and the nature of these definitions. The purposes of children's literature are also considered, as well as the benefits of reading for children. A general overview of children's literature in Britain and Spain is provided, with special emphasis on translations, to briefly show how much these countries have translated, and why, in recent history. Finally, basic approaches to translation will be introduced.

1.1 Introduction

Gillian Lathey, in the introduction to her book *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader* (2006), states that theoretical interest in the translation of children's literature has developed over the last thirty years.¹ Interest in the translation of children's literature coincides with interest in it from other fields such as gender studies, multicultural studies, postcolonial theory, and, more recently, food studies, eco-criticism and trauma theory.

Research into children's literature itself only gained academic credibility in the 1970s, and for decades one of the main issues has been to find a suitable definition of what children's

¹ Since Göte Klinberg published *Children's Literature in the Hands of Translators* in 1986, a number of scholars have published works about the specific issues of translating children's literature: Riitta Oittinen's *Translating for Children* (2000), Emer O'Sullivan's *Comparative Children's Literature* (2005), and Gillian Lathey's *The Translation of Children's Literature: A Reader* (2006) and *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature* (2010) are some of the most relevant texts in the field that have been published so far.

literature is and how it differs from adult literature, especially in terms of readership. Ideas of what children's literature is have changed over time, partly due to changes in the understanding of the concept of childhood (Epstein, *Expressive 2*).

Zohar Shavit explains that the concept of children's literature came into existence around the eighteenth century; before that, the modern concepts of "child" or "childhood" did not exist. This idea conflicts with others who believe that the history of children's literature differs from the history of the concept of childhood and child. Philippe Ariès underlined in his article "From Immodesty to Innocence" that the modern concept of childhood arose in Europe in the seventeenth century; until then, children were seen as miniature adults who work, eat and behave almost the same way as their elders. For Ariès, the concept of the innocent childhood can only be defended as a social construction. In contrast, Gillian Adams argues not only that the concept of childhood existed in the Medieval Era, but also indicates the existence of children's literature from centuries ago. She believes that didacticism, fictional or not, also has a value in children's literature. She states that "there is no logical reason why texts used for educational purposes should not qualify as literature" (48), providing several examples of texts written specifically for children during this period, such as Aesop's Fables (translated from Greek and Latin), courtesy books, and religious texts.

The idea of innocence as a defining characteristic of childhood has been perhaps most prevalent in the twentieth century. Henry Jenkins has referred to it as the "mythology of children's innocence" (2). He points out that society today tends to protect children, and he rejects the utopian concept of the "innocent child" because it is based on adult nostalgia rather than an accurate vision of children as active participants in their identity definition (4). Richard Flynn, too, refuses to countenance the myth of the "innocent child" and argues

that childhood is a concept ideologically and politically inflected and created by adults, who very often speak for children or just ignore them. By doing this adults convert children into “powerless victims” and deny them any agency.

The mismatch between traditional notions of the innocence of childhood and other definitions of children and childhood has had an impact on the way we see the literature that is produced - and translated - for them.² The concept of the child is an ever-present problem for children’s literature and children’s literature criticism, as it can mean different things to different people in varying contexts.

1.2 Children’s literature and its readers

Many critics and reviewers have lamented the lack of an adequate definition for children’s literature, and this has inevitably had an impact on the academics whose research is focused on translation. All scholars pose very similar questions: is a children’s book a book written by children or for children? Is a book written for children still a children’s book if it is (only) read by adults? What of adult books also read by children – are they children’s literature? Karín Lesnik-Oberstein asks these questions in her essay “Essentials: What is Children’s Literature? What is Childhood?” (15). She emphasizes how the definition of this literature is related to a particular reading audience and is therefore “underpinned by purpose: it wants to be something in particular, because this is supposed to connect it with that reading audience – children - with which it declares itself to be overtly and purposefully concerned” (15). Children’s literature may be seen as a unique genre in that it

² For different approaches to constructing the child through history, see Jenkins’ *The Children’s Culture Reader*, especially its introduction, “Children’s Innocence and other Modern Myths,” and Philippe Ariés’ article “From Immodesty to Innocence.”

is defined by its aims and intentions. Peter Hunt also comments on the purpose of children's literature in his collection of essays *Children's Literature: The Development of Criticism* when he states that this "species of literature" is "defined in terms of the reader rather than the author's intentions or the texts themselves" (1). This purposeful activity and the focus on the readership of the texts are of vital importance when translating for children. However, the author's intentions are not to be dismissed, especially in translated children's literature, as the readers of the target text may be reading a different text than the one the author created.³

The problem with focusing on children as readers is that we rule out, by definition, not only adults who may read this literature but also children who write it. Riitta Oittinen, in her book *Translating for Children*, defines children's literature as "literature produced and intended for children or as literature read by children" (61). This definition considers all kinds of literature that is read by children, whether or not this was the original intention of the author. Göte Klingberg, on the other hand, describes children's literature as literature produced specifically for children, and Emer O'Sullivan narrows it down yet further to literature "written or adapted specifically for children by adults" (*Comparative* 13). Readership and target audience is always an important point to consider when writing and translation for children, together with the author's intention.

Barbara Wall, in her book *The Narrator's Voice*, complicates issues of audience by considering children's literature as exhibiting dual address. She rejects the idea of "writing down" for children, and cites many examples where well known authors (C.S. Lewis, Lewis Carroll, Roald Dahl) confirm their opposition to this activity as being a condescending attitude and patronizing towards children (13-19). She acknowledges that

³ See Chapter Two.

adults, as well as children, are readers of these books. Editors and publishers who prefer to target a text with a clearly defined audience rarely consider adults who read children's literature for their own pleasure. However, it is common to have more than one implied reader in certain children's texts, especially canonical children's books.

According to Wall, nineteenth century writers of children's fiction provided more acceptable roles for adult readers by projecting strong adult narrator-personalities with which adults could identify and become the "teller-surrogate" (19). *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Water-Babies*, and the *Just So Stories* are some examples that she provides. Wall believes that the time when children's books were written for a dual addressee ended in the early twentieth century, giving way to the "single address" in which narrators "will address child narratees, overt or covert, straightforwardly, showing no consciousness that adults too might read the work. Concern for ... children's interests dominates their stories" (35). Wall makes a clear distinction between dual audience and dual address. Many authors acknowledge a dual audience for their books, by creating characters both simple and complex enough to hold the interest of children and also of adults willing to read and enjoy the story. However, the fact that an adult is reading a book, or that a book appeals to an adult reader, does not mean that the author created it with an implied adult reader in mind. She cites Beatrix Potter as an example of this: "... although she commands a dual audience, she uses single not double address. There are no jokes in Potter's work whose purpose is to amuse adults, or even the author, while children pass them by, although in almost every story there are parts which will yield up much more meaning to adults than to children" (qtd. in Wall 165).

It is only through textual analysis that traces of this dual addressee can be found in a text. For instance, even though it is constantly defined as a "children's book," the CU series

can be seen as one example of this dual address, when the author Dav Pilkey deliberately addresses not only the adult who is reading it to the child, but also the adult who is reading for his or her own pleasure.

There are also many examples of this dual addressee in relation to the social and historical context of the books. In 2002, the CU series was listed as one of the “Banned Books” for children published in the USA (ALA) Author Dav Pilkey answered his detractors a year later with *Bionic Booger Boy 2*, portraying the school library as “filled only with rows of empty bookshelves and posters that warned of potential subversive dangers of reading” (CU7, 50), and posters hanging on the walls alerting the children that “reading might offend you... why take the chance?” “you will ruin your eyes,” and “challenge books not minds” (50-51). Author Dav Pilkey is addressing the adult reader rather than the child, who probably remains unaware of reading as an act that can cause “potential subversive dangers.”

Authors do not always write with a clear reader in mind. There are many cases when a book is catalogued by publishers, editors and even bookshops as adult literature because of the content of the book; or vice versa: just because the main character of a book is a child, it is assumed that it must be a children’s text. Time has proved to be a factor that might change the target readership. Books such as *Gulliver’s Travels* or Hans Christian Andersen’s tales have been classified today as classics of children’s literature, although they were written originally with an adult audience in mind. Zohar Shavit defines these texts as ‘ambivalent’ and classes them with *Alice in Wonderland*, a text that can be read by a child as a conventional story, or by an adult who will make a more sophisticated reading of it, identifying the satire and ironical tone of the author (*Literary Polysystem* 171-179).

The idea that the same texts can be read at different levels is very important for the translation of children's texts. Translators can decide if they want to keep this ambivalence or if they want to focus on just one audience. Also, translators have to acknowledge the dual addressee before they even consider whether to respect it or not. It may happen that they do not recognize the second level of the text, or that they simply do not acknowledge an allusion included for the adult reader. Therefore, it is not always a voluntary choice to keep or omit these different reading levels of the text; such omissions may be due to the translator's own ignorance.

In this sense, translators have to take into account the adult presence within the text in any form, from the controlling adult who is looking over the child's shoulder, to what Wall defines as the adult observer-listener, the adult who enjoys the happy partnership of teller and told, as she exemplifies with Charles Dodgson telling the story of Alice's Adventures to Alice Liddell. The translator can then decide whether they want to target a specific audience or just refuse to adapt a literary work for any particular readership. For instance, Juan Gabriel López Guix, translator of Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, explains his uneasiness with adaptations for different audiences. There are more than 40 translations of this book in Spanish, some of which have a clear audience in mind, but others have respected the original dual addressee. As López clarifies:

Another question that I was asked during my work on *Alice* was whether I was planning to do a child –or an adult- oriented version. Again, it was a puzzling and awkward question. Did I have to choose? What kind of audience is the original aimed at? Although the translation was to be issued in a children's collection, I did not feel ... that I had to dilute the language or adapt the book to a restricted

language. I did not want to simplify the richness of Carroll's book. The original does not choose, the original offers itself. My aim was not to dilute the language or to beat the original into a shape which served the purposes of a restricted audience, but to write an 'original' in my mother tongue, a work able to sustain a variety of reading- a book... where adults become children. (95)

Unfortunately, more often than not, the way a book is marketed is going to affect its place in the literary realm, regardless of how the author feels about it. The intention of the author may not always be respected, as often he or she loses control over the text, especially once the book has reached the international market. If the text has to be translated, then the changes that it undergoes are even bigger and the author, in some cases, remains unaware of them.

As explained above, there is no consensus about what children's literature is. However, there are a number of features that apply specifically to children's literature and particularly to early readers. First, these texts are very often illustrated, and various pictures may provide more information than the text itself, as in the case of the CU series. Secondly, some early readers are meant to be read aloud, together with the emotional dimension that this entails: from the closeness of the adult and child reading together to the independence of the child alone reading privately and independently. Thirdly, when it is presented both as a toy and as a book the boundaries of the book as a physical object become ambiguous. Some early readers play with the conventions of books and present themselves as toys to be played with, or require some kind of physical interaction from their readers. All these matters are relevant to this thesis because they present specific challenges to translating

these texts, from complex issues of manipulation and ideology, to the question of whether the translation of pictures is possible, and how well such pictures travel across cultures.⁴

1.3 The purpose of children's literature versus the purpose of translation

The purpose of children's literature is important at many different levels. Many scholars seem to agree that literature written for children has two clear (and in many cases opposed) purposes in mind: to teach and to entertain. J.D. Stahl et al, in the introduction to their anthology *Crosscurrents of Children's Literature*, state that "the history of texts for children, whether 'didactic' or 'literary' or both, is a history of tension between the desire to teach children and the desire to please them" (3). Other scholars, such as Puurtinen, point out the numerous functions that children's literature fulfils, and how this feature is what makes children's literature an unusual genre: "Children's literature belongs simultaneously to the literary system and the social- educational system, i.e. it is not only read for entertainment, recreation and literary experience but also used as a tool for education and socialisation. This dual character affects both the writing and the translation of children's literature" (17). The purpose of children's literature is relevant for translation because of the "functionalist approach." As Christiane Nord explains, functionalist means focusing on the function (or functions) of the text for its translation (27). The *Skopos* theory of translation emphasizes that translators should consider the function or purpose of the text specified by the addressee, who may - and can - be different, in the source and target texts.⁵

⁴ See Chapter Six.

⁵ Skopos is a Greek word for "purpose." According to skopostheorie, the basic principle which determines the process of translation is the purpose (skopos) of the translational action. The idea of intentionality is part of the very definition of any action (Nord 27).

Katharina Reiss' ideas on text typology are linked to the different purposes that every text has. According to Reiss, every text possesses a function that the translator needs to take into account. Text typologies help the translator specify the appropriate hierarchy of equivalence levels needed for a particular translation *Skopos* or purpose (Nord 37). She acknowledges three different categories of texts: "informative," whose main function is to inform the reader about objects and phenomena in the real world; "expressive," in which the informative aspect is complemented or even overruled by an aesthetic component, and the stylistic choices made by the author contribute to the meaning of the text, producing an aesthetic effect on the reader; and "operative," in which both content and form are subordinate to the extralinguistic effect that the text is designed to achieve (38). Most texts are recognised as being a combination of different categories and purposes, although perhaps in different proportions. For instance, all literary texts fulfil an aesthetic function, but children's literature also possesses a clear didactic content. As Peter Hunt states:

It is arguably impossible for a children's book (especially one being read by a child) not to be educational or influential in some way; it cannot help but reflect an ideology and, by extension, didacticism. All books must teach something, and because the checks and balances available to the mature reader are missing in the child reader, the children's writer often feels obliged to supply them. Thus it may seem that children's books are more likely ... to be more prone to manipulation than others; but, in fact, it is only the mode of manipulation that is different. The relationship in the book between writer and reader is complex and ambivalent. (3)

One could argue that all texts are educational or influential on their readers, not only children's books but also those for adults; however, children's texts are more often than not underpinned by this purpose. Inevitably, the function(s) of a text will influence the way a translator approaches its translation and the strategies he/she chooses for its translation. The translator should understand for whom the text is presumably meant, and for what purpose (Epstein, *Expressive* 5). Katharina Reiss was one of the first scholars to identify the specific problems of the translation of children's literature in the context of her typology of texts, and names three factors that need further study: the asymmetry of the entire translation process, as adults are translating for children and young people; the agency of intermediaries who exert pressure on the translator to observe taboos or follow educational principles; and children's and young people's (still) limited knowledge of the world and experience of life (qtd. in O'Sullivan, *Comparative* 76).

In contemporary Western society this idea that children are will soon be adult readers, and need to learn how to operate in adult society, prevails to some extent. As Peter Hunt writes, "[C]hildren's writers ... are in a position of singular responsibility in transmitting cultural values, rather than 'simply' telling a story. And if that were not enough, children's books are an important tool in reading education, and are thus prey to a whole area of educational and psychological influences that other literature escapes" (4). Hunt emphasizes the responsibility that the writer of children's literature has in transmitting cultural values, and which tends to deflect literature from its function of entertainment. At this point, it is worth asking if the translator of children's literature also has the social responsibility of transmitting those values or, if that's the case, the values of the target

culture, manipulating the original intention of the text.⁶ Dav Pilkey, author of the series, has been asked if children's books need to do anything other than entertain, answering "I think children's books should always be entertaining. Even the educational ones. But is it enough to just entertain? Sure" (Pilkey Website). He assigns children's literature a clear entertaining function regardless of the educative content of the text.

When it comes to the translation of children's literature, many theorists of translation change their ideas precisely with respect to the didacticism assigned to children's texts. Nord, for instance, explains how in literary prose the conventional translation type is exoticizing, with the exception of children's books (103). According to Nord, the main function of the text will have to be changed from appellative (reminding the reader of their own world) to informative, for target children readers (showing what the source culture is like), forcing a didacticism in the text (50).

Adults tend to think that reading is going to have a favourable impact on the child. When evaluating books for children we search for books that are not only good in themselves, but also good for prospective readers (children). Peter Hunt argues that adults judge a book using two elements: quality and value (24). Quality refers to how well a story is written in terms of characters' development, storyline, style of writing, etc. Value, on the other hand, is what "a book is *really* about" (25, italics in original), what lies beneath the surface story. Hunt concludes that, "by combining the judgements of *quality* and *value*, we end up with some consensus about *good*" (25). This implies that there is an assumption amongst adults that children's texts should ultimately help children to become socially able and emotionally balanced; in short, good adults/persons/citizens. Up to a certain extent,

⁶ Examples of this happening in translated children's texts, and the role of the translator as communicator of ideology, will be discussed in later chapters.

these voices claim that children's literature may play a role in the children's development, and there have been in the past several studies supporting these arguments. The Bullock Report, *A Language for Life*, published in 1975, offers a list of values associated with teaching literature at school: "it helps to shape the personality, refine the sensibility, sharpen the critical intelligence; ... [it] is a powerful instrument for empathy, a medium through which the child can acquire his values" (*Bullock Report* 124). Although the report itself recognizes that there is no evidence that teaching literature actually will produce such effects in the readers, these kinds of conclusions have been reached in more recent research projects.

Baker, Dreher and Guthrie (2000) have identified the benefits of reading any text (regardless of its intended purpose) and have pointed out how reading has a positive influence not only on reading skills, but also on more general abilities and wider knowledge. Those who do not read, it is concluded, not only choose not to do it in their spare time but also, inevitably, make a decision about their future abilities, skills and understanding. According to this study, it is essential to encourage children to develop regular reading habits, positive attitudes to reading and the ability to make informed choices about their reading. In the report *Literature Circles, Gender and Reading for Enjoyment* these same ideas are summed up:

Children who say that they enjoy reading and who read for pleasure in their own time do better at school. Reading for enjoyment is positively associated with reading attainment and writing ability (OECD, 2002). Pupils who read for pleasure also demonstrate a wider and general knowledge (Wells, 1986), a better

understanding of other cultures (Meek, 1991) and more complex insights regarding human nature, motivations and decision making (Allan, Ellis and Pearson 5)

It may be concluded that regardless of the content of the book or the intended purposes of the author, any act of reading confers some benefits on the child reader.

Bearing in mind the rewards of reading, it has become almost a modern obsession to instill this habit in children. In order to do so, many primary and secondary schools and libraries in the UK are using relatively new software package called 'Accelerated Reader' for "monitoring and managing independent reading practice while promoting reading for pleasure" (Accelerated). This system uses a computer programme to scan books and analyse them for vocabulary and syntax, banding them in different levels that range from 0.0 to 13.0. Students can progress after successfully completing a multiple choice quiz on the books they have read and achieving points that will allow them to access the next reading band. The CU series scores are quite high, from 4.3 to 5.2, above other well-known children's titles such as Alan Garner's *The Owl Service* (Level 3.7) which is a challenging and sophisticated text despite its "simple" vocabulary. This scoring undermines the criticism that the Captain Underpants books have faced in America and, to a lesser extent, in Europe, where they are accused of being simplistic and not sufficiently educational. However, this ranking is based on the difficulty of the vocabulary rather than other important aspects of the books, such as the characters, the emotions, the use of language, or the plot. For example, in *CU6* alone the words "merciless," "massive," "convoluted," and "profanely" are employed gaining it an impressive Level 5.2, independently of the content of the book, or its use of humour or creative language.

Together with the many benefits that reading has for children, many voices have recently been raised about the necessity of offering children texts from other cultures and languages, so they can become more welcoming and understanding persons in an increasingly multicultural society. Therefore, the next section analyses this issue in the context of the publishing industry in England and, to a lesser extent, the USA.

1.4 The English language hegemony

This title summarizes the situation of the English and American publishing landscape. In both countries, the vast majority of books published are written in English by English-speaking authors. It also reflects the lack of criticism on the translation of literary works whose source language is English, as one is more likely to find studies on how other languages have been translated in English than the other way around. There are a number of reasons for this lack of translations, the economic being the most obvious one. It costs money to translate books, because it is a demanding intellectual activity that needs to be carried out by a professional translator. Phillip Pullman explains that this is a vicious circle in which publishers

are reluctant to spend money on producing books that booksellers won't sell, and booksellers are reluctant to give space to books that readers don't want, and readers don't want books they have never seen reviewed, and literary editors won't review books if the publishers won't spend money on advertising because... And it all goes round in a circle, and outside this circle is the rest of the world. (*Outside 7*)

This English language hegemony is not only due to economic reasons but also historic and geographic ones. There are plenty of books from other countries that were - and are - written in English: USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Ireland, the Caribbean, etc. These books will introduce foreign ideas, customs and traditions and they do not need to be translated. However, the mainstream of published books is largely based on American and British cultures. In terms of children's literature, the tendency is even more evident. Great Britain possesses a strong national children's literature and, in many cases, the canon of children's literature comes from British texts. Authors such as Enid Blyton, Jacqueline Wilson, Roald Dahl, and J.K. Rowling dominate the publishing market and the most-sold lists. However, this has not always been the case. The earliest history of children's literature in English is dominated by translations: Aesop's Fables; the Arabian Nights; the tales of Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and Hans Christian Andersen; *Pinocchio*; *The Swiss Family Robinson*; *Heidi*; *Babar* the elephant; *Emil and the Detectives*, etc. These translated books are all part of today's literary canon of children's literature (Lathey, *Role* 15). In fact, there is a clear domination of translations from French in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and an increasing influence of German writers in the nineteenth century (4). This tendency to translate texts continued during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, when it reached a high point (125). Since then, the number of translations in children's literature has suffered a free fall, especially during the last couple of decades, with very few examples of translated texts, such as Cornelia Funke's *Inkheart* books, successfully entering the English language market.

This has produced what Anthony Gardner calls the "British insularity." British children are barely being exposed to non-Anglophone cultures from a young age, with the

limitations this entails.⁷ Deborah Hallford in her foreword to *Outside In, Children's Books in Translation*, claims that “translated children’s literature is able to break down barriers of geography, language and race and [...] learning about other cultures is an enriching experience that opens up new horizons and stimulates new ideas” (4). It should be the publishers’ responsibility to translate foreign children’s literature, thereby making different cultures available and accessible for children and encouraging a tolerant outlook on the world and its cultural diversity. In the so-called globalization era in which we live, the statistics are both shocking and disappointing. In the United States and Britain only 1% of published children’s books are translated, and only 4% of the adults’ books published in England are translations.⁸

This lack of translated literature in the English-speaking world represents a barrier, a frontier, a new “Great Wall,” but a unidirectional one. European children’s literature has a long-standing tradition of translated classics, but unfortunately the same tradition of literary exchange is not true for Great Britain (Hallford and Zaghini 22-23). It seems that they have chosen a voluntary exile that isolates them from other literatures and cultures, which can

⁷ Anthony Gardner points towards the diplomatic importance of translating children’s literature and affirms that characters such as Tintin, the Snow Queen, Pippi Longstocking and Babar the Elephant have done more to break down barriers between nations than the most skilled diplomat could ever hope to achieve. He exemplifies this by describing how the Dalai Lama recognised the value of children’s literature when he gave his ‘Truth of Light’-award to the Hergé Foundation for *Tintin in Tibet* (*European Commission Culture Magazine Online*).

⁸ More research and statistics analysis is needed in Britain. Dr Jasmine Donahaye published a study in 2012 titled “‘Three Percent?’ Publishing Data and Statistics on Translated Literature in the United Kingdom and Ireland” in which she examines the information about literature translation in these two countries and assesses what information is available and how it is collected and shared. The objective of the study is to recommend a solution to the problem of lack of translation statistics. She also challenges the often-cited 3% figure as the number of translations published, and says it has been a little higher -consistently greater than 4%- for the last 15 years, with French, German and Spanish being the three most translated-from languages.

also have an impact on the quality of the work produced within its frontiers. As Ghesquiere explains in her article “Why Does Children’s Literature Need Translations?,” throughout history, translations have played an important role in the canonisation of children’s literature. Translations have improved the status of children’s literature and have at the same time motivated new initiatives: “...by confronting authors with the best from elsewhere, they have stimulated the production of literature in the national language. Translation was and remains a means of sharing creativity, new ideas and literary models” (25). Ghesquiere believes that there is a power struggle at work in the field of children’s literature, where the export of books and translations is not necessarily based on the intrinsic literary value of the texts concerned; instead they are more often the result of cultural dominance and of the concentration of power at the level of the publishing houses (20). For most publishers, the financial and intellectual effort to make more foreign children’s literature available outweighs any ideological benefits.

It appears that the shelves of continental European libraries and bookstores are filled with an abundance of translated children’s books and youth novels, but in England there is one powerful market that seems oblivious to the stream of foreign children’s books. As Anne Fine, the former Children’s Laureate, explains, after the success of the Harry Potter books, the chances of publishing a successful translation were diminished, as the success of a children’s book is directly related to its marketing budget, and it’s unlikely that publishers will choose a foreign author over a national one (in Gardner, *European*). So foreign books will need a first-rate marketing plan to add to the translation costs, which leaves foreign authors in an even more disadvantaged position.

In short, the powerful position of the English language, the quality of English and American literature, and the costs of translation have provoked a British and American

reluctance to publish translated children's texts. However, some efforts have been put into raising awareness of this lack of translations and the impact it may have in future generations. Both the USA and Britain have created prizes for children's books in translation, such as the Mildred L. Batchelder Award (USA) and the Marsh Award (Britain). This last award is given biennially to an outstanding work of fiction for young readers introduced into the English language through translation and published by a British publishing house.

Another important attempt is the organization "Outside In" that promotes, explores and celebrates world literature and particularly children's literature in translation. Their catalogue, also titled *Outside In* and edited by Deborah Hallford and Edgardo Zaghini, aims "to celebrate and actively promote an interest in the rich tradition and culture of children's literature from around the world" (4). Furthermore, it is a useful resource for information about what books are currently available in translation, comprising biographical details of authors, illustrators and translators. An American book that includes details of many (but not exclusively) translated children's books is *The World through Children's Books*. There is also a growing number of publishing houses which specialise in children's books in translation, such as Winged Chariot Press (a UK based publisher), Kane/Miller, and Gecko Press. All these are, without doubt, significant endeavours that will hopefully fill some of the cultural gaps in English children's literature.

1.5 The Spanish landscape

In order to establish the context within which the translation of the CU series has taken place, it is important to briefly explain the history of Spanish children's literature and its

tradition of translating texts. Spain, unlike other European countries such as France, Germany or England, does not have a long tradition of children's literature. Moreover, the Spanish literary system (within the children's literature field) has been subjected to many external influences. Paul Hazard defended the idea that Northern Europe was superior to the South when it comes to children's literature, and argued that during the first decades of the twentieth century Spain did not even have its own children's literature (Bravo-Villasante 75).

It is not possible to talk about a Spanish children's literature before the eighteenth century. There are isolated works such as Christmas carols, lullabies, legends, and pedagogical treatises (Bravo-Villasante 47); but any attempt to find anything related to children's literature before that will face the issue of the modern concept of childhood. However, Spain did have a strong oral tradition of folktales, legends, fables, etc. during that time. Carmen Bravo-Villasante explains how, in the same way as in France and England, the translation of the book *Aesop's Fables* in 1489 under the title *El Isopete Historiador* helped Spanish tale-tellers to develop a literary base that they would use in their creations later. Amalia Bermejo, in her book *La Literatura Infantil en España*, explains how during the eighteenth century the importation of French texts delayed the Spanish own production of children's literature (7). When the first Spanish children's magazine (*La Gaceta de los Niños*) was published in 1798 it was inspired by the French model and had clear didactic goals.

This didacticism and moral content prevailed throughout the most of nineteenth century in Spanish children's literature. Also, during this century a number of magazines for children published translations and adaptations of the tales already collected in Europe by Charles Perrault and the Grimm Brothers. It was not until the last quarter of the century

that the situation started to change, quite quickly, with the creation of two publishing houses specializing in children's literature: Editorial Calleja in Madrid and Editorial Sopena in Barcelona. Editorial Calleja published cheap books, but with excellent illustrations: shortened editions of the Grimm, Perrault or Andersen tales⁹, and books like *Gulliver Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe* which became well known to the Spanish audience. Saturnino Calleja, the owner of one of these publishing houses, has been called the Spanish Newbery, as he laid the foundations for the development of Spain's own literature (Fernández López, *Traducción* 77). Editorial Calleja continued publishing translations of the classics, together with books written by Spanish authors with moralistic, religious and didactic content (77).

Spanish children's literature expanded rapidly during the first three decades of the twentieth century, and scholars commonly refer to this period as the "golden years" (Bermejo 13). As the century advanced more magazines were founded, and the moralistic tone gave way to a humorous one in children's literature. Also, many genres were explored during this period by well-known authors of adult literature; Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti and Juan Ramón Jiménez, among others, wrote poetry, theatrical plays, and short stories for children. During this period numerous famous English children's books were translated into Spanish, such as *Peter Pan y Wendy* (translated in 1925) and *Alicia en el País de las Maravillas* (translated in 1927). The zenith of this proliferation can be exemplified with the first exhibition dedicated to children's books held in Madrid in 1935 (Fernández López, *Traducción* 78).

⁹ Andersen's first translation into Spanish was published in 1881, with illustrations by Spanish artists.

The Spanish Civil War brought a radical change to the Spanish literary landscape. When the war started in 1936, many famous authors and illustrators such as Elena Fortún, Antonio Robles or Salvador Bartolozzi emigrated to different countries. The decline in children's literature (both in quantity and quality) was not only due to this "brain-drain," but also because the Franco period brought censorship, and even worse, the self-censorship imposed by many children's authors who remained in the country. During the first years of the dictatorship writers of children's texts were obliged to comply with strict moral and political norms and views; these moral norms were focused on the exaltation of patriotic values, such as saints' lives and national heroes (Bermejo 21). Cendán Pazos explains how the government supervised the production plans of every publishing house and, in 1943, a letter was sent to all the editors stating that all books for children should be "rigorously edifying and pedagogical" (52). Very few new authors arose in the 1940s, with José Mallorquí's "El Coyote" series being the most popular one read by children and adults alike, with a print run up to 250,000 copies, an astronomic number for the country (Cendán Pazos, *Siglo 21*). Other than this series, only two female characters reached fame: Antoñita la Fantástica, created by Liboria Casas, and Mari-Pepa, by Emilia Cotaruelo (Fernández López, *Traducción 79*).

In 1952 an official censorship organ was created: la Junta Asesora de Prensa Infantil (Advisory Board of Childhood Press). This organization was under the authority of the Ministry of Information and Tourism, and all publications had to be sent to this institution to be approved or rejected (79). Fortunately, during this decade, a slight liberalization occurred and the economic situation of Spain improved, prompting an increase in the number of books published. The level of censorship was toned down without disappearing. The very few authors who were writing for children chose popular traditional or religious

stories (80). Curiously, the only Spanish author to receive the Hans Christian Andersen literary prize is José María Sánchez Silva, who published his work *Marcelino Pan y Vino* in 1954 with clearly Catholic content.¹⁰ It is also during this decade that Enid Blyton's books were introduced in Spain with great success.

José María Sánchez Silva was not the only successful author of the decade. The sixties and seventies witnessed a definite proliferation within the field. More writers were focusing on children's literature and, at the same time, the number of specialized publishing houses in children's literature increased (80). In terms of translated works, Blyton secured herself a place as the most read and sold author, with huge print runs, and without receiving any of the criticism that she received in England and other European countries on the grounds of sexism, racism, etc.¹¹ During these decades (1960s, '70s, and '80s) Spanish children's literature enjoyed great success, and in 1986 Spain reached third position worldwide for the number of children's titles published (Cendán Pazos, *boom* 4).

This children's literature publishing "fever" could be related to the national feeling that arose in Spain after Franco's death and the beginning of the new democracy. Well-known authors were demanding not only the writing of new books, but also reclaiming the Spanish tradition and folktales rather than the translation of foreign ones. Emilia Pardo Bazán, a famous author of the time, stated in 1985:

¹⁰ *Marcelino Pan y Vino* (*Miracle of Marcelino* in English) is both a book and a movie that tells the story of Marcelino, an abandoned orphan who is raised by monks in a monastery and whose best friend is the statue of Christ, which comes to life, descends from the cross and eats the bread and wine that the child offers him.

¹¹ In her article "Translation Studies in Contemporary Children's Literature: A Comparison of Intercultural Ideological Factors," Marisa Fernández López observes how fragments of the source texts that were purified of racist and xenophobic elements in subsequent English-language editions were published in Spanish versions that remained faithful to the original English. She exemplifies this argument with the works of Enid Blyton, Roald Dahl and Richmal Crompton.

In Spain there is no fairy tale collection for children that complies with the national character, [...] we live with what we have borrowed, depending on France and Germany, who send us strange things opposed to our country, and instead of our classic witches, fairies, giants and wizards, they made us learn about ogres, elves, and other beings. (qtd. in Bravo-Villasante 127)

During the 1980s and '90s the Spanish publishing business expanded out of all recognition. Marisa Fernández López explains that the number of children's books published in Spain in 1977 was very similar to that of the USA and UK (*Traducción* 89). As Table 1.1 below shows, Spain kept publishing more and more books during the 90s, a tendency that has been maintained up to the present day. The number of translations has always been around 25% of the total production, and English has always been the language most commonly translated. It is important to underline, however, that this study counts as translations books written in any of the regional languages existing in Spain (Euskera, Catalan, and Galician) and that have been translated into the Spanish language.

Year	Titles Published	Translations	% of translations
1991	43,896	10,542	24.0
1992	50,644	11,365	22.4
1993	49,328	10,904	22.1
1994	51,048	11,696	22.9
1995	51,934	12,445	24.0
1996	50,519	11,833	23.6
1997	54,943	13,661	24.9
1998	60,426	16,048	26.1
1999	62,224	15,082	24.2
2000	62,011	13,504	21.7
2001	67,012	17,030	25.4
2002	69,893	17,149	24.5
2003	77,950	20,124	25.8

2004	82.207	19.516	23.7
2005	84.335	20.618	24.5
2006	87.440	23.752	27.2
2007	96.770	23.955	24.8
2008	104.223	25.851	24.8
2009	110.205	25.223	22.9
2010	114.459	25.236	22.1
2011	116.851	24.623	21.1
2012	104,724	23,063	22.0
2013	89,130	19,865	22.3
2014	90,803	19,233	21.2

Table 1.1: Number and percentages of translations published in Spain. Source: La traducción editorial en España. Dic 2008, Dec. 2012, April 2015. Ministerio de Cultura Español.

When it comes to children's literature and young adult literature, data show that each year more and more books have been published (both in original Spanish and in translations) during the last three decades.¹² The number of translations from other languages is far higher than in any other sector of the publishing business. Table 1.2 below shows that children's literature is, by far, the most translated sector in Spain, with percentages in the years 2006 - 2013 that are close to 45%. Spain's interest in foreign literature is not coincidental. As explained earlier, Spain is not a country with a long tradition in children's literature. It has always kept an open eye on foreign texts, especially canonical and classic texts. We have accepted classics such as *Peter Pan*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Winnie the Pooh* as our own. Popular series such as *The Famous Five* or *The Hollisters*, or more recently *The Babysitters Club*, have always been very popular in the Spanish market. Therefore, when Spain's own published books took off, they did not take over from the translations entirely but rather complemented them, sharing rather comparable percentages

¹² The Spanish government offers on the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport's website a comprehensible analysis and data of the last research concerning the Spanish publishing landscape in the last three decades. See www.mecd.gob.es (in Spanish only).

of the total published texts: 2006 (47,1%), 2007 (43,1%), 2008 (42,2%), 2009 (46,9%), 2010 (43,6%), 2011 (45,2%), 2012 (45,0%) and 2013 (40,7%), and 2014 (41,8%).

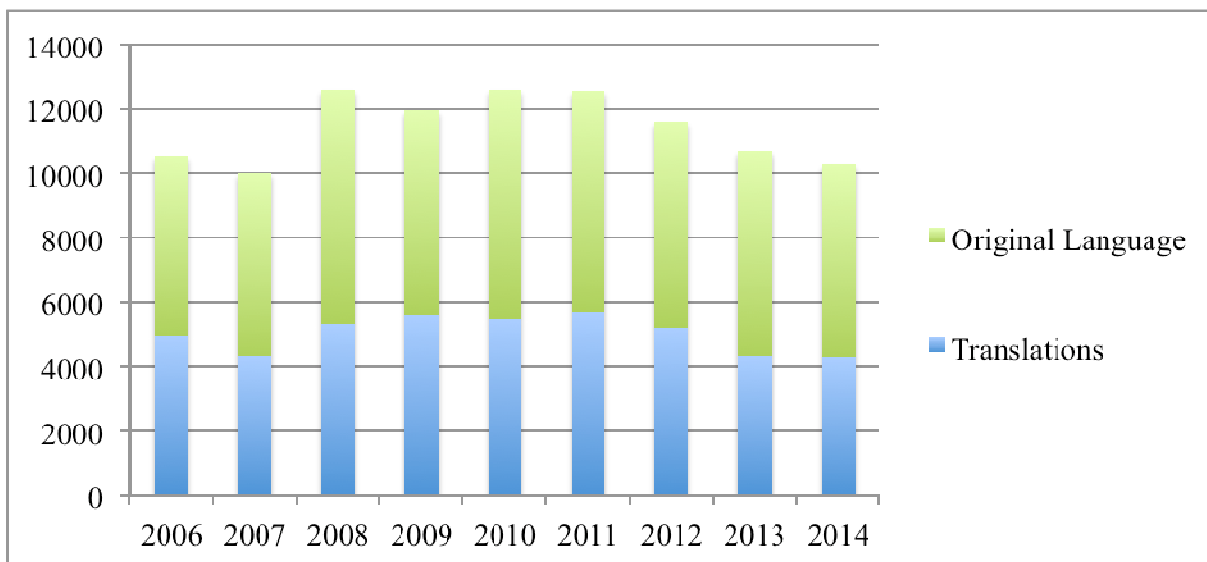


Table 1.2: Number of titles of children and young adult texts published in Spain. Source: La Traducción editorial en España, Ministerio de Cultura Español (2015).

During the last decade the Spanish publishing landscape has been dominated by English titles. Harry Potter, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, and the Captain Underpants series have sold millions of copies, relegating Spanish production to second position. For instance, none of the eight most read books in Spain for children aged 10 in 2012 was written by a Spanish author. As the readers grow older, the tendency is more pronounced. Blockbusters such as the *Twilight* series or *Hunger Games* dominate the best-sellers lists in Spain, partly influenced by the movies produced after them and their huge merchandising.

Having established that the Spanish publishing market relies heavily on translation, the last section of this chapter will focus on the specifics of translating literature in general, not only children's literature, and the two main approaches that can be adopted when translating.

1.6 Translation theory: foreignization versus domestication

When translating any kind of foreign literature, there are two macro strategies that can be applied to the text. Either the translator chooses to maintain the “foreignness” of the text (disturbing the reader when foreign elements appear in the text), or he or she decides to translate the text as if it were written in the target language, domesticating the text and promoting fluency of reading. These two translating strategies are also intrinsically related to the motivations of the translation process. If the educational motivation is stronger, then a foreignizing technique is likely to be applied, allowing the reader to discover new words, worlds, and cultures, although the didactic message of the text may require domestication. If the translator is more concerned with fluency then the text is naturalized and the reading task facilitated.

Friedrich Schleiermacher was one of the first scholars to reflect on foreignizing translation methods. In 1813, in a lecture on different methods of translation (*Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens*), Schleiermacher argued that there are essentially two approaches: “Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him” (qtd. in Venuti, *Invisibility* 19-20). Schleiermacher favours a foreignization method and defends a quite idealistic position of the translator, defining a “genuine” translator as a writer “who wants to bring those two completely separated persons, his author and his reader, truly together, and who would like to bring the latter to an understanding and enjoyments of the former as correct and complete as possible without inviting him to leave the sphere of his mother tongue” (100). Schleiermacher encourages

translators to take their readers abroad instead of leaving them behind in their familiar surroundings.

Lawrence Venuti writes in his book *The Translator's Invisibility* about adapting books for different purposes at different times. He defines this adaptation as domestication, and sees it as a result of issues of norms and power in any given society at a given time. Venuti, building on the ideas of Schleiermacher, is not only against domestication, but also rails against the invisibility that translators suffer in the contemporary context of Anglo-American cultural hegemony. He rejects the prevalent idea that the translator's voice should be lost in the translation process, and the way in which publishing houses, editors and the global market manipulate translations in such a way that the target text bears no trace of any translation activity:

A text is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers, when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the “original.” (1)

Venuti identifies transparency (and a complete naturalization) with invisibility; and the more transparent the translated text, the more invisible the translator remains, which creates an illusion that eliminates the translator's work completely and produces a text that has been fluently transposed into another language (1-2). Venuti's complaints about fluency and transparency in translated texts were developed with the English language in mind, and the way other texts are translated into English. He enumerates a number of qualities that a

fluent translation should possess, such as being written in current English (“modern”) instead of archaic, avoiding foreign words, as well as Britishisms in American translations and vice versa. However, this list can be applied to any language, including Spanish, where the need to create different versions for different South American countries is highly apparent. Venuti fights against the idea that in order to translate a text so that it seems “natural” to the reader, the translator needs to remain invisible, that is, the texts need to lose all traces of “foreign” elements, so the reader can enjoy a transparent text.

One of the points where Venuti’s theory is less transferable to other languages is the “individualistic conception of authorship that continues to prevail in Anglo-American literature” (6). Laws about plagiarism, copyright, and authorship exist all over the world but according to Venuti they are mostly focused to prevent intellectual theft of American and English texts when translated into another language rather than the other way around. Venuti believes that there is an asymmetry in the law itself that promotes the creation of English texts in other cultures but slows down the translation of other texts into the English language.

Since the 1950s British and American book production has increased fourfold, yet the percentage of published translations has remained the same (Venuti, *Invisibility* 12). Other European countries, including Spain, show a more positive percentage of translated texts. As explained in the previous section, it is estimated that just 3% of books published in the United States are translations from other languages. Meanwhile, the number of translations in Europe varies between Spain (22.9%), Italy (19.0%), France (14.3%), Germany (8.8%), and in the very last position, United Kingdom with just 4% of translated books. One possible explanation may be that the European book market is mainly dominated by translations from the English language (see Table 1.3 below); however, the

lack of translations from other languages in the United Kingdom stands out together with the lack of data available.

	France (2009)	Italy (2007)	Germany (2008)	United Kingdom (2010)	Spain (2009)
% of translations	14.3	19.0	8.8	4.0	22.9
English	62%	59%	66.9%		47.3%
French		16.5%	11.5%		12.2%
German	6.2%	11.5%			6.3%
Italian	4.3%		2.8%		6.7%
Spanish	4.0%	3.6%	2.6%		

Table 1.3: Percentages of translations in European countries and languages they are translated from. Source: Ministerio de Cultura Español. December 2010.

Venuti warns us of the cultural ramifications this imbalanced trade can cause: an unstoppable expansion of Anglo-American culture, and the possible cultural implications that these translations can have once they reach schools, libraries, bookshops, affecting diverse areas, disciplines and constituencies (academic, religious, literary and technical, elite and popular, adult and child) (17). Venuti, blaming the domesticating translation method, sees an “ethnocentric violence of translation” (*Invisibility* 20), which reflects the imperialistic and xenophobic attitude of the dominant Anglo-American culture (20). As he states, “[t]ranslation can be called a cultural political practice, constructing or critiquing ideology-stamped identities for foreign cultures, affirming or transgressing discursive values and institutional limits in the target language” (19). Unfortunately today translation is more focused on perpetuating the Anglo-American cultural hegemony than in challenging it, and even more so in children’s literature. Phillip Pullman also refers to the paradoxical influence that globalisation has had on translated children’s literature, and he challenges the idea that one would assume that in today’s globalised community literature

from all over the world would be easily available. According to Pullman, it is exactly globalisation, being “a phenomenon that’s driven by money and business, not by culture and curiosity” (*Outside 7*) that needs to be blamed for this lack of translations in American and British culture.

1.7 Conclusion

In theoretical approaches, today one is more likely to find pro-foreignization and anti-domestication ideas than the other way around when it comes to translating children’s literature. Still, many Spanish translated texts (and in particular, the Captain Underpants Series, as will be shown later) have mostly followed a domestication approach¹³, probably justified by reference to readability on the part of the youngest readers. Many translators assume that what is unknown to readers is going to disturb them, especially when the target readers are young. In children’s literature, many adults/writers/translators/publishers patronize children, assuming their lack of knowledge of, or (even worse) their lack of interest in, other languages and cultures.

Adults may assume that children are going to dislike what is unfamiliar to them, that foreign names and works are going to produce discomfort in young readers and that the level of foreignness has to be toned down. Furthermore, they may suppose that children’s reception of the foreign is not going to be positive, but quite the reverse. Therefore, it is adults’ responsibility to offer them the whole world, not only an egocentric and nationalistic approach to it. Author Phillip Pullman advocates this idea when he states that, “[Y]ou will never know what sets a child’s imagination on fire, but if we DON’T offer

¹³ Very limited research has been developed about this and I have found no empirical data to prove this.

children the experience of literature from other languages, we're starving them. It's as simple as that" (foreword, *Outside In*). In Spain, we do currently offer children the experience from other languages, but in a quite remarkably domesticated way that can hardly be seen as an invitation to know other cultures.

Spain is a country that has always been, is, and very likely will continue to be, an importer of foreign literature, especially children and young adult's literature. Therefore, it is important to consider how this literature is being translated and how Spanish readers perceive these texts. This thesis takes the CU series as a case study to examine the changes that the text has undergone through translation. In Spain, the books are considered neither rude nor offensive, nor are they perceived as advocating disrespectful behaviour. They have not been subject to any of the criticism faced in the United States where, over the past decade, they have held a steady position amongst the most banned books, ranking first on the American Library Association's Top Ten Challenged books list in 2012 and 2013. It could be argued that the two countries possess different attitudes toward the books. Spain, at first sight, could be declared more welcoming and less judgmental when it comes to subversive texts. However, as the following analysis shows, a history of these books' translation highlights significant linguistic and cultural differences between the English and the Spanish versions, including a lower degree of subversive content, a revision of the dual readership (adult and child), the mistranslation of humour, misrepresentations of food, an unavoidable gap that exists between the Spanish texts and American pictures, and a different perception of the physical representation of the books.

Chapter Two

The Translation of Children's Literature, Dialogism, the Translator's Ideology, and Reader Response

As Chapter One has explained, the history of translation studies has been dominated by discussions of the possible merits of word-for-word versus sense-for-sense, formal versus dynamic, semantic versus communicative, or foreignized versus domesticated translations. However, by applying Bakhtin's concept of *dialogism* to the Captain Underpants texts, it can be shown that the translation process is a continuum which changes with time, and never a finalized project. The main aim of the chapter is therefore to reflect on the ways in which ranges of meaning are narrowed, expanded or refracted in the process of translating the *Captain Underpants* series, and how translation affects young readers' understanding of the texts, modelling all this as a dynamic rather than static system. Special attention will be paid to the translators of the Captain Underpants series into Spanish, Miguel Azaola (Spain) and Nuria Molinero (USA), not as mere participants in the reading process but as ideologically-inflected components in the construction of meaning of the texts.

Chapter Two deals with the unequal relationship between the adult writer (Dav Pilkey) and/or the translators (Miguel Azaola and Nuria Molinero) and the child audience. Section 2.2 presents a literature review concerning the translation of children's literature and points out the particular challenges of translating for children. This is followed in Section 2.3 by a discussion of the dialogical approach to translation, building on theories developed by Oittinen and O'Sullivan. Section 2.4 will focus on the translator's ideology and the effects on his/her work. Finally, Section 2.5 will analyse the impact that translations

may have on readers' perception and reception of a text, and how reader response theory may help translators to understand the possible responses of the child reader.

2.1. Introduction

Translating children's literature is not an easy task. Often regarded as a simple activity, it may be affected by various constraints, which may differ from culture to culture. The translator must consider not only the target language and culture, but also the needs of target readers and cultural norms. They must set a specific strategy to develop their work. Also, many resources normally available to translators, such as the use of footnotes and the translator's commentary in the introduction or epilogue, etc., are not always at their disposal due to the very nature of the text and the readers and, when they are available, they can be alienating or are likely to be ignored by the child reader (Lathey, *Practices* 23). The development of translation norms has also proved to be challenging, in the sense that they may deviate from the norms of the target language and the source language. When translating for young readers, a number of specific issues related to child images arises, which may be based on complex issues such as ideology and manipulation.

2.2 The translation of children's literature

Critical interest in the translation of children's literature began almost 40 years ago. In 1976 the International Research Society for Children's Literature (IRSCL) devoted its whole conference to translation and the international exchange of children's books (Lathey, *Reader* 1). Relevant contributions to the field of children's literature translation are the theories of Klingberg, Lathey, O'Sullivan, and Oittinen. Like those working in literary

translation studies more generally, these scholars based their theories on the eternal dichotomy between adaptation and fidelity. Klingberg and Shavit adopt a negative attitude towards adaptation and prefer fidelity based on creative grounds.

Göte Klingberg was one of the pioneers on the subject with his books *Children's Books in Translation* (1978), coedited with Mary Ørvig and Stuart Amor, and *Children's Fiction in the Hands of the Translators* (1986), in which he argues that the integrity and the author's intentions in the original work must be respected and changed as little as possible, and categorizes what he believes to be the typical deviations from the source text. He assumes that the author of the original work has already considered his prospective readers, their abilities, interests, and concerns, and has made the text suitable for them. Therefore, the text should not be drastically changed, and it should undergo only a "cultural context adaptation," a phrase that has been adopted as an umbrella term for a variety of strategies for moving an original text towards the child reader in the target culture (Lathey, *Translation 7*).

Purification and modernization are key concepts in Klingberg's theory of cultural context adaptation. He believes that things (e.g. personal and geographical names and measurements) should be explained to the reading and listening child because of his or her lack of experience of the world and knowledge. In this context, purification means to sanitize values in translations (and illustrations when possible), while modernization implies altering the whole text to fit some more recent place and time; for instance, it often implies adapting old-fashioned language to reflect current usage, making a translation easier to understand. Still, he recommends that adaptation should be restricted to details, and the source text manipulated as little as possible. As Klingberg explains:

As *modernization* one could term attempts to make the target text of more immediate interest to the presumptive readers by moving the time nearer to the present time or by exchanging details in the setting for more recent ones. As *purification* one terms modifications and abbreviations aimed at getting the target text in correspondence with the values of the presumptive readers, or –as regards children’s books– rather with the values, or the supposed values, of adults, for example, of parents. One can find purification being defended in earnest, but it seems to me that it – as to some extent also modernization– is in conflict with one of the aims of translation, i.e., to internationalize the concepts of the young readers. (*Translation* 86-87)

Adaptations and translations should then be focused not only in terms of language, but also changed in order to correspond to the values of the new readers. Klingberg also favours the educational content that is implied in offering new cultures, as the child will further his international outlook: “the removal of peculiarities of the foreign culture will not further the reader’s knowledge of and interest in the foreign culture” (10). On the other hand, the English translator Anthea Bell has advocated more flexibility because, in some instances, she argues, an “impenetrable-looking set of foreign names” on the first pages of a book might alienate a young reader, so the translator needs to “gauge the precise degree of foreignness, and how far it is acceptable and can be preserved” (qtd. in Lathey, *Translation* 7).

Klingberg’s demand for faithfulness is mainly pedagogical and prescriptive, and leaves the translator in a place where he should “teach” the child something about the foreign, something valuable, but not anything excessive as the child may be alienated. This

theory is rather incongruent as “time related changes” are accepted but current foreign changes are not: texts, knowledge and values that come from past cultures should be adapted to correspond to current ones, they need to be modernized in order to make them more appealing; however, the “peculiarities of the foreign country” should be respected because they can teach something valuable to the reader. This will also pose the question of the intercultural ideological factors in the source context. Marisa Fernández López explains that children’s literature is more susceptible to censorship and alteration, and even original works are modified in subsequent editions to conform to the social standards prevailing at a given time and to satisfy the demands of the market (41).¹ In short, Klingberg sees children’s literature from the adult point of view, where he is in charge of educating the child, and he accepts foreign texts that instruct the child but not historical texts that might disturb the child’s reading and alienate the reader.

The whole position of children’s literature is also a key concept in terms of its translation, especially when the target text and the source text do not share the same position within their literary systems. Translated books for children have, in most cases, been relegated to a peripheral status.² When considering the status of children’s literature and of its translators, Zohar Shavit applied Itamar Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory to children’s literature in 1986. According to this theory, literature is to be seen as a differentiated and dynamic conglomerate of systems which exist in a hierarchical relation to each other. Its typical features are constant change and internal opposition. The term

¹ See Fernández’s article “Translation Studies in Contemporary Children’s Literature: A comparison of Intercultural Ideological Factors.”

² Zohar Shavit and Emer O’Sullivan have explained in depth the peripheral position of children’s literature. See Shavit’s “Translation of Children’s Literature as a Function of Its Position in the Literary Polysystem” (1981) and O’Sullivan’s *Comparative Children’s Literature* (2005).

'polysystem' was intended to denote the variety and diversity of literary, cultural and social systems that are constantly interacting. Because of the marginal position held by children's texts within the literary polysystem, translators feel that they can take bigger liberties than with other texts, and therefore adapt them to existing models already present in the target system (*Transation* 171). This position makes the translator of children's literature modify texts according to a number of constraints. As Shavit explains,

... the translators can manipulate the texts in various other ways only as long as they adhere to guiding principles rooted in the self image of children's literature:

- a) adjusting the text in order to make it appropriate and useful to the child, in accordance with what society thinks is 'good for the child';
- b) adjusting the plot, characterization and language to the child's level of comprehension and his reading abilities. (172)

Shavit describes five constraints derived from translational norms that every translator confronts when translating texts for children, especially when dealing with texts which were moved from adult to children's literature and with texts that belong to both adult and children's literature at the same time (e.g. *Alice in Wonderland*, *Gulliver's Travels*, etc). The first of these constraints is the assimilation of existing genres; for example, if the satire of a text originally written for adults cannot fit into a model of the target system, then it may be adjusted into a fantasy story. Secondly, it is acceptable to modify the integrity of some texts in order to make adults' texts suitable to the children's system. Shavit exemplifies this constraint with the deletion of sexual obscenity or mention of excretion in *Gulliver's Travels*. Thirdly, the level of complexity of the text, which will be affected not

only by its theme, characterization and main structures but also by the image of children's literature that the translator possesses. The fourth constraint concerns the changes a text can undergo in order to make it an ideological or moralising instrument according to the translator's own ideology. And finally, there are changes in stylistic norms, which are linked to the didactic concept of children's literature and the attempt to enrich the child's vocabulary through reading (*Translation* 171-77).

This list of constraints is still relevant for today's translations, but it is not an exhaustive one. For example, pictures and cultural norms have been omitted. Also, it is arguable that the situation of children's literature within the literary polysystem is changing, as children's and adults' writer Phillip Pullman has recently stated: "There are some themes, some subjects, too large for adult fiction; they can only be dealt with adequately in a children's book" (Carnegie). Pullman seems to reverse the conventional hierarchies by setting children's literature above that of adults. Defending the peripheral position of children's literature is, nowadays, more complicated than it has been in the past.

Birgilt Stolt also comments on the differences between translating for children and adults: "the original text must be accorded just as much respect as in the case of adult literature, therefore the endeavour should be a translation as faithful, as equivalent as possible" (qtd. in Oittinen, *Translation* 81). She also names three sources that may adversely affect the faithfulness of the translator to the original text: educational intentions; the preconceived opinions of adults about what children want to read, value and understand (often related to the underestimation of the child reader); and a childish attitude that results in a sentimentalization or prettifying of matter-of-fact texts (Stolt 71). These last three points are constraints that all translators face, but again, the list is not exhaustive. Stolt

admits only that when adaptation is absolutely necessary, it should be done with a “gentle hand,” as little as possible and in collaboration with the author (82-83).

To sum up, Klingberg, Shavit and Stolt argue for faithful translations rather than adaptations. They create a list of constraints and impediments which stand in the way of a faithful translation. Göte Klingberg’s view is very narrow; he examines words and fragments in isolation, looking for translational rules that will be useful for all translators of children’s literature. He is, in general, interested in educating the child by keeping the foreign elements of the text. Zohar Shavit takes into account time, place, culture and child images, but forgets about individual situations, about translators and children as readers. Her ideas are more linked to the stimulation of the canon of children’s literature within the literary polysystem. Stolt also worries about the status of children’s literature and argues that the concept of faithfulness takes a back seat in translations for children due to educational intentions, preconceived opinions of adults about what children want to read, and the sentimentalization of matter-of-facts texts. She also takes into account the role of illustrations and pictures in the translation process, an issue ignored by previous scholars.

There are, however, other scholars such as Riitta Oittinen, whose views on translation are more reader -than text- oriented, and who consider the reading experience to be as important as the text itself and see translation under a dialogical approach.

2.3 The dialogical approach to translation

Some translators and scholars believe they do not owe fidelity to the source text, but to the target text, to the reader. Oittinen, for instance, claims that reading is the key issue in translation for children:

first, the real reading experience of the translator, who writes her/his translation on the basis of how she/he has experienced the original; second, the future readers' reading experiences imagined by the translator, the dialogue with readers who do not yet exist for her/him, that is: imaginary projections of her/his own readerly self. The translator reaches toward the future child readers, who are beneficiaries of the whole translation process - the child and the adult reading aloud. Translators are readers who are always translating for their reader, the future readers of the translation. (*Translating* 5)

By acknowledging the readers of the texts, she offers an alternative to the prescriptive approaches of Klingberg and Shavit, and sees in adaptation a new fresh viewpoint; she rejects the negative image of 'adaptation' because it is not applicable in every reading situation and does not consider the future readers of texts. Oittinen starts by making a useful distinction between translating for children and translating children's literature, and chooses the former term. She adds, "translating for children can be defined as communication between children and adults" (*Translating* 44). Then, she argues that adaptation and translation are not separate issues, and that when we see them as that, we are mixing terms on different levels:

When translating, we are always adapting our texts for certain purposes and certain readers, both children and adults. The translation process as such brings the text closer to the target-language readers by speaking a familiar language.

Domestication is part of translation, and not a parallel process. There is no real methodological difference between the two. What really matters here is how well

translations function in real situations, where the “I” of the reader of the translation meets the “you” of the translator, the author and the illustrator. (*Translating* 83-4)

This dialogic view on translation is based on Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogism and the reading experience. Dialogism is a term coined by Bakhtin in which the ambiguity of the word is underlined. According to the Russian scholar, the futility of meaning derives not only from the fact that a single word may be occupied by two voices (“double voicedness”) but also from the fact that all words respond and seek response simultaneously, and therefore, the word remains forever unfinished in its potential to mean (Farmer xiii). It is precisely this unfinished quality that characterizes dialogue. Because human experience is intrinsically linked with the desire to make meaning, and because we need other human beings to begin a dialogue with, Bakhtin argues that, “where consciousness began, there dialogue began” (*Dialogic Imagination* 40) and takes this idea further to the extreme of “when dialogue ends, everything ends” (252). This approach to dialogue is almost ontological, in the sense that dialogue is one condition of our existence. As Bakhtin explains:

Life is by its very nature dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life... He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium. (*Dostoevsky* 293)

Thus, it can be argued that we are forever in dialogue with texts from our own particular historical and social moment. Bakhtin states that: “A reading experience is dialogic and

consists not only of the text, but also of the different writers, readers, and contexts, and the past, present and future. The word is always born in a dialogue and forms a concept of the object in a dialogic way” (qtd. in Oittinen, *Translating* 29).

The concept of dialogism and its relationship with children’s literature has also been explored by David Rudd’s article “Children’s Literature and the Return to Rose,” in what seems further evidence of the versatility of Bakhtin’s concepts. In this article Rudd advocates a Bakhtin-inflected approach to children’s literature in which readers could be actively involved in the negotiation of meaning rather than passively taught or simply ignored. He sees the area’s whole development, including “possible” readers, in dialogical terms, confronting Rose’s concept of the impossibility of children’s literature, which he believes is rooted in the same notion of the Romantic child which she denies in the first place (290-91). Rudd argues that Rose’s stereotypical depiction of children’s fiction is insular and leaves the child in second position, always behind the adult - who is the reader, maker, giver of the text (294). Meanwhile, Rudd advocates a Bakhtinian approach to the reading process that “would point to ‘the space in between’ as precisely where things happen... instead of conceiving isolated authors (adults) in ‘command,’ with passive readers (children) in danger of ‘seduction,’ and insular texts waiting to trap readers with their baited ‘image of the child’” (294). Therefore Rudd considers Bakhtin’s model more interactive, permitting broader dialogue between adults and children.

If the same principle is applied to translation theory, we could identify translators as the personification of this “space in between” that allows the understanding of the text in the target language. Translators facilitate the dialogue between one language and another, between cultures, and between readers. This turn to the translator brings issues of ideology to the surface and puts studies of translator behaviour and intentions back on stage. Not

only is he the ‘facilitator’ of the text, but also a reader, and a new author with different readers in mind. Therefore, it is important to develop an awareness of the complexities of the translation process and an avoidance of the simplistic view that regards translation as a mere process of transferring meaning from one text to another, evading focusing on “fidelity” or notions of equivalence between texts. Instead, the dialogue between the source and target texts, and the future dialogue of the participants of the publishing and reading process should be examined. Translation should be seen as a dialogical activity, where the translator, who is the listener, becomes the speaker, and his/her actual response is equally articulated, even though it may be affected by his/her own beliefs.

According to Oittinen, translators should work in collaboration; they should listen and ask questions about the text they are working on. However, it is inevitable that their own reading experience leaks into their work: “when a translator translates for the child, she/he also reads, writes, and discusses with her/his present and former self. She/he also discusses with her/his audience, the listening and the reading child” (*Translating* 30). This is all part of the dialogic situation of translation.

Oittinen emphasizes how dialogics also involves the translator’s responsibility and loyalty. The translator is accountable to the author of the original text, to the readers, to themselves as human beings and to their own child images. On the other hand, when translating for children the fact that translators take the target-language children into consideration as readers is a sign of loyalty to the original author. This child-centred theory focuses on the child readers rather than the text, and Oittinen believes that the translator serves the writer of the original text best when the translated text is successful with the child reader. According to Oittinen, “[loyalty] implies respect for an entire story-telling situation where a text is interpreted *for* new readers, who take the story as it is, who accept

and reject, who react and respond” (*Translating* 84). In this dialogue, the interests of the original author and those of future readers should be in harmony.

Oittinen has adopted Rosenblatt’s different reading strategies depending on both the reader and the reading situation. She distinguishes between aesthetic reading and efferent reading, and explains that these differ in two specific aspects: time and experience. Aesthetic reading encompasses the reader’s whole experience, generating feelings, attitudes, associations and aesthetic pleasure, whilst efferent reading describes the analytical, logical side to the reading process and the acquisition of facts and information. Rosenblatt states that adult reading takes place on the efferent level, while children, driven more by emotion, read on the aesthetic level (in Oittinen, *Other* 71-72). However, a translator’s process goes from ‘aesthetic’ to ‘efferent’ readings.

Taking a different approach, Emer O’Sullivan applies models of narrative communication to the process of translating for children and looks at the role of translator. O’Sullivan positions the real translator of the text outside the translated text. She explains how narratological models have ignored the discursive presence of the translator (*Comparative* 105); and, by doing so, an illusion of transparency is created. O’Sullivan acknowledges the translator as another “voice” of the narrative discourse that works on the texts at different levels. The implied reader of the text is time specific: the text is created in a particular context with a concrete audience in mind. Therefore, she believes in the figure of the mediating “implied translator” who can direct the translation towards what he or she believes are the requirements of the new target audience. O’Sullivan’s expanded model of narrative communication includes both the implied child reader in the target culture, and the ‘implied translator’ whose voice can be detected in the translated text.

In such a model the translator is the agent mediating culture difference, often in an idiosyncratic manner, rather than the invisible and voiceless instrument of cultural exchange who remains outside the translated text. It is the real readers who will interpret the text in any way they want. In this sense, the translator becomes an empowered reader, a reader endowed with the special power of rewriting the original text, and therefore he/she is in a privileged position (López Guix 95). Thus, it is important to look in detail at the figure of the translator in the translation process in order to evaluate his or her impact on the target language translation.

2.4 The translator's ideology

Susan Bassnett was one of the first scholars to stress the need to reassess the role of the translator by analyzing his/her intervention in the process of linguistic transfer, when she argued: “[O]nce considered a subservient, transparent filter through which a text could and should pass without adulteration, the translation can now be seen as a process in which intervention is crucial” (22). The translators' discursive presence in the text is more acknowledged by the public and themselves as it is their own ideology that inevitably shows in this involvement. However, this intervention is no longer seen as pejorative or in detriment of the text, but as the natural consequence of the human action of translating.

Gillian Lathey's fairly recent book *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature: Invisible Storytellers* points to the significance of translations and translators through the years. One of the purposes of the book is to give an account of the motivation and methodology of translators working for a child audience (8). The author claims that the role of the translator is feared and unrecognized at the same time. Not much information has

been made available about translators through history (who they are, what they think about children's literature, why they translate, why they know different languages, what is their relationship with the source language, etc.) In this sense, she is pointing in the same direction as Lawrence Venuti when he claims that translators remain, in most cases, "invisible," unrecognized by the readers of the target text. As Lathey puts it, translators "belong to the great disappeared of history," being the anonymous, unsung heroes or "shadowy figures," they were found nowhere in the translated work: front page, preface, afterword or elsewhere (*Role* 209). Translators today have a higher profile than at any time in the recent past (Pinsent 1) although they still need to be more visibly acknowledged in the literary landscape, especially in the United Kingdom, where hardly any translation of children's texts takes place. Anthea Bell recalls that translated children's books have been often placed in a kind of a ghetto twice over, the first for being children's texts and the second for being translations (qtd. in Pinsent 48). Xeni believes that translators do not seem to receive much appreciation from publishers, and she underlines that ignoring translators has become a behavioural pattern of publishers, defining it as a lack of respect and understanding of the role and nature of the translating profession (*Translation*).

However, there are scholars, such as Lathey, who insist on the important role the translator plays in the translation process, allowing him or her to achieve voice and power, and investigate new fields such as the translator's ideology, motivation, strategies and methodology. According to Lathey, translators of children's literature can be seen as a "cultural bridge" that fill the gap between children's knowledge and the need to stimulate curiosity and enhance a tolerance of the unfamiliar (introduction, *Translation* 7).

Generally, readers think of translators as 'facilitating tools' who write the text in the target language, rather than as a human being with their own ideology, politics and a

preconceived idea of their child reader. Adults do have an image of the child in mind (Stephens, Rose) and they are unable to escape from it. Therefore it is undeniable that the way translators think about children and childhood is going to affect their work. Child image, then, is going to be a decisive factor when translating for children, but it is not the only one: social class, education, gender, religion are, for instance, other factors that may affect the translation of a text. After all, translators do not work in isolation from the world. They are members of a particular culture; they belong to a race (White, African American, Indian, etc.), speak different languages, and have different attitudes towards those languages. They also have their own cultural baggage in the sense that they have had access to a different *repertoire* of books that have affected the way they approach other texts. Álvarez and Vidal, in the introduction of their book *Translation, Power, Subversion*, argue that:

Translators are constrained in many ways: by their own ideology; by their feelings of superiority or inferiority towards the language in which they are writing the text being translated; by the prevailing poetical rules at that time; by the very language in which the texts they are translating is written; by the dominant institutions and ideology expected of them; by the public for whom the translation is intended. (6)

In short, translators bring to the translation their inherited and lived cultural experiences, although it has not always been seen this way. The role of translators in the translation process has changed historically, and translation studies have undergone a ‘cultural turn.’ The term ‘cultural turn’ refers to a shift that occurred in the field of translation studies around the decade of the 80s, in which translation was no longer seen as a linguistic activity

done in isolation, but as the product of a broader cultural context that encloses plural belief systems. André Lefevere was one of the first theorists to adopt this point of view when he stated: “Translation needs to be studied in connection with power and patronage, ideology and poetics, with emphasis on the various attempts to shore up or undermine an existing ideology or an existing poetics” (10). He adds that translation needs to be seen in terms of the language and text that are being translated, besides the questions of why, how and who translates. This more inclusive approach to translation is, in a way, related to Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism in the sense that he believes that it is important to place a given text in the dialogue of its historical context, to identify its major ideological voices and accents.

This can also explain why different translators take different approaches to translating the same text, as this dissertation examines. Two translators have worked so far on the translation of the CU series into Spanish: Miguel Azaola (Spain) and Nuria Molinero (USA). The first American edition came out in 1997 by Scholastic, a U.S. publisher and education and media company known for publishing, selling, and distributing books and educational materials for schools, teachers, parents, and children. The first Spanish publication of the first book was in October 2000, three years later than the original. It was published by SM (El Barco de Vapor) which specializes in children’s literature and didactic materials. The publishing house has categorized these books into the ‘Blue Series’ for young readers, defined on their website as “Books for children who read quite well and yet have some difficulty from time to time. [The books include] Full colour illustrations to make reading entertaining” (Catalogos SM). Books in this series are for children between 7 and 9, as in Spain there is an established tradition of dividing texts into categories in order to facilitate the selection of books according to different levels and age. Since then, twelve books have been released in the United States in both English and Spanish, while only ten

books have been published in Spain.

At first sight, more than three years passed before the Spanish translation appeared. However, once the books proved to be a commercial success, the waiting period between the American and the Spanish publication became shorter and shorter, as table 2.1 shows; especially with the last two books, which have been published in Spanish in just a few months:

Order	English Title (USA, Scholastic)	American release date	Spanish title (Spain, El Barco de Vapor and USA, Scholastic en Español)	Release date in Spain
1st	<i>The Adventures of Captain Underpants</i>	1997	<i>Las Aventuras del Capitán Calzoncillos</i>	02-2000
2nd	<i>Captain Underpants and the Attack of the Talking Toilets</i>	1999	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y el Ataque de los Retretes Parlantes</i>	10-2000
3rd	<i>Captain Underpants and the Invasion of the Incredibly Naughty Cafeteria Ladies from Outer Space (and the Subsequent Assault of the Equally Evil Lunchroom Zombie Nerds)</i>	1-09-1999	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Invasión de los Pérfidos Tiparracos del Espacio</i>	10-2001
4th	<i>Captain Underpants and the Perilous Plot of Professor Poopyants</i>	2000	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y el Perverso Plan del Profesor Pipicaca</i>	10-2001
5th	<i>Captain Underpants and the Wrath of the Wicked Wedgie Woman</i>	2001	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Furia de la Supermujer Macroelástica</i>	11-2002
6th	<i>Captain Underpants and the Big, Bad Battle of the Bionic Booger Boy, Part 1: The Night of the Nasty Nostril Nuggets</i>	2003	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Noche de los Mocos Vivientes</i>	12-2004
7th	<i>Captain Underpants and the Big, Bad Battle of the Bionic Booger Boy, Part 2: The Revenge of the Ridiculous Robo-Boogers</i>	2003	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Venganza de los Repugnantes Mocarobots</i>	12-2004

8th	<i>Captain Underpants and the Preposterous Plight of the Purple Potty People</i>	2006	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Dramática Aventura de los Engendros del Inodoro Malva</i>	09-2007
9th	<i>Captain Underpants and the Terrifying ReTurn of Tippy Tinkletrousers</i>	28-08-2012	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y el Terrorífico Retorno de Cacapipe (Molinero)</i> <i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y el Contraataque de Cocoliso Cacapipe (Azaola)</i>	01-2013 (USA) 2013 (Spain)
10th	<i>Captain Underpants and the Revolting Revenge of the Radioactive Robo-Boxers</i>	15-01-2013	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Asquerosa Venganza de los Robocalzones Radioactivos (Molinero)</i> <i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Repugnante Revancha de los Calzones Robótico-Radiactivos (Azaola)</i>	09-2013 (USA) 2014 (Spain)
11th	<i>Captain Underpants and the Tyrannical Retaliation of the Turbo Toilet 2000</i>	26-08-2014	<i>El Capitán Calzoncillos y el Diabólico Desquite del Inodoro-Turbotrón 2000 (Molinero)</i> Yet to be released in Spain	30-12-2014
12th	<i>Captain Underpants and the Sensational Saga of Sir Stinks-A-Lot</i>	15-08-2015	Yet to be released in USA Yet to be released in Spain	

Table 2.1: Titles and release dates of all the Captain Underpants books.

The first ten books of the series have been translated by Miguel Azaola, a well-known and respected Spanish translator, into (peninsular) Spanish. The ninth, tenth, and eleventh books published by ‘Scholastic en Español’ have also been translated by Nuria Molinero for Latin American Spanish speakers in the American market.³

³ Due to the time frame of this dissertation, the last book published in Spanish by ‘Scholastic en Español’ and translated by Nuria Molinero will not be considered in the textual analysis.

Miguel Azaola is a well-known Spanish translator with a wealth of translating experience in the field of children's literature. Furthermore, he is familiar with the process of book production, as he has been editor-in-chief, editorial director and publisher of the children's imprints Altea, Alfaguara and Aguilar (part of the Santillana Group all three) for almost 30 years. He has translated numerous children's texts from English, French, German and Italian into Spanish, including René Goscinny's *Le Petit Nicolas* series, Gianni Rodari's *Filastrocche in Cielo e in Terra*, Maurice Sendak's *In the Night Kitchen*, Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes*, the *Horrid Henry* series, and of course, the *Captain Underpants* series. Miguel Azaola has also been very active in the international field: he was the first Spanish president of IBBY (International Board of Books for Young People) between 1982 and 1986, and has been a member of this prestigious organization for many years. He has also contributed to a number of seminars and conferences in Spain concerning the translation of children's books, as well as being an active promoter of children's reading in Spain, re-founding the Spanish National Section of IBBY (OEPLI) among other activities.

It is important to underline that translators are just one cog in the translation mechanism and their decisions are not always respected. In the case of Miguel Azaola, his views about what children's literature is and how it should be translated do not always tally with those of the publishing house he works for (SM). The highly educational publishing house in charge of the CU series is more concerned about the didactic side of the books at the expense of their humorous content. For instance, some editions have intentional spelling errors that have been corrected, the goal of the publishing house being to sanitize

all the misspellings and to present a series of books that are grammatically correct for children.⁴

Potential pressures from publishers and agencies can have an impact on the translation strategies chosen by translators. After all, norms relating to children's literature, such as issues of appropriateness, suitability and usefulness, reflect the fact that adults are very protective towards childhood and child readers, and are concerned with their choices regarding what to provide child readers with. For publishers, what children read should not be left to chance. As Thomson-Wolgemuth states:

Booksellers and publishers, feeling the pressure from parents, will adapt in order to sell their books; or rather, they will anticipate what it is that parents want and will censor anything that they feel would not meet with parental approval. Authors will adapt to survive in the market and write only "good" books –that is, meaning superficial, sanitized books– avoiding controversial and taboo subjects. What society wants, in the end, are good citizens who function according to society's norms. It will therefore exercise pressure on its citizens, i.e. the people working and bringing up their children, and so the circle closes again. (26)

Álvarez and Vidal argue that behind every one of the translator's choices, as to what to add, what to leave out, which words to choose and how to place them, "there is a voluntary act that reveals his history and the socio-political milieu that surrounds him; in other words, his own culture [and ideology]" (5). Therefore, the ideology of the translator and the ideology of the culture of the target text are always going to be intrinsically related. For instance,

⁴ This, and other examples, will be explained in the following chapters.

there are some noticeable differences in the Spanish translation of the CU series in the way that both translators approach religion and gender.

Dav Pilkey's Captain Underpants series makes just two references to religion. The first takes place in the fourth book when a child character invokes religion by saying "Please God! Make it stop!" with reference to "Cher's Greatest Hits" (CU4, 71). Although Azaola has decided not to include the religious expression this time ("Someone stop this!" when listening to "Julio Iglesias' greatest hits") it is clear that the Spanish translation has a Catholic legacy behind it, for several reasons. Firstly, the Spanish language includes many idiomatic expressions related to religion such as "Vaya por Dios" (Good Lord!) or "Santo Cielo" (Holy heaven). They are heavily used in all the translations; for instance, in the second book of the series, the expression "Vaya por Dios" is used six times. The second reference that the author makes to religion is when Pilkey attributes Harold's creativity to divine intervention: "Then, as if an angel had whispered it into his ear, Harold thought of the perfect thing to say" (CU9, 261). Both Miguel Azaola and Nuria Molinero have translated this statement literally, but Molinero has not included any of the idiomatic expressions in Spanish that make reference to God or religion. This presents a degree of incoherence for the readers of the Spanish CU texts in America: the first eight books translated by Miguel Azaola have them, but all references to religion actually disappear in the last two books published in the USA in Spanish.⁵

Another relevant difference between Azaola and Molinero's translations is the way they introduce gender. Part of the humour presented in the source text is due to the ridicule that the books direct toward women and feminized boys. Therefore these books on the one

⁵ More examples related to religion will be explained in Chapter Six (Section 1), as they deal with the impossibility of translating pictures.

hand challenge social hierarchies and status⁶, but on the other hand they also portray a dominant version of masculinity that places heterosexual males above females and feminized males (Wannamaker, *Bionic* 134). The fact that these books are written with a clear young male audience in mind is by no means an excuse for the constant negative depiction of women and, more specifically, young girls. The two main protagonists are stereotypically masculine in every way, including the way they creatively write and draw silly and absurd comics about male superheroes who fight crime and save the day, sometimes from a villain who is a woman.

One can find many comments online about how these books have helped reluctant readers (mostly boys) to develop an eagerness for reading that they never experienced before. Annette Wannamaker has discussed this issue in her article “‘The Battle of the Bionic Booger Boy,’ Bodily borders, and B.A.D. Boys: Pleasure and Abjection in the *Captain Underpants* Series,” in which she underlines that the popularity of these books can simultaneously perform anxieties about gender identity that boys can have, and then resolve these anxieties in conventional ways that reinforce our perception of gender identity as something that cannot be changed (135). However, this vision of gender is not necessarily shared by the translators of the books, who can enlarge or minimize the negative position of women within the narrative.

For instance, the vocabulary of Azaola’s Spanish version makes constant references to hell, inferno, the devil and diabolical beings, especially in order to define the female antagonists through the whole series. So, Pilkey’s words such as mean, evil, and bad have been translated with a religious connotation as “infernal being,” “diabolical harpy,” etc;

⁶ The way these books challenge social order and established hierarchies will be dealt with in the next chapter in which Bakhtin’s carnival theory will be applied to the CU series.

although this could be explained, again, by the influence of the catholic religion over the Spanish language and its idiomatic expressions. It is very common to refer women in Spain, pejoratively, as witches, demons, etc. However, in the Spanish version translated by Nuria Molinero, all these references disappear.

The second example of how Molinero has tried, if not to eliminate, then at least to tone down the negative portrayal of women, is the way she describes the cheerleaders. Pilkey describes them as “gossipy” (*CU9*, 176), but Molinero omits the Spanish word “cotillas” which has obvious negative connotations. The offensive statement “the wide-eyed group of gossipy girls had been rendered uncharacteristically speechless” (176) becomes, simply, “the girls were strangely speechless.” Later, when the cheerleaders find out about the ghost, Pilkey states, “[t]he girls huddled together in a tight, shivering group as they tiptoed into the school...” (206); however, Molinero chooses to not translate the fact that they were a tight shivering group, and tones down their hysteria by saying: “[t]he girls hugged, shaken, as they tiptoed into the school” (206). Also, on the next page, when the original text reads, “The cheerleaders screamed again,” the female translator has deleted the whole sentence from the text, avoiding the repetition of screams and the depiction of the cheerleaders as hysterical and uncontrollable girls. Molinero has chosen deletion as a translation strategy in order to minimize the pejorative image that Pilkey offers of girls/women. Azaola, on the other hand, has literally translated these sentences, creating the same effect that Pilkey desired in the first place: to show a group of girls who are scared, gossipy, far from brave, and unable to control their screams of terror.

Finally, it is also relevant to consider the differences between the Spanish spoken in Spain and Latin America. Languages are incapable of neutrality, for every word is inextricably bound to the context in which it exists (Farmer xviii). The illusion of a neutral

language is an impossible chimera, but in the case of Spanish, it is even more difficult due to the number of countries who speak it, each with its own cultural features and differences. Spanish is the official language in twentyone countries extended over three continents, with more than 495 million speakers in the world; it is the second most spoken language after Mandarin. It is also the fastest growing language in the world (for demographical reasons), and it is estimated that the United States of America will be, by 2050, the largest Spanish speaking country in the world.⁷

This is a variable that one needs to consider when translating into and from the Spanish language, especially when the text is going to reach several countries. I have already underlined some differences between the Spanish versions by Miguel Azaola and Nuria Molinero. However, these can be seen as ideological differences or even personal choices, but there are some that answer to the features of the Spanish language itself. A remarkable example is the change from “vosotros” (you, plural, informal) in Spanish to “ustedes” (you, plural) in Latin American varieties, changing the ending of all the verbs and possessive adjectives (tu/tus and su/sus). Again, the first eight books published by Scholastic en Español did not include these, as they were translated by the Spanish translator (Azaola), but the last three books have a more natural use of Spanish for the Latin American reader. On the other hand, Nuria Molinero cannot possibly represent in her translation the totality of all Latin American countries’ use of languages. For instance, the word “wedgie” appears several times in the American source text. A wedgie is defined as an uncomfortable tightening of the underpants between the buttocks, typically produced when someone pulls the underpants up from behind as a practical joke. One of the

⁷ For more details about the Spanish language see the ‘Instituto Cervantes’ research: http://eldiae.es/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/2012_el_espanol_en_el_mundo.pdf.

challenges the translation of the CU series into Spanish presents is that a wedgie, as a practical joke, is not performed in Spain. Children do not punish each other by giving “wedgies.” Therefore, there is a clear cultural constraint that must be solved. Azaola has translated the term choosing “calzoncillo chino” (Chinese underwear) which does not make much sense for the Spanish reader. However, Nuria Molinero has chosen the word “jalar,” in the sense of “to pull.” However, if one looks for the word “jalar” (*RAE*) in a dictionary, the results are surprising:

1. Halar (|| tirar de un cabo) --- to pull
2. Tirar (|| hacer fuerza para traer) --- to drag
3. Comer con mucho apetito --- to gorge oneself
4. (Cuba and Honduras) Aspirar con fuerza el humo del cigarro --- to inhale the smoke
5. (Cuba) Emborrachar (|| causar embriaguez) --- to get drunk
6. (Peru) Esnifar --- snort, sniff
7. (Peru) Suspender --- to fail (an exam)
8. (Andalucía and America) Correr o andar muy deprisa --- to run or walk quickly
9. (Central America) Mantener relaciones amorosas --- to keep sexual relationships
10. (Colombia) Realizar el coito --- the act of a sexual intercourse
11. (Honduras) Ingerir bebidas alcohólicas --- to drink alcohol
12. (Honduras) Dirigirse a un lugar --- to go somewhere
13. (Cuba and Mexico) Emborracharse --- to get drunk

All these meanings are not only different but also quite controversial when it comes to children’s literature, mostly for their sexual and narcotic content that many consider to be taboos. Thus, the desire to shield children from some aspects of life may not always be respected in translation. This may be because the translator is unaware of a meaning in another culture, or it may be their conscious choice. As Lathey explains, “[S]ince the translator is writing for an implied child reader living in different cultural and social circumstances from those of the implied reader of the source text, he or she may omit, rewrite or insert passages of text in order to aid the child’s understanding or to follow

trends and adhere to norms in children's publishing in the target culture" (*Practices* 23).

Therefore, translators should keep themselves informed about the trends and controversies in children's reading choices in other cultures (28).

This section has explored the role of the translator and the changes a text may undergo according to his/her ideology, his or her implied reader, and the trends in children's literature in other cultures. However, it is important to underline that these changes do not necessarily tally with the initial idea of the translator. Readers may respond to texts in many different ways; therefore, reader response theory may help translators to understand the potential responses of child readers.

2.5 The implied reader and reader response theory

Stephen Regan, in his article "Reader-Response Criticism and Reception Theory," explains how reader-response criticism and reception theory are principally concerned with the kind of readers that various texts seem to imply, the codes and conventions to which readers refer in making sense of texts, the mental process that occurs as readers move through a text, and the sociological and historical differences that might distinguish one reading response from another (139). However, children's literature possesses some particularities itself that also need to be taken into account.

There are many factors that can affect the child's reception of a text: the degree of reading competence, the reading circumstances, and the reader's relationship with the author, the reader's expectation, the background knowledge or the reader's own experience and associations, besides others (Spink 6-9). After all, before we become readers, we need

to go through several stages of development: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral, spiritual, and those concerning personality and language (29-45).

All these stages are going to shape children's personalities, who they are, and inevitably, how they understand and interpret texts. Children need therefore to develop critical reading strategies if we want to avoid reading becoming another kind of consumerism in which the quality of the texts does not matter. Zipes, for instance, proposes that adults should point out intertextuality wherever it exists in stories, so that young readers can recognize this device and become, with time, hopefully, appreciative of good children's literature (38-39).

The codes and conventions to which readers refer in making sense of text are also debatable points when talking about children's literature. Stanley Fish believes that literature is the activity that the reader performs: the place where meaning occurs is in the reader's mind and not in the space between the covers of a book (in Regan 139). He points out that what leads the reader's responses is a set of 'interpretive strategies,' (shared rules and conventions) which readers internalize and learn to apply in particular situations. This particular situation is affected by language and vocabulary, as each age group and even each generation has a language of its own. In translation, then, when new concepts are expressed in new words, the new text has a new message, with a new purpose and a new meaning.⁸ After all, because language cannot be separated from culture, translation is primarily a cultural transfer rather than a linguistic transcoding (Snell-Hornby 112-13).

Aidan Chambers develops his theory of "the reader in the book" by explaining that style, point of view, expectations and manipulations, and other literary elements help the

⁸ Different translation and reader response scholars have insisted on the idea of the creation of a new text in translation: Fish (*Text* 25-27), Iser (281), Bakhtin (*Dialogic* 290).

critic (and it may be added, the translator) to identify the kind of reader the text seeks (55). Chambers believes all children's texts have an implied reader. His idea of the implied reader evolved from the understanding that authors create relationships with readers in order to discover the meanings of the text. Distinguishing the implied reader from the actual reader, Iser believes that the implied reader is a creation of the text because it coaxes the reader through response-inviting structures he calls "gaps" (Ballard 8). Both Iser and Chambers see texts as dynamic and in constant change because the reader is invited to interpret them. However, texts are purposefully written with 'gaps' such as cultural references or intertextuality, which will produce different responses from different readers, because not all children will fill in the gaps in the same way, instead working from their own experience (Ballard 9).

This notion is close to what Stanley Fish says about interpretation - the idea that we all belong to an interpretive community in which we share "interpretive strategies" (331-32) that we, as readers, internalize and learn to apply in particular situations. These situations are affected by language and vocabulary, as each group and even each generation has a language, a discursive affiliation, of their own. We employ different discourses according to who we are: Miguel Azaola, as a man, translator, Spanish, reader, fan of certain authors, etc. will employ different discourses and strategies when translating for children. For instance, the translator, who rejects the idea of the dual addressee in this series, has completely eliminated the winks - in the form of intertextuality and use of humour - that Pilkey creates for the adult reader. Thus, some "indeterminacies and gaps"

created by the author to be decoded by the adult reader have been eliminated from the target text.⁹

Roland Barthes, in his article “The Death of the Author,” explains how the reader is actively involved in the construction of meaning: the author does not control how the meaning is produced the moment a text is read. Once a text is read by readers who interpret it in different ways, the author (as a producer of meaning) is effectively dead. If Barthes’ ideas are applied to Emer O’Sullivan’s model of narratology, then one might say that the translator is powerless to control how the meaning is constructed by its readers: only the readers of the target texts can construct meaning, regardless of what the translator has done. However, it is naïve to believe that the decisions adopted by a translator are not going to affect how the readers react to and understand the target text.

The best example to prove this point is an empirical study about the reception of translations in children’s literature developed in 2008 in Spain. Elvira Cámara developed a study with 128 primary school children which analysed the reception of three different translations of the same text, *Horrid Henry’s Nits* (*Pablo Diablo y Los Piojos*, in Spanish). This book has been published by the same publishing house (SM) as the CU series, and the translator of this series is also Miguel Azaola. Therefore, the conclusions reached in this study can be applied to the Captain Underpants books to an extent, bearing in mind that the target readers, the publishing house and the translator are the same.¹⁰

⁹ Several examples will be explained in the following chapters.

¹⁰ Although it should be noted that one study is not enough to consider it indicative from a statistical point of view, it is true that the complete lack of empirical studies in the field of translation of children’s literature in Spain makes this study the only indication we have of any general tendencies.

In the study, three different texts were offered to the children: Azaola's official translation (which is defined as mixed), a foreignized version and a domesticated version. It is important to note that illustrations were also modified to suit the translations. Later, two questionnaires were developed: one about reading comprehension and one about memory and motivation. The conclusions reached by the study are quite revealing, but rather expected: the ability to remember the names of the characters and the plot of the book is intrinsically related to the ability to understand and remember the different concepts and names (Cámara). When children were asked about the texts, the majority remembered data from the domesticated text, followed by the mixed text, and in the last position and quite far away from the others, the foreignizing text. Therefore, the hypothesis set by the author is verified: reading texts in which proper names have been translated favours the memory and identification of characters and places. The second hypothesis, reading translated texts with unknown cultural references hinders the general understanding and memory in young children, is also proven right in the study where a vast majority of children that have read the three versions of the text (domesticated, foreignized, and mixed) locate the story in Spain, and a big part of those who haven't, they wish the story took place there. After all, as Nida claims, domestication is a translation strategy that is based on an adherence to domestic literary canons, and produces translations that "relate the receptor to modes of behaviour relevant within the context of his own culture" (*Science* 159). Others believe, like Oittinen, that the child reader "may very well be unwilling to read the translated text finding it too strange... In the end, all translating for children inevitably becomes an activity 'guilty' of textual domestication" (*Innocent* 37), suggesting that translators of children's literature should reach out to the children of their own culture.

2.6 Conclusion

Regardless of the impact made on the target text, a translation is nothing more than a response to the original text facilitated by the translator. Heavy interventions in translations for children are usually justified on the grounds of the intended child reader (e.g. to facilitate understanding, eliminate allusions that would not be understood, etc.).

Domestication and adaptation have been judged as necessary (Bell, Klingberg) to meet educational needs. However, looking at a translation in terms of dialogue between all its participants is more relevant than judging the target texts in terms of gains or losses. When a text is translated, it is made accessible not only to more people but also to different cultures and different traditions of children's literature, evoking more responses from its readers and, ultimately, making the text come alive. It is in this way that the text is continually given different and various meanings, more dimensions, more understandings. Thus, a dialogical approach to translation would acknowledge the work of the translators not only as visible, but also as another participant in the evolving process that any translation implies.

The role of the translator as a reader, writer and interpreter of a text should never be overlooked. It is probably the best way to show respect to the readers of translation, and to raise the value of translations (Oittinen, *Translating* 97). Adults, as readers, often prefer to appeal to texts rather than appealing to themselves as readers, freeing themselves from the responsibility of interpreting the text. As Stanley Fish explains, human beings have "... the desire to be relieved of the burden of interpretation," and are afraid of "being left alone with the self-renewing and unquantifiable power of human signifying" (86), as it is easier to remain passive readers. It is because of this fear of interpreting that translations are

commonly judged in terms of equivalence and faithfulness, and linguistic analysis is focused on finding ‘mistakes’ instead of allowing the translator to interpret the text and re-create it. Therefore, it is important to go beyond the static boundaries of who is responsible for the meaning of text (be it the author, the translator, the publishing house, the buying parent, etc.) and move towards the idea of shared responsibility in terms of the socio-cultural benefits of translation. Also, teaching children to do what critics do (i.e. read critically) will provide them with enough analytical skills to face a translated text with an awareness of its limitations.

Therefore, in the following chapters, instead of looking at the translation of the CU series into Spanish in terms primarily of losses or gains, I plan to identify the changes that the series has undergone and, from a dialogical perspective, try to explain them. In order to do so I will look closely to the concept of carnival and the subversive content in the books, humour and its implications, food and its features, and finally, the relationship between pictures, text, and paratextual elements and the impact they have on the perception of the books as a cultural artefact.

Chapter Three

Subversiveness in the Captain Underpants Series

This chapter analyses the CU series from a Bakhtinian perspective with a special emphasis on ‘carnival’ to demonstrate the extent to which these books can be considered subversive. In the first section, I will discuss Bakhtin’s literary work *Rabelais and His World* (*RHW*) with a view to applying the theories presented there to the CU books. The theory of folk humour (the carnivalesque) developed by Mikhail Bakhtin in this book describes a time of collapse and the overturning of conventional boundaries and norms of the world. The fictional world that Pilkey has created introduces children to a world of exchange and revelry, a licensed landscape for children to challenge adults’ ideals. Thus, the subversive and revolutionary carnival spirit displayed by the clash between official and unofficial culture described by Bakhtin resonates strongly with the ethos evoked in the CU series.

Section 3.2 focuses on carnival. At the core of carnival imagery is what Bakhtin defines as the three elements of laughter: “universalism, freedom, and ... [their] relation to the people’s unofficial truth” (*RHW* 90). Mikhail Bakhtin’s carnival theory has occasionally been mentioned before in critical interpretations of the series but only in reference to particular aspects of the book.¹ However, the theory has never been systematically applied to the plot, characters, and use of language, nor used for an interpretation of the translation of this series into another language. Therefore, the focus of the following sections is to

¹ Roderick McGillis focuses on these books as cultural products (2010), Annette Wannamaker studies their use of food and its meaning (2009), and Jackie Stallcup discusses the use of satire throughout the series (2008).

develop an analysis of carnivalesque features of the CU books and their subversive content, such as the inversion of hierarchies (Section 3.3), the material lower stratum (Section 3.4), and grotesque realism and the grotesque body (Section 3.5). However, Spain and America do not necessarily share the same attitudes towards subversive texts and carnivalesque features. Throughout this chapter I identify differences between the two cultures and, at the same time, I highlight some points that may be challenging in translation. These will be dealt with more fully later in the thesis, in Chapters Four, Five and Six, where a close textual analysis is presented in terms of language and visual content.

3.1 Introduction

Mikhail Bakhtin developed his theory of carnival in *Rabelais and his World* (published in 1968 but based on his doctoral dissertation written in the 1930s) and in one of his chapters on the topic in the second edition of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. The main issue about Bakhtin's carnival theory is, as Babette Puetz states, that it seems at times incoherent and contradictory towards itself; "when speaking about 'carnival', Bakhtin sometimes seems to refer to the anthropological phenomenon, sometimes to the metaphorical-literal phenomenon" (41). Both approaches will be considered in this chapter, but first of all, a brief discussion of the origin and significance of the concept of 'carnival' is in order.

"Carnavalesque" is a term developed by Bakhtin in order to analyse the writing of the sixteenth century French novelist François Rabelais, whom he believed was underrated in his time: "Of all the great writers of world literature, Rabelais is the least popular, the least understood and appreciated" (*RHW* 1). Bakhtin studied Rabelais's most famous literary work: the comic novel *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. This book is filled with vulgar

humour and grotesque exaggerations of bodily images. The terms that Bakhtin uses to analyse this work have become very influential over time, so much so that it is very common for children's scholars to employ his terms when they are talking about children's literature.²

It is not possible to offer a fixed definition of Bakhtin's theory. There are, however, some elements that are repeatedly emphasized, such as the carnivalesque, the effects of laughter on society, the grotesque body, and the interaction between what is imposed from above and a desire to change from below, between old and new, official and unofficial (prologue, *RHW* xvi). Deborah Thacker, for instance, argues that some works of children's literature are ideal examples of Bakhtin's observations: "The parodic features of his notion of the carnivalesque and its roots in 'low' culture, bodily functions, and notions of the 'Other,' continually challenging notions of bourgeois social conformity, resemble and include those child-like uses of language that repeatedly test the authority of imposed structures of meaning" (10). All these Bakhtinian elements are found in the CU series. Specifically, I am going to focus on the carnival, the inversion of hierarchies, and grotesque realism and its relation to the human body and the bodily lower stratum.

It is important to note that the relationship between children's literature criticism and Bakhtin is not new. There have always been many examples of carnivalesque imagery in children's literature (such as dressing up, laughter, role play and role reversal, things that are dirty, emphasis on the lower half of the body, degradation, etc.) due to the rebellious

² There are many examples of children's literature critics who have employed Bakhtin's terms in their research: John Stephens' book *Language and Ideology in Children's Literature*, Kerry Mallan's article "Children's Storytelling as Carnavalesque Play," and more recently Jordana Hall's article "Embracing the Abject Other: The Carnival Imagery of Harry Potter." There are just a few examples of the many possibilities for linking Bakhtin's theories with children's literature.

nature of these texts. Children test boundaries, both social and physical, in order to subvert them. Therefore, the mischievous and playful spirit of the carnival is reflected in the texts by mocking authority, subverting power relationships, and emphasizing the physical side of the body in order, ultimately, to create a new world which children can rule. In a certain way, carnivalesque imagery enables children to establish a dialogue with the text through which to question the societal norms that have been learnt in school and at home. However, this new world is temporary, as is the carnival itself and the questioning of the norms, and the "natural" order of society will be eventually restored and, in a way, reassuringly reaffirmed.

Many examples of carnivalesque texts can be found in children's literature, although there is no one single piece of fiction that will fulfil all the carnival imageries together. Some texts are centred on the physical side of the body and the different bodily functions: Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002), for instance; or the innumerable titles that are focused on scatological content such as *Walter the Farting Dog* (2001), *Fartiste* (2008), some of which are even in the form of poetry, such as *The Gas We Pass: The Story of Farts* (1994).³ Other texts portray the grotesqueness of the body and its visual representation; Roald Dahl's *The Witches* (1983) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), together with Quentin Blake's illustrations, are perfect examples. Or there are even more alternative, and arguable, approaches, such as the Harry Potter series' subversion of social status and portrayal of class struggle (Hall).

³ Sarah Boelsvel explains the rise of scatological children's texts in her article "Oh, The Humanities!: The Poop on the Kids' Book Debate," in which she exposes the idea that many librarians in North America "strongly defended" the place of scatologically themed books in the public library system as a tool for children to identify taboos in society, to have a better recognition and understanding of their own body, and ultimately, to have access to books they enjoy.

Another link between the carnival and laughter and children's literature is that both have been considered "low genres" from a scholarly and publishers' point of view. Bakhtin states how carnival belongs "to the low genres, showing the life of private individuals and the inferior social level" (*RHW* 7). In a way, so does the CU series, constantly acclaimed for its humorous tone but never for its literary value; after all, children's culture is unofficial and with no authority in itself (Oittinen, *Translating* 54).

Regardless of whether these authors wrote in the fifteenth, twentieth and well into the twenty first century, time shows that literary texts have always faced the censors of their age. During the Middle Ages, the church played a strong role in terms of censorship. Spain also has a very recent history of censorship, mainly for political reasons.⁴ In the case of Pilkey and children's literature, adults decide in most cases what their children may read, and Dav Pilkey's children's books were once again top of the American Library Association 'challenged books list' in 2012 and 2013 for their offensive language and for being unsuitable for its age group, after being absent for six years.

Bakhtin sees Rabelais as a writer who "cannot be approached along the wide beaten roads followed by the bourgeois Europe's literary creation and ideology during the four hundred years separating him from us" (*RHW* 3). He stresses the key role that Rabelais' work played in the exploration and analysis of folk humour (3-4). According to Bakhtin, folk humour is:

A boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture. In spite of their variety, folk festivities of the carnival type, the comic rites and cults, the clowns and fools,

⁴ See Chapter One.

giants, dwarfs, and jugglers, the vast and manifold literature of parody - all these forms have one style in common: they belong to one culture of folk carnival humour. (*RHW* 4)

These features of folk humour can be seen in the CU series. However, Spain and America do not always share the same attitudes towards carnival and this is reflected in their tradition of canivalesque/scatological literature and the translation of some works, especially in children's literature.

3.2 Carnival

The New Oxford Dictionary describes carnival as “an annual festival, typically during the week before Lent in Roman Catholic countries, involving processions, music, dancing, and the use of masquerade” (OED). There are many famous carnivals around the world: Notting Hill Carnival in London, the Brazilian carnivals, or the Mexican Day of the Dead. Spain has two internationally recognised carnivals: ‘El Carnaval de Santa Cruz de Tenerife’ (Canary Islands) and ‘El Carnaval de Cádiz’ (Andalusia); this means that the Spanish people are well aware of the implications of the phenomenon. The traditions of carnival are still strong in Spain, although this celebration has faded away in many areas of the Iberian peninsula owing either to the forces of modernization or to government repression (Gilmore 12).⁵

The origin of the word dates back to the mid-16th century, and comes “from Italian *carnevale*, *carnovale*, from medieval Latin *carnelevamen*, *carnelevarium* 'Shrovetide', from

⁵ Francisco Franco, for instance, banned carnival in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War.

Latin *caro, carn-* ‘flesh’ + *levare* ‘put away’” (OED); as its etymology indicates, some sort of change or removal in the calendar was celebrated. It was during Lent that Roman Catholics gave up meat as a form of penance, and once it was over, they returned to their normal diet after celebrating Easter Sunday. However, more modern notions of carnivals not related to religion accept people celebrating in the streets: dancing, drinking, eating, etc. Work is temporarily suspended or delayed, and the whole city and society submerges itself into the carnival spirit; but eventually, normality returns.

Bakhtin connects the ‘carnavalesque’ with both the historical event of the carnival and its literary parallel, what Sue Vice calls “the carnivalization of literature” (150). In her book *Introducing Bakhtin*, she sees Bakhtin’s discussion of Carnival “as an element of popular history that has become textualized” (149) and defines it thus:

Carnival is, as Julia Kristeva puts it, ‘a signifier, but also a signified’: it can be the subject or the means of representation in a text, or both. The carnivalesque may be detected in textual images, plot, or language itself. As carnival ‘is a spectacle, but without a stage’, in which the participant is ‘both actor and spectator’, its textualization is not a straightforward matter, because the change of form at once introduces the equivalent of a stage, and a sharp distinction between actor (character and narrator) and spectator (reader). (149)

Following this definition, an aim in this chapter is to verify that the carnivalesque may indeed be found in the textual images, plot and language of the CU series, using several examples.⁶ I will also develop the idea of the reader as both actor and spectator, especially

⁶ However, the use of pictures and images - their humorous and subversive content and their challenges for translation - will be dealt with in Chapter Six.

since the child reader is constantly invited to participate in the text and asked to be co-author of it, a feature that can be seen as carnivalesque as well.

During carnival, this blurring of the comic and the serious is played by the clown or the fool who acts as 'hero', mocking and challenging authority figures and structures and 'acceptable' modes of behaviour (Mallan 115). Captain Underpants himself, the character, is the perfect example. He is the 'hero' who comes and saves the day, but he is also a puppet in the hands of Harold and George. He is not intelligent; he does not design any master plan to help or save the world. On the contrary, he is rather stupid. He cannot see the difference between a race and running to escape from danger (*CU10*), and he is completely unaware of the conventions of living in society. For instance, George and Harold need to cover him up with a barrel after he has used his underwear as a weapon to save the world (*CU1*). For Captain Underpants, nudity is acceptable. All this becomes more relevant if we add that Captain Underpants is the alter ego of Mr. Krupp, the principal of the school and an authority figure who should reinforce the morals and values of a society, not transgress them. He should be encouraging people to wear appropriate clothes; instead, he has to be reminded to wear them at all.

The character of Captain Underpants is also voiceless in terms of taking decisions. He is just a goofy clown with a heroic smile, dressed in underwear and with a red polka dot curtain around his neck. He is easily tricked into doing what the children want him to do:

- "Cool!" said Cheesball. "But from now on you have to call yourself 'Buttercup Chickenfanny.' The guy in the gerbil suit says so!"
- "Hey," said Captain Underpants, "I don't take orders from ANYBODY!"

- “Great,” said Fluffy. “Now fly out that window and bring back that big machine thingy with the Lava Lamp on top.”

- “Yes, SIR,” said Captain Underpants. (CU4, 96)

In all the books, Captain Underpants is completely dominated by George and Harold. He does not question their decisions, but simply complies with them: “... ‘You go back to the school, put some clothes on, then wash your face’ ... ‘O.K.,’ said Captain Underpants. So Captain Underpants did as he was told” (CU5, 164-65). Therefore, the more carnivalesque the attitude of the boys is, the more uncarnavalesque Captain Underpants becomes; he is not rebellious, he just simply assumes his role. The same social boundaries that are questioned by the two boys are always reinforced by Mr. Krupp but never by Captain Underpants, who always agrees with them.

Nonetheless, the natural order of the world is always restored at the end of each book; every novel ends as stable as it was in the beginning. In this sense Captain Underpants books are not *Bildungsromane*; there is no physiological or moral growth in the characters. Harold and George never learn lessons, not because they are unable to, but mostly because they are not interested in changing themselves, or social order that surrounds them. They need to go to school and they need to face their parents at the end of the day if they have been expelled. So they use humour to defuse a situation that, they assume, they cannot change.

Carnival as a time for change is reflected in the novels in both text and pictures. It is when Mr. Krupp, the principal teacher, is hypnotized that the real carnival starts. The realistic fictional world of George and Harold does not possess any carnivalesque characteristics by itself. They challenge authority, but never conquer it. They are always

ultimately punished for their behaviour: institutionally by their principal, and socially by the other children who get mad, dirty, hurt, or humiliated because of their pranks. However, it is when they create a comic, or when Mr. Krupp transforms into Captain Underpants, that they become more powerful than the adults, overturning the structures of the adult (fictional) world. That's when the carnival proper begins. This carnival has the potential to challenge the status quo of a certain society by playfully turning hierarchies upside down in such a way that the borders between high and low, adult and child, and author and reader are tested (Wannamaker, *Inedible* 247). It is precisely this last boundary between the creator of a text and the reader that is most clearly blurred throughout the whole series.

The roles of writer and readers are confused and interchanged in the whole series. George and Harold are not only characters, but also authors of their own comic book, "The Adventures of Captain Underpants." The text within the text is used as a narrative device that acts not only as a summarizing tool at the beginning of each book, but also as a catalyst to the plot. For instance, it is because Professor Pippy Poopypants finds the comic "Captain Underpants and the Pied Pooper of Piqua" lying around in the hallway and reads it that he "hit rock bottom, and he decided to take the rest of the planet down with him" (*CU4*, 74). Thus, the readers' status is positively affected when they enter in a dialogical relationship with the text, where they can participate and become, up to a certain point, co-authors of the text. In the same way that George and Harold are authors and readers, readers of the series can take on similar roles. All this authoritative ownership of the text can be expanded with access to Internet games and other electronic devices on the Scholastic website.⁷

Harold and George see in authorship an authoritative tool not only to fulfil their desire to mock their principal, but also the key to becoming heroes, fighting for the truth,

⁷ See Chapter Six.

and ultimately for the achievement of power. This is exactly what happens when their fictional plots come to life, when they really need to fight to defend humankind from monsters, crazy geniuses with silly names, aliens, giant rats, and all kinds of villains. Pilkey's use of metafiction, the book within the book, turns the hierarchies upside-down, but also maintains them. All the plots are cyclical in the sense that the boys are fighting for and against adult control. The thing they disdain the most is what they risk their lives for. The boundaries between reader and writer are blurred, and Pilkey constantly plays with that ambiguity in the whole CU series.

Creative writing and reading are therefore central themes of the novels. The boys not only create their own comics for fun, but they also use them to change the course of the action, to alter the plot in their favour. In the fifth novel, when they need to make Captain Underpants fly again, they run out of choices until George says: "We've got to make another comic book... it is our only hope. The fate of the entire planet is in our hands!" (*CU5*, 122-23). Of course, the comic plan works and Captain Underpants believes once more that he can fly.

They also draw pictures and comics as they are needed, as if creative writing was a way of solving the problems they have created. In that sense, Harold and George are tricksters, who defy the natural rules of reality and fiction alike. As Smith argues, "the writer as trickster blurs the boundaries... between the real and the fantastic, and even between story and audience" (qtd. in Puetz 47). For instance, in the tenth novel, George and Harold find themselves in a situation where they need to communicate and teach a number of cavemen how to act and behave in front of Tippy Tinkletrousers, a recurrent villain who plots to take over the world. The primitive people do not have any language skills to communicate and are scared: "they grunted nervously and lowered their heads in fear and

submission” (*CU10*, 100); so George’s idea is to teach them through a wordless comic: “They will understand that!” (100). George’s plan is of course successful and not only do the cavemen “read” the comic, but they also stop being afraid of Tippy and his Robo-Troussers, and ultimately are “inspired”: “... the cavepeople grabbed their own charred sticks from the fire and began drawing out elaborate plans... they all understood comics and they all knew what needed to be done” (127).

By stating “they all understood comics” Pilkey is implying that comics are, in a way, didactic tools that need to be comprehended and understood.⁸ Inevitably, these pages in the book show a very didactic approach to children’s literature: cavemen can be taught how to behave by offering them the correct text. Thus, the same didacticism that Pilkey rejects in many of his previous books in the series is used in this novel. George and Harold are not drawing the comic for the cavemen’s pleasure and entertainment; they are doing it because they need something from them, i.e. they need to change their behaviour in order to help them to defeat the villain of the story. In short, they need them to do what they want them to do.

By presenting themselves as heroes in the comics painted on the wall of the caves, they also gain an empowered position towards the ignorant and illiterate cavemen, who are infantilized by the two main child characters. By doing so, not only do they use humour and pictures to teach them, but they also treat them as children who “laugh, enjoy and learn throughout reading and experiencing heroes’ problematic situations with less stress and more joy, learning in such ways to face their own worries with less stress, anxiety and fear” (*Xeni, Childhood*). Cavemen are in a way offered a problem-solving novel, a manual of

⁸ In Chapter Six I develop an analysis of the comics in the CU series and the challenges they bring to translation, not only in terms of language but also of the relationship between text and pictures.

how to achieve knowledge and happiness through the act of reading. Carnavalesque texts are after all written and produced by adults and, as has been shown, can hide didactic and educational purposes very well.

As mentioned above, these themes (creative writing and reading) connect the different parts of the series. In several books, the reference to previous plots or characters within the CU series is a literary resource employed to remind the reader of a certain plot or a specific characteristic of an object. All the books actually begin with a comic to help the reader to remember the plot of previous books. Pilkey shows writing within a piece of writing. As Puetz explains in relation to another novel, the class mixture of writing styles achieved through this literary technique is typical of carnivalesque writing.⁹ It can arguably be said to typify Pilkey's writing style, which is direct and quite complex in terms of vocabulary and sophisticated sentence construction and humour. He also constantly employs cultural references. Throughout the whole series Pilkey becomes, as a narrator, more and more direct towards the child reader assuming the third person omniscient voice, a literary device that he uses more heavily in the last three books of the series. He talks directly to the child reader, but he always employs his position as narrator to distance himself from the rest of the adults. In fact, he mentions other adults, calling them "adults" or "they," but never refers to himself as an adult, nor as a child. Dav Pilkey, as narrator, is ageless. On the other hand, George and Harold's writing style is much less developed,

⁹ Babette Puetz explains how the concept of carnival and carnival theory are presented in Margaret Mahy's novel *The Tricksters*. She concludes her essay stating that the inversion of hierarchies and the power play between the Carnival brothers (note that the last name of the brothers, Carnival, is given with an intention and is by no means a coincidence) has a positive and affirmative effect, rather than a disruptive one.

filled with grammatical mistakes, misspellings and onomatopoeias.¹⁰ They are careless (in terms of writing adequacy) and are more preoccupied with the content of the text, never its form. They are characters and writers who are at the same time also readers of their own texts.

The blurred roles of writer and reader are, thus, central to Pilkey's novels. This strong carnivalesque element helps to emphasize the blurring of the boundaries of fantasy and reality by exposing the artificial constructed nature of the narrative. In many books, the reader is encouraged to participate in the action via the text and the chaotic images. Dav Pilkey combines text and illustrations to disrupt the traditional barriers between the fictional and the real world. He even uses adults' conventional rules of appropriateness to address the child reader directly: "WARNING: The Following chapter contains scenes that are so violent and naughty, you aren't allowed to view them" (*CU5*, 137) only to punish him or her a page later: "Hey, what are you doing here? You're not supposed to be looking at this chapter – it is too violent and naughty!... Now bend over and give yourself eleven spankings and a time-out before proceeding to the next page. Maybe you'll learn to follow instructions" (138). The fact that these words are said by two policemen who are hanging from road signs by their underwear is comical and very revealing: the orders are given by the police, the social and legal authority in our time, but at the same time they are presented in a demeaning, powerless position, losing all their authority.

3.3 Inversion of hierarchies

¹⁰ The translation of all these aspects will be dealt with in the following chapters, where a textual analysis of the CU series is developed in terms of humour (Chapter Four), food (Chapter Five), and visual content (Chapter Six).

It has been mentioned how during the carnival, the whole world is turned upside-down for a short period of time. During the medieval carnival, normal social order (social class hierarchies, gender relations and social values) were disrupted and inverted in a hilarious riot of liberating freedom. As Bakhtin describes it, “[C]arnival spirit offers liberation from all that is humdrum and universally accepted” (*RHW* 34). The carnivalesque is therefore in contemporary equivalence a licensed time of anarchy for the child reader. All the books of the series have some carnival features. The world is turned upside-down; adults become slaves, and children become the masters; and rules and logic do not hold in the fictional world that Dav Pilkey has created. The carnivalesque is hence about power and authority, and the questioning of the boundaries that divide them. Within these terms, Stephens establishes in his book *Language and Ideology in Children’s Literature* the link between the carnival and children’s literature:

Carnival in children’s literature is grounded in playfulness which situates itself in positions of non-conformity. It expresses opposition to authoritarianism and seriousness, and is often manifested as parody of prevailing literary forms and genres, or as literature in non-canonical forms... [Hence] playful and to some extent taboo language is used to disclose ways in which adult incompetence masks itself as adult authority, and more generally to construct subject positions in opposition to society’s official structures of authority. (121-22)

Stephens states that there are texts that interrogate the normal subject positions created for children within socially dominant ideological frames which can be seen as “carnivalesque texts.” These texts interrogate the established sociocultural values and react towards them

in different ways. According to John Stephens, these texts interrogate the official culture in three different ways described by Mikhail Bakhtin in 1968: 'time out,' gentle mockery, and subversion against social authority (parents, teachers, principal, priests, etc.). Captain Underpants can work as any of these types of text.

This ability to question established norms and culture is the reason why critics such as Stephens and Nikolajeva have defined carnival fiction as a form of interrogative text that challenges official culture through carnival motifs and imagery consistent with Bakhtin's theories. Maria Nikolajeva explains that one way of interrogating the social order is by offering children a time-out. In fiction, when the child is placed in extraordinary situations such as war, or a fantastic setting that requires a temporary dislocation of the child's parental or guardian protection, it is referred to as 'time-out.' In a way, this time-out works as a removal from traditional power structures, most commonly between the parent and the child, indicative of the carnival season when normal hierarchies of church and state (and school may be added to the list) authority over the peasant class were temporarily suspended. This time-out empowers the child "by reversing the existing order [and elevating] the fictional child to a position superior to adults" (*Aesthetic* 89). In the case of the CU series, not only are children superior to adults but they are also in control of the adults' actions. The character of Captain Underpants is under the effects of hypnosis, making him a puppet in the hands of the children. 'Time-out' is mostly clearly represented by the Principal of Jerome Horwitz Elementary School, Mr. Krupp. In these stories, Mr. Krupp is the one who 'runs away' from the social conventions and habitual constraints of society and eventually escapes from them. At the end of each book he always comes back to social normality (he ends up as Mr. Krupp, an elementary school principal) but during his adventures, he escapes from all social conventions and he even challenges authority.

When the story comes to an end, Captain Underpants returns to his normal self after someone has poured a glass of water over his head. Even though all the books finish with an open ending (someone accidentally snapping his/her fingers and Mr. Krupp becomes Captain Underpants while flying out of the window while shouting his battle cry “TRA-LA-LAAAAA,”) the social order has always been established first. The villain rests in jail or is dead, and the teachers enjoy once again control over their students. There is no space for a change, not even for questioning the established order. This time-out is, in short, a temporary removal of power structures, and in most cases it serves to reify the social system it initially subverts, since the carnivalesque demands that the child returns to the relative safety of the parent figure, or in this case, the school system, with the “inevitable reestablishment of the order” (Hall 89).

Gentle mockery, the second way texts interrogate the culture according to Bakhtin, dismantles socially received ideas and replaces them with their opposite (Stephens 121). The sign “Pick your own Roses” (an activity approved by society) becomes “Pick our noses” (an activity we encourage children not to do from the time they are toddlers). George and Harold make fun of absolutely everything, including American society and its conventions. From the very first book of the series, they mock cheerleaders, the football team, and the music band; in other words, all the stereotypes of the successful American teenager. Also mocked are adults, mostly represented by the school’s staff: teachers, maintenance staff, cooks, etc. No adult is safe from mockery and humiliation in the Captain Underpants series. Signs, for instance, are changed in order to laugh at teachers, so that “Have a blissfully grand retirement Ms. Ribble” (*CU5*, 39) becomes “Ms. Ribble really needs a breath mint” (40). Mockery is, in short, an important feature of this collection.

Abusive language or insulting expressions are not necessary in order to mock, although scatological terms become more and more frequent in the later books of the series.¹¹

Of the three ways that Stephens underlines as modes of interrogation in relation to carnival, Captain Underpants can be read mostly as a subversive text. The Captain Underpants books portray the eternal power struggle between adults and children. Mr. Krupp abuses his power and punishes the boys by giving them extra work to do at his home. In response, the children punish Mr. Krupp in the only possible way children can: they turn to fantasy, first in the comics and then by hypnotizing him. Also, they protest and rebel against the inequality of power through their behaviour: their table manners, school-obedience, personal hygiene and tidiness are modified in order to revolt against adult domination, incarnated, most of the time, in their teachers.

The figure of the hero can also interrogate social orders and systems: “the hero of an interrogative text is sometimes a clown or a fool, and as such may function to render problematic common social assumptions and presuppositions by blurring the borders between the serious and the comic, and between the reality that is and the ideality which is constructed” (Stephens 122). This spirit of the carnival, in which the dominant discourses of authorities are disrupted, the fool acts like a hero, and acceptable modes of behaviour are subverted, is present in many children’s books and films. For instance, the *Look Who is Talking* and *Home Alone* films show the twisting of child and adult power, control, competence and responsibility. Captain Underpants is an example of this hero who lives between fantasy and reality and portrays two sides of the same coin: he can reinforce social norms and good behaviour (as Mr. Krupp), or he can run away to defend ideals and to fight

¹¹ The use of humour in the whole series and its translation will be analyzed in the next chapter, especially in terms of irony, satire, and parody, and humour’s relation to expressive language.

talking toilets (as Captain Underpants). He is both powerful and powerless. In the same way, George and Harold are representations of the good versus bad child, good versus bad behaviour, or self versus other. In fact, the two main characters create their own representations (their 'Superegos') in the comics they draw. It is a representation of both self and other, and the struggle between them.

At this point it is important to underline how parenthood is not represented as one of the ruling powers over the children. Very little information is provided, for example, about George and Harold's parents. It is not until the 9th book, *Captain Underpants and the Terrifying Re-Turn of Tippy Tinkletrousers*, that readers find out about George's family background, the divorce of his parents, and how he struggles to make new friends while being bullied at school. The whole book is a retrospective of George and Harold's elementary school times. The reader can find in this, and other books, parents who are quite detached from their children. They do not act against the obvious school-bullying situation, they do not care about what their children are doing, they do not even ask questions when they collect random objects from their homes for "school" or receive parcels in the post. What is more important, the children seem to be economically independent. They seem to naturally have enough money to pay for the resources they may need, some of them being quite expensive, without anyone questioning the way they spend it or where it comes from. Therefore, it can be argued that parents do not exert any authority or control over their children in this series; teachers and the police are seen as controlling elements, but never the parents.

It can be said that the school system in this series is what church and state were in Rabelais's world: the dominant social institutions of a given time. Louis Althusser explained this same idea in 1969 in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

in relation to the workforce and the reproduction of labour power. According to Althusser, children at school learn not only the rules of good behaviour (i.e. rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by the dominant class), but also to “order the workers properly” (132). The acceptance of these rules will also facilitate the submission to the established order, and will provide them with “the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class ‘in words’” (132-33). In short, the schooling system and other state institutions like the church or other apparatuses like the Army not only seek to pass on “‘know-how’” (133) but also to ensure “subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its ‘practice’” (133). The CU series shows a very similar situation in that Mr. Krupp’s rules (the personification of the school as an institution) should be accepted and followed without being questioned.

Therefore, it is when children defy these institutions that they enter into a carnival stage, where uncontrolled freedom leads to laughter and its dissident and universal effects. Children are temporarily freed and detached from the ideological pressures of the ruling class and enter into an alternative world where liberation is possible. Pilkey has stated in numerous interviews how his characters are based partly on teachers and principals he had when he was in primary and middle school, some of whom were mean and villainous but got away with it simply because they were authority figures. Children spend many years at school now and this is where most of this knowledge is going to be learnt; as Althusser argues, the “[S]chool-Family couple has replaced the Church-Family couple” (154), and they will be receiving the ideology “which suits the role it has to fulfil in class society” (155). Pilkey, by questioning the authority of teachers, is also questioning the ideology

taught in these centres, and inherently inviting children to rebel against it. Pilkey is showing that interrogating authority is not only possible but also positive, and can eventually lead to freedom, for at least as long as the carnival lasts. It is, in other words, a way of letting off dangerous steam and thus maintaining the status quo.

Precisely for this same reason, the police (another social “apparatus”) are constantly humiliated in Pilkey’s fictional world. Not only are they portrayed as useless and unable to help when they are needed, but they are also shown as naïve and lazy. The sign hung by the police station that reads “[B]e back in 10 minutes, do not commit any crime” (*CUI*, 109) shows a complete lack of awareness of the real world from the police point of view. Pilkey states that not all types of authority should necessarily be challenged or criticised, but they should at least be questioned. This is the ultimate goal of these books: to make children react and think about authority and how it exerts its power: “I don’t see these books as encouraging disrespect for authority. Perhaps they demonstrate the value of questioning authority... Some authority figures in the Captain Underpants books are villains. They are bullies and they do vicious things” (Pilkey, *The Guardian*). If this were not enough, Pilkey takes the liberty of rewarding children for actually disobeying the orders given by the police, and in the last page of the book he lets George and Harold address the reader directly: “We’re sorry! If you didn’t follow the instructions on page 137 and had to punish yourself, please send a self-addressed, stamped business-sized envelope to ... We’ll send you something fun” (*CU5*, 176).

In this carnival spirit, both revolutionary and subversive, the reader can find a clash between official and unofficial folk culture, which is even more relevant in children’s literature where there is always a clash between the official culture of adults and the unofficial subculture of the children for whom the books are written. Pilkey explains this

struggle himself in the second chapter of his tenth book, *Captain Underpants and the Revolting Revenge of the Radioactive Robo-Boxers* (CU10), entitled “Let’s get serious, folks!”. Pilkey warns children for three pages about the dangers of having fun in front of adults and how they should disguise it, or otherwise face the consequences of being asked to stop whatever they are doing:

You have to wonder, why are most grown-ups like this? Weren’t they ever kids themselves? Didn’t *they* enjoy laughing and cheering and goofing around when they were young?? If so, when did they stop? And why? Now, I certainly can’t speak for *all* adults, but I’m going to anyway. I think it is a lot easier for adults to stomp out someone else’s fun than it is for them to reflect on their own lives and figure out where it all went so miserably wrong. It’s just too depressing for grown-ups to ponder all the decades of compromises, failures, laziness, fear and regrettable choices that slowly transformed them from running around, jumping, laughing, fun-loving kids into grumpy, complaining, calorie-counting, easily offended, peace-and-quiet demanding grouches. In other words, it’s harder to look within yourself than it is to shout, “HEY, YOU KIDS, CUT THAT OUT!” (CU10, 24-25, italics and capital letter as in original)

Pilkey here is guilty of showing an idealized concept of childhood, where children are free of problems and concerns and all they do is run and jump around while having fun. George and Harold may not represent the romantic conception of children in the sense that they are not pure, innocent, quiet or completely honest children. However, this does not mean that they are not equally idealized in a more modern way. They are constantly defined as “nice” and “good” (CU3, 3), “smart and sweet, and very good-hearted” (CU2, 15), “very bright

and good-natured” (*CU4*, 15); they rebel against bullies, they have their own sense of justice and they are eager to fight for it.

Iain Emsley argues that the carnivalesque challenges in a certain way Rose’s theory that children are outsiders to children’s fiction. According to Emsley, the carnivalesque in *Captain Underpants* represents the power struggle between adults and children and the reversal of the traditional dominant and subversive position of both. Although the text may very well support this theory, especially when George and Harold hypnotize their principal and all the official boundaries are turned upside down, there is also another interpretation. Pilkey is looking back at his own childhood, at his desire to act in a way he did not, and he wants to present the reader a fictional world where his ideals could be possible and become a reality.

Nonetheless, what Pilkey offers the child reader is another kind of nostalgia: a look back at his own childhood to show how he would have liked things to have been years ago. There is no carnival attitude in Pilkey’s narrative per se; he just offers an impossible alternative to his past experience. In a way, Pilkey’s subversive characters are his reaction to the past, but their behaviour is just as impossible as that of children in traditional children’s literature. When discussing this subversive attitude towards the authority figures, he explains: “[N]one of the children in my school, including me, thought to question them ... So, I do feel there is real value in showing kids that not all authority figures are good or kind or honorable” (*The Guardian*). The didacticism implied in these books is clear: not all adults are honest and kind and it is acceptable to rebel against them.

However, once the carnival is over (or once the books have been read and the child reader closes its covers), order is restored and, not without relief, normal social relations and discourses are again resumed (McKenzie 85). Carnival has the potential to dispute

these social structures by carefully turning hierarchies inside out in the ways it questions the borders between high and low, king and peasant, adult and child, and author and reader; and it often does so by calling attention to the body and bodily functions (Wannamaker, *Inedible* 247).

3.4 The material lower stratum

Roderick McGillis makes a valid point when he states, “[W]e are in a cultural moment that appears to find the whiff of flatulence fun” (*Cocrophilia* 64). The bar of tolerance for the vulgar is lower now than it has ever been, even though the vulgar and the bodily fluids have always been there for the pleasure of readers (64). Great classics of literature such as Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, Shakespeare’s plays and Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* are just some examples of literature filled with scatological references.¹² Therefore, the massive attention that scatology is currently receiving from authors, publishers, and everybody involved in the production process of a text is perhaps unsurprising. After all, the growing number of published books with scatological humour shows the popularity of such literature with children.¹³ However, the attraction of scatology in children’s literature is not necessarily shared by Spanish publishers or the general public. Not many books featuring poops, farts,

¹² Many scholars have explored the role of scatology in literature, from István Czachesz’s *The Grotesque Body in Early Christian Literature: Hell, Scatology and Metamorphosis* to Peter J. Smith’s *Between Two Stools: Scatology and its Representations in English Literature, Chaucer to Swift*; just to name two examples.

¹³ As John McKenzie states in his article “Bums, Poos and Wees: Carnavalesque Spaces in the Picture Books of Early Childhood. Or, Has Literature gone to the Dogs,” “[t]eachers, librarians and booksellers note that there has been an increased publishing output of books that are plainly scatological, also at the same time tending to bemoan the fact that they are popular with young children” (81).

and vomit have been translated into Spanish, *El Topo que Quería Saber Quien se Había Hecho Aquello en su Cabeza* (*The Story of the Little Mole Who Knew it Was None of His Business*) probably being the most popular one. Even so, this book was published in Spain in 2002, eight years later than the source text. There has been in the last decade an increase of translated books dealing with toilet and potty training (*¿Puedo Mirar tu Pañal?*, *Todo el Mundo Va*, *El Libro de los Culitos*) with a clear didactic goal.

Dav Pilkey is one of the most well-known authors in terms of scatological content. His books disgust readers at the same time as liberating them. The CU series is a clear example of the discursive negotiation between maintenance and subversion. In his books Pilkey shows adults as agents of control: they control the physical body, the behaviour, and the language of children. This topic is not new; Freud had already discussed this idea when he explained that a rejection of disgusting bodily effluvia is something we learn as part of the civilizing process (McGillis, *Cocrophilia* 184). Parents are after all responsible for bringing up their children so that they become active and sensible members of society, so they need to teach them how to control their bodily fluids in a socially accepted way.

Pilkey acknowledges this power struggle in relation to the mastering of potty training, and adopts a pro-child attitude when he writes: "... once children have mastered the art of toilet training, they are immediately forbidden to even talk about poop, pee, toilets, and other bathroom-related subjects again. Such things are suddenly considered rude and vulgar, and are no longer rewarded" (CU8, 19). And then he points out that adults' expectations change in terms of body control and language once the child has learnt to control his/her own body: "One day you're a superstar because you pooped in the toilet like a big boy, and the next day you're sitting in the principal's office because you said the word 'poopy' in American History class" (CU8, 20). When they are growing up, children learn to

not verbalize, or even to question, their bodily functions. As Pilkey states, they move from rewards to punishment in a very short period of time, which contributes to their desire to transgress the boundaries of what is acceptable and what it is not.

Excrements and all kind of scatological terms, once they are under control, are forbidden from children's language, becoming the whole topic of a taboo. By rejecting the possibility of discussing scatology parents are not only contributing to the image of bodily fluids as something that is a source of embarrassment and unnatural but also they are creating a taboo, a silenced topic not to be discussed. Mark I. West, in his essay about taboo and the grotesque in Roald Dahl's work, suggests that children deal with anxieties about parental control over their bodies through types of humour that make many adults uncomfortable. He writes, "[f]or very young children, this form of humor is expressed without a hint of subtlety" (3), and that young children find it funny to simply blurt out words like "poop."¹⁴

Children are not, however, the only ones who find amusement and liberation in scatology. Adults are, at the same time, constricted and amused by human bodily functions. It is my view that adults have a double standard in terms of scatology. In western popular culture, all kinds of scatological content (including vomit, diarrhoea, farts, etc.) are commonly used as an element of humour for adults. For instance, almost all modern comedy films, and many books too, include scenes with scatological content: *Bridesmaids*, *The Help*, *Bruno*, etc. to name just a few recent movies. All these are acclaimed comedies that have an adult audience in mind, and part of their comedy is due to their scatological content. Late-night comedy programmes very often turn to scatological jokes or

¹⁴ The close relationship between children's humour and scatology is analysed in Chapter Four (section three) together with the challenges it poses for translation.

embarrassing incidents to provoke laughter and amusement in their viewers. Even in everyday conversation we find ourselves laughing at someone (or even ourselves) who has been involved with an unfortunate event in relation to his or her bodily functions.

Scatology is not only popular and funny, but also an excellent marketing tool to sell a product to both child and adult audiences; and companies do it because such instances of the gross do not necessarily mean a degeneration or deterioration of culture but a liberation from society and its constrictions enjoyed by all its members. England's most obvious example is the magazine/comic *Viz*, which has been published for almost 35 years. It portrays crude toilet humour, black comedy and surreal humour, parodying and satirizing articles and newspapers, half-forgotten celebrities and current events and politicians. Even though in theory it represents everything an educated society may disdain, it has been selling copies for over three decades, reaching at its highest point a million sales per issue (Cook).

This sales success indicates a keen interest from English society, or at least part of it, in all that is scatological, rude, and absurd. And it is precisely these features that are most frowned upon in children's literature. Pilkey echoes this dichotomy when he addresses the child reader directly and says: "Why would adults do that? Why would they encourage something one day and *discourage* it the next? The only answer I can think of is that adults are totally bonkers and should probably be avoided at all times" (*CU8*, 23). Pilkey's accusation of adults can be judged as fair, especially bearing in mind that adults buy and enjoy scatological products, but reject their consumption by their own children.

It is therefore evident that adults have double standards when it comes to humour and scatology; what in many cases grown-ups consider funny and acceptable in fiction that is good enough for them to consume is not acceptable for their children's fiction. This is

also reflected in the CU series, where adults can be as cruel as children when it comes to scatology and humiliation. In all the books of the series featuring Professor Poopypants, adults and children laugh at him equally: “Poor Pippy Poopypants had been laughed out of every major scientific institution in the U.S. He had been giggled out of Georgetown, howled out of Harvard, yuk-yukked out of Yale, snickered out of Stanford...” (*CU4*, 50). Not only does this passage ridicule adults for laughing at an unconventional name, it also shows the academics of the most well-known and respected American universities who in theory should represent the intellectual elite of the whole country, to be as immature and cruel as 9-year-olds are. In this sense, the link between scatology and humour is universal, and it transgresses the boundaries of the official culture of adults and the subculture of children.

The “material bodily lower stratum” (*RHW*, chapter 6) is also celebrated by the carnival, a celebration intended as an ideological statement of the common people against the identified oppressive hegemony of a certain time (McGillis, *Coprophilia* 185). However, this “ideological statement” is orchestrated by the very same forces the people think they are protesting against; “the carnival works to contain as much as to release dangerous energies” (185), so in a way it satisfies and represses simultaneously. This same mechanism can be seen in children’s ruling institutions such as school or family. On the one hand, they cater to the basic necessities of the child as perceived in a socio-cultural context of desires and conventions, but on the other hand, they repress many others, such as the desire to do what they want, dress as they like or eat just the food they enjoy.

For this repression to work, first the adults who construct, maintain and develop these desires and conventions need to feel that they have the reins of instinct perfectly under control: “That which disgusts has always served both a psychological and social

purpose: essentially the purpose of repression. That which disgusts us disgusts us precisely in order that we both receive sly pleasure and maintain order and civility” (Miller, qtd. in *Cocrophilia* 185). It is therefore the case/true that children, and adults, are targeted with the presence of ‘regrettable fluid’ in books, films, adverts and games. They find some subversive pleasure in them.

However, this pleasure is something we need to learn to reject, or at least to not openly acknowledge in everyday conversation. In order to live in society and be accepted by its members, one must learn to measure and test its boundaries, but must be careful not to transgress them. Therefore, books written for children, like the CU series, demonstrate in a way that there is an unofficial culture that exists alongside the official culture of the adults, and that reading carnival literature offers young readers the possibility for pondering their experiences outside the control of adult institutions. Children can enjoy the use of language that it is related to scatology and, therefore, find some freedom from parental and institutional control.

In this power struggle, the author of a text teaches children the “dominant ideology,” and one of the main challenges that children need to learn in order to become socially acceptable, as I have explained above, is to deny the body. As Zornado underlines in his book *Inventing the Child: Culture, Ideology and the Story of Childhood*, “to teach the child to deny the body is, ultimately, to teach the child to deny the centre of human experience and the source for all creative, spiritual, and emotional connection, first to oneself and then to everything and everyone else” (9). This is intrinsically related to what Bakhtin termed “the material bodily principle” and its presence in children’s literature. Pilkey’s series is full of all kinds of food, drink, excretions, and varied scatology for a reason. As Stephens points out, Bakhtin’s “material bodily principle” makes reference to

the human body and its concerns with food and drink (commonly in hyperbolic forms of gluttony and deprivation), sexuality (displaced into questions of undress and nudity) and the excretory principle (displaced into opportunities of getting dirty) (122).

This bodily content is used, on the one hand, as a comic element within the narrative. But on the other hand, it also portrays the power struggle between adult and child communities. Adults interfere with the child's relationship to his body; they are taught to use the bathroom and the potty, not to fart and not to burp. In the CU series, the villain of the first book, Dr. Diaper, is defeated because he is made to believe that he cannot control his bowels. By doing this, Dav Pilkey is maintaining the same adult rules and social conventions (the human body must be potty-trained in order to live in society), but he is inverting the characters: this time it is the adult who wears a diaper. So, in a way, he fails to defend children's autonomy in society or the need for new values. Instead, he is ridiculing adult characters and their bodies by infantilizing them, a contradiction in itself for someone who is arguing the child's case.

3.5 The grotesque realism and the grotesque body

The concept of grotesque realism is related to how Bakhtin defined the images of the material bodily principle in the works of Rabelais. Bakhtin defines this literary genre "as one opposed to all forms of high art and literature" (Vice 155). The Russian author suggests that the bodily principle is deeply positive, "a triumphant, festive principle" whose essential feature is degradation, "the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body and their indissoluble unity" (*RHW* 19-20). Inevitably, it includes parody and mockery; "[t]he people's laughter which

characterized all the forms of grotesque realism from immemorial times was linked with the bodily lower stratum. Laughter degrades and materializes” (20). The physicality of the human body is underlined by Bakhtin in its unfinished nature and its interactions with the world, transgressing its own limits. According to Bakhtin, the most important events in the life of the grotesque body are “eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination (sweating, blowing of the nose, sneezing), as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberments, swallowing up by another body - all these acts are performed on the confines of the body and the outer world, or on the confines of the old and new body” (317). The regenerative aspect of the human body is shown throughout the CU series in the description of bodies.

Pilkey also pictures his characters in a rather grotesque way. He constantly establishes the link between authority and size. Usually, the villains are all big characters, and when they can transform themselves, they always gain volume as much as they try to gain power. It is therefore the case that the abuse of power is also related to size. The bigger and taller the characters are, the meaner they are. This stereotypical image of the bully who is male, bigger and older than his classmates, who does not do well in school, who fights, and who enjoys being feared by his classmates in school is the perfect description of Mr. Krupp in the first eight books of the series, and then of Mr. Krupp’s niece in the ninth book. Even though Pilkey is perpetuating the stereotypical image of the bully who does not adjust to reality, the truth is that he uses them with a comic effect.¹⁵ The meaner they are with

¹⁵ A number of studies suggest that bullies are not necessarily the strongest children. Carpenter and Ferguson in their book *The Everything Parent's Guide to Dealing with Bullies* explain how thanks to a number of studies on the topic of female aggression, the stereotypical bully myth has been largely debunked. The book points out how bullies now come in different shapes, sizes, and genders, and that girls can be as vicious and violent as boys; sometimes even more so.

their victims, the funnier the reader will find their humiliation when George and Harold defeat them.

Transformation or metamorphosis is one clear aspect of the carnival grotesque. There are multiple examples in the series that show how bodies change into grotesque forms. For instance, in the third book of the series, three aliens, disguised as the lunch ladies, give “Zombie Nerd Milkshakes” for lunch, so that everyone in the school except for George, Harold, and Mr. Krupp becomes a zombie nerd (*CU3*); Melvin turns out into Bionic Booger Boy (*CU6*), George and Harold become George and Harold’s evil counterparts or twins (*CU8*), and teacher Ms. Ribble becomes Wicked Wedgie Woman (*CU5*).

However, it is Pilkey’s depiction of the female body and the way he transforms it that I found more problematic. Women also suffer from grotesque transformations throughout the whole series. They are initially described both in words and pictures, in most cases as old, ugly, mean, and overweight: a repetition of the stereotype of the woman as witch. Wedgie Woman, for instance, becomes more and more grotesque as the book advances. She is initially described as having “two coiled arms of twisting hair” (*CU5*, 92), but as the plot progresses, so does her hair, which multiplies into “several twisted locks” (94); by page 159 she has “nine twisting braids.” Still, she has not rejected her motherly side and talks to her robots as if they were her children: “Well done, my precious robots – said Wedgie Woman affectionately” (114). When they finally get the chance to hypnotize her again, their desire is not to return her back to normal, as they do with Mr. Krupp; instead, they change her personality so that she can be the nicest teacher and bake fresh cookies for them, both actions related to the traditional role of the woman. Even when they question the correctness of changing her personality so much, they conclude: “Sure, why

not? ... She's happier. She'll probably live longer!" (CU5, 171). This is not the only case. In the whole series, women are constantly humiliated, degraded, stereotyped, or shamed just for being women. Pictures also reinforce this view; women are usually depicted cooking, cleaning, or teaching. It is therefore the case that Pilkey's carnival does not offer much of an alternative to the female characters. In the "real" fictional world of Captain Underpants girls are portrayed as cheerleaders, telltales, and whiners; and then, in the carnival, they just become meaner and more possessive. Therefore, even when boundaries are turned upside down, women are stuck in their traditional roles and ultimately punished for their gender; there is not much of a possibility of carnival offered to the female characters in the CU series.

The Spanish Carnival also echoes this transformation of the masculine and feminine roles, as one of its salient features is transvestism. Cross-dressing is a virtually universal feature of carnival everywhere, but male transvestism is especially common in Spain. Andalusian men, along with men elsewhere in the Mediterranean, have celebrated carnival with rituals in which males impersonate females. As Gilmore explains, even today in Andalusia, men and boys are almost always dressed as women during carnival, but girls and women have more choice and do not always choose to parade in masculine attire (19).

3.6 Conclusion

The particular value of Bakhtin's book does not lie in his insights on Rabelais *per se*, but in his consideration of the generative function of the grotesque, the history of laughter, and their encounter in the popular context of the marketplace. In the case of the CU series, these carnivalesque features attract children through their subversiveness and their call to

freedom. These reflections remain remarkably relevant to literary and cultural criticism today, especially in children's literature.

Children may find in reading the CU series a space that allows them to participate in a temporary carnival. When reading these books, they are allowed to shout, to point out, to make gross noises, etc; they are at the same time onlookers and participants, and by doing so they create their own carnivalesque world. As Bakhtin notes, "[C]arnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people" (*Rabelais* 7). This may be the reason why the CU books are so widely popular with children all over the world (or at least in North American and Europe), as they are also books filled with scatological content and characters who portray grotesque realism. When reading these kind of books all children can, for a moment, live in a world that challenges everything they are constantly reminded of and reassured by. It is due, in part, to the use of humour that these books employ to invert traditional canons of social behaviour and to expose formerly unquestioned realms of political correctness.

However, it is important to consider the side effects of this carnivalesque reading of the texts. Personal freedom and the knocking down of barriers erected by political correctness can lead to the oppression of others, and that temporary liberty can produce marginalized children who could become objects of discourses of misogyny, bigotry and stereotyping. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the CU series has been seriously and rightly accused of stereotyping, especially when it comes to gender, but also of bullying and for its representations of authority. According to Mallan, teachers (and adults) have a choice of either giving tacit approval to the carnivalesque displays and regarding them as a bit of harmless fun, or they can assist children in gaining a broader understanding of

themselves and others, and of the effect of their ‘blind spot’ in discourses of race, ethnicity, gender and disability (122).

In relation to this research, the decision adopted by the translator about how to translate a carnivalesque text can also change the level of humour (and the carnivalesque content) of the book and its representations. As the following chapter will show, the way Miguel Azaola has translated humour not only defies to some extent the carnivalesque aspects of the series, but also domesticates the texts in order to make them less subversive, and, ultimately, less appealing to the Spanish child (and adult) reader. In terms of language, the carnivalesque is characterized by language that breaks with the norms of official speech by the use of abuse, insult, name-calling, play on words, and other forms of taboo breaking with the ultimate aim of provoking laugh and creating humour. This is, therefore, the rationale of the analysis of how language has been translated in relationship with humour that will be developed in the next chapter, in which first notions of the humour and laughter will be explored.

Chapter Four

The Translation of Humour in the Captain Underpants Series

Chapter Four focuses on humour in the Spanish translation of the CU series. It aims to answer the research question as to how the humour has been translated and which strategies have been mostly employed to do it. The method adopted will be a comparative analysis of the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) focusing primarily on linguistic features. The role played in humour translation by pictures will be discussed in Chapter Six. The results of a survey conducted with Spanish children will be also considered to show how the texts have been perceived as less funny in the TT.

In Section 1, a distinction is made between ‘humour’ and ‘laughter,’ and different approaches to humour are scrutinized. This leads on, in Section 2, to a brief discussion of how and why children perceive and use humour. Section 3 focuses on the specific challenges of translating humour in children’s literature. It is divided into four subsections: the translation of parody, satire, sarcasm, and irony; the translation of cultural allusions and intertextuality; the translation of expressive language and word play; and, finally, the translation of names. All these features bring a strong humorous aspect to the original texts and they can be scrutinized in order to gauge the extent to which the humour of the original has been conveyed in the translation. The scope of the dissertation does not permit the inclusion of every example of the translation of humour in the entire series. For that reason, key examples have been selected to illustrate the translator’s strategies and some of the problems faced in translation. At times, possible alternatives to some of the translatorial decisions will be presented.

4.1 Introduction

Translating humour is one of the biggest challenges a translator faces. It is a notoriously difficult endeavour because of the close links between humour, identity and culture (Maher 141). Humour is universal; it can be found in all social strata, societies, and cultures.

However, there is nothing that is universally humorous. The fact that a translator recognizes and enjoys humour in a text does not necessarily mean that he/she is going to be able to recreate the same effect in the target language. When translating humour, a translator needs to understand the historical and social subtleties of humour and transfer the linguistic features and cultural nuances, as much as possible, to the extent that it makes the target audience laugh when reading or hearing the humour in his/her own language (Akmali).

Nevertheless, it is also important to consider the functions of humour, as provoking laughter is not always its main goal.¹ Humour can also be a sign of fear, embarrassment, or a harmful weapon to be used against someone; after all, not all humour is intended to be funny and enjoyable. For instance, some humour is created to be harmful and corrosive, or as an attack on a person or a social group. The CU series uses humour mostly to make children laugh but also to criticize authority, humiliate adults, and to question social norms. Humour can provoke different reactions and responses in different people, and the same joke can be judged on a scale from hilarious to offensive in different social contexts. Vandaele explains how, for instance, “[h]umour based on wordplay may have ‘silly’ or ‘witty’ undertones, slapstick may strike people as ‘simplistic’, nonsense talk in an unfamiliar environment may be slightly frightening” (154). All these reactions need to be transferred into the target language, even if it is at the expense of the form of the texts.

¹ Some scholars such as Attardo and Spanakaki suggest that humour ultimately depends for its success on the purpose for which it is used.

Translators are bound to take linguistic and cultural decisions that will enable the target readers to laugh in the same way as the source readers do. It is therefore relevant before studying the translation of humour in the CU series to consider the nature of humour, which is very complex to begin with, and both the causes of humour and the effects it produces.

4.2 Theories of humour

The definition of humour is not a simple one. Many theorists have researched the causes of humour and its functions within society. Even though this dissertation is mostly interested in children's humour, it is important to underline the general value of humour in society. Humour is one of the most pervasive elements of public culture in the sense that it occurs across all contemporary media, in most of their institutional formats, and is a central aspect of everyday life and our day-to-day relationships (Lockyer and Pickering 3).

Although much attention has been paid to the creation of humour in literary works, relatively little has been dedicated to laughter. In the introduction to his book *RHW*, Bakhtin states that “[l]aughter and its form represent... the least scrutinized sphere of the people's creation” (4). Bakhtin studies how the effects of laughter changed from the Renaissance conception of laughter, which was as admissible as seriousness in great literature, to the 17th century, when it was relegated to low genres, referring only to individuals and inferior social levels (*Rabelais* 66-67). This idea is comparable to today's humour (and laughter), often associated with what many mistakenly see as low genres of literature, such as comedy or even children's literature. There are three main philosophical theories of humour that consider the broad phenomenon of humour under their

physiological, psychological and social functions: the Relief Theory, the Incongruity Theory, and the Superiority Theory.

4.2.1 Relief theory

Relief theory supports the idea that laughter is the sudden release of tension in the nervous system (Morreal, *Taking* 67). It treats laughter as the venting of pent-up nervous energy (6). This theory is mostly concerned with the physiological and psychological benefits of laughter, rather than humour itself, and is related to the affective dimension (emotions), focusing on the 'response' side of humour (Cross 5). Humour, according to relief theory, is used mainly to overcome socio-cultural inhibitions and reveal suppressed desires. This theory stems partly from the work of Sigmund Freud who analyzed in depth the close links between humour and the unconscious, and its place within society.

Freud had a sceptical approach to humour in his book, first published in 1905, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. He argued that we are constantly deceiving ourselves about the reasons why we laugh and, even though we like to believe that we laugh at the wittiness of jokes, our pleasure may derive from less honourable sources that we do not dare to acknowledge; that is how we allow repressed topics and feeling to be given indirect expression and relief. For Freud, this explains why so many jokes have a sexual or an aggressive content, since these are some of the instincts that we are least willing to openly admit. Sexual and aggressive thoughts, which are not acceptable in polite society, can be shared as if they are not serious. Humour then becomes a way of rebelling against the demands of social order. As Freud wrote in a later essay, "humour is not resigned; it is rebellious" (*Humour* 429). The rebellious character of humour has already been discussed in the previous chapter, which explored how

the CU series has been seen as a carnivalesque text in which humour works as a tool for challenging social control and interrogating societal norms, with the ultimate aim of ensuring conformity.

4.2.2 Incongruity theory

According to Morreal, this is the most widely accepted theory of humour today (*Politics* 66). It is when something odd, abnormal or out of place happens which we enjoy in some way. For instance, when two robbers are stopped by Captain Underpants (an adult man wearing underwear) they “looked at each other and burst out laughing. They dropped their loot and fell to the sidewalk screaming in hysterics” (*CUI*, 56). According to Cross, incongruous forms of humour include “the subject/reader’s perception of something unexpected, illogical, inappropriate, clashing with what she/he might normally expect, which strikes him/her as humorous” (7). The amusement of the unexpected can come from the unusual speech, dress, or behaviour of characters. It also derives from many forms of wordplay, such as puns (for instance, the effect of the play on the word “placebo” versus “placenta” in the CU series, discussed later in this chapter). Humorous texts such as the CU series can be perceived as sophisticated types of humour because children need to comprehend the concepts involved in cognitive types of humour (parody, satire or irony), which are acquired only by the age of seven or eight years old.² However, once children have achieved a cognitive mastery of humour - or, in other words, they ‘get’ the joke - there

² Piaget’s ‘concrete operational stage’ of the child from about seven to eleven is when the child can deal with concrete reason and can take account of two or more relationships in his/her judgment. A more in-depth analysis of Paul McGuee’s comprehensive five-stage model of children’s humour from infancy to the elementary school years will be developed later in this chapter.

is not a clear distinction between incongruity and superiority theories, as some jokes and types could be categorized as serving the functions of relief, incongruity and superiority or various admixtures of these, simultaneously (Cross 8).

4.2.3 Superiority theory

Superiority theory began with the ancient Greeks, and views laughter as an expression of our feelings of superiority over someone else, or over a former state of our own (Morreal, *Taking* 4-5). This theory does not account for all laughter or humour, mostly because the following two conditions are not always met: first, we do not always compare ourselves with someone else; and second, in that comparison, we do not always find ourselves superior. This theory is based on the hypothesis that laughter “is the expression of a person’s feelings of superiority over other people” (4). Superiority theory would explain why one laughs at someone’s misfortunes (8). When George and Harold hypnotize Mr. Krupp for the first time they toy with making him believe that he is a chicken or a monkey (*CUI*, Chapter 11) and they “laughed so hard they almost cried” (54). Vandaele suggests that humour often ridicules a victim or target - the so-called butt of the joke - and produces a heightened self-esteem in those who appreciate the humour (148). It also fosters some sort of stratification in society: it exploits, confirms or creates inclusion (in-groups), exclusion (out-groups), and hierarchies between persons (between comprehenders and non-comprehenders, between “normal” and “abnormal” persons, etc.) (148).

Part of this stratification in the CU series is the clear distinction between adult and child. They are constantly opposed, and fight against each other throughout the whole series. In a way, children are likely to regard mistakes (behavioural or grammatical) and

vulnerabilities (e.g. a toilet accident) as funny when they have just mastered these skills themselves. They find George and Harold's grammatical mistakes amusing because they recognize the misspelling and realize that they can do better; in a way, they feel superior to the main characters because their literacy level is now higher.

Henri Bergson elaborated one of the most exhaustive arguments about laughter and the comic in his essay "Laughter: An essay on the Meaning of the Comic" (1911), which is mostly associated with the superiority theory of humour. He begins his essay by stating three basic aspects of laughter: it is strictly human, it comes with an absence of feeling, and is a social activity that we develop in a group³: "the comic will come into being, it appears, whenever a group of men concentrate their attention on one of their number, imposing silence on their emotions and calling into play nothing but their intelligence" (4). Bergson defends the idea that man is an animal that laughs, and argues that whenever objects produce the effect of laughter, "it is always because of some resemblance to man, of the stamp he gives it or the use he puts it to" (4). Bergson believes that humour is a living thing and that laughter is a social phenomenon, accessible only because we have some experience of it, because we understand it in relation to another item.⁴ As Bergson points out:

From the runner who falls to the simpleton who is hoaxed, from a state of being hoaxed to one of absentmindedness, from absentmindedness to wild enthusiasm,

³ The social side of humour and its functions of resistance and control have also been studied more recently by critics such as Mulkay (*On Humour: its Nature and its Place in Modern Society*) and Billig (*Laughter and Ridicule*). The latter points out that all humour is an act of aggressive social control and power with the aim of humiliating and disciplining its subjects, and concludes that humour can be defined as cruel and dominating (194-9).

⁴ Jeroen Vandaele also believes that humour belongs to our practical grasp of the world and understands it in terms of its social function (153).

from wild enthusiasm to various distortions of character and will, we have followed the lines along which the comic becomes more and more deeply embedded in the person... (27)

This statement puts the ethics of laughing back in centre stage, as we do not always laugh with good intentions. We laugh at others when they are humiliated, or at their faults; in short, at those to whom we may feel superior. Bergson also establishes that laughter has a social function: as we laugh it is likely that the victims will want to change their behaviour.

Hence, laughter can have a 'corrective' function and can be used as a tool to modify and improve social behaviour (Cross 9). Professor Pippy P. Poopypants is mocked because of his name on several occasions; each time he changes his behaviour (from changing jobs to ultimately changing his name) in order to try to be accepted and stop people from laughing at him, but without success. He feels ridiculed and humiliated for something as basic as his name. Melvin is another character who, despite his brilliant mind, is constantly mocked by his classmates. Rather than changing his behaviour, he tries to take over the world in an attempt to make others respect (and fear) him. He cannot cope with being laughed at and he reacts in a rather extreme way, ending up completely ridiculed and defeated by George and Harold.

Ridicule also plays an often overlooked but central disciplinary role in social life (Billig 5). There are a number of things that we cannot perform publicly because they belong to our private sphere and, if we cannot control them, embarrassment occurs. When Dr. Diaper (Dr. Nappy in the United Kingdom) sees the fake doggy doo-doo that George has shot at him and which has landed between his feet, making it look as though he has produced the 'doo doo' himself, he turns bright red and exclaims, "I'm dreadfully

embarrassed! Please excuse me... This has never happened to me before, I assure you... I-I guess with all the excitement....” (CU4, 77). Children laugh at this scene not only for its scatological content, but also because the idea of an adult who cannot control his bowels and actually defecates (or at least believes he has) in public is funny for them. Again, they feel superior to this character (to this adult) not only because they know that he has not had an “accident” but also because they realize that they do not have this kind of accident any more. There is the incongruity of an adult having that kind of accident and, at the same time, an adult not realising that they have not defecated and being tricked into believing they have.

4.3 Children’s humour

During the last two decades there has been an increase of published books with the exclusive function of provoking laughter. After all, the desire to make children laugh has always been present in contemporary society. Roald Dahl’s *Matilda* echoes this desire when the title character answers Miss Honey’s question of whether all children’s books ought to have funny bits in them: “I do... Children are not so serious as grown-ups and they love to laugh” (75).

Julie Cross in her book *Humour in Contemporary Children’s Literature* argues that humorous children’s literature has been critically ignored during the last fifty years, an especially relevant period in children’s literature because of the changes that have occurred in the meaning and experiences of childhood (2). These changes are mostly due to economic prosperity in the period post-1950, the fast-expanding power of media, progressive legislation, and the continuous growing economic empowerment of children as

consumers in western societies (2). Cross argues for the necessity of looking at the socio-historical contextualization of the many changes in humour in order to understand its impact on ideas about children and childhood (2). Therefore, when looking at the translation of humour it is also necessary to consider the historical and cultural contexts of both the source and the target cultures, in order to understand the shifts that have occurred.

Most critics, when making reference to humour or theorizing about it, do not distinguish between humour and laughter in the context of children's literature, but a differentiation is relevant when considering children's humour, especially with the youngest. Cunningham explains that children learn to laugh, "not only when they themselves experience arousing stimuli but also when they see others in similar situations" (100). Babies, for instance, laugh as an expression of pleasure (blowing of hair, tickles, etc.) or as a copy mechanism of someone else's laugh, but their laugh is not related to humour. In short, small children are able to relate stimuli to the corresponding appropriate behaviour. However, humour is something different; it "becomes reorganized around two specific dimensions: the social and the cognitive" (100). This is important because we need to understand that humour is a social activity related inevitably to experience, the senses, and knowledge; translating humour will inevitably be affected by social and cultural norms.

Developing a social identity, establishing and maintaining friendships with peers, are important parts of growing up. Children - and adults too - rely heavily on humour to pursue this aim (101). Olsson explains how "laughter is a language which can be understood by everybody and efficiently ease difficult encounters" (26). The same idea was developed by Bakhtin one century earlier when he defends the universality of (carnival) laughter:

[It is] a festive laughter. Therefore it is not an individual reaction to some isolated comic effect. Carnival laughter is the laughter of all people. Second, it is universal in scope; it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. The entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its gay relativity. Third, this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives. (*RHW* 11)

This universality of laughter and the comic is equally valid for children and adults. After all, adults use humour as a socializing tool to define their position within society. As Boxer explains, "teasing and joking are instruments by which social control is exerted and through which social identity is displayed" (275); and Olsson affirms that "a good sense of humour plays an important role in interpersonal communication between people and can serve as a means to establish good relations" (26). According to James, humour is a "learned response" which is influenced by, among other things, adult opinion, social environment and education (qtd. in Cross 1). It is also important to learn where the limits of humour reside. We cannot joke about anything whenever we want; boundaries must be learnt. As Sharon Lockyer and Michael Pickering explain in their book *Beyond a Joke: the Limits of Humour*, "humour is only possible because certain boundaries, rules and taboos exist in the first place. Their existence, along with the satisfaction and sense of agency gained in overcoming them, are equally vital to why we laugh" (14-15). However, the boundaries of "good taste" can vary from place to place and from age group to age group. This is why humour has a liberating effect, as it possesses a sense that it can go beyond the limits of correctness. When George and Harold toy with a school signboard that originally reads "Pizza Palace Field Trips are Today" and they change it to "Please, Don't Fart in a Diaper"

(*CU4*, 29), the principal judges the action as “rude and offensive” and to this George replies, with great logic, “[T]hat’s why it is funny” (29). However, when the children receive a punishment that they define as “cruel and unusual,” Mr. Krupp retorts: “That’s why it is funny” (30). However, laughing at a homophobic or racist joke can be seen as an antisocial behaviour and can exclude us from society; political correctness has its own boundaries and once they have been breached we can become outsiders from our own social group.⁵ Therefore, children need to learn when and how it is appropriate to laugh and how to use humour in a conventionally acceptable way.

Paul McGuee proposes a comprehensive five-stage model of children’s humour from infancy to elementary school years. In his research, he explains how a child progresses from perceiving incongruity during his/her infancy (Stage 1) to riddles and jokes (Stage 5). Stages 4 and 5 are the most relevant to this research as they are achieved during late childhood (elementary and middle school years), which corresponds to the target audience of the *CU* books. During Stage 4, as children’s verbal competence grows, they are able to play with words. They depend less on objects as the source of humour, as they are able to experiment with rhyming words, made up silly words, and other language-related word-play that does not necessarily link to the concrete objects within their reach (Cunninghan 106). The last stage, named riddles and jokes, is achieved when the child begins to understand that “humour has a meaning - that jokes must resolve from something absurd into something that makes cognitive sense” (106). It is also in this last stage that children look for peer-approval; they are more likely to look at or consult a peer when

⁵ Political correctness is defined as “the avoidance of forms of expression or action that are perceived to exclude, marginalize, or insult groups of people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against” (OED).

asked to judge whether something is funny. Bergson and other critics have established that laughter is a social activity, so children do exactly the same: they laugh more in the presence of others than alone, and they adjust their reactions to match those of their friends (107).

It is precisely in these last two stages that children are able to understand and play with what Cross defines dually as “high” humour, which is cognitive and sophisticated and includes parody, comic satire, humorous metafictional devices, and wordplay; and “low” humour, which includes depictions of farce and physical slapstick, often related to exaggerated characters, grotesque representations, and the scatological (3). It is possible, however, - and indeed is the case in the CU series - that both forms of humour coexist and work together in the same text, often in the same humorous stimuli. Children can enjoy the ambiguity and contrast of both kinds of humour.

In the previous chapter, it was explained that there has also been a proliferation of books that try to make children laugh through heavy reliance on scatology and bodily functions. Children’s delight in bathroom humour is often linked to their developmental stage. According to Cross, this may be because they feel such subjects are taboo, and they can transgress them by delighting in their “rudeness” (11). Also, certain types of humour are preferred partly according to the dominant concerns of the children’s age range; children in their “junior” stage are still generally curious about their bodies and interested in excretory functions, because of adult concern with the regulation of bodily function (12).⁶

⁶ The transgressive function of scatology in the CU series was examined in Chapter Three, section 3 (The Material Lower Stratum).

However, a number of scholars suggest that humour has historically been related to boys' rather than children's fiction. Reynolds explains that popular fiction aimed at boys, such as chapbooks, used simple language and cultivated "violence, vulgar humour and disrespect for adults, authorities and institutions" (105). Segal also argues that boys' adventures were basically "the world as play" while girls' books often had a didactic purpose, a "continuous moral message" (qtd. in Cross 151). Today, fiction aimed at implied young males may involve "humorous poor spelling, visual cartoon-like action, action-oriented humour, character wit, and knowing narration, as well as the comic grotesque and amusement at the scatological" (Cross 150). These "masculine" forms of humour have been related by Cross and Nodelman to Barthes' concept of "jouissance," a self-indulgent bodily and emotional pleasure in reading that produces the pleasure of transgressing the social order (Cross 150).⁷ The idea that "boys will be boys" is a constant in children's literature, and "represent[s] masculinity as a force in opposition to the law, to manners and to the social fabric" (Nodelman, qtd. in Cross 151). This anti-authoritarianism can also be seen in humour, a powerful weapon to resist conformity created through scatology or bad spelling. In a way authors may use poor spelling to create authenticity and gain complicity with their readers (153). This is certainly the case in the CU series, at least in the ST.

Cruel humour is also related to junior boy readers. This is mostly represented by unkind practical jokes at the expense of others. George and Harold are the masters of practical jokes; as the first book of the series clearly states, a day at school is a "hard day of

⁷ For a developed explanation about the concept of 'pleasure' see Nodelman's and Reimer's *The Pleasures of Children's Literature* and Barthes' *The Pleasure of the Text*.

cracking jokes, pulling pranks, and causing mayhem” (*CUI*, 9). For instance, they put sneezing powder in the cheerleaders’ pompoms at the game, leaving them “sneezing and dripping with mucus” (28). They also glue toilet doors shut, give ketchup “squishies” to pupils and teachers alike, and destroy the “Invention Convention” of the school by covering everybody in eggs, oatmeal, chocolate syrup, and cream-of-mushroom soup (*CU2*, Chapter 6). This sort of action-orientated, even cruel humour is more associated with the affective dimension and jouissance than the cognitive, which is mostly related to young female or more mature male readers (Cross 133-65). Adults tend to take pleasure in more sophisticated forms of humour than in humour based on actions, such as practical jokes and pranks.

It can be argued that there is a dichotomy in terms of what children and adults find funny. Pilkey uses inversion in his *CU* series to suggest that child and adult humour are quite different and that each strikes the other as inappropriate (Stallcup 184). In many cases, what is funny to an adult is merely seen as an abuse of power by the child. In the first book of the series, a scene shows how adults and children have different conceptions and responses to what they both believe can be funny. When Mr Krupp videotapes all the practical jokes and pranks George and Harold pull during the football game, he smiles with a devilish grin and laughs, before blackmailing them into doing all kinds of chores and homework as a punishment (*CUI*, 30-41). The children’s reaction to this scene is quite the opposite: they cry, beg, and leap out of their chairs and fall to their knees (36-37).

Perry Nodelman uses a very similar argument, saying that adults see themselves as the empowered group in opposition to children to maintain and enforce control boundaries: “we characterize the other as other in order to define ourselves... We need children to be childlike so that we can understand what maturity is - the opposite of being childlike” (*The*

Other 32). When it comes to humour, the situation repeats itself: children find funny what we adults find rude, offensive, or plain disgusting, thereby identifying ourselves as more sophisticated and with an appreciation of more complex forms of humour.

Humour preferences differ for child and adult audiences in the same way as those for food or games. Studies of children's preferences in book selection have noted that humour is a primary criterion for children's pleasure in the presentation of story, with scatological humour being very much part of this (Shannon, qtd. in McKenzie 81). Cunningham exemplifies how "even the simple scatological 'jokes' of a pre-schooler ('You poo in your pants!') are just instances of enjoyable pretence that observe the rules for ordering the real world by breaking them" (94).

Now that the social functions of humour have been discussed together with children's humour, the next section analyses to what extent it is possible to translate humour into another language and culture.

4.4 The translation of humour

The remark that many comic effects are incapable of being translated from one language to another because they refer to the customs and ideas of a particular social or cultural group is not new. Translating humour is one of the most difficult endeavours in a translator's work because it has a wide variety of functions and it works on multiple levels simultaneously. Humour is based on culture and related to language, which means that, in order to translate it literally, the target culture needs to share norms and conventions with the source culture, which is not the case.

Part of the challenge is that definitions of the majority of types of humour (satire, metaphors, idioms, allusions) cannot be found in dictionaries or anthologies. In an ideal world, translators would be trained in recognizing, understanding and using humour in both the source and the target language so they can not only understand the function of humour but also have the ability to recreate it. Another ideal situation would be that the author and the translator of a text could carry on a dialogue in which they discuss the value and function of humour in a given text so the translator can reproduce it in the target text. Unfortunately, this is very rarely the case. Therefore, the translator has to resort to different translation techniques to make the humour accessible to the target culture, such as literal translation, adaptation, replacement, or even the complete omission of the joke as the last choice.

It is an accepted axiom of translation theory that a translator should create an approximation or, if at all possible, an equivalent, so that the same effect and response are produced in the target readers. Every translator, no matter how many grammatical and lexical features the two languages share, needs to make choices to produce what Nida and Taber define as dynamic equivalence, or “the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptor of the source language” (24). Humour is not an exception to this general rule and the target text should produce the same degree of humour, if possible, for its readers.

However, it is impossible to achieve a perfect equivalence between two languages and two cultures, so when translating humour in a text there will always be “losses,” defined by Koponen as “some aspect that was present in the source text [that] is not there in the target text, e.g. a double meaning, a connotation” (48). Thus, assuming that a perfect equivalence between texts is simply not possible, this research will enquire about the extent to which

losses in the translation of humour are unavoidable, and how plausible it is that gains have also occurred in the translation process. In this textual analysis I shall be concentrating on the production of comic effect (by parody, satire, irony and sarcasm; intertextuality and allusions; expressive language; and names) and its translation into Spanish.

4.4.1 The translation of parody, satire, irony and sarcasm

Humour theorists such as Levine and Buckingham argue that junior readers are constantly acquiring skills that are necessary for the comprehension and understanding of more complex, higher, forms of humour such as satire, irony and parody (Cross 1). Parody is “an imitation of the style of a particular writer, artist, or genre with deliberate exaggeration for comic effect” (OED). Lockyer and Pickering argue how parodic mockery is usually confined to the arts and the realm of the aesthetic, and is kept separate from the realm of ethics (20). However, the scholars underline that when the aesthetic form, which is subversively parodied, draws on key public symbols or values (in which the defence of childhood may be present, for instance) then it becomes ethically impermissible because it breaches the standards of decorum (20). Once this happens then the parodic mockery is subject to condemnation, censorship, and even legal prosecution, depending on the level of offensiveness.

There are several examples of parodies in the CU books, many related to popular culture and literary figures familiar to an American audience, particularly in relation to the superhero culture; after all, parody can only be appreciated in reference to the context that is being mocked. In the CU series, some characters are parodies of former comic heroes and villains. For example, Dr. Diaper is a parody of Dr. Doom; The Inedible Hunk is a

parody of *The Incredible Hulk*, and *Wedgie Woman* is a parody of *Wonder Woman*.

Places can also be parodied, such as when George and Harold make reference to a place known as “the Underwear Cave” as a parody of Batman’s cave.

American comic and film history is full of villains who toy with the idea of destroying or taking over the world. The CU series parodies to a certain extent all these antagonists of democratic values. So, Melvin Sneedly, Pippy Tinkletrousers, Dr. Diaper, and *Wedgie Woman* are parodies of great villains such as *The Joker* (*Batman*), *Magneto* (*X-Men*), *Venom* (*Superman*), and *Dr. Doom* (*Fantastic Four*). However, some readers in Spain may not be familiar with these comic villains, to the same extent as in America, and therefore much of this parody is lost. As Ross states, “[p]arody uses signals, which can only be recognized by an audience familiar with the original” (49). It may be that the most popular heroes (*Batman*, *Superman*, *Spiderman*, etc.) are recognizable as well thanks partly to the movies that have been recently made, but the vast majority of them will remain strangers to the target audience. Furthermore, Spanish children’s literature has its own traditional children’s comics such as “*Zipi y Zape*” and “*Mortadelo y Filemón*.” Therefore, even though children can recognize the pattern of the “bad guy” wanting to conquer the world, it does not mean that they understand the parody that lies behind it.

As the series progresses, some parodies become subtler and at the same time more inaccessible. American science fiction franchises that are related to popular books, comics, and films such as *Star Wars* would be inaccessible for the Spanish child reader. For instance, the first comic of the fifth book is a parody of the saga of *Star Wars*. The first box is titled “Episode 1: the Fantom Principial” (instead of the actual *Star Wars* title “Episode 1: the Phantom Menace”) and then the opening lines “A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away” are parodied in the beginning of the comic as “A long time ago, in a elementary

school far far away...” (CU5, 9). Pilkey introduces another parody when describing the “orijin” (origin) of Captain Underpants in “a far time ago in a galaxy long, long away...” (CU5, 126) later in the same book. These parodies are probably more obvious to the American adult reader than the child, as many fans of the Star Wars saga are actually adults who enjoyed the movies decades ago. Also, the plot in the fifth book about the destruction of the Captain Underpants’ world is a clear parody of the destruction of Superman’s world, exchanging the kryptonite for starch powder as the biggest danger for the main character; and Star Trek is also parodied when George and Harold use the sentence “The Starch Ship Enterprise” instead of the authentic “Star Ship Enterprise” (CU5, 131). These three references are clear parodies of American cult comics and films and it is unlikely that young readers will recognize all these parodies outside America, although they may be still available for the adult Spanish reader. For instance, the starter line of Star Wars is quite well known in Spain, even though these popular films have not developed the fandom they have had in the USA. However, Azaola has refused his readers - children or adults - any possibility of getting the joke, as he has changed the well-known sentence of “Hace mucho tiempo en una galaxia muy muy lejana” (A long time ago in a galaxy far far away) for “Hace la mar de tiempo de tiempo, en una escuela, lejos, muy lejos...” (Monkey years ago, in a school far far away), making it unrecognisable.

In the last books of the series readers can find more sophisticated parodies that are not necessarily obvious to the child reader. For instance, in the sixth book, the different Flip-O-Rama titles “Spanks For the Memories,” “Cane Tops Keep Falling on My Head,” “Yummy, Yummy, Yummy, I’ve Got Glove In My Tummy” and “A Hard Day’s Bite” are spoofs of the popular songs “Thanks for the Memories”, “Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head”, “Yummy Yummy Yummy, I’ve Got Love In My Tummy” and “A Hard Day’s

Night,” respectively. These songs are popular within American culture and have stood the test of time. Azaola could have chosen popular songs in Spanish that would have conveyed the same effect, but instead, he has chosen to create his own lines, describing the action of the scene and making a rhyming couplet: “Chuli maneja el bastón con estilo y perfección” (CC8, 147, 149), “Su guantazo al esternón, es digno de un campeón” (CC8, 151, 153), “La dentellada final tumba al mocoso rival” (CC8, 155, 157). The couplets describe the content that the pictures portray: “Chuli controls the cane with style and perfection”; “his smacking to the sternum is worthy of a champion, his final bite knocks down the snuffly opponent.” The comic effect is not the same: it represents a loss for the adult reader who may very well recognize the parodies but, at the same time, it also implies a gain in the humour for the Spanish child reader, for whom these songs may not mean anything but who can still enjoy the comic effect of the rhyming couplets. In short, the replacement technique has not retained the original meaning, but has somehow compensated, although in a different sense, for the humour in the original. However, an increase in the level of violence has occurred. Song titles have been changed to descriptive titles for the pictures, making it less funny but more violent, and, at the same time, accessible to the target language reader.

Not only do flip-o-ramas use parodies, but many chapter titles are also parodies of well-known books and films: “The Night of the Nasty Nostrils Nuggets” (CU6, chapter 12), “Furious George” (CU9, chapter 11), “Honey, I Shrunk the School” (CU4, chapter 13), “When Kipper Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry” (CU9, chapter 26), and “Harold and the Purple Ballpoint Pen” (CU2, chapter 18). Other parodies are far more difficult to recognize, as they are strictly linked with American popular culture. For instance, in the fifth novel George answers the Rabbi: “Silly Rabbi, tricks are for kids” (CU5, 55) parodying the Trix cereal television adverts that were first broadcast in 1958 whose slogan was “Silly rabbit,

Trix are for kids!” It is impossible for the Spanish reader to recognize the parody, mostly because Trix cereals are not - and never have been - sold in Spain, so they have no possible connection that relates the advert to the text. What is more, the play on words “rabbit versus rabbi” and “Tricks versus Trix” would be completely lost in any other language, as “conejo” and “rabino” are clearly not homophones. Azaola has resorted to creating a new meaning far from parodies and plays-on-words and has translated the whole episode as “What a nonsense. Playing is for children, right?” (CC5, 55).

Satire, another form of sophisticated humour, can be seen as problematic in children’s literature. Satire is defined as “a mode of discourse that takes a polemical or critical outlook, or as the ridicule of a subject to illustrate its faults” (Pfaff and Gibbs 46). As Stallcup argues, “our modern conception of childhood as a time of innocence (as erroneous as this conception may be) makes it distressing to think of children interacting with satire, which tends to reveal –even revel in– disturbing facets of human nature” (173). Not many children’s texts use satire as a way of producing humour. Jackie Stallcup explains that it is believed that children do not possess enough knowledge or understanding of the world, and therefore they would be unable to understand it. According to Stallcup, the CU books are an excellent example of the use of satire in children’s literature, as these books

are anarchic, disrespectful, subversive, exuberant - everything that a good satire should be - but contrary to conventional assumptions about children not enjoying or understanding satire, kids devour the books eagerly while adults attempt to ban them. In fact, it is *because* they are satirical that children and adults have these responses. (174)

Dav Pilkey uses satire to ridicule, to prick pretensions, to expose hypocrisy, and to show that appearances can often be deceptive (Blake 16). For instance, when a little boy says “Mommy, I just saw two robots driving a van with a guy in his underwear hanging off the back by a red cape, pulling two boys on skateboards behind him with his feet” and his mother replies “[h]ow do you expect me to believe such a ridiculous story?” it is a normal and understandable situation and the mother is reacting as any sensible mother would do. However, as this mother is reading a newspaper that says “Tabloid Times. Bigfoot gives birth to 200 pound UFO baby” (*CU1*, 71), it becomes clear that Pilkey is using satire to describe how gullible adults can be. It also underlines the hypocrisy of adults in terms of encouraging their children always to tell the truth while they do not question the veracity of the news that they receive on a daily basis. This is a recurrent satirical scene in the *CU* series as this mother and her child appear in four of the novels: *CU* 1, 2, 4, 9; in all of them the specific target of the satire is adults rather than children. This satire is easily translated into Spanish following a literal translation technique, as Spain also has magazines and media programmes that contain completely unrealistic content and which play with the morbidity of society.

There are other cases where satire has been only partly maintained in the Spanish version because of its close links with cultural allusions. For instance, Jerome Horwitz, the name of the elementary school which the protagonists attend, is a name with two different connotations in American culture: a renowned American scientist who helped develop a drug to cure AIDS and a member of the comedic trio The Three Stooges both share this name. Knowledge of either public figure adds layers of meaning and humour to the name of the elementary school in the books. Jerónimo Chumillas is the Spanish

equivalent, a silly name not related to science or knowledge at all, even though it would have been extremely easy to choose a famous Spanish scientist (Severo Ochoa or Ramón y Cajal, for instance) that would have conveyed, at least, one side of the satirical effect.

Satire can be also used to highlight people's faults or mistakes, to mock or convey contempt. In the eighth book of the series, published in 2006, there is an illustration that depicts a sign saying: "Schools is educationy'; A message from our president" (CU8, 75). This might be a direct way of criticizing or parodying the former American president George W. Bush and his frequent grammatical mistakes, referred to by some as "Bushisms".⁸ However, this joke is contextually bound to the American president, and even though it has been literally translated as "La escuela es educante: Un mensaje de nuestro presidente" (CC8, 75) it does not make much sense to the Spanish reader.

Adults are constantly the butt of the satiric jokes throughout the whole series; they are portrayed as mean, sadistic, stupid and petty, or just insane and eager to take over the world. Children often behave in a more responsible way than adults do. It is also understandable that adults may be discomforted by these books and not find them funny at all, and "[T]hey are also likely to enjoy the books less and less the more they identify with the adult characters" (Stallcup 184).

Pilkey also satirizes adults by questioning their authority and their use of labels to deny children's fundamental liberties. In the *Adventures of the Super Diaper Baby*, a sequel of *Captain Underpants*, Pilkey uses adults as a target of criticism, blames them for children's lack of freedom, and challenges their power in messages inserted within the

⁸ There are a number of websites and even a published book, Jonathan Bines' *Bushisms: President George Herbert Walker Bush in His Own Words*, that quotes the most common mistakes, including unconventional words, phrases, pronunciations, malapropisms, and semantic or linguistic errors that often occurred when former President of the United States George H. W. Bush addressed the public.

books' narrative: "You know, since nobody reads these pages, we figured they'd be a good place to insert subliminal messages: Think for yourself. Question authority. Read banned books! Kids have the same constitutional rights as grown-ups!!! Don't forget to boycott standardized testing!!!" (76). The whole page has been translated literally in Spanish. The only difference is that in Spain standardized tests are not as common as in the USA and only happen at the end of secondary education. Therefore, the last line has been translated as "Don't forget to boycott the memory tests," which respects the subversive message of the original text and adds to it, as the instruction is actually not to forget a memory test.

Another clear example of satire comes in the tenth book of the series. When explaining the meaning of the word *misdirection*, Pilkey explains that it happens when "you are led to believe that something is true, but in reality it is not true at all" (CU10, 17). And then he exemplifies, "[It] happens a lot in real life - especially in politics, history, education, medicine, marketing, science, religion, and the Oprah Winfrey Network" (17). There is clearly some satire and sarcasm in this passage at two different levels: on the one hand, it is related to the Oprah Winfrey show and how much power and authority a television show-presenter may have these days; on the other hand, it debunks these serious topics and compares them with the television show. This sarcasm has again been lost for the Spanish reader, even though it would have been extremely easy to find a cultural equivalent within the Spanish broadcast landscape. Maria Teresa Campos, Ana Rosa Quintana, and Mariló Montero are some names that could have conveyed the same sarcastic content the original does. Instead, the whole last line has been deleted from the book and there is no sarcasm against a specific television presenter.

The use of irony is also remarkable in the CU series. Irony is defined as "the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite,

typically for humorous or emphatic effect” (OED). The books use irony to subvert the romantic vision of children as innocent and pure human beings. In the fourth novel, Professor Poopypants decides to work with children because “[K]ids are so accepting and loving... You can always count on the sweetness and innocence of children” (*CU4*, 52); however, reality shows that the children actually laugh at him as much as adults have done in the past and even play practical jokes on him. The next chapter, titled “The Sweetness and Innocence of Children”, is the best reality check he can get, and he spends all his energies unsuccessfully attempting to stop children laughing at his name. It is precisely our modern conception of childhood as a time of innocence that makes it distressing to think of children interacting with satire, which is based, in fact, on the most disturbing facets of human nature (Stallcup 173). Spain and America share attitudes towards childhood and its implied values, so Azaola’s decision to translate this ironical content literally has worked very well in Spanish.

To sum up, when it comes to parody, satire, and irony two main translation techniques have been followed: literal translation and deletion. Literal translation has worked well and has kept the humorous content when it comes to societal concerns and anxieties. After all, American and Spanish culture are not that far apart, and they share worries and taboos when it comes to childhood. However, in other cases, literal translation has not been successful, especially when the sarcasm is aimed at a specific person (Bush, Oprah Winfrey, etc.), and the search for a cultural replacement would have been a better translatorial technique. Simply deleting challenging sections, in my opinion, brings a huge loss of humorous content and should be avoided by all means. It implies a more politically correct text, where no one is personally attacked or mocked. However, part of the humour

intended by the author was directed at these personalities, and, therefore, a Spanish replacement should have been used.

4.4.2 The translation of allusions

Intrinsically related to the translation of high humour and particularly the type of parody mentioned in section 4.4.1 is the translation of allusions. Maria Nikolajeva explains that among the most prominent features in contemporary children's books irony, parody, literary allusions, direct quotations and indirect references to previous texts are very relevant (*Comes of Age* 185). These include references to popular, cultural and historical figures, regional and social accents and expressions, books, films, famous people, singers, Ivy League Universities, adverts, products, concepts, situations or events, and even inside jokes that may mean something for a small group of people.

Allusions have different functions in texts: it may be a way for the author to show off or feel academically superior to his/her readers, or it may be a way of making connections between texts.⁹ Producing humour can also be a clear function of allusions: if an author changes an allusion and plays with it in some way, or allusions are used to parody other texts, then they may convey a humorous component of the text. The CU series has allusions in many of the chapter titles. The names of some of the chapters in all the books draw self-conscious attention to the fictionality of the books. Pilkey plays with canonical children's texts and with well-known movies to include them in his books, matching them with the content of the chapter. Table 4.1 shows how Pilkey has used books, films, and different cultural references both directly and after playing with its meaning:

⁹ For an in depth analysis of the function of allusions in text, see Epstein 130-33.

	Literary references	Film references	Other Cultural references
CU1	* <i>Crime and Punishment</i>		
CU2	*Harold and the Purple Ballpoint Pen (<i>Harold and the Purple Crayon</i>)	* <i>The Aftermath</i> (1982)	* The Incredible Robo-Plunger (<i>The Incredible Hulk</i>)
CU3		* CU and the Night of the Living Lunch Ladies (<i>The Night of the Living Dead</i> , 1968) * <i>The Great Escape</i> (1963)	* <i>Here comes the Goop!</i> (TV programme) * Brown Bragging' It (idiom) * Space Slaves (TV cartoons) * The Big Switcheroo (Comic Strip)
CU4	* Are you There, God? It is Us, Fluffy and Cheeseball (<i>Are you There, God? It's me, Margaret</i>)	* Bye Bye, Mr Fyde (<i>Bye, Bye, Birdie</i>) * Honey, I Shrunk the School (<i>Honey, I Shrunk the Kids</i>)	* CU and the Pied Pooper of Piqua (Folktale: The Pied Piper of Hamelin). * The Flight of the Goofy Glider (Disney's cartoons Goofy's Rider).
CU5		* Freaky Weeky (<i>Freaky Friday</i>).	* When you care enough to send the very best (Hallmark Cards' Slogan). * Who is Afraid of the Big Bad Beehive? (Song: Who is Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf) * Bad Hair Night (Idiom: Bad Hair Day). * All Tied Up (song) * "We can rebuild her... we can make her better than she was... faster... stronger...eviler..." (TV show <i>The Six Million Dollar Man</i>)
CU6		* <i>The Aftermath</i>	* The Comic is Mightier than the Spitball (Adage: The pen is mightier than the sword). * You can't have your

			Cape and Edith, Too (English Proverb, You Can't Have your Cake and Eat it too).
CU7	* The Drapes of Wrath (<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>)		* With Big Underwear comes Big Responsibility (With Great Power comes great responsibility) * Comeuppance, see me sometimes (quotation from film <i>She Done Him Wrong</i> , 1933)
CU8	* Strangers in Paradise Lost (Comic: <i>Strangers in Paradise</i>). * Not Without my Hamster (<i>Not Without my Daughter</i>).		* The School of Hard Knocks (Idiom) * Gettin' Outta Town (Song: Getting out of town). * Shrinky-Dorks (Toy: Shrinky Dinks)
CU9	* Furious George (<i>Curious George</i>) * When Kipper Gets Angry – Really, Really Angry... (<i>When Sophie Gets Angry – Really, Really Angry</i>) * Something Wedgie this way comes (<i>Something Wicked this Way Comes</i>)	* Life in the Big House (<i>Doing time: Life in the Big House</i>) * <i>The Perfect Storm</i>	
CU10		* Mission Improbable (<i>Mission Impossible</i>) * Clash of the Cavemen (<i>Clash of the Titans</i>)	

Table 4.1: Cultural allusions in the CU series

Many of these cultural references are completely unapproachable for the child reader.

Authors might include references simply to amuse themselves or for anyone who is able to understand them. Some other allusions are hidden for the pleasure of the adult reader. For instance, later in the series the reader will discover that Harold's hamsters are named "Dr. Fine" and "Dr. Howard." These are the names of the doctors in the 1934 movie *Men in*

Black, performed by the famous American comedy team “The Three Stooges.” But many people ignore the fact that Curly Howard’s real name (the humorist in “The Three Stooges” again) is Jerome Lester Horwitz (which is also the name of the elementary school). The school’s American football team name is the Knuckleheads, and George and Harold get their hypnotic ring from the “Li’l Wise Guy Novelty Company.” All these are references to “The Three Stooges” that only an adult reader might recognize.

One of the most regrettable losses that have occurred during the translation of the series is precisely the collusive humour shared with the adult reader. Ideally, the translator would look for a comparable allusion in the target language so the adult audience will enjoy these, or other, links; but this has not occurred in the translation of the CU series. Dav Pilkey states that CU books are for a very wide age group: “The reading level is “officially” ages 7 to 10, but I’d like to think the interest level would be more like ages 4 to 140,” (Scholastic Canada) acknowledging that the adult reader may be interested in his literary work as much as the child reader. The translator, who rejects the idea of the dual addressee in this series and has eliminated most of the jokes directed at adults, does not share this view. In an email interview, he explains:

I am afraid that these books do not have a ‘dual addressee’ [...] and therefore, move away from my ideal of books for children. I am convinced that the best books for children, even the books for the youngest, also bring great pleasure to the adult reader [...] I have serious doubts that that is the case in this collection. I am convinced that the author has not considered the adult reader for a second. (*email*)

Azaola has failed to acknowledge the winks that Pilkey gives to his adult readers. There are a number of jokes in the books written with an adult audience in mind that have therefore been omitted and a deletion technique has been applied, making them disappear from the target text.

The translator could have employed different strategies to gain the same level of humour, such as replacement or adaptation (See Table 4.3 for definitions). Instead, most of the allusions have been deleted from the translated text or literally translated instead of domesticated which in both cases leads to the disappearance of the jokes for the target readers. For example, Judy Blume's *Are you There, God? It's Me, Margaret* has become in CU "Are you there, God? It is Us, Fluffy and Cheeseball" (CU4, 101). The literal translation "¿Estás ahí Dios? Somos Nosotros, Diplodocus y Adefesio" does not mean anything to the Spanish readers and it may even have a religious connotation (characters seem to be praying during a difficult situation) that was definitely not intended by Dav Pilkey. The chances of Spanish readers knowing about this book that was first published in America in 1970 are slim; however, the parents of American children will get the joke. The translator did not attempt to substitute a title that might have been recognizable to Spanish adults and instead he has chosen the literal translation, which leaves the Spanish reader unaware of the irony.

There are many other examples of loss of humour when the chapters are translated literally: "When Kipper Gets Angry - Really, Really Angry" (CU9, chapter 26), or "Furious George" (chapter 11), or "Harold and the Purple Ballpoint Pen" (CU2, chapter 26) are references to American canonical texts not recognizable to Spanish readers. However, films such as "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (CU4, chapter 13), are very popular among Spanish parents ("Cariño, he encogido a los niños") and the references could have been used to

make a clear joke, but they have not been translated literally and Azaola has changed the verbal tense from perfect to preterit (“Cariño, encogí la escuela”), making it unrecognizable to the adult reader and losing the pun.

Replacement is a technique that works well when translating humour. To replace the allusion with another from the target culture allows the target readers to actually get the joke, or at least recognize some humour in the target language. For instance, the singer Cher is included in the fourth book when children listening to her music scream: “Aaaaah,” “Help!” and “Please, God make it stop!” (71). The allusion to this singer has been changed for a play-on-words that loses its parodic content and is politically more correct as no one is personally mocked: Spanish children listen to “Junio Inglesas” (June English women), a clear parody of the very famous Spanish singer Julio Iglesias. In this case, a creative use of language has been employed to distance the reader from what was a personal allusion. In very few cases has Azaola replaced a cultural allusion with another one from the Spanish culture. For instance, in one scene a woman is reading a magazine titled “American Idol: Behind the Scenes” (CU9, 291); this magazine has been replaced with “Operación Triunfo: Todos sus Secretos” (CC9, 289) (Triumph Operation: All its Secrets), a successful translation that carry on the same connotations implied in the ST.¹⁰

The last translatorial technique I would like to discuss is explanation, which consists in adding a word or phrase in the text, footnote or endnote, introduction or translator’s note, (Epstein, *Expressive* 140). For instance, the literary reference to *Sarah, Plain and Tall* has been completely eliminated in the Spanish version, although the translator has managed to explain its meaning to Spanish children within the text: “... you may not want to smile or

¹⁰ *Operación Triunfo* is a reality-show talent contest which first aired on Spain's TVE network in 2001. Its television format is very similar to American Idol or The X Factor in Britain.

laugh while reading this book. And when you get to the Flip-O-Rama parts, I suggest you flip with a bored, disinterested look on your face or some adult will probably take this book away from you and make you read *Sarah, Plain and Tall* instead. Don't say I didn't warn you" (CU10, 25). Azaola could easily have chosen Spanish canonical texts that are commonly on the recommended booklists that schools provide for their students, such as *Marcelino Pan y Vino*, *Fray Perico y su Borrico o Cinco Panes de Cebada*. Instead, he has deleted the whole reference and adds an explanation by saying "... I suggest that you flip pages with a bored, disinterested look or, on the contrary, it is possible that an adult will take the book away from you and make you read another very different one about good manners" (CC10, 25). The humorous effect is not the same, neither is the level of criticism of the author. In the American version, Pilkey can be accused of criticising a book that many adults consider very suitable for children and may even remember with some fondness. This could not happen in the Spanish version as no book has been set up as the target of the critique and the result is, thus, more inoffensive but less humorous.

In conclusion, it is safe to assume that target readers are not very familiar with the canonical texts, artists, films and television programs named in the CU series and therefore, to maintain equivalent effect, cultural replacements in the new target texts should in my opinion have been found. The translator has failed to find enough cultural equivalents that fitted the context and the mood of the text in the same way as the ST does. Epstein claims that retention seems to be a common method for translating allusions in children's literature (*Expressive* 140), but the majority of allusions in the CU series that have been retained do not work well because the audience may not recognize the reference. Also, allusions that have been deleted or explained have not been successful and make the target text less personal or funny. Azaola could have looked for cultural replacements within the Spanish

cultural context (books, Spanish television programmes, famous celebrities) to maintain the level of humour in the text. He could also have opted for a compensation technique and employed allusions in different places/amounts than the source text. In sum, the Spanish version has become less funny when it comes to allusions.

4.4.3 The translation of expressive language and wordplay

Delia Chiaro defines wordplay as “every conceivable way in which language is used with the intent to amuse” (1-2). Blake lists a variety of ‘sources’ of verbal (or written) humour, which have been summarized in Table 4.2:

SOURCE	MECHANISM
Fun with words	Homophony, polysemy, mispronunciation, misidentification, misuse of words and malapropisms
Grammatical ambiguities	e.g. exploiting structural ambiguity
Transpositions	Swapping words or parts of words around
Mixing styles	e.g. mixing prestigious accent to a dialectical grammar, similar words that belong to different varieties
Language in context	Ambiguity because of lack of context
Dashing expectations	Expectations of quantity, style, etc. raised but the result is incongruous
Clever connections	A connection between two seemingly disparate phenomena or entities
Logic, or the lack of thereof	Tautology, but overall failing logic

Table 4.2: Sources of verbally expressed humour as presented by Blake (4-16)

Wordplay is considered nearly impossible to translate because the constituent words, usually homonyms, are just not there in the target language. According to O’Sullivan, the degree of translatability depends on a number of factors, including how firmly the references of the wordplay are rooted in the context of the narrative (*Losses* 197). She suggests that a functional equivalent is usually the best that can be provided, so that its function is retained in the target language (197). Since in most cases wordplay in the source language cannot be translated straight into the target language, the translator needs either to

switch to a similar form in the target language or find some other appropriate kind of vocabulary within the same form (198). This is what Azaola has done when translating acronyms and double-meaning words. At the beginning of the fourth book, Pilkey introduces the two main characters: “[t]heir guidance counsellor, Mr. Recter thought the boys suffered from A.D.D. The school psychologist, Miss Labler, diagnosed them with A.D.H.D. and their mean old principal, Mr. Krupp, thought they were just plain old B.A.D.!” (CU4, 14). The use of well-known acronyms such as A.D.D. (Attention Deficit Disorder) and A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) works well in conjunction with the adjective ‘bad’ and has a humorous effect. Later, when the narrator goes on to say: “But if you ask me, George and Harold suffered from I.B.S.S. (Incredibly Boring School Syndrome)” (15), it adds another layer of humour as I.B.S. is not only a play on words but also an acronym for Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Azaola has therefore to take into account not only the use of acronyms, which is not as common in Spanish as it is in English, but also the implication of scatological content in I.B.S. (Irritable Bowel Syndrome). He has replaced the acronyms with new ones: A.D.D. becomes F.O.C.A. “Falta de Order, concentración y atención” (Lack of order, concentration and attention), which also means “seal” in Spanish. A.D.H.D. has been replaced with S.A.C.O. “síndrome del alborotador crónico ordinario” (Ordinary chronic troublemaker syndrome) which can mean “bag” or “sleeping bag.” These are valid translation strategies, but FOCA and SACO are not terms related to children’s attention disorders and therefore they result in being less funny. In the ST, Mr. Krupp believes that children are “B.A.D.” but in the Spanish version they are instead L.O.C.O.S. (“crazy”), a possibly reductive translation option, as being bad has a more negative connotation than being crazy. Finally, the translator has chosen C.A.T.E. “cuadro agudo de tedio escolar” (Severe case of school tedium) for I.B.S.S., an

acronym that respects the source meaning but has not any kept any reference to the condition of the digestive system or any other mention of scatology.

There are a number of translatorial techniques that can be followed in order to achieve functional equivalence. In Table 4.3 there is a list of translatorial strategies for expressive language, together with a description of them and instances that they could be applicable to. This table is taken from B.J. Epstein's study about translating expressive language in children's literature (25-26). It is worth considering that translators do not follow just one strategy but usually consider a combination of them. However, they do follow a general strategy that can lead toward a domestication or foreignization of the whole text, and this determines, to a certain extent, how much humour is retained in the target text.

Translatorial Strategy	Description	Applicable to
Deletion	to remove the expressive language and/or its associations; this may be part of a larger strategy of abridgement or adaptation, and may not be because of the expressive language itself, although it could be	Neologisms, names, idioms, allusions, wordplay, dialects
Standardization	to standardized the language and/or cultural concept, using standard spelling, grammar, and word choices in place of the non-standard ones in the original	Neologisms, dialects
Replacement	to replace the expressive language (with another example of the same sort of expressive language, or some other literary device or form of expressive language, or with a non-figurative word)	Neologisms, names, idioms, allusions, wordplay, dialects
Addition	To add new expressive language and/or new associations and/or some other text where there was none before; this can be a way or compensating for deletion, adaptation, or replacement	Neologisms, names, idioms, allusions, wordplay, dialects
Explanation	To add an explanation paratextually (a footnote or endnote, introduction or translator's note, or a signal) or	Neologisms, names, idioms, allusions, wordplay, dialects

	intratextually (a word or phrase in the text)	
Compensation	To employ the expressive language, but in different places/amounts than the source text	Neologisms, idioms, allusions, wordplay, dialects
Grammatical representation	To use non-standard grammar to mark the language usage	Dialects
Orthographic representation	To use non-standard spelling to mark the language usage	Dialects
Vocabulary representation	To use non-standard word choices to mark the language usage	Dialects
Literal translation	To recreate the expressive language in the target text, usually in without the same connotations	Names, idioms, allusions
Adaptation	To use the expressive language but change the spelling or grammar or some other part of it, perhaps to better suit the target language	Neologisms, names, allusions, dialects
Retention	To keep the expressive language and, hopefully, its associations, if there are any, or to only retain the associations or ideas contained in the particular item of expressive language	Neologisms, names, idioms, allusions, wordplay, dialects

Table 4.3: Epstein's translatorial strategies for expressive language (25-26).

In the Spanish translation of the CU series, there has been a clear domestication approach, as most wordplay has been deleted and replaced with new Spanish meanings that have kept, with different degrees of success, its humorous content. However, there have also been some examples of compensation where a literal translation was not possible because of its close links with the source context. In the fifth book Pilkey narrates that, in many schools, the teachers were trying to emphasize “the three Rs” (Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic), although Ms. Rible was more concerned with enforcing what she called “the three Ss” (Sit down, Shut your pie holes, and Stop driving me crazy [CU5, 12]). The “three Rs” refers to the foundations of a basic skills-oriented education program within American schools developed in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Obviously, it is impossible to translate “the three Rs” into Spanish language or context, so Azaola has compensated with

a new play on words with LEA (Lectura, Escritura y Aritmética) which also means “you read”. Ms. Ribble tried to impose “la FEA”, (the ugly one), that enforces ‘Formalidad’ (seriousness), ‘Estar quietos’ (be quiet), and ‘A callarse de una vez, ¡Que me vais a volver loca!’ (shut up, you are driving me crazy!) (CC5, 12). There is a compensation here because not only have the meaning and the humorous content been translated, but also the fact that a female character who is physically not very attractive tries to instil in the classroom “the ugly one” rule is quite funny and adds an extra layer of humour in the TT not present in the ST. However, this is the exception to the rule, as many features of humour have been lost in translation because of the impossibility of translating expressive language.

The problem of translating all kinds of expressive language resides in the idiomatic differences between the two languages. As Emer O’Sullivan states, “wordplay on the highest level, linguistic jokes which can’t be translated easily, poems, parodies; the English language not only provides the context for much of his [English Language] humour, it itself is frequently its very object” (*Alice* 12). The Spanish language is not nearly as rich in homophones as English, most of them restricted to our silent “h” and the homophones “b” and “v.”

It can also happen that even though a literal translation is possible and acceptable, it has been rejected for its content. For instance, when George and Harold confuse the words “placenta” and “placebo,” it has a comic effect. The children explain the “placebo effect” as “if he [Captain Underpants] believes that fabric softener will save him, then it probably will. I think it’s called ‘the Placenta Effect’” (*CU5*, 121), and then Pilkey names the following chapter “The Placenta Effect” (133). It very rarely happens that a literal translation conveys the humour of the target text. In this case, “placenta” and “placebo” are

also Spanish words with exactly the same meanings; even the expression “efecto placebo” is well known in Spanish language carrying the same meaning as in English. Therefore, it is difficult to explain why Azaola has rejected the use of the word ‘placenta’ and has translated the whole episode using a new play-on-words with “sudigestión” (“his/ her digestion”) instead of “sugestión” (“suggestion”). One possible explanation is that the publishing house or the translator felt uncomfortable using the word ‘placenta,’ for its biological connotations related to giving birth. This seems to be a political decision rather than a linguistic one. There are, however, other examples where new plays-on-words have been created during the translation process. In the same book, Pilkey plays with the idea of “Reverse Psychology” (Chapter 7, 26, 27). Azaola, however, has not translated the term properly (“psicología inversa”) and has opted for “psicología reversible” (“Reversible Psychology”) adding a humorous connotation that was not present in the source text.

Hans Grassegger believes that a translation may be considered successful if a passage of wordplay in the source language is rendered in the target language at all, even with another type of wordplay: “The invariant in such a version is... not the specific form or content, but the idea of wordplay, and in rendering it one must often be satisfied with a translation which is only an equivalent” (100, qtd. in O’Sullivan, *Losses* 195). Azaola has tried to keep the language playful to a certain extent but the linguistic differences between the languages have made the task impossible at times. To exemplify these differences and the use of expressive language, I will now look at the translation of names in the CU series and the techniques that have been followed to translate them.

4.4.4 The translation of proper names

A proper name or noun is “a name used for an individual person, place, or organization” (OED). This section looks at proper names in the ST, its humorous content and how they have been translated into Spanish. Proper names in fiction are rarely arbitrary; authors pick names in order to fulfil certain functions and to motivate a meaning behind a particular name, even though it may happen that the reader does not succeed in recognizing this and the names do not provoke the expected reaction. Characterization of people in books or fiction through names might “create a set of expectations” which could be fulfilled, or not, by the story (Manini 166). After all, authors “have the freedom to overrule the play of sheer coincidence which dominates name giving in real life to make the names reflect the characters according to any particular narrative design they may have in mind” (163).

Van Coillie argues that besides identifying characters, proper names have a number of functions in the texts; specifically, he identifies six functions:

The informative function calls on readers’ knowledge and/or teaches them something. The formative function confronts readers with standards and values and/or provides a moral compass. The emotional function speaks to the emotions or enriches them. The creative function stimulates the imagination. The divertive function meets the need for relaxation, and the aesthetic function provides aesthetic pleasure. (124)

In children’s literature, especially in the fantasy genre and particularly in the CU series, names have a key role in creating comic effects and portraying characters’ personalities and physical traits, which will often guide the reader throughout the story. Names in children’s literature rely on many disparate techniques for their humour, but many of their comic

effects derive particularly from puns and double entendres (Embleton 175). In many cases, proper names also provide additional information to the reader about a character or place, alluding to one of their most relevant features.¹¹ Lefevere underlines the way in which allusions are an important function of names in fictional works: “Writers sometimes use names not to just name a character in a poem, story, novel or play but also to describe those characters. The name usually contains an allusion to a certain word in the language, and that allusion allows readers to characterize” (39). This is precisely what Pilkey has created in the CU series.

Lincoln Fernandes explains how proper names can function to convey semantic, social semiotic and sound symbolic meaning(s) directly from the writer to the reader in relation to, for instance, a character, place, or object being referred to in the narrative. Each one of these presents its own obstacle to translation. For instance, the task of translating a semantically loaded name is challenging because the translator needs to find an equivalent that will retain the same level of humour (46). By creatively employing names, authors can easily hint at a character’s personality, habits, or physical features and lead readers to make judgements about them in the fictional world in which they are presented. In the case of the CU series, the most obvious examples are the names of the teachers. As Table 4.4 shows, Dav Pilkey has created phonetic puns with all the teachers’ names, making rude and offensive homophones for each one of them, and in many cases he has related them to their position at school. Names can be enjoyable to read when the juxtaposition of letters or the fixed meanings or connotations deliberately echo or are reminiscent of a noun, adjective, or idiom:

¹¹ The translations of the Asterix comics to English are excellent examples of successful translation of names and wordplay. See Embleton.

Name of the teacher	Job	Phonetical Pun / Homonym
Mr. Krupp Mr. Benny Krupp	Principal	Mr. “Crap” “bankrupt”
Ms. Tara Ribble	4 th Grade teacher	“Terrible”
Mr. Jacob Meaner	Gym Teacher	“misdemeanour”
Ms. Edith Antrophe	Secretary	“misanthropy” or pun on the phrase “eat it and throw up”
Mr. Morty Fyde	4 th Grade Teacher	“mortified”
Mr. Larry Rected	Guidance Counselor	“misdirected”
Mrs. DePoint	Cook	“misses the point”
Ms. Nicole Guided	Teacher	“misguided”
Ms. Creant	Lunch Lady	“miscreant”
Mrs. Singlebrains	Librarian	“missing all brains”
Mr. Rustworthy	Music Teacher	“rustworthy” instead of “trustworthy”
Ms. Lily Fitt	Teacher	“misfit”
Ms. Olivia Dayken	Teacher	“mistaken”

Table 4.4: Names of teachers and phonetic puns

Also, proper names are often the semiotic elements of a text that are most urgent and at the same time the most problematic to translate, especially due to their semiotic significance that is often culture-bound (Tymoczko, qtd. in Fernandes 47). From a semiotic point of view, names in different cultures can signal historical associations, gender, class, education level, religious identity, and so on. In this sense, the difficulties in translating names are related to the complexity of translating cultural patterns. Lack of awareness of the source language and culture can lead to a loss of meaning in the translation process.

It is important to underline that names that convey semiotic meaning do not always present obstacles to translation. After all, some of these names exist in the target culture in

the same form as that of the source culture (47). The title of “Professor,” for instance, exists both in English (USA and UK) and Spanish (Spain and Latin American countries) as a sign of deference for an educated adult who works at a university and who has completed a doctoral program; therefore he/she should be respected for his/her knowledge and degree. In this case it is not necessary to explain the term further for the target reader.

Finally, the task of translating symbolic sound meanings can be more challenging, especially if the sounds do not convey the same meanings in the target language. Matthews explains how sound symbolism refers to “the use of specific sounds or features of sounds in a partly systematic relation to meanings or categories of meaning” (Matthews, qtd. in Fernandes 47). Among the typological significations that sound symbolism subsumes, there are two worth mentioning: imitative sound symbolic meaning and phonesthetic meaning. Ook and Gluk, for example, are the names of the two cavemen that make an appearance in tenth novel of the CU series. Their names are given as a phonetical imitation of guttural sounds that cavemen possibly used to communicate when language and speech were not developed in the prehistoric era. In the Spanish series, for the phonetic reasons of having two vowels together, “Ook” has become “Huk,” while Gluk has been retained as in the original.

Translating proper names can be a challenge for any translator. Puurtinen suggests that the presence of many foreign names and a plenitude of unexpected phonological sequences or even unfamiliar spellings in a translation bring with them the risk of creating linguistic barriers for young readers, who will be alienated from the text and have their enjoyment undermined. Also, concerning readability, it is important to stress that names have to be memorable if they are to fulfil their primary function of referentiality. According to Tymoczko, the referential function of names presupposes a certain “recognizability” and

“memorability,” which means that proper names must in “some way be memorable so as to serve their function as indicators of unique objects” (qtd. in Fernandes 48). Thus, it is easy to argue that unfamiliar foreign names with strange phonology and orthography can interfere negatively with memorability, as it becomes hard for the receptor audience to “keep the names straight in literary works” (48).

Different countries have followed different approaches to translating the proper names in the CU series. Table 4.5 shows how the books published in France, for instance, have favoured a foreignizing approach and have left the names as in the ST. In Canada, however, they have translated the books into French and have domesticated the majority of them.

English (USA)	Spanish (Spain)	French (France)	French (Canada)	Italian	German
George Beard	Jorge Betanzos	George Beard	Georges Barnabé	Giorgio Giorgi	George Beard
Harold Hutchins	Berto Henares	Harold Hutchins	Harold Hébert	Carlo de Carlis	Harold Hutchins
Mr. Krupp	Zarzamoro Carrasquilla	Mr. Krupp	Abélard Bougon	Signor Grugno	Rektor Mr. Krupp
Captain Underpants	Capitán Calzoncillos	Capitaine Slip	Capitaine Bobette	Capitan Mutanda	Captain Underpants
Melvin Sneedly	Gustavo Lumbreras	Melvin Sneedly	Louis Labrecque	Mariolino Atomo	Helfer
Ms. Tara Ribble	Sra. Pichote	Madame Ribble	Madame Thérèse Rancier	Signora Ribble	Frau Ribble
Wedgie Woman	La mujer macroeástica	Mdm. Culotte	Mdm. Culotte	Superprof	Mdm. Muffelpo
Professor Pippy-Pee-Pee Poopypants	Profesor Pipicaca	K.K. Prout	Professor Pannolino	Professor Pipipus	K.K. Prout

Table 4.5: Translation of the CU proper names in different languages.¹²

¹² It is not within the scope of this dissertation to study the translation of the CU series into other languages, although I believe it is important to acknowledge that other

Fernández suggests that names should be dealt with by translators in a way which would enable young readers to recognize them according to the phonological and orthographic conventions of the target language: “in addition to serving as identifying labels and conveying semantic, semiotic and sound symbolic meanings, names must in some way be readable so as not to alienate children from reading” (48). Azaola has definitively followed this tendency when translating all the proper names, as he has domesticated all the characters in the series. There are only two names that have been retained as in the original text, the evil aliens Klax and Zorx, but all the others have been adapted or replaced.

Different translation scholars have identified numerous techniques for the translation of proper names. Van Coillie in his article “Character Names in Translation: A Functional Approach” identifies ten possible strategies a translator can adopt when dealing with the translation of proper names in children’s fiction. Table 4.6 shows the different types of strategies adopted in translating proper names, with the characteristics of each one (123).

Types of strategy	Character of translation
1) Reproduction	Leaving foreign names unchanged
2) Non translation plus additional explanation	Adding explanations, either in the form of a note or in the text itself
3) Replacement of personal name by a common noun	Replacing a proper name by a common noun that characterizes the person
4) Phonetic or morphological adaptation to the target language	Turning to phonetic transcription or morphological adaptation

translators/publishing houses in different countries have followed a completely different approach from the Spanish one. The translation of proper names is just an example.

5) Exonym	Replacing a name by a counterpart in the target language
6) Replacement by a more widely known name from the source culture or an internationally known name with the same function	Opting for recognisability without abandoning the foreign context
7) Substitution	Replacing a name by another name from the target language
8) Translation of names with a particular connotation	Reproducing the connotation in the target language, when names have specific connotations
9) Replacement by a name with another or additional connotation	Adding or changing the connotation of a name
10) Deletion	Omitting all the proper names

Table 4.6: Van Coillie's model of translating proper names

Van Coillie also mentions that the actual choice of strategy the translator makes depends on a variety of factors. He distinguishes four categories of translating motives: the nature of the name (the connotation attached to a name); textual factors (names that are embedded in a cultural context that cannot be developed in the target context); the translator's frame of reference (his/her ideas, experiences, norms, values, and so on); and other factors, such as cooperation with other actors in the literary communication process (129).

Looking at the CU series and its proper names, the research question of which translation strategy has been applied to translate the main characters' names into Spanish language is answered in table 4.7:

Name in ST	Translation in TT	Strategy
George R. Beard	Jorge Betanzos	Substitution
Harold M. Hutchins	Berto Henares	Substitution
Mr. Benjamin Krupp Captain Underpants	Zarzamoro Carrasquilla Capitán Calzoncillos	Substitution Translation
Dr. Diaper	Doctor Pañal	Translation
Melvin Sneedly	Gustavo Lumbreras	Substitution

The Turbo Toilet 2000	Retre-Turbotrón 2000	Translation
Incredible Robo-Plunger	Robodesastacop	Translation with particular connotation
Zorx, Klax Jennifer (three evil aliens)	Zorx Klax Jeroma	Reproduction Reproduction Substitution
Cafeteria Lunch Ladies	Las señoras del comedor	Translation
Professor Pippy Poopypants	Profesor Pipicaca	Translation with particular connotation
Wicked Wedgie Woman	La Supermujer Macroelástica	Replacement
Robo-boogers Carl, Trixie, and Frankenbooger	Carolo Barbie Frankenmonken	Substitution Substitution Translation with particular connotation
“Crackers” (a quetzalcoatlus)	Galletas	Translation
Sulu	Chuli	Substitution
Kipper Krupp	Luisón	Substitution
The Bullies (Finkstien, Bugg and Loogie)	Tronquete, Ferni y Culebra	Substitution

Table 4.7: Translation strategies for names in the CU series

It is important to remark that all the teachers' names have been translated using a substitution technique, which means that all the puns intended by the author have been lost. Instead, the translator has chosen to use old-fashioned names to create a comic effect that, in my opinion, is not as effective as in the original text. Of course, the way Azaola (following the dictates of the publishing house SM) has translated the proper names is based on what adults think is appropriate or best for readers: “the translator’s personal image of childhood, his or her ideas about what children can handle, what they find strange, what they like to read, what is important for their education” (Van Coillie 132-33). However, it is a fact the when it comes to names, the “foreignness” of the texts has been

erased. In terms of names, the CU books have been so domesticated that they could easily pass for Spanish texts.

In terms of statistical analysis, out of the 40 names analysed, substitution is the most common strategy, used 75% of the time (30 names). Far behind are translation and translation with connotations (22%, 7 names). The other translation techniques were not used, except for 2 reproductions (5%) and 1 replacement (2.7%).



The fact that substitution and translation are the most common strategies is not surprising. Descriptive names are dependent on language and on the context of the story, so it is less likely that they would be directly retained within the Spanish translations, as the associations would then no longer be available to readers. In this case, translator Miguel Azaola could not translate the names literally, as the play on words would not have made sense in Spanish, but he has in some cases kept language playful and created new names for adults related to their position at school: for instance, Mrs. Creant and Mrs. DePoint, the lunch ladies, become Sra. Masmaizena (“Mrs. More-cornstarch”) and Sra. Aldente (“Mrs. Al-Dente”). These names, despite creating a new play-on-words, do not imply a negative connotation or a rude remark as the original ones do, and therefore they lose part of their

subversive potential. They do not appear obvious to the child reader either. In a survey conducted in a Spanish school, only 27% (Sra. Masmaizena) and 8% (Sra. Aldente) of the children were able to identify these names respectively with their position at school, and both were perceived as not very funny. Señor Regúlez, the Spanish name for the guidance counselor (Mr. Rected in the ST), is a name that has a degree of word play, as it may be related to “regla” (ruler or rule) or to “regular” (to regulate). It could have been a good option for the Mathematics teacher, for instance. Señor Panfilotas (‘pánfilo’ in Spanish means simple, gullible, stupid, or sluggish, depending on context) is perhaps the most insulting name in the Spanish series, although the word ‘pánfilo’ is quite old fashioned and not very common amongst children today. Finally, another name that retains some play on words is Señor Magrazas, the PE teacher (Mr. Jacob Meaner), as “magra” means ‘lean meat’ or ‘pork loin’ so there is a connection here between the name of the teacher and his position at school.

These are perhaps the exception to the rule, as in the Spanish texts most of the names have been domesticated and have lost their dual meaning and an important source of humour. As Azaola explains:

I soon understood that it was too difficult to find an equivalence in names that were word play in Spanish, so I tried to find names that resulted in humour (with more or less success) and that’s it. In some cases (Panfilotas, Regúlez, Aldente) they try to reflect features of the characters, and these cases are evident. However, the majority of them do not imply a second or a third intention/meaning. It is likely, naturally, that there is a link between the words “Carrasquilla” and “Cascarrabias” (in English:

grouch), but in this case it will be more the result of my subconscious than my intention. (*email*)

The vast majority of the descriptive names have therefore been sacrificed in the target text and completely domesticated, a solution that makes phonetic sense. For instance, Mrs. Carrs or Mr. Rustworthy are difficult names for the Spanish speaker to pronounce, mostly due to the numbers of consonants that are grouped together. Alternatively, Azaola could have looked for descriptive names in Spanish for teachers. For instance, some common jokes related to names are “Dolores Fuertes” (translated: Strong Pains), Ana Mier de Cilla (wordplay for “Ana little-shit”), Ramona Ponte Alegre (Ramona be happy), Margarita Flores del Campo (Daisy Flowers of the Field), just to name a few.¹³ They could have been used for the school nurse (Strong Pains), the cantina ladies (Ana little-shit) or the Biology teacher (Daisy Flowers of the Field), for instance. Instead, his choice of old-fashioned names makes the text a great deal less funny than the original.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter cannot possibly enumerate all the possible ways in which Pilkey creates humorous effects in his work or comment on all their possible translations and strategies followed.¹⁴ Using specific examples I have tried to show both successful and unsuccessful translations and the degree of, and reasons behind, their success. It is obvious that the

¹³ There are a number of websites and forums that compile funny names in Spanish; for instance: <http://www.macuarium.com/foro/index.php?showtopic=6119>

¹⁴ For instance, the use of the graphic dimension of the text to create humour will be analysed in the next chapter.

higher degree of specific cultural and linguistic factors involved in humorous features, the more difficult it is to translate them. In achieving humour, both written and verbal, translators are called upon to reconstruct the stylistic effect of expressive language and intertextuality. However, the most important thing to retain in the target text is the play of ideas. To a certain extent, it is relevant to remind readers that, behind every successful translation, there is an author who has a high degree of linguistic and stylistic awareness, and that a translated text always implies a gain for the literature of the language into which it is translated rather than a loss in the original text.

Shifts of meaning in humour translation should not be seen as a negative phenomenon but as the consequences of linguistic and cultural differences. However, they should aim to have the same humorous effect as the source text does, which is not always the case in the CU series. The translator needs to understand the historical and social subtleties of humour, approximate to its style, and transfer the linguistic features and cultural nuances, as far as possible, to the extent that it makes the target audience laugh when reading or hearing the text in their own language. Azaola and the publishing house may have made the Spanish children laugh, softly, but they do not create the guffaw intended by Pilkey. Because the pleasure adult readers might take from the text has been ignored, the translations have also lost much of the complexity of the originals.

An obvious gap revealed by analysis of humour in the CU series is the use of food, its excessiveness and its relation with language, and the humorous content of pictures. Therefore, the next two chapters of this thesis will focus on the translation of food (including its functions and the role it plays in both the source and target cultures and texts) and the translation of the visual aspects of the series (pictures, comics, paratexts, and the

cultural peritext). First, for its close links with language, I will study the translation of food in the CU series.

Chapter Five

Translating Food

Chapter Five focuses on the uses of food in the CU series and its translation into Spanish. The introduction to this chapter explores the relationship between food and culture. In Section 5.2, national visions of food in children's literature are analysed in the Spanish, British and American contexts. This leads on, in Section 5.3, to current concerns around healthy eating and body image in these three countries. Section 5.4 explores the way food is used in the CU series to achieve different goals. Finally, Section 5.5 studies the Spanish text and how the language of food has been changed in translation.

5.1. Introduction

People today tend to think about food with pleasure; in the same way, some people find pleasure in reading about it. Food is more than the nutritional value it possesses for its consumption, and its importance goes far beyond that of satisfying our hunger. Layers of meaning are hidden in food and what it represents. Food - or the lack of it - is also omnipresent. Genesis, the first book of both the Jewish Torah and the Christian Bible, mentions food in its very first chapter: "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face the all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for your food" (*Gen.* 1:29). Food has always been present in the oral tradition and in literature because it is an essential element of life. Thus, readings of fictional food events provide us with knowledge about the culture,

ideology, values, morals, concerns, and family and social relationships of a culture or historical period.

The relationship between food and culture is undeniable. All cultures consume and celebrate food in different ways. But food can also be one of the great cultural dividers. A dish that is enjoyed in one culture may be considered inedible in another (e.g. for cultural or religious reasons). Food has its own meaning and significance in different cultures. Roland Barthes explains this idea further in his article “Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption” when he defines food as “... not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages situation and behaviour” (21). Barthes uses his article to develop a semiotic theory of food and culture, and explains how the way in which modern man purchases, consumes or serves an item of food sums up and transmits a situation: “it constitutes an information, it signifies” (21). Barthes refers here to the fact that the food has to be obtained, prepared, cooked, served and digested; all these actions imply that “all the facts concerning food form a structure analogous to other systems of communication” (22). At the same time, in his book *Mythologies* he dedicates three chapters to food in which he studies its representation in everyday society. For example, in “Wine and Milk”, Barthes explains how wine for the French is a symbol of patriotism, “a possession which is [their] very own, just like [their] three hundred and sixty types of cheese” (58). He also distinguishes how wine is presented in itself as a pleasure, not a means to get drunk: “other countries drink to get drunk, and this is accepted by everyone; in France, drunkenness is a consequence, never an intention” (59). In “Steak and Chips” a similar argument is developed. Barthes claims that how a steak is prepared is more important than its consumption, and a rare steak

“represent[s] both a nature and a morality” that an overdone one lacks. Barthes states that blood and the natural feelings it inspires are patriotic for the French. As Ann Alston explains, “associations of food and nationality emphasize the cultural investment in food and its importance to perceptions of belonging, on both national and familial terms” (106), although it is also important not to fall into stereotypes.

People consciously or unconsciously give different cultural meanings to these meals. For example, lunch in Spain is considered to be a proper meal (the most important one in terms of food intake) while in America or United Kingdom evening dinner is the main meal of the day. Not only does the amount of food differ, but also the meal structure and format, the time employed, the social context of eating and the appropriateness of certain food items. All these factors can affect the reception of some books in different cultures. Carolyn Daniel states that “different foods *produce* different people. This implies that food can influence or transform people’s personalities and behaviours” (14, emphasis in original). This statement should be considered when translating food in children’s (and adults) texts. Different products may possess a political/religious/ideological charge that the foreign reader remains unaware of; therefore, the reader may decode or interpret the text in an unexpected way. After all, food preferences tend to be culturally specific (Daniel 12) and this is inevitably reflected in children’s literature.

Food and eating are, at the same time, universal and fundamental human experiences, because we all need to eat. Not only do we eat for survival, but also the act of eating is unavoidably related to social functions. When it comes to children, food is even more relevant because children are supposed to learn how to behave socially in their early years, and it is only natural that children’s literature has acknowledged food’s social implications. As Carolyn Daniel points out, “[m]eal

times are powerful socializing events. Cultural food rules and attitudes toward food and the eating body are transmitted via the subtexts of children's fiction and of their everyday lives" (15). Food is used, then, as a tool to teach children what is, or is not, appropriate in society. Regardless of this didactic approach, when it comes to food and social matters, children's literature portrays a positive attitude towards food more often than not.

There are three relevant works in the theoretical field of children's literature and its relation to food, all of them of fairly recent publication. The first is Carolyn Daniel's *Voracious Children: Who eats Whom in Children's Literature*, published in 2006. This book develops a feminist argument around food and its representations in children's literature. Employing binaries as a starting point, Daniel concludes that cultural rules about food and eating in children's literature produce and perpetuate the basic structural oppositions inside/outside, self/other, good/bad and, significantly, adult/child and male/female (211), and therefore these cultural rules cannot escape from the patriarchal culture. The power relations in all these binaries are examined in different children's texts with the conclusion that the *Other* (usually represented in female characters) fails to change the existing ideological patriarchal structure of society.

The second relevant work is a compilation of essays edited by Kara Keeling and Scott Pollard entitled *Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature*, published in 2009. This recent work analyses the significance of food in children's literature in different periods and places (nineteenth century, contemporary, United States, multicultural literature, international children's literature) and focuses on different genres (picture books, novels, young adult literature, comics, cookbooks,

etc.) under a variety of approaches (gender studies, postcolonialism, cultural studies, etc.)

The most recent book concerning food and children's literature is *Feast or Famine? Food in Children's Literature*, based on papers and talks presented at the joint annual conference of the British branch of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY UK) and the MA course at the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (NCRCL) at Roehampton University in November 2013. This compilation of essays covers a wide range of historical times, examining the uses of food in children's books from the nineteenth century to the present day, and genres, from ancient fable to twenty-first-century fantasy. Especially relevant to this dissertation is Gili Bar-Hillel's essay about translating food in children's literature, discussed in more detail in Section 5.4.

In the next section I analyse how children's literature reflects national visions of food and their differences, as well as why British, American and Spanish writers have chosen different items of food from within their cultures, and how they present them to the reader. Examples from the source text (CU books) will be employed to explain and illustrate the American cultural context.

5.2. Food in children's literature: the English, American and Spanish landscapes

Traditionally, food descriptions in children's literature are created to produce pleasure in the reader, a physical/bodily/visceral pleasure provided by the consumption of a lavish, splendid, magnificent, and abundant meal. However, uses of food in children's texts differ from culture to culture. England, America and Spain all have different attitudes toward food and its implications, and this is echoed in their national

narratives. I have decided to include the uses of food in British children's literature in order to provide a wider context of the relevance of food in children's literature overall. Also, I have identified many similarities and, most importantly, differences between the American and the English landscapes, which are relevant because it shows how the uses of food, even within the same language, can be affected by psychological, sociological, and cultural perspectives and attitudes.

Food fantasies are an important ingredient in British children's literature, probably more than in any other country. Tolkien, Blyton, Rowling, Grahame, Dahl, Burnett and Carroll, among others, have dedicated many lines to descriptions of food and meals, usually depicted as sumptuous and served in copious quantities. During the Golden Age period of British children's literature, lavish food fantasies were introduced. As Robert Hemmings explains in his article "A Taste of Nostalgia: Children's Books from the Golden Age - Carroll, Grahame and Milne", the nostalgic version of childhood adopted by the Victorian adult was also projected in food. The longing desire of the adult looking back to a pure and innocent childhood makes writers introduce succulent food to the child reader who was, in reality, forbidden to try such delicacies. Victorian children's texts are full of marmalades and cakes (Carroll), "coldhamcoldbeef sandwiches," "rashers from a side of bacon," and "fried ham" (Grahame 4, 39, 41); but, in reality, children in their everyday meals hardly ever tasted this food.

Daniel explains how from the late eighteenth century to the beginning of World War II children from economically well-positioned families ate with their servants rather than their parents, and how their diet was austere and monotonous (64). This practice was inherited from John Locke's principles for child-rearing described in his book *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), a book to which

the English upper classes adhered for nearly two hundred and fifty years (Avery 157). The Puritans embraced the idea of the corruptive quality of some edibles; rich food was accused of disturbing both children's bodies and souls and, as a consequence, children were deprived of it. The lack of sugar and meat in children's diets is "directly attributable to the strictly hierarchical structure of Victorian society... and condemned them (children) to a meager diet of simple, bland, food" (Daniel 71).

It was no longer an issue of finding and providing food, because food was a common resource in the middle and upper class household; but middle-class girls saw in food a symbolic language linked to femininity, parental concern and social convention. Joan Jacobs Brumberg, in her article "The Appetite as Voice," points out how meat caused Victorian women and girls greater moral anxiety, because "[t]he flesh of animals was considered a heat-producing food that stimulated production of blood and fat as well as passion" (166). Food in general was to be feared because society linked it to gluttony and physical ugliness in women (168). What Jacobs implies in her article is the same idea later developed by Carolyn Daniel that food (and appetite) was an important voice in the identity of a young woman, and by controlling and withholding it, patriarchal bourgeois society exerted control over girls.

Children and young adults' texts helped to perpetuate this control, reminding readers how sensitive girls eat small quantities and how their appetite should be affected by almost any circumstances. Jane Eyre, the main character in Charlotte Brontë's Victorian novel, tells the reader how she was not hungry even after a journey of two days: "I drank, for I was thirsty, but did not touch the food, excitement and fatigue rendering me incapable of eating" (32). Not even later in the book, when she is starving to death, is she allowed to eat as much bread and milk as she wishes, and it is a male character (and a morally strong one) St. John, who rations her food: "Not too

much at first, restrain her... She has had enough” (233). Jane Eyre is not an exception. During Victorian times, tasty food was reserved for adults, mainly men, because it was perceived as inherently sinful. In order to create some distance between the sinful adult and the innocent child, Victorians refused to accept children’s appetite and condemned them to consume a diet based on boiled meat or steamed fish, cabbage, and milk-based puddings like rice and tapioca (Murcott, qtd. in Daniel 65).

It was Victorian authors who introduced fantasy food descriptions, but they made these unavailable for children anyway. *The Wind in the Willows*’ main characters Mole, Rat, Badger, and Rat do consume pork chops, bacon, and greasy products, but they are, after all, adult males and anthropomorphised characters; animals eagerly eating other animals. Very rarely can one read about a young girl feasting herself with meat, cakes, chocolates, etc. in Victorian texts. Only anthropomorphised animals can devour meat and other treats that were, in reality, being consumed by male adults. Therefore, children were following Victorian standards even in fiction, and were inevitably being condemned to a boring and scarce diet.

Cultural beliefs can also affect the suitability of some items of food for children. Questions of children’s diet and health have been dealt with in many ways and through different approaches. Historical and cultural beliefs, medical models, body image, health and safety regulations, etc. vary in different cultures at different times and have influenced the literature written for children at the time. Gillian Avery shows how during the nineteenth century American children were not subjected to the same strict diet as British children. British visitors commented with amazement when they saw American children ordering fish or beef-steak at breakfast, or enumerating the kind of food children were allowed to eat, including oysters, tea, coffee, flesh and

game (158). Avery explains how for the English mentality it was a sign of an ill-bred family when children were indulged over their food, but this was not the case in America, where children were allowed to feast themselves (159).

This lack of lavish food can fuel characters' imaginations. After all, as Keeling and Pollard state, "food is also fundamental to the imagination and the imaginary arts. Food is fundamental to the imagination, because food is fundamental to culture" (5). Children constantly imagine food in different case scenarios: when they are hungry they day-dream about food, and when they are offered a meal they dislike they wish they had something else on their plates, or even have plates designed to create faces and objects on them using the different colours and textures of food.

J.M. Barrie, however, takes a different approach to link imagination and food. When Peter Pan and the lost boys are in Neverland, Wendy takes care of them; in fact, her biggest task is cooking and feeding the boys. She actually prepares rather elaborate food consisting of roasted breadfruit, roasted pigs, or tappa rolls and bananas, besides other items (Barrie 78). The children in the book never know, however, if it is a real meal or if it was all in Peter's imagination: "...but you never exactly knew whether there would be a real meal or just a make-believe, it all depended upon Peter's whim. He could eat, really eat, if it was part of the game, but he could not stodge just to feel stodgy, which is what most children like better than anything else; the next best thing being to talk about it" (78). For English children, the pleasure obtained from talking about food is only inferior to the pleasure achieved from actually eating it, although again it should be noted that the children in Peter Pan are mostly boys, not girls. Wendy is the only girl in the group, and she is relegated to the job of food preparation in the kitchen.

Some theoretical approaches link food with women. Social hierarchies and power relations are intrinsically related to women and their control of food as a source of power, and this is substantially echoed in children's literature (i.e. witches, mothers, fairies, stepmothers, etc.). In the CU series, this stereotypical image of women as producers of food is portrayed. Without exception, every time food is being prepared or cooked, it is always a woman who is doing it (see *CU3*, 32; *CU5*, 171; *CU8*, 80-81, *CU10*, 66). The Lunch Ladies, for instance, are depicted as three old-looking women, rather obese, and wearing glasses, very close to the traditional image of a witch. Later in the book, when three aliens (Zorx, Klax, and Jennifer) want to take over planet Earth by turning all the children into giant, super-powered evil zombie nerds, they do it disguised as the new lunch ladies. They change their names to Zorxette, Klaxette and Jenniferette, and they present themselves as women, large in size, and wearing wigs with bows on them and heavy lipstick. Apparently, in Pilkey's narrative you have to be a woman to work in the school kitchen and therefore, androgynous aliens need to become female (and grotesque females at that) to be considered for the job. Inevitably, food and self-awareness of body image is also a medium for gender definitions. Therefore, it is only natural that the relationship between food, gender and culture studies has been applied to a number of fields, including children's literature itself.

The physicality and preparation of food, as represented in the kitchen, has also been treated in different ways in England and the USA: while middle-upper class English children were not allowed in the kitchen and had to eat their food in the nursery, American children ate, and even helped to prepare, their own food in the kitchen: "it is the kitchen dimension that gives such a pleasure sense of warmth and well-being to American books; the hearth and the food represent comfort and

security” (Avery 160). It can be argued that British literature too portrays the warmth of the kitchen, as we read the description of Badger’s home with “all the glow and the warmth of a large firelit kitchen” (Grahame 54). But again the “cosiness” of the kitchen is just for moles, hobbits, fauns, or other animals in British texts; it is not suitable for children who belong to the nursery.

With the coming of the twentieth century and the outbreak of the World Wars, government-imposed restrictions and rations were quite common in England. After World War I, a shortage of fats and sugars in the diet of the British population shaped an even bigger craving and desire to consume them. In a war context, food and shelter can become luxury goods not affordable to everyone. Milne’s Pooh reminds us of his obsession with honey and the joys of having access to it: “Sing Oh! For the life of a bear. I don’t much mind if it rains or snows, / ‘Cos I have a lot of honey on my nice new nose!” (Milne 84). World War II meant an even more radical change in the English diet, for both adults and children. Food was scarce and rationed, and the majority of people were eating less than they had in previous decades (Daniel 73). Food rationing began in England on the 8th of January 1940, after the outbreak of World War II, and continued for fifteen years. This shortage of food affected not only the working classes, but all social classes; even Princess Elizabeth had her own ration book, although the idea that the royal family adhered to the same strict rations of food during wartime is debatable (Gardiner 123). Fresh vegetables were scarce, unless people had access to a home vegetable garden (73). Thus, the possibility of eating cakes, sweets and chocolates was remote at the time: “War’s a nuisance... You can’t get sweets, everything is on coupons”, declared a 10 year old boy when asked about war (qtd. in Gardiner 120). The first rationed foods were, in fact, sugar, butter, ham

and bacon¹. It was in this context that the first book of The Famous Five series was published in 1942, and many more followed: all of them contained detailed food descriptions. Therefore, while British children did not have access to sweets and other delicacies, Enid Blyton was presenting them with a world full of “toast, marmalade and butter to come, and the coffee and hot milk... and if you want any more bacon and eggs, just ring the bell” (*Five on a Hike* 69). Delicious and limitless food was offered to this group of children who were also always hungry and eager to devour it. Blyton, with her food descriptions, was offering the reader an emotional experience of “tasting” food through reading, a recreation of food that was unreachable in the reality of the post-war period, a “jouissance” hidden in literature.²

It is not only British texts that portray this desire to revive the pleasure of eating through the act of reading. The American literary landscape is quite similar when it comes to offering the reader sumptuous meals during times of deprivation. The beginning of World War II occasioned the rationing of many edibles and other products such as gas, rubber, or nylon (*Children in History*). Again, the first food item that was rationed was sugar, in 1943, followed by butter and meat. Rationing ended in the USA in 1946, while in Britain it lasted for almost another decade, until the 4th of July 1954 (BBC). This difference in the length of the rationing probably explains the

¹ Juliet Gardiner’s book *The Children’s War: The Second World War through the Eyes of the Children* contains a whole chapter about food, its rationing, and feeding children (120-48).

² Roland Barthes uses the concept of ‘jouissance’ in his book *The Pleasure of The Text* (1973) to express the ultimate pleasure experienced through reading, an unexpected pleasure that “hits” the reader in response to a narrative. This pleasure can be induced by textual food, especially when the reader is hungry or deprived of certain items of food. “The novelist, by citing, naming, *noticing* food (by treating it as notable), imposes on the reader the final state of matter, what cannot be transcended, withdrawn... [the novelist] speaks “reality” ” (45-46, italics in the original). Thus, textual food can produce some sort of emotional relief for the reader who cannot have access to food in reality.

varying degrees of desire towards food. While American children desired sweets and had regular access to them, British children day-dreamed about eating them, an option quite unapproachable for middle-class children who were still using rationing coupons. For instance, The Happy Hollisters Series can be defined as the American equivalent to the British Famous Five, but with different attitudes toward food. The Hollisters are all members of the same family and they solve mysterious cases, pretty much like The Famous Five, and both groups enjoy eating large quantities of food. However, the level of detail in their food description and the variety in which food is presented differs. Also different is the eagerness with which the children eat, as the excerpts below, both from 1953, exemplify. The Hollisters have a healthy appetite, but they are willing to stop eating if adventure calls: “‘Flapjacks!’ yelled Ricky. ‘I’ll eat ten!’ He was on his fourth cake when the telephone rang. Mrs. Hollister answered, and the message she received made Ricky forget all about his flapjack race” (West 32). The Famous Five, on the other hand, have very clear priorities, food being one of them. Appreciative children should eat everything on their plates, and then they can go on with their business: “There now – you’ve done really well... That’s what I like to see, people finishing up everything put before them” (Blyton, *Five go Down* 91).

Spain’s situation during World War II was, if possible, more dramatic than England’s. With a Civil War (1936-1939) just finished, the whole country was plunged into extreme poverty. Spain was a divided country with no workforce due to the thousands of young soldiers who died in combat, leaving fields unattended and unproductive. In May of 1939 rationing began and lasted for thirteen years, up to 1952. These years are remembered for the highly imaginative cuisine that Spanish women developed, creating fries out of orange-peel and steaks out of beans (Azcoytia).

Spanish children's texts, however, were not allowed to portray the level of poverty in which the country was immersed. A strict censorship was established under Franco's dictatorship and, from 1939, children's literature started a backward movement: only books focused on the formation of moral virtues and exaltation of patriotic values were being written and published, such as saints' lives and biographies of national heroes (Bermejo 21). In this historical context realism was not accepted, and hungry children were not present in children's literature. For instance, one of the most popular series during the 1940s and 50s portrayed a girl named Antoñita la Fantástica. She was upper class and did not represent the harsh reality Spain was facing. Food was not a problem for her family as it was for the rest of the country. Ration books are not mentioned in the texts, neither were the hunger and fears of the losers of the Civil War acknowledged. In Antoñita's family, the only concern toward food was to make meatballs of a kilo of ground meat (to make it last longer) and to control the number of spoons of sugar you put in your coffee.

An important representation of post-war misery in Spain was the comic strip *Carpanta*, created by José Escobar Saliente. According to the Royal Spanish Academy, the word 'carpanta' is defined as "violent hunger" (RAE). In his stories, Carpanta is perpetually hungry, and all his attempts to find food are frustrated, usually in a humorous way. The comic strips reflect the hard circumstances that Spain was suffering, but the tone of social criticism was quite contained in order to avoid censure. During the last years of the 1950s, the dictatorship's censors reprimanded Escobar, making that well-known allegation of the time: "In Franco's Spain, nobody is hungry." Therefore, from that moment, Carpanta suffered from "appetite" instead of "hunger" in his adventures, in order to avoid censure.

During the 1960s and 1970s, England continued portraying glorious food fantasies. American texts also featured food, but it was not described with the same enthusiasm as in the British texts. In any case, food was no longer about survival. In the last decades of the twentieth century, the need for food was replaced by the necessity of eating good quality food. The act of eating gained a new meaning: to eat “proper” food now included notions of healthy eating.

5.3 Healthy eating in children’s literature

Food currently represents a physical danger to children, but in this case it is not the lack of food that can harm children, but the opposite: the excess of food. Children are eating too much, and especially too much food that is bad for them: chocolates, fast food, ketchup and mayonnaise, sweets, precooked and frozen meals, etc. Products stuffed with saturated fats, sugars, salt and preservatives are offered to children on a daily basis, and children devour them with more excitement than a piece of fruit or a salad. The CU books constantly display this tendency, where junk food is devoured with excitement but healthy food is very rarely present in the text.

The relationship between food and body image is also important: the amount and quality of food we eat have repercussions on our body. Several studies show how the population of Western countries is becoming fatter and that we are developing more illnesses related to food habits (i.e. diabetes, cancer, heart diseases, etc.).

Children’s literature has echoed the anxieties of the time concerning children, and a large number of books about the benefits of healthy food has been published during the last two decades. Many of these are picture books written for the youngest, from *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits & Vegetables from A to Z*, in which Lois Ehlert taught us in 1994 that A is for apricot, artichoke, avocado, apple and asparagus, to *Good*

Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition, published in 2009, where we read about proteins, vitamins and the food pyramid. The actual literary landscape shows that the number of texts about organic, healthy, nutritious food and recipes has dramatically increased in the last twenty-five years.

The level of didacticism that usually comes with these books is quite remarkable. Most of the books whose main topic is food entail the message and ideological charge that the author means to instil. Many books, especially picture books, contain the idea of vegetables and fruits as sources of strength, healthiness and vitality. This idea is not new: the fictional hero Popeye has been promoting the wonders of eating spinach since 1932. More modern texts contain the same message: John Burningham's *Avocado Baby*, published in 1994, tells the story of a weak baby who becomes strong enough to stop burglars, fight bullies or carry groceries right after eating one single avocado. Even Eric Carle's very hungry caterpillar has to eat a curative "nice green leaf" in order to feel better after the indigestion caused by a pickle, Swiss cheese, salami, and a lollipop (all unhealthy foods, of course).

Many of these books possess a clear agenda towards food and eating habits that they try to pass to children, which includes concerns about vegetarianism and veganism. The need to teach children about what they are eating and where food comes from is increasingly recognised. Anna Meigs, in her article "Food as a Cultural Construction" claims that children in modern Western societies must be taught that "the impersonal lifeless packages we call 'food' were originally living animals and plants" (104). Some authors question the moral arguments of eating animal products, favouring their own dietary restrictions. For instance, Ruby Roth's picture book *That's Why We Don't Eat Animals: A Book About Vegans, Vegetarians, and All Living Things* (2009) introduces vegetarianism and veganism to early readers. By

using colourful artwork the book features a number of animals both in their natural state and in the terrible conditions of a factory farm. The book also emphasizes the negative effects that eating meat has for the environment and gives a number of suggestions for avoiding the consumption of animal products, such as celebrating a vegan thanksgiving or buying shoes and clothes not made from leather or animal skins. Influenced by this agenda, children can then modify their cultural rules and behaviour about what should (or should not) be eaten.

During the last eight years a number of books portraying vegan and vegetarian characters have been published in English: *V is for Vegan: The ABCs of Being Kind* (2013), *Vegan is Love: having Heart and Taking Action* (2012), *Steven the Vegan* (2012), *Herb the Vegetarian Dragon* (2007) and *The Lamb Who Came for Dinner* (2007). Only the last two books (*Floro el Dragon Vegetariano* and *La Ovejita que Vino a Cenar*) have been published in Spain, where vegetarianism has gained little traction, and the only Spanish guide available to vegans in relation to children is *Niños Veganos Felices y Sanos: Una Guía para Madres y Padres* (Happy and Healthy Vegan Children: A guide for Mothers and Fathers).

The notions of “who eats what” and “you are what you eat” have gained more significance since the increase in vegetarianism worldwide. In England, the Vegetarian Society has reported that approximately 3% of the population is vegetarian (Veg. Soc. Website). The number of vegetarians in the USA exceeds that in the UK, with 5% of the American population being vegetarian. The numbers in Spain, however, are different. With an even stronger culture of beef and pork meat consumption, it is natural that the number of vegetarians descends to just 0.5% of the Spanish population (Fanjul). Spanish people often boast about their food and the healthiness of the Mediterranean diet; they are proud of producing first-class chefs

and defend the use of olive oil rather than butter or other cooking products full of saturated fat. Being a country that exports a large number of fruits and vegetables, it should be expected that there would be a healthy life-style of its citizens, at least when it comes to food. Reality, however, tells otherwise.

There are a number of studies showing how Spanish children, teenagers and university students have been following unhealthy dietary habits. In the article “Is the Mediterranean Lifestyle still a Reality?” Baldini et.al. research the consumption of fruit and vegetables, fat and sugar, dietary fibre and fried/high fat fast food in college students. The study shows how younger generations in Spain (and also in Italy, but to a lesser extent) seem to have given up the traditional Mediterranean dietary pattern, adopting new trends, leading to an overweight population, exacerbated by the lack of physical activity. This study confirms the alarm raised by the Spanish Agency for Alimentary and Nutrition security (AESAN) that states how almost half of Spanish children aged 6 to 9 years old suffer from weight problems, with 43% of them overweight and, of those, 18.4% obese (Francesc).³ However, latest data in Spain has underlined that the high obesity levels are not only related to food intake, but to bad habits that are being instilled in Spanish children such as not having breakfast, sleeping less than the recommended hours, and mostly, spending too much time in front of the television or choosing a more sedentary lifestyle and leisure activities (Francesc).

British children’s weight and dietary habits, although far from perfect, offer a much more positive perspective. The latest figures, for 2013/14, show that 19.1% of children in Year 6 (aged 10-11) were obese and a further 14.4% were overweight.

³ Data published on November 4, 2014.

Among children aged 2 to 15, 14 % of both boys and girls were classed as obese, and 28% were classed as either overweight or obese (Harding).

In the United States of America, the fast food country, one out of three children (6 to 11 years old) are considered to be obese or overweight. This percentage (33%) has remained stable for the last 4 years (Neighmond). In summary, Spain (43%) has more than double the percentage of overweight children than the United Kingdom (18.7%) and almost one third more than the USA (32%). The implications of these statistics are striking, especially bearing in mind the effect that this may have on children's quality of life and general wellbeing. WHO estimates that obese children are more likely to suffer bullying, discrimination, stigmatization, sleep apnea, low self-esteem and poor body image.

Amy Farrell, in her book *Fat Shame: Stigma and the Fat Body in American Culture*, explains how, due in part to popular culture and the signals sent by physicians and government, fat people are constantly mocked. She also adds that "fat denigration is intrinsically related to gender as well as racial hierarchies, in particular the historical development of 'whiteness'" (5). Today, many people believe that a proper (and healthy) body is a "thin" one. Beauty standards have changed through time, but now, the ideal of beauty is focused on slender and svelte figures. This ideal has inevitably affected parents, whose parenting skills are being examined under the microscope. In the U.S.A, the United Kingdom and Spain there have been several cases where obese children have been taken into care after their parents could not help them lose weight. Legal systems seem to agree that parents are to blame when they have obese children, as if obesity could be defined as a new form of child abuse (160-61). Therefore, cutting junk food from children's diets can be interpreted as good parenting practice and vice versa.

These trends are reflected in children's literature. Phil Nel and Lissa Paul state that "the child's body is normed by literature and culture" (21). Literature and culture favour thin characters (who are represented as courageous, vital, and intelligent) over fat characters, usually depicted as lazy, dumb, greedy, or corrupted. In a blog post on fat-positive children's books, Rebecca Rabinowitz describes fat politics- (fatpol-) friendly children's books as "rare" and discovers few "supersize" characters, up to the point where she recommends some books even though they are "weaker than I would normally recommend." This lack of positive representation represents the same problems that queer characters or characters of colour have undergone before. Fat children do not feel represented in a literary world where the chubby boy is always the slow one, the mocked one, the bullied one; he may be the good "mate" but hardly ever the hero. Rabinowitz's blog argues for increasing the presence of fat characters, not only directly addressing fatpol, but also fat characters that are portrayed going about their lives without being hindered by being fat. In the CU series, the stereotypical image of the fat bully is perpetuated. In the ninth book of the series there are four bullies (Kipper, Bugg, Loogie, and Finkstein) who terrorise the kindergarten children. These bullies, especially two of them, are overweight and they have a clear preference for junk food that they eat copiously: "the four barbarians devoured eight whole pizzas between them and finished off fourteen cans of pop" (CU9, 199). The meanest of them, Kipper Krupp (Mr. Krupp's nephew) is the biggest and fattest of them all, establishing a connection between size and power: the bigger you are, the more power you have, as Pilkey clearly states, "Kipper was the biggest and meanest kid at Jerome Horwitz Elementary School" (CU9, 78). Children are not the exception. Throughout the whole series, all villains (especially the human ones) are portrayed as overweight or obese: Mr. Krupp, Wedgie Woman, Professor Poopypants, etc. Even

one of the meanest teachers, the PE teacher Mr. Jacob Mean, is pictured as massively overweight, establishing again a connection between body shape, health, and a mean character.

Authors of children's literature can, then, be trapped in the dilemma of promoting healthy dietary habits or supporting the new fatpol friendly movement, although they are more likely to incline to the former. The topic of healthy eating has also proven to be a lucrative business. Schools are eager to invite authors or buy books with this idea in mind. It was in this context that HEALTHEE Kidz was born in 2006: children's books that follow the adventures of four cartoon characters on their journey towards maintaining good health through healthy eating and daily exercise (Healthee). Concerned teachers welcome the visit of the company to school, where "it is so much easier to teach them the skill when they are younger and before bad habit starts" (unidentified teacher, qtd. in Healthee website).

This kind of programme is succeeding because the number of overweight and obese children (as well as adults) is actually reaching pandemic levels. Food is no longer seen as a treat but a threat, especially the food that children enjoy most. Marisa Fernández López states that "[o]riginal works are modified in subsequent editions to conform to the social standards prevailing at a given time and thus to satisfy the specific demands of the market" (*Translation* 29). Even though her argument makes reference to racial attitudes in Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* and Roald Dahl's works, it is not completely unthinkable that social standards towards food will need to be changed in the near future. Pizzas, ice creams, chips, hotdogs, French fries, candy, and chocolate could be, then, soon substituted by broccoli, salads, fruits, plain grilled chicken, and whole grain products in children's texts, or after going through revision of original works. Health departments in both the UK and Spain have already foreseen

a collapse of their services if children go down this obesity road, so it is logical to assume that Governments may be interested in stopping this new pandemic disease.

Some steps have already been taken in this direction. The United Kingdom, for instance, announced a total ban in 2006 on junk food advertising during children's programming on all children's channels and around all programmes that have a particular appeal to under 16-year-olds. The problem with banning certain food products is, firstly, how to define what a "harmful" item of food is and is not; and secondly, the lack of coherence in terms of reaching potential customers. Banning McDonald's from television is not very efficient if later, the same company is allowed to sponsor the Olympic Games held in the same country in 2012.

Different medical journals (such as Public Health Nutrition) and organizations (WHO, NHS, etc.) are already raising awareness of the dangers of portraying "junk" food as desirable, and are campaigning for the creation of health promotion programmes, with special emphasis on nutritional education, directed specifically at young people and utilizing media which are familiar to them, such as television, Internet and comics (Baldini et.al.) We should question, then, to what extent authors of children's literature have a social responsibility to promote healthy dietary habits. Children may get mixed signals when it comes to food and the media. National campaigns held in schools and on television channels, such as the Grab 5! Campaign (United Kingdom) or Take a Fruit Break Campaign (USA), are good examples of marketing. Still, they are instilling in children a diet that does not correspond with the one offered in television programmes, books, movies, or even society. Children at Hogwarts do not seem concerned about their five a day; Harold and George celebrate with pizza, hotdogs and ice-cream on their classes-free day; and birthdays and special

occasions are celebrated with cake and chocolates. The Captain Underpants series portrays - and constantly reinforces - the idea of celebrating junk food.

5.4 Food in the Captain Underpants series

As I have explained in Chapter Four (sections 4.3 and 4.4), food in the CU series is intrinsically related to humour and language. By breaking the social conventions of behaviour and attitudes towards food, Pilkey creates humorous situations that provoke delight in younger readers. It is when language becomes more playful, irreverent, and rude that food is used as a weapon (to be thrown at someone), as a magical concoction that provokes physical changes, and as a tool to “gross out” and humiliate adult characters (Wannamaker, *Inedible* 243). Children, who are constantly reminded of how to eat, what to eat, and when to eat it, find amusement in breaking these boundaries of the “socially acceptable.”⁴ In the CU series, food becomes a subversive element to rebel against adult control.

Under normal circumstances it would not be acceptable to start a food fight at a wedding banquet, nor to manipulate a recipe in order to make millions of cupcakes, nor to eat your physical education teacher; but all of these happen throughout the CU series and are perceived as humorous. As Daniel states, “food narratives in children’s stories are often ‘grounded in playfulness’ and transgressive of adult food rules, not only in terms of ‘foodbunbling tricks’ but also timing, defecation, and sexuality” (18). The playfulness of the food is intrinsically related to linguistic play, both of them being subversive, excessive, and challenging.

⁴ Ann Alston in her chapter “Edible Fictions: Fictional Food –The Meal in Children’s Literature” explains the cultural significance of family meals as rituals of power and control, with special emphasis on the figure of the “mother” as provider of food.

Throughout the whole series excess is represented in many variants, and excess of food is a major one. Not only the quantity of food consumed, but also the descriptions of food are exaggerated, often making the text an impossible read drawing on extended alliterative passages to add to the fun:

The creamy candied carrots clobbered the kindergarteners. The fatty fried fish flipped onto the first graders. The sweet-n-sour spaghetti squash splattered the second graders. Three thousand thawing thimbleberries thudded the third graders. Five hundred frosted fudgy fruitcakes flogged the fourth graders. And fifty-five fistfuls of fancy French-fried frankfurters flattened the fifth graders.
(*CU5*, 66-67)

Food is also related to its inevitably scatological destiny. After all, all food has to be digested and expelled from our bodies. Eating and drinking are presented, most of the time, as enjoyable experiences; but they are also related to the bathroom and excretion, as if Pilkey could not conceive one without the other: “It’s fun to shop, eat, and drink out at the mall. All the stores have clean toilets and big sales” (*SDBI*, 62). Clean toilets are, apparently, more important than “Big Sales” in Dav Pilkey’s shopping mall. Later, on the same page, after a flying dog has destroyed the sign, it reads: “Its fun to drink out of the toilet” (62), which again emphasizes the inevitable link between drinking and urinating.

The digestion (and indigestion) of food is physically represented in vomits, farts, and excrement. The scatological use of food has a double function: on the one hand, it makes readers aware of the physicality of their own bodies and the natural process of digesting food; and, on the other hand, by disgusting young readers the

author breaks a taboo, creating a comical and playful effect. Many are the times when children are told off or punished for using “bathroom” words such as pee-pee, pooh, boogers, butthead, etc.; therefore, their use in a book causes adults’ disgust but thrills child readers.

Throughout the whole series, scatological objects are not only referred to but also physically consumed. There are many examples of ingestion of boogers, excrement, and urine, including jokes: “What’s the difference between boogers and broccoli? A: Kids wont eat broccoli” (*SDBI*, 72); signs: “Today’s Lunch: Nasty toilet pee-pee sandwiches” (*CU3*, 16); or when Ms. Ribble offers cookies completely covered in mucus: “Now, who wants a cookie?” (*CU6*, 106). All these scatological scenes are physical reminders of our human bodies and their nature. Pilkey reminds the reader about the equality of our bodies by playing with faeces, vomit, mucus, and urine. After all, we humans all have the same physical needs regardless of our race, gender, age, or social status; “the bodily element is deeply positive. It is presented as something universal, representing all the people” (Bakhtin, *RHW* 15).

All the examples mentioned use language and food as a tool not only to gross out adults (“You kids are DISGUSTING” (*CU3*, 57)) but also to humiliate them. Children and adults have different ideas when it comes to food and food experimentation. Children enjoy mixing up foods that do not match (sweet and savoury, hot and cold, etc.) not only in order to discover new tastes, but also to gross out adults who disapprove of such behaviour: “‘What’s for desert?’ -asked Harold. ‘Hard-boiled eggs dipped in hot fudge and skittles!’ said George. ‘AAAUGH!’ Screamed Mr. Krupp. ‘*I can’t stand it anymore!*’ He got up and stumbled out the door for some fresh air” (*CU3*, 58, italics in original). Throughout the whole series, adults lose control of the situation and children can fantasize about the illusion of

power, a subversive act that challenges adults' authority. Adults cannot control what these children have for lunch.

Related to food and eating is the fear of being eaten, a common fear in childhood. Tales of being killed or eaten by supernatural creatures have controlled misbehaving children in cultures across the world. The Boogey Man in the United States, El Coco in Spain or La Llorona in Mexico are all culturally equivalent examples of how frightened children may change their behaviour in order to avoid being taken and eaten by these creatures. These stories threaten children's physical and psychological well-being and thus induce them to modify their behaviour. Child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim is convinced of the importance of bringing such monstrous images to the surface in children's literature, as they have a cathartic effect: "[W]ithout such fantasies, the child fails to get to know his monster better, nor is he given suggestions as to how he may gain mastery over it. As a result, the child remains helpless with his worst anxieties - much more so than if he had been told fairy tales which give these anxieties form and body and also show ways to overcome these monsters" (120). In the CU series, Harold, George, Captain Underpants and other children come close to being devoured in most of the books, and in some of them teachers are actually eaten, although they are later vomited or excreted unharmed. These scenes take place mostly in the comics (fictionally) created by George and Harold, where their anxiety of being devoured is reflected in their narrative (Table 5.1).

Book	Monster	Who does the monster eat?	Who is attempted to be eaten?	Comic	Actual Story
<i>CU1</i>	Inedible Hunk	Gym teacher		X	
<i>CU2</i>	Talking toilets	Gym Teacher		X	
	Talking toilets	Every teacher in school			X

	Turbo Toilet 2000		George and Harold		X
<i>CU3</i>	Dead Lunch Cafeteria Ladies	Gym Teacher		X	
	Dandelion of Doom		George and Harold		X
	Dandelion of Doom	Captain Underpants			X
<i>CU4</i>	The girble Jogger two thousands	Gym teacher		X	
	Weiner dog		George and Harold		X
<i>CU6</i>	Tattle-tron	Gym teacher and many more people		X	
	Bionic Booger boy	Mr. Krupp	George and Harold		X
<i>CU7</i>	Carl, Trixie and Frankenbooger		George, Harold, Melvin, Mr. Krupp		X
	Trixie and Frankenbooger		George and Harold		X
<i>CU8</i>	Robo-Geezers	The Bad Guys in the Spaceship		X	
	Evil Zulu		George, Harold and Crackers		X
<i>CU9</i>	Wedgie Magee's Haunted Pants	Three bullies		X	

Table 5.1: Who eats (or tries to eat) whom in the CU series.

These blurred boundaries between the eater and the eaten are important because children need to learn the rules of what should - or should not - be eaten, both in terms of health and as a means to socialization. As Daniel points out:

As far as adult culture is concerned, children must internalize very precise rules about how to maintain a “clean and proper” body, what to relegate to

abjection, and how to perform properly in social situations. Children must also learn all sorts of rules about food and eating. Most important - they must know who eats whom. Food events in children's literature are clearly intended to teach children how to be human. (12)

In children's literature, to keep a "clean and proper" body may be related to fantasy and magic, as food may be used as a potion to change the body.⁵ Food and drink in the CU series is sometimes magical and able to transform the body (or the physical abilities) of the eater/drinker. For instance, Zombified children return to normal when they drink some root beer spiked with "anti-evil zombie nerd juice", and Captain Underpants achieves real superpowers after he has consumed the "extra-strength super power juice". In the third book of the series the "SUPER EVIL RAPID-GROWTH JUICE" used by the three aliens to increase the size of the children newly converted into zombies has a label that reads: "Twice the evil... half the fat! 100% Organic, No M.S.G" (CU3, 65). The author makes sure to introduce in the text a product that follows all the suggested healthy standards (less fat, organic, MSG free) but it is, at the same time, the same product that is going to lead to the unleashing of giant evil zombie nerds that want to take over the planet (64). By doing so, Pilkey is parodying both the excess of information that edible products contain in their labels and the misleading nature of them, thereby converting a potentially fatal product into something, if not healthy, at least "half-fat." By the eighth book, when Harold and George's world is upside-down, the cafeteria seems normal and there is a picture of some children smiling and eating, and you can read in the sign of the food "All Natural" and "Organic Salad Bar" (44). Again, today's obsessions with labelling the

⁵ An obvious example is Alice's body transformations, both growing and shrinking, following her consumption of various magic foods in Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

pureness of food is echoed in the books, associating an idyllic world with a good “all natural and organic” diet. However, the reality that Pilkey shows is very different.

Throughout the whole series cafeteria lunches are disgusting and usually a target of mockery. Pilkey himself comments about school cafeteria food and its smell:

I noticed a common element at all of the cafeterias I went to. Sometimes the food tasted o.k., other times it was pretty nasty, but it always smelled the same. It all had this weird ‘cafeteria food smell’ (kind of a combination of hamburger grease, diapers and musty beach towels, with just a slight whiff of burned plastic... you all know the smell I’m talking about, right?). I began to wonder what made the food smell that way. Why doesn’t food at an all-you-can-eat buffet-style restaurant smell that way? It’s basically the same stuff, right? So I began to think that cafeteria food might be some sort of alien plot to control the brains of children. (Pilkey, *Notes*)

Pilkey portrays his opinions in the narrative by making the lunches not very tempting in the first place; “New Tasty cheese and lentil pot-pies” (*CU3*, 13), “Soy Burgers, Hot Lime Pie and Apple Juice” (*CU8*, 38); but Harold and George rewrite the sign, playing with the letters in order to make them much more gruesome: “Nasty Toilet Pee-Pee Sandwiches” (*CU3*, 16) or “Please eat my plump, juicy boogers” (*CU8*, 38). Other times, however, Pilkey has chosen to present the reader with a menu that could be directly harmful for the child: “Today’s lunch: Genetically modified meat flavoured beef with extra bovine growth hormones” (*CU5*, 100). By doing so, he is emphasizing the fictionality of his books. No school in the world will serve, not to mention advertise, beef with growth hormones, in the same way that no school (in

Spain, the UK, or the USA) will allow the generally disgusting food that is served in “Jerome Horwitz Elementary School.”

Fruit consumption is not common in the CU series. Only once can the reader see George and Harold actually eating a piece of fruit, and it is precisely when George and Harold have become evil that they demand that the goofy Captain Underpants bring them a pineapple as an ingredient for their pizza. In short, the only time in the whole series when the main characters actually eat a piece of fruit is when they have been changed into Evil George and Evil Harold, and they are acting in a way they would never do in (literary) reality. It may be that Pilkey is showing the two main characters as demanding and rude with CU; however, there is an implied message that only the evil characters will choose to eat a piece of fresh fruit.

The only positive representation Dav Pilkey offers of fruit consumption is in his seventh book. In the denouement, Captain Underpants, George and Harold are cornered at a local shopping centre by the three evil Robo-Boogers Trixie, Frankenbooger and Carl. In a desperate attempt to save themselves, they throw everything they find at hand at the Robo-Boogers: “a pair of low-fat tennis shoes... a delicious tube of wild cherry-flavored hemorrhoid ointment... and a genetically-modified, organic-orange-flavored orange” (CU7, 124-25), but only the orange seems to do the trick. “It is the *oranges!*... It’s gotta be the vitamin C in these oranges. It’s combating the cold and flu that caused those boogers to turn evil!” (126, emphasis in original). It is often argued that Vitamin C helps avoid getting ill (cold and flu) and, at the same time, it may also help during recovery. Dav Pilkey dedicates the whole chapter “Vitamin C you Later” to defeating the booger-monsters with oranges using different strategies: throw them and squeeze them. The fruit is defined as “deadly oranges” (128) by the anthropomorphised boogers, and the juice they produce is

“delicious, vitaminy orange juice” (153). Pilkey is not only emphasizing the curative properties of vitamin C, but he is also describing the product as “delicious.” This is not the typical way healthy food is handled in the books, but even Pilkey has to acknowledge the curative power of vitamin C.

For a translator it is important to know the historical, geographical and cultural context before determining what food is being referenced and why, as the same food can represent quite different things in different cultures. The challenges of translating food terms are not merely linguistic, but cultural as well (Bar-Hillel 2006). Therefore, the next section analyses how food has been translated into Spanish and to what extent the connotations that it implies have been maintained in the target text.

5.5 Translating food in Captain Underpants

From a practical point of view, the translation of food and cookbooks presents some specific challenges. Epstein explains that possible difficulties are the availability of ingredients, the different cuts of meat, measures, implements, pots and pans.⁶ The translation of food references in children’s literature is not alien to translation theory. Throughout this chapter I have explained how food is more than just something to eat. There are cultural and social expectations towards food. The translator of food in children’s literature has to acknowledge and respect these differences and, at the same time, make the text approachable and understandable to the target language reader. Therefore, for literary translators food presents the challenge not merely of finding the right words, but “of trying to render equivalent associations, allusions and imagery,

⁶ Epstein’s article offers a number of possible solutions to how to translate food in cookbooks, such as having other sources available (other chefs or translators), not being afraid to recommend substitutions (where appropriate), being willing to test and compare original recipes and translations, and including glossaries, translator’s notes, substitution lists, or other extratextual material where necessary (*Cooking*).

despite the very different roles that a certain food may play in different cultures” (Bar-Hillel 206).

All the research developed so far concerning the translation of children’s literature underlines the same paradox: on the one hand, books are translated in order to present children with different cultures, food, and languages, and in order, hopefully, to make the child reader more receptive towards them; but on the other hand, it is common practice in translating for children to eradicate the foreign elements, in order to make the text more accessible to the child so he will understand it. As Emer O’Sullivan explains, the translation of children’s literature “is this balancing act between the adaptation of foreign elements to the child reader’s level of comprehension, and preservation of the differences that constitute a translated foreign text’s potential for enrichment of the target culture” (*Comparative* 74).

Therefore, there are two different approaches to the translation of food in children’s literature. Klingberg argues for preserving in the translated text culturally specific givens - such as food and drink - claiming that children are able to absorb stimuli that come from another culture and, hopefully, that this can widen their awareness of the world:

Food is something of interest to children and the popularity of some books may have something to do with the interest the books take in food and their detailed description of it. What children in other countries eat and drink may thus awaken the readers’ interest in the foreign culture. In translation deletion and change should therefore be avoided. The translator should tell what the characters really eat and drink. It is of no importance if the translator needs more words than the source text in such cases. (38)

In contrast, Oittinen argues for adapting the culturally specific givens of the source culture to the target culture, and suggests that children should not be exposed to aspects of a foreign culture that they are not capable of understanding (in Paruolo 53). Ann Alston also explains how foreign food in children's literature may be seen as threatening, "for if food plays a part in creating identity and it is something that connects individuals, then children should always be encouraged to remain with the family hearth rather than embrace the unknown other" (106). Therefore, children's literature is usually very conservative about the type of food that it promotes (119). The translation of the CU series into Spanish, as the following analysis shows, has been more inclined to the latter of these approaches.

A priori, when it comes to the translation of food in the CU series, translator Miguel Azaola has opted for a complete domestication of the text, and this has provoked some changes in the way the text may be perceived. For instance, the quality of the food served - and its implied meaning - is different. In the original text, fruit and vegetables very rarely make an appearance throughout the series, and when they do, humans never eat them. In the Spanish text, however, menus are not only more appealing in the first place, but they are also considerably more substantial, comprised of a first and a second course, a dessert, and a drink. In short, the Spanish version of CU offers a proper meal according to Spanish standards. The menus are also much healthier, always including a piece or two of fresh fruit (Table 5.2). With this approach, the books not only become less funny, but also children's (the ones illustrated in the original series) reactions toward cafeteria food seem disproportionate, excessive, and rather incongruous to Spanish readers. For instance, "cheese and lentil pot pies" becomes in Spanish "[g]arlic soup, homemade meatballs,

tropical pineapple, and tea,” a quite appetizing menu and definitively nothing to frown upon. When Spanish children were asked their feelings about these menus (the source text ones translated into Spanish and the Spanish translations), 85% stated that they preferred the Spanish one (back-translated as garlic soup, meatballs, pineapple and tea) rather than the cheese and lentil potpies. The reasons they gave alluded to the fact that there is more food on that menu, it seems more appetizing, or because the other one sounded disgusting.

English Original Sign	English after Harold and George have played with it	Spanish Original Sign	Spanish after they have played with it	English back translation of the original sign	Spanish translation after they have played with it
New tasty cheese and lentil potpies	Nasty toilet pee-pee sandwiches	Sopas de ajo, albóndigas caseras, piña tropical, té	Estropajo, boñigas secas, picadillo de ranas.	Garlic Soup, homemade meatballs, tropical pineapple, tea.	Scouring pad, dried dungs, mince meat of frogs.
	Freeze-dried worm guts Boston baked boogers Zombie-nerd milkshakes *		Gazpacho de tripas de gusano, gratinado de mocos, batidos tipo pardillo zombi		Worms' guts soup, boogers au gratin, zombie nerd style milkshakes.
Pizza Palace Field Trips are Today	Please dont fart in a diaper	Hoy gran excursion escolar al palacio de las pizzas	Gran concurso de chillar, peleas y palizas	Today, big school trip to Pizzas' Palace	Big shouting, fighting and beating competition
Soy Burgers, Hot lime pies, apple juice	Please eat my plump, juicy boogers	Lasañas de verduras, pastel de hongos, queso y dos piezas de fruta	Legañas duras, plastas verdes, queso de pies	Vegetable Lasagne, mushroom pie, cheese and two pieces of fruit	Hard bits of sleep, green soft lump, feet cheese.

Table 5.2: Menu signs in the CU series, before and after George and Harold's manipulation in English and Spanish.

* Zombie nerds had already changed the sign before George and Harold did.

School meals in Spain are not only healthier and more substantial than in the USA, but inevitably more expensive (latest data show that the cost per pupil is about double: 2.93 Dollars versus 4.39 Euros). Therefore, differing cultural attitudes towards food are portrayed in the books in a way that significantly affects their translation and makes this attempt at humour much less funny.

In other cases, the results of Jorge and Berto manipulating the signs have provoked not only the loss of scatological content but also an increase in violent content. For instance, “Please don’t fart in a diaper” becomes in Spanish “big shouting, fighting, and beating competition.” The fact that Azaola has translated the menus with more appetizing food can also cause some level of incoherence in the books. A clear example is in the eighth book, when Harold and George’s world is upside-down, and the cafeteria seems normal: “That’s weird... It doesn’t smell like dirty diapers, greasy dishwater, and moldy tennis shoes in here anymore. It smells like – like *food!*” (CU8, 44, emphasis original). On the same page there is a picture of some children smiling and eating, and you can read in the food sign “All Natural” and “Organic Salad Bar” (44). This sentence has been translated literally, and both characters seem surprised by the nice smell of food. However, a few pages before, the menu that Azaola had chosen was “Lasañas de verduras, pastel de hongos, queso y dos piezas de fruta” (CC8, 38). This menu is not only extremely appetizing (Vegetable lasagne, mushroom pie, cheese, and two pieces of fruit) but it is also very healthy, comprising almost the 5 portions of fruit and vegetables recommended per day. Therefore, the comment of Jorge and Berto seems somehow surprising, as the smell that this food produces is very likely to be a good one.

By including disgusting food Pilkey also creates the perfect context for scatology. Disgusting food provokes vomit, flatulence, and excrement. Children tend to find the use of scatology enjoyable (see Section 4.4.3). In most cases, scatology in the CU series has been translated literally, which means that most of the words (peepee, poo, boogers, etc.) are in the Spanish text as well. After all, as Bakhtin explains, “the bodily element is deeply positive. It is presented ... as something universal, representing all the people” (*RHW* 19). The word “wedgie” is the only one that has been omitted, not as a form of censorship, but for lack of a cultural equivalent, as in Spain giving somebody a “wedgie” is not a common prank or practical joke. However, there are some instances where the scatological content has been toned down or replaced. This is an ideological decision adopted by the translator, who believes Spanish culture has a lower bar of tolerance when it comes to scatology:

I have mitigated, minimally, the overuse of scatological terms and expressions of doubtful taste of the original text. In this case it has not happened because of the editor’s fear of schools not recommending the books, but because of my personal conviction that, lavatory humour, so American, is not funny if it becomes excessive, and I am sure that this is not what the author wanted.

(email)

This sanitization can be clearly seen, for instance, in the song included in the tenth book, created hypothetically by Albert Einstein, titled “I am smarter than you.” The lyrics contain many scatological references, such as: “Eat a bowl of poo-poo ... wash it down with pee-pee, don’t forget to eat your poo-poo... don’t forget to drink your

pee-pee” (*CU10*, 212). Azaola has erased all the scatological references from the Spanish text and kept the rhythm of the song, using the alliteration of typically Spanish sounds: “¡que po-poró-po-po!” and “¡que tú-rurú-ru-ru!”, together with the lyrics “Soy más listo que tú” (I am smarter than you) and “Más tonto eres que yo” (You are dumber than me) (*CC10*, 212). However, Nuria Molinero, the translator of the CU series into Spanish in America, has translated the lyrics literally, including the references to “eating your poo” and “drinking your own pee”, making it clear that American are more likely to accept scatological references regardless of their linguistic background.

Cultural attitudes toward scatology are not the only translation issues presented by the CU series. The idiomatic differences between the two languages can also pose a real challenge. For instance, “the fatty fried fish fritters flipped onto the first graders” (*CU5*, 64) is a sentence that is essentially alliterative and difficult to pronounce. However, if you translate it literally into Spanish (“los aceitosos buñuelos de pescado frito granizaron sobre los de primero”) the result is just a long sentence that lacks the repetition of the “f” sound. Though a similar sentiment could have easily been created in Spanish, the translator decided to literally translate the sentence, losing the alliteration and reducing the humorous effect.

Idiomatic expressions concerning food also need to be taken into consideration. For instance, when the cafeteria ladies are eating their own food, they keep saying “Waste not, want not” (*CU3*, 40), meaning that if you do not waste things, you are less likely to end up lacking them in the future. A very common tactic for overcoming both lexical gaps and cultural gaps in food translation can be to replace an idiom from the source language with a description in the target language, or ideally, with another idiom that carries a similar meaning. In this case the translator

has decided to use “Lo que no mata, engorda” (CC3, 38) which has another translatable equivalent in English, “what does not kill you, makes you stronger.” The meaning of these expressions is roughly equivalent, and this has been a successful translation solution. Later, when the cafeteria ladies are forced to eat their own disgusting food, they say in the original language: “Past the lips... and over the gums... look out tummy... here it comes” (CU3, 40). This game or distraction, usually employed with children to make them eat, has a similar cultural equivalent in Spanish, although with a slightly different approach. When children refuse to eat a meal in Spain (and, indeed, in the UK) parents or carers commonly ask them to eat one spoon for each member of the family or people they love (this is for mum, this is for dad, etc.) If they still refuse, children are made to feel guilty for their rejection, implying that they do not love that person enough to make the sacrifice to eat. This was a common practice in my primary school, where nuns usually tried to convince children to eat not only for mum and dad, but also for the starving children of Africa, the starving children of Asia, and so on, making children feel guilty for rejecting food when other children were dying of starvation. Azaola has chosen this solution in his translation of the well-known sentence “past the lips...” and has depicted the cafeteria ladies eating the disgusting food saying: “Esta por mi mama... esta por mi agüela... y esta por mi tía Micaela” (this is for my mum, this is for my grandma, and for my aunty Micaela) (CC3, 38).

The appropriateness and popularity of certain items of food over others is also culturally specific and can have an impact on the translation. For instance, England is famous for its “Fish and chips” and Sunday roasts. Certain foods are also linked to religion (Muslim people refuse to eat pork because it is considered forbidden and sinful) or availability, of course. Globalization has helped to overcome the latter, and

today almost any food can be found in Western supermarkets all year around. But this does not change the conception of what is suitable or not to eat, and it does not avoid the problems that the striking differences in mealtimes and meal patterns can pose in translation. Food that is not known in other countries cannot be translated with ease, and if the translator stops and explains the meaning then the rhythm and fluency of the reading are broken. For example, in the original text we can read: “They were more powerful than the stench of their ‘Sloppy-Joe’ Cassarole.... And they could leap tall buildings with the gassy after-effect of their ‘Texas style’ three- bean chili con carney” (CU3, 43). These American cultural references are addressed to an American audience. “Sloppy-Joe Cassarole” is a dish of ground beef, onions, sweetened tomato sauce or ketchup and other seasonings, usually served on a hamburger bun, and probably needs a translation for non-American English speakers. “Texas style three-beans chili con carney” is another American dish that has been misspelled. Dav Pilkey has chosen to write the American phonetic “carney” instead of “carne,” the correct Spanish spelling. When translating these food cultural references, Azaola has chosen to domesticate both dishes. The first one has become “cazuela con carne ‘pocachica’” (backtranslation “casserole with meat ‘little meat’”) which keeps the original meaning and uses the redundancy of the word “meat” in order to create humour. The second one, however, poses more problems for translation: Chili con carne, in spite of its name, is not a Spanish dish and is not consumed in Spain; its Spanish translation “Judías con chorizo ‘al estilo tejano’” (CC3, 41) actually means “Texas style white beans with chorizo.” It results in incoherence that the translator has chosen to domesticate the food but not its origin, therefore leaving a gap and confusing the reader. He could have chosen for the Spanish reader one of the regions where this recipe is typical, such as Aragón and Asturias, but instead he has kept the American

reference. A paradox that could be pointed out is that contemporary Spanish readers are more likely to eat American food (fries, hamburgers, chilli con carne) or even Italian food (pastas and pizzas) than judías con chorizo or other traditional Spanish dishes.

If educational norms play a special role in the translation of children's literature, within the topic of food they are even more relevant. Birgit Stolt cites educational intentions, which impose a taboo on unwelcome phenomena or descriptions, as the most important reason for divergence from a source text (qtd. in O'Sullivan, *Comparative* 82). The consumption of certain foods would certainly qualify as an unwelcome phenomenon, as delicacies from some countries are defined by others as "disgusting." It is in these cases that "purification," a term coined by Göte Klingberg, comes into action: "bringing the target text into correspondence with another set of values" (qtd. in O'Sullivan, *Comparative* 82). An example of "purification" can be seen in the translation of a taboo such as alcohol consumption in children's literature. The first comic ever created by George and Harold, "The adventures of Dog Man", finishes with a party where a policeman is asking for some wine to celebrate an arrest: "Good idea! Lets have some wine!!!" (CU9, 136). The next frame pictures a bottle of wine - with grapes on it - and a label that reads "non-alckholick wine" (136). Alcohol, together with drugs, sex and nudity, is a well-known taboo in children's literature. Pilkey has avoided the issue of alcohol consumption by making the drink non-alcoholic. However, Azaola has gone one step further and erased all references to alcohol by translating the label as "Zummo de hueso sin alcohol" (non-alcoholic bone juice) (CC9, 134) perhaps trying to compensate for the playful spelling of "non-alckholick." This solution can be seen as unnatural, as a

literal non-alcohol wine would have worked better with the picture portrayed in the text.

When it comes to portraying disgusting food, this has also been domesticated as much as possible, although sometimes a lexical gap in the target language, to signify certain items of food, has made Azaola look for a replacement in the target culture. For example, when Harold and George are having “Hard-boiled eggs dipped in hot fudge and Skittles!” (*CU3*, 58) for dessert, their Spanish counterparts have “Huevos cocidos con leche condensada and chorizo” (*CC3*, 56), which means “hard boiled eggs with condensed milk and chorizo.” The translation result is equally disgusting, and the effect achieved is the same as in the original text: the principal is grossed out in both languages (“AAAUGH!” in English and “PUAAAJJ” in Spanish) and readers are amused. Spanish children are unlikely to know what “fudge” is, and even though it can be translated as “caramelo con mantequilla y azúcar” (caramel with butter and sugar) it is good that Azaola has looked for an equally disgusting combination of food available in the target culture. The reference to Skittles has been deleted as they are not sold in Spain and children would not recognize the reference to these sweets.

It has been explained before in this chapter that mealtime rules and routines are different in the two cultures. Different values can be assigned to food in different cultures and this can cause a wrinkle in translation. Big food chains are very common in America, where people mostly eat lunch outside the home. This cheap and low quality food has been exported to most Western countries: McDonalds, Burger King, Starbucks, Wendy’s, Taco Bell are just some examples. In Spain teenagers and children are regular customers, but very rarely will an adult choose one of these establishments for lunch or dinner on his/her own initiative. Therefore, the number of

restaurants is also much lower and the visual impact they have in Spanish cities is less relevant. For instance, in 2012 there were 14,157 McDonald restaurants in the USA (one per 22,000 habitants) but the number is much lower for the United Kingdom (1,208 restaurants and one per 52,000 habitants) and even lower for Spain (439 restaurants and one per 105,000 habitants) (Chalabi and Burn-Murdoch). These numbers can also be applied to Burger King restaurants and Starbucks, whose presence in Spain is also smaller, and this may pose a challenge for a translator.

When Super Diaper baby and Diaper dog stop in Mars for some refreshments at an establishment, one can read on a half sign the word “Starb” (*SPDI*, 109), which is incomplete because of the page edge. The American reader will immediately deduce that they have stopped at Starbucks, the multinational coffee company, especially when the dog comments: “Man, these places are everywhere” (109). Of course, when the reader turns the page and discovers that the actual name of the place is “Starbutts”, he or she may find this amusing for its reference to “butts.” The Spanish reader, however, faces a different and quite incongruent reading. It should be noted that when *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby* was published in USA in March 2002, not even one Starbucks coffee shop existed in Spain. Translator Miguel Azaola could not have chosen a cultural equivalent (a Spanish coffee house) because we do not have any big chain like Starbucks. The United Kingdom has many cultural equivalents that could have been used, such as Caffè Nero, Costa Coffee, and even the pseudo-French adaptation Café Rouge.

Starbucks is not as popular in Spain as in the USA. A very few Spanish cities (Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia and Sevilla, mostly) have a Starbucks coffee shop with a tourist clientele in mind. It is not our culture to drink take-away coffee. By the time the book was published in Spain (September 2003), only four Starbucks were open in

Spain, certainly not enough to maintain the name in the book and allow the child reader to link it with any coffee or refreshments brand. Azaola has chosen for the first page the term “Mart” (*SPI*, 111), which has no indication that it relates to food or refreshments; therefore, the dog’s comment “¡Vaya, estos sitios están por todas partes!” (These places are everywhere!) loses all its meaning and results in incoherence. The reader can very likely assume that they are arriving at “Marte”, the planet. On the next page, we can read “Martonald”, a clear allusion to McDonalds fast food restaurants and children can then make a connection, although the allusion obviates the reference to “butts” and the whole episode is less funny in general.

5.6 Conclusion

Food exists as a symbol of larger cultural implications and not simply as a means for survival; however, its symbolic meanings differ across individuals and groups (Fjellström 161). Throughout this chapter I have shown how food plays a vital part in many children’s literature texts. It can fuel the imagination, be presented as a temptation for children, change their bodies, or be used as a tool to lure them into doing something they should not. It can act as a means of putting children in danger from an evil power, or as a way of reinforcing the traditional view of the value of the family meal.

Food in the CU series can be seen as transgressive. It tests the limits of what is socially acceptable to eat, both in quality and quantity. George and Harold play with food in an experimental way that adults are not eager to accept. However, they only consume American food (pizza, hotdogs, burgers, candy floss, ice cream, etc.), reinforcing their national identity and culture. When George and Harold are principals for a day (i.e. in a position of power) they establish a whole break-day with free pizza,

chips, candyfloss and hotdogs. Dav Pilkey's pictures show happy children with junk food and lots of excess (*CU2*, 132-33). Junk food is used, then, as a reward, as something that is cherished and celebrated by all children in the school as an alternative to the norm, but it is not the food that they are allowed to consume every day. The depictions of food and food-play can be seen as rule-bound and conventional: cafeteria food is disgusting, and food fights are common, while children are rewarded with delicious fast food. As Wannamaker states, "[t]hese depictions of fictional subversion of power may indeed mark the books as ones that maintain societal norms, although seeming to challenge them" (*Inedible* 252). Food is certainly part of this process.

The CU books are undoubtedly American texts when it comes to food. Children enjoy eating unhealthy American fast food and other treats such as gummy worms, ice creams, cakes, etc., while fruit and vegetables are very rarely introduced through the series, and when they are, children never consume them. Azaola has opted for complete domestication of food in the Spanish translation. Furthermore, he has toned down the scatological content of the series, which has an impact not only on the humorous load of the text but also its subversiveness. The Spanish CU series, when it comes to food, is not as excessive, playful, and subversive as the original. Substitution and replacement have been the most common techniques employed when translating food and idiomatic expressions related to it.

This chapter has shown how differing cultural attitudes towards food preferences are portrayed in the books in a way that significantly affects their translation, and which makes the attempt at humour much less funny, especially when it comes to scatology. However, as I have evidenced, the main problem when translating food is linguistic (related to expressive language, idioms and alliteration of

sounds). Food, humour, and language are contextually bound throughout this series, and the way that food is portrayed in Spanish translations (as less excessive and less disgusting) and described (with less alliteration, and more positive adjectives) inevitably affects the perception of the texts, rendering them less funny.

This also brings incongruences between the text and images. As I have exemplified in the last section of the chapter, sometimes the child gets contradictory information from text and pictures. Children should not seem disgusted by an appetizing menu as happens in the Spanish version. Therefore, the next chapter's point of departure is to explore whether it is possible to translate the visual content of pictures, and to what extent pictures pose a challenge for translation.

Azaola's decisions are just one cog in the whole translation mechanism. He has opted for a complete domestication of food and reduced the amount of scatology. His decisions tally with those adopted in the translation of humour, leading again to a less subversive, but more correct, text. However, it is important to remember that there are many valid translations from the same text. As Bar-Hillel states, "[I]like chefs following a recipe translators can cook up the same dish with very different results – and readers, like diners, bring their own preferences to the table when evaluating what they are served" (211).

Chapter Six

The Adaptation of Pictures, Comics, Paratranslation and the Lack of the Cultural Peritext in the CU Series

Chapters Three, Four and Five have highlighted the importance of text in translation in the CU series. Focusing on the subversive aspect of CU, its humour, and representations of food, I have looked at examples that show how authors and translators in the U.S. and Spain have different expectations of child readers and deal with particular ideological issues and pressures when writing or translating for children. So far, my analysis has been based on language; but the written word does not exist by itself. Language is a very important aspect of translation but it is not the only one. The translation - or lack of translation - of the visual content can be very influential and can change the overall perception of the text.¹ Picture books and comics are literary and artistic forms based on the interaction of two different semiotic systems - pictures and words. In fact, one depends on the other. In this last chapter, I will focus on the translation of not only the illustrations of the books, but also on the translation of the other elements that form a book (paratext) and the effect that the lack of a cultural peritext equivalent to the world surrounding CU series in America has on the Spanish readers' perception and reception of the text.² Section 1

¹ The application of the term 'translation' to the transfer of visual semiotics is arguably an unorthodox one. As we shall see, however, there are various ways in which the visual elements can be, and are, adjusted to fit the ideology of the publisher/target audience. What is more, at times the illustrations are not adequately adjusted to fit the target text or vice versa.

² By cultural peritext I mean additional material to the core of the texts, external to the published volume. I believe it has a profound influence on the readers' perception of

analyses the difficulties of translating the illustrations in the CU series, and the extent to which the illustrations provide information that does not necessarily agree with what is presented in the text. As Thomson-Wohlgemuth suggests when commenting about the problems of translating illustrations in children's literature, the style of the text should correspond to the style of the illustrations in a book so, optimally, author, translator, and artist complement each other (73). The fact that Dav Pilkey has created both text and pictures in the CU series is the best guarantee that the illustrations tally with text. This is not possible in translations where a translator has to work with pictures which are taken wholesale from the original source text. I shall also analyse the content of pictures, and how they can add layers of humour, indicate irony, or even be in stark opposition to the text, creating an obvious gap in the target text.

This leads on, in Section 2, to the specific challenges of translating the comics in the books and the limitations comics impose, especially when it comes to the delimited space they provide and the translation of onomatopoeia and interjections linked to the linguistic creativity of comics. Section 3 focuses on the study of the paratextual elements in the CU series. One needs to examine not only how pictures are transferred –and sometimes modified- in comics and picture books, but also how the different paratextual elements that exist within them are adapted, when possible, into the target language and culture. Finally, in section 4, the lack of translation of the cultural peritext in the Spanish context will be analysed, including the possibilities that the website offers and the dialogue that the American publishing house Scholastic establishes with its readers through all kinds of merchandise, gifts, mobile applications, and different kinds of media. In this chapter, the outcome of the survey conducted in a Spanish school will be used to show how children can have different

the text. I will define later in Section 3 the concept of cultural peritext in greater depth and its implications in translation.

perceptions of the same illustrations and to what extent the cultural content of the ST illustrations is lost or perceived in a different way in the TT readers.

6.1 Introduction

Illustrated books, like early readers, are texts in which pictures convey a substantial proportion of the content and meaning. Illustrations can also reflect society's attitudes towards childhood.³ As Nathalie op de Beeck states about picture books, "surveying them through a contemporary comics lens reveals diverse approaches to visual/verbal narrative and to childhood itself" (468). Illustrated texts have complex meanings and convey an ideology that emerges from their verbal/visual form and content (469). The translator of children's literature needs therefore to take into account what the translator Anthea Bell has called the "no man's land" that resides between source text, target text and image in the translation process (qtd. in Lathey, *Reader* 11).

Translators need to read and develop both verbal and visual literacy: the need to understand the text not only by itself, but also in relation to the pictures, and vice versa.

One of the main issues that faces the CU series is the difficulty of defining its genre when it comes to its pictorial narrative. It displays features of a picture book, a comic, a graphic novel, and an illustrated text. There are pages with no text at all, pages with no illustrations, and pages that combine both. There are comics within the books and chapters of "Extremely Graphic Violence" in the form of sequence animations named "Flip-O-Rama." This amalgamation of pictures and text is not only

³ In her article "True Love or Just Friends? Flemish Picture Books in English Translation" Vanessa Joosen offers an excellent example of how pictures can offer different approaches towards children's literature taboos and how norm conflicts can lead to different translation strategies.

difficult to classify, but also difficult to translate, as pictures can serve multiple purposes: they can be a catalyst for dramatic play, provoke humour, or include notions of intervisuality within the narrative. In pictures there is more information than just the image: colours, size of characters, distances between them, and even “empty” spaces that can be as revealing as the lack of dialogue in a scene. Therefore, the translator needs to understand how this complicated relationship between text and illustrations works in the source text and try to transfer it for the target culture readers.

Nikolajeva and Scott describe how readers use the relationship or interaction between the words and the images in a picture book in order to construct a narrative of the text and point out different ways in which picture books can communicate with readers. *Symmetrical* interaction means that words and pictures tell the same story and the two forms of communication repeat the same story. *Complementary* interaction happens when words and picture complement each other by filling each other’s gaps and compensate inadequacies. In *enhancing* interaction pictures intensify the meaning of the verbal text or, not very often, the other way around. It depends on the degree of the presented information if a *counterpoint* interaction is developed, where “words and images provide alternative information or contradict each other in some way” (17). There are different ways to create a counterpoint interaction: addressing dual audiences of children and adults, incorporating different or contradictory styles, blurring the distinctions between genres or modes, juxtaposing multiple narrative lines or incidents, shifting narrative perspective (either visually or verbally), developing ambiguity or irony in characterization, cultivating metafictional elements such as multiple frames or paratextual elements, and highlighting the different temporal/spatial dimensions of the two modes of communication (Donovan 111). Most of these are present in the CU series and need to be taken into account. Pictures

can communicate symbolism and hold stereotypes and ideologies of the prevailing social code, but they can also challenge them and this can be affected in translation. This following section deals with the translation of pictures and key examples have been selected to illustrate different translators' strategies and perceptions when it comes to translating pictures.

6.2 The translation of pictures

Pictures are commonly regarded as universal: not only can they transcend linguistic barriers but they also possess a strong meaning; 'a picture is worth a thousand words' is an idiom that can be found in many different languages. However, this is not entirely true. In fact, pictures with typographical elements –street signs, advertisements, shops, newspapers and magazines, television channels' logos, etc.- are usually a particular problem in translation as they can bring cultural discrepancies between text and pictures.

Picture books and illustrated texts are often co-printed to save cost, but the translators' choices are somewhat restricted when stories travel from culture to culture due to the imposition of pictures.⁴ Therefore, translators need to read and develop both verbal and visual literacy; they need to understand the text not only by itself, but also in its relation to its pictures, and vice versa. Oittinen, for instance, underlines the importance of understanding the role of the visual in children's literature as a key task for any translator: "Translating illustrated texts is a special field, or a special language, and requires specialization in translation studies, combined with art for

⁴ Co-prints are books that appear near-simultaneously in many countries and are translated by local translators and sold in national language versions but the pictures remain the same and are in the same place in all editions. In their article "Co-Prints: Translation without Boundaries" Dollerup and Orel-Kos conclude that not enough scholarly attention has been paid to co-printed books, even though they are becoming increasingly popular in Western countries where minor languages are spoken.

example” (*Translating* 114). Words and pictures go hand in hand in children’s literature and therefore, when it comes to translation, they should not be treated as isolated elements.

In order to avoid the rising cost of production, storage, advertising and distribution, books are created for several countries at once, and the illustrations are created with an international audience in mind. Therefore, culture-specific features and the diversity they entail - together with the problems they may present for international distribution - are dealt with in the early stage of the production process (O’Sullivan, *Comparative* 101). Publishers look for unprovocative texts that are unlikely to offend and that may be easily adaptable to different markets, but this need for sales may result in international insipidity (101), as all culture-specific subjects or artistic trends are avoided for reasons of cost, while buildings, clothing and everyday objects are pictured non-specifically so as to strike no one as foreign. Thus, the ever-growing media and the Internet will likely promote the creation of texts - and films, television shows, videogames, etc.- that do not pose a threat to any culture or race and are easily adapted to all of them. Examples of this cultural insipidity are television programs such as *Barney the Dinosaur*, *Peppa Pig*, and *Dora the Explorer*.

This is not the case for the CU series. In a series where almost everything related to language has been domesticated in the Spanish version, the reader can still see American flags, white fences, American police cars, etc. and this is going to pose some problems when it comes to translating any typographical elements which are included in the pictures themselves. The Spanish publishing house has had some control over the signs depicted in the pictures and has been able to replace them with Spanish equivalents. Still, there is a big discrepancy between the labels of these signs and their content. We may read “Simplicio Aparicio-Gasolinera Autoservicio” (CC9,

79) instead of the original “Billy Bill’s Gas ‘n’ Git!” (*CU9*, 83) but the look of the scene is still American. The big billboard where you can write in black letters the offers of the day is not present in Spain. The fact that George changes “Free Brake Inspection” for “Free Bra Inspection” (*CC9*, 90-94) is not only funny, but also physically possible. In Spain, children would be unable to change something that does not even exist in the first place. On the other hand, thanks to the media, the cultural distance between European countries and America is decreasing; we may not have this kind of petrol station in Spain but we have seen them often enough in movies, television series, and musical videos, to recognize them.

The issue here resides in the inconsistency of the final result: the scene is visually American although it has been domesticated up to a certain extent by changing the names of labels and signs into Spanish. The result is a confusing amalgamation of cultural elements: the Spanish audience reads “Correos” (mail), but they can see a mailbox with an eagle on the side, the American logo for mail service; they may read on the bus “Distrito Escolar de Chaparrales” instead of the original ‘Miami County School District,’ but the bus is a clear representation of the well-known yellow school buses that are used in America. These are just two examples but the whole *CU* series has been translated following this approach, and this is going to present some limitations.

In the first place, changing the names of the signs may ruin the general artistic impression. The fact that the translated word is placed over the original pictures breaks the visual unity of the pictures. Because the Spanish reader is very familiar with American culture, he/she also knows what to expect. So even though the text may have been translated for their understanding, readers can notice a gap between the image and the text on the image. In the survey conducted in Spain, I read to a

group of children the first page of the book in Spanish but I did not let them see any pictures. When they were asked about where the action was taken place their answers were in a Spanish city (36%), in any city (36%), in a European city (15%) and in an American city (12%). Immediately after, I read again the same page, but this time I projected four illustrations from the first book with more or less obvious American content (cheerleaders, an American flag in the background of the image, a thief holding a bag with a dollar symbol, etc.). When they were asked again where they thought the action was taking place, the vast majority changed their answers to an American city (73%) and the reasons behind this choice were the American flag, the dollar symbol, the signs in English, and the cheerleaders. Another 8% of children identify the foreign with being English rather than American, and they said it was an English city because they were speaking in English and there were English symbols. This change in the children's perception of the text implies that there is a gap when it comes to what they see and what they read. The domestication of the text to Spanish is clearly perceived, as it is the American perception of the pictures.

In the second place, there are numerous times in the books where the text of the illustration is linked to the meaning of the words and they become a linguistic and visual joke. For instance, when Diaper Baby arrives on the planet Uranus, there is a sign that reads: "Welcome to Uranus. Please, dont make fun of our name" (*SDBI*, 108), an obvious reference to the homophones "uranus" and "your anus." The Spanish sign has been translated literally "Bienvenidos a Urano. Rogamos no se rían de nuestro nombre" (*SPI*, 110); however, the word 'Urano' does not necessarily remind reader to "tu ano" (your anus) and the inclusion of the formal "we ask that you do not laugh at our name" using the polite form "ustedes" instead of "vosotros" also adds a

formal tone not intended by Pilkey, who even decided to eliminate the apostrophe in ‘don’t’.⁵

When there is a direct relationship between pictures and language it is almost impossible, unless the same link can be made in the target language, to keep the source text picture and still expect the connection to be available. In these cases, the translator has to resort to other strategies. The best example in the CU series can be found in the picture that portrays two hieroglyphs that mean ‘adults are nuts’ and ‘grown ups are screwballs’ (CU8, 21) even though the text does not make any reference to them and it is left to the reader to make the connection between language and meaning (See Figure 6.1). Emer O’Sullivan explains that,

in a genre combining words and pictures, an ideal translation reflects awareness not only of the significance of the original text but also of the interaction between the visual and the verbal, what the pictures do in relation to the words; it does not verbalize the interaction, but leaves gaps that make the interplay possible and exciting. The reader of the ideal translation is left to do the same work as the reader of the original. (*Translating Pictures* 113)

In these cases, the visual representations are relevant to the readers for two different reasons. Firstly, Pilkey assumes that an active child reader would make meaning by associating verbal and visual cues, deciphering the hieroglyphs, and giving him/her agency as a reader. As Kümmerling-Meiabauer explains, words and pictures have a combative relationship because they communicate different kinds of information. Therefore, some degree of inference making is always required from the reader (170).

⁵ The polite form “ustedes” can be identified in the verb conjugation “se rían.”

She includes ironic picture books as good examples of Iser's "indeterminacy gaps," which become spaces that readers/viewers are required to fill. The pressure to complete the conception of that special image is exerted by the degree of indeterminacy in the picture, or in this case, to decode the joke (See Figures 6.1 and 6.2). She relates this crucial process of understanding all the details and perspectives of a picture as reader with what Iser calls "the wandering viewpoint" (qtd. in Kümmerling-Meibauer 170), which is seen as a means of describing the way in which the reader is present in the text, but which is also regarded as fundamental to the construction of meaning (170).

Secondly, the subversive content of some of these illustrations empowers children and humiliates adults. Because of the lack of any idiom or linguistic resource that actually links peanuts or nuts with mentally unstable people it is impossible for any translator to transfer this meaning into Spanish (while keeping its criticism toward adults). Looking for an alternative, the Spanish publishing house has changed the pictures and in the target text the reader can see a sign that says "Hoy" (today) and "Ayer" (yesterday) and then the pictures of two toilets, one of them crossed out (Figure 6.2). This illustration points to the child reader that the use of toilet language is only appropriate when you are little and in the process of potty training, but once children have mastered the control of their own bodies this language is taken away from them for being considered childish, rude, or simply not appropriate:

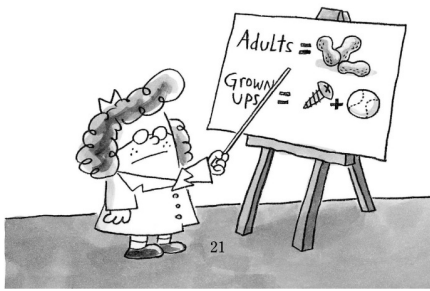


Figure 6.1

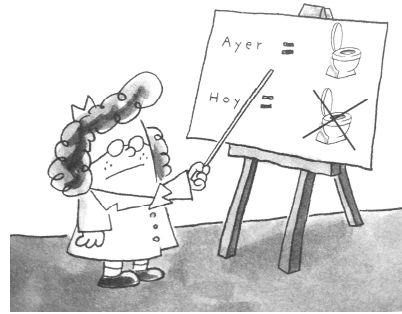


Figure 6.2

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This replacement of the picture is a valid translatorial solution only to a certain extent; while the new image is successful in showing a message that can be easily understood, the subversive content towards adults has been completely erased, and the wordplay is lost. If a manipulation of the pictures had to be made then ideally the new sign would have kept both the playful connection between language and pictures and the subversive content. Spanish is a rich language when it comes to expressions and idioms and there are a number of them that suggest or point out the fact that someone may be crazy: ‘estar como una cabra’ (act like a goat), ‘te falta un tornillo’ (you are missing a screw), or ‘se te va la pinza’ (you are losing a clothes peg). If a change in the illustration had to be made then it could have been a more faithful approach to actually keep the criticism of adults, and just adding a picture of a goat, instead of the peanuts, and leaving the screw with a question mark, for instance. However, in most cases, the solution of changing the graphic representation depicted in the original is usually quite expensive and complicated, so the translator has to come up with his/her own most descriptive translation and try not to ruin the cleverness or smoothness of the pun or the idiom of the source text very much (Macková 39). For example, in the fifth book of the series, Wedgie Woman’s twisted dreadlocks end in eleven hands that

use sign language to actually spell “Wedgie Power” (Figure 6.3). This is a clever visual resource to add a layer of humour to the inquisitive child reader, who most likely would need to find out what these signs mean. The Spanish readers, however, cannot enjoy the joke because of the name of Wedgie Woman has been translated as “Mujer Macroelastica” and the practical jokes of giving wedgies have been substituted with “Elasticollejas” (‘colleja’ means in Spanish ‘a slap on the back of the neck’). Therefore, the fact that the hand sign also says “wedgie power” in the Spanish version does not mean anything, plus you have a certain degree of incongruity with the pictures when the reader can see policemen hanging from the street signs by their underwear (they have suffered a wedgie) for no apparent reason.⁶

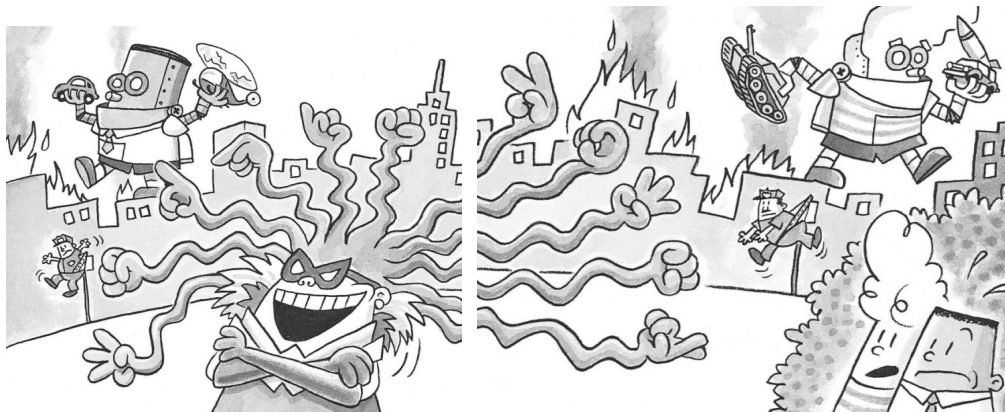


Figure 6.3
From *THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS: AN EPIC NOVEL* by Dav Pilkey.
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Pictures can sometimes offer some room for manoeuvre when they are adapted to the target culture. In the Spanish version of CU, for example, the festivities and religious rites have been domesticated to Catholic celebrations when possible. For instance, in the source text a boy opens his presents on December 25th, following the American customs of opening the present on Christmas Day. In the Spanish version the calendar reads January 6th, coinciding with the Epiphany Day (El Día de los Reyes

⁶ English and Spanish share the sign language alphabet, so in both languages the hands spell “Wedgie Power.”

Magos), the date on which Catholics open their presents in Spain. However, in other cases the change of religion was not possible at all, creating an obvious gap between the text and the pictures. In the fifth book, a wedding is going to be celebrated between Mr. Krupp and Ms. Ribble. In the original text, the pictures clearly convey that Mr. Krupp is Jewish: a rabbi wearing a kippah and a tallit will officiate at the wedding and Mr. Krupp is drawn wearing a kippah as well (Figure 6.5). Pilkey chooses very clearly to describe this wedding as Jewish both in the text (“the rabbi walked down the aisle”) and with pictures. In the Spanish version the word “rabino” (the literal translation for “rabbi”) is not mentioned at all; instead Azaola has chosen the word “celebrante” (“celebrant” in English), deleting from the text all connotations of a Jewish ceremony, and transforming it into a secular one, despite the obvious Jewish imagery (*CU5*, 55-58). When the illustration was presented to a group of children who have not previously read the book and they could not contextualize the image within the narrative, they reached different conclusions. 27% of the children were not able to identify the picture by itself and answered “I don’t know,” but a vast majority of 73% was able to identify a wedding as the general content of the image. However, when asked about the religion conveyed in the image and the reason behind their choices their answers were quite different: 23% of the group stated that it was a Catholic wedding and the reasons they gave were, in most of the cases, related to the priest (“because a priest is officiating the ceremony” and “because the priest is holding a bible”). The fact that all the children attended a Catholic school may have had an impact on their answers as some of them seem more likely to recognize something they are familiar with than something that is actually in the image. 35% of the children declared that it was a Jewish wedding, with the “little hat of the priest” being given as the reason for it, although none of them was able to name the “kipá” by

its actual name in Spanish. These readers will very likely identify a gap between the text and picture and it can be seen as an example of a counterpoint interaction, where the text and the image provide contradictory information. 7% of the children were not able to identify any religion behind it and another 7% gave other answers such as Christian wedding (no justification given) or gypsy wedding with the racist justification “because they are badly dressed.”

Pictures may be insurmountable obstacles for translators because they are unable to change them, but they sometimes offer some opportunity for re-interpretation, which can maintain or challenge the ideologies of the source text. As mentioned in previous chapters, the CU series has justifiably been criticized for its portrayal of traditional gender roles and its depiction of girls and women. Dav Pilkey has constantly perpetuated gender stereotypes with his pictures. For instance, in most of his illustrations of the cavemen in the tenth book men are clearly portrayed as warriors and protectors of the tribe: they light a fire, they carry spears, and they comfort and put their arms round scared women, who are depicted holding babies, crying, and covering their eyes (*CU10*, 95-127).

However, this vision of gender has not necessarily been shared by the two different translators of the books, whose work can expand or diminish the negative depiction of women within the narrative. For example, the ninth book of the series was published in Spanish in the U.S. by Scholastic Español months earlier than the Spanish version in Spain. The translator of the American Spanish version, Nuria Molinero, has been more benevolent toward the female roles and images than either Pilkey or Azaola. She translated the character Judge Fudgie McGrudge as “Jueza Alicia Malicias” while Azaola, using the same picture, has assumed the judge is a man named “Sisebuto Sañudo” (Figure 6.4). Even though the original text does not

reveal the gender of the judge, Molinero has decided on a female character, a welcome change from other female characters who are teachers, stay-at-home mothers, or news-presenters. At least she offers an alternative for young girls reading the series to find one woman in a position of authority. Spanish children, however, like Miguel Azaola, mostly perceived the character as a man. When they saw the illustration and were asked about the gender of the judge, 81% decided it was a man, even though in Spain judges do not wear a wig in court. Spanish children perceive the image of a judge as being closer to the masculine gender. Only five children thought it was the image of a woman, and of these, only one girl identified the judge as a female character. Girls did not identify the androgynous figure with a female character. This may be partly because of the historically traditional role of the judge as a man presented in the media and films.

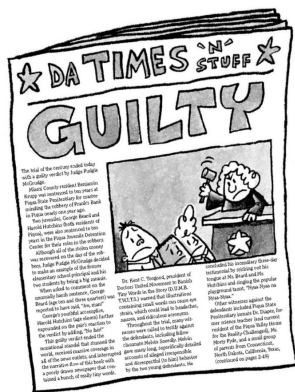


Figure 6.4.



Figure 6.5

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I have already mentioned how the pictures in the series reinforce the traditional stereotypical image of women. They are also presented as quite irrational and emotion driven. For example, an angry group of women beat the owner of the petrol station when they read the sign that George has tampered with from “Free Brake Inspection”

to “Free Bra Inspection” (CU9, 92-97). The two Spanish translators had to work with the pictures given to them, which means the sign had to become offensive to women in some way so as to justify the beating the reader can witness later in the pictures. Molinero has opted for the literal translation “Revisiones de frenos gratis” bearing in mind that ‘frenos’ is phonetically very close to the word ‘senos’ (‘breast’ in English). The phonetic closeness of these two words has worked extremely well in translation and the manipulated sign “Revision de senos gratis” (‘free breast inspection’) is a perfect match to the pictures. So, in this case, a literal translation of the sign has facilitated the new play on words in the target language as well. Miguel Azaola, however, has chosen a different approach. He has translated the first sign as “Superganga Los Mejores Frenos Gratis” (Super bargain, the best brakes free) and then he has converted the second sign into “Mujeres a Fregar” (‘Women go to do the dishes’). As he did with the “placenta vs. placebo” play on word, he has again eliminated the reference to the female body.⁷ Although it has not necessarily become more or less offensive than the source text, it is obvious that he has chosen not use the word ‘breast’ and he has opted for a sexist comment to provoke the violent reaction. It is perhaps the case that references to the female body have acquired some sort of taboo in the translation of the CU series and have been deleted from the text, but women in the Spanish text are still depicted as irrational, emotional, and ultimately violent.

There is a clear connection between humour and violence throughout the whole series. Violence and its visual representation are usually perceived as something funny and to be enjoyed in all the books. People are constantly being chased and beaten by monsters, aliens, animals, or other humans. Even persecution is

⁷ As discussed in Chapter Four.

seen as something comical. In the seventh book, for example, the image of Melvin running away from an angry mob is seen in three different pages from different angles: as the centre of the visual attention (Figure 6.6), as a secondary scene behind the main one (Figure 6.7) and through a window (Figure 6.8). The text only makes reference to this image in the first case; the reiteration of the scene the second and third time is a visual resource that adds a humorous connotation.



Figure 6.6

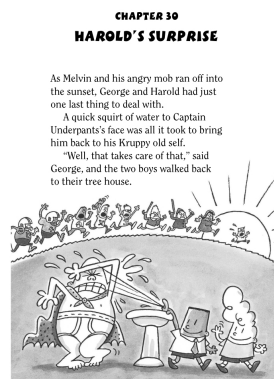


Figure 6.7

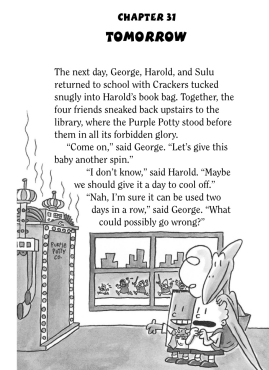


Figure 6.8

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Pilkey plays constantly with the location of pictures. According to Nodelman, children do not necessarily focus their attention at the centre of a picture,

[y]oung children tend to scan a picture with equal attention to all parts; the ability to pick out and focus on the human at the centre is therefore a learned activity, and one that reinforces important cultural assumptions, not just about the relative value of particular objects, but also about the general assumption that objects do indeed have different values and do therefore require different degrees of attention. (114)

Pilkey assumes that the child readers probably look at books and illustrations in a different way from adults. He even includes visual jokes for his more conscientious readers, who can find hidden messages in the text if they know where to look. For instance, in a house surrounded by signs to keep people away, Pilkey has included a small sign that says “Do not read this sign” (CU9, 29), which is completely unrelated to the plot but will entertain readers who have stopped to read the signs in detail. On the next page, in the middle of the text that forms the newspaper page that comments on the verdict of guilty given to George, Harold, and Mr. Krupp, he also includes a small paragraph in tiny font that reads:

... and interrupted the narrative flow of this book with a poorly drawn newspaper that contained a bunch of really tiny words. Dr. Kent C. Toogood, president of Doctors United Movement to Banish Tiny Words in the Story (D.U.M.B. T.W.I.T.S.) warned that the illustrations containing small words can cause eye strain, which could lead to headaches, nausea, and ridiculous acronyms. (30)

This self-referential sign, which draws attention to the text as a text rather than a secondary world and is one of the main features of postmodern children’s literature, has also been translated into the Spanish language. The new acronyms read “MEMOS ESTOS” (“these dumbs”) and both the self-referentiality and the irony about the size of the words have been kept in Spanish.

Irony in pictures can arise in various ways: it could be produced either by contradicting within the text itself, by contradicting within the picture itself, or by creating a contradiction between picture and text (Kümmerling-Meibauer 162). For

instance, at the altar, just before they get married, Ms. Ribble breaks up with Mr. Krupp, saying she cannot marry him because he has a funny-looking nose. The irony is clear as the reader can see that Pilkey has drawn both characters with identical noses (*CU5*, 34-5). In the fourth book of the series, Professor Poppypants is holding a newspaper that reads, in tiny print, “Reading Small Print is Bad for your Eyes,” a piece written by Dr. Kent Toogood, the same doctor that makes a similar recommendation in the ninth book of the series. Azaola has not kept the same name for the doctor but, this aside, the visual irony does work very well in the target text.

The vast majority of the visual humour, an important feature in this series, has been kept in the target text. Julie Cross explains that visual humour is widely present in texts for male early readers. Basing her ideas on Michael Guerian’s arguments she believes that, when younger boys read,

they need sound, colour, motion, or some physical stimulation to become engaged, due to the fact that boys’ brains engage in less cross-hemisphere brain activity than girls, and it seems the case that these literary forms of physical humour relay, by means of the text, and also sometimes the accompanying illustration, a form of visual, action-oriented humour. (154)

In the CU series, the comic-style form is indispensable to the humour in the text. There are many slapstick “visual” instances of humour, typical of comics, such as when the hero’s cape becomes stuck in the back of a moving van (Figure 6.10). Even the text acknowledges these comic-style pictures and humour. For instance, when the two protagonists throw water over their principal, Mr. Krupp, to try to wake him from his hypnotized state George says, “I saw ‘em do this in a cartoon once” (*CU1*, 117).

These examples of visual humour should work well in different cultures and do not pose any specific problems in translation, especially when it comes to pictures. For instance, when Captain Underpants jumps out of a window and hits the ground missing a trampoline, a truck full of pillows or a hay bale (Figure 6.9), it is an image that any reader, regardless his/her culture, may find funny. Cross explains that this sort of action-orientated humour, is more associated with the affective dimension and ‘jouissance’ than the cognitive, and involves “textual depiction of cartoon-like, extreme violence and ridiculous slapstick, in keeping with the common perception of the later maturing of certain cognitive abilities of boys in general” (156). Although this argument ignores the fact that young girls may also enjoy this kind of humour, it is true that visual violence is commonly used in books aimed at young male readers.



Figure 6.9



Figure 6.10

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Much of this visual humour is based on laughing at other people’s misfortunes and unkind practical jokes at the expense of others. In this case, the excessive use of visual violence links the books with their comics’ aesthetic. Violence is very frequently displayed in all kinds of visual representations -kicks, blows, dents, bangs,

etc.- and it is mostly enjoyed by watchers/witnesses and perpetrators. In the majority of cases, people become part of an angry mob to lynch the two main characters, a villain, or to punish someone. Children laugh mercilessly at adults and all ridicule is celebrated and not censored. In the CU series, empathy and compassion are hardly ever present. George and Harold seem more concerned about the gerbil being slapped than about the suffering of any other characters or schoolmates. They constantly crack jokes, pull pranks and cause mayhem at the school. Their concern to save the world does not necessarily apply to individuals. All this violence has visually been left untouched in the Spanish books and has not been censored, a decision that tallies with the content of the Spanish texts, where, as I have explained in previous chapters, violence has sometimes been used in exchange for scatological content or toilet humour.

Violence seems to be enjoyed and shared in the community, and it is an important source of humour. There are many pictures of children laughing at other people's (especially adults) misfortunes and bullies are visually represented in a demeaning position. Illustrations very often contribute to presenting the antagonist in a humiliating way. For instance, the bullies of the ninth book are pictured as being not only scared, but also crying, on the floor over a puddle of tears or actually having wet themselves (Figure 6.11). In the same book, when the bullies are tricked into eating an extremely spicy pizza and they lick the milk on the floor in order to find some relief, the rest of the group seem to enjoy the scene, and they even record it with their mobile phones (Figure 6.12).

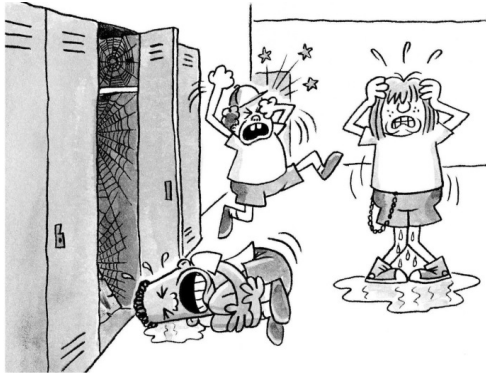


Figure 6.11



Figure 6.12

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In the previous chapter it has been explained how the intertextuality of CU is a postmodern feature of this series, as well as an important source of humour. CU contains many intertextual connections, parodic in nature, to people, media events, other texts and cultural knowledge. The visual representations of the CU series present some of these postmodern features as well. For instance, the self-referentiality, which refuses to allow readers to have a vicarious lived-through experience, offering instead a metafictional stance by drawing attention to the text as a text rather than a secondary world (Sipe and Pantaleo 3) is obvious in the series in its visual representation. When Booger Boy is defeated, he “flopped, unconscious, into a giant boogery blob that spread across several city blocks (and nearly four whole pages)” (CU7, 154). Indeed, for the next four pages the reader can see the body of the Booger Boy spread on the floor.

Another postmodern feature of this series is its intervisuality. The books are not only a pastiche of illustrative styles, but they also include visual references to well-known texts and illustrations. Desmet suggests that substitution and compensation are useful strategies to retain the play of ideas so the cultural reference does not remain dormant in the target culture (132-33). Unfortunately, because of the

impossibility of finding an equivalent for the original reference, some visual elements remain dormant in Spanish. For instance, in the eighth book of the series, a librarian offers the boys the book “Mommy Has Two Heathers” a clear parody of the 1989 book, *Heather Has Two Mommies* during their Banned Books Weeks. This book tells the story of Heather, a child raised by a lesbian couple and it is considered to be one of the first lesbian-themed children’s book published. In the CU series this scene takes place when the time travel machine ‘Purple Potty’ has brought George and Harold to some kind of back-to-front universe (one with organic food and where rule #1 in the gym is to have fun): Pilkey could be implying that “Mommy Has Two Heathers” should not be banned. This whole scene has been translated into Spanish by changing the title of the book to “Las Dos Caras de Mamuchi” (The two faces of mommy) in the Spanish version (Figure 6.13). The reference has been deleted and the creation of a new title in this case fails to convey a similar meaning to that of the original text, as “Heather Has Two Mommies” has a history of being a controversial, and even banned, book in the USA; “Las Dos Caras de Mamuchi” does not mean anything to the Spanish reader, who is going to miss the reference.

Spain, as explained in the first chapter, has faced a different and more institutionalised censorship in recent history, but now it does not have a list of banned or challenged books that can be considered harmful. However, some authors and publishers have applied a self-imposed censorship when it comes to controversial topics. For instance, it took almost 15 years to publish *Paula Tiene Dos Mamás* (*Heather Has Two Mommies*) in Spain and until the first decade of the 21st century very few books for children addressing the issue of homosexual parents saw the light. Bearing in mind that this book was published in Spain in 2003 - one year before the eighth CU book was released- the reference could have been included. However, it

would not have been recognizable to the reader, as the book was not well known and it had not received much publicity neither positive nor negative. This is probably one of the cases when meaning gets lost in translation, as to explain the implications of the text in its source culture is not possible without the help of some kind of paratextual element, and there is no text in the target culture which echoes ideas associated with the original reference.

There are, however, other examples where intervisuality works very well in the target text. It is precisely when it is aimed at an older audience and the images can be recognised and enjoyed by the adult reader. Examples of this intertextuality include adaptations of Leonardo Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man and Uncle Sam's poster of "I want you for the U.S. Army." In the first case, the Vitruvian man (a picture portraying the ideal human proportions) becomes a picture of George in two superimposed positions with his arms and legs apart and inscribed in a circle and a square (Figure 6.14). Wedgie Woman is pictured creating her robots and designing them to resemble George and Harold's image. This is an image that children will probably not understand, but an adult reader is likely to enjoy. In the second case, the poster of Uncle Sam has been parodied and it reads "I want you to stop reading" (CU7, 50). In Spanish, it has been literally translated as "Quiero que tú dejes de leer," (Figure 6.15) a solution that conveys the irony of such words in a library poster but may miss the irony in having Uncle Sam addressing the nation to stop reading.



Figure 6.13

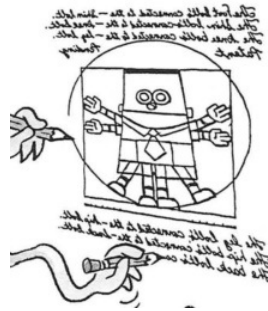


Figure 6.14



Figure 6.15

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These examples of intervisuality show how the impossibility of replacing pictures is going to have an impact in the perception of the text as less humorous and complex in the target text. Visual jokes aimed to an adult audience are again lost in translation, as happens with intertextual references, because of the lack of cultural equivalents. Of course, there is nothing a translator can do to fill this gap between text, pictures and meaning, as he/she has usually no mean of editing the pictures or format. However, the presence of these visual references has a cultural significance in the source text and this should also be acknowledged. This is precisely one of the main challenges of translating postmodern children's books: to understand that the meaning of a text comes from different sources and that the boundaries between author, narrator, and readers can be blurred.

Postmodern texts are also defined as playful as the readers are invited to treat the text as a semiotic playground (Pantaleo and Sipe 3). Nothing shows this postmodern play with fiction and intertextuality better than the pages that precede the Flip-o-Rama section in each book and that warn the readers about different dangers: "All toilet violence was carefully monitored by P.E.T.T. (People for the Ethical

treatment of Toilets.) No actual toilets were harmed during the making of this chapter” (*CU2*, chapter 20); or “The following stunts were performed on closed streets by a highly trained professional hamster” (*CU6*, 145). In these warnings, the books reference film conventions easily recognized by young American readers. According to McGillis, this willingness to play with form as well as content is a feature of recent children’s texts, and this renewal and manipulation of forms reflects how self-consciously children’s literature takes its place in the general culture (McGillis, *Hero* 65). These warnings are a clear parody of the American Humane Association’s trademarks “No Animals Were Harmed” which have appeared at the beginning or the end of American movies and television series since 1940. Although Spanish readers may know about these warnings, Spanish films and television programmes do not include them, and younger readers may not even recognise them. Even though readers will probably find these warnings funny, they will not identify them with Spanish film and television conventions.

In conclusion, the quality of mixing and matching different intertextual and intervisual elements in the source text has been mostly recreated in the Spanish text. A substitution technique has worked very well with intertextual references but it is not available for intervisual ones because of the need to retain the original pictures. Thus, many of these references remain dormant for the target culture audience and the author cannot establish a dialogue with his readers as many different layers of content are lost in translation, although this does not mean that they cannot enjoy and decode a text in a different way. As Desmet argues, “readers of translated texts who do not have access to the source text or source language will forge their own interpretations and intertextual links based solely on the target text” (133). Meaning will always be

gained in translation, as it is through translation when texts become available to a whole new audience regardless the different interpretations they may make of them.

6.3 The translation of comics

An important part of the illustrative content in the CU series arises from the comic books. Captain Underpants books are not comic books *per se* but they all include at least two different comics, made by George and Harold, within the narrative of each book. These serve different purposes: they can recapitulate the plot from previous books, they can act as catalysts of an action, or provoke rage when found by teachers. George and Harold are always the authors of these comics and, because they have been created by children, they are not very developed either graphically or linguistically.

The definition of the word “comic” is not an easy one. Scott McCloud, in *Understanding Comics*, explains that the world of comics is large and varied, so it can be a challenge to find a definition so broad that includes all kind of comics (4). He defines them as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (9). However, this definition is not fully inclusive for all kind of comics, for example it omits cartoons that are formed by one single panel. Neil Cohn’s definition of comics is a more inclusive one and it can be better applied to the comics that appear in the CU books, “...single panel comics, text dominated comics, and text absent comics are all comics... categorically, comics can only be understood as sociological, literary, and cultural artifacts, independent from the internal structures comprising them” (9). As cultural artefacts, comics can also be seen as ideological texts,

portraying different attitudes that may, and have, changed with time.⁸ Attitudes towards comics may also change when comics are translated into another language. Translators need to consider a number of issues that may affect the overall perception of a text, such as distance between characters, dialogue, violence, and obviously use of language.

Not much research has been done into the translation of comics.⁹ It has been traditionally seen as an easy task and the possible difficulties faced by translators are rarely considered and more linked to availability of space than content. To translate a comic different strategies of foreignization or domestication can be followed. A foreignization strategy implies that “[t]he comic keeps, as far as possible, its original cultural and editorial characteristic” (Rota 85). When a foreignizing strategy is applied, “the format is preserved, thus clearly revealing the foreign origin of the comic” (85) and only a few necessary changes are made. A domestication strategy, on the other hand, “involves the publication of a foreign comic in the local format, notwithstanding the characteristics of a foreign publication” and may be “accompanied by many alterations of the original comic” (86). These alterations may include a change in the type of publication (from a paperback to hard cover), changes in pages and panels that may be magnified, re-arranged or omitted, or changes in the

⁸ Martin Barker was one of the first UK scholars who paid attention to comics and their ideology. His books *Comics: Ideology, Power and the Critics* (1989) and *A Haunt of Fears: the Strange History of the British Horror Comics Campaign* (1992) pioneered the study of comics at scholarly level. In Barker’s view the absence of critical rigour on the part of the opponents of the comics until 1970s meant that “the [British] campaign against the comics was not about the comics, but about a conception of society, children and Britain” (*Haunt* 187).

⁹ For more information look at Federico Zanettin’s compilation of articles *Translating Comics*, Vineta Terescenko’s *Translating Comics: Comics Creation, Common Translation Strategies, Dos and Don’ts*, and Victoria Trianes’ *The Translation of Humour: Compensation in the Comic Mafalda: An Insight into the Strategy of Compensation to Translate Humorous Comic Strips from Spanish to English*.

colouring (from black and white to coloured and vice versa) (86-89). The translation of the CU series is an amalgamation of both. Panels, pictures, and colouring have been respected but there have also been changes in the content of the balloons in terms of typography and the font of the written onomatopoeias.

Comics are unique in their combination of pictorial and verbal content, which in some cases depend on each other. On a basic level, the component parts of comics are four: the panel, the gutter, the caption and the speech balloon. The panel is a rectangular frame that contains pictures and pieces of short dialogue (Terescenko 11). Panels vary in size and page arrangement. The speech balloon is a “defining element of the comic because it establishes a word/image unity that distinguishes comics from pictures illustrating a text” (Carrier 4). The gutter is the space that divides frames. Captions are boxes containing text that are most often used for narrative, but can occasionally be used for dialogue (most commonly internal dialogue) when the character is not present in the panel. Balloons are placed within a panel in order to represent speech or thoughts of the characters. They can appear in many different forms, the most common ones being cloud-shaped, with small clouds, increasing in size, coming from the character’s head to denote thinking; or speech bubbles with a pointed tail from the character’s mouth to denote speech. Captain Underpants’ balloons are very underdeveloped because they are the creation of the two main characters, two children.

The translation of text in comics is relevant. As Rota explains, “[t]exts in comics are not mere transcription of the character’s speech: they are graphic representation of them. Before being something to be read (i.e. texts), they are something to be seen: pictures themselves, which contribute to the visual equilibrium of the page” (80). However, the decisions regarding the available space do not depend

on the translator but on the editor. As Azaola explains, the Spanish language tends to be more verbose than English, and he tries not to be prolix. Editors play with empty spaces and reduce the size of the typography to fit the balloons and/or caption boxes. When there are paragraphs that do not fit in the space provided in the source text they (editors and translator) devise a definitive version in a communicative process that Azaola has defined as “easy, fluid and always cordial” (*email*). Space was not an issue in the translation of the CU comics, but it is worth underlining that the typography has been changed in most of the cases, from messy and infantile hand-writing in the source text to a more correct and smaller one in the target text, and this has inevitably had an impact on the perception of the text, as less excessive and more formal.

Not only have the aesthetics of the comics changed but also the way the content is presented. In the original CU books, George and Harold create their own comics within the text, and they do it like children: with mistakes. Karen Coats argues that when children are learning to read they find pleasure in interpreting and decoding the texts by themselves (59-76). Children find these mistakes amusing, as they are able to interpret the joke that the author is creating through misspellings. By contrast, the level of agency that the Spanish version concedes to children is much lower. When Jorge and Berto (the Spanish characters) first write their comics, their grammar is perfect. Later, however, in the second book of the series, the comic book includes the grammatical mistakes and misspellings. Without explanation, the main characters have become less accomplished and write more like “real” children would. From the third to the tenth book - and this constantly changes within the different editions - the books adopt several methods of dealing with these mistakes: by correcting them, by leaving them in the translation, or by trying to teach the children how to spell by misspelling a word, crossing it out, and then writing it again correctly. This last option

is in stark opposition to Pilkey's intentions, as children are not only not amused, but also are being taught how to spell, a change that betrays a didacticism not intended in the original.

Translators, though, are just one cog in the translation mechanism and their decisions are not always respected. In the case of the Spanish translator of the CU series, his views about what children's literature is and how it should be translated do not always tally with those of the publishing house he works for. The educational publishing house in charge of the CU series is more concerned about the didactic side of the books, even at the expense of their humorous content. Azaola explained in a personal communication that a book goes through different persons responsible for its publication, and that different criteria are applied, not always in alignment with those of the author and/or the translator:

Editors did not want to take the risk of schools not recommending these books based on what teachers could consider *grammatical mistakes*. Therefore, in the new editions, they *correct* the mistakes (many of them quite funny, in my opinion), that were there in the first books. In a short time, all the books will be reprinted and no nonsense will be left, adhering to only one criterion: the one that I do not like. (*email*, emphasis in original)

Scholastic en Español has published the books in Spanish in the USA with the grammatical mistakes. Therefore, all the first eight books of the series, including Azaola's translations, have respected what Pilkey chose in the source text. However, SM is a very didactic publishing house favoured by teachers when recommending books for their students; it is too large a commercial niche to be lost due to some

spelling mistakes. The editorial manipulation of a text may not, therefore, be the result of the translator's work, and it is important to raise awareness of the advantages of sharing the process of decision-making between the editor, the publisher, the translator, and ideally the author in all the different stages of a book's production and translation. Translators must negotiate various pressures and constraints imposed upon them via ideology, commissioning editors, and the publishing industry.

Another relevant aspect of comic translation in relation to language is the use of onomatopoeia and interjections. Although the translation of onomatopoeia and interjection is, strictly speaking, a linguistic issue, this often intersects with meaning conveyed by the pictures in the comics. Therefore, the translation of these rhetorical figures is analysed in this section. Onomatopoeia is "a combination of sounds in a word that imitates or suggests what the word refers to" (OED) and an onomatopoeic word is a word that imitates, reproduces or represents a natural sound. In the CU series, onomatopoeia appears both outside and inside the balloons, and in both cases "the iconic framework imposes specific limits on the translation of the linguistic message" (Rabadán, qtd. in Garcés 238) because of the physical constraints related to the use of space, fonts and typography (238).

Onomatopoeic words represent sounds and they need to be translated like any other word because written representations of sounds differ across languages. As Chapman states, "since words of this type are adapted into the phonemic and orthographic resources of the language, they are likely to take varied forms in different speech-communities" (40). The decision making when translating the onomatopoeia involves whether to leave the original or translate it. In some cases, onomatopoeia may reflect conventions accepted by most readers, as for example the representation of certain sounds, an area in which English is highly productive and in

which its creations are left unchanged in the Spanish comics (Garcés 238).

Traditionally, comic books have always been influenced by the English language. The 1950s and mid 1960s was a period of mass diffusion of American comic books in Spain and translators found it difficult to create onomatopoeia or sound representations in Spanish so quickly; so even when a Spanish equivalent was available, English onomatopoeia was favoured “for reasons of snobbery or because of the need for exoticism or local colour” (239). In the following decades, comic books continued to be influenced by English, and therefore the permanence of the borrowed forms was ensured, with a tendency to retain English onomatopoeia (239).

The biggest problem with onomatopoeia in comics is that graphically they are usually heavily interconnected with drawings and sometimes even can be used as a part of a linguistic play that should be translated in order to have the same meaning in the target text. In CU onomatopoeia has, when possible, been translated into the conventional equivalents in the Spanish language following a domestication approach. For instance, animal sounds have all been domesticated into their Spanish equivalents, but this has presented some problems when it comes to their relationships with pictures. In the ninth book of the series, George and Harold create “The Adventures of Dog Man” featuring a superhero dog that fights crime. Traditionally, a dog’s bark in English is represented as “woof-woof” and in Spanish as “guau, guau.” Pilkey plays with the dog’s onomatopoeic expressions and their homophones and homonyms to help him communicate with humans: “Roof Roof” means that the thief is on the roof; “Pant Pant Pant” implies that he is wearing pants; “Bark Bark” suggests that the police need to climb the bark of a tree to catch him; and “whine whine” indicates that he wants to celebrate his victory with wine (CU9, 119-34).

The chances of maintaining a homophone that conveys the same meaning as in the target language are pretty slim, so the translator has to resort to other linguistic devices in order to maintain the original meaning or simply reject the play-on-words. In this case, the Spanish dog keeps repeating the onomatopoeia “Aúuuu” and Azaola has tried to keep language playful by using the words “Aún,” (still) “Raúl,” (Name) and “Azul” (blue) to help catch the thief, indicating that the thief’s name is Raúl, that he is still in the area and that he is wearing something blue. The Spanish text has a lower degree of success than the original text because it does not have a clear connection to the pictures of the comic. For instance, the speech bubble reads that the thief is dressed in blue but the illustrations are clearly in black and white (CC9, 120-34).

The change of onomatopoeia also means additional expense for the publisher and additional work for the letterer or the graphic designer (Garcés 240). The decision to translate an onomatopoeic word or not in these cases is not the translator’s but the publisher’s, and it may depend on the publisher’s willingness to invest money in the graphic adaptation of comics. After all, to translate and graphically adjust onomatopoeia is not always necessary - this may depend on the publishing tradition of respective publishers and countries and on the readership’s expectations. In countries where foreignizing strategies in translation prevail, onomatopoeia may not be translated and readers accept and expect this (Garcés 239). In Spanish comics, for example, a mixed approach is common. The replacement of onomatopoeia by respective Spanish equivalents depends on the type of sound that it represents - sounds made by animals, humans and sounds of feelings are replaced by their Spanish equivalents and representations of mechanical sounds are retained in their original form (Garcés 241). This is precisely what has happened in the CU series. Animal

sounds have all been domesticated and cats' "meow" becomes "miau", frogs' "ribit" becomes "Croac", and dogs' "Ruff" has been domesticated as "Guau" (CU6, 70; CC6, 70). However, mechanical sounds have mostly been kept in English. The Spanish language lacks the ease that English enjoys for grammaticalizing the representation of sounds and converting them into verbs or nouns without the addition of endings or some other type of modification. Therefore, there is an extensive use of English onomatopoeic verbs and nouns integrated into the panels, which include "Crash" or "Grrrr" and "sssss", which have been left unchanged. Other mechanical sounds have been slightly domesticated, changing the order of the letters so the tendency of the Spanish language of alternating vowel and consonant is respected and there is a remarkable deletion of all onomatopoeias that include the letter 'w', as it is hardly used in the Spanish language. This is a good translation strategy for phonetic reasons ("Pow" becomes "Paf" or "Wow" becomes "Uau").

This is not necessarily the case with the translation of interjections. An interjection is "a word or short phrase used to express emotion", such as "Hey!," "Ouch!," "Ugh!," etc. Most onomatopoeic expressions that are used to represent unarticulated sounds produced by humans have been translated by Spanish equivalents, where one exists: Captain Underpants' catch-cry "Tra-la-laaaa" becomes "Tata-ta Cháááán", "Hey" is "Eh", "Haha" becomes "Jua Jua". Sounds used to show feelings and attitudes have also been adapted in spelling or Azaola has changed them for the onomatopoeias heard in Spanish: "Yummy Yummy" becomes "ñam, ñam", "yippee!" is "¡yupi!" and "weeee" is "uyyyy." Translating interjections is not simply a matter of word translation. It implies translating textual/discourse meanings which are language-specific and culturally bound. The translator must interpret its semantic and pragmatic meaning and its context of use, and then look for a form (interjection or

not) that can convey that meaning and produce an identical or similar effect on the audience of the translated text in order to avoid pragmatic errors (Cuenca 21).

In the process of translating idiomatic interjections there are also cultural differences that should be taken into account. The Spanish language has a tendency to include references to religion and family meanwhile English tends to include more onomatopoeic expressions. For instance, many of the interjections expressing disappointment, surprise, or regret such as “Awww, man!,” “Oh, NO!,” “Oopsy Daisys,” or “UH-OH” have been translated to “Vaya por Dios” (Good Lord!), “¡Santo Cielo!” (Holy Heaven!), “Pobres Angelitos” (Poor little angels), and “¡Ay, Madre!” (Aw, Mother!). These expressions are used in most of the books; for instance, just in the second book of the series the expression “Vaya por Dios” is used six times not only in the speech bubbles of the comics but also in the main text. The expressive meaning is equivalent in both languages to express surprise and in this case, references to religion are not addressing God nor insisting in his goodness; the characters here are just expressing an emotion. This shows how translators’ creative and perceptive ability is of key importance when looking for equivalent interjections, but they are influenced by their situational context and their own use of language.

This strategy of adapting interjections to Spanish has been successful in terms of meaning but it has also occasioned a modification in the tone of the comics. “Awww, man” and “Oh, no!” are informal expressions that any child may use in his/her everyday speech. However, “¡Santo Cielo!” or “¡Vaya por Dios!” belong to a more formal adult language. The translator has kept the level of surprise but the register has been changed. It is unlikely that Spanish children today would use these expressions over other less developed such as “Jobar” or a simply “Oh, no.” The translation of interjections tallies with the more formal tone of the whole series: the

old-fashioned names or the more formal narrative voice are also good examples of this general change in the register of the target text. Inevitably, this might be seen as somewhat incoherent in relation to the pictures, where young children are portrayed showing surprise and/or anger but adopting expressions that may not necessarily be used by children nowadays.

To conclude, the translation of onomatopoeias in the CU series agrees with data of a recent survey of translation of onomatopoeia in Spanish comic books in the last fifteen years: the prevailing norm is to retain English onomatopoeia (Garcés 243). However, Miguel Azaola has made changes when it comes to animal sounds or unarticulated sounds produced by humans and has domesticated them. On the other hand, to retain English expressions or to translate literally are neither the most frequent nor adequate strategies when it comes to interjections. Azaola has chosen Spanish interjections with similar meaning but with different forms and this has provoked a change in the register of the characters and a possible mismatch with the content of the pictures. In terms of space, typography and font of letters, technological advances have made it easier to modify the text and pictures when necessary, and therefore, translators enjoy now more freedom to adapt a text than they did in the past. It is precisely this technology what also allows changes in the paratext of any published book. Therefore, in the next section, I shall analyse to what extent the paratext of the CU series has been adapted for the Spanish readers and market and the reasons, both ideological and commercial, behind these changes.

6.4 The translation of the paratext

Publication formats and conventions represent key factors for the construction of meaning of the text as a whole and, therefore, possible alterations to them may affect

the reception in the target culture. Oittinen states that, “the visual appearance of a book always includes not only the illustrations, but also the actual print, the shape and style of letters and hearings, and the book’s entire layout; all these features influence the reader emotionally” (103). Therefore, it is important to consider not only how pictures are modified in comics and picture books, but also how the different paratextual elements that exist within all books are also adapted, if possible, into the target language and culture.

Paratext is “the text that surrounds and supports the core text” (Pellatt 1). If texts are to become real in the publishing world, they depend on paratexts. Genette and Macleans’s definition of paratext as “... the means by which a text makes a book of itself and proposes itself as such to its readers” (261) is the starting point for most scholars studying the uses of paratexts and their translation. However, Valerie Pellatt’s definition of paratext is far more inclusive, and more relevant to the focus of this research as she considers written, verbal and non-verbal material. According to the scholar paratext includes “any material additional to, appended to or external to the core text which has functions of explaining, defining, instructing, or supporting, adding background information, or the relevant opinions and attitudes of scholars, translators, and reviewers”(1).¹⁰ I leave outside this definition what I have termed ‘cultural peritext’ which will be dealt with in the next section of this chapter.

Paratext can typically include a cover, title, front matter (dedication, opening information, foreword), back matter (endpapers, colophon), footnotes, and many other materials not created by the author. Other editorial decisions can also fall into the category of paratext, such as the formatting or typography. Because of their close

¹⁰ The public perception of Captain Underpants in America and Spain has already been discussed in the Introduction and in Chapter One, as well as the criticism this series has achieved in America but not in Spain.

association with the text, it may seem that authors should be given the final say about paratextual materials, but often that is not the case.

Regarding the translation of paratexts, scholars at the University of Vigo (Spain) have widely studied the subject because as far as “there can be no text without paratext, neither can there be a translation without corresponding paratranslation” (Yuste Frias 118). It is important to underline that many resources normally available to translators, such as footnotes, epilogues or prefaces, are not usually appropriate in the case of children’s literature due to the nature of the target audience. Children are not likely to be interested in explanations about changes or linguistic explanations concerning the text they are reading. Most likely, translators of children’s books write prefaces with an adult audience in mind, to justify their choice of the text or to comment on its didactic content.

Gillian Lathey explains in her article “The Translator Revealed” that translators’ prefaces may offer valuable insights into the selection of texts for translation, development in translation practices and changes in the image of the child reader. According to Lathey, “[w]hen the translator becomes visible, metatextual comment highlights the particular demands of translating for children” (1). She argues that translators become active and creative mediators in these prefaces - which can be seen as a medium of cultural mediation - in which they can justify themselves, address the child directly, or illustrate the rethinking of their task and audience (16). She also underlines that translators should make a clear choice between the academic adult and the child reader when translating classic texts, as no translation can suit both (15).

One of the ways in which the translator acts as a mediating agent outside the literary text is through the use of paratexts. The voice of the implied narrator can be

heard in paratexts, such as footnotes, glossaries, forewords, cover and back cover, and it is a voice directed to the implied reader of the target text. All this paratextual material may very well possess a pedagogical content not intended by the author. Information about the author of the book and the circumstances in which it was written, or about the historical, political or cultural background of a story are the most frequent additions to texts. In the case of the CU series, there has been a clearly reductive approach, where the translator and/or the editors have omitted many features from the paratexts of the original books.

This “reduction” is not an arbitrary one, but, rather, an intentional act. The information offered by the paratext helps the readers to know the author and his/her intention. In the case of the CU books the sanitization carried out concerning the texts’ author is particularly striking. Many books in the American CU series include an “about the author” epilogue in the last page that highlights the episode in Pilkey’s life when he started to create these comic books: “Dav’s teacher told him, ‘You’d better straighten up, young man, because you can’t spend the rest of your life making silly books.’ Dav was not a very good listener!” (*CU1*, 123). This information about Pilkey’s creative childhood has been reduced to a very much more polite, less transgressive text in Spanish and moved to the back cover with a clear commercial purpose: “Dav Pilkey created his first stories when he was in primary school. Since then, he has written and illustrated numerous books for children. Ediciones SM has published the whole series of the very famous Captain Underpants” (back cover, all *Capitán Calzoncillos* books).

It is unlikely that the Spanish reader of the translated text is going to think of the author as a subversive child, who was punished and told off for making his own comic books, but simply as a creative child. Adults, who exercise control over the

publishing, editing and translating process, have their own implied reader in mind, and they may not necessarily agree. As Theo Hermans claims, "... translations... stop short of reorienting the discourse so radically that the orientation of the original Implied Reader disappears altogether" (qtd. in O'Sullivan, *Comparative* 110). However, it is worth questioning the origin of these editorial decisions in the translation of the CU series, especially when it comes to the design of the covers, back covers, or paratextual elements. As Miguel Azaola explains:

Normally the translator has nothing to do with the book's design, and even less with the front cover. He can give his opinion if he believes it is necessary, although I have never done it despite looking at original front pages that I really did not like... Experience tells me that if it is possible at all, and in order to save money, beside other things, editors use the front cover of the original book and they adapt it to the collection's "frame design," which is usually quite rigid, logically. What is usually altered is the title that the translator has given to the book – because the editor thinks it is too long, because he/she has thought of another one with more commercial "hook"... for thousands of reasons. (*email*)

Even though their decisions are not always going to be respected, translators need to read, interpret and translate typographical and orthographical details. Yuste Frías explains that each letter's typographical writing, size, and style contributes to both the translation's legibility and to the success or failure of the translation's presentation in the target culture (121). A quick look at the covers of the books (the first and foremost paratextual space in a book) will illuminate this idea further:

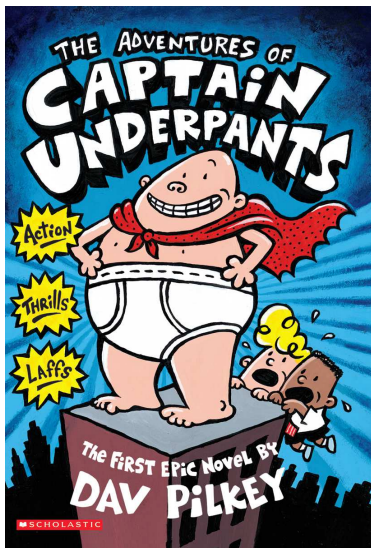


Figure 6.16

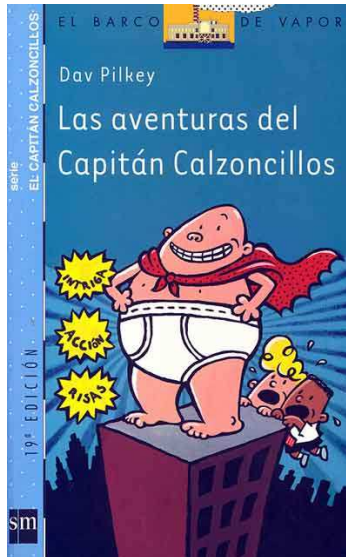


Figure 6.17

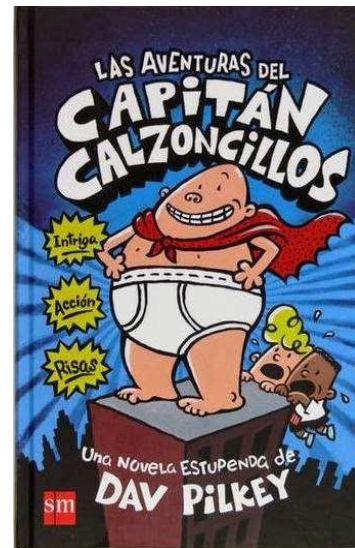


Figure 6.18

From *THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN UNDERPANTS: AN EPIC NOVEL* by Dav Pilkey. Scholastic Inc./The Blue Sky Press. Copyright © 1997 by Dav Pilkey. Reproduced by permission.

The first picture (Fig. 6.16) shows the American cover, which is very different from the Spanish one, even though they both have the same picture. In terms of typography, the American cover letters of the title attempt to emulate comic book style lettering in big, capital, bold letters, whose shade is projected making them gain some relief and appear three-dimensional. The big, white, bold letters hold visual priority on the cover as much as the picture of the superhero standing on top of a building, with George and Harold hanging off the rooftop. This cover may be perceived as more approachable to readers, as they can identify with the main characters' "handwriting."

The Spanish cover page's layout (Fig. 6.17) has a more formal look just at first sight. The pictures are smaller and more information about the book's publisher and its suitability for readers is offered: the reader knows that the book belongs to the 'Blue Series' (for children over 7 years old), that it has been included in the collection *El Barco de Vapor*, by the publishing house SM, whose colophon is also pictured in the bottom left corner. Each cover also prints its edition number - 19th edition in this

specific cover - in order to prove that it is a very successful book in terms of sales. Concerning the typography, the large letters become typed, lower-case, and not bolded, giving them a sense of uniformity, deleting any reference to comics from the cover. They are also significantly smaller, making the pictures, also smaller than in the source text cover, hold the visual priority over the text. Unequivocally, the Spanish version stresses the linearity of a far from playful style of typography.

Another issue concerning visual hierarchy is what it has been added, or left behind, when it comes to paratranslation. For instance, we cannot ignore the Western convention of reading from left to right and top to bottom, giving priority to the left corner as the place where a trained reader will immediately look when he/she is facing a new page. The fact that the Spanish version has included another texture in the cover page (a column of a lighter blue and dotted) affects not only the overall visual experience of the cover, but also moves the reader's attention from the picture to the factual information. The new visual appearance breaks with the original iconotextual unity, thereby drawing text and image further apart in the Spanish translation.

The titles of the cover pages are also part of what can be considered paratext. These titles should be attractive, suggestive and should reflect the content of the work (Celotti, qtd. in Mackerá 40). More importantly, they should align with the mood of the book and its visual and content styles. In the case of the CU series, titles are remarkably - and sometimes even ridiculously - long. Dav Pilkey introduces the excessiveness of the books right in their cover page. For instance, the third book of the series is titled *Captain Underpants and the Invasion of the Incredibly Naughty Cafeteria Ladies from Outer Space (and the Subsequent Assault of the Equally Evil Lunchroom Zombie Nerds)*. This title has been translated as *El Capitán Calzoncillos y la Invasión de los Péfidos Tiparracos del Espacio*, eliminating the second part of the

title (and the Subsequent...) and making it visually much less excessive, reducing the space it takes on the cover from seven lines to only four, and giving it a neater appearance. It seems that the editors in this case have forgotten to take into account what Oittinen and González-Davies have defined as “the grammar of the visual... such as the symbology or hidden meanings of typography, page margin sizes and all the different ways of combining words and pictures” (xiii). Pilkey wants his covers to be excessive, long, full of colours, and this has not necessarily been respected in the Spanish covers. However, this decision tallies with most of the Spanish children’s books, which tend to be included in a “collection” for specific target age readers and to be more formal and homogeneous. Azaola explains that this implementation of a book series into a pre-existing block already consolidated in a collection of the publishing house would happen with any editor in the world facing the same issue: “That’s what I mean with the “frame design” of the collection, whose identity signs get materialized in graphic and textual formulas that, although they admit variants and could be relatively flexible, you have no other option than to respect the general guidelines” (*email*).

For instance, any front cover from the “Blue Series” of El Barco de Vapor would share the same formula that we have seen in Fig. 6.17. These include the Capitán Calzoncillos series (Captain Underpants series), Pablo Diablo series (Horrid Henry series), Dav Pilkey’s Sito Kesito series (Ricky Ricotta's Mighty Robot Series); coincidentally, all of them have been translated by Miguel Azaola into Spanish.

In most of these titles the text has been translated (although with some reductions in the case of the CU series) but the editors have not paratranslated the visual elements on the cover, choosing a more didactic and formal approach. In order to duplicate the visual content of the source text, a paratranslation of the playful and

child-like original visual content was required. Actually, the first book of the series, *Las Aventuras del Capitán Calzoncillos*, has been reedited following the American paratext formula and all the information about the publishing house and series has been removed from the front cover (Fig.6.18). It also comes in a bigger format and in hard cover. The last two books of the series have also been published following this format. However, the Spanish edition does not yet offer the option of buying these books in a full colour edition, something that the American reader can choose for the first four books of the series.

When Spanish children were asked about which cover they preferred (between Fig. 6.17 and Fig. 6.18), the answer was a resounding 100% in favour of the American paratext formula (Fig. 6.18). The reasons they gave were based on the aesthetics of the image: they liked the letters, the combination of colours, the size of the pictures, and many of them claimed that the second one seemed, in general, “much cooler.” Bearing these results in mind, it is not surprising that some of the decisions regarding the covers and back covers of the books have been reconsidered in recent editions of the Spanish CU books and in the translation of the latest books.

These changes in format have, however, had an impact on the price of these books: a soft-cover copy in America of the first CU books costs \$4.49. Meanwhile a copy of the same book but with hard cover (soft cover is not available) in Spain costs 12.50€, which is almost four times its American price (\$15.65).¹¹ The price of a product is inevitably going to affect the perception of the public towards it and its value as a literary text. Because they have been published by an educational

¹¹ These prices and exchange rate are valid as in the 1st of November 2014, in both publishing houses’ websites: www.scholastic.com and www.literaturasm.com

publishing house and at a quite expensive price, these books are more likely to be perceived as appropriate, educational, and good literary texts.

To conclude, it is of key importance that translators read and interpret not only the text of a book, but also its pictures and paratext. Translators and publishers should be open to maintain a dialogue in which the meaning and its visual representation can be negotiated. All these elements form the part of the work to be translated: words, images, movements, and in the case of CU, even sounds. It is equally important that the editorial manipulation of a text respects, as much as possible, the paratext presented in the source text. This is not, as I have explained, a decision the translator can make, but it is important to raise awareness of how the lack of paratranslation may impoverish the target text as a whole. The editing of paratextual elements entails “not only symbolic, but also ideological, political, social, and cultural implications” (Yuste Frias 132). It may happen that the final result is an amalgamation of ideas that reflect multiples voices, although it is the publisher who dictates, in most of the cases, what crosses the border and in what form (Joosen 116).

In short, a collaborative translation between the editor/publishers, translator, and ideally the author might be the optimal approach to translate the paratextual elements in a book. This collaboration has not always taken place in the Spanish translation of the CU series and the paratext has not been translated. Some re-editions have resolved some issues when it comes to the cover of the books, but there are many other features of peritexts that have disappeared from the Spanish editions, especially those related to the Internet games, on-line apps, and merchandise accessible through the Scholastic website. Therefore, in the last section of this chapter, I will analyse to what extent this cultural peritext is important for the meaning of the text and the way it is perceived.

6.5 The impossibility of translating the cultural peritext

The export of books and translations is not always based on the intrinsic literary value of the text, but is more often the result of cultural dominance and of the concentration of power at the level of the publishing houses (Ghesquiere 19-20). International agreements and cooperation facilitate the publishing of Anglo-American texts in other countries and, as I extensively argued in Chapter One, this seems to happen only one way around, as Britain and the USA barely translate books from other languages. The dominance of the English language makes the image of Anglo-American children's literature export-orientated, and *extraductions* play a more important role in the Anglo-Saxon literary system than *intraductions*¹² (O'Sullivan, qtd. in Ghesquiere 27). Stahl is aware of the negative effects of this isolation and defines it as "a form of cultural poverty [that] testifies to a lack of imagination in an information-rich world" (qtd. in Ghesquiere 27). It is precisely the ever-growing power of the media and the availability of information, mostly in English, where translation faces one of its biggest challenges.

The Internet offers not only much valued information to the readers, but also the ability to establish a playful dialogue with the characters, the action, and the possibility of becoming an author oneself.¹³ In the case of the CU series, all these features are only offered in one language: English. The cultural peritext that surrounds

¹² Both the terms 'extraduction' and 'intraduction' are employed by Pascale Casanova (1999). 'Extraduction' refers to a translation whereby a text is exported and introduced in another country and another language; 'intraduction' refers to a translation whereby a foreign text is imported and introduced in one's own culture (in Ghesquiere 27).

¹³ Pilkey's website offers its users a comic generator where the child can create his/her own comic using characters not only from the CU series but also from Pilkey's other fictional works. Also, fan fiction around the Captain Underpants series is proliferating online and there are very intelligent crossovers with other comic characters.

the CU series, reflected in different websites such as www.scholastic.com, www.pilkey.com, several youtube videos uploaded by Dav Pilkey, a Captain Underpants app for mobile devices,¹⁴ or even a Captain Underpants Wiki page where hundreds of contributors have added their comments over 260 pages, is also limited to their original language. Therefore, children who are not confident enough in the English language cannot access all these games and resources, and the impossibility of participating in an interactive community affects the reading experience of the child and limits the possibility of engaging with any further materials.

Roderick McGillis, in reference to the CU series' access to merchandise and interactive spaces, states that, "as soon as kids start entering contests, they enter into a dialogic relationship with the book and its author. The website extends this dialogic relationship" (*Hero* 63). This dialogic relationship is completely nonexistent in Spain, where no website has been developed. There is no access to games, jokes, and dances. Neither can they find out their silly names using the Professor PoppyPants Name Change-o-chart (mine is Falafel Diaperchunks). All the interactive possibilities are denied to the Spanish reader together with the possibility of establishing a dialogue with other members of the Captain Underpants' community, which makes them passive readers, rather than active ones who can expand their reading experience.

Furthermore, I see it as problematic that the only available language for these interactive games is English, especially within the USA. Spanish is the fastest growing language in the USA and some observers predict that the U.S. will grow to be the largest Spanish speaking country by 2050. It is the third most commonly used language on the Internet and the number of Spanish speakers is growing at a faster

¹⁴ The Captain Underpants app costs \$4.99, it is made for children between 6 and 8 years old, and it has been selected by Apple as one of the best apps for children this age (*Itunes*).

rate than that of English speakers. Therefore, not only Spanish readers in Spain are denied the possibility of engaging in this kind of interactive games, but also Spanish speakers who live in the USA and for whom Spanish may be their native language. This is another way of promoting the hegemony of one language over another, especially in a country where the advance of Spanish (and other languages) has been seen in the past as a threat to so-called American culture.¹⁵

In recent years there has been an increased emphasis in Scholastic on catering for multiplatform demands and incorporating texts into play. Ellen McCracken explains how Genette's formulations on paratexts are insufficient today, as they need augmentation and modification for the analysis of electronic texts (105). This statement gains significance by the day as more and more readers are choosing to download books and elements such as auto-commentaries and publishers' ads take on new paratextual functions not present in print literature (105). Narratives have been carried from the pages in the books to the screens in forms of apps, videogames, websites, and also into merchandise objects, such as the Captain Underpants' cape or costume, an inflatable Captain Underpants figure, stickers, crosswords, etc. The links between the books and these cultural peritexts start within the books' own paratext where in the last pages of the American texts refer the reader to Pilkey's website. All these references have been deleted from the Spanish text, impeding further dialogue. For instance, the last page of the fourth book has a picture of Harold and George where they address the reader directly and apologise to him/her: "WE'RE SORRY! If you have suffered great emotional distress from having your name changed by Professor Poopyants, please visit www.pilkey.com to download something fun"

¹⁵ A clear example are the complaints that Coca Cola received last year when they aired an advertisement called "It's Beautiful" featuring people of different nationalities using different languages to sing "America the Beautiful" during the 2013 Super Bowl final.

(*CU4*, 146). The Spanish publisher has deleted all these references and has substituted a list of books that the reader may also enjoy from the same series.

This is not entirely surprising, especially bearing most of the “Clik-O-Ramas”, dances, and games on the website are based on extremely scatological jokes and content: “the big butt boggie,” “Poopy-Puncher,” or “Wedgie Power vs. Potty Power” are just some examples. Bearing in mind the sanitization process the Spanish publishing house has carried out within this series in terms of scatology it would not make sense to allow the reader to access all this material online.

Another relevant point is that the whole CU series is available for purchase in Amazon Kindle only in English, but none of the books is available in Spanish. This decision overshadows the potential of the Spanish series in both America and Spain, not only in terms of sales (for instance, many schools offer I pads to their students and their reading list is downloaded to their devices) but also when it comes to the perception of the books as two-dimensional objects and with no possible textual enhancements. As Lisa Sainsbury states in her article “Game On: Adolescent Texts to Read and Play,” “if adolescent readers are willing to engage with new literacies as their texts cross the divide between book and game, then we should be prepared to follow them across the bridge that brings ideas and action together” (166). CU texts are not for adolescents nor do they give the readers any choice in terms of narrative, but they do offer a whole new world of possibilities to their readers via their cultural peritext which the Spanish publishing house has not yet considered. Interactivity between reader and text is not an option for Spanish readers.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the functions and effects of illustrations and visual (and online) content have been analysed, along with the extent to which these have been retained in the

target texts. The translation of pictures with typographical elements is usually problematic because cultural discrepancies between text and pictures can emerge. Thus, the translation needs to be done by reading and developing both verbal and visual literacy. The translator should understand the text not only by itself, but also in its relation to its pictures, and vice versa. However, the decisions and requirements imposed by publishing houses do not always allow the translator to prevent the gap between the image and the text which accompanies the image and the adaptation to the target language fails.

Pictures may be insurmountable obstacles for translators because they are unable to change them, but they sometimes offer some opportunity for re-interpretation, which can maintain or challenge the ideologies of the source text. The translators of the CU series have succeeded in meeting some of these challenges, but some humorous effects related to gender, religion and irony have been lost. It is, however, the case that the vast majority of the visual humour, an important feature in this series, has been kept in the target text, as the pictures do not pose any specific problems in translation with the exception of the visual humour that involves the postmodern feature of intervisuality. In these cases the visual references to well-known texts and illustrations remain dormant in Spanish because of the impossibility of finding an equivalent for the original reference.

It is the job of the translator to acknowledge the relationship between the linguistic and visual systems, and to choose a method of translation or adaptation that makes the text readable for the intended target reader. As Oittinen summarizes, “[i]llustrations, comics, shape and setting of the text, paratextual elements, are not just decorations of the texts, they are part of the dialectic whole of the illustrated book and influence the content of the story, however the contents may be understood by

different readers” (*Translating* 103). However, the reading experience from these texts, when it comes to visual and peritextual content, is not the same in English and Spanish.

In America, the Captain Underpants books have become one of these texts that possess a multimedia approach that blurs the borders between literature, videogame, and video. American children are offered the possibility of reading the CU series on cool modern devices (Ipad, Kindle, etc.) in which they can control the font-size, brightness, contrast, and orientation. Even a dictionary function that has been integrated in some devices that allows the definition of some words to become part of the text. In terms of cultural peritext, this new format also allows the readers to access indefinite content presented in exciting new ways and as textual enhancements. Meanwhile, the Spanish “Capitán Calzoncillos” series is stuck in the traditional form of printed books and all these interactive possibilities are denied to Spanish readers.

The Captain Underpants franchise is likely to become an even bigger cultural and marketing phenomenon with the upcoming animated movie, scheduled to be released on 13 January 2017 in USA and produced by Dreamworks animation. This film may be a way of bridging this gap or, on the contrary, it may make it bigger. It will surely present new challenges to translators, who will need to work around the additional constraints of the visual representation of the films and the decisions Azaola has already adopted when translating the series into Spanish.

Conclusion

This study has examined the history of publishing for children in Spain and how the didactic mission of some publishing houses can challenge and diminish the subversive elements in the translation of some texts. By taking the CU series as a case study and following a multi-disciplinary approach, drawing both on theoretical sources and empirical methodologies, I have addressed the question of how and why the translation of texts for children can be influenced by educational, pedagogical, commercial, and editorial factors.

At the beginning of this enquiry I reflected that Spain is a country that has a large tradition of importing children's literature. Spanish libraries and bookshops are filled with translated titles and the lists of the bestsellers have been, during the last decade, mostly translations from American and British texts. The number of translations in children's literature is far higher than in any other sector of the publishing industry. At first glance, cultural mediation might not seem to be necessary between the USA and Spain. Thanks to globalization, Spanish children are well aware of American culture and conventions. However, throughout this dissertation it has been proved that texts written for children are more likely to change due to preconceptions related to children and childhood. As I have exemplified with the CU series, some of these translations have followed a domestication approach, due mostly to sociocultural and linguistic differences between the target and source texts.

It is important to note that this research cannot be expected to draw definitive conclusions regarding English translation to Spanish or the translation of children's literature in general, as the sample is simply not enough to represent the whole landscape of Spanish translated children's literature. Only one series of books has been scrutinized in depth and the work of just one translator has been taken into

account. However, Miguel Azaola has been able to provide valuable insights about the specific challenges of translating for children, especially in the Spanish context. Therefore rather than achieving general conclusions about translation, this research has aimed to exemplify ideas about power, manipulation, and the level of domestication that texts undergo in translation. I hope that it also will be a good basis for further research, and that my conclusions can be applied to other texts, genres and languages.

I have noted the particular challenges of translating for children to understand the use of this domestication and I studied the role that the translator - and other editorial forces - play in this process. The translators' different solutions seem to lie in their different strategies, different audiences and different views of the story as a whole (Oittinen, *Innocent*, 36). After all, there are as many child images as there are cultures and human beings (*Translating* 159). Translated texts always reveal the translator's intentions, feelings and moral values, making translation an inherently ethical issue (*Innocent* 37). In a literary system there are professionals who constantly make decisions on the poetics and even the ideology of translated texts. Thus, a subversive text such as CU is more likely to change in translation because of different ideological views.

Dav Pilkey's CU series takes place in a school setting where children are supposed to be civilized and socialized in order to take their place in adult society. These books mock and challenge the authority figures and structures of the adult world (parents, teachers, political and religious institutions), and approved social values such as respect and independence, creating a world in which children may feel liberated. The decisions made by the translators and publishing house in the translation of this series have undermined these carnivalesque aspects of the series. I

have noted how the domestication of the texts has resulted in a less subversive and, therefore, less appealing text for Spanish readers, both adults and children.

In the first part of this dissertation I showed that the translation process is never a finalized one but a continuum along which ranges of meaning can be explored, narrowed or expanded. Chapters One, Two and Three, set the theoretical parameters that allow us to comprehend the changes that the texts undergo in translation, which are then demonstrated in the close textual analyses developed in the last three chapters of this dissertation.

In Chapter Four I engaged with the shifts of meaning in the translation of humour as a result of linguistic and cultural differences. I noted how the translator needs to be aware of the historical and social subtleties of a text's humour in order to approximate to its styles, and to transfer the linguistic features as far as possible. I concluded that the translator and the Spanish publishing house did not succeed in creating the same type of humour intended by Pilkey in the original text, especially when it comes to adult readership. The domestication of names and the loss of intertextual content are the most striking differences from the source text, and this brings clear disadvantages: the loss in the humorous tone and the clash this may create with the cultural and geographical setting of the source text (especially the one portrayed in the pictures).

I also examined the extent to which food is an essential symbol of larger cultural implications and how it has been changed in the target text. The translator has opted for complete domestication of food in Spanish. He has toned down the scatological content, which has had an impact on the humorous tone of the text and its subversiveness. I evidenced that the main problem when translating food is linguistic, related to expressive language, idioms and alliteration. Also, the visual representation

of food and food perceptions has resulted in some incongruence between text and images.

Finally, I analysed the function and effects of illustrations and visual (and online) content in the series. I showed the extent to which the translation of pictures with typographical elements or heavily contextualised images is problematic because they can bring cultural discrepancies between text and image. In a series where almost all the cultural references have been domesticated, the visual aesthetics have been retained, giving rise to incongruities. I noted how the publishing house imposed decisions when it came to page layout, paratext, and cultural peritext, affecting the overall perception of these books as cultural artefacts.

There are many possible directions that future research could take to seek answers to some of the questions I have raised in this thesis. First, the differences between Azaola's and Molinero's texts should be looked at in much more detail, together with translations of books into the Spanish language in Spain and Mexico, the United States, Argentina, and other Spanish-speaking areas of the world. This could be a linguistic investigation and/or an ideological one. It could also look at the role that translators play, interview them, and compare their views about children's literature and images to the texts they have translated. To record editors' experiences more widely within the publishing sector and more specifically within the activity of publishing translated fiction for children could also be relevant. However, the challenges of locating suitable interviewees, arranging interviews or meetings and fully transcribing these interviews means that considerable expenses of time and resources must be met in order to make this a viable future project.

Children's responses to translation are also worth studying and this is definitely one of the most neglected areas of study in translation. A comparative

analysis of the same text in two languages could be extremely interesting, together with an analysis of children's perceptions of them. However, children are very rarely bicultural and bilingual, so it will be difficult to measure their responses in terms of judging both texts. In the case of this dissertation, the small sample I look at in my survey is not enough to understand the perception of children in terms of the foreign and distance between text and pictures, nor did it have the necessary element of randomization. Ideally, the same questions should be asked of American (both English and Spanish speaking backgrounds), Spanish, Mexican and other South American children, so that empirical data can be collected about the level of foreignness that children perceive and tolerate in a translated text.

Another interesting development of this thesis could be to analyse the translation of the series in terms of gender. As I have highlighted throughout this research, the CU series has a very problematic and conservative depiction of gender. Wannamaker states that the grotesque depictions of gender in the CU series work to construct women, girls, and feminized boys and men as "other" or as abject, leaving female readers in the disadvantaged position of choosing between the "Other," often humiliated or ridiculed, or learning to identify with boys. I would like to investigate whether these depictions of gender have been maintained, challenged, or even enlarged in the translation process. The very few examples I have provided show how Molinero and Azaola have chosen different approaches to translate gender, and possible further research might enquire into the whole issue of translation and gender. Also, it would be interesting to develop a survey about children's responses in terms of gender, to see how boys and girls perceive the characters in both the source and target texts.

As for my own continuing research, rather than look into historical publishing practices I intend to do quite the opposite, and investigate the prospects for the future. I am interested in looking at the globalization of the children's literature market and children's culture, and how textual transformation extends beyond the realm of books into franchises of screens, pages, toys, and merchandise. As publishing houses cross the boundaries between the paper and the electronic age, translators have new challenges ahead to find visibility and recognition. Maria Nikolajeva explains that “[m]ultivolume fiction is a mass culture phenomenon. The abundance of sequels, presequels, interquels, midquels, sidequels, and other by products in popular culture - including fiction, film, television, comics, videogames, and theme parks - has a variety of commercial reasons” (*Dilemma* 197). However, it is a global phenomenon that needs to be translated, and it is my view that the role of the translator in these international developments in children's literature should be considered in more detail. I am particularly interested in looking at the impact that translation has once a book becomes not an object, but a franchise. The twenty-first century has opened endless possibilities when it comes to literary characters: films, videogames, websites, mobile applications, Youtube videos, etc. The multimedia translation (or lack of translation) of these will affect the perception of the text (or cultural product) by the audience and is going to require further dialogue between translators and child readers.

This international expansion, led by English speaking countries, backs up the existent hegemonic position of the English language, the language in which the majority of these blockbuster “products” are created, and it will not help boost the already limited number of publication of translations in the UK and USA. Despite

efforts made by some British publishing houses¹, the reality is that the British's literary landscape lacks translated text. Therefore, to a lesser extent, I hope I have raised some awareness about the lack of translated texts in the UK and USA; a lack that will likely create a gap in the literary landscape of these countries and that should be acted upon.

This thesis has posed as many questions as it has attempted to answer, particularly as regards the complexities of translating a text into the same language but in different cultures. It is hoped, nevertheless, that the initial research questions set out at the beginning of this study have been addressed, that new levels of understanding have been reached regarding the history of the Spanish translations of contemporary English children's literature, and that some key future avenues of research have been identified.

The expectation is that this thesis will serve as a stepping-stone for further research. The aim of this work has not been to point out where the translation of the CU into Spanish has failed, but quite the opposite. My goal has been to describe the whole translation process as a dialogue where all the participants collaborate and, up to a certain extent, to raise awareness of the difficulties of translating texts in this new globalized multi-genre era, where more collaboration between the participants in the translation process is needed. After all, as Simon states, "the globalization of culture means that we all live in 'translated' worlds" (36).

¹ Lathey offers some examples of texts that have been recently translated from other languages to English and have been commercial successes (*Role* 202-4).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire in Spanish

Cuestionario “Las Aventuras del Capitán Calzoncillos”

1. ¿Has leído algún libro de la serie el Capitán Calzoncillos?
 - A. Si, me gustan mucho esos libros.
 - B. Si, conozco los libros y he leído alguno.
 - C. Conozco los libros pero nunca los he leído.
 - D. Nunca he oído hablar de ellos.

2. Vas a escuchar la primera página del primer libro de la serie. En tu opinión, ¿dónde crees que tiene lugar la acción?
 - A. En una ciudad española.
 - B. En una ciudad europea pero no española.
 - C. En una ciudad americana.
 - D. Puede ser en cualquier ciudad en cualquier sitio.

¿Por qué?

3. Después de ver estas imágenes que pertenecen al primer libro de la serie, ¿dónde crees ahora que tiene lugar la acción?
 - A. En una ciudad española.
 - B. En una ciudad europea pero no española.
 - C. En una ciudad americana.
 - D. Puede ser en cualquier ciudad en cualquier sitio.

¿Por qué?

4. A continuación hay una lista con los nombres de algunos profesores de la serie. **Siendo 1 muy aburrido y 10 muy divertido**, ¿qué puntuación les darías a estos nombres? ¿Puedes intentar adivinar qué posición tienen (director, secretaria, bibliotecaria, cocinera, responsable del comedor) o de qué asignatura dan clase estos profesores (música, gimnasia, etc)?

Nombre del profesor	Puntuación (1-10)	Posición/Asignatura
* Señor Zarzamora Carraquilla		
* Señora Pichote		
* Señorita Carníbal Antipárrez		
* Señor Magrazas		
* Señor Regúlez		
* Señorita Depresidio		
* Señor Perrofiel		
* Señora Nipachasco		
* Señor Panfilotas		
* Señora Tolondretas		
* Señora Masmaizena		
* Señora Aldente		

5. Mira la ilustración 1. ¿Qué crees que está ocurriendo aquí? ¿Qué religión crees que aparece reflejada en esta ilustración? ¿Por qué?

6. Mira la ilustración 2. La persona que tiene un mazo en la mano, ¿es un hombre o una mujer?_____.

¿Qué nombre te parece más adecuado para ese personaje?

A. Jueza Alicia Malicias

B. Juez Sisebuto Sañudo

7. ¿Qué cartel te parece más divertido y por qué?

8. ¿Qué menú te parece más apetecible? ¿Por qué?

9. Mira la ilustración número 3. ¿Qué es lo que más te llama la atención de la ilustración y por qué?

10. Mira estas dos portadas. Si tuvieras que elegir una, ¿con cuál te quedarías y por qué?

11. ¿Te suena esta ilustración? ¿Has visto alguna vez algo parecido?

12. ¿Qué opinas de este póster? ¿Te parece una biblioteca el lugar adecuado para ponerlo? ¿Sabrías decir algo de la procedencia de este poster?

13. ¿Cuál de estas ilustraciones te parece más ofensiva para las mujeres?

14. Para terminar, contestas a las siguientes preguntas:

* Edad:

* Chico o chica:

* ¿Cuántos libros lees al año aproximadamente?

A. Me gusta leer y leo frecuentemente.

B. Leo en casa de vez en cuando.

C. Solo leo los libros que me mandan en el colegio.

D. Nunca leo libros.

* ¿Qué criterios sigues para elegir un libro?

Appendices

Appendix 2: Questionnaire in English

Questionnaire “The Adventures of Captain Underpants”

1. Have you ever read a book from the Captain Underpants series?
 - A. Yes, I really like them.
 - B. Yes, I know the books and I have read some of them.
 - C. I have heard of them, but I have not read them.
 - D. I have never heard of them.

2. You are going to listen the first page of the first book of the series. In your opinion, where do you think the action takes place?
 - A. In a Spanish city.
 - B. In a European city, but not a Spanish one.
 - C. In an American city.
 - D. It could be any city, anywhere.

Why?

3. After seeing these images from the first book, where do now you think the action takes place?

- A. In a Spanish city.
- B. In a European city, but not a Spanish one.
- C. In an American city.
- D. It could be any city, anywhere.

Why?

4. Here you have a list of the names of the teachers in the books. If 1 is very boring and 10 very funny, what grade would you give these names? Could you try to guess their positions at school (principal, secretary, librarian, chef, lunch lady, etc.) or what subjects they teach (Music, PE, etc.)?

Teacher's Name	Grade (1-10)	Position/Subject
* Señor Zarzamora Carraquilla		
* Señora Pichote		
* Señorita Carníbal Antipárrrez		
* Señor Magrazas		
* Señor Regúlez		
* Señorita Depresidio		
* Señor Perrofiel		
* Señora Nipachasco		
* Señor Panfilotas		
* Señora Tolondretas		
* Señora Masmaizena		
* Señora Aldente		

5. Look at illustration 1. What do you think is happening here? What religion does this illustration reflect? Why?

6. Look at illustration 2. Is the person who has a gavel in his/her hand, a man or a woman? _____.

What name is, in your opinion, most appropriate for this character?

- A. Jueza Alicia Malicias
- B. Juez Sisebuto Sañudo

7. Which poster do you think is funnier and why?

8. Which menu is more appealing and why?

9. Look at illustration 3. What attracts your attention and why?

10. Look at these two covers. If you had to choose one, which would you choose and why?

11. Do you recognize this illustration? Have you ever seen something similar?

12. What do you think about this poster? Is the library the right place to show it? Do you know anything about the origin of this poster?

13. In your opinion, which of these two illustrations is more offensive to women?

14. Finally, answer the following:

* Age:

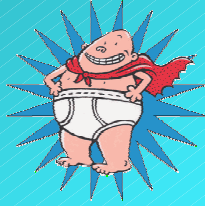
* Boy or Girl:

* How many books do you read per year?

- A. I enjoy reading and I read frequently.
- B. I read sometimes at home.
- C. I only read the mandatory schoolbooks.
- D. I never read.

* How do you choose what books to read?

Las Aventuras del Capitán Calzoncillos
---Teresa Asiain---



Capítulo 1:

Estos son Jorge Betanzos y Berto Henares. Jorge es el chico de la izquierda, con camisa y corbata. Berto es el de la derecha, con camiseta y un corte de pelo demencial. Recordarlos bien. Jorge y Berto eran amigos íntimos. Tenían muchísimo en común. Eran vecinos y los dos estaban en la misma clase de cuarto año de la Escuela Primaria Jerónimo Chumillas.

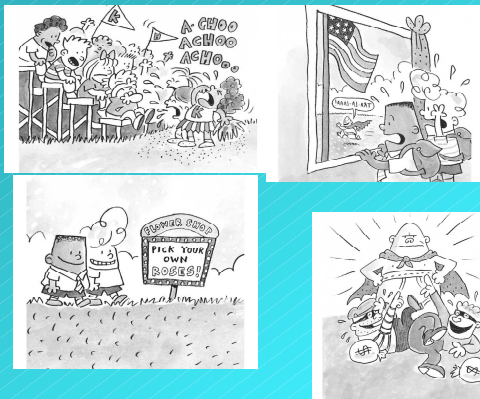
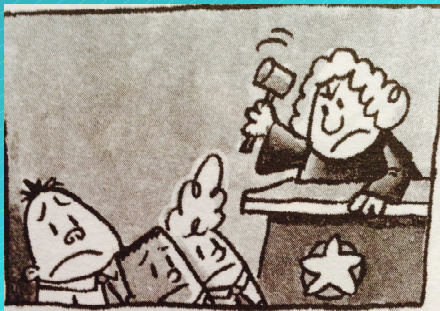


Ilustración 1:



Ilustración 2



A qué cartel te parece más divertido?

Cartel 1



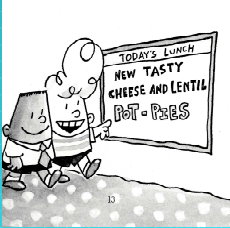
Cartel 2



Traducción: Por favor, no te tires un pedo en un pañal.

AQuH менъ те parece мѝs
apetecible?

Cartel 1



Cartel 2

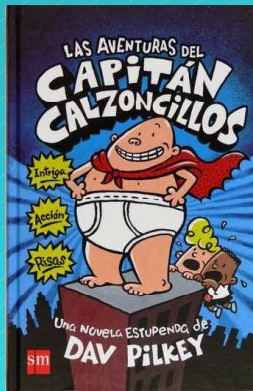


Traducci—n: Sabroso pastel
de lentejas y queso

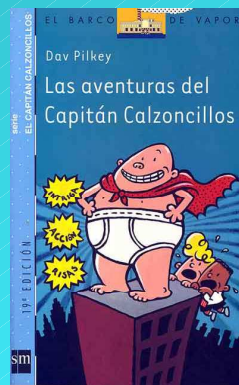
Ilustraci—n 3



Portadas:

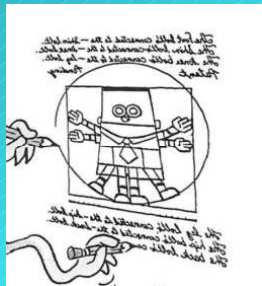


Portada 1



Portada 2

Ilustraci—n 4:



Ilustraci—n 5:



ACuñl de estas ilustraciones te parece más ofensiva para las mujeres?



Número 1



Número 2

Muchas
gracias

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