

# Indonesian

## *Jabberwocky*

Waktu itu jam empat sore,  
dan luak yang sangat lentur dan licin  
Berputar-putar dan menggali seperti bor  
di halaman rumput sekitar jam matahari  
burung kurus kering yang buruk rupa  
dengan bulu yang lengket ke mana-mana itu  
tampak rapuh dan menyedihkan  
dan babi biru yang tersesat dari rumahnya itu berdesis

Hati-hati dengan Jabberwocky, anakku  
Rahang yang menggigit, cakar yang mencengkeram  
Hati-hati dengan burung Jubjub dan jauhi  
Bandersnatch yang sangat cepat

Ia mengambil pedang vortal di tangan  
Telah lama ia mencari musuh bebuyutan  
Maka beristirahatlah ia di bawah pohon Tumtum  
Dan berdiri sebentar untuk berpikir

Dan ketika ia berdiri tercenung dengan pikirannya  
Jabberwocky, dengan mata menyala  
Muncul tidak terduga dari hutan tulgey  
Dengan suara yang menderu-deru

Satu, dua! Satu, dua! Dan terus dan terus  
Pedang vortal membabatnya!  
Ia tinggalkan jabberwocky dalam keadaan mati,  
dengan kepalanya  
Ia memasukkan pedangnya ke dalam sarungnya

'dan apakah kau telah membantai Jabberwocky?  
Ayo, ke sinilah anakku yang membuatku bangga!  
Oh, hari yang luar biasa, hore! Hurrah!  
Ia menyerukan kegembiraannya

Waktu itu jam empat sore,  
dan luak yang sangat lentur dan licin  
Berputar-putar dan menggali seperti bor  
di halaman rumput sekitar jam matahari  
burung kurus kering yang buruk rupa  
dengan bulu yang lengket ke mana-mana itu  
tampak rapuh dan menyedihkan  
dan babi biru yang tersesat dari rumahnya itu berdesis

*Sri Hariyanto*

## *Jabberwocky*

Jelang senja si lincak luwak bertanduk pendek  
Berputar-putar membuat lubang di padang rumput  
Para borogove pun jadi kesal merengek-rengok  
Penyu kaki bengkok menjerit-jerit kalut

"Hati-hati terhadap Jabberwock, anakku!  
Rahangnya menggigit, cakarnya menangkap!  
Hati-hati terhadap burung jubjub dan hindari  
Bandersnatch yang murka dan mengamuk."

Dipegangnya pedang pusaknya,  
Lawan seram yang lama dicarinya  
Sedang beristirahat dekat pohon tumtum  
Termenung tenggelam dalam pikiran.

Dan dengan pikiran seram, geram, mendendam,  
Jabberwock, matanya menyala berkobar,  
Berdesah berdebum menembus padatnya hutan,  
Sambil mencongklang dengan aum kemenangan.

Satu, dua, satu, dua! Babat sana babat sini,  
Pedang pusaka membabat menebas,  
Ia meninggalkannya tewas dan memenggal kepalanya,  
Membawanya mencongklang pergi.

"Sudahkah kau memenggal Jabberwock?  
Mari kupeluk kau anakku berseri,  
Hari yang megah, horeee, hurrra  
Ia ter geli-geli gembira.

Jelang senja si lincak luwak bertanduk pendek  
Berputar-putar mengais-ngais punggung bukit.  
Para borogove jadi kesal merengek-rengok,  
Penyu kaki bengkok serius menjerit-jerit.

*Djokolelono*

# It's a Turtle, It's a Pig, It's a Rath! : Some Thoughts on the Indonesian Translations of “Jabberwocky”

*Chrysogonus Siddha Malilang*

The status of *Jabberwocky* as a key nonsense text (Sewell; Lecercle) seems to elude the Indonesian school of literature completely. Every attempt at translation to Indonesian robs it of playful and non-sensical qualities, as mercilessly as the beheading of the titular monster. This disrespectful act, if not a cruelty, is motivated by the philosophy contained in the Indonesian word used as an equivalent to literature – *sastra*. The etymological burden of *sastra* – a device (*tra*) to educate and teach good values (*sa*) – does not allow overtly playful or comedic texts to be considered as literary texts (Teeuw). Only those written with “carefully chosen words that are good” (Riniwati) and “contain good morality” (Teeuw) deserve literary status and treatment. Even within the parameter of *puisi mbeling* – the most rebellious form of literature in Indonesian school and the closest to nonsense poems, the “naughtiness” and “chaotic structure” are only tolerated in order to hide serious topics, such as patriotism, contemplations, religiosity, or social critiques. The innately playful and nonsensical “Jabberwocky” thus does not qualify.

The lack of playful space in Indonesian literature creates discomforting tensions with any Carrollian neologisms. Instead of participating in the lexical play, both Sri Hariyanto’s (2012) and Djokolelono’s translations (2016) resort to choosing the vocabulary closest to the neologisms’ intended meaning. The experience of reading “Jabberwocky” with vague ideas of what every other word means yet still able to understand the text by having just enough knowledge of the

language is gone. Instead of letting the readers feeling perplexed by the strangeness and unfamiliarity of “brillig,” “slithy,” and “toves,” both translators take away the mystery by their use of conventional Indonesian expressions. While Djokolelono’s use of “jelang senja” (“before dusk”) conveys more temporal ambiguity compared to Hariyanto’s super specific “jam empat sore” (“four o’clock in the afternoon”), it still directs readers’ interpretation and demolishes the play of words. On the other hand, the specific reference of “brillig” to “the time when you begin broiling things for dinner” is also difficult to understand through the lens of Indonesian culture – no dinner is prepared as early as four o’clock in the afternoon.

On the one hand, Indonesian as a language does not have a rich enough vocabulary to address different times of the day. This might be an excuse for not coining a new neologism for “brillig.” The vocabulary for spatial setting, on the other hand, is considerably larger. Thus, the decision of both translators to treat “wabe” the same way becomes more questionable. Hariyanto continues his approach of using Humpty Dumpty’s explanation in translating the term and writes “halaman rumput sekitar jam matahari” (“the grass plot around a sundial”). Adopting a slightly different strategy, Djokolelono treads the path of generalization, using “padang rumput” (“prairie”) as the equivalent to “wabe.” The uncanny setting built in “Jabberwocky” is thus replaced by a mundane world, stealing the sense of exploration of a new place and the re-invention of known concepts through new signifiers.

The inhabitants of the forest are also localised into common, recognizable animals. “Tove,” for example, is translated by both Hariyanto and Djokolelono as “luak” (“badger”). This reversion into recognizability takes away the uncanny quality of the toves. While “tove” is indeed similar to badger, Alice (and the readers) would not know about that. She was forced to continue her journey (and the readers, their reading) carrying this *unheimlich* sense until the encounter with Humpty Dumpty. The unfamiliarity and sense of wonder in navigating through the universe of “Jabberwocky” are ripped away in the Indonesian translations. For the other names, Hariyanto continues to use explanatory translations, such as “burung kurus kering yang buruk rupa dengan bulu yang lengket ke mana-mana” (“skinny birds with sticky feathers everywhere”) as a translation for ‘borogove’.

Their translation of “raths,” however, reveals the use of different references for the translation. On one hand, Hariyanto’s use of “babi biru” (“blue pig”) clearly refers to Humpty Dumpty’s explanation in the latter part of the book. Djokolelono’s translation, on the other hand, reflects the use of external sources. The word “penyu kaki bengkok” (“crook-legged tortoise”) in his translation does not have any ground in Humpty Dumpty’s explanation. This word is closer to Carroll’s later explanation of “rath” in his notes for the original in *Mischmasch*, as a species of land turtle whose front forelegs curved out.

Hariyanto's (mis)translation also changes the demise of Jabberwocky. Instead of staying true to the beheading of the monster, Hariyanto translates the line into "Ia tinggalkan jabberwocky dalam keadaan mati / dengan kepalanya" ("He left jabberwocky dead / its head still intact"). Without the monster's head as the trophy, the vorpal knight leaves after sheathing his sword – "Ia memasukkan pedangnya ke dalam sarungnya" – instead of "galumphing back".

All these explanatory approaches also leave the translated poem bereft of playfulness in its structure and phonological properties. At least, Djokolelono tries to keep the traditional rhyme (ABAB) in the first quatrain before giving up and resorting to more random sounds at the end of every line. In Hariyanto's translation, the poetic form is drastically changed from quatrain to free verse. The first quatrain, for example, is expanded from four to eight lines. This expansion can be seen and compared in the following table.

<b>Lewis Carroll</b>	<b>Sri Hariyanto</b>
'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves	Waktu itu jam empat sore dan luak yang sangat lentur dan licin
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe	Berputar:putar dan menggali seperti bor di halaman rumput sekitar jam matahari
All mimsy were the borogoves	burung kurus kering yang buruk rupa dengan bulu yang lengket ke mana-mana itu tampak rapuh dan menyedihkan
And the mome raths outgrabe	dan babi biru yang tersesat dari rumahnya itu berdesis

While retaining the meter of "Jabberwocky" is impossible in Indonesian translation due to the lack of a regulated stress pattern, Djokolelono compensates this loss with his own spin of phonological repetition, often where Carroll himself refrains from doing this. In translating "uffish thought," for example, Djokolelono's play with the internal rhyme results in "pikiran seram, geram, mendendam." He builds up the intensity of the thought by letting the readers shift the place of sound production from voiceless fricative alveolar (/s/ in "seram") to voiced plosive velar (/g/ in "geram") before adding the number of vowels in "mendendam." At the same time, he uses the same sound (/am/) to create internal rhyme and hint the root of the growth. The same strategy

is also applied to the translation of “whiffing” into “berdesah berdebum” – combining the alliteration and the move from voiceless sounds to voiced sounds.

Perhaps what is needed to get a more playful translation of “Jabberwocky” into Indonesian is time. The first attempt to bring this poem into Indonesian language is barely a decade old. Therefore, the progression from Hariyanto’s explanatory version of 2012 to the dawn of phonological play in Djokolelono’s translation within short four years sparks hope for a more nonsensical “Jabberwocky.” Navigating through this dark tulgey wood of translation will require time and persistence.

## Translations into Indonesian

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