

Persian

یاوه گو

گیشام بود، وئوهای نَرزج
در مسجَلعَطَر می چَرخوردند و می مَنَیدند:
مرغانِ جار و همه نَحبی بودند،
و رانهای گَماخنه می نَعسوتیدند.

«از یاوه گو برحذر باش، پسرم!
از آرواره هایی که گاز می گیرند، و پنجه هایی که می ربایند!
پرنده ی جابجاب را حقیر مَشمار، و
از آدم زشتخوی دل آزار دور باش!»

شمشیر بُزَن خود را برداشت؛
دیری بود که دشمن انسان را انتظار می کشید-
پس زیر درخت تام تام ایستاد،
و، اندیشناک، لختی درنگ کرد.
و، همچنان که ایستاده سرگرم اندیشه های آشفته بود،
یاوه گو، با چشمانی چون دو شعله ی آتش،
از میان بیشه ی تاریک آشکار شد،
هایهوکنان می آمد!
یک، دو! یک، دو! شمشیر تیز آخته ی او
بر همه جای پیکر یاوه گو فرود می آمد!
سرانجام، او را مرده بر جای نهاد،
و شاد و پلایکوبان بازگشت.

«اکنون که یاوه گو را کُشتی
در آغوشم بیا، پسرکِ سرفرازم!
آه، چه روز شادی! هورا! هورا!»

گیشام بود، وئوهای نَرزج
در مسجَلعَطَر می چَرخوردند و می مَنَیدند:
مرغانِ جار و، همه، نَحبی بودند
و رانهای گَماخنه می نَعسوتیدند.

Mohammadtaghi Bahramhorran

“Jabberwocky” in Persian

Bahar Eshraq

The first Persian translation of “Jabberwocky” appeared in the 1995 publication of *Through the Looking-Glass* (reprinted in 2010) by Setareh Books of the Jami publishing house, an imprint geared towards the young adult market. The edition contains a foreword by the publisher in which he emphasizes that the purpose is to introduce this international children’s classic to an Iranian audience.

The book was translated into Persian by Mohammadtaghi Bahramihorran, an experienced translator from English and French. The translation is almost complete except one line of the poem which has been omitted, and Tenniel’s drawing of the Jabberwock. The title is “Yavegou” [“the babbler”], playing on the Persian translation of the subjective form of the word “jabber”. In the preface Bahramihorran also refers to “wocky” as “*faryad*” [“cry”].

Bahramihorran used a formal classic language, but applied neologisms and portmanteaus to convey the poem in order to show Carroll’s style to the Iranian reader. He also added some informative details about Lewis Carroll, Alice books, and the international musical adaptations of his different poems such as “Jabberwocky” in the preface, as well as the Persian free translation of the closing poem “A Boat beneath a Sunny Sky”. In his preface he also states his intention to produce an authentic version of *Through the Looking-Glass* for readers familiar with *Alice in Wonderland*.

As Orero (2007) emphasizes in her book *The Problem of Translating “Jabberwocky”* the original poetic form imposes some constraints on the creative translation of the translator. In the case of Bahramihorran, he has managed to translate the content and create nonsense words but in so doing he uses the Persian pattern of the ballad, *tasnif* or *taraneh*, which is different from that of the English ballad tradition. The translator has attempted to produce the quatrain, four line stanzas, approximating the English model (near to Persian Rubaiyat stanza), but for the third and fifth stanzas he has used eight and three lines. Moreover, the sound

patterning is different. In other words, the Persian translation of “Jabberwocky” does not conform to the pattern of original form, and deviates from the rhyming and metrical pattern of the original.

In terms of content, as elaborated by Orero (90-91), the use of nonsense words provides “a fair amount of creative liberty” for the translator. So in the creation of his own nonsense expressions of the first stanza he has taken into account the interpretation of Humpty Dumpty in chapter six of *Through the Looking-Glass* and has provided a footnote that refers to his translational choices of nonsense words based on Humpty Dumpty’s explanation. In many cases he creates Carrollian-style portmanteau words. Thus, “borogoves” is rendered “*morghān-e jaroo*” [“broom-birds”], a neologism that works with Humpty Dumpty’s explanation. In the case of the translation of the qualifiers “brillig”, “slithy”, “mimsy”, and “mome” Bahramihorran adopts a similar procedure. But for the nonsense verbs such as “outgrabe” he has translated the phrase “something between bellowing and whistling” into “*nareh keshidan*” [“yelling”] and “*soot zadan*” [“whistling”] and then by the blending of the first letters of the two words he creates the nonsense verb “*nasoutidan*”.

Regarding the translation of the rest of the stanzas the translator is no longer guided by Humpty Dumpty’s explanations. Instead, the translator relies on sound-likeness with regard to the proper nouns “Jubjub” and “Tumtum.” With the “Bandersnatch,” the Persian connotations go to an annoying ill-tempered man. The rest of the qualifiers – “frumious”, “vorpal”, “manxome”, “uffish”, “tulgey”, “beamish” and “frabjous,” as well as the verbs “whiffing”, “burbled”, “galumphing” – have no nonsense equivalents in the Persian translation, but are common Persian words. For instance, “frumious” has been translated into “*del aazaar*” meaning heart-rending, and “vorpal” into “*borran*” and “*tiz*,” meaning cutting edge and deadly sharp.

Something which has also been lost in the Persian poem is the beheaded Jabberwock. The reader is merely informed of the dead Jabberwock, but not that it has been decapitated. There is no sign of the hero’s galumphing back with the head of the evil creature. Moreover, the rhetorical question of line 21 has been translated into a simple/declarative sentence.

In general, Bahramihorran has attempted to produce “parallel value” (Orero 115) by conveying the threatening atmosphere of the poem and the element of threat or danger for the hero by his choice of formal language and translational procedures. But the “mock-heroic”, as Orero (117) emphasizes, or the parodic-comic effect of the poem is not present in his translation. According to Orero (120) all the Carrollian nonsense words are representative of the “mock-heroic

ballad of wondrous feats of bravery” but Bahramihorran’s translation merely conveys the somber atmosphere of the poem.

Nonsense literature has a long tradition in Persian culture and can be traced back to folk literature, especially folk oral tradition such as folk songs, lullabies and nursery rhymes, but little research has been done on Iranian nonsense (see Mohammadi & Ghaeni; Torabi *Study*; Torabi *Baresi*). Literary nonsense (in the way Tigges defines it) is named “*Hichaneh*” or “*Mohmal*” (Torabi *Study*; Kianush) in Iran. It is mostly used in children’s play so the only intention behind the Iranian literary nonsense is the amusement and pleasure of children through the humorous rhythmic wordplays, puns, mirroring and situational contradiction. Most of the Iranian nonsense literature is made through the meter of the phonemes and words with rhyming tradition (Torabi, *Baresi* 14). The only critical studies are three MA theses on children’s literature and Persian literature (Torabi *Study*; Mirzapour; Raoufi).

Unlike the well-received translations of *Alice in Wonderland* in Iran, the translation of *Through the Looking-Glass* (particularly “Jabberwocky”) has not become an Iranian classic. Iranian translators, publishers and academia have not shown so much interest in *Through the Looking-Glass* or “Jabberwocky”. The few related academic works include MA theses on *Through the Looking-Glass* Tehran Azad University’s English department (Famili) and a book review (Vaezi) published in *Pazhuhesh Nameh* [*The Research Quarterly of Children & Youth Literature*]. Recently, the dubbed version of *Through the Looking-Glass* film became available in Aparat, an Iranian video sharing service, in the target culture. In 2019, another translator (Mohammad Ali Mirbagheri) also published a new Persian translation of *Through the Looking-Glass* that can be an object of study for future research.

Translations into Persian

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