

Slovak

Taradúr

Pražne je, hľa slizopružké jazvrtky
zotrاديةne kolodujú po zátraví,
vechtógáje clivia na tie vývrtky,
prasotnačky výstia, zľubčia - čo to spraví.

Daj pozor na Taradúra, synu môj,
chráň sa jeho hryzoľustí, zvlášť keď zumrí,
aj na vtáka Krvilaka priprav zbroj,
Tupír nech ťa nerozchvatne drapazúrmi!

Syn sa mečom vorpálovým opásal,
dlho hľadal v diaľobzore nepriateľa.
Odpočíval pod bukubom, nehlo stál,
zahútaný prešľastával, hudna znela.

Žľčodrubý pomaly už odísť chcel,
vtom Taradúr búrne húrno zryčal kdesi;
syčal, fučal, zraky v plamoch, vzduch sa chvel,
hnal sa k nemu cez tulgové čierne lesy.

Ťal do neho, do živého do tela,
vorpálovú čepel brúsnu zbrosil krvou;
až keď mŕtva hlava strúpne zletela,
tryskom-výskom domov crielil cestou prvou.

Ty si zdolil Taradúra, synu môj,
poď, nech si ťa prituniem na vetré kosti!
Leporysé! Slávčin! Hurraj! Hojahoj!
chichodákal v blahne, jasčal od radosti.

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Juraj & Viera Vojtek

A Stream and a Road

Timotea Vrablova

Conversations, whether in the form of friendly dialogue or dispute, play a significant role in both Alice books by Lewis Carroll. Conversations drive the narration, and, more importantly stimulate reflection and thinking, encouraging the growth of imagination. The conversations reveal the contrast between highly organized systems of talking and learning (rhetoric), and the rather modern idea of spontaneously and intuitively discovering the world. What does a bright girl like Alice need in terms of learning and imagination – road maps of logic, or a stream of intuitiveness and brilliant creativity? The author does not exclude or prioritize one or the other. Why bring this up? Because Carroll's books in translation provided key impulses for modern Slovak poetry for children.

It took a long time until Carroll's books were translated, but even before they were translated they had had an impact. Already by the end of 1950s, during the Communist period, the Alice books had been used by authors as a reference, suggestive of fantasy and journeys to exotic countries. Alice's adventures were used to inspire children to think unconventionally and to liberate their language, which had been ideologically imprisoned (Andricikova and Vrablova). It was not only a matter of referring to an iconic work of classical world literature, but some authors also strove to transfer "the substance" of the nonsense, and initiate in children a passion to develop a deep dialogue with reality rather than submit to stereotypes. Here we must mention the work of poets such as Lubomír Feldek, Tomáš Janovic, Miroslav Válek, Ján Navrátil, Daniel Hevier. To get the full sense of life, children were welcome "to dive into the stream" of intuition and imagination, and to follow their senses and feelings. By the end of the 1950s it was quite heroic to encourage a young reader to travel into a mystery, even if it were just the exotic Wonderlands of children's poetry.

Both Alice books were finally translated in the 1980s by Juraj Vojtek and Viera Vojtková (*Alica v krajine zázrakov* and *Alica za zrkadlom*, 1981). It is the only

Slovak translation of the book. The translation was provided with exquisite illustrations of Dušan Kállay. He found the contextually prolific text a reservoir of inspiration. In one of the TV interviews, Dušan Kállay describes how rich in motifs Carroll's text is: "I could literally illustrate every single line, or paragraph or a phrase" (Minárik).

As Juraj Vojtek used to say, the point of translation is to stay close to the genuine character of the Slovak language, both linguistically and culturally (Minárik). The ambition was to achieve cultural equivalence which could appeal to Slovak readers (Andričik). In accordance with this, Kállay's illustrations make use of both the "stream of nonsense" and the references made to domestic artistic traditions.

With "Jabberwocky," the translators created a version, which is in line with the tradition of Slovak translation studies to seek for an appropriate cultural equivalent. "Jabberwocky" became "Taradúr" in Slovak. "Taradúr" phonetically conveys several connotations. The onomatopoeic "tarara", usually used for singing joyful tunes, represents the strong sound of trumpets. It can also evoke "tárat" which means to talk in a voluble manner, or to wander around. It is also suggestive of the word troubadour, but in a rather parodic way, opposite to the former meaning. The translators also make use of a contrastive combination of vowels a-ú in the name. In the Slovak phonological system "a" is regarded as a clear sound which creates a feeling of something dynamic, vigorous or even aggressive, while the long vowel "ú" is a dark and deep sound. It is often used in words to suggest something gigantic or massive. Through the name Taradúr the translators have created a name for the enemy with rich connotations. The word is colorful and semantically rich.

The poem "Jabberwocky" may work like a code for "entering" the book *Through the Looking-Glass*, in which Carroll provides readers with a unique game plan to discover the power of language and its rich potential to organize the material of thoughts. Now, she does not have "to change her size to smaller" to adapt, and handle the power of her nature. Instead, she "comes through" as she is, more experienced, to mirror not her "reflection" in the Looking-Glass but her true self. The Slovak translators connected excellently with that level of meaning.

Both writer (Carroll) and translators (the Vojteks) found fitting narrative resources in traditional heroic stories, myths, legends and poetry. The language and form of the original Carroll's poem evokes an ancient narrative, such as from the time when Old English was the language of powerful warriors. It could hint at what really might play a role in Alice's journey to meet with glorious side of herself. It is not a language of courtesy, she is a strong character, she needs to deal

with dark monsters in the most fearless and fierce way. In that generic area, the *Vojteks* operated, too. They used equivalents from the old Slovak literary culture that symptomatically evoke, what a Slovak reader culturally feels as the language of “initiation” into adulthood, or a ritual language of praise for good work, or heroic achievement. It is also a language which conveys confirmation and reassurance that the protagonist is a hero. The *Vojteks* sought inspiration from Slovak folk tales and ballads. The lexical and phraseological core provided a foundation from which the translators could create neologisms, or derive poetic pictures, parodying words, or using neologisms in such a way, that the reader could feel the connection to Slovak literature. The father’s exclamation – “slávčín!” – at the son’s victory over *Taradúr* is a good example. The word is made up of “sláva” (glory) and “čín” – which is also a word for achievement (to act). Moreover, “Sláv” is also an archaic name for both Slavic people and Slovaks. For the fight with “*Taradúr*” (the *Jabberwock*) the translators have appropriated traditional texts, and used poetic language from the Slovak renaissance of the 16th century as well as from Slovak folk tales. While in English original Carroll portrayed the fight and death of the enemy in a playful, sarcastic way, in the Slovak translation it is rather expressive, and dramatic, just as in the old Slovak literature (Minàrik 86-102).

The poem “*Taradúr*” enables child’s reader to tune in the feeling of reading with fantasy and excitement for imagination. Such language cannot be comprehended linguistically, it is more an impulse “to dive” into the stream of its sounds and feelings. We should have in mind the complete picture of a being – with its irrational part.

It is not by chance, that the poem is placed in the beginning of Alice’s journey. The opposite, mirror-reversed way is, how she can read the lines. It shows her the first important principle for the successful journey: to reflect. It was the perfect way for cultivating a soul.

In short, we have attempted to tell the the story how the Slovak “*Taradúr*” was defeated through the power of the great English nonsense tradition. *Taradúr* could not be defeated by logic alone. That fight required the translation of nonsense.

Translations into Slovak

Carroll, Lewis. *Alica v krajine zázrakov*. 1981. Transl. Juraj Vojtek and Viera Vojtková. Ill. Dušan Kállay. Bratislava, Slovart: 2004.

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