

with  
Catalogue of 100+  
Dutch 'Alice in Wonderland'-editions



# Wauwelwok

the magazine of  
Het Nederlands Lewis Carroll Genootschap



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# Wauwelwok

't Wier bradig, en de spiramants  
Bedroorden slendig in het zwiets:  
Hoe klarm waren de ooiefants,  
Bij 't bluifen der beriets.

Pas op de Wauwelwok, mijn kind!  
Zo scherp getand, van klauw zo wreed!  
Zorg dat Tsjoep-Tsjoep je nimmer vindt  
Vermijd de Barbeleet.

Hij nam zijn gnijspend zwaard ter hand:  
Lang zocht hij naar den aarts-schavoest  
Maar nam toen rust in lommers lust  
Op een tumtumboomknoest.

En toen hij zat in diep gedenk,  
Kwam Wauwelwok met vlammend oog,  
Dwars 'oor het bos met zwalpsse zwenk,  
Sluw borbelen wijl hij vloog.

Eén, twee! Hup twee. En door en door  
Ging kler de kling toen krissekruis.  
Hij sloeg hem dood en blodd'rig rood  
Bracht hij het tronie thuis.

Hebt gij versnaggeld Wauwelwok?  
Kom aan mijn hart, o jokkejeugd!  
O, heerlijkheid, fantabeltijd!  
Hij knorkelde van vreugd.

't Wier bradig, en de spiramants  
Bedroorden slendig in het zwiets:  
Hoe klarm waren de ooiefants,  
Bij 't bluifen der beriets.





# Wauwelwok Editors

## Marietta de Waard

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# ... and Contributors

## Mary Boxen

studied English literature in Leyden. She is interested in 'nonsense' literature, especially "Alice in Wonderland" and the poems by Edward Lear. In her scarce spare time she collects bits and pieces from 'funny' languages like Urdu; her working hours are devoted to teaching English.

## Gerard J. Bouma

co-ordinated printing-production and distribution of this issue. Besides being a Carroll-fan, he is also fond of Thurber, Wodehouse, limericks and other playful rhymes; as well as chess-problems, mathematics and meta-mathematics. Also rather interested in design and architecture of computer-language, ancient technological instruments and Bonsai breeding.

## Harm-Jan van Dam

has also studied in Leyden, but his subject was Latin and Greek. His





translation into Dutch of parts of "The Hunting of the Snark" is still famous in a small circle within the Dutch Lewis Carroll Society; unfortunately, it was never published.

Janna H. Dekker - Hietink

created the illustrations in this issue of WAUWELWOK; as well as the WAUWELWOK-monster on the front-cover and the "Dutch Alice" on the Catalogue-cover. Is interested in rock drawings, fossiles and radiolaria. She paints, draws, makes collages, loves art in general and grandchildren in particular.

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produced lay-out and design for WAUWELWOK 2, 3, 4 and 5. Probably became first acquainted with Lewis Carroll's works through the comic-book 1951 GP (see Catalogue in this issue) or the 1951 feature-length Disney-cartoon. Now a free-lance writer, he and his family (including two daughters) live in Amsterdam, surrounded by Disneyana, Carrolliana, optical toys and puppet theatres.

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founded the Dutch Lewis Carroll Society in 1976. He owns one of the rarest and most extensive collections of translations and editions of "Alice in Wonderland". At the moment, he lives in Hoorn.

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Harm-Jan van Dam

# A Laughing Jabberwocky



## 1. Introduction

Jabberwocky has caught many readers in its fascinating claws. Among its victims there were inevitably some old crabs who tried to translate the poem into Latin. This is only natural, since tradition has it that Latin literature started with a translation, and moreover both Jabberwocky and the Latin tongue seem to have expired. In this paper I shall try to examine what these snicker-snackers have left of Jabberwocky.

As far as I know, five Latin translations of Jabberwocky have been published: the oldest was done by Augustus A. Vansittart of Trinity College, in March 1872, a few months after the appearance of *Through the Looking-Glass*. It was printed some years later for private circulation and can be found in one of the rare copies of Collingwood's *Life and Letters* (pp. 144-145).

Then, before 1899 (when it appeared in the *Lewis Carroll Picture Book*), Carroll's uncle Hassard Dodgson rendered Jabberwocky in Latin.

The third translation is only known to me from a reference in the *Lewis Carroll Handbook*, which states that H.D. Watson published it in 1937 in *More English Rhymes with Latin Renderings*. One year earlier Mr. Watson had already translated *The Snark* into *Latin Elegiacs*, prefaced by the famous classical scholar Gilbert Murray.

The two most recent versions are those in H.D. Carruthers' translation of *Through the Looking-Glass*, *Aliciae per Speculum Transitus* (London, 1966), one in the text, and an alternative translation as an appendix to the book. Carruthers' translations (for he has also done





a Latin translation of Alice in Wonderland) have received almost unlimited praise. Personally, I agree with the one reviewer who ventured to say: 'this kind of Latin makes me nervous'. Grammatically, the translations are irreproachable, and it is obvious that much time and ingenuity have been spent in rendering the jokes and puns, generally with success. But the text as a whole is slow and clumsy: verbs and pronouns which can be omitted in Latin abound, constructions follow English rather than Latin syntax. In short, as the same reviewer states, it reads and looks like a translation (unlike, for instance, *Winnie ille Pu*): the Latin, I would say, is like treacle rather than having its natural, Snarklike crispness. However, these defects manifest themselves least in Carruthers' renderings of the poems.

I cannot refrain, Looking-Glass-wise, from drawing my conclusion before collecting arguments: in my opinion Vansittart's translation is, on the whole, the most satisfying. Then comes Carruthers' Alternative Translation (C2), followed by his first (C1), or perhaps the other way round. I might as well say that everybody has won, and all must have prizes, but, being short of comfits, I cannot. But the fact that Uncle Hassard's version comes at the dry tail of this list cannot be concealed.

## 2. Does the Jabberwock live?

Classical Latin verse does not rhyme, but is characterized by metre. The choice of metre is influenced by the tone of the poetry involved. In this case all three of the translators have opted for elegiacs, that is to say a succession of hexametre and pentametre. This is indeed the most natural metre for light verse in Latin. C2 offers a medieval alternative: short rhyming lines. This is a success, both because the rhyme is ingenious and because it forces Carruthers to be concise.

No translator commits any real 'howlers', but Uncle Hassard sometimes comes dangerously close to them. To mention some: *uffishia* contains a sound unknown to Latin and virtually the same goes for *Bandersnatcham*. When he translates 'as...he stood' with *dum requiescebat*, he breaks the rule that *dum* is, with some exceptions which are irrelevant here, always followed by a present tense. *Ad brachia veni* for 'come to my arms' looks literal, but is not Latin. Vansittart does one strange thing: he translates 'raths' by *rathae*, which looks like a





feminine word. But the adjective with it assumes a masculine form:  
*profugi*.

It is clear that the first translator is always at a disadvantage: his successors can always take into account his attempts. Moreover, Vansittart had not read *The Snark*, let alone Martin Gardner's *Annotations*. His only support has been Humpty Dumpty. Carruthers, on the other hand, could profit from the enormous increase of knowledge and literature on Carroll and Jabberwocky. He strangely insists that the whole poem takes place in the present, for in his translation 'Tis brillig, the toves do gyre, the borogoves are mimsy and the raths outgribe'. Is this supposed to imply that the Jabberwock lives?

### 3. *Coesper erat*

Since the first (and last) stanza is the best test of any translation of Jabberwocky, I shall first examine the four versions of this stanza, and then add some remarks about the rest. Hidden in the translations of the first stanza is a kind of 'Rule Forty-Two', which will turn out to be decisive.





Here follows the first stanza four times, in chronological order:  
Vansittart, Dodgson, Carruthers 1 and Carruthers 2:

*Coesper erat: tunc lubriciles ultravia circum  
Urgebant gyros gimbiculosque tophi;  
Maestenui visae borogovides ire meatu;  
Et profugi gemitus exgrabuere rathae.*

*Hora aderat briligi. Nunc et Slytheia Tova  
Plurima gyrabant gimbolitare vabo;  
Et Borogovororum mimzebant undique formae,  
Momiferique omnes exgrabuere Rathi.*

*Hora coctava per protiniam teremeles  
Limagiles teretant et quoque gyrirotant;  
Sunt tenuiscopi macrilli; saepeque viri  
Edomipali etiam vocibus eruditant.*

*Est brilgum: tovi slimiei  
In vabo tererotitant;  
Brogovi sunt macresculi,  
Momi rasti strugitant.*

#### 4. Cheap

To translate 'brillig' by *briligi* or *brilgum* is rather cheap. And unfortunately it must be said that Uncle Hassard's imagination (or knowledge of Latin) did not go much beyond this elementary procedure. Thus 'slithy' becomes *slytheia*, 'toves' becomes *Tova*, 'borogoves' becomes 'figures of *Borogovi*', complete with somewhat mysterious capitals. This goes on and on. From the rest of the poem I instance *snicsnaccans* for 'snicker-snack', *galumphat* for 'galumphing' and even *bemiscens* (which is not a Latin word) for 'beamish' (which is English). It may be added that one of the few words here which look like Latin, *gyrabant*, 'whirled' is not found in classical Latin. But even if it was formed in later Latin, it would not have been constructed with an infinitive, *gimbolitare*, here. Exit Uncle Hassard without a gimble or a thimble.

Both *coctava* and *coesper* are ingenious. As Humpty Dumpty says, it is the time when you begin broiling things. *Coctava* is composed of





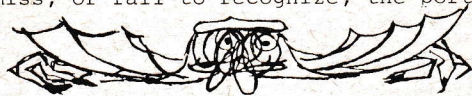
*coquere*, to cook, and *octava*, the eighth hour of the day, which may be four o'clock. *Coesper* is a combination of *coena*, meal, and *vesper*, evening.

'Slithy', according to the same authority, means 'lithe and slimy'. This is rendered by *limagiles* and by *lubriciles*: *agilis* and *gracilis* translate 'lithe', and *limus* is 'slime', while *lubricus* is 'slippery'.

A 'wabe', it will be remembered (...the slithy toves/ did gyre and gimble in the wabe), is called like that because it goes a long way before it and a long way behind it and a long way beyond it. *Ultra* (in Vansittart's translation) is 'beyond' and *via* 'way'. *Protinam* and *protinus* mean 'directly, straight on, forward'. It may be noted that Carruthers disregards Carroll's own, earlier interpretation of the stanza in Misch Masch in favour of Humpty Dumpty's: Carroll explained 'slithy' as 'smooth and active' and 'wabe' as 'the side of a hill'.

'Toves' are something like badgers and something like cork-screws. This is brought out by *teremeles*, for *terebrare* means 'to make holes' (it returns in *teretant* and *tererotitant*, an ingenious combination with *rotare* 'to gyre') and a *meles* is a badger. We can hardly complain that Carruthers has left out the lizards. He is also the only one to translate 'borogoves', 'thin shabby-looking birds, like a live mop': *tenuis* is 'thin' and *scopa* is 'mop'.

In Misch Masch Carroll explained 'mimsy' as unhappy. But Humpty Dumpty rightly sees another portmanteau word in it: 'flimsy and miserable'. This is what Vansittart's *maestenui* says: *maestus* is 'miserable' and *tenuis* we have seen already. *Macer*, or its diminutives *macrillus* and *macresculus*, has both connotations, flimsy and miserable, but I miss, or fail to recognize, the portmanteau here.



## 5. Rule 42

The 'raths' are another triumph for Carruthers: 'a kind of green pig'. This is exactly *virceus*: *viridis* is 'green', and *porcus* is 'pig'.

'Mome' is probably 'from home' (for once Humpty Dumpty is not certain). So is *edomipali*: *e* is 'from', *domus* is 'home', and *palari* is 'to wander abroad'. And so is *profugi*, 'that flies from his home, exiled'.





The translation of this word may well serve to illustrate a difference and a preference (here comes Rule Forty-Two): Readers may well be amazed that I do not award all prizes to Carruthers' ingenious first translation, since it is the one which renders most hidden meanings. The reason for this is that his Latin Jabberwocky does not read as Latin poetry, while Vansittart's does. *Proefugus*, for instance, is a word which often occurs in Latin poetry, while *edomipali* does not, for the simple reason that it does not exist. Nor does 'mome' exist, will be the retort. And yet Jabberwocky is indisputably English poetry, while Carruthers' cannot, I believe, be called Latin poetry, for all its ingenuity.



Further on in the poem he employs other words which are unimpeachable Latin, but not poetic, words: the language of Latin poetry was an artificial one; certain words or constructions could only be used in spoken Latin, others were all right for prose, but not for poetry, or vice versa. These rules are often very strict. Carruthers translates 'beware' as *fac caveas*, and 'my son' as *fili mi*. Cicero could have written this to his son, but a poet could not. Vansittart's *fuge*, ...*sanguis meus*, on the other hand, is an almost literal quotation from Vergil. Carruthers employs *itidem*, 'also', (which he smuggles into the text, but this is not the worst). No Latin poet after, say 50 BC, did employ this word. 'Hast thou slain' becomes *offerre necem quivisti*, 'could you give death'. But *necem offerre* is a typically prosaic expression (whereas its opposite, *neci dare*, 'to give to death', is very poetic). And *queo*, 'I can', is extremely rare in poetry. Vansittart's complete change, *victor*,...*spoliis insignis opimis*, which literally means 'vanquisher, conspicuous by your rich spoils' (a religious expression) has all the flavour of the grandeur that was Rome, or rather reeks of the blood spilt for this myth. Vansittart's text is full of these fine Latin expressions: 'jaws and claws' becomes *recurvis unguibus* (with a convincing enjambment)... *avidis dentibus*, 'curved claws and greedy teeth'. This is not what the original says, and Collingwood, incidentally, is completely wrong in calling this a faithful translation.



It may be objected that this is light verse, and that Vansittart overdoes it with his high-flown style. This is not exactly true, for Jabberwocky is, after all, venerable Anglo-Saxon poetry. It may, more rightly, be objected that this rigid conception of mine about what is Latin poetry and what is not, blocks every development. After all, why should we mummify Latin poetry? That is true, but I prefer developments to consist of combining rather than of breaking the old rules. Those disagreeing with me are invited for a game of croquet with me as the Queen of Hearts.

## 6. *Iabrocchius*

Let us conclude by looking at a few other expressions: the monster itself, for instance, is called *Gaberbocchus* by Uncle Hassard, who, for once, has had the greatest success of all translators, for the name lives on in the Gaberbocchus Press. C2's *Gabrobocchus* is a variation on this. But Vansittart's *Iabrocchius* sounds more Latin to me. C1 coins *Taetriferor*, *taeter* and *feror* both meaning 'horrendous'. The 'Jubjub bird' is, predictably, *Jubbubbus* in Dodgson, *Iubiuba* in C2 and *orbiubata avis* in C1. This means either 'bird with round crest' or 'bird without crest, - neck-feathers'. Vansittart has *Ububa*, which reminds of Latin *bubo*, a kind of owl which was a bird of ill omen, and *upupa*, 'hoopoe'.

The 'Bandersnatch' is *silvirapus* in C1; *silva* means 'wood' and *rapere* is 'to snatch'. C2 makes it an *unguimanus*, a 'clawhand', alluding to *anguimanus*, 'snakehand', a poetic equivalent for 'elephant'. Vansittart beautifully turns it into a *Foedarpax*. *Foedus* is a 'treaty, confederacy', while a 'bander' is a confederate; *arpax* is related to Latin *rapax* and Greek *harpazo*, 'to snatch'. A Grecism is the summit of poetic expression in Latin poetry.

For 'galumph' Carruthers could draw on Gardner and the OED; he translates it as *cursiovans* (1) and *citumphans* (2). *Triumphare* and *ovare* both mean 'to triumph', and *cursus* is 'to gallop', while *cito* is 'quickly'.

Vansittart has one thing which is his own invention: for 'uffish' he makes *egnis*, explaining that *segnis* is 'muffish', so *egnis* is 'uffish'. Likewise, whiffling' is *susuffrus* because 'whistling' is *susurrus*. The explanations may be Collingwood's, but they seem to do





justice to Vansittart's imagination. Carruthers translates 'uffish' as *subarvia* (1) or *subtectim* (2), something like 'furtively'. Here I do not follow him, especially if he tries to render Carroll's own explanation (in Gardner) that it is 'a state of mind when the voice is gruffish, the manner roughish and the temper huffish'. His translation of 'whiffing' also seems to disregard Gardner's annotations: it is *sprinxit* (C2), a word I do not know, but which sounds all right; or *blaterans argutat* 'prated and babbled' (C1). The first word is also used for the sounds of, surprisingly enough, rams and camels. A new interpretation of the Jabberwock?

There is one last point to make: Who do I like C2 so much? Mainly because I do not know much of medieval Latin; so, like some Carrollian scholars argue, 'anything goes'. Secondly because it has a nice steady beat, which is certain to drum the Jabberwock out of town. Listen to it:

*Tum semel, bis et iterum*  
*Vorpale ferrum pupugit*  
*Necati caput exanimum*  
*Citumphans retro rettulit.*

'Then, once and twice and again, he slashed with his "vorpale blade" ('vorpale', incidentally, is *vorpaleis* for all three translators); and the dead head of the slain (monster) he brought back galumphing'. Thirdly, because it sounds real (Rule 42), like one of the *Carmina Burana*.

## 7. Last question

My last question is 'why is a translation like a rattle?'. Answer: "Because it is a bone of contention between Language-dee and Language-dum and ends up broken". Let us grant that one rendering seems to tend too much to Englishdum (Carruthers') and the other too much to Latindee (Vansittart's); and the third one may even have been too fragile to last (Uncle Hassard's). When all is said and done, they all have something skilful: most readers, including myself, are unable to compose a Latin translation even half as good as Uncle Hassard's, let alone one five times as clever as it. And their noise makes us aware of the fact that Latin is not as dead as a dodo. And does that imply that the Jabberwo...





# RO THEATER Interprets ALICE

"...Alice's dream-world is a grown-up nightmare. Fleeing something inevitable, her longing (not to live), she encapsulates herself in a regressive dream; a dreamed duplicate of herself, she sees herself wandering in miniature through the labyrinths of her inner confusion, following the trail of her associations....."

"Alice lives like a dream within a dream, trying to forget herself. Underneath the surface of a bizarre wit, a poisoned idyll is hidden: the other side of 'Alice'. This interpretation by the RO theater differs considerably from the traditional views on Carroll's 'Alice's'."

## Partial List of Performances in 1982:

19.03 - 04.04	Rotterdam	30.04 - 01.05	Amsterdam
06.04	- Hilversum	06.05	- Turnhout
07.04	- Velsen	07.05	- Breda
08.04	- Amstelveen	08.05	- Tiel
14.04 - 17.04	Eindhoven	10.05 - 11.05	Groningen
18.04	- Bussum	15.05 - 16.05	Tilburg
20.04	- Leeuwarden	18.05	- Antwerpen
22.04	- Winschoten	21.05 - 22.05	Arnhem
23.04	- Alkmaar	24.05	- Middelburg
24.04	- Assen	25.05	- Enschede
27.04 - 28.04	Den Haag	28.05	- Hoorn
29.04	- Apeldoorn		

Travelling exhibition on the life and works of Lewis Carroll - organized in co-operation with The Dutch Lewis Carroll Society - on the performance dates in the foyers of the respective theatres.

More information on this series of performances:

RO THEATER - van Oldenbarneveldtstraat 105 - 3012 GS ROTTERDAM.





Maniëtta de Waard

# Russian Burblings by The Jabberwock



## 1. Introduction

As is presumably generally known, Lewis Carroll's famous poem *Jabberwocky* contains a great number of 'nonsense' words, words which often have some vague association but cannot be immediately explained. Further on in the book, Alice discusses the poem with Humpty Dumpty, who then proceeds to 'explain' all the 'nonsense' words.

It will be interesting to compare the English and the Russian versions of *Jabberwocky*, and to try to find out how the Russian translator has managed to resolve the word problems. So far, I have found only one Russian translation of *Jabberwocky* and of *Through the Looking-Glass* in general, although there are several Russian translations of *Alice in Wonderland*. The translation I am referring to is by A. Shcherbatov and was published in Moscow in 1977 by *Chudozhestvennaya Literatura*:

### Tarbormot

Розгрень. Ырзкие хомейки  
Просвертели весь травас.  
Айяют брыскунчейки  
Под скорячий рычисжас.

"Сын мой, бойся Тарбормота!  
Он когтист, клыкаст и лют.  
Не ходи через болото:  
Там ведь Цапчики живут!"









### 3. "Pustik-Dutik" puts in a word

The word *den'* means *day*; according to Humpty Dumpty, who in Russian is called *Pustik-Dutik* (this word has some associations with *hollow* and *inflated*), *rozgren'* is "the time of four o'clock in the afternoon, when people start *broiling* things for dinner" (note the similarity to the English). The Russian for *broiling* is *razogrevat'*: *razogrevat'* + *den'* = *rozgren'*. (In Russian, a and o are often interchangeable; if the o is not stressed, it is often pronounced as an a; likewise an a that is not accented can change into an o.)

The word *yurzkiy*, comparable to *slithy*, has been constructed in the same way. According to *Pustik-Dutik*, it is a combination of the words *yurkiy* (quick, lithe) and *myerzkiy* (evil, low; not quite the same as *slimy*). The word *khomeyki* is also unknown in Russian; it is rather similar, however, to *khomyaki* which means *badgers*. According to *Pustik-Dutik*, *khomeyki* are "somewhat like badgers, somewhat like lizards, and also somewhat like corkscrews". Again an almost literal translation of the English original; however, the word *toves* does not resemble the word *badgers*.

In *prosveteli* the words *proverteli* and *prosverlili* are combined; these words both have approximately the same meaning, i.e. *to penetrate*.

The word *trava* means *grass*. The *s*-ending of *travas* signifies, according to *Pustik-Dutik*, that the word refers to the grass *to* the left (*s lyevoy storony*), *to* the right (*s pravoy storony*) and *to* any side (*s lyuboy storony*) of a sun-dial (this is again comparable to the explanation of the meaning of *wabe*).

The meaning of *ayayayut* is obvious, says *Pustik-Dutik*. Indeed: *ayayayut* can only mean: (*they*) *scream ay, ay, ay* (the *ut*-ending signifies the third person plural).

According to *Pustik-Dutik*, *bryskuncheyki* are "those thin rumped-looking birds, their feathers stick out all around, like a live mop". The word *skoryachij* is an adjective derived from the non-existent word *skoryaki*, which refers, according to *Pustik-Dutik*, to "some kind of green pigs or boars"; thus, *skoryachij* might be translated by *pig-like*. The only association this word might have is with *skot* = *boar*.

*Rychiszhas*: in this word we can recognize the word *rychat'* = *to roar, to bellow*, as well as the word *uzhas* = *terror, horror*. According to





*Pustik-Dutik*, *rychiszhas* means "something between bellowing and screaming, but with a kind of whistle added to it" ("Once you've heard it, it'll last you a lifetime," he adds.)

As we have seen above, *Pustik-Dutik*'s explanation of the Russian version of the poem corresponds to Humpty Dumpty's in practically every detail; the Russian translator has tried to follow the original as accurately as possible (as he has done throughout the book, in fact); there are only a few minor differences.

#### 4. Time for dinner

For completeness' sake, I shall give here an explanation in English based on the Russian version of the poem as explained by *Pustik-Dutik*.

"It was four o'clock in the afternoon, time to start  
cooking dinner,  
and the lithe/evil little badgers  
completely perforated the grass-plot around the sun-dial.  
The thin, mop-like birds screamed: 'ay, ay, ay!'  
While the green pigs bellowed/screamed."★

Above, I have mentioned the numerous similarities to the English original; however, some differences deserve to be mentioned as well. Firstly, far more *portmanteau-words* are used in the Russian version; for instance, *rozghen'* is a portmanteau-word whereas *brillig* is not; *prosveteliis* also a portmanteau-word as opposed to *gyre and gimple*. Secondly, the translation switches to the present tense in the third line of the first stanza; this tense will be maintained in the translation throughout the poem.

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★ It is interesting to note here that Carroll himself once gave an 'explicatory translation' of the first stanza of *Jabberwocky*, viz. in "Misch-Masch", a little private periodical for the amusement of his brothers and sisters. Here is the text of this 'translation':

"It was EVENING, and the SMOOTH ACTIVE BADGERS  
were SCRATCHING and BORING HOLES in the HILL-SIDE;  
all unhappy were the PARROTS;  
and the GRAVE TURTLES SQUEAKED OUT."

(See *The Annotated Alice* by Martin Gardner, Penguin, London, 1970, pp. 191/2).

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## 5. Enter the Tarbormot

The second stanza runs:

"Сын мой, бойся Тарбормота!  
Он когтист, клыкаст и лют.  
Не ходи через болото:  
Там ведь Цапчики живут!"

*Syn moy, boysya Tarbormota!  
On kogtist, klykast i lyut.  
Ne khodi cherez boloto;  
Tam ved' capchiki zhivut!*

The word *Tarbormot* in the first line is obviously a rendering of *Jabberwock*; the title of the poem is *Tarbormoshki*, clearly a translation of *Jabberwocky*; like the English -y ending, the Russian -shki ending has a diminutive meaning. Carroll himself gives an explanation of the word *Jabberwocky* in a letter quoted in *The Annotated Alice*, saying that *wocer* or *wocor* means *fruit* or *offspring*, whereas *jabber* can be taken in its ordinary meaning of *excited* and *voluble discussion*. Thus, *Jabberwock* could mean *the fruit of much excited discussion*. Quite likely, Carroll made this up on the spot (it was in a letter to a group of schoolgirls who wanted to name their schoolmagazine *The Jabberwock*). For the name of a magazine this meaning of *Jabberwock* is, of course, quite appropriate; however, it is hardly fitting for the frightening monster Tenniel has drawn.

The word *Tarbormot* can be associated with several words in Russian:

1. *Tarabarshechina* - mumbling, muttering, talking nonsense  
(comparable to *jabber*)
2. *bormotat* - to mutter, mumble
3. *mot* - (slang for) a wasteful person

So *Tarbormot* might be taken to mean "a mumbler, someone who talks nonsense, someone who wastes his words".

This might be a rather accurate translation of the word *Jabberwock* in view of the meaning of *jabber*.

The meaning of this verse is approximately as follows:

"My son, fear the Tarbormot (*Jabberwock*)!  
He has sharp teeth, big claws, and is ferocious.  
Do not go across the swamp; because 't is there  
that the Snatchers (*Bandersnatches*) live!"

Words as *Jubjub bird* and *frumious* have not been translated. *Bandersnatch* has not been translated either; the word *capchik* is associated with *capnut* = to grab, to snatch, however.





## 6. More portmanteau's

The third stanza:

Острый меч берет он в руки,  
Стрембежит в лесной овраг  
И в овраге у корняги  
Ждет, когда нагрянет враг.

Bostryj mech beret on v ruki  
Strembezhit v lesnoy ovrag.  
I v ovrage u kornyagi  
Zhdyot, kogda nagryanet vrag.

*Bostryj* is again a portmanteau-word combined of *ostryy* = sharp, and of *bodryj* = brave, fearless; the *b-* at the beginning of the word is also reminiscent of *bor'ba* = battle. *Mech* means sword, so *bostryj mech* might be taken as a rendering of *vorpəl sword*.

*Strembezhit* - another portmanteau, consisting of *stremit'sya* = to strive, but also to run, *stremglav* = at full speed, hurriedly, and *bezhit* = he runs. Therefore, *strembezhit* might mean *he runs in a great hurry, he speeds, hastens*.

The meaning of *kornyaga* is, frankly, not clear to me.

This stanza might be rendered as follows:

"He takes his sharp/brave/fighting sword in hand  
And runs in great haste to the wood-ravine,  
and in the ravine at the magic root-tree  
he waits, until the enemy draws nigh."

The translator has not managed to find any rendering for *manxome*; however, the meaning of this word is not quite clear in English either (see *The Annotated Alice*, page 196). The word *Tumtum tree* is, as we have seen, rather inadequately rendered by (I think) *kornyaga*. I have translated this word by *root-tree* (see above), because the word has some association with *koren' = root*.

## 7. Roaming through the underbrush

The next stanza:

Тягодумчиво стоящий  
Ожидает он, и вот,  
Бурворча, бредет сквозь чашу  
Пламеглазый Тарбормот.

Tyagodumchivo stoyashchiy  
Ozhidaet on, i vot,  
Burvorcha, bredet skvoz chashchu  
Plameglazyj Tarbormot.

*Tyagodumchivo*: here two words are combined in a rather unusual way: *tyago-* is connected with *tyagost' = burden*, *tyagostnyj = heavy*, *burden-*









The only 'nonsense word' here is *zhiknet*, which might be considered an *onomatopei*, rendering the sound *zhik* (zheek) a sword makes when whizzing through the air.

*Galumphing*, a portmanteau-word coined by Lewis Carroll, a combination of *gallop* and *triumph*, is now officially mentioned in the dictionary (see e.g. *Chambers Everyday Dictionary*): *galumph* - to prance along boundingly and exultingly. In Russian, this word has been rendered rather inadequately by *vprпрыzhku* which simply means *skipping*, *hopping*. *Snicker-snack* has been only partly translated by *zhiknet*.

## 9. And hast thou slain the Tarbormot?...

The last stanza:

"Победитель Тарбормота!  
Дай тебя я лобзниму!  
Уррабраво! Привеслава!"  
Говорит отец ему.

"Pobeditel' Tarbormota!  
Day tebya ya lobznimu!  
Urrabravo! Priveslava!"  
Govorit otec yemu.

Here the word *lobznimu* is another portmanteau-word, a combination of *lobzat'*, a rather ancient word for *to kiss*, and *obnimat'* (first person sing. *obnimu*) = *to embrace*.

*Urrabravo* is obviously a combination of *urra* and *bravo*; these words have the same meaning in Russian as in English.

*Priveslava*: the words *prives* and *slava* are written together here, *prives* meaning *you have brought* and *slava* fame. So this will probably mean: *you have brought fame*, although one would expect the word *slava* to take the accusative case, i.e. *slavu*.

The meaning of this verse:

"Victor of the Tarbormot (Jabberwock)!  
Let me kiss/embrace you!  
Hurrah/bravo! You have brought fame!  
his father says to him."

The words *beamish* and *frabjous* (the latter is probably a Carrollian variation of the word *fabulous*) have not been rendered in Russian. *Callooh! Callay!* has been translated only partly by *urrabravo*. *Chortle*, another one of the portmanteau's coined by Lewis Carroll,





The last stanza is similar to the first stanza, as in the English original. This stanza has already been extensively discussed in the above.



Carroll

Russian translation

X hozgren' - razogrevat'/den'  
X yurzkiiy - yurkiiy/myerzkiiy  
\* khomeyki - khomyaki  
X prosverteli - proverteli/pro-  
svertlili  
X travas - trava/slevo i.t.d  
\* ayayayut  
+ bryskuncheyki  
-  
+ skoryachiiy  
X rychiszhas - rychat'/uzhas  
X Tarbormot - tarabarshchina/  
bormotat'  
-  
\* Capchik - capnut'  
X tarboryj - bodryj/ostryj  
-  
+ kornyaga - koren'  
X tyagodumchivo - tyago/(za)dum-  
chivo  
X burvorcha - burnyj/vorchat'  
\* zhiknet  
\* vprypryzhku  
-  
-  
X urrabravo! priveslava!

English: 6 \* 14 + 8 X

Russian: 5 \* 1 + 10 X







*Casper Schuckink Kool*

# The Youngest Dutch ALICE



Since its first publication in 1865, *Alice in Wonderland* has been translated into a great many languages. The first Dutch translation appeared in 1875. Since then, a large number of translations and adaptations of the book have appeared in Dutch. (See the bibliography elsewhere in this issue.) Many of these have badly distorted the original, and only a few can be called 'serious'. Three of these serious ones are still for sale. One of them, the translation by A. Kossmann and C. Reedijk, is the best one up to now, in our opinion. It is the only Dutch Alice that contains *Through the Looking-Glass* as well. (Published, since 1948, by Ad Donker, Rotterdam.)

The available translations certainly show how difficult it is to translate "*Alice in Wonderland*". Yet the Dutch author Eelke de Jong has found the courage to try his hand at a new translation, to be published shortly. We are very grateful to publisher Peter Loeb for allowing us to see the proofs of this translation in advance; in this way we are able to give a first impression of this translation to our readers.

Undoubtedly, the translator has done his best. Unfortunately, like so many Dutch authors of children's books, he has found it necessary to "lower himself to the child's level". The tone of the translation is colloquial; it is very easy to read. Sometimes this "colloquiality" makes painful reading; for instance, "speak English" in the original has been translated by "sreek je moerstaal", a somewhat vulgar term meaning something like "speak your (damned) mother's lingo". Another example: in Dutch a person can be addressed in two ways: by "jij" or





"je" and by "u". "Jij" is familiar, colloquial, used by children among themselves and to adults they know well. Although there is a tendency to use "jij" more often nowadays, it is still felt to be rather impolite to address relatively unknown adults with "jij". But in the translation Alice uses "je" or "jij" throughout the book; this is certainly not in keeping with her character.

The poems have generally been translated badly (worse than the prose); this is a pity as they have a charm which is all their own. Take for instance, the famous poem "You are old, Father William"; in Dutch this title **reads** "Je wordt oud, pa", meaning simply "you're getting old, dad". Throughout the poem "Father William" is not mentioned either, but simply addressed as "pa" (dad), which makes the tone of the poem rather colourless. The fluidity and rhythm of Carroll's original are completely lacking; often words rhyme badly or not at all. Also the other poems in the book are treated no better.

Some of the puns and jokes have also been translated inadequately or not at all. E.g. at the trial the dates 14, 15, and 16 are added up and then split into Dutch guilders and cents - however, a 100 cents go into a guilder, so such a split is not possible. It would have been possible had the translator used "kwartjes" (Dutch quarters) instead of guilders.

The Tenniel illustrations might be said to lend some authenticity to the translation; however they have been tampered with in many cases: often they have been enlarged, placed on a separate page or left out altogether.

The epilogue by Lenny Bouman is full of not translated quotations. Also, Bouman begins by calling Lewis Carroll "Charles", and then suddenly switches to "Carroll" in the second half of the epilogue.

Summarizing, we feel that the translation is a missed chance. Certainly there is a need for a really good translation of "Alice in Wonderland", particularly in view of the incredible amount of rubbishy translations published since 1875. Although de Jong's translation is certainly not rubbishy, it must be judged more severely than many others in view of the pretensions it obviously has, being "complete and unabridged". The translation is mediocre and rather careless. In that it is no worse than many other translations of children's books appearing each year - but we think Alice deserves better.







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