

SOME NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION AS AN INTERPRETATIVE ART AND COMMUNICATION AS WELL

Interview with Juraj VOJTEK

ABSTRACT:

This interview has been done at the occasion of The Grant Prize delivered by The Lewis Carroll Society of North America to the Slovak edition of Lewis Carroll's books *Alica v krajine zázrakov* and *Za zrkadlom a s čím sa tam Alica stretla*, in English *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, which were published by Slovart, illustrated by Dušan Kállay, and co-translated by Viera Vojtková a Juraj Vojtek. It presents two main events organised by the Society at the 150th anniversary of publication of the book in England – the introduction of a three volume set (LINDSETH, J. A. (ed.): *Alice In a World of Wonderlands. The Translations of Lewis Carroll's Masterpiece*. New Castle, Delaware : Oak Knoll Press and The Lewis Carroll Society of North America, 2015. 2656 p.), and the exhibition of Lewis Carroll's masterpieces translated into more than 200 languages of the world. It serves to one of the awarded creators of the book, to Full Prof. Juraj Vojtek, as a starting point to give a thought on such questions as what is a translation, what are its limits and what is its place in communication, from the viewpoint of a practical translator.

KEY WORDS:

translation, translator, exoticism and domestication, intrapersonal communication of the translator

As it is generally known at the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, its Full Professor Juraj Vojtek is a specialist in the history of journalism, mainly that of English and American ones. For the time being he has published 15 books on the subject. The less known is his activity in the field of translating, even though he has produced 33 translations of the English and American authors, predominantly the classic ones including Edward Albee, Jane Austen, Lewis Carroll, Michael Crichton, Daniel Defoe, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Henry Fielding, Ernest Hemingway, Marti Leimbach, Jack London, Herman Melville, John Milton, George Orwell, William Saroyan, Wilbur Smith, John Steinbeck, Laurence Sterne, William Makepeace Thackeray and Virginia Woolf. He is a Laureate of the artistic translation of the year award – the Ján Hollý Prize (i.e. the Slovak best translation of the year award) for his translation of Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (*Najdúch Tom Jones*, published in Bratislava by Tatran, 1980). In the years of 1965 – 1989 he was a reader of several Slovak publishing houses of fiction. He commented on 131 books of English and American literature, mostly those, that were later on published in Slovak. To his translations he wrote his studies,



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Juraj Vojtek graduated twice from the Comenius University in Bratislava (Journalism in 1959, English and American Studies in 1975), and is a Full Professor at the University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia, where he was awarded his honoris causa degree in 2012. He specialises in the history of English and American journalism and in the theory of newspaper editing and is the author of 17 books on these subjects. Besides he translated 33 books by English and American writers, mainly classical. In 1980 he was awarded the Ján Hollý Prize (Best Translation of the Year) for his translation of Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (Fielding, H.: *Najdúch Tom Jones*. Zväzok 1 a 2. Bratislava : Tatran, 1980).

prefaces or postscripts, chronologies of lives and times of particular writers, explanatory notes and annotations. He was the editor of several anthologies and collected works of classical English and American literature, which were published by the Tatran, especially in its edition *The Golden Collection of World Literature* (in Slovak *Zlatý fond svetovej literatúry*). At the occasion of Mr. Juraj Vojtek's evaluation from the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, two University colleagues of his have made the following interview.

Ján Višňovský (J. V.): *We know how it happened that you got the Grand Prize of the Lewis Carroll Society of North America...*

Juraj Vojtek: I am sorry for interrupting you, but at the beginning of this interview I have to apologise for a mistake I made in my previous text published in this journal, Vol. 6, No 2, in November 2015. While writing it, I thought that we translators, Mrs. Viera Vojtková and me, would be awarded the certificates of translation which got the Grand Prize for illustrations (by Dušan Kállay) as well as for design (by the Publishing House Slovart, issued in 2010). The truth is that all four of us have been bestowed upon the Grand Prize, from more than 200 editions. This mistake of mine was caused by my misinterpretation of a certificate exhibited at the Manhattan Grolier Club in New York where two events connected with the 150th anniversary of publication of two masterpieces by Lewis Carroll took place, to be more explicit *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (Alica v krajine zázrakov)* and *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There (Za zrkadlom a s čím sa tam Alica stretla)*. The first one was a two days conference of translators, translating theorists, literary historians as well as editors of a three volume massive book *Alice in a World of Wonderlands*.¹ The second event was the exhibition of more than 200 editions of the above-mentioned titles into different languages (even to their historical periods, for example the Old English, Middle English) dialects, slangs of the world.

Jana Radošinská (J. R.): *What is your estimation of your translation after it was appreciated so high abroad?*

Juraj Vojtek: Before I answer your question, I would emphasise that our translation, as we were two, of Carroll's 'Alices' is more than 40 years old. In a way it is more than old enough. On the one hand, when taken objectively, it is not a very positive fact, as according to me, every generation should have its own translation of this masterpiece of English as well as world literature. Of course, another fact is that in such a small country as ours, more over which is fully commercialised in culture, it is almost unthinkable. For any publishing house it is cheaper to re-publish the old translation than to issue a new one. On the other hand, from our point of view, I mean the translators, it is very flattering as it implies that our work was not the worst one. Of course, we should not forget that the popularity of the book in Slovakia is to a great degree the merit of Dušan Kállay's illustrations. It seems to me that this fact was one of the reasons why our translation was appreciated in agreement with the premise that if the illustrations are good, the translation cannot be the poor one.

J. V.: *But as we know it was not the only reason of bestowing upon you, the translators, the Grand Prize of Lewis Carroll Society of North America.*

Juraj Vojtek: You are right. For more than three years I have been engaged in a world-wide project leading into the publication of the above-mentioned book. At least according to me, the *Alice in a World of Wonderlands* is without question a result of the unique project in translating sphere. The first book of the set, called *The Translations of Lewis Carroll's Masterpiece*, was inspired by a well-known specialist in the life and art of translating of Lewis Carroll, Warren Weaver, who in 1964 published his well-known *Alice in Many Tongues (The Translation of Alice in Wonderland)*,² in which, probably as the first theorist of translation, he used the method of the so-called back-translation in evaluating particular translations. Besides that, he traced the history of

translation of the book into different languages in the world. And last but not least, he compiled a checklist of editions of translations not only into European, but even world languages. Of course, for a single scientist it was, in a way, a mammoth task. That is why it was not as complete as it should have been, but even erroneous in some cases. To be particular, for example, the Šarlota Barániková's translation published by Mladé letá (in English Young Years) in 1959 is ascribed to the Czech language.³ But the idea to record as much translations as possible and with the help of the back-translations to try to appreciate them was very inspiring. In the first place to the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, which about six years ago brushed up this idea of Warren Weaver and realised it on a much broader scale. To be honest the idea was realisable only thanks to the invention of digital ICT, as all contributors should have been in a constant touch with the general editor. Their first task was to write an essay explaining how they had done their translations. Then the task of two back-translations came. They should have selected two different translations ever done in their vernacular and then translate two versions the same chapter, to be particular, *The Mad Tea Party*, back into English. As for our part of the task, the choice was easy, as there are only two translations of the book ever published. The first one was taken from the shortened and adapted version⁴ translated by Mrs. Šarlota Barániková and Krista Bendová. The back translation as well as notes on it were done by me. The second back-translation, the one based on our translation, was the work of Jan George Frajkor and me. Last but not least, the task we were supposed to fulfil was the compilation of bibliography of all editions of the book and its film, radio and television adaptations. This task was not the easiest one, as it may seem to an uninterested person, as the relevant Slovak institutions are not the best equipped in this field.

J. R.: *What was the highlight of the whole project?*

Juraj Vojtek: There were two of them... The first one was the conference of general organiser, to be particular, the Lewis Carroll Society of North America and the second one was the exhibition of more than 200 different editions of Lewis Carroll's masterpieces. Both these events were organised on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of these books' publication in English.

J. V.: *Are you able to be more precise in describing the incompleteness of the translation of Šarlota Barániková and Krista Bendová (poetry)?*

Juraj Vojtek: The first book of this combined edition has only six chapters (instead of twelve of the original); the second one has only five (instead of twelve). Of course, at the times we are speaking of, the translations into the Czech language did exist, for example the one made by Jaroslav Císař⁵ published in 1947 which was in many cases full of inspiration for us, but once more it was not quite complete translation and after all it was not in our vernacular. I would hardly mention this title if not for one interesting point: the name *Alenka* (in Czech and Slovak the equivalent of English name *Ellen*) is used by Císař for his translation of *Alice* and that translation was very popular with Slovaks. Those who had read it asked us why we changed the name in our Slovak translation from *Alenka* to *Alica* (*Alice* in English).

J. R.: *Not having a predecessor in translating the complete Lewis Carroll's 'Alices' was an advantage or disadvantage for you?*

Juraj Vojtek: On the one hand, it was a disadvantage, because we had to 'discover' the author fully, on the other, it was an advantage as we were not tied down by any solution of translation. It is difficult for me to recall all details of our work on Lewis Carroll, as the first edition of our translation is more than thirty years old,

1 LINDSETH, J. A. (ed.): *Alice in a World of Wonderlands. The Translations of Lewis Carroll's Masterpiece*. 3 Volumes. New Castle, Delaware : Oak Knoll Press and The Lewis Carroll Society of North America, 2015.

2 See: WEAVER, W.: *Alice in Many Tongues (The Translation of Alice in Wonderland)*. Mansfield Centre, CT : Martino Publishing, 2006.

3 WEAVER, W.: *Alice in Many Tongues (The Translation of Alice in Wonderland)*. Mansfield Centre, CT : Martino Publishing, 2006, p. 69.

4 CARROLL, L.: *Elenkine dobrodružství v Divotvornej krajine a v Zrkadlovom paláci*. Translated by Šarlota Barániková and Krista Bendová (poetry). Bratislava : Mladé letá, 1959.

5 CARROLL, L.: *Alenčina dobrodružství v podzemní říši a za zrcadlem*. Translated by Jaroslav Císař. Praha : Aurora, 1996.

issued in 1981, and the manuscript itself is even older, forty years old, completed in 1971. The reason for the ten years gap is that at first the Publishing House Mladé letá had a problem with finding the suitable editor, and later on the proposed illustrator kept the manuscript for a year before giving it back to the publisher.

J. V.: *What is a translation according to you?*

Juraj Vojtek: Any translation of a work of art is a problem... Different language, different society, different culture, in many cases different times, even eras. I do not want to go to details. But, for example, in the Slovak language there are words, which are more marked than in English, and of course, vice versa. Let us say that conjunction *and* is typical for the style of Ernest Hemingway. He used it by far more frequently than other authors. But the Slovak equivalent 'a' is more marked than its English counterpart. And, alas, a problem for his translator is born. How to solve it? On the one hand, a translator has to respect this characteristic feature of Ernest Hemingway, on the other he/she cannot use it as frequently as it is used in the original text. Another example... Almost any sentence in a dialogue of William Saroyan's heroes ends with "he/she said". But you cannot translate it verbatim, because in Slovak it would sound stylistically too 'scruffy'.

Moreover, in the case of Lewis Carroll, the problem is/was represented by something which might be formulated such as the non-existence of literature of nonsense in the Slovak literature and its long tradition and popularity in the English surroundings. Last but not least, the problem to be solved was the character of this piece of art, as it belongs – at least according to me – not only to the literature for children but also for adults. The rationale of it gives away that in the literature for children the connection between exoticism and naturalisation should be in the favour of the second one. On the other hand, it is questionable, if, let us say, a parody on the known doggerel or poetry, a child reader is able to comprehend irrespective of its origin. But this is a problem surpassing the theme of this interview, as I have never been a theorist of translating, not to speak of the one specialising on child readers.

If it is generally accepted that the reader in target language should perceive a work of art approximately as the reader in the source language, in the case of Lewis Carroll first of all the real problem is the second volume. Simply because it cannot be translated in its full meaning, but in many cases you have to re-tell it, of course in the spirit of the original text.

J. R.: *How did it happen that you started to translate it?*

Juraj Vojtek: From 1959 to 1965 I was an active journalist at, in that time, the only Bratislava evening newspaper *Večerník* (in English *Evening Post*) covering cultural events and had published five translations. At that time I organised, for example, the journalistic campaign "What we are short of from the world literature?" (in Slovak "Čo nám chýba zo svetovej literatúry?"), in which a couple of Slovak literary historians took active part. During one of my frequent visits to the publishing house Mladé letá, which specialised in the literature for children, I asked the editor Marta Lesná, if they did not intend to publish a complete edition of both *Alices* in our vernacular.

The first impulse to translate Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* came in 1967 or 1968 from my ex-wife Viera Vojtková, who had loved his books since her childhood. She nearly knew by heart the 1947 Czech translation of *Alice* by Jaroslav Císař, which I have mentioned above.

After some time the publishing house adapted this suggestion of mine. Certain kind of problems appeared as soon as we delivered our manuscript to the publishing house. First we were said that they lacked an adequate editor. Later on the selected illustrator had kept our translation at himself as far as for one year, instead of returning it to the publishing house. As it came out both these problems were solved for the benefit of the translation; it was well-edited by now late Marta Lesná as well as for the new illustrator, this turned out to be our good fortune because the publisher, tired of waiting, engaged Dušan Kállay whose illustrations won the Grand Prix of the Biennial of Illustrations of Bratislava in 1983. The outstanding illustrations and our complete translations are the reasons why the book has appeared in five editions and more re-prints.

But let us go back to our translation. Here it has to be added that our intention was not to know the translation made by Šarlota Barániková and Krista Bendová (poetry) as we did not want to be tied up by it. Thanks

to the British Council, in times I am speaking of, I was on several study stays in Great Britain. I graduated twice from the Comenius University in Bratislava, first time in journalism (1959), the second in the English and American studies (1974), as extramural student. The main objective of mine was to study the structure of Modern English newspapers. Apart of it I paid my attention to its fiction, which I had started to translate some years ago. Here I would like to emphasise that any serious study of journalism requires knowledge about history of a society where it is produced, its culture... and so on. And as to the very author – Lewis Carroll, whose work I along with my co-translator wanted to transform into my vernacular, in London I tried to find an annotated edition of his *Alice*. Without having it, I would not have been able to face so many problems connected with transforming it into the Slovak language with all its nuances. As we know, this book is full of allusions to and parodies of then well-known English rhymes or nursery rhymes. The word 'then' was used by me here intentionally, as there was a gap of time between publishing of the original and that of translation. And I am not quite sure if even the modern English reader is acquainted with all its nuances, not to speak of the foreign one. And if a translator is supposed to preserve as much of the originality of the original as possible, first of all he/she must be familiar with them. Otherwise he/she will not look for the right equivalents in the target language. Anyway, I was lucky enough to come across *The Annotated Alice*,⁶ edited by Martin Gardner. This book turned out to be very helpful in orienting and informing us on the text, especially in those parts of it, where Lewis Carroll's verses were parodies on and imitations of popular folk poetry. As a result, we began to look for adequate substitutions in Slovak literature and culture. Due to this experience of mine, I learned that this principle should be applied in any case of translating of classic writers, which I have tried to stick to during all the years of my translating carrier.

J. V.: *What have you learned from Lewis Carroll in general?*

Juraj Vojtek: That translation, if done seriously, is an art of interpretation. For a translator original text is the score, his/her translation is his/her interpretation of it in his/her vernacular, in his/her society, in his/her culture. The original piece of art might be written in different times than are his/hers, and of course it was written in different culture and last but not least in different language. If you want to transform these phenomena accurately, you have to reduce something of the original, but at the same time to add something to it. Otherwise, the reader of your translation will not perceive it in the same way as the reader of the original, which is the most important attribute of a good translation.

J. R.: *Are you able to compare your translation with that of Šarlota Barániková and Krista Bendová?*

Juraj Vojtek: As you know, this only translation prior to that of ours was published in 1959 and done by Šarlota Barániková and Krista Bendová. Unfortunately, it was an abridged and adapted version of both *Alice* books. This was the principal reason why the publisher wanted us to make the complete translation of them. We made up our minds not to read them before doing our translation because we did not want to be influenced by it. And it was only in connection with the worldwide translation project *Alice in a World of Wonderlands* that I became immersed in these translators' interpretation.

My overall impression of this book has been rather good. Šarlota Barániková (1923–1996), the translator of thirty-seven books into Slovak, was a rather skilful stylist. Reading her interpretation of the *Alices*' is very instructive as it helps present-day readers realise that the vocabulary of colloquial Slovak language has changed immensely in the last fifty years. Quite a few of her words would still be familiar to the present younger generation. On the other hand, there are curiosities in her translation. In the Chapter III, which is Chapter VI in the original, *Pig and Pepper*, she used the English interjections of the Chorus (*Wow! wow! wow!*) in a Slovak form (*Vau! vau! vau!*). At that time only a few Slovak readers knew the interjections' origin. And ironically nowadays this English word is quite frequently used by young Slovaks.

⁶ See: GARDNER, M. (ed.): *The Annotated Alice. Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. Harmondsworth, England; Ringwood, Australia: Penguin Books, 1966.

As I have said, Barániková's and Bendová's translation is both a shortened and an adapted version. The book itself does not state the authorship of this adaptation. Instead of twelve chapters in each book it has six in *Alice* and five in *Looking-Glass*. The chapter numbers in Barániková's translation are not identical to their original counterparts and many poems are omitted. And even in the chapters which found their way to the translation, some verses were shortened. Instead of twenty-eight lines, the famous *Jabberwocky* has only eight.

J. V.: *We know that even the names of Lewis Carroll's heroes represent a very serious translating problem. How did you tackle it in comparison with Šarlota Barániková and Krista Bendová?*

Juraj Vojtek: We concurred with Barániková in two names: *The March Hare* is in both translations as *Aprílový zajac*, *April Fool Hare*. If translated word by word, *The March Hare* would be *Marcový zajac* in Slovak. But this would not characterise it (or him). On the other hand the saying "to be as mad as April weather" is used very frequently in Slovakia. *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee* were renamed in both of our translations as *Tidli a Fidli*. *Tidli-fidli* is a Slovak interjection which feigns the sound of a violin. As for our differences in names... *The Dormouse* is in Šarlota Barániková *Spachtoš–Plch* (the *Sleepyhead–Dormouse*).⁷

The solution with the en-dash in the Barániková translation does not seem to me to be the best one, as it is not quite in the spirit of Slovak. It seems to me that Barániková realised it, as she later used only the *Sleepyhead*. The Slovak equivalent of *Dormouth* is *Plch*. But as its sleepiness is the most characteristic feature of this Carroll's hero, we combined *plch* with *Spachtoš* (in English *anybody, who is sleepy*) creating *plch Spachtoš* (*sleepyhead Dormouse*), where the first word means the type of this rodent, and therefore it is written with small initial letter, while the second one is its real name, that is why it is written with initial capital letter.

Then there was the problem with the *Caterpillar* (in Slovak *Húsenica*)...While in English the names of animals including reptiles are not differentiated according to the gender, Slovak *Húsenica* is a feminine noun. Nevertheless, we were in need of a masculine form, as Lewis Carroll states: "... the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth"⁸ So the new Slovak word *Húseničiak* came into being, where the very ending suggests that it is masculine. Moreover, it is derived in the spirit of the Slovak language.

The next problem was represented by *Mock Turtle*. Unfortunately, the Barániková translation completely omits *The Mock Turtle's Story*. We had two solutions for the problem of the *Mock Turtle's* name. The first and at the same time the easiest one would be *Pakorytnačka*. The prefix "pa" adds to some Slovak nouns a meaning of something artificial, imitated, or false (not genuine). For example Slovak *paveda* is in English *pseudoscience*. Even the prefix "pseudo" (*pseudokorytnačka*) would be indicative of the meaning. But it would hardly be acceptable in a book for children, as the prefix *pa* sounds in Slovak too bookish, so at the end we gave priority to the collocation *Falošná korytnačka*. Here we applied a model, which is known in Slovak cooking. There is a difference between *sviečkoviča* and *falošná sviečkoviča*. While the first word has its English equivalent in *sirloin*, the second one, if translated literally, means *not genuine sirloin*. If *sviečkoviča* is defined as "the most delicious part of flesh (mostly beef) from shoulder on"⁹, *falošná sviečkoviča* is made from that kind of flesh which is not genuine sirloin. In short: if *korytnačia polievka* (*turtle soup*) is made from *korytnačka* (*turtle*), *falošná korytnačia polievka* (*not genuine turtle soup*) is prepared from *falošná korytnačka* (*not genuine turtle*).

As I have said above, *Tweedledum* and *Tweedledee* were renamed in our translation as *Tidli* and *Fidli*. This interjection feigning the sound of a violin is commonly used by our children and as it is in rhyme, that is why it seemed to us as the suitable solution. And finally, the names *Humpty* and *Dumpty* were replaced by *Hupky* and *Dupky*. The set phrase *hupky-dupky* is well-known even among our children as it is very frequently used in Slovak literature for them. It means in English something like *in leaps and bounds*. Its popularity is given once again by the fact that it is in rhyme, reminding even the original names.

7 CARROLL, L.: *Elenkine dobrodružstvá v Divotvornej krajine a v Zrkadlovom paláci*. Translated by Šarlota Barániková and Krista Bendová (poetry). Bratislava: Mladé letá, 1959, p. 26.

8 GARDNER, M. (ed.): *The Annotated Alice. Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. Harmondsworth, England; Ringwood, Australia: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 67.

9 KAČALA, J., PISÁRČIKOVÁ, M., POVAŽAJ, M.: *Krátky slovník slovenského jazyka*. Bratislava: VEDA, 2003, p. 728.

J. R.: *From all you have said it is evident that in any translation there should be a certain balance between foreign and domestic elements... Are there any differences between literature for children on one hand and that of for adults on the other?*

Juraj Vojtek: Any translation is certainly a particular kind of the compromise between exotic (foreign) elements, in this case English which are, by the way, in this case one hundred and half century old, and those domestic ones (Slovak). It seems to me that in the sphere of literature for children the domestic phenomena should predominate over the exotic. As for the literature for adults it is the other way round. I am not going to contemplate over a question if the *Alice* is a typical book for children or not. It seems to me that it is both for children and adults as well. And it depends on the translator, which part he/she stands on. As for our translation, it was originally published in Slovakia by, in that time, the only one publishing house for children. The later editions including the one which was awarded were re-published by a not specialised Publishing House called the *Slovart*.

J. V.: *So far you have given us examples of domestication of names of heroes in your translation, but it is evident that the process goes on behind them...*

Juraj Vojtek: Of course... So, for example, instead of *twopence*¹⁰ we used the Slovak *groš*. Here I would like to mention that in the days of our translating, this coin was not in use in our country (the former Czechoslovakia). But the word was quite popular, even in a set phrase (in Slovak *nemá ani groša*, in English *not to have two pennies to rub together*), which was quite understandable even for children. The other kind of domestication was the English song "Here we go round the mulberry bush",¹¹ which was replaced by a very popular Slovak nursery rhyme *Kolo, kolo mlynské*, which in English is something like *Wheel, wheel, millwheel*.

J. R.: *But the process between domestication and exoticism might be very tricky...*

Juraj Vojtek: Yes, it might be... Once more I will give you an example from Lewis Carroll. With the help of Martin Gardner we found out that some verses by Lewis Carroll imitated the popular, at his times generally known, even trivial, English poems or doggerels, so we tried to do the same in our language. But as it is likely to happen, from time to time we went too far, or to put it in other words we naturalised more than it was suitable. So for example, we wanted to use the very familiar verses written by the Slovak romantic poet Samo Chalupka (1812-1883), his *Turčín Poničan*, which started with very popular and known verses *Jajže, Bože, strach veľiký; padli Turci na Poniky*; something like *Oh, dear, my goodness, everybody is scared stiff*... But fortunately, it sounded "too Slovakized", too naturalised to the editor. There is no question that she was right. So we changed it in the following way – we kept Chalupka's rhythmic pattern and at the same time we used quite different words. So to a Slovak reader it resembled Chalupka, but it was not "him". And paradoxically, these verses found their way into a dictionary¹² as an example of the nonsense literature in the Slovak language, which at that time, was not very popular in our country. The following verses were included: *Hľadte na tie čudné zvyky/ karty mastia i poníky! / Sedia v klietke do polnoci, hrajú, hrajú, niet pomoci* (in English *Look at the curious customs / even the ponies play cards / they sit down in a cage / they play, they play, no remedy is within reach*). In Chalupka's verses *a čo mladé zutekalo, a čo staré – nevládalo* (in English *the young run away, the old have not enough strength to do it*), having to do with the Turkish invasion into Slovak speaking lands within the Kingdom of Hungary in the sixteenth century was changed by us to *the young go on laughing, the old run away*.

10 GARDNER, M. (ed.): *The Annotated Alice. Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. Harmondsworth, England; Ringwood, Australia: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 247.

11 GARDNER, M. (ed.): *The Annotated Alice. Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; Ringwood, Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 232.

12 ŽILKA, T.: *Poetický slovník*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1987, p. 276.

Of course, such examples of looking for and finding more or less adequate equivalents in the target language would be by far more numerous. We know that the original, I am speaking of, is full of double meanings, plays on words, allusions to phenomena, which are not known for the contemporary reader (inclusive the translator), etc., etc.

J. V.: *As you were two in translating Lewis Carroll, how did you divide the work?*

Juraj Vojtek: Being two working on the translation made it possible to divide the task. I made the first draft and then edited it pointing out passages with double meanings or allusions to things not apparent at the first reading. Then my ex-wife Viera took over doing the next editing as well as versifying the appropriate lines.

J. R.: *How would you characterise the act of translating?*

Juraj Vojtek: Once more I would like to emphasise that I have never been a theorist of translating and as to the practice of translating I put a stop to it more than sixteen years ago. I am quite sure that any serious translation of Lewis Carroll as well as other masters of fiction is really an art of interpretation. As I have said, the score is in front of a translator, any translation of it is the art of using different instruments, which should be in accordance with the score.

J. V.: *And from the point of communication...?*

Juraj Vojtek: It is quite evident that in this process the translator fulfils a central figure. On the one hand, he/she communicates with the outgoing text. He/she tries to understand it as fully as possible. And he/she cannot do it without knowing its place in author's works of art. Each author is a phenomenon of his/her own. To understand him/her fully it means not only to read as much as possible of his/her works of art, but also to understand his/her place in the outgoing literature. And to be successful, in this case, means to know as much as possible not only about literature of that particular period, but also about culture, society and times in which all these phenomena do belong. The more the translator knows the better. In this phase of his/her creative doing, the translator communicates with the work of art he/she is going to translate. In a way it is his/her intrapersonal communication with the original author.

The second type of his/her communication is also an intrapersonal communication, because the translator argues with himself/herself how to interpret the original author to the target reader. In this phase he/she interprets all what he/she knows of and how he/she perceives the original text, its social, cultural and literary surroundings, the original author/authoress and tries to transmit his/her pieces of knowledge into another and different language, literature, culture and often into different times as well. That means the translator should be as a good master of the target language, society, culture as a writer of the original text. Because of all these facts it is true that a really good translator is the one, who is able to translate a piece of art exactly in the same way as it is perceived by the reader of the original text.

Of course as soon as the translation is technically realised in a form of either a magazine or book, it becomes the message of mass communication. If I am right to remember, both parts of the book written by Lewis Carroll were my fifth translation, and as it showed, I had learned quite a lot from them on the art of translating. They helped me understand that translating is something like a translator's interpretation of a particular work of art in the target language. And as soon as you realise this fact, you do not see the gap between the original art creation and its translation into a foreign language as broad as it seemed, even if the original text is bidding for you. Or: if you want to naturalise Lewis Carroll in other language, you cannot translate him in the traditional sense of the word. You have to look for something I would call the most suitable substitutions, which is not easy at all, as it has to be in harmony with the original text on the one hand but in different language, social, cultural or historical conditions on the other. In my opinion, this is the main reason why the first part of *Alice* is translated more often than the second one. To translate *Jabberwocky* (in our translation *Taradúr*) in a narrow sense of the word is simply impossible. I would say that there has to remain Lewis Carroll's spirit, but the words are of his/her translator's.

J. R.: *What were the next lessons taken up from translating Lewis Carroll for your further translation career?*

Juraj Vojtek: Lewis Carroll was successful in teaching me that in any translation the question of naturalisation and exoticism is of great importance. On the one hand you are supposed to preserve as much of the original features of the outgoing text as possible, which is quite exotic for the target reader, on the other hand any translator has to build on domestic phenomena, which should prevail evidently in the case of literature for children.

Carroll's books turned out to be very instructive for me because they helped me realise that there is not a wide gap between translating and writing an original work. If you want to domesticate (or naturalise) *Alice* in any foreign language, just to translate is not enough. You have to look for the most suitable substitutions, which is not always easy, as you have to do it in line with the original author's intent. This is the reason why the *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is more often translated than *Through the Looking Glass*. You cannot translate *Jabberwocky* in a narrow sense. It has twenty-six made-up words. To put it clearly, the 'spirit' has to belong to Lewis Carroll, but the words to the translator.

To sum it up, to translate Lewis Carroll was not only a great adventure for me, perhaps similar to the adventures of his heroine but even very much instructive for my future work in domesticating 33 masterpieces of English as well as American literature into the Slovak language. And that is why I cannot end these lines without giving my tribute to Mr. Lewis Carroll.

At the two of main events organised by the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, 1st the introduction of a world-wide project *Alice In a World of Wonderlands* and the 2nd exhibition of more than 200 editions of Lewis Carroll's '*Alices*', where the 2015 Slovak edition got the Grand Prize, namely its publisher Slovart, illustrator Dušan Kállay and translators Viera Vojtková a Juraj Vojtek.

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Prepared by Ján Višňovský and Jana Radosinská.

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