APPROACHES TO LEWIS CARROLL

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APPROACHES TO LEWIS CARROLL

This thesis has as its ultimate aim the reinstatement of Lewis Carroll not as a Victorian eccentricity, but as an important minor Victorian who has his proper place in the development of English literature. To define this place several methods and approaches are used: first, there is a discussion of Carroll against the background of Dickens' achievement (whose work he obviouslyknew well). Second, and again to give some idea of the context and traditions within which Carroll's work operates, the thesis then looks at other implicit background sources and precursors, this time citing an example from the eighteenth century, Laurence Sterne, and one from the seventeenth, Cervantes and his Don Quixote, and traces some of the ground that they have in common. The third section of the thesis then returns to consider Carroll again in a specifically Victorian context by examining all the important figures whom he knew, both in the literary and visual arts, in order to find some further ideas shared and hence some pedigree for Wonderland and Alice. George MacDonald, D. G. and Christina Rossetti, Arthur Hughes, Millais, Holman Hunt and Tennyson are those that feature mainly in this group of chapters, but other acquaintances of Carroll's such as Ruskin, Doyle and Noel Paton are also considered. Next, this thesis seeks to determine the way in which Carroll has been astoundingly "posthumously productive" (to use Goethe's

definition of the true sign of genius) by citing as an example the surrealists' approach to his work and by showing how he has been influential for them. The conclusion more briefly catalogues others who show indebtedness to his work; amongst them are Nabokov, Joyce, Eliot and the playwrights of the absurd.

APPROACHES TO LEWIS CARROLL

"It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards" -

The White Queen

"Every writer creates his own precursors" - J. L. Borges

"No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" - T. S. Eliot

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Editions of Lewis Carroll's works used and abbreviations

(The editions used have been chosen for their availability and ease of reference)

AAIW - Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

TTLG - Through the Looking-Glass

Both in The Annotated Alice (abbreviated to AA) edited by Martin Gardner, Penguin, 1966.

SB - Sylvie and Bruno

SBC - Sylvie and Bruno Concluded

Both in The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll (abbreviated to N) edited by Alexander Woollcott, Nonesuch Press, (n.d.). This or The Works of Lewis Carroll, edited by Roger Lancelyn Green, Hamlyn, 1965, is the edition most frequently used for the poems and other less important pieces by Carroll.

HS - The Hunting of the Snark. The Annotated Snark, edited by Martin Gardner, Penguin, 1962, is the best modern edition.

DFC - Dodgson Family Collection. Carroll established a family home for his unmarried sisters in Guildford; since then it has become the home of Carroll studies mainly because of the Dodgson Family Collection which has been deposited in the Muniment Room attached to Guildford Museum.

LLLC - The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll, S. Dodgson Collingwood, T. Fisher Unwin, 1898.

LCPB - The Lewis Carroll Picture Book, edited by S. Dodgson Collingwood, T. Fisher Unwin, 1899. This has been reprinted with additions as Diversions and Digressions of Lewis Carroll, by Dover Publications, New York.

Diaries - The Diaries of Lewis Carroll edited with supplementary material, by Roger Lancelyn Green, 2 vols., Cassell, 1953.

DSC - "Catalogue of the Furniture, Personal Effects, and the Interesting and Valuable Library of Books, The property of the late Rev. C. L. Dodgson ..." Known as The Dodgson Sale Catalogue. Oxford, 1898.

LCH - The Lewis Carroll Handbook, ed. Williams, S.H., Madan, F., and Green, R. L. (repr) Dawsons, 1970.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The history of literature through all its developments, declines, experiments and advances, is difficult to assess in general terms so that the evaluation of a particular writer like Lewis Carroll is simultaneously aided and hindered by looking at the particular historical context relevant to his life-span. Thus the recurring problem is one of how to approach the work of a man who hypothetically has had the entire past to learn from, who is continually described by his admirers as a revolutionary and ahead of his time, but who, in biographical detail, seems entirely rooted to his period.

If the historical approach has its difficulties so too does the biographical one. For though the details of a man's life may help, they may also be used too readily to fit our schemes of analysis - as in the case of the Freudian critiques of a generation ago. The other difficulties here come from the fact that because recorded time itself is selective, we cannot know the complete story, and in any case such a story may largely be a catalogue of irrelevance so that even a private diary, like Lewis Carroll's, may not help very much. A scientific method may be a matter of processing all the available data and then finding an intelligent answer; for the student of literature all the data would be as misleading and unhelpful as no data at all. Moreover, much that would be considered as irrelevant or as fortuitous, such as chance

encounters, or an unrecorded conversation, could be in fact of the greatest importance. If he ever really existed Coleridge's "person on business from Porlock" who interrupted the writing of Kubla Kahn prevented it from being what it might have been - but also made it what it is: the man who dropped the Venus de Milo might deserve our praise just as much as the sculptor.

Though we cannot be confident about the importance of certain events and facts we might nevertheless approach others with more assurance (but still with no certainty). A man's personal library for example, if deliberately collected rather than inherited, will inevitably reflect his tastes and interests, just as much as the company he kept. If we admit that to deal in likelihoods is better than the admission of so many qualifications that there can be no conclusions, then this might give us a key. But apart from the immediate difficulties (what was borrowed from a friend or library?) and doubts as to whether the need to possess actually indicates artistic affinity, there are other pressing problems. If a book is owned is it necessarily read? (was it bought for furniture, or presented by the author, as much of Dickens' library at Gad's Hill was?). When was it read, and how attentively? What facts are lost, what papers destroyed?*

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*Dodgson's family had speed as their primary motive when it came to winding up his estate so that an enormous amount of material has been lost. W. L. Dodgson wrote to Brooks the auctioneer: " ... I thought at the finish that it would be a great deal of trouble bringing the sacks of papers all the way down here, and, as you stated that you could have them burnt in the manner we wish at Oxford, I should be glad if you would do so ..." (DFC 15/5).

Aside from such detective-work necessary for an informed approach to an author and his work, time anyway as it passes, by turns sharpens and blurs what is presumed to be actually a constant literary achievement, so that filters of different kinds of subjectivity distort or enhance according to fashions and the needs of the reader. As those needs change, so the literature seems to demand a different kind of appreciation and to re-align itself with other literature and other works of art, so that its "real" meanings can be teased out in new and different ways. When we appeal to "the test of time" to award the status of literature to writing, we are in danger of assuming that this is one test, not a never-ending series, always with new rules. For just as reading Alice in Wonderland at the age of ten is a totally different experience to reading it in maturity, so reading it in 1865 will have been different from reading it in 1973, and by the year 2000 it will seem different again. And because the only constant is that there is no critical constant, the best literature will tend to contain all our ideas; it will not be wholly contained by any one of our ideas alone.

With these difficulties in mind, one useful remaining tool of literary criticism is the element of creativity that cuts through some of the problems whilst maintaining an integrity towards its subject; that uses without total dependence, elements of the historical and biographical approach, without actually trusting or dismissing either. If granted this licence, at best the critic can at times enlarge on what his subject, the author, may even have been unconscious of, by

using techniques of comparison between his subject and others before and after him who seem on common ground - which may be a more evocative appraisal of his achievement than a painstaking job of excavation with trowel and brush. Though of course at worst the critic might be in danger of over-elaboration, with this approach there can be no insistence either on absolutes or comprehensiveness - only an evocation of some of those who, in attempting to beat a particular path, made it easier for others to recognise and follow.

The purpose of this present thesis then, is to approach in this way, one of the most enigmatic figures in the history of English literature, Lewis Carroll - or Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. The story of his life, career and interests has been told, but he remains almost an eccentric accident, a temporary aberration on what is often taken to be a smooth continuous line of literary progress, and a figure who seems difficult to fit into his own age. To confuse evaluation he appears to have been an artist only by default; that is when his own chosen academic discipline of mathematics was not monopolising his time and talents. Another paradox is that it is his extraordinary writing done merely to amuse a child-friend that alone seems to transcend the ordinariness of his own life.

In fact, however, it is only if seen in isolation that Carroll and his work seem eccentric; in relationship to certain other key figures he can be seen as having connections with a number of significant artistic traditions. Similarly, it is only when his life is considered as a totality that it seems uniformly dull; in fact during the short period of his

most successful creative years as an artist (approximately between 1864 - 1876) he had a considerable social life and mixed with some of the most creative of his contemporaries. Not only was he in contact in this way but he also visited art galleries, went to the theatre, and, perhaps most significantly of all, possessed a large personal library of upwards of 5,000 volumes, that not only is a testament to his wide range of interests but demonstrates how inclusive was his knowledge of literature, since almost every major figure is amply represented.

The ultimate aim of these following chapters is to attempt to re-evaluate Carroll not by telling the story of his life, nor even of those few successful creative years; neither will they try to explain him by examining his art in an exclusively Victorian context - rather the evaluation will be by approaching him from various seemingly heterogeneous viewpoints. Thus the main approaches from the literary aspect will be made taking examples from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, followed by examples from the visual arts of the 19th and 20th centuries. For in order to chart his territory, the more various our viewpoints, the more extensive it will prove to be.

In this aim several methods will be used and, when appropriate, a combination of two different critical techniques will be employed. Thus a relationship between Carroll's art and that of other artists or literary figures will be inferred where no concrete evidence is extant, but where there <u>is</u> biographical fact to support this (either of Carroll's knowledge of them personally or their work) then this will be cited as

explicit authority. Because these relationships are often complex, substantial documentation will be cited where necessary and expert witnesses (scholars specialising in the various fields touched on here) will be called.

The first approach to Carroll therefore, will be made by attempting to set his work in the perspective of a literary philosophy whose tone was established by the colossal figure of Victorian fiction, Charles Dickens - and Carroll's library, his frequent quotation from Dickens, and similarities between their work will be used to support this. Next, this thesis will look briefly at what were, second to Dickens, possibly other sources of literary background to Carroll's art, but this time citing an example from the 18th century, (Laurence Sterne) and one from the early 17th century (Cervantes) and trace some of the common roots and preoccupations of all four of them.

The third section of this thesis will then move away from what will have had to have been largely conjectural (for Carroll did not know Dickens, and cannot be said positively to have read the work of Sterne or Cervantes) to biographical fact, and returns to consider Carroll again in a specifically Victorian context. For by examining all of the important figures whom Carroll knew both in the literary and visual arts, it will attempt to find some further shared ideas, and hence some pedigree for wonderland and Alice. These contemporary friends and acquaintances of Carroll's were (among others): George MacDonald, Christina and D. G. Rossetti, Tennyson, Ruskin, John Millais, Arthur Hughes, Holman Hunt, Noel Paton and Richard Doyle.

Fourth, and finally, this thesis will seek to determine the way in which, far from being merely a quirkish eccentricity, Carroll has been astoundingly "posthumously productive" (to use Goethe's definition of "the true sign of genius") by citing as an example the Surrealists' approach to his work, and by showing how he has been influential for them.

Three further points need to be made at this stage. First: none of the approaches made here towards an understanding of Lewis Carroll are meant necessarily to exclude others that are recognised as being equally possible (for example, from the point of view of his knowledge of mathematics* and logic, or from a consideration of other earlier nonsense literature and the mock-heroic). Second: at no point does this thesis wish to become involved in any fundamental sense with sorting through the wastepaper-basket labelled "Victorianism" (or, for that matter, "Augustanism") into which all manner of conflicting literary and historical theories are thrown - a fact pointed out some time ago by Jerome Buckley in the opening chapter to The Victorian Temper. His sense that "the terms 'Victorian' and 'Victorianism' have acquired the vaguest of emotional connotations" because "the outlines of the Victorian era blur beyond recognition in the confusion of conflicting charges"

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*Though in passing it is encouraging to find that with the recent discovery of the sequel to Symbolic Logic: Part I, Elementary, Carroll's status as a mathematician is being revised and upgraded - the aim, in the literary field, of this thesis. (For the new work being done on the lost book on logic - and the assertion that Carroll was 30 years ahead of his time see Scientific American, July 1972).

made by critics, is one which is both recognised but yet deliberately not pursued lest the major object of this book, Lewis Carroll, be forgotten. "Victorianism" is, then, recognised as being no more than a label that has been contrived partly by the Victorians themselves for self-glory and to impress posterity, and partly by posterity to insult, by simplification, the Victorians. With these reservations it is a term employed here for its convenience rather than for its accuracy.

Thirdly: though this is a study of Lewis Carroll which approaches him and his work by tracing influences from and on other writers and artists, it must be recognised that he, and not they, remains the subject of this thesis. There is accordingly much that has to be left unsaid about, for example, Cervantes, Sterne, and the Surrealists, and since the concern here is to find common-ground, the differences are implicitly recognised but for want of space cannot be explicitly discussed. Similarly it is recognised that, to cite just one instance, Hard Times is not only about "fancy" but also, for example, about trade-unionism - yet since this has little to do with wonderland it is not examined here despite its centrality to the novel. It is recognised in the same way that George MacDonald wrote nearly fifty books other than the fairy stories and two fantasy novels that have some relationship with Carroll's work - these also are not discussed for the same reason. In short this study concentrates on the moments when influence in either direction can be demonstrated, in order to attempt, whilst knowing that it finally can never be

complete, to trace where wonderland and its creator came from and some of the subsequent effects it had on later artists.

Finally, it is appropriate and encouraging to find that if authority for this study of an author and his work through an examination of his friends, acquaintances, his reading and his interests be needed, we have Carroll's own behaviour to follow as an example. For in writing to his cousin, William, about a visit he managed to make to the poet laureate, Tennyson, in 1859 (at his home in Farringford, Isle of Wight) Carroll admitted:

> "... I looked with some curiosity to see what sort of books occupied the lowest of the swinging bookshelves, most handy to his writing table; they were all, without exception, Greek or Latin - Homer, Aeschylus, Horace, Lucretius, Virgil, etc. ..."
>
> ("A Visit to Tennyson", Strand Magazine (May 1901) vol. xxi, no. 125).

The same spirit of curiosity is behind this enquiry.

Lewis Carroll and Charles Dickens; introductory

(i)

There is no doubting either the fact that Dickens was amongst the major literary figures of his time, or that he achieved great popularity. It is scarcely the place here to reiterate at any length exactly what the stature and extent of Dickens' influence was on his public; that has already been authoritatively done by George H. Ford in Dickens and his Readers. But a brief note of some of the points from a few of Ford's sources might emphasise just how strong Dickens' contemporary position and influence was (opinion about which, as Ford shows, was a matter of constant revision through the years subsequent to Dickens' death). Today it is important to remember therefore that Dickens in his own time was able implicitly to secure the discharge of a heartless police magistrate after the publication of Oliver Twist; that a callous Yorkshire schoolmaster was shamed into retirement after Nickleby; and that even a bumpy road in Maryland was repaired after Dickens had described it in American Notes*. It was with some justice that, accordingly, the critic of the English Review for 1848 solemnly reminded Dickens and Thackeray that "their responsibilities are enormous. No two men are capable of exercising a wider influence for good or evil over their fellow creatures".† Even in 1858, in his Novels and Novelists the critic J. C. Jeaffreson ("influential in his own

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*Dickens and his Readers, Princeton University Press, 1965, p. 84.

†cit., ibid, p. 32.

generation" according to Ford) had superseded this, saying:

"Dickens' ... benefits to mankind are as innumerable as the flowers that cover the earth ... There is not a human heart in these islands ... which Dickens has not at some time or other influenced for the better ... Amongst us there is not a grinding task-master who would not have been more selfish ... had Dickens not lived to write. ... We have been in his hands only plastic clay that he has fashioned... We cannot ... look out upon the world save through his eyes."*

But it was not merely his admirers who admitted Dickens' power; even Anthony Trollope, whose distaste for Dickens was pronounced, had to admit that "It is fatuous to condemn that as deficient in art which has been so full of art as to captivate all men."/ Accordingly, Benjamin Jowett was probably right when he said in his obituary notice in the Times:

"... He whose loss we now mourn occupied a greater space than any other writer in the minds of Englishmen during the last thirty-five years ..." ∅

Though, of course, there were many Victorians who disliked Dickens, it is this kind of evidence concerning his extensive influence that aids an evaluation of what he might have meant to the Victorian who is the subject of this thesis - Lewis Carroll. For Dickens was such a colossal literary figure with such a large audience that he could scarcely help being instrumental in shaping much else that was written or believed during Victoria's reign. Most particularly, therefore, this opening chapter will be concerned with the influence that this, the most popular-

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*cit., ibid., p. 100

/cit., ibid., p. 106.

∅cit., ibid., p. 109.

novelist ever, had on the author of one of the most popular, most printed, most translated and most coveted bibliophile's prizes, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass.* For in this attempt to claim for Carroll a literary status that extends beyond the nursery, Dickens is an appropriate yardstick not only because of his importance as a literary figure, but also because his work focusses some important shared ideas and methods that inform the creation of wonderland. Moreover, as John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson have shown[/] Dickens was an acute observer of his age and accurately mirrored contemporary concerns and problems.

Broadly speaking the concurrence between Dickens and Carroll may be categorised as follows: first, they both have an understanding of childhood and of the effort that the child has in growing up in a world that seems to become increasingly de-sensitised, and they both feature the fairy-tale and the concept of play as two possible antidotes to this. They also concur in the way in which they recognise the failings of adulthood - which cause the misery of the child - and similarly expose the pretentions, masks, preoccupations in occupations, games of non-communication ("how not to do it") and the adult capacity to shelter behind 'character' and self-caricature. They are finally significantly similar in that, by exposing this about adulthood, both Dickens and

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*It is estimated in The Lewis Carroll Handbook that about 110,000 copies of Alice had sold during Carroll's lifetime (see p. 30) and that by 1911 654,000 copies of Alice and 429,000 copies of Looking-Glass including all the variant editions, had been issued (p. 213).

[/] Dickens at Work, Methuen (repr.) 1968, especially ch. VII.

Carroll champion the child as an ideal and defend his right to maintain much of his inherent capacity for imaginative perception - a quality that they also both celebrate in their work.

We cannot ever fully reconstruct the thinking behind an artist's achievement and should not hope to do so, but as stated in the introduction such congruencies between themes of one artist and another allow us to glimpse paths of approach which can be more significantly and surely traced if one artist has followed others along them. The originality of Carroll is not at issue here - for he was always essentially original - but the concern in this three-part opening chapter is whether Dickens (and in later chapters whether others) made a particular path more easily seen and more worth following.

(ii)

Dickens' possible influence on Carroll has been noticed once before by the Dickens scholar Professor Kathleen Tillotson who in a paper called "Lewis Carroll and the Kitten on the Hearth" (English, viii, 45, (Autumn 1950), 136 - 8) noted a general concurrence whilst also asserting that the opening of Through the Looking-Glass is based on an unconscious recall of a parody of the opening of Dickens' Cricket on the Hearth that appeared in Blackwood's Magazine in November 1846 as "Advice to an intending Serialist". This parallel Professor Tillotson herself says is "hardly more important than the kitten's ball of worsted" but, at any rate, seems proven. Here, for the record, is (a) Dickens' opening

paragraph of the Cricket, followed by (b) Blackwood's parody and (c) the opening of Looking-Glass:

(a) "The kettle began it! Don't tell me what Mrs. Peerybingle said. I know better. Mrs. Peerybingle may have it on record to the end of time that she couldn't say which of them began it; but I say the kettle did. I ought to know, I hope? The kettle began it, full five minutes by the little waxy-faced Dutch clock in the corner before the cricket uttered a chirp ..."

(b) "It was the kitten that began it, and not the cat. It isn't any use saying it was the cat, because I was there, and I saw it and know it; and if I don't know it, how should anybody else be able to tell you about it, if you please? So I say again it was the kitten that began it, and the way it all happened was this.

There was a little bit, a small tiny string of blue worsted - no! I am wrong, for when I think again the string was pink - which was hanging down from a little ball that lay on the lap of a tall dark girl with lustrous eyes, who was looking into the fire as intently as if she expected to see a salamander in the middle of it. [Meanwhile Huggs the old cat is watching through half-shut eyes] the movements of a smart little kitten [playing with a roll of paper which pricks it]. And then the kitten put on a look of importance, as if its feelings had been injured in the nicest points, and then walked up demurely to Huggs, and began to pat her whiskers, as if it wanted, which it probably did, to tell her all about it."

[There follows a long game with the worsted, the tall girl's annoyance, and the intervention, in defence of the cat and against the kitten, of 'a little child' sitting on the other side of the fire].

(c) "One thing was certain, that the white kitten had had nothing to do with it: - it was the black kitten's fault entirely. For the white kitten had been having its face washed by the old cat for the last quarter of an hour (and bearing it pretty well, considering); so you see that it couldn't have had any hand in the mischief.

The way Dinah washed her children's faces was this ... But the black kitten had been finished with earlier in the afternoon, and so, while Alice was sitting curled up in a corner of the great arm-chair, half talking to herself and half asleep, the kitten had been having a grand game of romps with the ball of worsted Alice had been trying to wind up ... Kitty sat very demurely on her knee, pretending to watch the progress of the winding, and now and then putting out one paw and gently touching the ball, as if it would be glad to help if it might."

The parallels that exist between these passages do not seem random. But, slight though Professor Tillotson's point may be, her conclusion to the paper isolates an important area of research that despite having been noticed over twenty years ago, has never been explored:

> "Finally - ('and the moral of that is') - this parallel can be seen as a small instance of a large and growing responsibility for the modern critic of Carroll's work; that of replacing the writer in his full context of Victorian literature. Other settings and relations - Oxford, mathematics, logic, child-friends and his own childhood - have yielded much; but no critic seems to have yet given enough attention to the Carroll who parodied Tennyson and Sydney Dobell, who read David Copperfield in 'numbers' as it came out when he was a boy at Rugby, and made a favourite of Mrs. Gummidge (an early Mock Turtle?), who himself remarked on the close resemblance ('might have been twin sisters') between his White Queen and that other great Victorian grotesque, Mrs. Wragg in Wilkie Collins's No Name. Carroll ought now to be taking his place among the novelists. Henry Kingsley, a novelist himself, was not speaking at random when he called the Looking-Glass 'the finest book since Martin Chuzzlewit'. It may be mere chance that the opening paragraphs recall a twenty-years-old parody of Dickens; it is not chance that the Looking-Glass characters are defined and memorable in the same way as those of Dickens, and of no other novelist."

The first part of this thesis then, as Professor Kathleen Tillotson suggests, will focus its attention on Carroll as a literary figure both influenced by and influential for artistic and intellectual men of his time in ways already outlined but most centrally in this particular chapter, it will seek to discover just what makes Carroll Dickensian, and attempt to see him in "his full context of Victorian literature".

(iii)

The shy, meticulous, Oxford mathematics don Lewis Carroll, who hated publicity, stammered, and loved other people's little girls - and Dickens, the gregarious best known and

loved novelist, a father of ten, who liked nothing better than to read his work aloud to packed theatres, to travel abroad and to be an influential voice in the world, - do not, it would seem, have much in common. Yet because of certain important ways in which they agree that have already been itemised, there is actually more that unites them than is at first apparent.

It is, indeed, an attractive hypothesis that Carroll actively responded to these elements in Dickens' novels and deliberately adopted them in his own work. Though obviously this can never be conclusively proved, something of this nature quite possibly occurred since there is quite considerable evidence that Carroll knew Dickens' work well. Firstly, the Catalogue of the ... Interesting and Valuable Library of Books [of] ... Lewis Carroll* (i.e. of the auction sale that took place in Oxford after his death in 1898) shows that he owned practically the whole of Dickens' work in their first edition (see lots 280, 495 - 503, 667 - 669, 908) which, as Carroll was, for example, only five years old when Pickwick Papers appeared in 1837, he obviously had had to search out and deliberately collect - demonstrating not only diligence but also an admiration for the books themselves. Secondly, Carroll actually contributed to Dickens' weekly All the Year Round, where, on February 11th 1860 his poem Faces in the Fire appeared. This seems to indicate that Carroll respected and

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*Sometimes known by the short title The Dodgson Sale Catalogue, abbreviated to DSC in this thesis.

no doubt read the periodical. Further, in his copy of Pickwick Papers (which was, incidentally, the rare first issue in that it had the two plates by Buss which were later cancelled and replaced by those by 'Phiz') the Dodgson Sale Catalogue mentions that it had the "Autograph of C. L. Dodgson.. with the following note in his handwriting: 'Bought with the proceeds of a poem "Faces in the Fire", contributed to "All the Year Round"'" - Carroll was an enthusiast!*

This poem, in that it represents a really solid link between them is for this reason a significant piece of Carroll's work which, as Stone[/] makes clear, Dickens probably read and approved of. For this reason, and because, in embryo at least, it touches on certain common preoccupations, it seems appropriate to examine it in some detail.[ø] The poem in the 1860 version (it was later changed) was as follows:

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*He also was bibliophile enough to own The Christmas Carol in an edition that reproduced the original MS. DSC p. 15.

[/]"... Dickens exercised control through rejection or through thorough editing ... he had to approve ..." Uncollected Writings, Household Words, Lane, 1969. 1, 22. Arthur A. Adrian in his article "Charles Dickens as a verse editor" (Modern Philology LVIII (1960) p. 104) also makes it clear that "Whatever the poem ... whether the work of a well-known author or of an obscure one-timer, Dickens exercised a firm control over the final selection" and quotes Dickens' letter to one of his sub-editors: "Pray, pray don't have Poems unless they are good. We are immeasurably better without them."

Despite such evidence Professor Philip Collins has judiciously pointed out that Dickens was "less interested in All the Year Round than Household Words and less interested in poetry than prose" so that it is possible that he neglected Faces in the Fire (private letter to me dated 25.5.73).

[ø]Unfortunately Carroll's Diaries for this period have been lost so there is no extant reference as to how he came to write the poem or have it published by Dickens. Whether they ever actually met is also unclear but is unlikely since their social spheres hardly overlapped.

I watch the drowsy night expire,
And Fancy paints at my desire,
Her magic pictures in the fire.

An island-farm 'mid seas of corn,
Swayed by the wandering breath of morn,
The happy spot where I was born.

The picture fadeth in its place;
Amid the glow I seem to trace
The shifting semblance of a face.

'Tis now a little childish form,
Red lips for kisses pouted warm,
And elf-locks tangled in the storm.

'Tis now a grave and gentle maid,
At her own beauty half afraid,
Shrinking, yet willing to be stayed.

'Tis now a matron with her boys,
Dear centre of domestic joys:
I seem to hear the merry noise.

Oh, time was young, and life was warm,
When first I saw that fairy form,
Her dark hair tossing in the storm;

And fast and free these pulses played,
When last I met that gentle maid -
When last her hand in mine was laid.

Those locks of jet are turned to grey,
And she is strange and far away,
That might have been mine own to-day -

That might have been mine own, my dear,
Through many and many a happy year,
That might have sat beside me here.

Ay, changeless through the changing scene,
The ghostly whisper rings between
The dark refrain of "might have been".

The race is o'er I might have run,
The deeds are past I might have done,
And sere the wreath I might have won.

Sunk is the last faint flickering blaze;
The vision of departed days
Is vanished even as I gaze.

The pictures with their ruddy light
Are changed to dust and ashes white,
And I am left alone with night.

This, quite obviously, is not a particularly good poem - but Dickens printed it nevertheless, and printed it for no other reason than that he liked it (Carroll was 28 and unknown at that time - Alice appeared five years later). But as Stone notes "only with fiction did [Dickens] allow substantial deviation from his own tastes, and then only occasionally, and usually with established authors ..."* - it is clear therefore that Carroll was actually subscribing to the Dickensian All the Year Round image. Just what this image was will be looked at more fully later, but one might speculate that perhaps the appeal of the poem for Dickens was that like his Louisa from Hard Times, Carroll shows how he too finds his inspiration in the burning coals, the patterns of which his imagination interprets to mirror his thoughts back to him. The faculty for this is one which, it will be remembered, even Louisa's unlikeable brother Tom has a grudging admiration for ("You seem to find more to look at in it than ever I could find ..." Hard Times, p. 53) and it is this that is squarely contrasted with the hard, unlovely world of Coketown. Furthermore it seems hardly coincidental that some such sympathy should exist between the creator of wonderland and Louisa who confesses "I have such unmanageable thoughts that they will wonder".

Apart from this, the poem indicates other common ground in that it has as its subject nostalgia for an elusive beauty who, like Pip's Estella (and Ellen Ternan on whom she was probably

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*Ibid, p. 22

modelled) seems to have been both a half real and half ideal creature in the lover's mind and tantalizingly impossible to attain. Carroll was doubtless overstating his problem (he was not yet thirty) but the line "Those locks of jet are turned to grey" doubtless also found a sympathetic ear with Dickens who, at 48 and chasing Ellen Ternan, was perhaps feeling the loss of his youth! Moreover the transcience of life as expressed in the poem, which could be in some way at least temporarily assuaged through an act of the imagination ("I seem to hear the merry noise") - this too might have appealed to Dickens. At any rate no doubt the idea of "a grave and gentle maid, / At her own beauty half afraid, / Shrinking, yet willing to be stayed," must have been appreciated by the creator of Little Nell - The Old Curiosity Shop being similar to Alice's journeys in this respect in that they are both a kind of Virgin's Pilgrim's Progress through a largely hostile world. Indeed Dickens frankly admits as much in his Preface to the novel:

> "I will ... observe, therefore, that, in writing the book, I had it always in my fancy to surround the lonely figure of the child with grotesque and wild, but not impossible companions, and to gather about her innocent face and pure intentions, associates as strange and uncongenial as the grim objects that are about her bed when her history is first foreshadowed ..."
>
> (p. xii)*

The fragile Little Dorrit (notice that she is little again) and Florence Dombey, Agnes Wickfield, Rose Maylie and Madeline Bray, were in many ways variations on Nell - and

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*All page references to Dickens' work are to the "New Oxford Illustrated" Edition.

Alice seems to be a relation to them all. Other 'relations' will be looked at later, and tangible links between Carroll and Dickens - by way of references by Carroll to Dickens' work - are largely in passing but, for the record, will be found itemised at the end of this opening chapter, if only by their sheer number to demonstrate how familiar Carroll was with his writing. We must look, however, less at factual evidence (Carroll was no literary critic and left only a little that was significant concerning his ideas on what he read) and more at what can be inferred between what Dickens was doing in his enormously successful writing and its effect on Carroll's thinking. It is enough to know that Carroll read and admired Dickens' work - as he did - its effect can only be established by looking at some specific ideas that were, or became, important to them both.

I Dickens and the fairy tale

To be able to trace Carroll's understanding of Dickens we must first begin by isolating certain of Dickens' pre-occupations - a task that in itself is formidable, since his immense ability to demonstrate rather than intellectualise his philosophy, often makes this less than clear; as Professor Philip Collins puts it, Dickens was not "a systematic thinker, nor a philosophical novelist, such 'ideas' as he holds are more often implicit in his creations than explicitly stated and discussed."*

The difficulty is that Dickens did not appear to think. There is not, for example, outside the achievement of the novels themselves, any real hint that he knew what or how he achieved what he did. Yet he was no primitive literary Douanier Rousseau - some of the novels are perhaps the most sophisticated ever to have been written and they moreover demand and achieve the praise and attention of intellectuals - though, as Philip Collins/ points out, "When intellectuals appear in his novels, and this is rarely, they are almost always pretentious and ludicrous, if not worse: hard-hearted, cynical, or rendered oblivious to reality by their studies or

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*"Queen Mab's Chariot Among the Steam Engines: Dickens and 'Fancy'". English Studies XLII (1961) pp. 78 - 90). I am indebted to this paper and Collins' later book Dickens and Education for drawing my attention to many of the examples of "fancy" that are discussed in this chapter. Apart from this there have been other slighter discussions on this theme in Dickens' work, see M. C. Kotzin's introduction to his unpublished Ph.D. thesis Dickens and the Fairy Tale (University of Minnesota, 1968).

/Dickens and Education, p. 194.

activities. None of them (except David Copperfield) whose intellectual life is taken at all seriously, are happy or sympathetic ..."

Such reservations admitted, a critic looks in vain for a procedure by which to understand him, and usual methods, such as a comparative study, for example, are largely invalidated because of Dickens' astounding lack of formal literary and cultural knowledge. As Collins again observes "Neither [in his youth] nor later, was he bookish or well-read by the standards of his more intellectual contemporaries. When he was on the staff of the Morning Chronicle, the editor used to keep him off reviewing books - any fool, he would say, could do that, and 'Besides, he has never been a great reader of books or plays, and knows but little of them, but has spent his time in studying life.'"*

To be just, however, Forster notes, on the other hand that he was "quite up to the average of well-read men" and emphasises that the celebrated description of David Copperfield's first reading is "One of the many passages in Copperfield which are literally true" [of its author]:

> "My father had left a small collection of books in a little room upstairs to which I had access (for it adjoined my own) and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room, Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas and Robinson Crusoe, came out, a glorious host, to keep me company." (p. 55).

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*Ibid, pp. 15 - 16. Though as a generalisation this remains largely true, William Oddie in his Dickens and Carlyle, The Question of Influence, Centenary Press, 1972, makes a strong and well-documented case for Dickens' knowledge of, and agreement with, much that Carlyle wrote - especially in regard to Hard Times which, in turn, focussed many of Dickens' ideas that, as we shall see later, Carroll also implicitly agreed with.

Collins, however, in his examination of Dickens' reading cannot restrain an unmistakeably exasperated tone: "[it was] neither wide nor nicely selective, nor did it range far beyond the obvious and expected ... Prose rather than poetry was his interest: his verse quotations are almost all hackneyed, and he shows little inwardness with any poet."* He goes on to quote G. H. Lewes' astonishment over the arbitrary nature of Dickens' library at Doughty Street ("nothing but three-volume novels and books of travel, all obviously presentation copies from authors or publishers") and how little it had improved, apart from the superior bindings, when he had moved to Devonshire Terrace two years later ("[showing] a more respectable and conventional ambition" though the collection remained "completely outside philosophy, science and the higher literature"). Dickens' reading, Collins complains, "in theology, history and other disciplines was equally scrappy" and that "as an editor he was lively and conscientious, but intellectually banal" (Ibid, p. 21). The biographer, Johnson, further notes that on his visit to Italy, Dickens' reaction to the art there was one of "crude honesty" and that "he lumped artists of very different degrees of merit

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*F. R. Leavis in his chapter on Little Dorrit in Dickens the Novelist disagrees without even minimal supporting evidence saying that: "[Dickens] read immensely, with the intelligence of genius ..." (ed. cit., p. 214) and thus going further than the partisan Forster who rated him as being only "up to the average of well read men" (see above), the biographer that the Leavises themselves state they prefer (ibid., pp. ix - x). However strange it may seem, or how out of character for one of the very greatest of English novelists, the insuperable fact remains that Dickens did prefer to spend his time acting in melodramas rather than Hamlet, and reading his own work to enthusiastic crowds, rather than engrossing himself in the works of Milton or Dryden.

together, and seldom said anything to suggest that he looked on painting with the eyes of an artist".* Further, Nicholas Bentley, remarking on the obviously inferior work of his later illustrators in comparison with that of Cruikshank and "Phiz", concludes that the fact that Dickens "accepted such, apparently without remonstrance or criticism does, however, reflect something of his innate philistinism."/

Finally, even Dickens' conversation hardly seems to be of the level that might be expected of one of the greatest English novelists; George Augustus Sala reports that:

> "What he liked to talk about was the latest new piece at the theatres, the latest exciting trial or police case, the latest social craze or social swindle, and especially the latest murder and newest thing in ghosts ..."
>
> (Things I have seen, I, 76)

Though most attempts at unravelling Dickens' ideas are undeniably made much more tentative by evidence such as this, there is a certain compensation in the fact that the effect of the little that Dickens did read, especially the eighteenth century novels from his father's library, seems to have remained permanent and decisive.ø Dickens as

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*Charles Dickens His Tragedy and Triumph I 562.

/"Dickens and his Illustrators" in Charles Dickens 1812 - 1870 A Centenary Volume ed. Tomlin, London, 1969.

øNot only was this literature important, but so also was the obviously related eighteenth century graphic tradition, exemplified by Hogarth, Rowlandson and Gillray. Some of the possible ramifications of Dickens' interest in this area have been documented and summarised by J. D. Hunt; "Dickens and the traditions of graphic satire" in Encounters, Essays on literature and the visual arts, ed. J. D. Hunt, Studio Vista, 1971. The relationship between the writers we are concerned with here in this thesis, and the graphic caricaturists will be returned to later.

David Copperfield, for example, continues his description of the books in that "library" by observing that:

> "They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time - they, and the Arabian Nights and the Tales of the Genii - and did me no harm ...
>
> I have been Tom Jones (a child's Tom Jones, a harmless creature) for a week together. I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for a month at a stretch, I verily believe. I had a greedy relish for a few volumes of Voyages and Travels - I forget what, now - that were on those shelves; and for days and days I can remember to have gone about my region of our house, armed with the centre-piece out of an old set of boot-trees - the perfect realisation of Captain Somebody of the Royal British Navy".
>
> (Copperfield, p. 56)

This is the only occasion in the largely autobiographic novel David Copperfield that literature is shown to have any effect on its eponymous hero, and by inference, its author. The paradoxical conclusion that must be reached is, then, that most literature meant very little to one of its greatest exponents. Rather, reading, though not cherished for its powers of intellectual stimulation and nourishment, was in a sense more fundamentally loved because of its ability to vitalise the imagination; the important point was that "They [books] kept alive my fancy". Literature, as far as Dickens was concerned, was just one way of making mundane reality exciting, of transforming a piece of wood into a sword and a boy into a Captain Somebody. It is also a way of training the imagination to heightened perception so that the dullest stimulous provokes the most colourful response - and this clearly was one of Dickens' most dazzling abilities. We find, for example, that the sight of old clothing hanging in the window of a second-hand clothes-emporium is enough to fire his imagination:

"We love to walk among these extensive groves of the illustrious dead, and to indulge in the speculations to which they give rise; now fitting a deceased coat, then a dead pair of trousers, and anon the mortal remains of a gaudy waistcoat, upon some being of our own conjuring up, and endeavouring, from the shape and fashion of the garment itself, to bring its former owner before our mind's eye. We have gone on speculating in this way, until whole rows of coats have started from their pegs, and buttoned up, of their own accord,round the waists of imaginary wearers; lines of trousers have jumped down to meet them; waistcoats have almost burst with anxiety to put themselves on; and half an acre of shoes have suddenly found feet to fit them, and gone stumping down the street with a noise which has fairly awakened us from our pleasant reverie."

(Sketches by Boz, "Meditations in Monmouth Street", p.75)

Edgar Johnson (op. cit., I, 113) draws attention to this sketch in particular and says of The Sketches as a whole - "time and time again ... we see Dickens' imagination in the very act of taking fire and rising into a realm far above that of the mere factual reporting or even shrewd satire, though it be the most commonplace experience that provides the spark."

For Dickens then, literature too was only a similar "commonplace experience",having the same potential power of magicing a gun from the centre-piece out of a set of boot trees, just as the sight of old clothes have in conjuring up people:

"We could imagine that coat - imagine! We could see it; we had seen it a hundred times sauntering in company with three or four other coats of the same cut, about some place of profligate resort at night. We dressed, from the same shop-window in an instant, half a dozen boys of from fifteen to twenty; and putting cigars into their mouths, and their hands in their pockets, watched them as they sauntered down the street and lingered at the corner."

(Ibid., p. 77)

The point here is that the imaginative eye possesses a metamorphic quality that is fed by the understanding of literature because it conjures images, by using words, as brilliantly as here coats conjure up people in Dickens' mind. This is effectively the first way in which we can link Carroll's work and Dickens', for the last page of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, for example, emphasises how Alice's sister, after listening to the evocative story of adventures in wonderland, retains the Dickensian ability to transform the commonplace into the phenomenal:

> "[Alice's sister] sat on, with closed eyes, and half believed herself in Wonderland, though she knew she had but to open them again, and all would change to dull reality - the grass would be only rustling in the wind, and the pool rippling to the waving of the reeds - the rattling tea-cups would change to tinkling sheep bells, and the Queen's shrill cries to the voice of the shepherd boy - and the sneeze of the baby, the shriek of the Gryphon, and all the other queer noises, would change (she knew) to the confused clamour of the busy farm-yard - while the lowing of the cattle in the distance would take the place of the Mock Turtle's heavy sobs."
>
> (AAIW, pp. 163 - 4)

The double inference here is clear; that literature of a certain kind can release the imagination from dullness not merely to fantasy but to a new vision of reality, and that the adult sister can learn a good deal from the younger Alice, who has journeyed into the land of wonder and imagination. This last point also is one that Dickens himself made: he, like Carroll, maintaining throughout his life a special reverence for childhood and its world primarily because of the vicissitudes of that period of his own life. For as

Stone observes, the result of his enforced labour in the infamous blacking warehouse was that:

"He never forgot ... that imagination was an anodyne for servitude and suffering ... In a time of disorder and neglect, he had been saved (or so he felt) by reading and imagination. Imagination, he now insisted could help others."

(The Uncollected Writings of Charles Dickens Household Words. Lane, 1969, I, 34)

Though perhaps over-simplified, this seems near the truth. Certainly there seems to have been a very abrupt halt to the child-Dickens' happiness by this short but brutal interlude in his existence which he continued to remember with anguish as an adult:

"The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless - of the shame I felt in my position - of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned and thought and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me never to be brought back any more - cannot be written ..."

(Autobiographic fragment in Forster's Life I)

Once restored from poverty back into the civilisation and comparative safety of a more solvent home, these things that he says he "learned and thought and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by ..." seem to have become emblematic of the paradise that he remembered so fondly, and so never, he felt, quite lost. Sentimentally, then, he viewed his early childhood as a very special period of his life to be cherished and idealised. Thus in David Copperfield the words that Dickens gives David, are

reiterated by Forster, in his Life,as being "simply and unaffectedly true of Charles Dickens" (I, 2):

> "If it should appear from anything I may set down in this narrative that I was a child of close observation; or that as a man I have a strong memory of my childhood, I undoubtedly lay claim to both of these characteristics".

Similarly, in a Household Words article Where we Stopped Growing (1.1.1853), for example, he admits that:

> "... we, the writer, having been conscious of [nostalgia for our childhood] the other night - for, at this present season most of us are much in childish company, and we among the rest - were led to consider whether there were any things as to which this individual we actually did stop growing when we were a child. We had a fear that the list would be very short; but on writing it out as follows, were glad to find it longer than we had expected.
>
> We have never grown the thousandth part of an inch out of Robinson Crusoe. He fits us just as well, and exactly the same way, as when we were among the smallest of the small. We have never grown out of his parrot, or his dog, or his fowling-piece, or the horrible old staring goat he came upon in the cave, or his rusty money, or his cap, or his umbrella. There has been no change in the manufacture of telescopes, since that blessed ship's spy-glass was made. [...] Never sail we, idle, in a little boat and hear the rippling water at the prow, and look upon the land, but we know that our boat-growth stopped forever, when Robinson Crusoe sailed round the Island ...
>
> Our growth stopped, when the great Haroun Alrachid spelt his name so ... when the Sultan of the Indies was a mighty personage, to be approached respectfully even on the stage; and when the dazzling wonders of those many nights held far too high a place in the imagination to be burlesqued and parodied. When Blue Beard came over mountains ... when Don Quixote might have been right after all ... when Gil Blas had a heart ... and when it was a wonderful accident that the end of that interesting story in the Sentimental Journey ... was not to be found in our edition though we looked for it a thousand times ..."

This significant article ends with a plea that is not only Dickens', but is also a keynote for many other Victorians, especially Carroll, as we shall see:

"If we can only preserve ourselves from growing up, we shall never grow old, and the young may love us to the last. Not to be too wise, not to be too stately, not to be too rough with innocent fancies, or to treat them with too much lightness - which is as bad - are points to be remembered that may do us all good in our years to come ..."

The key word here is "fancies"; the key phrase is "if we can only preserve ourselves from growing up". The former is stressed, for example, by Dickens' introduction to the Uncommercial Traveller, which amounts to a policy statement for all his work. "Figuratively speaking I travel for the great house of Human Interest Brothers, and have a rather large connection in the fancy goods way" (or goods of fancy). The latter is a quality of mind that Dickens seems to have been especially adept in preserving:

"I never was in Robinson Crusoe's Island, yet I frequently return there ... [in my imagination]. I was never in the robbers' cave, where Gil Blas lived, but I often go back there and find the trap-door just as heavy to raise as it used to be, while that wicked old disabled Black lies everlastingly cursing in bed. I was never in Don Quixote's study when he read his books of chivalry ... yet you couldn't move a book in it without my knowledge, or with my consent ... So with Damascus, and Bagdad, and Brobdingnag and Lilliput, and Laputa, and the Nile and Abyssinia and the Ganges, and the North Pole, and many hundreds of places - I was never at them yet it is an affair of my life to keep them intact, and I am always going back to them".

(Uncommercial Traveller "Nurse's Stories" pp. 148 - 150)

Apart from what he read in Dickens' work, Carroll also had his own acute sense of nostalgia for his childhood, as is witnessed not only by his cultivation of legions of adored (and adoring) child friends, but also by such sentimental poems as, for example, Solitude, surprisingly written in 1853 (i.e. when he was only 21!):

... "Ye golden hours of Life's young spring,
Of innocence, of love and truth!
Bright, beyond all imagining,
Thou fairy-dream of youth!

I'd give all wealth that years have piled,
The slow result of Life's decay,
To be once more a little child
For one bright summer day."

(N, p. 959)

Dickens was not usually so mawkish as this (and nor was Carroll) but he was well aware of the provinces of the world of childhood that were threatened by the especially hard Victorian adult world; for his respect for childhood was not merely sentimental nostalgia but actually had a quite practical tone informed by his own experience as a child:

"We may assume that we are not singular in entertaining a very great tenderness for the fairy literature of our childhood ... It has greatly helped to keep us, in some sense, ever young, by preserving through our worldly ways one slender track not overgrown with weeds where we may walk with children, sharing their delights.

In a utilitarian age, of all other times, it is a matter of grave importance that Fairy Tales should be respected. Our English red tape is too magnificently red ever to be employed in the tying up of such trifles, but everyone who has considered the subject knows full well that a nation without fancy, without some romance, never did, never can, never will, hold a great place under the sun.

[It is therefore] ... doubly important that the little books, nurseries of fancy as they are, should be preserved."

(Household Words 1.10.1853 [my underlining])

This is not merely an isolated example of Dickens' ideas on the subject - even as early as the 1830's he was satirising those who could not value the good effects that fairy tales could have on children through their appeal to the imagination. His brief time with Bentley's Miscellany,

for example (which he edited) produced ~~the~~ one of his first, and admittedly heavy handed, swipes against Science and its ill effects, in the form of "The Mudfog Association - for the Advancement of Everything" (c.f. The British Association, of course). This Association - a kind of reborn Pickwick Club whose personnel were however mainly Bad instead of Good - only lived for two chapters (or "reports") because Dickens left Bentley; it did, however, enable its young author to pinpoint one preoccupation that was to last throughout his career: the value of the fairy tale. This, though perhaps overlaboured, is well worth quoting in full:

Section C - Statistics

President - Mr. Wooden Sconce
Vice Presidents - Mr. Ledbrain and Mr. Timbered

"Mr. Slug stated to the Section the result of some calculations he had made with great difficulty and labour, regarding the state of infant education among the middle classes of London. He found that, within a circle of three miles from the Elephant and Castle, the following were the names and numbers of childrens' books principally in circulation:

"Jack the Giant Killer	7,943
Ditto and Bean Stalk	8,621
Ditto and Eleven Brothers	2,845
Ditto and Jill	1,998
Total	21,407

"He found that the proportion of Robinson Crusoes to Philip Quarlls was as four and a half to one; and that the preponderance of Valentine and Orsons over Goody Two Shoes was as three and an eighth of the former to half a one of the latter; a comparison of Seven Champions with Simple Simons gave the same result. One child, on being asked whether he would rather be Saint George of England or a respectable tallow-chandler, instantly replied, "Taint George of Ingling". Another ... was found to be firmly impressed with a belief in the existence of dragons,

and openly stated that it was his intention when he grew up, to rush forth sword in hand for the deliverance of captive princesses, and the promiscuous slaughter of giants. Not one child among the number interrogated had ever heard of Mungo Park - some inquiring whether he was at all connected with the black man that swept the crossing; and others whether he was in any way related to the Regent's Park. They had not the slightest conception of the commonest principles of mathematics, and considered Sindbad the Sailor the most enterprising voyager that the world had ever produced.

"A MEMBER strongly deprecating the use of all the other books mentioned suggested that Jack and Jill might perhaps be exempted from the general censure, inasmuch as the hero and heroine, in the very outset of the tale, were depicted as going up a hill to fetch a pail of water, which was a laborious and useful occupation - supposing the family linen was being washed, for instance.

"MR. SLUG feared that the moral effect of this passage was more than counterbalanced by another in a subsequent part of the poem, in which the very gross allusion was made to the mode in which the heroine was personally chastised by her mother:

"'For laughing at Jack's disaster;'

besides, the whole work had this one great fault, <u>it was not true</u>.

"THE PRESIDENT complimented the honourable member on the excellent distinction he had drawn. Several other members, too, dwelt upon the immense and urgent necessity of storing the minds of children with nothing but facts and figures; which process the President very forcibly remarked, had made them (the Section) the men they were."

(<u>Sketches by Boz</u>, pp. 640 - 641)

This piece, early though it is (it anticipates Gradgrind by about seventeen years), makes virtually a manifesto for the need for wonderland in that it emphasises the need for infant make-believe, mocks the merely learned and their societies and ridicules those who would try to displace the natural inclination towards fantasy with hard fact and didacticism. Moreover, as Gillian Avery makes clear in her

definitive history of childrens' literature, Nineteenth Century Children (Hodder and Stoughton, 1965) Dickens was not fighting a paper tiger, despite the light tone of the piece: for traditional fairy stories and tales of fantasy were being replaced by didactic volumes from humourless do-gooders of the kind that Mr. Slug and his friends would have heartily approved:

> "[by c.1800] the English child was provided with at least three classics which were to be the foundation stones of the nursery library for the next hundred years. Mrs. Barbauld's Evenings at Home (1792 - 6), Thomas Day's Sandford and Merton (Parts I - III 1783 - 9), Mrs. Trimmer's Fabulous Histories, later known as The Robins (1786) have survived to this day as names, but to the young Victorian they were more than names, they were an inevitable part of his upbringing; they were constantly recommended by the earlier educational theorists, and they were still being reprinted in the last two decades of the 19th century. In these works we find the essence of the late Georgian juvenile writers, their prosiness, their materialistic values, their almost ludicrous lack of imagination, their total repudiation of all irrational influences on the child's mind." (p. 14).

Moreover, there seems to have been little alternative reading available for children born about 1840 - Mrs. Molesworth (herself a didactic and dull writer for children) reported that when she was young "not only had no children many books, but everywhere children had the same! There was seldom any use in little friends lending to each other, for it was always the same thing over again: Evenings at Home, Sandford and Merton and so on."* The work of these authors was moreover of an extremely low literary calibre. Percy Muir says, for example, that Sandford and Merton is "a feat of nausea.

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*Quoted by Percy Muir English Children's Books, Batsford, 1954, pp. 108 - 109.

It is so ludicrously serious in its preposterous moralisings that, in small doses, it makes hilarious reading" (p. 91); that Mrs. Trimmer was "a preposterous woman" who believed that "children were naturally sinful creatures to be rescued from their own satanic impulses" (p. 87); and that Evenings at Home was one of an "appalling list" of bad literature for children current in the 1850's. This opinion of the literature of the time cannot be refuted - most authorities agreeing that the dark days in the history of childrens' literature were between 1800 - 1850.

Dickens, then, with his father's small but select library available to him, was lucky - others had to put up with the effects of the opinions of small minded men such as Richard Edgeworth (the brother of Maria Edgeworth, the author of the famous volume The Parents' Assistant (1796)) who saw fit to make it perfectly clear in his introduction to that volume that it has a specifically moral purpose - and that Dr. Johnson was wrong: "Dr. Johnson says that 'Babies do not like to hear stories of babies like themselves; that they require to have their imaginations raised by tales of giants and fairies, and castles and enchantment.' The fact remains to be proved, but supposing they do prefer such tales, is this a reason why they should be indulged in reading them?"*

As Avery observes: "fantasy was excluded from childrens' fiction under the late Georgian regime. Fairies ... had long before come under an interdict ... fairies and

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*cit., Avery p. 27.

reasonableness do not mix ..." (p. 16). Even as comparatively far into the 19th century as 1820 there were still writers who were perpetuating late 18th century views on the subject. A Mrs. Sherwood, for example, in editing The Governess, or the Little Female Academy, felt obliged to make it clear that fantasy is a dangerous phenomena and not to be trusted:

> "Instruction when conveyed through the medium of some beautiful story or pleasant tale, more easily insinuates itself into the youthful mind than anything of a drier nature; yet the greatest care is necessary that the kind of instruction thus conveyed should be perfectly agreeable to the Christian dispensation. Fairy-tales therefore, are in general an improper medium of instruction because it would be absurd in such tales to introduce Christian principles or motives of action ... On this account such tales should be very sparingly used, it being extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the reason I have specified, to render them really useful."*

It is important to keep in mind that this was the very real background against which both Dickens and Carroll had to struggle. The bombardment of the imaginative faculty inherent to childhood that was rigorously maintained in the 1840s and 50s was what they both tried to counter-attack.[1]

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*cit., Avery p. 41.

[1] An attack by Carroll against The Child's Guide to Knowledge: Being a Collection of Useful and Familiar Questions and Answers by A Lady [Mrs. R. Ward], has recently been traced by the bibliophile, Seumas Stewart, in Book Collecting, 1972, pp. 128 - 9. He compares the two Queens' interrogation of Alice at the end of Looking Glass ("How is bread made?" "I know that! You take some flour - ". "Where do you pick the flower") with; Q: "Are there not many things [in the world] you would like to know about?" A: "Yes, very much". Q: "Pray then, what is bread made of?" A: "Flour". Q: "What is flour?" A: "Wheat ground into powder by the miller" etc. Other schoolroom texts that are made fun of include La Bagatelle (Alice's French Lesson Book, the first chapter beginning with "Ou est ma chatte?" Cheprell's Course of History (the "driest thing I know", according to the Mouse) and, of course, the Latin Primer (declining "A mouse - of a mouse - to a mouse - a mouse - o mouse").

Dickens especially, being well aware of what he had been able to miss at the hands of what Muir calls this "Monstrous Regiment" of women writers for children, satirised them throughout his career. In Our Mutual Friend, for example, Charley Hexam's contemporaries

> "... were expected to profess themselves enthralled by the good child's book, the Adventures of Little Margery, who resided in the village cottage by the mill, severely reproved and morally squashed the miller when she was five and he was fifty; divided her porridge with singing birds; denied herself a new nankeen bonnet, on the ground that the turnips did not wear nankeen bonnets, neither did the sheep who ate them; who plaited straw and delivered the dreariest orations to all comers, at all sorts of unreasonable times. So unwieldy young dodgers and hulking mudlarks were referred to the experiences of Thomas Twopence, who, having resolved not to rob (under circumstances of uncommon atrocity) his particular friend and benefactor, of eighteen pence, presently came into supernatural possession of three and sixpence, and lived a shining light ever afterwards. (Note that the benefactor came to no good) ...
>
> (Our Mutual Friend, pp. 214 - 215)

There was, however, a much thinner, and to many a much finer book, published the same year as Our Mutual Friend (i.e. 1865) which was part of this same counter-attack and making the same points as the Inimitable - though in a more gentle and more subtle way. This was Carroll's Alice in Wonderland* - a book that not only was very much a product

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*That Carroll was innovatory in this respect is not merely a modern judgement; the paper The Lady's Pictorial for 27.1.1898 (i.e. Carroll's obituary notice) said that "To him, undoubtedly, belongs the honour of having TURNED THE TIDE OF NURSERY LITERATURE into its present channel. Before Alice went to Wonderland and journeyed through the Looking Glass all the books that were written for children were positively appalling in their dullness; but when Alice came all was changed ..."

of its time but also, in some measure at least, a product of this side of Dickens' teaching. Here, for example, is Carroll's satiric barb against the equivalent of "the Adventures of Little Margery" (Alice has found the bottle labelled "DRINK ME", and it seems to offer the only solution to the problem of becoming small enough to enter the tiny door in the hall, and so into the beautiful garden):

> "It was all very well to say "Drink me", but the wise little Alice was not going to do <u>that</u> in a hurry. 'No I'll look first', she said, 'and see whether its marked <u>poison</u> or not': for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and other unpleasant things, all because they <u>would</u> not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them: such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that, if you cut your finger with a knife, it usually bleeds; and she had never forgotten that, if you drink from a bottle marked 'poison' it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later."
>
> (<u>AAIW</u>, p. 31)

Gently Carroll implies here that such books are fundamentally inadequate in wonderland. It is not surprising that, though Dickens himself never wrote a book specifically for children (except the MS <u>Life of Our Lord</u> which he did not intend for publication but only for his own children; and the rather inept <u>A Child's History of England</u> - a work of non-fiction),* nevertheless for him they had a special place, not only in his affections, but also in his philosophy of life. The best of them were above all something of an antidote to what he considered to be the harsh contemporary

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*In 1836 the publisher Thomas Tegg offered Dickens £100 for a childrens' book which was to be called <u>Solomon Bell the Raree Showman</u> which was, however, never written. See <u>Letters</u>, House and Storey, I. 163).

poison of a diet of hard facts served up by the industrial revolution. They were also a vital method by which imaginative perception could be nurtured. Typical of Dickens' enthusiasm in this respect is the following letter to Angela Burdett-Coutts:

> "It would be a great thing for all of us, if more who are powerfully concerned with education thought as you do, of the imaginative faculty. Precisely what you say in your note is always in my mind in that connexion. The three best houses for childrens' books are Arthur Hall, Paternoster Row - Grant and Griffiths, Saint Paul's Church Yard - Darton and Co., Holborn Hill. Tegg of Cheapside, also published a charming collection of stories, called the Child's Fairy Library - in which I had great delight on the voyage to America."
>
> (Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts, ed. Johnson, 1953, p. 175, Letter dated 6.9.1850)

For Dickens this kind of value which he placed on the fairy-tale was not a pose or merely theoretical; he read and cherished them. It is hardly surprising that this also drew him towards friendship with Hans Christian Andersen - and indeed sustained it for a time, despite obvious temperamental differences between them. As Elias Bredsdorff has shown in his Hans Andersen and Charles Dickens: a friendship and its dissolution (Heffer, Cambridge, 1956), their relationship was not without its difficulties, though it did manage to come to a climax with Andersen staying with Dickens and his family for five weeks (which was three weeks too long apparently) in 1857. But before this visit, and indeed what prompted it, Dickens knew and admired Andersen's work, as Bredsdorff shows:

"It is certain that Dickens admired Andersen the writer before he met Andersen the man, and that his admiration was just as sincere as that of Andersen for Dickens. Before they met Dickens had in any case read the Improvisatore, A Poet's Bazaar and some of the fairy tales. When he met Andersen for the first time, he mentioned particularly The Little Mermaid, which he knew from Lady Duff Gordon's translation in Bentley's Miscellany in 1846. 'My father thought very highly of his literary work', wrote Dickens' son, Sir Henry Dickens, about Hans Andersen in his memoirs".

(ibid. p. 15)

Though after Andersen's stay Dickens does not seem to have written other than twice to Andersen again, he was full of enthusiasm before it and, for example, travelled to London especially to meet him in 1847* and made him a present of his complete works (12 volumes then) which he inscribed as being from a "friend and admirer".ℓ In letters to Andersen at this time he sent the "love of your true and admiring friend"ø and by July 1856 he was enthusiastically writing to press him to come and stay:

"And you, my friend - when are you coming again? Nine years ... have flown away, since you were among us. In these nine years you have not faded out of the hearts of the English people, but you have become even better known and more beloved, than when you saw them for the first time. When Aladdin shall have come out of those caves of science to run a triumphant course on earth and make us all the wiser and better - as I know you will - you ought to come for another visit. You ought to come to me, for example, and stay in my house. We would all do our best to make you happy ..."

(cit. ibid. p. 40).

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*ibid. pp. 20 - 21.

ℓibid. pp. 22 - 23.

øibid. p. 30.

Bredsdorff detects a patronising tone here, but certainly Andersen missed it and took Dickens up on his offer. Though things did not go very well, they also did not always go badly during his stay, and, despite the sometimes miserable tone of a few of his diary entries, there is the occasional one that illuminates the area of their mutual interest:

"Friday 19th June, 1857. Dickens came home, and we spoke much together of Danish folk legends; it was hard for me to express myself.

(cit. ibid. p. 59)

As Bredsdorff records however:

"As for Dickens himself, despite his pressing invitation, his acclamation of the Dane's genius, and his untiring exertions to make the visit an enjoyable one, he could not - after his guest's departure - resist the temptation of writing on a card which he stuck up over the dressing-table mirror:

'Hans Andersen slept in this room for five weeks - which seemed to the family AGES!'"

(p. 115)

What had obviously happened was that Andersen was less interesting to Dickens than his writing which, at its best, was exactly the kind of literature that he himself cherished. Again and again this was the subject of his virtual propaganda weeklies, Household Words and All the Year Round, and especially during the 1850's and 60's (i.e. in the years just before Alice) his championship of the course of fancy and fairy tales was at its height, and he energetically hit out against those who denied their value or who tampered with them (see "Frauds on the Fairies" Household Words 1.10.1853). An even more lengthy

campaign was carried out in another article* in Household Words two years later (in 1855):

"There is in all literature nothing that can be produced which shall represent the essential spirit of a man or of a people so completely as a legend or a fairy-tale. The wild freaks of fancy reveal more of the real inner life of man than the well-trimmed ideas of the judicious thinker. The inventor is completely off his guard when he has set his fancy loose to play among impossibilities; but when he sports with the affairs of life by twisting them into odd forms, gives unrestrained licence to his ingenuity, for the invention of any conceivable picture of what seems to him to be the most beautiful and desirable, or the reverse; his unstudied dealing with ideal things shows all that is most unalterable and essential in his own mind, or the minds of those whom his inventions are designed to please. Everybody knows that fairy-tales and other compositions of that kind represent the spirit of the age and nation out of which they spring; there are few who trouble themselves to consider why, or to how great a degree that is the case, or to reflect upon the use that might be made of this fact in the education of children.

The fancy of a child is - for the first six or seven years at least of childhood - by a great deal the broadest channel through which knowledge and wisdom can be poured into the mind. The flower comes before the fruit, in man as in the tree; and in each case the fruit is developed from the flower. To clip fancy in youth for the sake of getting more wisdom from age, is about as wise a scheme of mental culture, as it would be wise in agriculture to pick off the leaves of apple blossom in the spring, for the sake of getting monster apples in the autumn."

("The School of the Fairies", Household Words June 30th 1855)

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*Though this essay was ostensibly by Henry Morely it has an unmistakeable Dickens flavour. Moreover it was a "leader" - which was where Dickens' own writing usually appeared and/or implies that it was closely scrutinised and probably corrected by him. It would certainly have had his positive approval. (See Stone, Uncollected Writings of ... Dickens, p. 36 ff). Similar ideas as are voiced here are also the theme behind a rather poor poem that appeared five years later (August 4th 1860) in All the Year Round called "Fairy Lore" which, though this clearly has nothing of Dickens in it, is interesting in that it is another instance of the approved party line being faithfully followed.

Later, near the end of the same article, this aspect of the Dickensian ideology is defined in a statement that is not only important in itself but especially significant in the light of his own novels where it was more skillfully presented. This again stresses one of the important focal points of attention significantly current in the decade before Carroll had written Alice, and indicates one of its purposes:

> "Let the child, familiar not with [one type of fairy story] alone, find liveliness and grace in other circles, and in energy and massive strength. With the whole playground of fancy open to him, let him exercise all faculties, and so acquire perfect agility of mind." (My underlining)

Agility of mind, as an ideal, was not however the easiest quality to recommend to the Victorians, and Dickens himself recognised that "Fancy" was a "frail bark ... on the angry main."* Moreover his ideals of freedom and mental agility were intrinsically unattractive to the era that knew, and enforced, the meaning of "Above stairs" and "Below stairs". Dickens, no doubt aware of the difficulties of his message, more usually aimed it towards those who might be more receptive - that is towards the younger generation. In the following speech, for example, that he delivered to the "Playground and General Recreation Society" on 1st June 1858, he quite clearly dismisses as beyond redemption a large body of public opinion (the "majestic minds") and concentrates on the needs of those upon whom some impression can still be made (the children):

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*Prologue to Wilkie Collins' The Lighthouse.

"... I begin with children, because we all began as children, and I confine myself to children tonight because the child is the father of the man. Some majestic minds out of doors may, for anything I know, and certainly for anything I care, consider it a very humdrum and low proceeding to stop, in a country full of steam-engines, power looms, big ships, monster motors, and great-guns of all sorts, to consider where the children are to play. Nevertheless, I know that the question is a very kind one, and a very necessary one [hear, hear]. The surgeon and the recruiting sergeant will tell you with great emphasis that the childrens' play is of immense importance to a community in the development of bodies; the clergyman, the schoolmaster, and the moral philosopher, in all degrees, will tell you with no less emphasis, that the childrens' play is of great importance to a community in the development of minds. I venture to assert that there can be no physical health without play; and there can be no efficient and satisfactory work without play. [Hear, hear]. A country full of dismal little old men and women who had never played would be in a mighty bad way indeed ...".

(The Speeches of Charles Dickens, ed. Fielding, Oxford 1960, p. 272).

Dickens is simplifying and exaggerating here in order to make his rhetorical point, but he is also defining one of his major premises - that the new capitalist-industrial world was lowering the quality of life by ignoring its children, or by educating them badly, if at all, and this was most often the result of the restrictive vision of the profit-and-loss world of materialism - which, as Wilde was later to put it, knew "the price of everything and the value of nothing." Most of all, this world respected factual definition; Dickens' most sustained and heated protest against such coldness was, of course, Hard Times.

Hard Times appeared in 1854 and, in a sense, synthesises all Dickens' scattered references and ideas about the fairy tale, 'fancy' and 'play' that have been looked at in this chapter, and presents them with more sustained force and

conviction than ever before. The indignation that he felt did not allow for much subtlety in making his point, but his satire was as energetically fashioned as that in a Gillray cartoon. Thus the government officer who appears in the opening pages of the book is nothing more than an inhuman mouthpiece, advocating the glories of an inhuman world:

"You are to be in all things regulated and governed ... by fact. We hope to have, before long, a board of fact, composed of commissioners of fact, who will force the people to be a people of fact, and of nothing but fact. You must discard the word Fancy altogether. You have nothing to do with it."

(Hard Times, p. 7)

Seeing a man wholly in terms of a factual machine is hardly subtle but, for the sake of total clarity, subtlety is deliberately scorned in this novel. Yet, as we have already noted, the parallel with Gillray is not random, and Dickens even personally owned the magnificent volume of Celebrated Caricatures ("comprising the best Political and Humorous Satires of the Reign of George III 1779 - 1810") and it is in Hard Times that the effect of that volume is most substantially registered. Firstly, Dickens' novel, like the cartoons, is totally committed to a single point of criticism of society (his condemnation is, as has been noted before, always more diffuse elsewhere, and invariably laced with humour; in Hard Times, as Chesterton with some truth pointed out, Dickens, though writing about happiness, "forgot to be happy"). Secondly, such humour as there is in Hard Times is, like Gillray's, of an almost Juvenalian kind

in its harsh wildness. Despite this (and because of it) as Ruskin observed, "The essential value and truth of Dickens' writings have been unwisely lost sight of by many thoughtful persons merely because he presents his truth with some colour of caricature. Unwisely, because Dickens' caricature, though often gross, is never mistaken. Allowing for his manner of telling them, the things he tells us are always true."* Ruskin's "always" here is perhaps over-emphatic, but his understanding of the reasons for the neglect of Dickens by "thoughtful persons" seems essentially accurate - caricatures have always seemed too informal and too playful to achieve the status of "fine art". Yet Poe, who got on well with Dickens when they met in America, was one of the earliest to defend this element in Dickens' writing as being an effective weapon in the illusionist's armoury:

> "We have heard some of [the characters] called caricatures - but the charge is grossly ill-founded. No critical principle is more firmly based in reason than that a certain amount of exaggeration is essential to the proper depicting of truth itself. We do not paint an object to be true, but to appear true to the beholder. Were we to copy nature with accuracy, the object copied would seem unnatural. The columns of the Greek temples, which convey the idea of absolute proportion, are very considerably thicker just beneath the capital than at the base."
>
> (The Dickens Critics, Ford and Lane eds. Cornell U.P., N.Y., 1961, p. 22)

Poe was specifically writing about The Old Curiosity Shop (i.e. well before Hard Times appeared) yet his words seem especially applicable to Hard Times and, incidentally,

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*Cornhill Magazine II (1860), 159.

to the caricatures in Carroll's work. For both Hard Times and the Alices, despite differences in their respective tones, are aimed towards the championship of the same kind of freedom, and Hard Times, especially, was written specifically as a coherent whole to persuade rather than record individuals, or entertain. (It was significantly issued plain and unillustrated and, after it had appeared in the weekly Household Words, it was published as a single-volume five shilling novel). Such a purpose makes Hard Times unique both in its particular strengths and weaknesses. For it uses more consistently the machinery of caricature than Dickens' other work, so that people are symbols or emblems rather than anything else. Hence the government inspector says his piece and disappears from the novel, and Sleary and the Circus are not much more than an antidote to the School and Coketown. The final chapter of the novel is also little more than a summary rather than an ending and readily forgotten by the reader - the resolution, as far as Dickens was concerned, was to be a philosophic one rather than that of the history of his dramatis personae. Within this scheme of writing, moreover, Dickens' own voice legitimately intrudes and comments, leaving nothing to the reader to interpret (or ironically, imagine) for himself:

> "If he [M'Choakumchild] had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more!
>
> He went to work in this preparatory lesson, not unlike Morgiana in the Forty Thieves: looking into all the vessels ranged before him, one after another, to see what they

contained. Say, good M'Choakumchild. When from thy boiling store, thou shalt fill each jar brim full by-and-by, dost thou think that thou wilt always kill outright the robber Fancy lurking within - or sometimes only maim and distort him!".

(Hard Times, p. 8)

Explicit as this is, it is also a highly imaginative piece of rhetoric and, by example, exactly displays the 'fancy' that Gradgrindery is determined to destroy and replace by fact. The simile here is significant too in that it deliberately invokes a type of literature that would be tabooed in Coketown - a literature that, as has been seen earlier, was especially cherished by Dickens as the inspiration to 'fancy'. Accordingly, one of the bitterest moments in the novel is the description of the Gradgrind children's education:

> "No little Gradgrind had ever seen a face in the moon; it was up in the moon before it could speak distinctly. No little Gradgrind had ever learnt the silly jingle, Twinkle, Twinkle, little star; how I wonder what you are! No little Gradgrind had ever known wonder on the subject, each little Gradgrind having at five years old dissected the Great Bear like a Professor Owen, and driven Charles' Wain like a locomotive engine-driver. No little Gradgrind had ever associated a cow in field with that famous cow with the crumpled horn who tossed the dog who worried the cat who killed the rat who ate the malt, or with that yet more famous cow who swallowed Tom Thumb: it had never heard of those celebrities, and had only been introduced to a cow as a graminivorous ruminating quadruped with several stomachs."

(Hard Times, p. 9)

We are told that Sissy, on the other hand of course, used to read to her father "about the Fairies ... and the Dwarf, and the Hunchback, and the Genies"* - literature

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*Ibid. p. 48.

that she is later taught is virtually wicked. But, as she explains to Louisa:

"'I used to read [to him] to cheer his courage, and he was very fond of that. They were wrong books - I am never to speak of them here - but we didn't know there was any harm in them'.

'And he liked them?' said Louisa, with a searching gaze on Sissy all this time.

'Oh very much! They kept him, many times from what did him real harm. And often and often of a night, he used to forget all his troubles in wondering whether the Sultan would let the lady go on with the story or would have her head cut off before it was finished.'"

(Ibid. p. 59)

Dickens is here yet again insisting that recreation and amusement are necessities rather than luxuries in a hard world. In her first confrontation with her father, Louisa, influenced by Sissy, asks him the questions that Dickens effectively asks all parents on behalf of their children:

"What do I know father ... of tastes and fancies; of aspirations and affections; of all that part of my nature in which such light things might have been nourished? What escape have I had from problems that could be demonstrated, and realities that could be grasped? .... The baby-preference that even I have heard of as common among children, has never had its innocent resting-place in my breast. You have been so careful of me that I never had a child's heart. You have trained me so well, that I never dreamed a child's dream. You have dealt so wisely with me, father, from my cradle, to this hour, that I never had a child's belief or a child's fear."

(Ibid. pp. 101 - 102)

Dickens' indictment here is clear: what he is saying is that for his society as he sees it rationalism has gone

too far; schematization and rules, in seeking to measure life, have become instruments of repression and inhibition. Like Blake before him, (whose "One law for the Lion and Ox is Oppression" might be the epigraph to Hard Times) Dickens, having had little formal education, could readily see the dangers in it - and especially in the often primitive education of Victorian England. Dickens was unlike Blake, however, in that, especially when fired with conviction, far from being aphoristic when saying something important, he was always in danger of becoming laboured and sermonizing. This, almost more than anything alse in Hard Times (even including the unbearable Stephen Blackpool) is the major flaw of the novel - and surely keeps it from being the master-piece that Leavis takes it for. Here, for example, is the moment when Louisa returns to her father's house when her mother is dying - and Dickens breaks into a kind of passionate blank verse:

"Neither, as she approached her old home now, did any of the best influences of old home descend upon her. The dreams of childhood - its airy fables; its graceful, beautiful, humane, impossible adornments of the world beyond: so good to be believed in once, so good to be remembered when outgrown, for then the least among them rises to the stature of a great Charity in the heart, suffering little children to come into the midst of it, and to keep with their pure hands a garden in the stony ways of this world, wherein it were better for all the children of Adam that they should oftener sun themselves, simple and trustful, and not worldly-wise - what had she to do with these? Remembrances of how she had journeyed to the little that she knew, by the enchanted roads of what she and millions of innocent creatures had hoped and imagined; of how, first coming upon Reason through the tender light of Fancy, she had seen it a beneficent god, deferring to gods as great as itself: not a grim Idol, cruel and cold, with its victims bound hand to foot, and its big dumb shape set up with a sightless stare, never to be

moved by anything but so many calculated tons of leverage - what had she to do with these? Her remembrances of home and childhood were remembrances of the drying up of every spring and fountain in her young heart as it gushed out. The golden waters were not there. They were flowing for the fertilization of the land where grapes are gathered from thorns, and figs from thistles."

(Ibid. pp. 196 - 197)

Monumentally earnest and over-emphatic as this passage is, its success is to be found in the passion with which it is written, which is implicitly its real message - for it is exactly this that Gradgrindery seeks to annihilate. In a strange way also, even the energetic awkwardness which is often found in the writing in many parts of the novel, is thus part of the point. For measured precision is the stock-in-trade of the coldly correct Coketown, and Dickens' contrasting energetic enthusiasm is, in itself, refreshing and vitalising. Indeed he himself says of Gradgrind that "his character ... might have been a very kind one indeed, if he had only made some round mistake in the arithmetic that balanced it, years ago" (Ibid. p. 27) and, in this sense, the mistakes and negatives of the novel are as significant as the positives.

Aside from this unwitting display (Dickens after all was not being <u>deliberately</u> awkward) the strength of <u>Hard Times</u> lies, of course, in the way in which it is squarely on the side of mystery, imagination and freedom in its reaction against the scientific "explanations" and the joyless sobriety of the voice of the official culture:

"So many hundred Hands in this Mill; so many hundred horse steam Power. It is known, to the force of a single pound weight, what the engine will do; but, not all the calculators of the National Debt can tell me the capacity for good or evil, for love or hatred, for patriotism or discontent, for the decomposition of virtue into vice, or the reverse, at any single moment in the soul of one of these its quiet servants, with the composed faces and the regulated actions. There is no mystery in it; there is an unfathomable mystery in the meanest of them, for ever - ".

(Ibid. p. 69)

The insistence on this mysteriously spiritual life that is uniquely different and unfathomable for each individual, is what makes Hard Times such an important work with such large implications for Victorian writers to take heed of. Yet it is clearly true that there are times when it makes its points against the calculators badly and crudely:

"'Then Mr. M'Choakumchild said he would try me once more. And he said, Here are the stutterings - '

'Statistics', said Louisa.

'Yes, Miss Louisa - they always remind me of stutterings, and that's another of my mistakes - of accidents upon the sea. And I find (Mr. M'Choakumchild said) that in a given time a hundred thousand persons went to sea on long voyages, and only five hundred of them were drowned or burnt to death. What is the percentage?' 'And I said Miss,' here Sissy fairly sobbed as confessing with extreme contrition to her greatest error; 'I said it was nothing' ... 'Nothing…to the relations and friends of the people who were killed.'"

(Ibid. pp. 57 - 58)

Here, no doubt, Dodgson the mathematician would have protested at the heavy handed jibe against statistics, yet elsewhere Dickens, sometimes through sheer energetic indignation, made the same points extremely well:

"... although ... [the eighteen religious denominations of Coketown] differed in every other particular, conceivable and inconceivable (especially inconceivable) they were pretty well united on the point that these unlucky infants were never to wonder. Body number one, said they must take everything on trust. Body number two said they must take everything on political economy. Body number three wrote leaden little books for them showing how the good grown-up baby invariably got to the savings-bank, and the bad grown-up baby invariably got transported. Body number four, under dreary pretences of being droll (when it was very melancholy indeed), made the shallowest pretences of concealing pitfalls of knowledge, into which it was the duty of these babies to be smuggled and inveigled. But all the bodies agreed that they were never to wonder."

(Ibid. pp. 49 - 50)

This "wonder" that the Coketowners are forbidden to indulge in is, of course, <u>the</u> theme (and even part of the title) of the major work of Lewis Carroll. Indeed Dickens was defining the area of Carroll's interest at least ten years before <u>Alice in Wonderland</u> appeared. He even, in a way, defined the generic term of "Nonsense" as for example when he says of Mr. Gradgrind's approval of Mrs. Gradgrind: "She was most satisfactory as a question of figures, and ... <u>she had "no nonsense" about her</u>. <u>By nonsense he meant fancy</u>."* The words "Fancy" and "Nonsense", in the sense of the free play of the imagination, are clearly also synonymous for Carroll, - and it is, for example, this same "nonsense" or imaginative subjectivity that Dickens tells us was missing from the courtship by Josiah Bounderby of Louisa Gradgrind:

"The business was all facts, from first to last. The Hours did not go through any of those rosy performances, which foolish poets have ascribed to them at such times; neither did the clocks go any faster, or any slower, than at other seasons. The deadly statistical recorder in the

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*Ibid. p. 17 (my underlining).

Gradgrind observatory knocked every second on the head as it was born, and buried it with his accustomed regularity."

(Ibid. p. 107)

We shall see in subsequent chapters how deliberately different the world of Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass is to this (in that there, fancy reigns supreme). For, by contrast, the unreasonableness and the unpredictability of that world heighten perception by making Alice see anew; and hence, paradoxically, she is stimulated to question and learn. It is just this kind of education that is not open to the Gradgrind children and those like them. As Louisa says to her father:

"'Yet, father, if I had been stone blind; if I had groped my way by my sense of touch, and had been free, while I knew the shapes and surfaces of things, to exercise my fancy somewhat, in regard to them; I should have been a million times wiser, happier, more loving, more contented, more innocent and human in all good respects, than I am with the eyes I have.'"

The ability to be free to make mistakes is, as Dickens knew, an essential element of education. In this he again anticipated modern educational theory, where "finding out for oneself" takes quite definite precedence over the teacher imparting ready-made, though correct, answers, and it is this that is perhaps the conclusion of Hard Times. As Mrs. Gradgrind discovers and tries to write down at the moment of her death: "there is something - not an Ology at all - that your father has missed, or forgotten, Louisa. I don't know what it is". Such an admission of not knowing constitutes a considerable advance, yet it is appropriate that as she attempts to communicate her knowledge of the

inadequacy of her husband's "Ologies", death intervénes and we are told that all that survives of her deathbed insight are "figures of wonderful no-meaning" that she traces with her hand on her bed wrappers. Such "no-meaning" can indeed be quite legitimately be described as "wonderful" in a milieu where only facts that are absolutely relevant have been allowed to count. By the same token,what Gradgrind has missed cannot satisfactorily be defined.

Dickens' answer to the mechanical life on the other hand - the nourishment of fancy - hardly got an audience for it was an answer to a question that would not occur to those it was directed towards; "people equally like one another". Moreover if Hard Times is in any way a mirror of reality, the idea of a liberal education for children, especially when it stressed the value of play, leisure and "wasted" time, was hardly an attractive philosophy to the Victorians. To begin with,Dickens' voice was far too late to be heard. Though this is not the place to go into anything like a history of children's literature, one example must be cited as typical of the propaganda that Dickens and Carroll had to fight against. Over fifty years earlier than Hard Times (1804) the once immensely popular children's poets Ann and Jane Taylor (authors of,amongst much else, "Twinkle twinkle little star") had trotted out their miserable doggerel and established what might be taken as the official view of 'play' as being a positive hindrance rather than an aid to understanding and education. In the following typical "poem" from their collection,ominously called

Original poems for Infant Minds (why not children?) they glibly destroy The Idle Boy whose love of play is no less than "vice and vanity" and "wicked":

"Young Thomas was an idle lad,
Who lounged about all day;
And though he many a lesson had
He minded nought but play.

He only cared for top and ball
Or marble, hoop, and kite;
But as for learning, that was all
Neglected by him quite.

In vain his mother's watchful eye,
In vain his master's care;
He follow'd vice and vanity,
And even learnt to swear.

And think you, when he grew a man,
He prosper'd in his ways?
No: wicked courses never can
Bring good and happy days.

Without a shilling in his purse,
Or cot to call his own,
Poor Thomas grew from bad to worse,
And harden'd as a stone.

And oh! it grieves me much to write
His melancholy end;
Then let us leave the mournful sight,
And thoughts of pity send.

But yet may this important truth
Our daily thoughts engage,
That few who spend an idle youth,
Will see a happy age."

The hopeless mechanical rhyming here is as repetitive and inelegant as the streets of Coketown; yet to the uncritical whose attitudes were reflected by it, it was, for all that, infinitely preferable to what were considered to be the blows struck for progressive education and socialism*

*cit. Ford, Dickens and His Readers ed. cit. p. 102. See p.102ff for other contemporary reactions to Hard Times. Few, if any, were favourable except Ruskin's - himself a figure who had some effect on Carroll's thinking as will be shown later.

("sullen socialism" according to Macaulay) in Hard Times, and such opinions were, as the contemporary reviews of the novel show, a widely held one. The novel's closing words were nevertheless the most coherent attack on so much bad thinking that preceded it:

> "But happy Sissy's happy children loving her [i.e. Louisa]; all children loving her; she, grown learned in childish love; thinking no innocent and pretty fancy ever to be despised; trying hard to know her humbler fellow creatures, and to beautify their lives of machinery and reality with those imaginative graces and delights, without which, the heart of infancy will wither up, the sturdiest physical manhood will be morally stark dead, and the plainest national prosperity figures can show, will be the writing on the wall - ... did Louisa see these things of herself? These things were to be."
>
> (Ibid. p. 299)

It would be oversimplifying the issue to claim that what Dickens was explicitly trying to do in Hard Times was to destroy the credo of an entire generation*, but the flaws in the novel seem to be largely the result of the urgency with which he wrote. We, in needing less rhetoric to understand his point, find the novel perhaps too stridently fighting for what is now a commonplace cause. In saying this, however, it must be remembered that Dickens was originally preaching to the unconverted. Moreover, just as contemporary Victorians were exasperated at not finding their own opinions confirmed in the novel, we, finding them over-stated, tend either to overpraise or dismiss it (in the latter

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*George H. Ford in Dickens and His Readers pp. 82 - 84 effectively summarises Dickens role as a critic of society, and emphasises how variable his stance was regarding industrialism. For Dickens was the born bourgeois, an anarchist, a foe of institutions, a Macaulean, but also a follower of Carlyle and Ruskin and all simultaneously; however "Industrialism appalled him wherever it became associated in his mind with human hardness - as in Coketown. Here one does arrive at a consistent reference point in Dickens' position". (Ibid. p. 83).

case through the recognition that it is an elementary expression of what is seen now as a complex problem). It remains a testament to Victorian inflexibility, however, that Hard Times failed for so long to achieve the respect it deserved; yet it seems accurate to accept that Dickens was telling the truth - but loudly.

We might conclude therefore that Dickens was misunderstood precisely because the damage that he tried to correct had been conclusively done before he had even started to write. Thus though Hard Times advocated fancy and imagination in education and spoke out against the physical, mental and spiritual pollution of the age, this governing principle of the novel was intrinsically inimical to the already flawed adults of the system that had, for example, proudly produced that largely tasteless monument to the assembly-line, "The Great Exhibition"* It was, as we shall see, rather Carroll's Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass, informed by Dickens's work especially of the kind that has been looked at here, that were able to more effectively satirise similar targets as Dickens' by using the very same form of literature that he himself advocated as being specially vital in the Victorian utilitarian age - the fantastic fairy-tale. Indeed, what Dickens meant by the term 'fancy' was very largely the stock-in-trade of the magician, Lewis Carroll, who was able to out fairy-tale the fairy-tale through his special power of nonsense:

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*For Dickens' "instinctive feeling against the Exhibition" (as he himself described it to Wills) see Butt and Tillotson, Dickens at Work p. 179 ff.

"'It was much pleasanter at home,' thought poor Alice, 'when one wasn't always growing larger and smaller ... I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit hole - and yet - and yet - it's rather curious, you know, this sort of life! I do wonder what <u>can</u> have happened to me! When I used to read fairy-tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one!'"

(<u>AAIW</u>, pp. 58 - 59)

II Dickens, children and play

It was not only the fairy-tale and the notion of fancy that Dickens cared about as ways in which to defeat Gradgrindery; for though these ideas were an important ingredient of the antidote to what he saw as the terrifying hard times of his day, they were nevertheless only one part of a whole cluster of related ideas that he also thought effective and consequently valued. Nor, for similar reasons, was the implicit effect of Dickens' writing on the background of Carroll's wonderland limited to his ideas on the fairy tale and of fancy - his others on childhood and the essential nature of play were equally important and can be found not merely in Hard Times but (as Leavis points out*) in various stages of development in almost all his other novels. It is this second group of ideas that will be looked at here.

To find the root of the whole notion of what was virtually a mystical/religious view of children that both Dickens and Carroll shared - children alone being capable of living life as an integrated whole and not in a fragmented Dodgson/Carroll or Wemmick-at-home/Wemmick-at-business way - there is little need to go further than Christ's "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the

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*Dickens the Novelist, p. 210 ff.

same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." (Matthew, XVIII, 3 - 5).* As Coveney has shown in his Image of Childhood these words have inspired a whole tradition of literature and philosophy. There is, as he argues, a definable line of inheritance and influence from Blake's "Some Children are Fools ... .But there is a vast Majority on the side of Imagination or Spiritual Sensation", to Wordsworth's "Bless the infant Babe / ... No outcast he, bewildered and depressed: / Along his infant veins are interfused / The gravitation and the filial bond / Of nature that connect him with the world ..." (Prelude, ll. 233 - 245), to similar ideas in the presentation of the child in the work of Coleridge, the Brontes and Kingsley, amongst many others.

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*In this vein Carroll even went as far as to see his work as a writer for children as a positive mark in his favour in his personal Final Reckoning:

> "... And if I have written anything to add to those stores of innocent and healthy amusement that are laid up in the books for the children I love so well, it is surely something I may hope to look back upon without shame and sorrow (as how much of life must then be recalled!) when my turn comes to walk through the valley of shadows."
>
> (Easter Greeting)

Carroll also actually refers to the biblical passage above in Sylvie and Bruno Concluded when Lady Muriel asks the narrator/Carroll:

> "Dear friend ... do you think Heaven ever begins on Earth, for any of us?"
>
> "For some," I said. "For some perhaps, who are simple and childlike. You know He said 'of such is the Kingdom of heaven'".
>
> (SBC, p. 581)

Dickens' part in this tradition is also examined by Coveney and, in a sense, was arguably the greatest part of Dickens' influence on Carroll, though the latter also admired the work of both Blake and Wordsworth. It is not a coincidence that an entry in his Diary for 19th October 1863, for example, runs as follows:

> "... got Macmillan, [who owned the blocks at that time - they published Gilchrist's Life of Blake -] to print me some of Blake's Songs of Innocence on large paper ..."

Further, the Dodgson Sale Catalogue shows that he owned Gilchrist's Life of Blake (in two volumes, the second one containing the poems) (lot 916); Blake's Poetical Sketches (lot 829) as well as the specially printed Songs of Innocence (lot 357).* Similarly, the fact that Carroll knew Wordsworth's work can be gleaned from his letters - such as this one to Macmillans:

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*There is also evidence to show that Carroll was familiar enough with Blake's work to be able to quote it. There is, for example, a letter to one of his child friends extant which begins with the opening four lines of Blake's Infant Joy:

> 'What shall I call thee?
> "I happy am -
> Joy is my name."
> Sweet joy befall thee!
>
> There, my dear Dorothy; if you happen not to have seen these lines before and if you can guess, from the style who wrote them, I will admit that you are a fairly good judge of modern poetry!'
>
> (Hatch, Letters of Lewis Carroll, letter CLXVI, p. 239 11.11.1896).

"You never made a more judicious present than when you gave me your "Golden Treasury" Wordsworth.* It is a real delight to me: so handy, so well printed, and so well selected - containing pure gems only ..."

(quoted by Hudson, Lewis Carroll, p. 229. Letter dated 22.8.1886).

This was not insincere praise to his publisher, Macmillan, for Carroll sent a copy of this volume to one of his little girl-friends, inscribing it "May, with love, from Lewis Carroll Aug. 2, 1895"[f], and books given "with love" are usually themselves admired by the donor. Carroll also owned a 7 volume edition of Wordsworth's Poetical Works[ø] and for some reason no less than 4 other editions (see DSC lots 365, 369, 450, 731 and 945) and, of course, he knew it well enough to be able to parody Resolution and Independence in Through the Looking-Glass.

But though these literary influences can be traced as being a possible background to Carroll's thinking, it is nevertheless between him and Dickens that there is the most significant congruence in this respect. For in Dickens' work as in Carroll's, not only was the child and what he

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*This is the edition "chosen and edited" by Matthew Arnold which has as its epigraph "The Child is Father of the man ..." and opens with the poem We are Seven.

[f]The Lewis Carroll Centenary Catalogue (1934) shows this volume as item 622 in the exhibition (see p. 104).

[ø]Dickens, appropriately enough, also owned the Poetical Works (6 vols. 1836) as well as a first edition of The Prelude (1850) see Stonehouse, Catalogue of the Library of Charles Dickens, reprint, Piccadilly, 1935, p. 119. There is no record of Dickens owning any of Blake's work.

stood for important, but actually considered essential enough to merit the focus of much of their work. For the first time in the history of the English novel, Dickens placed a child at the centre of his work so that in virtually all his major writing children have a vital part to play. Indeed in five novels they are absolutely central - in Oliver Twist, Dombey and Son, The Old Curiosity Shop, David Copperfield and Great Expectations. Such an emphasis on childhood and its problems was unmistakeable and for someone like Carroll would have had immediate interest, since for him children were similarly important. Indeed he admitted that they "[were] three-fourths of [my] life ... I cannot understand how anyone could be bored by little children ..."* and as Evelyn Hatch observes:

> "[Lewis Carroll's] child friends could be numbered by the hundred. The secret of their fascination for him lay chiefly in the appeal which their fresh beauty made to his very keen artistic sense, and in the stimulus which their ready acceptance of anything new or strange gave to his powers of invention ..."/

Dickens too was capable of rhapsodising over children - and he also claimed that they had special qualities that the adult would/well to appreciate and acknowledge;

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*See Isa Bowman, The Story of Lewis Carroll, Dent, 1899, p. 60.

/A Selection from the Letters of Lewis Carroll to his Child-Friends, Macmillan, 1933, p. 1.

Nell's death above all emphasises her divinity, a divinity denied to adulthood:

> "... She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death."
>
> (Old Curiosity Shop, pp. 538 - 9)

It is not coincidental that Carroll also emphasised the painful, heart-stopping beauty of his "unearthly" creature "fresh from the hand of God":

> "I had felt ... a pang [through my heart] only once ... in my life, and it had been from seeing what, at the moment, realised one's ideal of perfect beauty - it was in a London exhibition, where, in making my way through a crowd, I suddenly met, face to face, a child of quite unearthly beauty ... Then came a rush of burning tears to the eyes, as though one could weep one's soul away for pure delight."
>
> (SBC, p. 693)

But most important amongst all that children had to offer, as both Dickens and Carroll understood, was an extraordinary perceptual ability; it is only the child who can enter wonderland or go through the looking-glass, just as it is only the child who can see his parents by looking at the letters on their tombstones:

> "'As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them ... my first fancies regarding what they were like were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription "Also Georgiana, Wife of the Above," I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly.'"
>
> (Great Expectations, p. 1)

Pip's conclusion is "childish" for two reasons; first because it would surely be condemned as such by an adult mind

("childish" = silly, illogical, fanciful) and secondly because only the lively and unfettered perception of the child's eye would be capable of making a connection between the shape of letters and the physique and bearing of the person they have been used to form words to describe ("childish" in this case = imaginative inspiration). In this capacity Pip is not, of course, alone in Dickens' world, but such fertile imaginations are most readily found uniquely amongst the children of the novels. In Dombey and Son, for example, it is stressed that:

> "[Paul] loved to be alone ... he ... liked nothing so well as wandering about the house by himself, or sitting on the stairs listening to the great clock in the hall. He was intimate with all the paper-hanging in the house; saw things that no-one else saw in the patterns: found out miniature tigers and lions running up the bedroom walls, and squinting faces leering in the squares and diamonds of the floor cloth".
>
> (Dombey, p. 166)

Even the celebrated clock in Dr. Blimber's hall is enough to set Paul's imagination into activity:

> "'And how do you do, sir?' he [Dr. Blimber] said to Mr. Dombey, 'and how is my little friend?' Grave as an organ was the Doctor's speech, and when he ceased the great clock in the hall seemed (to Paul at least) to take him up and go on saying 'how, is, my, lit, tle, friend? how, is, my, lit, tle, friend?' over and over again."
>
> (Dombey, p. 145)

It is this kind of power of perception that enables Paul to "read" the waves of the sea at Brighton as emblematic in their ineffability of the heaven to which his mother, and then he, "journey". Paul, we are told, significantly

learns about the waves from a fantastic called Glubb whom he describes as "a very nice old man ... He used to draw my couch. He knows all about the deep sea, and the fish that are in it, and the great monsters that come and lie on rocks in the sun ... And though [he] don't know why the sea should make me think of my Mama that's dead ... he knows a great deal about it ..." (Dombey, p. 152). Glubb's "education" is, of course, in contrast to Blimber's, who predictably reacts scornfully against him with "Ha! ... this is bad, but study will do much."

In Hard Times, as we have already discussed, "seeing" imaginatively and perceptively is Louisa Gradgrind's province - her "medium", as it was for Carroll in his poem "Faces in the Fire", most commonly being the coal fire - for which powers even her selfish brother Tom has a grudging admiration:

> "'You seem to find more to look at in it than ever I could find ... Another of the advantages, I suppose, of being a girl.' [...] Tom went and leaned on the back of her chair, to contemplate the fire which so engrossed her, from her point of view, and see what he could make of it.
>
> 'Except that it is a fire', said Tom, 'it looks to me as stupid and blank as everything else looks. What do you see in it? Not a circus?'
>
> 'I don't see anything in it, Tom, particularly. But since I have been looking at it I have been wondering about you and me grown up'.
>
> 'Wondering again!' said Tom.
>
> 'I have such unmanageable thoughts', returned his sister, 'that they will wonder'."
>
> (Hard Times, p. 53)

What is wrong with Gradgrindery is virtually the same as what is wrong with any education that ignores the necessity of "fancy". Indeed as F. R. Leavis observes "Dickens was insisting that 'play' as a need is intimately bound up with 'wonder', imagination and creativity and that any starving of the complex need is cruel, denaturing and sterilising, and may be lethal."* - and to support this he quotes the brilliant example from Bleak House:

> "During the whole time consumed in the slow growth of this family tree the house of Smallweed, always early to go out and late to marry, has strengthened itself in its practical character, has discarded all amusements, discountenanced all story books, fairy tales, fictions and fables, and banished all levities whatsoever. Hence the gratifying fact, that it has had no child born to it, and that the complete little men and women whom it has produced, have been observed to bear a likeness to old monkeys with something depressing on their minds."
>
> (Bleak House, p. 288)

The play and 'wonder' that the Smallweeds have always deprived themselves of are to be found personified in the figure of Mr. Sleary (that "brandy sodden Fairy Queen"†) whose encomium to Mr. Gradgrind at the end of Hard Times is a clumsy expression of what he really has to offer:

> "People mutht be amuthed. They can't alwayth be a learning, nor yet they can't alwayth be a working, they ain't made for it. You mutht have uth ..."
>
> (Hard Times, p. 293)

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*Dickens the Novelist, p. 210.

†Butt and Tillotson, Dickens at Work, p. 221.

Discounting the tiresome lisp, this is not an effective or accurate statement of the circus's vital function as inspiration for the imagination. Indeed, Sleary's insistence on being mere "amuthment" is as much an understatement of the truth, as is the conclusion that Dickens himself was merely an entertainer. What both really have to offer, as we have seen, is food for the imagination or 'fancy' and as this cannot be quantified, or factualised, or defined, it was most often missing from the Victorian educational diet as Dickens saw it. And because this diet is one which is, of course, largely determined by a child's parents, Dickens centred much of his attack on bad parenthood. A few examples will make the point: in Nicholas Nickleby, Squeers breeds Master Squeers as a sample of the product that Dotheboys can turn out, and Crummles breeds "The Infant Phenomenon"; in Chuzzlewit, Old Anthony admits to the faithful Chuffey "It's a dreadful thing to have my own child thirsting for my death. But I might have known it I have sown and I must reap ..." (p. 784); in Dombey and Son Edith confronts Mrs. (Cleopatra) Skewton with the accusation: "A child ... when was I a child? What childhood did you ever leave to me? I was a woman - artful, designing, mercenary, laying snares for men - before I knew myself ..." (p. 394); in David Copperfield Uriah Heep confesses "They taught us all a deal of umbleness - not much else that I know of, from morning to night ... 'Be umble', says my father, 'and you'll do!' And really it ain't done bad!" To which David comments appositely "... I had seen the

harvest but had never thought of the seed." (p. 575). In the later novel Little Dorrit, Clennam similarly explains to Mr. Meagles:

> "'I have no will. That is to say ... next to none that I can put into action now. Trained by main force; broken not bent; heavily ironed with an object on which I was never consulted ... what is to be expected from me in middle life? Will, purpose, hope? All those lights were extinguished before I could sound the words ... I am the son ... of a hard father and mother. I am the only child of parents who weighed, measured, and priced everything; for whom what could not be weighed, measured, and priced, had no existence ... austere faces, inexorable discipline, penance in this world and terror in the next - nothing graceful or gentle anywhere, and the void in my cowed heart everywhere - this was my childhood.'"
>
> (Little Dorrit, pp. 20 - 21)

In a less harsh tone the indolent Eugene Wrayburn intimates in Our Mutual Friend that he, and his brothers were subjected to a similar parental educative process:

> "'M.R.F. [My Respected Father] having always in the clearest manner provided (as he calls it) for his children by pre-arranging from the hour of the birth of each, and sometimes from an earlier period, what the devoted little victims' calling and course in life should be, M.R.F. pre-arranged for myself that I was to be the barrister I am ...'"
>
> (p. 146)

The damage, then, that parents do to their children in the name of discipline, or that teachers do to their pupils in the name of education, was a recurring theme for Dickens, though at its most distinct in the relationship between

Gradgrind and his children in Hard Times.* Conscious on the one hand of the contemporary neglect of children (Jo in Tom-All-Alone's) and their exploitation by the unscrupulous (Fagin's use of his 'boys') which perhaps was prompted by his own view of his own childhood ("[I was ... a] very small and not-over-taken-care-of-boy" Forster, Life I p. 6), he was also acutely aware of the damage that absolute power, given by misguided parents to the well-intentioned by myopic educator, could produce; making children unnatural monsters:

> "... Dr. Blimber's establishment was a great hot house, in which there was a forcing apparatus incessantly at work. All the boys blew before their time. Mental green peas were produced at Christmas, and intellectual asparagus all the year round. Mathematical gooseberries (very sour ones too) were common at untimely seasons, and from mere sprouts of bushes, under Dr. Blimber's cultivation. Every description of Greek and Latin vegetable was got off the driest twigs of boys, under the frostiest circumstances. Nature was of no consequence at all. No matter what a young gentleman was intended to bear, Dr. Blimber made him bear to pattern somehow or other."
>
> (Dombey, p. 141)

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*It is interesting to note that Thackeray (whom Carroll actually met in 1857: "I was much pleased with what I saw of him ...") also very occasionally made similar points, for example: "If people would but leave children to themselves; if teachers would cease to bully them; if parents would not insist upon directing their thoughts and dominating their feelings - those thoughts and feelings which are a mystery to all (for how much do you and I know of each other, of our children, of our fathers, of our neighbours, and how far more beautiful are the thoughts of the poor lad or girl whom you govern likely to be, than those of the dull and world-corrupted person who rules him?) - if, I say, parents and mothers would leave their children alone a little more - small harm would accrue ..." Vanity Fair, 1848, Ch. V.

Though Toots the most celebrated product of Blimber's hothouse is comic in his oddity there is a more advanced variety of the same plant in Dickens' oeuvre in the later novel Our Mutual Friend in the would-be murderer, Bradley Headstone, who amply demonstrates the frightening results of a similar education. Out of love for Lizzie Hexam he moves mechanically towards possessing her, regardless of her feelings and the rivalry of Wrayburn, both of which he believes he can mould to his own purposes. Potentially even more horrifying than the melodramatic outcome of this is the effect that he, as a school teacher, has on his pupils:

> "Bradley Headstone ... had acquired mechanically a great store of teachers' knowledge. He could do mental arithmetic mechanically, sing at sight mechanically, blow various wind instruments mechanically, even play the great church organ mechanically. From his early childhood up, his mind had been a place of mechanical stowage. The arrangement of his wholesale warehouse, so that it might be always ready to meet the demands of retail dealers - history here, geography there, astronomy to the right ... this care had imparted to his countenance a look of care. ... He always seemed to be uneasy lest something should be missing from his mental warehouse, and taking stock to assure himself ..."
>
> (Our Mutual Friend, p. 217)

There are many other Dickens' characters who are so-called teachers that are spread through the other novels and have a similar effect but to enumerate them all would be tedious; it is sufficient to note here that the effect of the Mrs. Generals, Miss Peechers and Bradley Headstones is in many ways as damaging as Gradgrind himself. But the bad teacher was not, despite this, a stock character who was virtually repeated in every novel, for Dickens developed his understanding of the sins of educators and his anger against

them became more perceptive and even constructive. For it was not merely that they were, like Creakle in David Copperfield, physically cruel (even though some pupils like Smike would die because of the brutality of a man like Squeers), but rather that the greater damage by far could be done mentally. As Dickens continued to write he came to recognise that incapable teachers were made rather than born because they were themselves products of a system similar to the one they were employed to perpetrate; a badly taught teacher will teach badly, thus Miss Peecher, sadly trapped by her own mistaken disciplines, "loved the unresponsive Bradley with all the primitive and homely stock of love that had never been examined or certificated out of her." (Our Mutual Friend, p. 338).

The effective conclusion made by Dickens was that since educators and educational processes determine perceptive and creative powers, then the result of nature being denied and spontaneity being punished is inevitably intellectual and emotional poverty:

"'And what,' asked Mr. Gradgrind, in a still lower voice, 'did you read to your father, Jupe?'

'About the Fairies, Sir, and the Dwarf, and the Hunchback, and the Genies,' she sobbed out; 'and about - '

'Hush!' said Mr. Gradgrind, 'that is enough. Never breathe a word of such destructive nonsense any more. Bounderby, this is a case for rigid training, and I shall observe it with interest.'"

(Hard Times, p. 48)

A child then, needs the chance to be fanciful, illogical, unreasonable and even totally nonsensical - such was both

Dickens' plea to educators, and a part of Carroll's purpose as a writer of nonsense. For though Carroll's criticism of educators and the hardships that children suffer at their hands was by no means so radical, nor so loudly voiced as Dickens', yet nevertheless it is clear at the outset that Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is going to be in rebellion at the books that Alice's sister reads, since it even opens with:

> "Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book', thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?'".
>
> (AAIW, p. 25)

Immediately it is apparent that Carroll is voicing his antipathy for the literature that was currently available for children, and Alice, as she falls down "what seemed to be a very deep well" at the beginning of her adventures, moreover symbolically falls past and beyond the trappings of a school-room ("as she went down ... she ... noticed that [the sides of the well] were filled with cupboards and bookshelves: here and there she saw maps and pictures hung on pegs ..."). Her education is to be one that goes beyond the province of the classroom. Furthermore the instruments of Gradgrind's "rigid training" will be shown to be ineffectual and inadequate here as Carroll demonstrates just what Dickens cherished in his appreciation of "the accuracy of the intelligent child's observation"*. For this is capable of

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*The Uncommercial Traveller, p. 67.

such a potent kind of magic that the result can be either as wonderful as a suit of old clothes coming to life or as strange as a baby turning into a pig!

The essential point is that Dickens' concurrence with Alice's antipathetic view of the dull and unimaginative books that dominated Victorian bookshelves, made him, like Carroll, determined to strike a new path in his own writing. Indeed it was an essential part of Dickens' philosophy to do so - his Preliminary Word which appeared by way of a manifesto for Household Words (on March 30th, 1850) made it clear that, as Dickens saw it, it was not only that life was hard but that perception was dulled, that was the matter with society. Thus as far as Dickens was a revolutionary the revolution was to be one of personal reorientation through the nourishment of Fancy:

> "No mere utilitarian spirit, no iron binding of the mind to grim realities, will give a harsh tone to our Household Words. In the bosoms of the young and old, of the well-to-do and of the poor, we would tenderly cherish that light of Fancy which is inherent in the human breast, which, according to its nature, burns with an inspiring flame, or sinks into a sullen glare but which (or woe betide the day!) can never be extinguished. To show to all, that in familiar things, even in those which are repellant on the surface, there is Romance enough, if we will find it out: - to teach the hardest workers at this whirling wheel of toil, that their lot is not necessarily a moody, brutal fact, excluded from the sympathies and graces of imagination; to bring the greater and the lesser in degree - together upon that wild field, and mutually dispose them to a better acquaintance and a kinder understanding - is the one main object of our Household Words."

To demonstrate a change in the way in which the world is perceived, rather than a change in the world itself, was Dickens' fundamental preoccupation. His treatment of the

mob in A Tale of Two Cities and Barnaby Rudge firmly indicates that, in his view, physical rebellion was a mistaken method of attempting what would most certainly be achieved through a mental/spiritual revolution. Such a revolution in perception, Dickens proposed, would be most effectively accomplished if the strictures and inhibitions imposed upon the imagination by the adulthood of the industrial age were not allowed to destroy the free spirit of childhood. And, as we have seen, there was something special about his pre-blacking-warehouse childhood which helped to reinforce the romantic ideals he had about children, so that he could invest them with the powers of vision that the rest of society had lost.

In this, of course, Dickens again shares much with Blake* - not least because for them both, childhood had the prerogative of "play" as a right rather than a wasteful luxury. "Play" is indeed the natural medium for the imagination to find a voice, and Blake's "But to go to school on a summer morn, / O! it drives all joy away",† Dickens would, in spirit, have agreed with. Thus in contrast to the hard-working world of the Victorian adult, the child who was capable of imaginative play became Dickens' natural choice as his emblem for freedom.

Similarly it is no coincidence that though Dodgson remained firmly in Christchurch Carroll's heroine is a child who is able, quite literally, to escape from the everyday world and its restrictions:

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*See Coveney The Image of Childhood, Peregrine, 1967, p. 55.

†Songs of Experience, "The Schoolboy".

"In another moment Alice was through the glass, and had jumped lightly down into the Looking-glass room. The very first thing she did was to look whether there was a fire in the fireplace, and she was quite pleased to find that there was a real one, blazing away as brightly as the one she had left behind. 'So I shall be as warm here as I was in the old room,' thought Alice: 'warmer, in fact, because there'll be no one here to scold me away from the fire. Oh, what fun it'll be, when they see me through the glass in here, and can't get at me!'"

(TTLG, p. 184 - 5)

What both Carroll and Dickens were reacting against was that aspect of officialdom that viewed the phenomenon of 'play' as evil and that saw adults who played as being virtually wicked sinners.* As before, Dickens' writing provides the clue to the problem, for he found himself early on in his career attacking such views: in 1836, for example, he had indignantly listened as a reporter in Parliament to the re-introduction of a Bill by a certain Sir Andrew Agnew "that would have prohibited not merely all work but all recreation on Sunday. Agnew had repeatedly been bringing up or supporting measures of this stamp since 1832, only to have them defeated or deferred to the next session".† Dickens' anger was reflected in the nom de plume "Timothy Sparks" under which he wrote a pamphlet attacking Agnew

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*In a sense this implies a conscious revolutionary stance on Carroll's part which though true at times of Dickens is over-emphatic regarding Carroll. For Dodgson was nothing if not a stalwart upholder of the Tory status-quo and it only in the context of the Alices that Carroll could escape Dodgsonism (just as, to the surrealists delight, as we shall see later, the Alices infiltrated the Victorian nursery under the guise of "fairy-story").

†Johnson Charles Dickens ... I. 144. It must be emphasised that Dickens was not merely attacking Agnew but a prevalent opinion. Agnew indeed was not the crank he would now be considered to be - his Bill did after all get through the House of Commons (see op. cit. p. 146).

called Sunday Under Three Heads: As it is: As Sabbath Bills Would make it: As it Might be made. Crude and essentially ephemeral as this piece of writing is, (not much care could be given to it as Pickwick was being written at the time and Dickens had not yet become proficient in writing two things at once) it does very sharply define certain of Dickens' views that were later to be developed:

> "I should like to see the time arrive when a man's attendance to his religious duties might be left to that religious feeling which most men possess in a greater or less degree, but which was never forced into the breast of any man by menace or restraint. I should like to see the time when Sunday might be looked forward to, as a recognised day of relaxation and enjoyment, and when every man might feel, what few men do now, that religion is not incompatible with rational pleasure and needful recreation."
>
> (Uncommercial Traveller and Reprinted Pieces, p. 662)

Relaxation and "needful recreation", essential elements to release the imagination for the ordinary man who could not afford to buy leisure, were ideas that outlasted the broadside and recur more and more strongly in Dickens' work. By 1851, for example, he* was writing in Household Words essentially the same thing even more strongly:

> "There are not many things of which the English as a people stand in greater need than sound rational amusement. As a necessary element in any popular education worthy of the name; as a wholesome incentive to the fancy, depressed by the business of life; as a rest and relief from the realities that are not and never can be all-sufficient for the mind - sound rational public amusement is very much indeed to be desired ..."
>
> ("Shakespeare and Newgate", 4.10.1851)

At its most fundamental what Dickens was calling for was recreation and amusement, and Sunday was the obvious day

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*Dickens wrote this piece with R. H. Horne, but since this particular paragraph echoes the opening of Ch. X of Hard Times it is very likely to be by Dickens alone.

for this. For just as he believed in these things as necessities (and even with a spiritual purpose at that) he was careful to make his own work especially in the early novels at the very least supply that need. To condemn him for being amusing and popular as some critics come close to doing, is misdirected simply because this is a condemnation of an important part of what Dickens himself considered to be a fundamental priority of the novelist. In fact, as the passages quoted from Household Words show, Dickens, in his understanding and use of pleasure as a principle of education, was anticipating what is common educational theory today; that instruction and enlightenment are best (and perhaps only) effected when the experience is also pleasurable.

If we remember that Dodgson was a cleric then it is perhaps surprising to find that he in his writing agreed with Dickens' radical views concerning worship, Sunday observance and pleasurable education. But in Sylvie and Bruno such a view is feelingly put forward; it is laboured and crudely done but is worth quoting in full to show something of the thought behind wonderland:

> (Arthur, Lady Muriel and the narrator meet on a Sunday morning)
>
> "... 'I would say ... whatever is innocent on a week-day, is innocent on Sunday, provided it does not interfere with the duties of the day'. [said Arthur]
>
> 'Then you would allow children to play on Sunday?'
>
> 'Certainly I should. Why make the day irksome to their restless natures?'
>
> 'I have a letter somewhere', said Lady Muriel, 'from an old friend, describing the way in which Sunday was kept in her younger days. I will fetch it for you.'

'I had a similar description, viva voce, years ago', Arthur said when she had left us, 'from a little girl. It was really touching to hear the melancholy tone in which she said "On Sunday I mustn't play with my doll! On Sunday I mustn't run on the sands! On Sunday I mustn't dig in the garden!" Poor child! She had indeed abundant cause for hating Sunday!'

'Here is the letter', said Lady Muriel, returning. 'Let me read you a piece of it'.

'"When, as a child, I first opened my eyes on a Sunday-morning, a feeling of dismal anticipation, which began at least of Friday, culminated. I knew what was before me, and my wish, if not my word, was 'Would God it were evening'. It was no day of rest, but a day of texts, of catechisms (Watts'*), of tracts about converted swearers, godly char-women, and edifying deaths of sinners saved."

"Up with the lark, hymns and portions of Scripture had to be learned by heart till 8 o'clock, when there were family prayers, then breakfast, which I was never able to enjoy, partly from the fast already undergone, and partly from the outlook I dreaded."

"At 9 came Sunday-School ... [then] the Church-Service [which] was a veritable Wilderness of Zin. I wandered in it, pitching the tabernacle of my thoughts on the lining of the square family-pew, the fidgets of my small brothers, and the horror of knowing that, on the Monday, I should have to write out, from memory, jottings of the rambling disconnected extempore sermon ..."

"This was followed by a cold dinner at 1 ... Sunday-School again from 2 to 4, and Evening-Service at 6. The intervals were perhaps the greatest trial of all, from the efforts I had to make, to be less than usually sinful, by reading books and sermons as barren as the Dead Sea. There was but one rosy spot, in the distance, all that day; and that was bedtime, which could never come too early!"'

'Such teaching was well meant, no doubt', said Arthur; 'but it must have driven many of its victims into deserting the Church-Services altogether.'"

(SB, pp. 497 - 99)

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*Watts, with his "All the elect are born into this world, sinful and miserable" was a natural and frequent target for Carroll - most celebratedly in his parody of The Sluggard (as "'Tis the voice of the Lobster" (AAIW, p. 139) a poem that is, incidentally, inappropriately quoted by Captain Cuttle in Dombey (p. 796). Watts is also attacked in Sylvie and Bruno for his theology (Ch. XVII).

In order to be sure that the reader does not miss the point Carroll solemnly draws his attention to this passage by noting in the Preface that "The descriptions ... of Sunday as spent by children of the last generation, are quoted verbatim from a speech made to me by a child friend and a letter written to me by a lady-friend."

But Carroll's radicalism here was not really a new departure for him, for in his Easter Greeting to Every Child who Loves 'Alice' 1876 (which was originally meant for private circulation, though eventually was distributed with The Hunting of the Snark*) he commented on the fact that his words there about God may have seemed out of context "from a writer of such tales as 'Alice'". He continued:

> "And is this a strange letter to find in a book of nonsense? It may be so. Some perhaps may blame me for thus mixing together things grave and gay; others will smile and think it odd that anyone should speak of solemn things at all, except in church and on Sunday: but I think - nay, I am sure - that some children will read this gently and lovingly, and in the spirit in which I have written it.
>
> For I do not believe God means us thus to divide life into two halves - to wear a grave face on Sunday, and to think it out-of-place to even as much as mention Him on a week-day. Do you think He cares to see only kneeling figures and to hear only tones of prayer - and that He does not also love to see the lambs leaping in the sunlight, and to hear the merry voices of the children as they roll among the hay? Surely their innocent laughter is as sweet in His ears as the grandest anthem that ever rolled up from the 'dim religious light' of some solemn cathedral?"

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*See LCH, p. 88

As Coveney observes* there is here a "reminiscence of Blake's Innocence" and an "evocation of the romantic symbol of 'life' in childhood".[/] There is also clearly an acknowledgement on Carroll's part that it is above all children who should not be forced to divide life into two halves - with the implication that it is adulthood that wrongly demands that this should be done. Thus in this context it is a quality of childhood that does not, and cannot, divorce God from everyday life - a quality that maturity forces itself to lose; in Wordsworthian terms "we murder to dissect". The larger implication is, of course, that such divisions are not only driven between a solemn God and "the merry voices of ... children" but, as Dickens showed, also between a whole range of ideas that should naturally go together, so that work was not therefore then expected to be anything but dull, nor education anything but unimaginative rote learning, nor wonder anything other than a repressed instinct to be visited by going underground. In his fantasy nonsense stories as we shall see Carroll was largely practising what Dickens preached, and essentially they were both campaigning for toleration (and even emulation) of the liberated and integrated mind of the child.

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* The Image of childhood, p. 245.

[/] In this respect it is interesting to note that later in the Easter Greeting Carroll quotes appropriately from Wordsworth's We are Seven saying that "This Easter sun will rise on you, dear child, feeling your "life in every limb" ...

III Dickens and "the character"

In the paper by Professor Kathleen Tillotson which prompted these chapters in that it recognised certain similarities between Carroll and Dickens, part of the central argument it will be remembered was that "it is not chance that the Looking-Glass characters are defined and memorable in the same way as those of Dickens, and of no other novelist". It is time now, after looking at the way in which the points of reference of these two writers often concur in their attitudes to the fairy-tale and to children and childhood, to examine this central and particular idea of "character" which partly explains how these other ideas grew.

One point must be made clear at the outset, however: I do not wish to suggest either in this chapter or in others, that Carroll consciously and deliberately took anything directly from what he read in Dickens; what I do wish to demonstrate is that there is more that is Dickensian in Carroll than has yet been realised and that incidentally there is more of the nonsensical, the absurd and even of the surreal in Dickens than is usually recognised. The important point is that Carroll, far from being obscure, was deeply involved in issues similar to those which concerned the major novelist of Victorian England and, in a sense, was often furthering Dickensian philosophy and methods in his own writing, possibly even pushing Dickensian frontiers forward. This does not mean, however, that Carroll ever borrowed from Dickens but rather that he understood him.

Dickens' portrayal of people in his novels has always occasioned the loudest popular praise or the harshest intellectual criticism. On the one hand the Staffordshire potteries in the 1850s turned out huge editions of several of the familiar Dickensian characters: on the other hand he has been blamed for his lack of understanding of the human personality and his tendency to caricature. But it is in his presentation of character and of people who are subservient to their jobs that Dickens has been most consistently misunderstood. The playwright, Strindberg, for example, makes great capital out of his divergence from Dickens in this respect, explaining in the foreword to his play Miss Julie just where Dickens is at fault and consequently where Strindberg himself is more acute:

> "I have made my people somewhat 'characterless' for the following reasons. In the course of time the word 'character' has assumed manifold meanings. It must have originally signified the dominating trait of the soul complex, and this was confused with temperament. Later it became the middle class term for the automaton, one whose nature had become fixed or who had adapted himself to a particular role in life. In fact a person who had ceased to grow was called a character, while one continuing to develop - the skilful navigator of life's river ... was called characterless, in a derogatory sense, of course, because he was so hard to catch, classify and keep track of ... A character came to signify a man fixed and finished: one who invariably appeared either drunk or jocular or melancholy, and characterisation required nothing more than a physical defect such as a club foot ... or the fellow might be made to repeat some such phrase as: 'That's capital' or: 'Barkis is willin'."
>
> (Six plays of Strindberg trans. Sprigge, Anchor 1955, N.Y., p. 64)

Strindberg continues his foreword by censuring the Dickensian tradition in order to more fully justify his divergence from it. He is, however, inaccurate since

Dickens' treatment of Mr. Barkis and similar characters can be seen favourably if more carefully examined; for Dickens, in recognising the propensity for the human imagination to actually <u>prefer</u> living in the disguise called 'character', peopled his novels deliberately with those who cultivate personal quirks, set speech patterns and limited personal perspectives. It is inaccurate therefore to censure Dickens for his supposed incapacity to draw convincing full-blooded people - rather he penetratingly observed that for some humans, life and human nature is less complicated and therefore more easily managed, if, like ordinary nature, it is enclosed by a fence or wall. Such walls are best built by becoming an automaton that is rigorously 'programmed' to follow an occupation. Thus the job is taken as a way of protecting the sensibilities by disguising them with the uniform that goes with it; rendering the personality simultaneously invulnerable to the outside world and, eventually, incapable of seeing it either objectively or imaginatively. Dickens' exploitation of this phenomenon seems to have developed quite distinctly as time went on. In the earlier novels, for example, the limited vocabulary that was the feature of a particular job, was quite obviously enjoyed. Hence when the Boots, Sam Weller, is asked about the guests at his master's inn, he quite naturally replies:

> "'There's a wooden leg in Number Six, there's a pair of Hessians in thirteen; there's two pair of halves in the Commercial; there's these here painted tops in the snuggery inside the bar; and five more tops in the coffee-room.'"
>
> (<u>Pickwick</u>, p. 125)

Similarly it is not surprising to find in Dombey and Son, that Captain Cuttle "had felt it appropriate to take to spectacles on entering the Instrument Trade, though his eyes were like a hawk's". By the penultimate novel, Our Mutual Friend, however, though Mr. and Mrs. Veneering are amusing in their dedication to fashion and high society, their extraordinary concept of human beings, as tools by which to pursue their trade of hunting the landed and titled, is surreal and blackly comic:

> "There was a innocent piece of dinner furniture that went upon easy castors and was kept over a livery stable yard in Duke Street, St. James's, when not in use ... The name of this article was Twemlow. Being first cousin to Lord Snigsworth, he was in frequent requisition, and in many houses might be said to represent the dining-table in its normal state. Mr. and Mrs. Veneering, for example, arranging a dinner, habitually started with Twemlow and then put leaves in him, or added guests to him. Sometimes the table consisted of Twemlow and half a dozen leaves ... sometimes Twemlow was pulled out to his utmost extent of twenty leaves."
>
> (Our Mutual Friend, p. 6)

But Dickens was not always content to present comically the way in which the free human spirit will trap itself by hiding behind other people's opinions or its own prepared face. There is for example the more frightening phenomenon of the jailer Mr. Chivery, whose identification with his job is so absolute that his whole claim to individuality is totally subservient to the conscientious pursuit of his occupation:

> "What Mr. Chivery thought ... was never gathered from himself. It has already been remarked that he was a man of few words; and it may be here observed, that he had

imbibed a professional habit of locking everything up. He locked himself up as carefully as he locked up the Marshalsea debtors. Even his custom of bolting his meals may have been part of a uniform whole; but there is no question, that, as to all other purposes, he kept his mouth as he kept the Marshalsea door. He never opened it without occasion ..."

(Little Dorrit, p. 298)

At his most pessimistic, Dickens was also aware of the emergence of the totally mechanical human creature that found existence because of the way the human personality seeks to define and enclose the world on the same principle in which it will define and enclose itself. He saw that because the need for money occasioned occupation that was often mechanical then this also destroyed perceptive ability and even the curiosity that heralds the impetus to seek, if not intellectual nourishment, then at least play and entertainment:

"'A fresh night!' said Arthur.

'Yes, its pretty fresh', assented Pancks. 'As a stranger you feel the climate more than I do, I dare say. Indeed I haven't got time to feel it ... But I like business ... what's a man made for?'

'For nothing else?' said Clennam.

Pancks put the counter question, 'What else?' it packed up in the smallest compass a weight that had rested on Clennam's life; and he made no answer.

'That's what I ask our weekly tenants', said Pancks. 'Some of 'em will pull long faces to me and say, Poor as you see us master, we're always grinding, drudging, toiling every minute we're awake. I say to them, what else are you made for? It shuts them up. They haven't a word to answer ... 'Here am I' said Pancks, 'What else do you suppose I think I am made for? Nothing. Rattle me out of bed early ... set me going, give me as short a time as you like to bolt my meals in, and keep me at it. Keep me always at it and I'll keep you always at it, you keep somebody else at it. There you are with the Whole Duty of Man in a commercial country.'"

(Little Dorrit, p. 160)

People in Little Dorrit indeed, are their jobs to such an extent that Dickens actually re-christens them by the names of their occupations; there is nothing else to distinguish them by:

> "'I am told', said Bishop magnate to Horse Guards, 'that Mr. Merdle has made another enormous hit. They say a hundred thousand pounds.'
>
> Horse Guards had heard two.
>
> Treasury had heard three.
>
> Bar, handling his persuasive double eye glass was by no means clear but that it might be four ...'" (p. 248)

But perhaps the absolute in invulnerability through this kind of complete identification with his occupation is demonstrated by Mr. Merdle's Chief Butler in Little Dorrit who reacts in the same automatic way to the news of his employer's suicide as he would react to anything; instantaneously and with his job his only consideration:

> "'Mr. Merdle is dead'. [said Physician]
>
> 'I should wish', said the Chief Butler, 'to give a month's notice.'" (p. 708)

At its saddest a ritualised occupation and a familiar world can merely shield the personality from the terror of mental emptiness, so that, for example, when Mr. Boffin goes to see Mr. Lightwood in Our Mutual Friend, he finds Blight, the Clerk, mechanically engaged in going through his routine in a pantomime of employment which Dickens no longer exploits for its comedy:

"... Young Blight made a great show of fetching ... a manuscript volume ... and running his finger down the days appointments, murmuring, 'Mr. Aggs, Mr. Baggs, Mr. Caggs ... Mr. Boffin [...] I'll take the opportunity if you please, of entering your name in our Callers' Book for the day'. Young Blight made another great show of changing the volume, ... and running over previous entries before he wrote. As 'Mr. Alley, Mr. Balley, Mr. Calley, Mr. Dalley, Mr. Falley, Mr. Galley [...] and Mr. Boffin.

'Strict system here; eh, my lad?' said Mr. Boffin ...

'Yes Sir,' returned the boy. 'I couldn't get on without it.' By which he probably meant that his mind would have been shattered to pieces without this fiction of an occupation."

(Our Mutual Friend, pp. 86 - 87)

One obvious escape route offers itself to the would-be self-caricature in Dickens' world and that is to divide life into two parts and not admit the existence of one part to the other. Thus a character like "Miss Twinkleton, has two distinct and separate phases of being. Every night, the moment the young ladies have retired to rest, does Miss Twinkleton smarten up her curls a little, brighten up her eyes a little, and become a sprightlier Miss Twinkleton than the young ladies have ever seen." (Edwin Drood, p. 20). Similarly Wemmick's secret life in his miniature mock-gothic castle; his games of firing off a gun at nine o'clock "every night, Greenwich time", and his affection for his Aged P. and Miss Skiffins are kept, proudly, well within the boundary of his private existence. Naturally as he travels between the two worlds he metamorphoses and Pip reports "[as] we started for Little Britain ... By degrees, Wemmick got drier and harder as we went along, and his mouth tightened into a post office again". (Great Expectations, p. 198). The reason for this is that emotion and affection

have no place in Wemmick's chosen career - that of clerk to Jaggers, the inscrutable lawyer. Thus when Mike, tearful because his daughter has been arrested, comes to the office to seek Jaggers' help, he is unhesitatingly rounded upon:

> "'A man can't help his feelings, Mr. Wemmick,' pleaded Mike.
>
> 'His what?' demanded Wemmick, quite savagely. 'Say that again!'
>
> 'Now look here my man', said Mr. Jaggers, advancing a step and pointing to the door. 'Get out of this office I'll have no feelings here. Get out.'
>
> [...] So the unfortunate Mike very humbly withdrew and Mr. Jaggers and Wemmick appeared to have re-established their good understanding and went to work again with an air of refreshment upon them as if they had just had lunch."
>
> (Great Expectations, p. 394)

The division of public and private, professional and amateur, factual and emotional, is a feature that Victorian life in general seems to have demanded - not least from Dickens himself; witness the fact of All the Year Round being changed from Household Words. Obviously also the divided nature of Lewis Carroll and the Rev. C. L. Dodgson is significant in this respect - and indeed has readily led many critics to the easy label "schizophrenia". In fact if all that is needed to qualify for this label is a public face and a private face, then many other Victorians qualify for it - and indeed, so do many celebrities and public figures today. As for Carroll himself, much of his deliberately divided way of life was virtually essential for the circles he moved in, since fairy stories and mathematics are hardly congenial. Carroll was, it seems, well aware of the attendant peculiarities of having two names - and at times positively

enjoyed its implications as in this famous letter to one of his child-friends:

"... I couldn't make out what was in it (the wheelbarrow). I saw some features at first, then I looked through a telescope, and found it was a countenance; then I looked through a microscope and found it was a face! I thought it looked rather like me, so I fetched a large looking glass to make sure, and then to my surprise I found it was me. We shook hands, and were just beginning to talk, when myself came up and joined us and we had quite a pleasant conversation ... Then it was time for us to go to the train, and who do you think came to see us off? You would never guess, so I must tell you. They were two very dear friends of mine, who happen to be here just now, and beg to be allowed to sign this letter as your affectionate friends,

Lewis Carroll and C. L. Dodgson."

(LLLC, p. 371 - 2)

But there is other evidence of near panic if, so to speak, the lines of his identity were crossed. He needed to keep the different parts of his life apart and thus was rude (in a gentlemanly way, of course) if this need was violated:

"My Dear Edith, - would you tell your mother I was aghast at seeing the address of her letter to me: and I would much prefer 'Rev. C. L. Dodgson, Ch[rist] Ch[urch], Oxford'. When a letter comes addressed 'Lewis Carroll, Ch., Ch.,' it either goes to the Dead Letter Office, or it impresses on the minds of all the letter-carriers, etc., through whose hands it goes, the very fact I least want them to know."

(Letter to Miss Edith Rix, LLLC, p. 411)

This jealously guarded separation of the diverse sides of his nature was invaluable to Carroll; he was thus able to enjoy writing hysterical letters to the 'Times' concerning vivisection; to be a mathematics lecturer at Oxford; a writer of children's nonsense books; an anonymous figure at

the seaside; an accomplished photographer; a devout Christian, and a preacher and a theatregoer (something "not done" by clerics).*

When the private and the public <u>are</u> forced to mix however or are inverted through circumstances beyond control, then for a strictly divided Victorian character like, for example, Dickens' Miss Peecher, who suddenly becomes infatuated with Bradley Headstone, the effect is disastrously comic:

> "Though all unseen, and unsuspected by the pupils, Bradley Headstone even pervaded the school exercises. Was geography in question? He would come triumphantly flying out of Vesuvius and Etna ahead of the lava, and would boil unharmed down in the hot springs of Iceland, and would float majestically down the Ganges and the Nile. Did history chronicle a king of men? Behold him in pepper and salt pantaloons [...] were copies to be written? In capital B's and H's most of the girls under Miss Peecher's tuition were half a year ahead of every other letter in the alphabet ..."
>
> (<u>Our Mutual Friend</u>, pp. 338 - 9)

Carroll obviously had no such difficulties! Partially this was because his Carroll, rather than Dodgson self, was

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*See Carroll's letter to Luke Fildes, who had just refused to illustrate <u>Looking-Glass</u>: "I fear you go on the theory of having only one 'iron in the fire' at once - <u>My</u> theory is that you can hardly have too many. The work of my life is Mathematics - but I try light literature as well, and give a good deal of time to photography, and even trespass on <u>your</u> territory occasionally, in sketching my little friends at the seaside - and various other 'irons' as well, so there is always <u>something</u> to turn to, in harmony with the inclination of the moment. I fancy a man with only <u>one</u> line of work must do a great deal of his work 'Against the grain', and I think Ruskin is right in saying that all such work is bad work."

Letter dated 14.7.1877 quoted <u>Luke Fildes, R.A. A Victorian Painter</u> by L. V. Fildes, 1968, p. 45.

a personality with a free imagination unhindered by the strictures of his time. But we can sense that such an arrangement was not always so easily arrived at and, for example, behind the obvious comedy of Dickens' treatment of Miss Peecher lies the hint of a very pertinent worry that Dickens had often expressed before about his society; that custom through occupation disguises and eventually atrophies the individual's perceptive powers. If then exposed to a different influence that could penetrate this disguise of conformity then the human personality would possibly have such difficulty in adapting itself that it would be liable to die from exposure to the larger, alien dimension.* This, quite clearly, is one part of the thesis of Little Dorrit: the Marshalsea is not simply so much a geographical fact, nor really a fact of Dickens' childhood, nor an evil that, labelled "social injustice", Dickens was campaigning against, but rather such a prison is a mental state that could replace the individual entity of the free personality. In a cruder form Dickens examined the prison and its psychological effects on Dr. Manette in A Tale of Two Cities, who, whenever subjected to undue strain after he had been "restored to life", reverted to his old prison attitude and job as cobbler - in other words

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*This literally occurs with William Dorrit as he symbolically strips off his persona at the breakdown before his death, becoming once again the Father of the Marshalsea by selling the regalia of his new affluence ("a pompous gold watch" and other jewelry), and then even losing the pretence of that persona at the moment of his death as he recognises his tyranny over Little Dorrit and his brother Frederick. By losing his self-imposed prisons he reaches a state of redemption but because he can no longer sustain the fiction his insight precipitates his death. (See Little Dorrit pp. 650 - 652).

he took refuge in an occupation that preoccupied his faculties. In Little Dorrit the fear of being re-cast in a role, the words and norms of which had been forgotten through disuse, is a strong one, so that being physically set "free" may in fact be more harmful, if all flexibility of personality has withered, and more damaging than being kept prisoner where routine marks the boundaries of the personality. Thus unsurely and tenderly Little Dorrit hypothesises about her father:

> "'I have often thought that if such a change [a release from prison] could come, it might be anything but service to him now. People might not think so well of him outside as they do there [in the Marshalsea]. He might not be so gently dealt with outside as he is there. He might not be so fit himself for the life outside as he is for that.'"
>
> (Little Dorrit, pp. 98 - 99)

The events of the novel prove her correct for though financially poor whilst in prison, the Dorrits have a real richness through the fiction of the title of Father of the Marshalsea and its preoccupying duties, through the game of "Tributes" and Little Dorrit's industry and selflessness. Hence the division of the novel into the two books - "Poverty" and "Riches" seems to be more ironic - or at least complex - than is at first apparent. The point is first made when Clennam informs Dorrit of his release:

> "'[The wall] is down ... gone ... And in its place are the means to possess and enjoy the utmost that they have so long shut out. Mr. Dorrit, there is not the smallest doubt that within a few days you will be free and highly prosperous. I congratulate you with all my soul on this change of fortune, and on the happy future into which you are soon to carry the treasure you have been blessed with here - the best of all the riches you can have elsewhere - the treasure at your side.'"
>
> (Little Dorrit, p. 418)

This is a keynote that has been struck earlier by Esther at the end of Bleak House when she says of her marriage to Woodcourt: "We are not rich in the Bank ... I never walk out with my husband but I hear the people bless him ... Is not this to be rich?" (p. 879). It is the blessings, fictitious or not, of the Pupils of the Marshalsea that Dorrit will have to live without; richness has less to do with money and more with love - even contrived love.

Dickens, even as early as Pickwick Papers, was alive to this possibility that imprisonment could affect a personality differently, depending on factors that had nothing to do with justice or the law but more on a man's view of himself. Thus if the personal perspective of a man was markedly limited anyway through the personal walls that he himself had constructed to keep the world out, then the constriction of gaol would be a comfort; the myopic person is distressed by open spaces that he cannot focus on - as Sam explains to Mr. Pickwick:

> "'It strikes me Sam ... that imprisonment for debt is scarcely any punishment at all ... You see how these fellows drink and smoke and roar ... it's quite impossible that they minded much.'
>
> 'Ah, that's just the wery thing, Sir,' rejoined Sam, 'they don't mind it; its a regular holiday to them - all porter and skittles. Its t'other vuns as gets done over, with this sort o' thing ... them as would pay if they could, and gets low by being boxed up. I'll tell you vot it is, sir; them as is alvays a idlin' in public-houses it don't damage at all, and them as is alvays a workin' ven they can it damages too much. "Its unekal", as my father used to say, ven his grog varn't made half-and-half: "Its unekal, and that's the fault on it."'"
>
> (Pickwick, p. 576)

By the time that Dickens came to write Little Dorrit the idea had developed so that those outside prison could be seen as being in a prison of their own making - and mental prisons are, of course, more terrifying:

> "It appeared on the whole, to Little Dorrit herself, that this same society [in Venice] in which they lived greatly resembled a superior sort of Marshalsea. Numbers of people seemed to come abroad, pretty much as people had come into the prison; through debt, through idleness ... and general unfitness for getting on at home ... They prowled about the churches and picture galleries, much as in the old dreary, prison-yard manner. They were usually going away again tomorrow or next week and rarely knew their own minds, and seldom did what they said they would do, or went where they said they would go: in all this again very like the prison debtors ... a certain set of words and phrases as much belonging to tourists as the college and the snuggery belonged to the gaol, was always in their mouths. They had precisely the same incapacity for settling down to anything as the prisoners used to have; they rather deteriorated one another ... and fell into a slouching way of life: still always like the people in the Marshalsea."
>
> (Little Dorrit, p. 511)

Conversely, it is possible if the spirit and perception are large enough to be actually in the Marshalsea itself and be happier, freer and richer than the members of Metropolitan High Society in their watering places - as Little Dorrit testifies in the final chapter: "Never to part, my dearest Arthur; never any more until the last! I never was rich before, I never was proud before, I never was happy before. I am rich in being taken by you, I am proud in having been resigned by you, I am happy in being with you in this prison, as I should be happy in coming back to it with you ..." (p. 817).

The insight that love affords the individual into the real values of life - in contrast to fictitious and manufactured concepts of status and a self-imposed role - is one which can transcend adversity and can consider walls irrelevant - or at

least relatively unimportant because of a larger, selfless, view of the world. "Characters" on the other hand, fitting themselves into occupations that shield the senses and spirit from interference from and understanding of the world, are to be found everywhere; incapable of accepting change and, reluctantly, if at all, indulging in even limited explorations of the world around them. Such people are, like the inhabitants of "The Garden of Live Flowers" at best able only to see the world in their own image: "If only [Alice's] petals curled up a little more, she'd be all right" [said the Tiger Lily].

In conclusion, therefore, it seems that Dickens was wholly alive to the ways in which man imprisons himself and his perception, particularly through preoccupying and ultimately destroying individual sensitivity by shielding it behind the routine of a job or the disguise of a "character".

It was not, however, Dickens' "only remedy ... if the intellect is baffled ... to turn to the heart", as Houghton suggests (The Victorian Frame of Mind, Yale, 1968) but rather, because Dickens understood that, since in the Blakean sense "man has closed himself up till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern", then the essential solution was to strive to cleanse "the doors of perception."

The attempt to cleanse perception by questioning the status quo and practically all established terms of reference by exposing them to the strange and forever demanding perspectives of wonderland is, of course, a vital part of Carroll's purpose. His characters, as Alice finds out, are

even more eccentric than many of Dickens', though often from similar causes, and Alice has to try to retain her sense of order where no-one is normal and no-one pretends that they are or anyone else is:

> "'... But I don't want to go among mad people,' Alice remarked.
>
> 'Oh you can't help that,' said the [Cheshire] Cat: 'we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad.'
>
> 'How do you know I'm mad?' said Alice.
>
> 'You must be', said the Cat, 'or you wouldn't have come here.'"
>
> (AAIW, p. 89)

One of the ironies of wonderland is that though most of the characters are deliberate self-caricatures carefully presenting an inscrutable face to Alice, there are so many different faces that she learns to perceive more in the context of wonderland because she meets so much incompatibility. Because each character wants to re-classify the world in general and her in particular she sees how little except tolerance is appropriate. The challenge made here by the Cheshire Cat undercuts all the established divisions and labels that Alice is expected to accept and none of her preconceptions are allowed to stand. The Cheshire Cat's assertion that madness is an essential part of everyone's life is one which immediately discounts the efficacy of the comfortable arrangement that madness should be and is safely behind lock and key. In fact the Cheshire Cat and Mr. Dick (from David Copperfield) are in total agreement:

"'Ha! Phoebus!' said Mr. Dick, laying down his pen. 'How does the world go? I'll tell you what,' he added in a lower tone, 'I shouldn't wish it to be mentioned, but its a' - here he beckoned to me, and put his lips close to my ear - 'its a mad world. Mad as Bedlam, boy!' said Mr. Dick, taking snuff from a round box on the table, and laughing heartily."

(p. 202)

Just how accurate both these indictments of Victorian society were must remain a matter of conjecture. But there is a sense that both Dickens and Carroll convey that the world as they saw it was largely peopled not with individuals, but by caricatures whose eccentricities at best border on madness. If we remember that the word "in-dividual" means "inseparable" or "indivisible" and see how prevalent, if we are to believe Dickens, the practice of singling out a particular trait was (in order to hide the others), then characters who shelter behind their occupations or their cultivated eccentricities or their position in society are inevitably mimic schizophrenics. And again, if we believe Dickens, this reduction of a part of the personality to a machine and ignore or hide the rest was (and perhaps is) "the whole Duty of Man in a commercial country".* The direct relationship between this psychological state and the

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*In The Stones of Venice (1853) Vol. 2, Ruskin, reacting against Adam Smith's ideas regarding the division of labour, was in no doubt where the source of this phenomenon lay: "We have much studied and much perfected, of late, the great civilised invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided, but the men: - Divided into men segments of men - broken into small fragments and crumbs of life." It was, incidentally, this chapter from The Stones of Venice, that William Morris chose to print as the fourth Kelmscott Press book in 1892, calling it The Nature of Gothic.

tradition of caricature itself is one which has been noted before: for if a caricature is "the deliberate distortion of single features" to make them stand for the whole person* then self-caricature was for some Victorians virtually a way of life. This projection was moreover often a self-conscious act - people in Dickens' mature work often display a kind of double-consciousness, of the sort that Pip is uncomfortably aware of here in that most mad of mad women, Miss Havisham:

> "'Look at me', said Miss Havisham. 'You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?'
>
> ... 'Do you know what I touch here?' she said, laying her hands, one upon the other, on her left side.
>
> 'Yes, ma'am' ...
>
> 'What do I touch?'
>
> 'Your heart'.
>
> 'Broken!'
>
> She uttered the word with an eager look, and with a strong emphasis, and with a weird smile that had a kind of boast in it."
>
> (Great Expectations, p. 53)

Miss Havisham thus smiles at her own caricature of herself - and is pleased at her performance. Alice, like Pip also meets such actors - for example here is another professional self-pitier:

> "They had not gone far before they saw the Mock Turtle in the distance, sitting sad and lonely on a little ledge of rock, and, as they came nearer, Alice could hear him sighing as if his heart would break. She pitied him deeply. 'What is his sorrow?' she asked the Gryphon. And the

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*See Gombrich and Kris, Caricature, King Penguin, 1940, p. 14.

Gryphon answered, very nearly in the same words as before, 'It's all his fancy, that: he hasn't got no sorrow, you know. Come on!'

So they went up to the Mock Turtle, who looked at them with large eyes full of tears, but said nothing ..."

(AAIW, pp. 125 - 6)

There are many characters who, whether first drawn by Dickens or Carroll, similarly seem to be distinctly related as caricatures - not probably from any direct influence but from a mutual understanding and exploration of this element of Victorian culture and its tendency to make single-minded professionals from people who, because they will not protest at what they see, are myopic almost from an act of self will. We are told, for example, of Lady Deadlock (on being handed the anonymous note accusing her of Tulkinghorn's murder):

"[She] is not a hard lady naturally ... But so long accustomed to suppress emotion, and keep down reality, so long schooled for her own purposes, in that destructive school which shuts up the natural feelings of the heart like flies in amber, and spread one uniform and dreary gloss over the good and bad, the feeling and the unfeeling, the sensible and the senseless; she had subdued even her wonder until now ..."

(Bleak House, p. 755)

Such deliberate self-limitation leads, eventually, to self-caricature. One can imagine that the Queen of Hearts (similarly driven by the sense of her role in society) was once human but hasbecome a professional aristocratic machine that is similarly incapable of making distinctions:

"The Queen had only one way of settling all difficulties, great or small. 'Off with his head!' she said without even looking round."

(AAIW, p. 114)

The "uniform and dreary gloss ... spread ... over the good and bad" which necessarily makes distinction impossible, means that communication between people is difficult and that most of the talk that does go on is merely self-defining, rather than spoken in the hope that another person will understand. Here, for example, is Miss Monflathers from The Old Curiosity Shop demonstrating not that Little Nell is at fault so much as that she is a rigorous professional who is out to prove her own righteousness rather than actually give aid to a child who looks to her for comfort:

> "'You're the wax-work child, are you not?' said Miss Monflathers.
>
> 'Yes, ma'am,' replied Nell, colouring deeply, for the young ladies had collected about her, and she was the centre on which all eyes were fixed.
>
> 'And don't you think you must be a very wicked little child,' said Miss Monflathers, who was of rather uncertain temper and lost no opportunity of impressing moral truths upon the tender minds of the young ladies, 'to be a wax-work child at all?'
>
> Poor Nell had never viewed her position in this light, and not knowing what to say, remained silent, blushing more deeply than before ...
>
> 'Don't you feel how naughty it is of you,' resumed Miss Monflathers 'to be a wax-work child, when you might have the proud consciousness of assisting, to the extent of your infant powers, the manufactures of your country; of improving your mind by the constant contemplation of the steam engine; and of earning a comfortable and independent subsistence of from two-and-nine to three shillings per week? Don't you know that the harder you are at work the happier you are?'
>
> 'How doth the little - ' murmured one of the teachers in quotation from Dr. Watts."
>
> (Old Curiosity Shop, pp. 235 - 6)

Compare Nell's experience here with Alice's at the hands of the Red Queen:

"'Where do you come from?' said the Red Queen. 'And where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers all the time.'

Alice attended to all these directions, and explained, as well as she could, that she had lost her way.

'I don't know what you mean by <u>your</u> way,' said the Queen: 'all the ways about here belong to <u>me</u> - but why did you come out here at all?' she added in a kinder tone. 'Curtsey while you're thinking what to say, it saves time.'

... 'It's time for you to answer now,' the Queen said, looking at her watch: 'open your mouth a <u>little</u> wider when you speak, and always say "your Majesty"'."

(<u>TTLG</u>, pp. 205 - 6)

Carroll himself later remarked that "the Red Queen must be cold and calm; she must be formal and strict, yet not unkindly; pedantic to the tenth degree, the concentrated essence of all governesses!" ('Alice on the Stage', <u>The Theatre</u>, April 1887). As for the philosophy of Dr. Watts, murmured by one of Miss Monflathers' pupils, Carroll was even more ready to criticise it than Dickens was - for when Alice tries to recite the poem <u>Against Idleness and Mischief</u> which goes as follows:

"How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower.

How skilfully she builds her cell!
How neat she spreads the wax!
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet food she makes

In works of labour or of skill
I would be busy too;
For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do (etc.) "

she finds that what she says "are not the right words" -

and indeed Carroll's parody is not only in mockery of Watts

but is also a comment on the hidden treachery of the obsequious moraliser who is caricatured as the crocodile itself (with crocodile tears and sympathy). Hence this is what Alice recites:

> "How doth the little crocodile
> Improve his shiny tail
> And pour the waters of the Nile
> On every golden scale!
>
> How cheerfully he seems to grin
> How neatly spread his claws
> And welcomes little fishes in
> With gently smiling jaws!"

(AAIW, p. 38)

The belief in Watts' moral ethic that work - whatever it is - is, per se, valuable, since Satan is always present is, of course, precisely what Dickens realised to be the matter with Blight the clerk in Our Mutual Friend. Similarly the second-rate character when faced with "the Snark, so to speak, at the door" - a dreadful challenge to courage and fortitude - retreats into the mechanical rituals of the comforting and familiar occupation:

> "Then the Banker endorsed a blank cheque (which he
> crossed),
> And changed his loose silver for notes:
> The Baker with care combed his whiskers and hair,
> And shook the dust out of his coats:
>
> The Boots and the Broker were sharpening a spade -
> Each working the grindstone in turn:
> But the Beaver went on making lace, and displayed
> No interest in the concern:
>
> Though the Barrister tried to appeal to its pride,
> And vainly proceeded to cite
> A number of cases, in which making laces
> Had been proved an infringement of right.
>
> The maker of Bonnets ferociously planned
> A novel arrangement of bows:
> While the Billiard-marker with quivering hand
> Was chalking the tip of his nose.

But the Butcher turned nervous, and dressed himself fine,
With yellow kid gloves and a ruff -
Said he felt it exactly like going to dine,
Which the Bellman declared was all 'stuff'."

(HS, fit 4)

Such rituals and performances - and even more peculiar ones - were also recognised by Dickens as a method of keeping sane. Mr. Jarndyce's fiction of an adverse easterly wind as scapegoat on which to vent his irritation and maintain equanimity (and even sanity) is not a unique example from Dickens. Pip in Great Expectations is surprised by similar rituals from Mr. Pocket:

"To my unutterable amazement, I now, for the first time, saw Mr. Pocket relieve his mind by going thro' a performance that struck me as very extraordinary, but which made no impression on anybody else, and with which I soon became as familiar as the rest. He laid down the carving knife and fork - being engaged in carving at the moment - put his two hands into his disturbed hair, and appeared to make an extraordinary effort to lift himself up by it. When he had done this, and had not lifted himself up at all, he quietly went on with what he was about." (p. 181)

Alice is advised under similar moments of tension and frustration to retain her balance by also indulging in a routine of pre-occupation and distraction. Thus when she despairs she is given good advice:

"'Only it is so very lonely here!' Alice said in a melancholy voice; and at the thought of her loneliness two large tears came rolling down her cheeks.

'Oh, don't go on like that!' cried the poor Queen, wringing her hands in despair. 'Consider what a great girl you are. Consider what a long way you've come today. Consider what o'clock it is. Consider anything, only don't cry!'

Alice could not help laughing at this, even in the midst of her tears. 'Can you keep from crying by considering things?' she asked.

'That's the way it's done,' the Queen said with great decision."*

(TTLG, p. 250)

Another professional "type" that occurs in both Carroll's and Dickens' work, which as a self-caricature often impedes the progress of the sane with its nonsense, is "the moraliser". Mr. Pecksniff for example "never lost an opportunity of making up a few moral crackers to be let off as occasion served" (Chuzzlewit, p. 487) and Alice comes in for a veritable bombardment from a like-minded spirit, the Duchess:

"'You're thinking about something my dear, and that makes you forget to talk. I can't tell you just now what the moral of that is, but I shall remember it in a bit.'

'Perhaps it hasn't one,' Alice ventured to remark.

'Tut, tut, child!' said the Duchess. 'Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it.'

[...] 'The game's going on rather better now,' [Alice] said, by way of keeping up the conversation a little.

''Tis so,' said the Duchess: 'and the moral of that is - Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round.'

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*Dodgson evidently also believed in the validity of this advice since we find in the preface to his Pillow Problems (1893) - a collection of mathematical problems thought out and solved during nights of insomnia - the same idea recurring:

"It is not possible ... to carry out the resolution, 'I will not think of so-and-so'. But it is possible ... to carry out the resolution, 'I will think of so-and-so'... The worrying subject is practically annulled. It may recur, from time to time ... these are unholy thoughts, which torture with their hateful presence, the fancy that would fain be pure. Against all these some real mental work is a most helpful ally."

'Somebody said,' Alice whispered 'that it's done by everybody minding their own business.'

'Ah, well! It means much the same thing ... and the moral of that is - 'Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves.'"

(AAIW, pp. 120 - 1)

If Alice is irritated by this, Pip's exasperation at a similar moraliser is even greater in comparison. Here Mr. Wopsle, goaded to it by Uncle Pumblechook, finds a pertinent moral in the first object at hand and directs it in fine rhetorical style solely at Pip for his discomfort and supposed education:

"'Look at Pork alone. There's a subject! If you want a subject, look at Pork!' [said Uncle Pumblechook]

'True, sir. Many a moral for the young,' returned Mr. Wopsle; and I knew he was going to lug me in, before he said it; 'might be deduced from that text'.

('You listen to this', said my sister to me, in a severe parenthesis).

Joe gave me some more gravy.

'Swine', pursued Mr. Wopsle, in his deepest voice, and pointing his fork at my blushes, as if he were mentioning my Christian name, 'Swine were the companions of the prodigal. The gluttony of swine is put before us, as an example to the young ... What is detestable in a pig, is more detestable in a boy.'"

(Great Expectations, p. 23)

Bullies like this one, sheltering behind their self-righteousness, were a particular anathema to Dickens since they are usually men who, being limited themselves, would restrict the world to their own limitations and condemn anything and everything else. A character like Mr. Podsnap is, it is true, in part treated comically, yet there is bitterness in Dickens' tone:

"Mr. Podsnap's world was not a very large world, morally; no, nor even geographically: seeing that although his business was sustained upon commerce with other countries, he considered other countries with that important reservation a mistake, and of their manners and customs would conclusively observe, 'Not English!' when PRESTO! with a flourish of the arm and a flush of the face, they were swept away. Elsewise, the world got up at eight, shaved close at quarter-past, breakfasted at nine, went to the City at ten, came home at half-past five, and dined at seven. Mr. Podsnap's notions of the Arts in their integrity might have been stated thus. Literature; large print, respectively descriptive of getting up at eight, shaving close at quarter-past, breakfasting at nine., going to the City at ten, coming home at half-past five, and dining at seven. Painting and sculpture; models and portraits representing professors of getting up at eight, shaving close at quarter-past, breakfasting at nine, going to the City at ten, coming home at half-past five, and dining at seven. Music; a respectable performance (without variations) on stringed and wind instruments, sedately expressive of getting up at eight, shaving close at a quarter-past, breakfasting at nine, going to the City at ten, coming home at half-past five, and dining at seven. Nothing else to be permitted to those same vagrants the Arts, on pain of excommunication. Nothing else To Be - - anywhere!"

(Our Mutual Friend, pp. 128 - 9)

Less harmful - yet unmistakeably from the same school as Podsnap - is Carroll's Humpty Dumpty, for he is even capable of defining the meaning of words to suit his own purposes ("when I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean") and it would not be inaccurate to describe him as "being in the frequent habit of using any word that occurred to him as having a good sound, and rounding a sentence well, without much care for its meaning. And he did this so boldly, and in such an imposing manner, that he would sometimes stagger the wisest people with his eloquence and make them gasp again" - which are the very words Dickens used to describe his other great figure of pomp Mr. Pecksniff (see Chuzzlewit, p. 15) - such is the

correspondence between Carroll's characters and Dickens'. Similarly we might describe the character of the Queen of Hearts ("Off with her head!") or that of the Duchess in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland as one which showed "extreme severity and grim taciturnity; sometimes interrupted by a propensity to offer remarks in a deep warning voice, which being totally uncalled for by anything said by anybody and traceable to no association of ideas, confounded and terrified the mind. [She] may have thrown in these observations on some system of her own, and it may have been ingenious or even subtle; but the way to it was wanted." In fact, of course, the description is by Dickens of Mr. F.'s Aunt in Little Dorrit (see p. 157).

Similarly other congruities exist between people and their ideas in Carroll's and Dickens' work. Briefly, though by no means inclusively, and despite some obvious differences in tone and intention, the following examples seem to be related:

1. (a) "'This is the first class in English spelling and philosophy Nickleby ... Now, then, where's the first boy?'

'Please, sir, he's cleaning the back parlour window,' said the temporary head of the philosophical class.

'So he is, to be sure,' rejoined Squeers. 'We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r-, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of the book, he goes and does it.'"

(Nicholas Nickleby, p. 90)

(b) "'What is a Caucus-race?' said Alice ...

'Why,' said the Dodo, 'the best way to explain it is to do it.'"

(AAIW, p. 48)

2. (a) "'Wal'r, my boy,' replied the Captain [Cuttle] ... 'When found, make a note of ...'"

(Dombey, p. 210)

"'Your father's regularly rich, ain't he?' inquired Mr. Toots.

'Yes, Sir,' said Paul. 'He's Dombey and Son.'

'And which?' demanded Toots.

'And Son, Sir,' replied Paul.

Mr. Toots made one or two attempts, in a low voice to fix the firm in his mind; but not quite succeeding, said he would get Paul to mention the name again tomorrow morning, as it was rather important. And indeed he purposed nothing less than writing himself a private and confidential letter from Dombey and Son immediately."

(Dombey, p. 155)

(b) "The King was saying 'I assure you, my dear, I turned cold to the very ends of my whiskers!'

To which the Queen replied 'You haven't got any whiskers.'

'The horror of that moment,' the King went on, 'I shall never, never forget!'

'You will, though', the Queen said, 'if you don't make a memorandum of it.'

Alice looked on with great interest as the King took an enormous memorandum book out of his pocket, and began writing."

(TTLG, pp. 189 - 190)

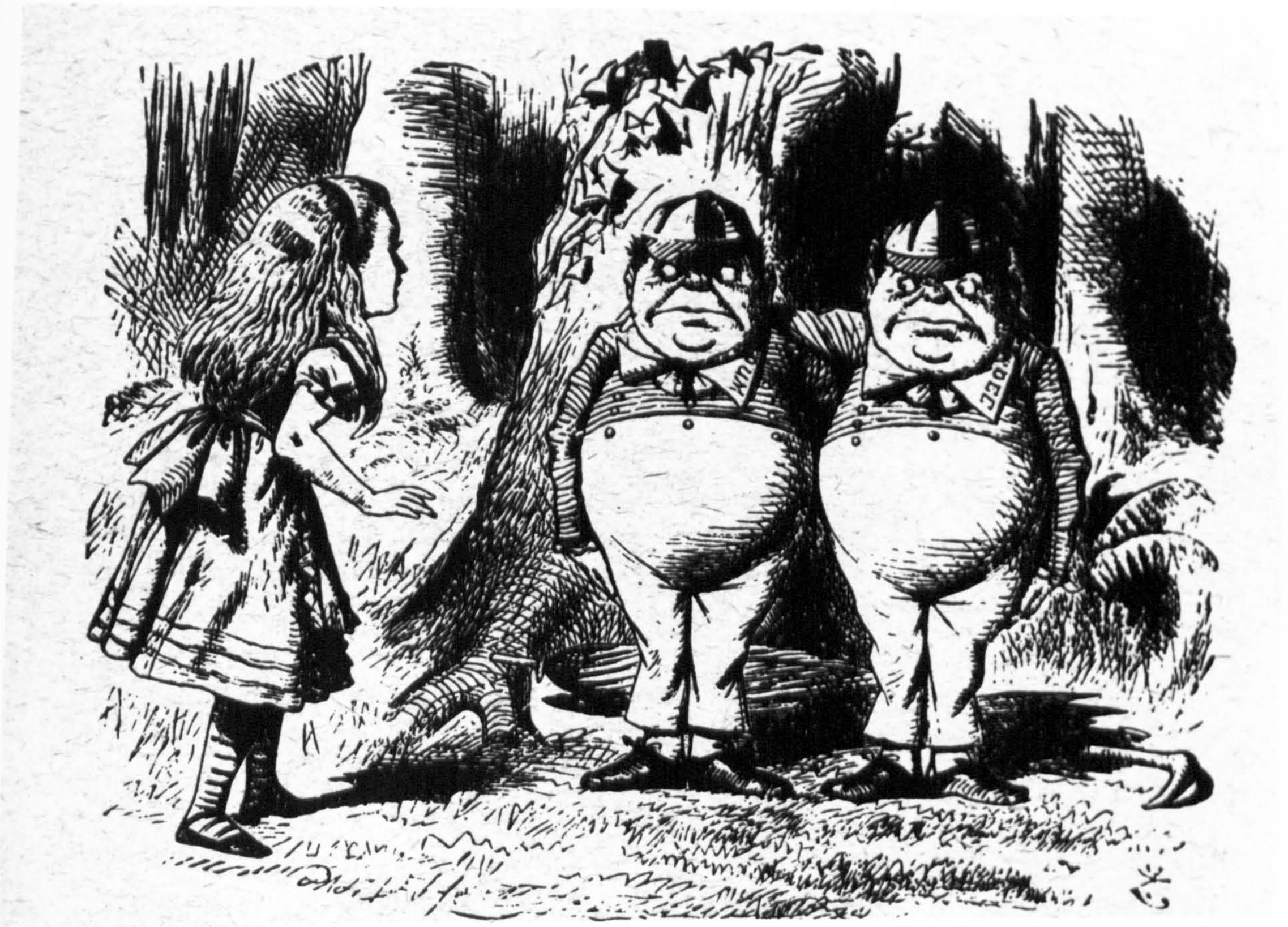
Illustrations 1 - 2

1 Tenniel: Tweedledum and Tweedledee (TTLG Ch. IV) 3(b)

2 The Cheeryble Brothers 3(a)

"What was the amazement of Nicholas when his conductor [Mr. Ned Cheeryble] advanced, and exchanged a warm greeting with another old gentleman, the very type and model of himself - the same face, the same figure, the same coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth, the same breeches and gaiters - nay, there was the very same white hat hanging on the wall! [...] Both the brothers it may be here remarked, had a very emphatic and earnest delivery; both had lost nearly the same teeth, which imparted the same peculiarity to their speech ..."

(Nicholas Nickleby, p. 453)



4. (a) "'... go into that opposite room,' said [Miss Havisham], pointing at the door behind me with her withered hand, 'and wait there till I come.'

I crossed the staircase landing, and entered the room she indicated. From that room, too, the daylight was completely excluded, and it had an airless smell that was oppressive ... Certain wintry branches of candles on the high chimney-piece faintly lighted the chamber; or, it would be more expressive to say, faintly troubled its darkness. It was spacious, and I dare say had once been handsome, but every discernible thing in it was covered with dust and mould, and dropping to pieces. The most prominent object was a long table with a table-cloth spread on it, as if a feast had been in preparation when the house and clocks all stopped together ..."

(Great Expectations, p. 78)

(b) "There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep ... The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it. 'No room! No room!' they cried out when they saw Alice coming. 'There's plenty of room!' said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table. [...]

'Well I'd hardly finished the first verse,' said the Hatter, 'when the Queen bawled out "He's murdering the time! Off with his head!"'

'How dreadfully savage!' exclaimed Alice.

'And ever since that,' the Hatter went on in a mournful tone, 'he wo'n't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now ... it's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles.'

'Then you keep moving round, I suppose?' said Alice.

'Exactly so,' said the Hatter: 'as the things get used up.'

'But what happens when you come to the beginning again?' Alice ventured to ask.

'Suppose we change the subject,' the March Hare interrupted, yawning. 'I'm getting tired of this.'"

(AAIW, pp. 93 - 99)

5. (a) "'I want to know ...' [said Clennam]

'Look here. Upon my soul you mustn't come into the place saying you want to know, you know ... You really are going it at a great pace, you know. Egad you haven't got an appointment,' said Barnacle Junior, as if the thing were growing serious ... 'Well I tell you what. Look here. You had better try the Secretarial Department,' he said at last, sliding to the bell and ringing it. 'Jenkinson' to the ... messenger, 'Mr. Wobbler!'

Arthur Clennam, who now felt that he had devoted himself to the storming of the Circumlocution Office, and must go through with it, accompanied the messenger to another floor of the building, where that functionary pointed out Mr. Wobbler's room ...

'Mr. Wobbler?' inquired the suitor [...]

'What's the matter?' said Mr. Wobbler with his mouth full.

'I want to know - ' and Arthur Clennam again mechanically set forth what he wanted to know.

'Can't inform you,' observed Mr. Wobbler, apparently to his lunch. 'Never heard of it. Nothing at all to do with it. Better try Mr. Clive, second door on the left in the next passage.'"

(Little Dorrit, pp. 113 - 4)

(b) "Alice went timidly up to the door, and knocked.

'There's no sort of use in knocking,' said the Footman, 'and that for two reasons. First, because I'm on the same side of the door as you are: secondly, because they're making such a noise inside, no one could possibly hear you.' And certainly there was a most extraordinary noise going on within - a constant howling and sneezing, and every now and then a great crash, as if a dish or kettle had been broken to pieces.

'Please, then' said Alice, 'how am I to get in?'

'There might be some sense in your knocking,' the Footman went on, without attending to her, 'if we had the door between us. For instance, if you were inside, you might knock, and I could

let you out, you know.' He was looking up into the sky all the time he was speaking, and this Alice thought decidedly uncivil. ... But at any rate he might answer questions. - How am I to get in?' she repeated aloud.

'I shall sit here,' the Footman remarked, 'till tomorrow - '

At this moment the door of the house opened, and a large plate came skimming out, straight at the Footman's head: it just grazed his nose, and broke to pieces against one of the trees behind him.

' - or next day, maybe,' the Footman continued in the same tone, exactly as if nothing had happened.

'How am I to get in?' asked Alice again, in a louder tone.

'Are you to get in at all?' said the Footman. 'That's the first question, you know.'

It was, no doubt: only Alice did not like to be told so. 'It's really dreadful,' she muttered to herself, 'the way all the creatures argue. It's enough to drive one crazy!'"

(AAIW, p. 80 - 81)

And "Just then the door opened a little way, and a creature with a long beak put its head out for a moment and said 'No admittance till the week after next!' and shut the door again with a bang.

Alice knocked and rang in vain for a long time; but at last a very old Frog, who was sitting under a tree, got up and hobbled slowly towards her: he was dressed in bright yellow, and had enormous boots on.

'What is it, now?' the Frog said in a deep hoarse whisper.

Alice turned round, ready to find fault with anybody. 'Where's the servant whose business it is to answer the door?' she began angrily.

'Which door?' said the Frog.

Alice almost stamped with irritation at the slow drawl in which he spoke. 'This door, of course!'

The Frog looked at the door with his large dull eyes for a minute: then he went nearer and rubbed it with his thumb, as if he were trying whether the paint would come off: then he looked at Alice.

'To answer the door?' he said. 'What's it been asking of?' He was so hoarse that Alice could scarcely hear him.

'I don't know what you mean,' she said.

'I speaks English, doesn't I?' the Frog went on. 'Or are you deaf? What did it ask you?'

'Nothing!' Alice said impatiently. 'I've been knocking at it!'

'Shouldn't do that - shouldn't do that - ' the Frog muttered. 'Wexes it, you know.' Then he went up and gave the door a kick with one of his great feet. 'You let it alone,' he panted out, as he hobbled back to his tree, 'and it'll let you alone, you know.'"

(TTLG, pp. 327 - 9)

6. (a) "'The boys are all as well as they were, I suppose?'

'Oh, yes, they're well enough,' replied Mrs. Squeers, snappishly. 'That young Ditcher's had a fever.'

'No' exclaimed Squeers. 'Damn that boy, he's always at something of that sort.'

'Never was such a boy, I do believe,' said Mrs. Squeers; 'whatever he has is always catching too. I say its obstinacy and nothing shall ever convince me that it isn't. I'd beat it out of him; and I told you that six months ago ...'"

(Nicholas Nickleby, p. 78)

(b) "Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes:
He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases

CHORUS

(in which the cook and the baby joined):

'Wow! wow! wow!'

... 'I speak severely to my boy,
I beat him when he sneezes;
For he can thoroughly enjoy
The pepper when he pleases!'"

(AAIW, p. 85)

7. (a) "We expressed our acknowledgements, and sat down behind the door where there was a lame invalid of a sofa. Mrs. Jellyby had very good hair, but was too much occupied with her African duties to brush it. The shawl in which she had been loosely muffled, dropped on to her chair when she advanced to us; and as she turned to resume her seat, we could not help noticing that her dress didn't nearly meet up the back ...

The room, which was strewn with papers and nearly filled by a great writing-table covered with similar litter, was, I must say, not only very untidy but very dirty. We were obliged to take notice of that with our sense of sight, even while, with our sense of hearing, we followed the poor child who had tumbled downstairs: I think into the back kitchen, where somebody seemed to stifle him ..."

(Bleak House, p. 37)

(b) "The door led right into a large kitchen, which was full of smoke from one end to the other: the Duchess was sitting on a three legged stool in the middle nursing a baby: the cook was leaning over the fire, stirring a large cauldron which seemed to be full of soup.

'There's certainly too much pepper in that soup!' Alice said to herself, as well as she could for sneezing [...]

While [Alice] was trying to fix on ... some ... topic of [conversation] the cook took the cauldron of soup off the fire, and at once set to work throwing everything within her reach at the Duchess and the baby - the fire-irons came first; then followed a shower of saucepans, plates, and dishes. The Duchess took no notice of them even when they hit her; and the baby was howling so much already, that it was quite impossible to say whether the blows hurt it or not.

'Oh, please mind what you're doing!' cried Alice, jumping up and down in an agony of terror. 'Oh there goes his precious nose!' as an unusually large saucepan flew close by it, and very nearly carried it off."

(AAIW, pp. 82 - 3)

8. (a) [Pickwick's trial]

"'Ah now gentlemen' [said Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz] 'but one word more. Two letters have passed between these parties, letters which are admitted to be in the handwriting of the defendant, and which speak volumes indeed ... They are covert, sly, underhanded communications, but, fortunately, far more conclusive than if couched in the most glowing language and the most poetic imagery ... Let me read the ... [second, it] has no date whatever, which is in itself suspicious. 'Dear Mrs. B., I shall not be at home till tomorrow. Slow coach.' And 'Don't trouble yourself about the warming-pan.' The warming pan! Why gentlemen, who <u>does</u> trouble himself about a warming pan? ... Why agitate herself about this warming pan, unless (as is no doubt the case) it is a mere cover for hidden fire - a mere substitute for some endearing word or promise ...'"

(<u>Pickwick</u>, pp. 473 - 4)

(b) "'There's more evidence to come yet, please your Majesty,' said the White Rabbit, jumping up in a great hurry: 'this paper has just been picked up.'

...'Who is it directed to?' said one of the jurymen.

'It isn't directed at all,' said the White Rabbit: 'in fact, there's nothing written on the <u>outside</u>.' He unfolded the paper as he spoke, and added 'It isn't a letter, after all: it's a set of verses.'

'Are they in the prisoner's handwriting?' asked another of the jurymen. ...

'Please, your Majesty,' said the Knave, 'I didn't write it, and they ca'n't prove that I did: there's no name signed at the end.'

'If you didn't sign it,' said the King, 'that only makes the matter worse. You <u>must</u> have meant mischief, or else you'd have signed <u>your</u> name like an honest man.'

There was a general clapping of hands at this: it was the first really clever thing the King had said that day.

'That <u>proves</u> his guilt, of course,' said the Queen."

(<u>AAIW</u>, pp. 156 - 7)

9. (a) "When we came to the Court there was the Lord Chancellor ... sitting in great state and gravity, on the bench; with the mace and seals on a red table below him, and an immense flat nosegay, like a little garden, which scented the whole of the Court. Below the table, again, was a long row of solicitors, with bundles of papers on the matting at their feet; and then there were the gentlemen of the bar - some asleep and some awake, and one talking and nobody paying much attention to what he said. The Lord Chancellor leaned back in his very easy chair, with his elbow on the cushioned arm, and his forehead resting on his hand; some of those who were present dozed; some read the newspapers; some walked about or whispered in groups: all seemed perfectly at their ease, by no means in a hurry, very unconcerned, and extremely comfortable ...

When we had been there half an hour or so, the case in progress - if I may use a phrase so ridiculous in such a connexion - seemed to die out of its own vapidity without coming, or being expected by anybody to come, to any result. The Lord Chancellor then threw down a bundle of papers from his desk to the gentlemen below him, and somebody said "JARNDYCE AND JARNDYCE". Upon this there was a buzz, and a laugh, and a general withdrawal of bystanders, and a bringing in of great heaps, and piles, and bags and bags - full of papers ..."

(Bleak House, pp. 344 - 5)

(b) "Alice had never been in a court of justice before, but she had read about them in books, and she was quite pleased to find that she knew the name of nearly everything there. 'That's the judge,' she said to herself, 'because of his great wig.' ...

'And that's the jury-box', thought Alice; 'and those twelve creatures,' (she was obliged to say "creatures", you see, because some of them were animals, and some were birds) 'I suppose they are the jurors.' She said this last word two or three times over to herself, being rather proud of it: for she thought, and rightly too, that very few little girls of her age knew the meaning of it at all. However, 'jurymen' would have done just as well.

> The twelve jurors were all writing very busily on slates. 'What are they doing?' Alice whispered to the Gryphon. 'They ca'n't have anything to put down yet, before the trial's begun.'
>
> 'They're putting down their names,' the Gryphon whispered in reply, for fear they should forget them before the end of the trial.'
>
> 'Stupid things!' Alice began in a loud indignant voice; but she stopped herself hastily, for the White Rabbit cried out 'Silence in the court!' and the King put on his spectacles and looked anxiously round, to make out who was talking.
>
> Alice could see, as well as if she were looking over their shoulders, that all the jurors were writing down 'Stupid things!' on their slates, and she could even make out that one of them didn't know how to spell 'stupid', and that he had to ask his neighbour to tell him. 'A nice muddle their slates'll be in before the trial's over!' thought Alice.
>
> (AAIW, pp. 144 - 145)
> (c.f. also HS Fit 6)

These nine examples of resemblances between certain characters and incidents in Dickens' work and those in Carroll's will have to suffice. Others, of course, spring to mind such as Todger's neighbourhood in Chuzzlewit (Ch. IX) which is as bewildering as any Wonderland territory: "A kind of resigned distraction came over the stranger as he trod those devious mazes, and, giving himself up for lost, went in and out, and round about," etc., and Mrs. Gummidge ("I am a lone lorn creetur") seems to be at least an aunt to the Mock Turtle ("Alice could hear him sighing as if his heart would break"). The greatest resemblance of all that exists between them, however, is not only to be found in specific examples but in a general similarity both in their methods of

caricature and in their implicit agreement for the need for it as a legitimate method of portraying the people around them. This method of portrayal, as Ernst Kris in his seminal book Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art (International U.P. N.Y. 1952) has observed, has affinities with the magician's preparation of a wax-doll - also ostensibly a play-thing, which despite its seeming crudity manages to capture enough of the original to be uncannily emblematic of the entire person. Such an emblem becomes, in time, all that remains of the personality "since the artist has taught us how to see the victim with different eyes and turned him into a comic monstrosity". The famous example of this which is cited by Kris is Louis Philipe being transformed into a pear by the caricaturist Charles Philipon. In the original "image magic", blood was symbolically shed which suggested and inspired the real thing when the voodoo wax dummy was pierced - in a caricature the same kind of thing occurs but under the surface of fun and play. To burn a straw doll of a Prime Minister is a more showy, less bloody, and often more effective way of killing off what is felt to be the essential evil that a man may perpetrate or symbolise than actually killing the man himself. Similarly to caricature the victim is to manage to exaggerate and transform his weaknesses often by confining his personality in an unflattering context or to an unflattering metaphor until he looks what he is. Kris sees the growth of the art of caricature as being proportionately related to the growth of the portrait painter and his goal of attempting "to reveal

the character, the essence of the man in an heroic sense"

so that the caricaturist in comparison:

> "... provided the natural counterpart - to reveal the true man behind the mask of pretense and to show up his 'essential' bitterness and ugliness. The serious artist, according to academic tenets, creates beauty by liberating the perfect form that Nature sought to express in resistant matter. The caricaturist seeks for the perfect deformity, he shows how the soul of man would express itself in his body if only matter were sufficiently pliable to Nature's intentions."
>
> (Op. cit., p. 190)

Thus the caricature can be simultaneously an almost magical flourish that captures the essentials of a personality or a self-created disguise to frustrate analysis by the outsider. In wonderland, especially, the caricatures have this ambiguity; they reflect a real world where life is two dimensional (unwonderland) but they have a magical quality of conjuring up Alice's imagination so that she sees her imperceptiveness. One of the ways in which this is done is in Carroll's use of animals in the Alices which is, of course, an example of how in the tradition of Rowlandson and Hogarth and that of animal fables, he found certain human behaviour nearer to that of animals and so fused the two to give him his characters.* Dickens also occasionally did the same kind of thing extremely well - and again Carroll may have learnt from him. The following description, for example, of Poll Sweedlepipe from Chuzzlewit is a brilliant example of this process of a marriage between human and

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*See Ronald Paulson, Rowlandson, A New Interpretation, Studio Vista, 1972, pp. 34 - 6, for the history of the animal/human metamorphosis concept in caricature.

animal and again emphasises how the preoccupied personality will caricature itself with little help from the writer:

> "Poll had something of the bird in his nature; not of the hawk or eagle, but of the sparrow, that builds in chimney-stacks and inclines to human company. He was not quarrelsome, though, like the sparrow; but peaceful, like the dove. In his walk he strutted; and, in this respect, he bore a faint resemblance to the pigeon, as well as in a certain prosiness of speech, which, might, in its monotony, be likened to the cooing of that bird. He was very inquisitive, and when he stood at his shop-door in the evening-tide, watching the neighbours, with his head on one side, and his eye cocked knowingly, there was a dash of the raven in him. Yet there was no more wickedness in Poll than in a robin ..."
>
> (Chuzzlewit, p. 419)

Here the ornithological metaphors are so applicable that the man virtually becomes the bird. In wonderland this can, indeed, actually happen. Hence the little boy who is called "Pig!" by his scolding Duchess-mother, actually turns into one (he looks what he is) - a process which intrigues Alice and sets her meditating:

> "... she began thinking over other children she knew, who might do very well as pigs, and was ... saying to herself 'If one only knew the right way to change them - "
>
> (AAIW, p. 87)

Similarly other Carrollian animals are literal renderings of metaphors that might have been used to describe them - "nervous as a (White) Rabbit", "as sleepy as a Dormouse", "as mad as a March Hare" and so on. Sometimes Carroll even shows how it is done: for example the woolly-minded and rather bleating White Queen actually metamorphoses into an even more refined caricature before Alice's very eyes (she has just asked whether her injured finger is better):

"'Oh, much better!' cried the Queen, her voice rising into a squeak as she went on. 'Much be-etter! Be-etter! Be-e-e-etter! Be-e-ehh!' The last word ended in a long bleat, so like a sheep that Alice quite started.

She looked at the Queen, who seemed to have suddenly wrapped herself up in wool. Alice rubbed her eyes, and looked again. She couldn't make out what had happened at all. Was she in a shop? And was that really - was it really a sheep that was sitting on the other side of the counter? Rub as she would, she could make nothing more of it: she was in a little dark shop, leaning with her elbows on the counter, and opposite to her was an old Sheep, sitting in an arm-chair knitting, and every now and then leaving off to look at her through a great pair of spectacles ..."

(TTLG, p. 252)

What has happened here is that the caricature label "chess-queen" has given way to another more appropriate one of being "sheep-like", just as in the political cartoons of the day (and today for that matter) where Prime Ministers are caricatured as their latest statement or problem (Edward Heath as Concorde for example). If moreover Kris is correct in his analysis of the reasons for the growth of caricature - that it flourished by way of deliberately contrasting with the serious portrait painter and his heroic sitters - then it is scarcely surprising to find two such caricaturists as Dickens and Carroll in an age which, since it had the new skill of photography to help, has provided more sober and carefully composed solemn portraits than any before or since. No wonder Punch, which was founded in 1842, also flourished as an antidote!

I have used the word "caricature" in this chapter simply through convenience - yet actually it is not ultimately accurate since it does not describe all that both Carroll and Dickens are doing in their work in their portrayal of

character. For, as Gombrich points out, "A caricature reveals its true sense to us only if we can compare it with the sitter, and thus appreciate the witty play of 'like in unlike'. It may then happen that when we meet the victim in real life we are forced to laugh at him, because his picture is linked inseparably in our minds with the caricature we have seen."* Similarly a parody has little or no absolute existence except by courtesy of the original it parodies; yet both the caricatures and the parodies of both Carroll and Dickens are fine enough to exist as generalisations about human character without any knowledge of specific originals. Likewise caricature has always been deliberately crude and, in a sense "playground art"[/] - and this is hardly an adequate description of either Carroll's or Dickens' work. The truth is, however, that they are nearer to the tradition of Hogarth than of Gillray in their portrayal of character and, though perhaps neither would have declared with Hogarth that they had nothing to do with "that modern fashion caricature" still, like him, their work does not simply "make witty comparisons of things apparently unlike but ... [reveals] the character ..."[ø] But because of the subtlety of difference between the revelation of character and caricature, certainly

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*Gombrich and Kris Caricature, p. 13.

[/]Ibid., p. 26.

[ø]Ibid., p. 181.

both Carroll and Dickens, (and perhaps to some extent even Hogarth as well), have been undervalued and misinterpreted for the very reason that caricature in itself has never achieved high status as an art form. Despite this the bewildering adult world that Alice travels through during her adventures both in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass is not, as has been often said, made up of <u>particular</u> adults caricatured and satirised. Rather, except for "in-jokes" - such as the Duck being Reverend Duckworth; the Lory being Lorina Liddell; the eaglet being Edith Liddell and the Dodo being Dodgson ("Do-Do-Dodgson" is how he was supposed to stammer when pronouncing his name)* - the characters, like those of Dickens, are examples of certain obviously recognisable types of adult. Thus, for example, just as Carroll himself says of the Red Queen that he pictured her as "the concentrated essence of all governesses", so it is this essence that flows through all the characters' veins. To make them specific people would, of course, seriously impair the reader's approach to the books. For it would be difficult for us since we know nothing of the minutiae of the day-to-day Victorian political scene to derive much pleasure from the Lion and the Unicorn if they are simply specific portraits of Gladstone and Disraeli - but as the essence of politicians they remain immediately recognisable and enjoyable.

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*<u>AAIW</u>, see Ch. II, "The Pool of Tears".

This does not mean that audiences ever since publication of the Alice books have been able to resist reading into them (or perhaps extracting from them) character portraits of current bêtes noirs; and that this is possible seems to be a very strong testament to how acutely and lastingly Carroll portrayed certain dominant human characteristics. For Carroll to be able, just like Dickens, to isolate and then fashion into generic types people that are rediscovered in generation after generation was no small achievement - and was partly possible because Carroll himself refused to be specific and recognised that topical lampoons are mortal.

Tenniel himself was perhaps the first to begin finding actual personalities in Carroll's world. Indeed he even managed to squeeze one in that world itself in the person of "the gentleman ... dressed in white paper" who is one of the passengers that accompany Alice in the railway carriage in Chapter III of Through the Looking-Glass. As Martin Gardner annotates:

> "A comparison of the illustration of [this man] with Tenniel's political cartoons in Punch leaves little doubt that the face under the folded paper hat is Benjamin Disraeli's. Tenniel and/or Carroll may have had in mind the "White Papers" (official documents) with which such statesmen are surrounded."
>
> (AA, p. 218)

But Tenniel's recognition of just how appropriate Carroll's characters were as generic types or even metaphors for adult confusion, shows itself most prominently in his cartoons for Punch that he did after he had completed his work for Carroll (see illustrations 3 - 6). Whether this use of Carroll's work seemed to license others or not is

Illustrations 3 - 10

The following four Tenniel '<u>Punch</u>' cartoons refer to:

3 THE MONSTER SLAIN: The end of the great Tichborne Case.

4 ALICE IN BLUNDERLAND: A satirical comment on the Gryphon which took the place of the historic Temple Bar at the entrance to Fleet Street.

5 FATHER WILLIAM: The German Emperor was having difficulties with his Army Bill.

6 ALICE IN BUMBLELAND: The reorganisation of the County of London under the proposals of the London Government Act of 1899 gave rise to a bewildering conflict of interests.

7 Lindley Sambourne: Bannerman and Rosebery

8 Scarfe's Edward Heath/Queen of Hearts insisting on the Industrial Relations Act ('<u>Sunday Times</u>' 8.6.1972.)

9 Gibbard's Harold Wilson/Alice looks nervously at the government directive for industrial policy called "In Place of Strife" ('<u>Guardian</u>' 10.5.1969).

10 Ugandan Asians arrive in Britain: though not all greet the news with pleasure (£50 was the allowance per family the Asians were allowed to export from Uganda) ('<u>Guardian</u>' 26.8.1972).

"THE MONSTER SLAIN."

"AND HAST THOU SLAIN THE *WAGGA*-WOCK?
COME TO MY ARMS, MY BEAMISH BOY!"

[*Vide* "The Jabberwock," in *Through the Looking-Glass.*

ALICE IN BLUNDERLAND.

(With Mr. Punch's *profoundest Apologies to "Alice in Wonderland.")*

"FATHER WILLIAM."

"YOU ARE OLD," SAID THE YOUTH; "ONE WOULD HARDLY SUPPOSE
THAT YOUR EYE WAS AS STEADY AS EVER;
YET YOU BALANCE THAT EEL ON THE END OF YOUR NOSE—
WHAT MAKES YOU SO AWFULLY CLEVER?"

ALICE IN BUMBLELAND.

The Gryphon . . City of London. *Alice* . . The Right Hon. A. J. B-lf-r. *The Mock Turtle* . . City of Westminster.

'WHAT IS THE USE OF REPEATING THAT STUFF," THE MOCK TURTLE INTERRUPTED, "IF YOU DON'T EXPLAIN IT AS YOU GO ON? IT'S BY FAR THE MOST CONFUSING THING I EVER HEARD!"

TEXT BOUND INTO THE SPINE

"If you're going to turn into a pig, my dear," said Alice seriously, "I'll have nothing to do with you. Mind now!"

'No room! No room! they cried out when they saw Alice coming'

indeterminable - suffice it to say that in the years that followed, Alice and her friends were used again and again in Punch (see illustration 7) and later in such books as Alice in Plunderland (1910; a parody against Lloyd George (the Welsh Rabbit)); Alice in the Delighted States (1928; an adventure in America); Clara in Blunderland (1902; a parody where the Jabberwocky is Porloknochy (Paul Kruger) and Clara is Balfour); Lost in Blunderland; Malice in Kurtland (1914; a parody directed against the Kaiser); The Westminster Alice; (1902 - politics parodied) and Alisquis in Blunderland; (1916; Haldane was Humpty Dumpty, Lloyd George the White Rabbit, Birrell the Cheshire Cat etc.). Other titles, briefly, are; Alice in Legal Land; Alice in Lumberland; Alice in Movieland; Alice in Numberland; Alice in Newspaperland; Alice in Orchestralia; Alice in Rankbustland (a satire on alleged abuses in the administration of the Bankruptcy Act, U.S.A.); and Allies in Wilhelmsland.*

None of these so-called "parodies" are parodies of the original Alice volumes - they are comments on contemporary events and people of the times in which they were written and, as such, are all ephemeral and practically unreadable today. The original thus cleverly provided the framework for successive generations to project their own people and problems on to (see, for modern examples, illustrations 8 - 10) whilst it skilfully avoided committing itself to satirising

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*For details see Handbook of the Literature of C. L. Dodgson, Williams and Madan O.U.P. 1931, Supplement F. pp. 287 - 309.

particular personalities. Hence to point at any one of the individual characters in Carroll's work as a specific person as critics have sometimes done is erroneous and, in a sense, misses a mark of Carroll's virtuosity which in its way is, as we have seen, of Dickensian proportions.

If such characters as occur in both Carroll's and Dickens' work seem to be limited it is therefore not a mark of <u>their</u> limitations - but because they both understood the limitations of the people around them and portrayed them with a clarity that few of their contemporaries could match. If only we as readers understand what self-imposed limitations are indicated by admissions such as "Feelings! I have no time for them, no chance of them. I pass my whole life, miss, in turning an immense pecuniary Mangle". (Mr. Lorry, <u>Tale of Two Cities</u>, p. 21) and "I wish <u>I</u> could manage to be glad ... only I can never remember the rule ..." (The White Queen, <u>TTLG</u>, p. 250) then clearly it is really hardly surprising that the much vaunted "three-dimensional character" was a rare being. Thus, though possible to find in immaturity, this animal usually managed to lose his third dimension in adulthood to avoid detection in a world where only two dimensions were expected and the third was taboo. For Carroll therefore especially, the caricature was a method by which the wonder and enigma of the dream adventure could be evolved, but also, as with Dickens, a way in which the actual two-dimensional world could be accurately reflected.

Appendix to Chapter One:

References by Carroll to Dickens' work*

(1) "I have read the first number of Dickens' new tale David Copperfield. It purports to be his life and begins with his birth and childhood: it seems a poor plot, but some of the characters and scenes are very good. One of the persons that amused me, was a Mrs. Gummidge, a wretched melancholy person, who is always crying happen what will: and whenever the fire smokes or other trifling accident occurs makes the remark with great bitterness and many tears, that she is a "lone lorn creetur, and everythink goes contrary with her"."

(letter to his second sister Elizabeth from Rugby, written when he was fifteen. Letter dated May 4th 1849, cit. Diaries, p. 17).

(2) In his story "The Walking Stick of Destiny" which he wrote for the family MS book The Rectory Umbrella (1849 - 50) Carroll parodies Dickens' style by writing Life and Truth with capital letters when they occur in one of his character's speech. He footnotes this "Dickens' style".

(The Rectory Umbrella and Mischmasch, Cassell 1932, p. 26).

(3) Carroll uses "Is this the hend" from Nicholas Nickleby as the epigraph to Ch. IV of his short story Wilhelm von Schmitz. (Ibid, p. 125).

(4) "Finished this morning the first volume of Friends in Council [Dialogues on social and intellectual subjects by Sir Arthur Helps, 1813 - 75] a book beautifully written and I think well worth a second perusal. If the conversation has a fault, it is the too great similarity of style in the different speakers. This is always a danger in fictitious conversation; it is hardly possible to give each speaker real individuality with caricature (as in Dickens) ..."

(Diaries, 16.3.1855)

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*As far as I have been able to ascertain Dickens does not seem to have ever quoted from Carroll's work, or to have shown that he read it. There appear to be no references in The Pilgrim Edition of the Letters of Charles Dickens nor have the editors, Madeline House and Graham Storey, yet come across any. (Private letter to me from Graham Storey dated 18.5.1972).

(5) "Henry VIII [was] the greatest theatrical treat I ever had or ever expect to have ... I never enjoyed anything so much in all my life before - and never felt so inclined to shed tears at anything fictitious, save, perhaps at that poetical gem of Dickens; the death of little Paul [Dombey]."

(Diaries, 22.6.1855)

(6) "Got the first number of The Train; it is, I think, only average in talent and an intense imitation of Dickens throughout - I don't think it has any chance of surviving the year."

(Diaries, 8.1.1856)

(Carroll was a contributor to The Train - he first used his nom de plume to publish the poem "Solitude" in it in March 1856. The Train was publicised, co-incidentally, in a two-page advertisement on blue paper in The Little Dorrit Advertiser which accompanied the IVth part of Little Dorrit when it was first published in periodical parts in 1856).

(7) "Read third number of Little Dorrit".

(Diaries, 8.2.1856)

(8) "We set out by coach for Barnard Castle at about 7 a.m., and passed over about forty miles of the dreariest hill country I ever saw: the climax of wretchedness was reached in Bowes where stands the original of Dickens' Dotheboys Hall: it has long ceased to be used as a school, and is falling into ruin, in which the whole place seems to be following its example - the roofs are falling in and the windows broken or barricaded - the whole town looks plague-stricken."

(Diaries, 3.8.1856)

(9) "... One novel has been all my reading, Our Mutual Friend, one of the cleverest that Dickens has written ..."

(Diaries, 16.1.1868)

(10) "From Guildford ... to town. Went with Edwin to the Olympic to see Nell or the Old Curiosity Shop [made into a four-act drama by A. Halliday]. Florence Terry acted Little Nell very nicely and Mr. Belerove was excellent as the grandfather. The best bit of acting, however, was 'Quilp' by Mr. J. Clarke. The drama ill put together, but is well acted and quite worth seeing.

(Diaries, 12.12.1870)

(11) Letter to George du Maurier, December 17th, 1873: speaking of illustrations he wants for one of his books, Dodgson writes: "The artist, whoever he may be, should go at them in the spirit of the 'fat boy' and say, 'I want to make your flesh creep.'"*

(12) Carroll used the following quotation from Pickwick as an epigraph for his fable The Blank Cheque (1874):

> "Vell, perhaps," said Sam, "you bought houses, vich is delicate English for goin' mad; or took to buildin', vich is a medical term for bein' incurable."

(See N, p. 1170)

(13) Unpublished Diary for June 26th, 1878.

"... called on Mrs. Coote, and borrowed Carrie (Lizzie was at Olympic, rehearsing "Oliver Twist") ..."

(14) "Went to town ... Took Evelyn to the Olympic, to the first night of Oliver Twist. (The play is called Nancy Sikes, and is by Mr. Cyril Searle, who acted "Bill Sikes"). Miss Rose Eytonge, from America acted "Nancy" with great force, though rather artificially Lizzie Coote made a pretty "Oliver" and acted it well on the whole; perhaps a little too sentimental. The play was fair, all but the murder at the end, which was much too realistic and ghastly. I was very sorry that I had taken Evelyn with me."

(Diaries, 9.7.1878)

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*Letters marked with an asterisk are unpublished. My attention has been drawn to them by Professor Morton Cohen of C.U.N.Y. who is at present editing a definitive edition of Carroll's letters.

(15) In a letter to Tom Taylor dated February 24th 1880, he alludes again to the stage production of Oliver Twist:*

> "Theatrical children always have a special attraction for me. The last time I wrote to you was, I think, when I wanted to introduce to your notice one of them, Lizzie Coote by name. I don't know if she ever called on you. Just about that time she appeared as "Oliver Twist", at the Olympic, in one of the most detestably realistic plays I ever saw. The murder of "Nancy" was simply brutal."

(16) Unpublished Diary for September 21st 1880:

> "Edwin and I went ... to the "Otheroscope" exhibition (on the "Pepper Ghost" principle). I had seen it, years ago, at Hastings. They did Dickens' Christmas Carol, and a farce."

(17) In a letter to Ellen Terry dated April 14th 1881, Carroll quotes from Ch. 49 of Martin Chuzzlewit: "I am one of those feeble natures, that forgives from very laziness: even things that lambs cannot forgive, No, Betsy, nor worms forget!"*

(18) Carroll refers to Pickwick in a letter to Ellen Terry, March 20th, 1883, in commenting on Much Ado about Nothing, and specifically on Hero's lack of an alibi at not having slept in her room:

> "I quite felt inclined to quote old Mr. Weller, and say to Beatrice at the end of the play ..., 'Oh Samivel, Samivel, vy vorn't there a halibi?'"*

(19) Carroll cites a production of a dramatic version of David Copperfield in his essay The Stage and the Spirit of Reverence.

(The Theatre, June 1888)

(20) "[My father's (one of Carroll's brothers)] favourite author was Charles Dickens, and in his old age he read the leather bound set of Dickens' works given him by Lewis Carroll over and over again."

(Mrs. Frere Jaques: "Recollections of my father" in Jabberwocky (The Lewis Carroll Society Magazine). No. 6, Winter 1970, p. 3).

(21) Helmut Gernsheim, in his definitive Lewis Carroll, Photographer (Dover, 1969) notes that "Like all Victorians, Lewis Carroll was an ardent collector of photographs ... The auction of his personal effects soon after his death included the astonishing number of thirty-three photograph albums ... I think that [about two-thirds of them] were filled with the usual carte-de-visite and cabinet portraits." (p. 99). In the "Lewis Carroll Centenary in London Exhibition", held in 1932, the Dodgson family loaned three of these albums, one of which contained a photograph of Dickens: evidence that Carroll was a 'fan'! (See Madan, The Lewis Carroll Centenary in London, Bumpus, 1932, p. 68).

(22) For his own photographs Carroll was fond of dressing his models in various 'character costumes', and there are at least two of these that are characters from Dickens' work. (1) "Dolly Varden" (see Beatrice Hatch; "Lewis Carroll", Strand Magazine, 1898, XV, 421); (2) Q. F. Twiss, Esq., Christ Church, as "The Artful Dodger" a photograph taken in 1858. (See LCPB, p. 192).

(23) Dickens' Wemmick from Great Expectations (Ch. 24) is quoted by Carroll's Earl in Sylvie and Bruno:

> 'A child's first view of life,' the Earl remarked, with that sweet sad smile of his, 'is that it is a period to be spent in accumulating portable property. That view gets modified as the years glide away.' (p. 509)

The phrase 'portable property' was Dickens' coinage. (See Oxford Dictionary of Quotations 2nd ed., 1959, p. 175).

(24) Carroll cites as an example of a "rose-coloured dream" the supposed tenderness of Squeers (from Nicholas Nickleby) in a letter to the Pall Mall Gazette, "Vivisection as a sign of the times": 12th February, 1875:

> "... Is it possible that ... the schoolmaster, to whom I have entrusted my little boy, can starve or neglect him? How well I remember his words to the dear child when last we parted. 'You are leaving your friends,' he said, 'but you will have a father in me, my dear, and a mother in Mrs. Squeers!'"

(Carroll is charging the physicians and surgeons - "so gentle in manner, so full of noble sentiments" with Squeersian cruelty and hypocrisy in that, despite their gentleness and nobility, they are vivisectors).

(25) ... "And just as Sairey Gamp, for pains within,
Administered a modicum of gin,
So does my mind, when vexed and ill at ease,
Console itself with soothing similes ..."

(From Notes by an Oxford Chiel, Elections to the Hebdomadal Council, 1866. See N pp. 908 - 916. The above are lines 5 - 8).

(26) In answering an assertion that a correspondent to A Tangled Tale (a series of problems originally appearing in The Monthly Packet) that "It's the same thing in substance whether in solving this problem we use words and call it arithmetic, or use letters and signs and call it algebra", Carroll uses a character from Dickens to prove otherwise:

"Take an illustration: Your house has been broken into and robbed, and you appeal to the policeman who was on duty that night. 'Well, mum, I did see a chap getting out over your garden wall: but I was a good bit off, so I didn't chase him, like. I just cut down the short way to the 'Chequers', and who should I meet but Bill Sykes, coming full spit round the corner. So I just ups and says, "My lad, you're wanted". That's all I says. And he says, "I'll go along quiet, Bobby," he says, "without the darbies," he says.' There's your Arithmetical policeman. Now try the other method: 'I seed somebody a-running, but he was well gone or ever I got nigh the place. So I just took a look round in the garden. And I noticed the footmarks, where the chap had come right across your flowerbeds. They was good big footmarks sure-ly. And I noticed as the left foot went down at the heel, ever so much deeper than the other. And I says to myself, "The chap's been a big hulking chap: and he goes lame on his left foot." And I rubs my hand on the wall where he got over, and there was soot on it, and no mistake. So I says to myself, "Now where can I light on a big man, in the chimbley-sweep line, what's lame of one foot?" And I flashes up permiscuous: and I says, "It's Bill Sykes" says I.' There is your Algebraical policeman - a higher intellectual type, to my thinking, than the other."

(See N pp. 1058 - 1059)

(27) Carroll quotes as epigraph to appendix III of Euclid and his modern rivals (2nd edition, 1885) the following from David Copperfield:

"'... and so we make it quite a merry-go-rounder.' I was obliged to consider a little before I understood what Mr. Peggotty meant by this figure, expressive of a complete circle of intelligence."

(28) "... those [readers] who succeed in mastering Part I, and who begin, like Oliver, "asking for more," I hope to provide, in Part II, some tolerably hard nuts to crack - nuts that will require all the nut-crackers they happen to possess!"

(Introduction to Symbolic Logic, 1896)

(29) Carroll read Household Words and All the Year Round at least occasionally since he refers to an article called "Mr. H's Story" which appeared in one of them (he can't remember which) in a letter to his sister Mary.

(See LLLC, p. 93)

[Probably Carroll was referring to Four Stories (told by a Mr. H.) which appeared on 14.9.1861 in All the Year Round or Mr. H.'s own narrative a related story which appeared in the same magazine on 5.10.1861. "Mr. H." was the artist Mr. Heaphy whom Carroll later met and from whom he bought a painting of a reclining girl.]

(30) Diary entry for 14.1.1888: "went to the very pretty play Dot [Don Boucicault's version of The Cricket on the Hearth] in which Toole was excellent as Caleb Plummer; Violet was a pleasing May Fielding ..."

(31) Carroll and Dickens had several mutual friends and acquaintances; not the least of these being Tenniel himself. For apart from being one of the illustrators of Dickens' Christmas book for 1848, The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain, Tenniel also acted in some of his plays (see Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dickens: His Letters to Her, ed. Perugini and Dexter, Constable, 1935, p. 161). Sarzano in his book on Tenniel further notes that Tenniel appeared during one of Dickens' theatrical evenings as "Hodge, servant to Sir Geoffrey Thornside in Not So Bad As We Seem (Lytton's play). Dickens wrote to Forster: "... You have no idea how good Tenniel, Topham & [Wilkie] Collins have been in what they do ..." (See Frances Sarzano; Sir John Tenniel, Art and Technics, 1948, p. 35).

(32) In his long search for an illustrator to replace Tenniel, Carroll wrote to Luke Fildes on July 2nd 1877:

"Dear Sir,

As I am writing this on a matter of business, and as I am unknown to you, even by name, I had better begin by stating that I am the writer of

two little books ... which were illustrated by Mr. Tenniel, whom I do not doubt you know well by reputation, if not personally. And my motive for addressing this to you is that I have seen (and admired more than I can easily express) your pictures in [Dickens'] Edwin Drood ... Is it likely that you would be willing, at some future time, to illustrate a book of the same general character as Alice's Adventures? ..."

(quoted by L. V. Fildes; Luke Fildes, R.A., A Victorian Painter, Michael Joseph, 1968, pp. 43 - 4).

(2) A digression in search of origins, or: Nonsense as a way of life, or: Uncle Toby Don Quixote and the White Knight

I Carroll and Shandean Nonsense

Although it may confirm certain received ideas about the period to think that the self-limited character who hides behind the disciplines and disguises of an occupation or eccentricity is essentially a Victorian, we must look further afield for his origins. Are, for example, Dickens and Carroll re-awakening particular types of Rip-van-Winkle who flourished earlier; are there other examples of the exploitation in literature of the painful processes of communication and self-caricature that demonstrate its problems? For though it is true that Carroll recognised that words, like eccentricities, are often ironically less useful for communication than as barriers that leave the personality unassailable behind word rituals and clichés, there have been many other users of words who have also often doubted their efficiency. What differentiates Carroll from them, and in this respect from Dickens, is that he shows Alice only beginning to understand <u>because</u> she is confused and, conversely, when she remains in control she no longer probes and questions to find answers. The "real world" assumes a status quo and acts accordingly but when Alice acts according to its demands she finds herself clumsy in wonderland and her behaviour actually delimiting. Her remarks are rendered meaningless in scores of different ways - as, for example, in the famous following exchange she has with Humpty Dumpty where he explains

how words can have their meanings imposed on them by those who are masterful enough to use them well:

"'I don't know what you mean by "glory",' Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. 'Of course you don't - till I tell you. I meant "there's a nice knock-down argument for you"!'

'But "glory" doesn't mean "a nice knock-down argument",' Alice objected.

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less.'

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you <u>can</u> make words mean so many different things.'

'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master - that's all.'

Alice was too much puzzled to say anything; so after a minute Humpty Dumpty began again. 'They've a temper, some of them - particularly verbs: they're the proudest - adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs - however, I can manage the whole lot of them! Impenetrability! Than's what I say!'

'Would you tell me please', said Alice, 'what that means?'

'Now you talk like a reasonable child,' said Humpty Dumpty, looking very much pleased. 'I meant by "impenetrability" that we've had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you'd mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don't mean to stop here all the rest of your life.'

'That's a great deal to make one word mean,' Alice said in a thoughtful tone.

'When I make a word do a lot of work like that,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'I always pay it extra.'

'Oh!' said Alice. She was too much puzzled to make any other remark."

(<u>TTLG</u>, pp. 268 - 269)

In this search to re-evaluate Carroll, and particularly this aspect of his interest, one figure immediately comes to

mind and demands consideration here so that we must now move, appropriately enough, backwards to the 18th century and Laurence Sterne's novel of non-communication that communicates by confusion; Tristram Shandy. For if Humpty Dumpty prides himself on his impenetrability (so that Alice remains perceptive because she cannot predict what will happen next) so too does Sterne:

> "What these perplexities of my uncle Toby were, — 'tis impossible for you to guess; — if you could [...] I should blush as an author; inasmuch as I set no small store by myself upon this very account, that my reader has never yet been able to guess at anything. And in this, Sir, I am of so nice and singular a humour, that if I thought you was able to form the least judgement or conjecture to yourself, of what was to come in the next pages, — I would tear it out of my book."
>
> (Tristram Shandy, p. 101)*

The main reason for considering Sterne out of chronological sequence, after Dickens, is that such an influence from Sterne and others on Carroll could have almost as effectively been transmitted through Dickens since the one thing we do know of Dickens' reading is that he was aware of the work of the early novelists through his father's "small collection of books". We are told, moreover, by the editor of the "Oxford Illustrated Dickens" Dombey and Son, H. W. Garrod, that "when he went to Lausanne in June 1846, Dickens carried with him in his book-box a copy of Tristram Shandy," and that "Sterne had been, with Fielding and Smollet, among the favourite authors of his childhood"; Dickens, himself, saying in one of his letters that, "No one read them younger than I, I think," (Dombey, p. v). Furthermore, there

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*All page references to Tristram Shandy are to the Penguin English Library Edition (1967)

is a precedent for drawing comparisons between some of Dickens' characters and those of Sterne in Forster's official Life of Dickens. He says, for example, of Betsey Trotwood that she is "a woman Captain Shandy would have loved for her startling oddities, and who is linked to the gentlest of her sex by perfect womanhood" (III, 17) and that he, in some of his characters, was able along with other "great humourists" to "enshrine in a form for eternal homage and love such [a] whimsical absurdity as [a] Captain Toby Shandy" (III, 319).

Phiz also saw that there were parallels to be drawn between Dickens and Sterne - and did so for an ironic effect in his illustration "Joe B. is sly, Sir; devilish sly" (Dombey, p. 393) in which the picture on the wall of the dining-room where Major Bagstock, Carker and Dombey are feasting, is of Toby and Widow Wadman. The contrast between that fiery courtship and the frozen affair between the widow Edith Granger and Dombey is one which is not lessened by the insincere jovial Shandyisms of "Joey B". Both Dickens and Phiz seem to be aware of the lack of real eighteenth-century gusto in this scene - and regret that it has been replaced by Dombey's coldness, Carker's treachery and the hypocrisy of Bagstock. With this in mind, when we find in Dickens a "conversation" like the following one, for example, from Oliver Twist (where Mr. Brownlow and Mr. Grimwig are "discussing" what to do about Oliver) the Shandean undertones should not be missed or its good-humoured nonsense be discounted:

"'Do not heed my friend, Miss Maylie,' said Mr. Brownlow; 'he does not mean what he says'.

'Yes, he does,' growled Mr. Grimwig.

'No he does not,' said Mr. Brownlow, obviously rising in wrath as he spoke.

'He'll eat his head if he doesn't,' growled Mr. Grimwig.

'He would deserve to have it knocked off if he does,' said Mr. Brownlow.

'And he'd uncommonly like to see any man offer to do it,' responded Mr. Grimwig, knocking his stick upon the floor.

Having gone thus far the two old gentlemen severally took snuff, and afterwards shook hands, according to their invariable custom."

(Oliver Twist, p. 311)

Such an eighteenth century inheritance which shows itself throughout Dickens' work, (the "tradition from which his novels stem*") to some extent at least must have been as obvious to Carroll as it was to other Victorian readers. We find, for example, the Athenaeum, in its review of the first nine numbers of Pickwick saying that it was a concoction of -

"two pounds of Smollet, three ounces of Sterne, a handful of Hook ..."

(3rd December, 1836)

- such obvious (and, of course, inadequate) points were certainly not beyond Carroll's range of understanding.

But besides this "second-hand" influence via Dickens, Carroll could have readily known Sterne's work through his

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*George H. Ford Dickens and his Readers, Norton N.Y., 1965, p. 55.

own direct reading - for there was a ten volume edition of Sterne's Works bound in calf in his library (DSC lot 658)*. However, the likelihood of Carroll - who in the preface to his Sylvie and Bruno Concluded complained that Bowdler's Shakespeare was "not sufficiently 'expurgated'" and that he wished for an edition that had "all that is unsuitable on the score of reverence or decency ['for girls of (say) from 10 to 17'] ... relentlessly [erased]" - welcoming the joyous indelicacies of Sterne seems perhaps out of character.ℓ Moreover in contrast to his extensive quotation of Dickens there does not seem to be extant a single quotation or recognition of Sterne's work by Carroll.

Despite this fact (and incidentally without acknowledgement of it) the link between Carroll and Sterne has been recognised as being viable once before - by a German scholar, Annemarie Schöne. In an article in Neophilogus in 1956 (vol. XL, p. 51 - 62), "Laurence Sterne - unter dem Aspekt der Nonsense - Dichtung" ("Laurence Sterne in relation to Nonsense-literature")ø she has made the first link between Carroll and Sterne. It is worthwhile perhaps at this point

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*The Sale Catalogue omits the date of this set - but NCBEL lists only six ten volume sets viz.: 1780, 1783, 1788, 1790, 1798, 1802. Carroll's was one of these - a point that will be returned to later.

ℓThough Sterne's work would have seemed to have been positively out of favour with the Victorians in general, in fact it was probably owing to the new cheap methods of printing that his work was published more during this period than at any earlier time. Both William P. Nimmo (in his "Library Edition of Standard Works" price 5/-) and George Routledge (in his "Literature and Miscellaneous" series, price 3/6) offered Sterne's Works, for example, and there were scores of other Victorian editions.

øAlthough the article is in German I shall quote from it in an English translation made for me by Mr. S. J. Curtis.

to summarise in some detail Schöne's argument, if only because it has been virtually ignored by Carroll and Sterne scholars alike.

Schöne begins by questioning the possibility that nonsense literature in the nineteenth century could exist as an independent phenomenon with no links with the past, and though she cites Shakespearean fools and old folk-literature as having elements of nonsense in them, she doubts whether these alone would have been enough to "provide the key to the mystery of how, all of a sudden in the middle of the Victorian period, a great wealth and variety of works employing an entirely new kind of humour could have been written without its being at all clear who the forerunners might be who prepared the way for them." She then cites Sterne's Tristram Shandy as being a work which, if nothing else, was one which "prepared the way" for the reader's understanding of nonsense at least. Hazlitt's link between nonsense and the "hobby-horse" is then quoted:

> "The devotion to nonsense ... is one of the striking weaknesses and greatest happinesses of our nature ... The history of hobby-horses is equally ... delightful ... My uncle Toby's is one of the best and gentlest [hobby-horses] that ever 'lifted leg'."
>
> (Lectures on the Comic Writers, 1819, 6, Centenary Edition, p. 11)

After arguing that there are similarities between fools in Shakespeare and Sterne (for example, Yorick) Schöne develops a parallel between the fool's powers of magical vision and that of Sterne's "cosiness of comic entities" - which in turn "belongs no less to the world of Tristram Shandy as it does to the Jumblies or of the

Pobble who had no toes or to the dream world of Carroll's Alice books." Schöne then continues by pointing out biographical similarities between Sterne, Carroll and Edward Lear (nonsense seen as a form of escape from the troubles of life) and, after showing how Tristram Shandy broke up the rapidly setting form of the novel (though only temporarily - and largely unappreciated until "the stream-of-consciousness novel and ... the impressionistic writing of our own day") she concludes that Sterne's other great innovation was that he created "a world of originals in which oddity is not the exception but the rule". From this point she progresses to an examination of the main characters of Tristram Shandy in some detail and celebrates the virtues of the hobby-horse - oddities being: "essential features of 'the spirit of Shandeism' and shows its function of consoling people and helping them over the miseries of everyday life. Thus eccentricities are by no means rendered ridiculous but are commended as having their own important function in that they, on the one hand, constitute a person's distinguishing characteristic and, on the other, are the sole means of making the owner amiable." Schöne then quotes Goethe on Sterne to support her:

> "Rousing the human affections in man with the utmost delicacy, Sterne has very charmingly named these qualities the 'ruling passions'. For this is what they truly are; they drive a man in a certain direction, maintain him in a constant and logical path, and, without the necessity of reflection, conviction, principle or strength of will, continually keep him alive and in motion."*

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*Aufsatzen zur Literatur, Goethe, Jub. Ausg. 38, 86.

Schöne concludes her essay by noting that "the valuation of oddity as a sign of true humanity, to which Sterne subscribed, has been completely assimilated into English life" (sic) and that Sterne "created one of the basic pre-conditions for the rise of literary Nonsense" by fostering and placing this high value on eccentricity. He, moreover, as a development from this, actually pioneered certain "elements of nonsense such as the massive accumulations of words (like Rabelais) comic metaphors, incongruous enumeration, nonsense names (like Dr. Kurostrokius ...) a nonsense alphabet which is supposed to define the nature of love ... and the use of ambiguity."

Though admirable for its pioneer qualities, certain of the assertions of this essay need to be developed further. For though certainly Schöne's understanding of Sterne's depiction of oddness and eccentricity is essentially accurate it is also itself somehow eccentric. Perhaps most interesting of all, however, is her quotation from Goethe on Sterne; for his understanding of Sterne's "ruling passion" - which "drive a man in a certain direction, maintain him in a constant and logical path, and, without the necessity of reflection, conviction, principle or strength of will keep him alive and in motion" - is the single greatest element that makes a link between Carroll and Sterne (and, for that matter, Dickens) a valid one. For it is the lack of communication through the reduction of personality to an often mechanical caricature from addiction to the hobby-horse, that is the single most prominent correspondence between them all. Here, for example, is Sterne's definition of a hobby-horse:

"For my hobby-horse, if you recollect a little, is no way a vicious beast; he has scarce one hair or lineament of the ass about him - 'Tis the sporting little filly-folly which carries you out for the present hour - a maggot, a butterfly, a picture, a fiddlestick - an Uncle Toby's siege - or an anything, which a man makes a shift to get a-stride on, to canter it away from the cares and solicitudes of life - 'Tis as useful a beast as is in the whole creation - nor do I really see how the world could do without it -"

(Tristram Shandy, pp. 557 - 558)

Here, by way of living proof of the existence of the hobby-horse rider, is the White Knight, inventor extraordinary, from Through the Looking-Glass who, as Goethe says, is indeed "maintained in a logical path" that is nevertheless, in fact, absurd:

"He was dressed in tin armour, which seemed to fit him very badly, and he had a queer-shaped little deal box fastened across his shoulders, upside-down, and with the lid hanging open. Alice looked at it with great curiosity.

'I see you're admiring my little box,' the Knight said in a friendly tone. 'It's my own invention - to keep clothes and sandwiches in. You see I carry it upside-down, so that the rain can't get in.'

'But the things can get out,' Alice gently remarked. 'Do you know the lid's open?'

'I didn't know it,' the Knight said, a shade of vexation passing over his face. 'Then all the things must have fallen out! And the box is no use without them.' He unfastened it as he spoke, and was just going to throw it into the bushes, when a sudden thought seemed to strike him, and he hung it carefully on a tree. 'Can you guess why I did that?' he said to Alice.

Alice shook her head.

'In hopes some bees may make a nest in it - then I should get the honey.'

'But you've got a bee-hive - or something like one - fastened to the saddle,' said Alice.

'Yes, it's a very good bee-hive,' the Knight said in a discontented tone, 'one of the best kind. But not a single bee has come near it yet. And the other thing is a mouse-trap. I suppose the mice keep the bees out - or the bees keep the mice out, I don't know which.'

'I was wondering what the mouse-trap was for,' said Alice. 'It isn't very likely there would be any mice on the horse's back.'

'Not very likely, perhaps,' said the Knight: 'but if they do come, I don't choose to have them running all about.'

'You see,' he went on after a pause, 'it's as well to be provided for everything.'"

(TTLG, pp. 297 - 8)

In such a character as the Knight there certainly seems more than an echo of Uncle Toby, with his similarly benign approach to war and his ingenious inventiveness, that is in the same way often impractical and absurd. Their similar inability to listen to or really communicate with anyone else comes from complete self absorption with their hobby-horse - which is not to be confused with selfishness but is really a kind of chronic tunnel vision. The White Knight's song (the parody of Wordsworth's Resolution and Independence) makes it clear that it is not deliberate perversity that prevents communication, but rather a complete addiction to a way of life - in this case the hobby-horse of invention. Thus when in the poem he asks the "aged aged man ... how is it you live?" again and again the dust kicked up by the hobby-horse completely obliterates the answer:

His accents mild took up the tale:
He said 'I go my ways,
And when I find a mountain-rill
I set it in a blaze ...

... But I was thinking of a way
To feed oneself on batter,
And so go on from day to day
Getting a little fatter.
I shook him well from side to side,
Until his face was blue:
'Come, tell me how you live,' I cried,
'And what it is you do!'

(TTLG, p. 311)

The aged-aged man could never tell the White Knight about his life because he would not listen, but the best explanation of the White Knight's way of life is to be found in Tristram's analysis of Walter Shandy:

> —— There was that infinitude of oddities in [my father], and of chances along with it, by which hand he would take a thing, —— it baffled, Sir, all calculations. —— The truth was, his road lay so very far on one side, from that wherein most men travelled, —— that every object before him presented a face and section of itself to his eye, altogether different from the plan and elevation of it seen by the rest of mankind. —— In other words, 'twas a different object, —— and in course was differently considered. This is the true reason, that my Dear Jenny and I, as well as all the world besides us, have such eternal squabbles about nothing.
>
> (Tristram Shandy, p. 375)

To see the world as a different one from a different position because the individual is steadfastly going through life on a road "so very far on one side", has always been a source of comedy and a fond target for caricaturists, whether writers or graphic artists. For they have been preoccupied, ever since Hogarth, with demonstrating how the same stimulus will provoke different responses for different people in

differing mental conditions - and this can most clearly be shown by the fascination that graphic caricaturists have always shown in their ready depiction of audiences - the members of which are almost invariably registering different emotions and thoughts though they are watching the same stage activity.*

Sterne's work is, in its way, if not the father at least a follower of this tradition of caricature.[/] For he manages the impossible of communicating the lack of straightforward communication both by demonstrating Tristram Shandy's vision of the world <u>through</u> his eyes,

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*See, for example, Hogarth's "The Laughing Audience", Rowlandson's "Comedy Spectators and Tragedy Spectators" (1789), George Cruikshank's "Pit, Boxes and Gallery" and Daumier's "The Orchestra during the Acting of a Tragedy" (1852).

[/] Reference has already been made to the graphic caricaturists but it is interesting to document the contact and obvious admiration that Sterne, Carroll and Dickens had for them. Dickens, for example, had the work of Hogarth, Gillray, Cruikshank, Doré and Tenniel in his library (see <u>The Catalogue of the Library of Charles Dickens</u> Ed. Stonehouse, repr. Piccadilly Fountain Press, 1935) and it does not seem coincidental that it was Rowlandson who illustrated many of the eighteenth century novels he admired - Fielding, Sterne, Goldsmith and Smollet. Sterne's admiration of Hogarth (and compliment to him in <u>Tristram Shandy</u> see p. 124) resulted in Hogarth providing an illustration as frontispiece for the 2nd edition of volumes I and II in April 1760, and another for volumes III and IV in January 1761; Carroll was, of course, not only a friend of Tenniel's but also a life-long devotee of <u>Punch</u> and had in his library examples of work by Gillray, Cruikshank and Leech. Carroll also admired some of Hogarth's work as this unpublished <u>Diary</u> entry shows:

"24 March 1882: Got Chandler [a friend] to come and criticise a collection of Hogarth's prints (117) which I have just bought. I think of selecting the presentable ones and selling the rest ..."

and by drawing out the character of the dramatis personae through extremely sophisticated Hogarthian methods.* These are, of course, extraordinary and seemingly disorganised since he is attempting to convey and enact at the same time; his medium is the message - or rather so it appears. The fact is, of course, that though seemingly arbitrary, Sterne is never really out of control - just as Carroll's Jabberwocky is also carefully created though apparently arbitrary in its choice of words and sounds. Both of them are attempting to achieve in their work a stimulus to the reader's imagination by confronting him, paradoxically, with art that does not exaggerate but reproduces life uncensored or formalised by art. Thus Sterne admits that his writing is unbounded by the rules of fiction because what he wants to reproduce is life and its lack of organisation, saying that he "shall confine [himself] neither to [Horace's] rules, nor to any man's rules" during the composition of his own work. Accordingly, intending to stimulate the imagination and expose the truth about communication, Sterne's writing follows no obvious logic except the arbitrary logic of a personal association of ideas and refuses to conform to any recognised schematisation or working hypothesis. Such conventions, as he saw them, did not help the intellect but hindered it. For example he says of Walter Shandy:

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*Ronald Paulson goes so far as to claim that "Sterne is remembered as the inheritor of Hogarth's method as well as his theory" (see Hogarth: His Life, Art and Times, Yale U.P., New Haven, 2 vols. 1971, II, 305; see also pp. 303 - 6 for the history of Hogarth's illustrations to Tristram Shandy.

"My father['s way] was to force every event in nature into an hypothesis, by which means never man crucified TRUTH at the rate he did ..."

(Tristram Shandy, p. 613)

Dickens' prison walls, and the characters' self-enclosure behind rules, preoccupations and preconceptions are, of course, exactly the kind of strictures that Sterne sees in his characters but personally eschews and tries to prevent either himself or his reader taking safe refuge behind. He must try all the time to disconcert, to stimulate, to provoke us to decode his riddling and to move away from limiting schematisation of thought in order to mirror the madness of the world in his seemingly mad novel:

"Let me go on, and tell my own story my own way:- or, if I should seem now and then to trifle upon the road, —— or should sometimes put on a fool's cap with a bell to it, for a moment or two as we pass along, —— Don't fly off, —— but rather courteously give me credit for a little more vision than appears upon my outside; —— and as we jog on, either laugh with me, or at me, or in short do anything, —— only keep your temper."

(Tristram Shandy, p. 41)

It seems no coincidence that Alice is told by the hookah-smoking Caterpillar similarly to keep her temper* (see AAIW, p. 69), for the unstable world of Wonderland asks similar questions about communication and challenges the ordinary assumptions that we rely on to find our way. Thus Alice, and we, find that the old comfortable rules of ordering things do not apply:

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*In the same exchange Alice is asked by the Caterpillar "Who are you?" c.f. "My good friend, quoth I —— as sure as I am I —— and you are you —— And who are you? said he —— Don't puzzle me; said I" from Tristram Shandy, p. 500.

"'Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual, I wonder if I've changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is "Who in the world am I?" Ah, that's the great puzzle!' And she began thinking over all the children she knew that were of the same age as herself, to see if she could have been changed for any of them.

'I'm sure I'm not Ada,' she said, 'for her hair goes in such long ringlets, and mine doesn't go in ringlets at all; and I'm sure I ca'n't be Mabel, for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh, she knows such a very little! Besides, she's she, and I'm I, and - oh dear, how puzzling it all is! I'll try if I know all the things I used to know. Let me see: four times five is twelve, and four times six is thirteen, and four times seven is - oh dear! I shall never get to twenty at that rate! However, the Multiplication Table doesn't signify: let's try Geography. London is the capital of Paris, and Paris is the capital of Rome, and Rome - no, that's all wrong, I'm certain! I must have been changed for Mabel!

(AAIW, pp. 37 - 38)

It is this lack of "the right words" - and the difficulty of ever really finding them that is one of the prime mutual preoccupations of Carroll and Sterne. Carroll, indeed, seems to have especially devised a whole range of characters that exist to draw attention to what are in fact rules of non-communication, purposely designed to keep Alice's mind out of focus and unpresuming, and therefore alive to the very real difficulties of communication. Indeed this one principle of questioning the norms and forms of communication by parading in quick succession the methods by which it can so easily be made to break down, is a large part of Carroll's virtuosity. And, of course, what prevents communication is also a prime concern of Sterne's in Tristram Shandy. What relates both the world of Uncle Toby and the White Knight is the way that both Sterne and Carroll

recognise the existence of their characters' small worlds that, though they may all revolve in the same direction, never actually meet. Moreover there seem to be deliberate sets of rules that keep these worlds apart, since all the various characters (like, indeed, many of Dickens') are self-caricatures who are incapable of anything but an unthinking rigidity and therefore use all their gifts to confuse and distract others from carrying off a successful bout of communication. Characters in Wonderland therefore display a surprising ability to perplex the explorer, be it the reader or Alice, and act often in an automatic and reflex way so that they are able to avoid pondering over a given situation. Though no rules are actually formulated, the principle of non-communication is so rife in Wonderland they can in fact be readily discovered - although, of course, the characters themselves continually blame not themselves but Alice, and by inference us, for muddying the waters. Carroll, by contrasting the lunatic and sane worlds, demonstrates just how close they are, and how neither their madness nor Alice's perfect grammatical syntax (nor ours) are really adequate in the face of the problem of understanding one another.

The key rule in Wonderland is the opposite of this and is Never to Communicate Anything if you can help it, (and in this has obvious parallels with Dickens' Circumlocution Office and How Not to Do it) whilst talking all the time: all other rules are essentially concerned with keeping this rule inviolable; to communicate is a sin. It may be useful

to list the ways in which this rule is kept. The first sub-rule is the desirability of the use of word-play; hence in Carroll's poem The Three Voices the man uses a pun to escape the woman's threat of destruction:

> "'The world is but a Thought,' said he,
> 'The vast unfathomable sea
> Is but a Notion unto me.'"

and thus escapes easily from her immediate attack. Similarly the White Queen:

> "'How is bread made?'
>
> 'I know that!' Alice cried eagerly. 'You take some flour - '
>
> 'Where do you pick the flower?' the White Queen asked. 'In a garden, or in the hedges?'
>
> 'Well it isn't picked at all,' Alice explained: 'it's ground - '
>
> 'How many acres of ground?' said the White Queen."
>
> (TTLG, p. 322)

Likewise the Mock Turtle:

> "'When we were little ... we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle - we used to call him Tortoise -'
>
> 'Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn't one?' Alice asked.
>
> 'We called him Tortoise because he taught us,' said the Mock Turtle angrily: 'really you are very dull!'
>
> 'You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question,' added the Gryphon; and then they both sat silent and looked at poor Alice, who felt ready to sink into the earth."
>
> (AAIW, pp. 126 - 7)

These are just two examples of the many, many instances of the pun being used for the purpose of bewilderment. In the

special environment of the poem The Three Voices, however, the pun will not be suffered, and justifiably the man is rebuked by the woman for playing the pun-game where it is invalid:

> "The Good and Great must ever shun
> That reckless and abandoned one
> Who stoops to perpetrate a pun.
>
> The man that smokes - that reads the Times
> That goes to Christmas Pantomimes -
> Is capable of any crimes!"

and eventually the man is reduced to "a scared dullard, gibbering low."* The man can be reduced because the environment enables her to penetrate his personality since he is not protected by the rules of a game and she is able to communicate to him his worthlessness:

> "Yea, each to each was worse than foe;
> Thou, a scared dullard, gibbering low,
> AND SHE, AN AVALANCE OF WOE!"

Moreover, that this undervalued poem actually uses recognisable forms of nonsense to achieve its end, gives it a force that makes it rank highly in Carroll's work, and demonstrates that Nonsense at its best is a precise celebration of the imprecision of communication and that this, paradoxically, is part of its sense - that is, to provide a mirror to an absurd world that

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*See A. B. Frost's drawing in early editions of Rhyme? and Reason? for this and his magnificent grasp of the special environment where the 'nonsense game' will not work - i.e. a desolated sea-scape. This visual interpretation would almost certainly have been in accordance with Carroll's own ideas, as he was scrupulously precise in his supervision of all the drawings done for him by his numerous illustrators. See pp. 259 - 261 LLLC.

thinks itself to be sane. Thus the following rules are not only to be found in Wonderland and often precedented in Sterne and Dickens, but also are used by many people most of the time.

Rule (2) Stick rigidly to the first premise and do not advance from it. This can be achieved by the extensive use of word play, dislocation of idea, false logic, misleading imagery and misapplied metaphor. Do this precisely and methodically in order to distract the inquirer. Thus with a dazzling glossy surface any questions concerning the hurriedly applied undercoat will be avoided:

"'And how many hours a day did you do lessons?' said Alice ...

'Ten hours the first day,' said the Mock Turtle: 'nine the next, and so on.'

'What a curious plan!' exclaimed Alice.

'That's the reason they're called lessons ... because they lessen from day to day.'

This was quite a new idea to Alice, and she thought it over a little before she made her next remark. 'Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?'

'Of course it was,' said the Mock Turtle.

'And how did you manage on the twelfth?' Alice went on eagerly.

'That's enough about lessons,' the Gryphon interrupted in a very decided tone: 'tell her about the games now.'"

(AAIW, p. 130)

Rule (3) Use words to bombard your listener into submission. Miss out punctuation for an added effect:

"'[Mustard is] a vegetable. It doesn't look like one, but it is' [Alice said]

'I quite agree with you,' said the Duchess; 'and the moral of that is - "Be what you would seem to be" - or, if you'd like it put more simply - "Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise."'

'I think I should understand that better,' Alice said very politely, 'if I had it written down: but I ca'n't quite follow it as you say it.'

'That's nothing to what I could say if I chose,' the Duchess replied, in a pleased tone."

(AAIW, p. 122)

Rule (4) Use lots of pronouns - it makes for confusion:

"They told me you had been to her,
And mentioned me to him:
She gave me a good character,
But said I could not swim.

He sent them word I had not gone
(We know it to be true):
If she should push the matter on,
What would become of you?

I gave her one, they gave him two,
You gave us three or more;
They all returned from him to you,
Though they were mine before

If I or she should chance to be
Involved in this affair,
He trusts to you to set them free,
Exactly as we were

My notion was that you had been
(Before she had this fit)
An obstacle that came between
Him, and ourselves, and it.

Don't let him know she liked them best,
For this must ever be
A secret, kept from all the rest
Between yourself and me."

(AAIW, p. 158)

Rule (5) Be hypocritical; say what you should say but <u>do</u> whatever you wish. Sincerity is not a virtue; the ability to bewilder <u>is</u>:

> "'It seems a shame,' the Walrus said,
> 'To play them such a trick,
> After we've brought them out so far,
> And made them trot so quick!'
> The Carpenter said nothing but
> 'The butter's spread too thick!'
>
> 'I weep for you,' the Walrus said,
> 'I deeply sympathize.'
> With sobs and tears he sorted out
> Those of the largest size,
> Holding his pocket-handkerchief
> Before his streaming eyes.
>
> 'O Oysters,' said the Carpenter.
> 'You've had a pleasant run!
> Shall we be trotting home again?'
> But answer came, there none -
> And this was scarcely odd, because
> They'd eaten every one ..."
>
> (<u>TTLG</u>, p. 236)

Rule (6) Speed sometimes can aid the principle of non-communication; so also can interruption and harsh interrogation:

> "'Manners are not taught in lessons,' said Alice. 'Lessons teach you to do sums, and things of that sort.'
>
> 'Can you do Addition?' the White Queen asked. 'What's one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one?'
>
> 'I don't know,' said Alice. 'I lost count'.
>
> 'She can't do Addition,' the Red Queen interrupted. 'Can you do Subtraction? Take nine from eight.'
>
> 'Nine from eight I can't, you know,' Alice replied very readily: 'but - '
>
> 'She can't do Subtraction,' said the White Queen. 'Can you do Division? Divide a loaf by a knife - what's the answer to that?'

'I suppose - ' Alice was beginning, but the Red Queen answered for her. 'Bread and butter of course ...'"

(TTLG, pp. 320 - 1)

Rule (7) Become as confusing as possible; lacing what you are saying with incongruous examples. Oppose the idea of 'gravitas' with bewildering non sequiturs:

"'Come back!' the Caterpillar called after her. 'I've something important to say!'

This sounded promising certainly: Alice turned and came back again.

'Keep your temper,' said the Caterpillar.

'Is that all?' said Alice, swallowing down her anger as well as she could.

'No,' said the Caterpillar."

(AAIW, p. 68)

Rule (8) A head-on collision is allowable, but only in emergencies, e.g.:

"... [The three little sisters] 'were learning to draw,' the Dormouse went on, yawning and rubbing its eyes, for it was getting very sleepy; 'and they drew all manner of things - everything that begins with an M - '

'Why with an M?' said Alice.

'Why not?' said the March Hare.

Alice was silent."

(AAIW, p. 103)

Rule (9) Do not listen to anyone because this will interfere with your ability to obstruct and only confuse your original plan of confusion. Be resolute and there will be no intrusion; be pig-headed rather than reasonable, otherwise you will fail, e.g.:

"'That's very important,' the King said, turning to the jury. They were just beginning to write this down on their slates when the White Rabbit interrupted; 'Unimportant, your Majesty, means of course ...'

'Unimportant, of course, I meant,' the King hastily said, and went on to himself in an undertone, 'important ... unimportant ... unimportant ... important' as if he were trying to find which word sounded best.

Some of the jury wrote it down 'important' and some 'unimportant'. Alice could see this, as she was near enough to look over their slates; 'but it doesn't matter a bit,' she thought to herself."

(AAIW, p. 155 - 6)

Indeed shortly after this episode Alice wakes from Wonderland because the King (supposedly the personification of authority) has allowed himself to become confused by the White Rabbit. Thus the King breaks the rule by listening to him, does not remain resolute and shows his own confusion - hence Alice can no longer be bewildered by him, for he has communicated, the worst of all sins, his own ineptitude.

Rule (10) Invent new words where necessary:

"'Well 'toves' are something like badgers - they're something like lizards - and they's something like corkscrews.'

'They must be very curious creatures.'

'They are that,' said Humpty Dumpty.

(TTLG, p. 271)

Rule (11) Look at things backwards to avoid answering a question:

"Sylvie was arranging some letters on a board - E-V-I-L. 'Now Bruno,' she said, 'What does that spell?'

Bruno looked at it, in solemn silence, for a minute. 'I know what it doesn't spell!' he said at last.

'That's no good,' said Sylvie. 'What does it spell?'

Bruno took another look at the mysterious letters. 'Why, it's 'LIVE' backwards!' ..."

(SBC, p. 529)

Rule (12) When it furthers the cause of confusion assume that an accepted figure of speech is literally meant and is exactly reproducing the meaning that the speaker intends:

"'I beg your pardon?' said Alice.
'It isn't respectable to beg.' said the King.
'I only meant that I didn't understand ...'"
(TTLG, p. 280)

Rule (13) A very important rule; think lots and lots of thoughts; it doesn't really matter what; and again do not listen:

"... I saw an aged aged man,
A-sitting on a gate.
'Who are you aged man?' I said.
'And how is it you live,'
And his answer trickled through my head
Like water through a sieve

He said 'I look for butterflies
That sleep among the wheat:
I make them into mutton-pies,
And sell them in the street ...'

But I was thinking of a plan
To dye one's whiskers green,
And always use so large a fan
That they could not be seen.
So having no reply to give
To what the old man said,
I cried 'Come tell me how you live!'
And thumped him on the head ..."

(TTLG, p. 311)

Rule (14) if rule (13) is difficult - try. Since the only real external limit imposed on the fancy, is an unwillingness to explore possibilities open to the imagination, make sure that you are unwilling:

"The Lion had joined them ... he looked very tired and sleepy, and his eyes were half shut.

'What's this!' he said, blinking lazily at Alice, and speaking in a deep hollow tone that sounded like the tolling of a great bell.

'Ah, what is it, now?' the Unicorn cried eagerly. 'You'll never guess! I couldn't.'

The Lion looked at Alice wearily. 'Are you animal - or vegetable - or mineral?' he said, yawning at every other word.

'It's a fabulous monster!' the Unicorn cried out, before Alice could reply.

'Then hand round the plum-cake, Monster,' the Lion said ..."

(TTLG, pp. 288 - 9)

The sense behind these rules, which are only a selection from the many that operate in Wonderland, has its roots not only in Dickensian examples of the unvulnerable personality, fenced round as we have seen by self caricature, but also seems to follow an even better example from Laurence Sterne. For the reader of Tristram Shandy and A Sentimental Journey suffers in a similar way to Alice because his expectations of what a novel is, and what form the "Life and Opinions" of a hero or a journey "Through France and Italy" should take, are similarly not indulged. Thus in the former the hero gets born in volume IV, breeched in volume VI and from then onwards the story of his life is virtually crowded out by other events, stories and digressions until the volume

concludes without him. A Sentimental Journey is equally disturbing as, despite its sub-title ("Through France and Italy") Italy is never reached and the whole journey might as easily have taken place in England or even in Yorick's head, for all that it has to do with France. In a sense then, the rules and regulations that the reader tries to bring to bear on Sterne's world are as completely inverted and mocked as those that Alice (or rather the effect of her upbringing) attempts to impose on Wonderland.* Hence both our and Alice's ideas about what should succeed as forms of communication and rules to govern life are shown as invalid and replaced more candidly by ones that deliberately keep people apart. In their recognition and comic portrayal of this, Sterne and Carroll manage to ridicule the self-absorbed personality (both as character and reader) who expects that communication is more a matter of form than content. Hence it is not surprising to find that a deliberate disturbance and inversion of the usual processes of communication - as in these rules - forms a great part of both Sterne's and Carroll's work. As far as the former

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*In this, Swift's treatment of Gulliver his traveller through eight wonderlands, resembles Carroll's of Alice. For Gulliver, like Alice, guides the reader's established sense of order through worlds where it will not do; changing relative size and intellectual and social orientation to throw the reader's preconceptions off balance. It is possible that Carroll knew Swift's work, though he did not seem to have it in his library, and it may have been influential here. (Some of the typographical devices beloved by Sterne and Carroll which will be looked at later in this chapter were also of course anticipated by Swift, for example in the maps in Gulliver's Travels and the lines of asterisks etc. that punctuate Tale of a Tub. Greenacre's claims, in her Swift and Carroll, A Psycho-analytic Study of Two Lives (International U.P., N.Y., 1955) are for medical rather than literary or artistic similarities between them.

is concerned, for example, it seems that it is imperative that the reader's reaction to the medley of colliding voices, fractured plot sequences and digressions, time-shifts, typographical jokes/devices, learned (and not so learned) wit, furiously ridden hobby-horses, innuendos and good-humoured insults must be (and is meant to be) one of bewilderment and astonishment. Sterne was, nevertheless, writing in accord with (and by exemplifying it ad absurdum, satirising) Locke's theory that the association of ideas in the mind was an irrational process. Thus he increased the irrationality of the process in order to make us conscious of its artificiality and to demonstrate the lack of a recognisable logic in a world where there is neither a beginning, a middle nor an end to the ever-continuing stream of digressions, time-consuming details, surprises (marbled pages et al) and interruptions. This is a world where there is:

> "... no regular reasoning upon the ebbs and flows of our humours; they may depend upon the same causes, for ought I know, which influence the tides themselves."
>
> (Sentimental Journey, Ch. III)

What does "influence the tides themselves" is, of course, the moon; and Sterne, again like Dickens and Carroll, was alive to the value of the freedoms of madness and the often limited nature of sanity. Such a paradox equally shows that there can be more sense in so-called nonsense than there may be in commonplace rationality. Sterne's aim therefore is an exploration (and exploitation) of the lack of "regular

reasoning" that he observes around him and thus he rejects the picaresque tradition of his contemporary fellow novelists or, perhaps, rather exaggerates the tradition to make his novel a seemingly never-ending series of events and digressions that are in a constant state of flux. To do this, however, he had to overcome the limitations of language and force the medium of the logical and sequential novel into something new so that it could carry the illogical wanderings and digressions of the human mind. At the same time he had to be careful that the reader was beguiled into understanding, since Sterne's first premise is that words themselves are essentially inaccurate. His answer was to stimulate the imagination:

> "WRITING, when properly managed, (as you may be sure I think mine is) is but a different name for conversation: As no one, who knows what he is about in good company, would venture to talk all; ——— so no author, who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good breeding, would presume to think all: The truest respect which you can pay to the reader's understanding, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself.
>
> For my own part, I am eternally paying him compliments of this kind, and do all that lies in my power to keep his imagination as busy as my own."
>
> (Tristram Shandy, p. 127)

In this way the understanding was, in theory at least, to be enticed out from behind the prejudices that fence the individual off from effective communication; hence the element of surprise was exploited by Sterne as an absolutely essential vanguard to stun preconceptions so that the imagination might be reached and forced to work. Similarly Carroll's world is, as Alice complains, bewildering - but there are compensations in that the mind discovers new freedoms and dimensions:

"'I don't understand you,' said Alice. 'It's dreadfully confusing!'

'That's the effect of living backwards,' the Queen said kindly: 'it always makes one a little giddy at first - '

'Living backwards!' Alice repeated in great astonishment. 'I never heard of such a thing!'

' - but there's one great advantage in it, that one's memory works both ways.

'I'm sure mine only works one way,' Alice remarked. 'I ca'n't remember things before they happen.'

'It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards,' the Queen remarked.

'What sort of things do you remember best?' Alice ventured to ask.

'Oh, things that happened the week after next,' the Queen replied in a careless tone.'"

(TTLG, pp. 247 - 8)

We find that Sterne/Tristram Shandy has the same power of mental projection:

"I am this moment walking across the market-place of Auxerre with my father and my uncle Toby, in our way back to dinner - and I am this moment also entering Lyons with my post-chaise broke into a thousand pieces - and I am moreover this moment in a handsome pavillion built by Pringello, upon the banks of the Garonne, which Mons. Sligniac has lent me, and where I now sit rhapsodizing all these affairs.

- Let me collect myself, and pursue my journey."

(Tristram Shandy, p. 492)

In Through the Looking-Glass especially, Carroll exploits the notion of time and mocks the concept of life carefully regulated by the dictates of the clock, as for example, in the incident when the White Queen injures

herself retrospectively whilst simultaneously being able to predict what is going to happen.

The exploitation of such unexpected procedures by Carroll and Sterne keeps the reader, and in Carroll's case the protagonist, alive to the possibility that nothing is actually fixed as expected and that everything is open to doubt and change and interpretation other than the obvious. Hence a character, like for example, Uncle Toby, will think of nothing but fortifications and campaigns of war and therefore will measure everything in these terms and ignore virtually everything else. Likewise, we interpret life in our own image and make assumptions about time sequences and the definition of words that are very nearly absurd. Thus when the philosophical Walter whose delight is pure abstraction (which, as the novel shows, is totally useless in its ostensible end of giving order to life) converses with Toby, whose head is filled with ideas of war, the result is that they largely talk to themselves:

> "'Now, whether we observe it or no,' continued my father, 'in every sound man's head, there is a regular succession of ideas of one sort or another, which follow each other in train just like —— A train of artillery? said my Uncle Toby —— A train of a fiddlestick! —— quoth my father, —— which follow and succeed one another like the images inside of a lanthorn turned round by the heat of a candle ...'"
>
> (Tristram Shandy, p. 201)

Such difficulties are taken by both Carroll and Sterne as a mainspring for their comedy of communication errors. Language, they both recognised in their different ways, was a difficult thing and to be treated with respect:

"... —— O my countrymen! —— be nice; —— be cautious of your language; and never, O! never let it be forgotten upon what small particles your eloquence and your fame depend.

—— 'My sister, mayhaps,' quoth my Uncle Toby, 'does not choose to let a man come so near her ****' Make this dash, —— 'tis an Aposiopesis. —— Take the dash away, and write Backside, 'tis Bawdy. Scratch Backside out, and put coveredway in, 'tis a Metaphor; ——and, I dare say, as fortification ran so much in my Uncle Toby's head, that if he had been left to have added one word to the sentence, —— that word was it."

(Tristram Shandy, p. 120)

c.f. Lewis Carroll:

"... no word has a meaning inseparably attached to it; a word means what the speaker intends by it and what the hearer understands by it, and that is all.

I meet a friend and say, 'Good morning!' Harmless words enough, one would think. Yet possibly, in some language he and I have never heard, these words may convey utterly horrid and loathsome ideas. But are we responsible for this? This thought may serve to lessen the horror of some of the language used by the lower classes, which, it is a comfort to remember is often a mere collection of unmeaning sounds, so far as speaker and hearer are concerned."

(From "The Stage and the Spirit of Reference" first published in The Theatre for June 1888. Repr., LCPB)

Sterne, of course, delighted in the possibility of conjuring up what Carroll (who was nothing if not prudish) calls here "utterly horrid and loathsome ideas", and actually lavishly exploited the fact that it is possible, by insisting on the harmlessness of words and their meaning, to load them with bawdy innuendo:

"I define a nose as follows —— entreating only beforehand, and beseeching my readers, both male and female, of what age, complexion, and condition soever, for the love of God and their own souls, to guard against the temptations and suggestions of the devil, and suffer him by no art or wile to put any other ideas into their minds, that what I

put into my definition. —— For by the word Nose throughout all this long chapter of noses, and in every other part of my work, where the word Nose occurs, —— I declare, by that word I mean a Nose, and nothing more, or less."

(Tristram Shandy, p. 225)

Words then, have usually more than one meaning, and if they do not, like the word "nose" here, they can moreover always be forced to carry an imposed meaning. As Stedmond* says of Tristram Shandy "puns and double meanings emphasise the unstable nature of language, its dynamic qualities which are so difficult to control. One can never really be sure of saying what one means." Stedmond here is, of course, echoing what is perhaps Carroll's most famous paradox, and the source of the majority of the difficulties of language:

"'Come, we shall have some fun now!' thought Alice. 'I'm glad they've begun asking riddles - I believe I can guess that' [i.e. the riddle that the Hatter has just posed to the tea party] she added aloud.

'Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?' said the March Hare.

'Exactly so,' said Alice.

'Then you should have said what you mean,' the March Hare went on.

'I do', Alice rashly replied: 'at least - at least I mean what I say - that's the same thing, you know.'

'Not the same thing a bit!' said the Hatter. 'Why, you might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the same thing as "I eat what I see"'.

'You might just as well say' added the March Hare 'that "I like what I get" is the same thing as "I get what I like"!'"

(AAIW, p. 95)

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*The Comic Art of Laurence Sterne, University of Toronto Press, 1967, p. 44.

This constant destruction of the illusion that control is possible over language - and hence, by inference, over life itself - is another important fundamental concurrence of Carroll and Sterne. Carroll, in particular, as we shall see time and again in the course of these chapters, enjoyed the difficulties of language and questioned its mechanics even to the extent of demonstrating that even if the most precise logic and the utmost care are employed there is a proportionately greater degree of error in the use of words:

> "'You are sad,' the Knight said in an anxious tone: 'let me sing you a song to comfort you ... The name of the song is called "Haddocks' Eyes"'.
>
> 'Oh, that's the name of the song, is it?' Alice said trying to feel interested.
>
> 'No, you don't understand,' the Knight said, looking a little vexed. 'That's what the name is called. The name really is "The Aged Aged Man."'
>
> 'Then I ought to have said "That's what the song is called"?' Alice corrected herself.
>
> 'No, you oughtn't: that's quite another thing! The song is called "Ways and Means": but that's only what it's called, you know!'
>
> 'Well, what is the song, then?' said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.
>
> 'I was coming to that,' the Knight said. 'The song really is "A-sitting On A Gate": and the tune's my own invention.'"
>
> (TTLG, p. 306)

From the desire to be absolutely logical the Knight "bewilders" Alice; the precision of the discipline of logic should make the meaning clear in theory and yet in practice what inevitably happens is that what he means is confused, paradoxically, by the machinery of clarity. The distinction that the White Knight is making is, as

Gardner points out,* between things, the names of things, and the names of names of things. But Carroll also questions the value of names and naming per se just as Sterne does in the figure of Uncle Toby who, because he is unable to use words to communicate just how and where he came by his wound, seeks the help of maps and charts and finally constructs a scale model of the seige of Namur on his bowling-green. Logically, of course, he should reconstruct the entire event - just as the mad professor suggests in Sylvie and Bruno Concluded regarding satisfactory map-making: "we actually made a map of the county on the scale of a mile to the mile! [but] it has never been spread out yet, ... the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole county and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the county itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well ..." (N, p. 617). But even a perfect reconstruction may miss the actual point, as with Dickens' Bitzer from Hard Times, the attempt at definition is only a mechanical process which, however accurately attempted, always falls short of its objective. Toby (like one of Squeers' pupils understanding the meaning of "win-der") might try to enact what he means, but all Alice's (and for that matterGradgrind's) cosy notions of definition are squarely mocked:

> "'What sort of insects do you rejoice in, where you come from?' the Gnat inquired.
>
> 'I don't rejoice in insects at all,' Alice explained, because I'm rather afraid of them - at least the large kinds. But I can tell you the names of some of them.'

---

*AA p. 306.

'Of course they answer to their names?' the Gnat remarked carelessly.

'I never knew them do it.'

'What's the use of their having names,' the Gnat said, 'if they won't answer to them?'

'No use to them,' said Alice; 'but it's useful to the people that name them, I suppose. If not, why do things have names at all?'

'I can't say,' the Gnat replied. 'Further on, in the wood down there, they've got no names - however, go on with your list of insects: you're wasting time.'

'Well, there's the Horse-fly', Alice began, counting off the names on her fingers.

'All right,' said the Gnat: 'half way up that bush, you'll see a Rocking-horse-fly, if you look. It's made entirely of wood, and gets about by swinging itself from branch to branch'."

(TTLG, pp. 221 - 2)

II "What is the use of a book ... without pictures or conversations?"

The question we must now ask is technically an absurd one: if communication is as difficult as Sterne and Carroll delight in saying, then how was this to be communicated and how could their distrust be enforced? Part of the answer lies in Alice's complaint about her sister's reading matter; "What is the use of a book ... without pictures or conversations?" Tristram Shandy and the Alices have both, and so neither have to exist by their words alone, that is by how they sound, but have the added dimension of how they look so that they can demonstrate what they mean. By doing this they are able, especially Tristram Shandy, to surprise the reader into understanding; by being nonsensical, sense is conveyed. It is possibly in this respect that Tristram Shandy was particularly influential for Carroll - and indeed it is arguable that, though perhaps Carroll did not closely read his ten-volume edition of Sterne's Works, he very likely knew the typographical devices of the major writings merely by glancing at his own edition. For this reason the typographical similarities of their work are illustrated in this chapter with photostats taken from the 1780 ten-volume edition, which, as each of the subsequent ten-volume editions were based on it, will give some idea of what Carroll himself may have been in his own copy.

There could be no clearer indication that Sterne meant his prose to be read as a score rather than merely an account,

than in his use of the famous Shandean dash, which, though it has other more fantastical manifestations, is most common in four powers: —, ——, ———, ————. What the dash was for Shandeism, italics were for Lewis Carroll, and here, for example, Carroll isolates precisely the problem that both he and Sterne saw and overcame:

> "'Does [shyness] show itself in a letter?' Lady Muriel enquired. 'Of course, when I hear anyone talking - you, for instance - I can see how desperately shy he is! But can you see that in a letter?'
>
> 'Well' [said Arthur] 'of course, when you hear anyone talk fluently - you, for instance - you can see how desperately un-shy she is ... But the shyest and most intermittent talker must seem fluent in letter-writing. He may have taken half-an-hour to compose his second sentence; but there it is, close after the first!'
>
> 'Then letters don't express all that they might express?'
>
> 'That's merely because our system of letter-writing is incomplete. A shy writer ought to be able to show that he is so. Why shouldn't he make pauses in writing, just as he would do in speaking? He might leave blank spaces - say half a page at a time. And a very shy girl - if there is such a thing - might write a sentence on the first sheet of her letter - then put in a couple of blank sheets - then a sentence on the fourth sheet: and so on.'"
>
> (SBC, p. 586)

Both these simple devices of the use of italics and the dash are, as has been noted before,* ways of communicating "nuances of gesture" and an "implicit substructure of tone, accent, rhythm ... and expression". But Carroll, in this passage from Sylvie and Bruno Concluded shows that he is also alive to other possibilities that the "incomplete" nature of writing ignores. Yet, for example, just the kind of extended silence that blank paper signifies, Sterne has in

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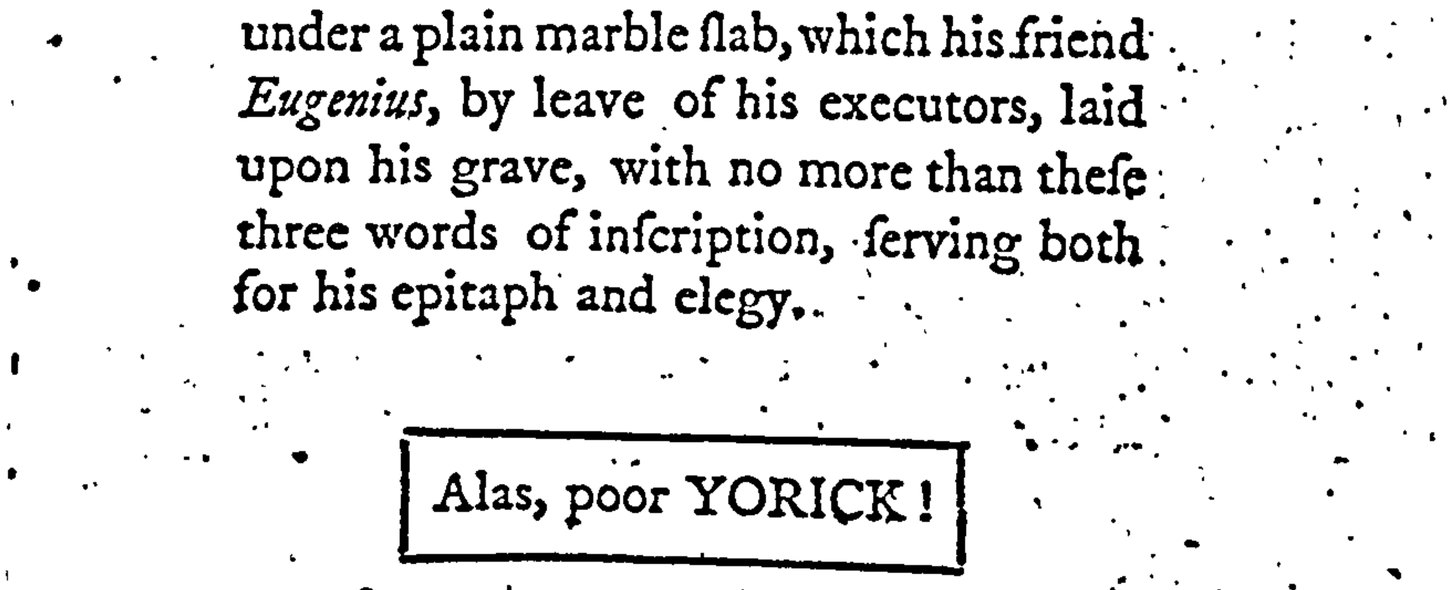
*William Holtz, "Typography, Tristram Shandy, the Aposiopesis" etc. in The Winged Skull, Methuen, 1971, p. 251.

his empty chapters 18 and 19 of volume IX of Tristram Shandy, and Carroll could have recognised and appreciated this for himself. For when Sterne reaches chapter 25 he assumes that half an hour has passed in reading time and, being sure that the reader has made up his own mind and filled those chapters, then completes them out of sequence to prove him incorrect. Similarly we find that Sterne, like Carroll, is intrigued by the possibility that the passage of time can be communicated by equating it with the pages of the novel:

> "It is about an hour and a half's tolerable good reading since my uncle Toby rung the bell, when Obadiah wasordered to saddle a horse, and go for Dr. Slop, the man-midwife; — so that no one can say, with reason, that I have not allowed Obadiah time enough, poetically speaking, and considering the emergency too, both to go and come; — though morally and truly speaking he has scarce had time to get on his boots."
>
> (Tristram Shandy, p. 122)

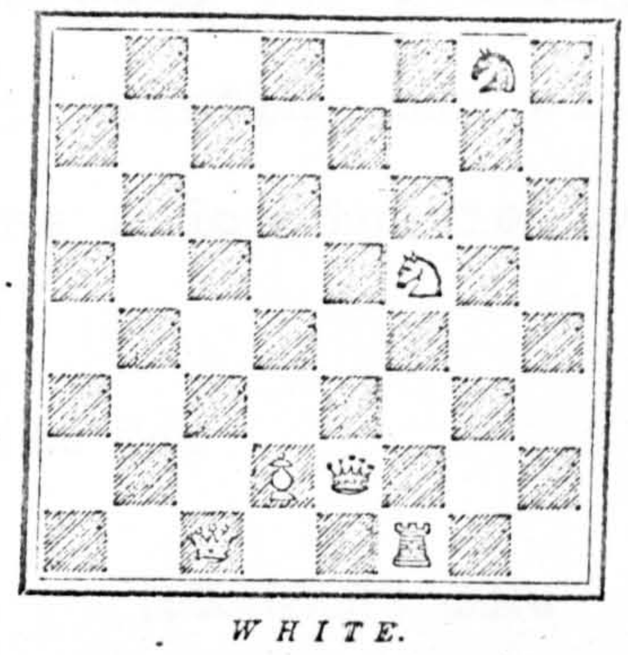
If the passage of time can be successfully communicated by collating it with the actual time taken to read or turn over a number of pages as both Sterne and Carroll suggest, so then other visual typographical devices can be just as communicative. Thus Tristram Shandy has two black pages as memorials to Yorick's death (which form, as Holtz points out, hideous full-stops both to Yorick's life and the printed page and a diagram of what he lies buried under) viz.:



under a plain marble ſlab, which his friend *Eugenius*, by leave of his executors, laid upon his grave, with no more than theſe three words of inſcription, ſerving both for his epitaph and elegy.

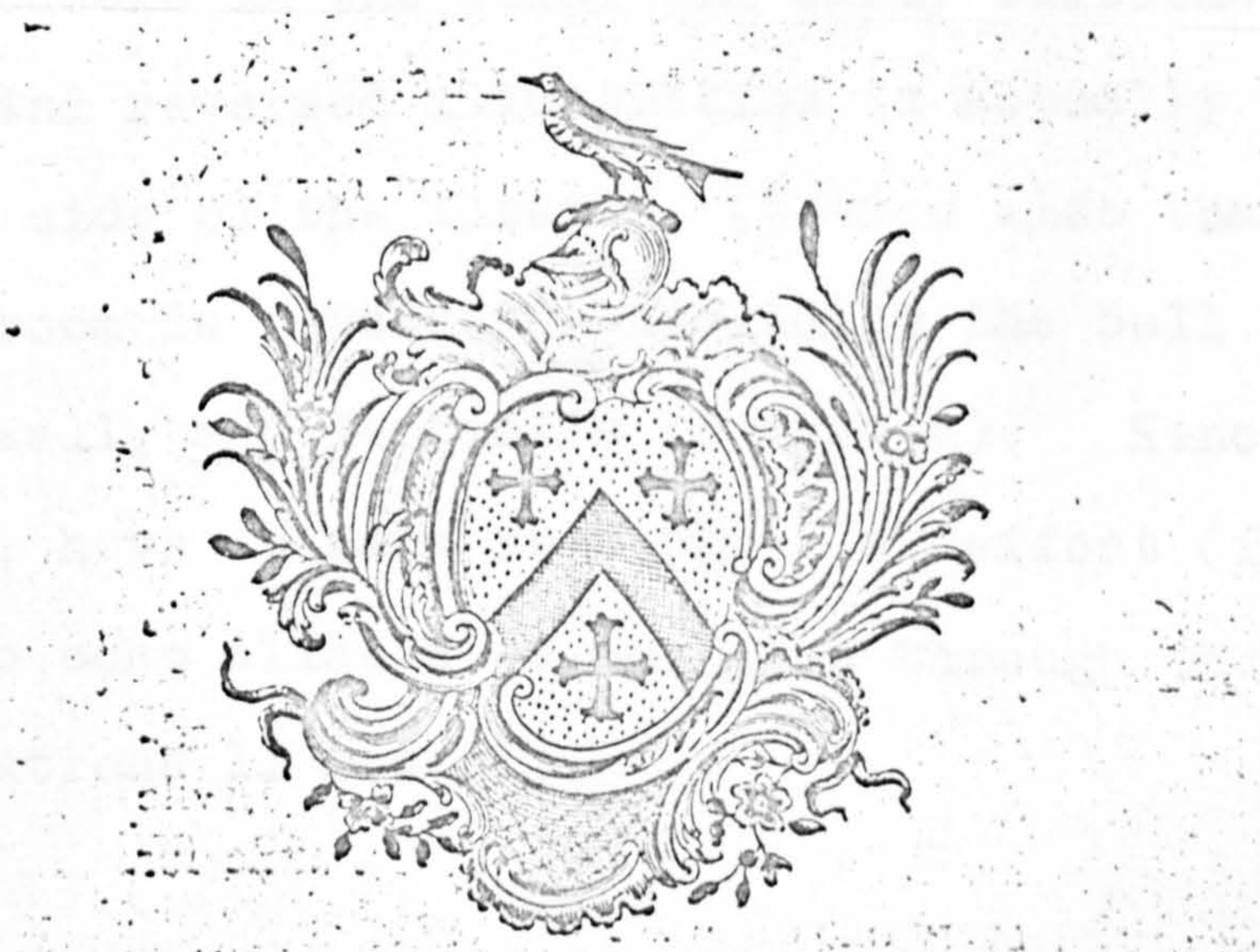
Alas, poor YORICK!

Similarly, when Alice contemplates how she will address parcels to her feet once she has grown so tall after eating the magic cake, the address is set out in the text (as if on a parcel). Also set out are the positions of the chess-men dramatis personae of Through the Looking-Glass before the game (i.e. book) commences:



White Pawn (Alice) to play, and win in eleven moves.

In the same way, and again to emphasise a point, in Sterne's A Sentimental Journey there is at the end of a digression about a starling, an engraving of it on his coat of arms which by interrupting the text demonstrates all the more effectively the honour due to it:



Another device of Sterne's is of course the famous marbled page to indicate the difficulty encountered when trying to unravel the "moral of the many opinions, transactions and truths which still lie mystically hid" and thus the page itself is a "motley emblem of Sterne's work" (see p.232). Similarly the difficulty of understanding the language of through the looking-glass is brought home to the reader by presenting him with the first stanza of Jabberwocky just as Alice initially encounters it:

It was like this.

JABBERWOCKY.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

In the same way in Through the Looking-Glass the reader is made as far as possible to experience Alice's journey through the glass by having to turn over the page (as it occurs in the first and early editions) so that the second and reversed illustration is actually printed on the reverse side of the first. (Notice also that everything in the room is reversed - including the bell for the servants on the wall, and Tenniel's monograph). Hence we, as readers, have to make some physical effort (in turning the page) to echo Alice's as she goes through the glass (see illustrations 11 and 12).

Illustrations 11 - 12

11 Tenniel; Alice goes through the looking-glass

12 ... and comes through on the other side (TTLG Ch. I)

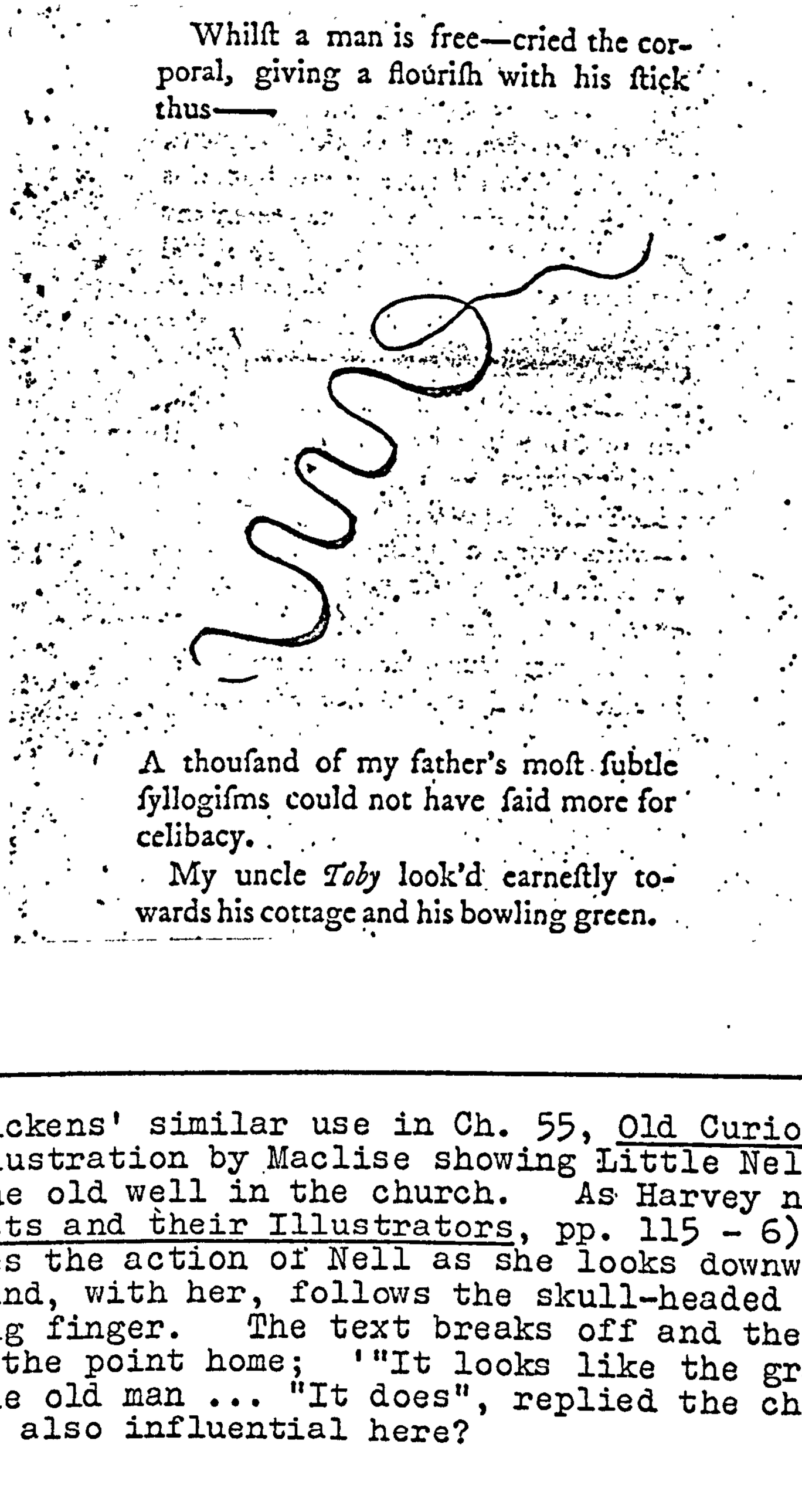
(Illustrations taken from the first edition, 1872, showing the page format approved by Carroll).

there. And certainly the glass *was* beginning to melt away, just like a bright silvery mist.

In another moment Alice was through the

glass, and had jumped lightly down into the Looking-glass room. The very first thing she did was to look whether there was a fire in the

Words in this example give way to, or rather are emphasised by, illustrations, because they are superior in their power of communication.* This retreat from words into images as being more effective in 'saying what you mean' is, similarly, what is behind the flourish Corporal Trim makes with his stick in order to illustrate liberty to Uncle Toby (who is being hunted by Widow Wadman):



Whilſt a man is free—cried the corporal, giving a flouriſh with his ſtick thus——

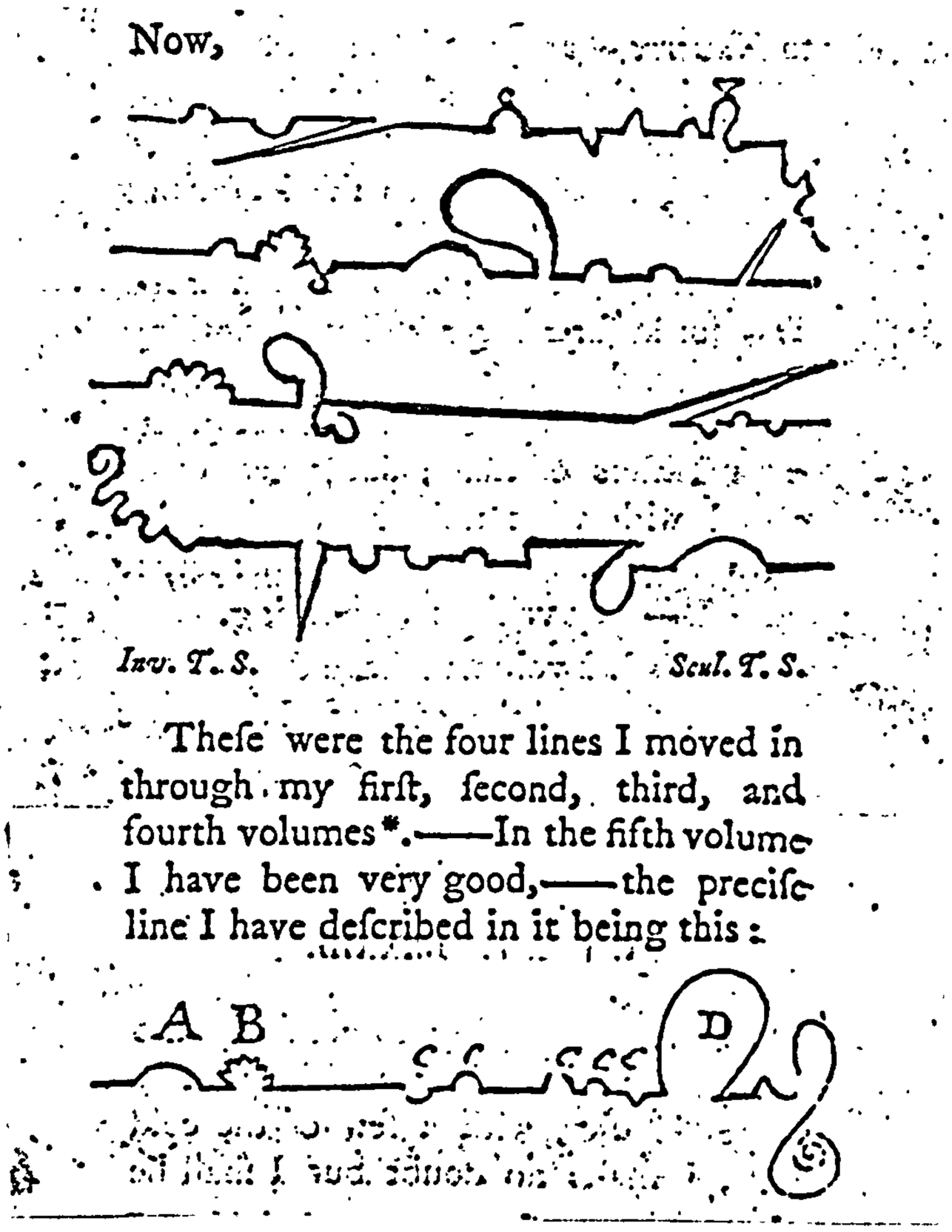
A thouſand of my father's moſt ſubtle ſyllogiſms could not have ſaid more for celibacy.

My uncle *Toby* look'd earneſtly towards his cottage and his bowling green.

---

*c.f. Dickens' similar use in Ch. 55, Old Curiosity Shop of the illustration by Maclise showing Little Nell looking deep into the old well in the church. As Harvey notes (Victorian Novelists and their Illustrators, pp. 115 - 6) the reader emulates the action of Nell as she looks downward into the well, and, with her, follows the skull-headed sexton's pointing finger. The text breaks off and the illustration forces the point home; '"It looks like the grave itself" said the old man ... "It does", replied the child.' Was Dickens also influential here?

The gesture here in its graphic freedom replaces words, and even supersedes them in effectiveness but is, at the same time, proportionately more absurd than they would have been. Sterne also in Tristram Shandy illustrates his story line (taking the word 'line' literally and mocking Hogarth's 'line of beauty'):


Now,

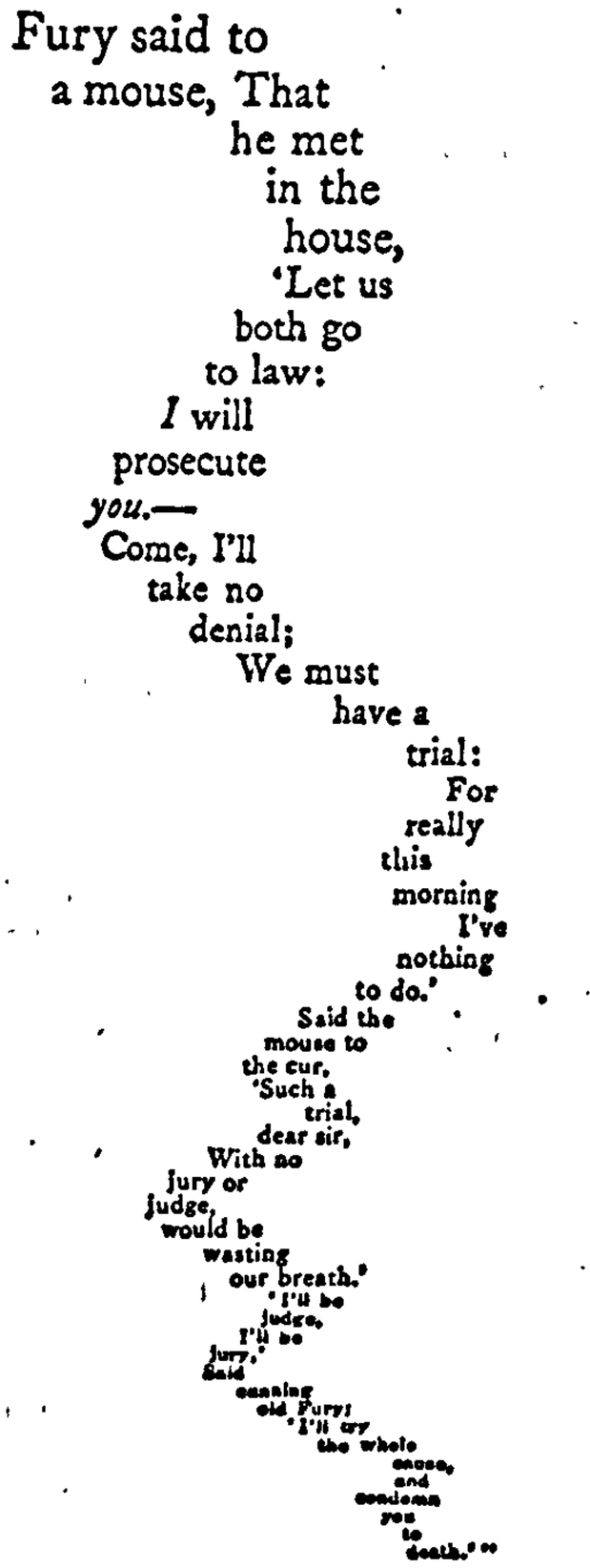
Inv. T. S. *Scul. T. S.*

These were the four lines I moved in through my first, second, third, and fourth volumes*.——In the fifth volume I have been very good,——the precise line I have described in it being this:

A B D

But, if anything, Sterne is surely outclassed in this device by the mouse's tale/tail from Alice in Wonderland which not only tells a tale but makes the shape of a long mouse tail whilst indicating, by the gradually diminishing letter-size,

the (literally) smaller and quieter voice in which it should be read:



The latter is something which Sterne also did in Tristram Shandy making the Abbess of Andoüillet's swearing duet with Margarita (that they chant to the mules) vary in pace and volume in a similar manner:

Abbeſs, } Bou - - bou - - bou - -
Margarita, } —— ger, - - ger, - - ger.
Margarita, } Fou - - fou - - fou - -
Abbeſs, } —— ter, - - ter, - - ter.

The two mules acknowledged the notes by a mutual laſh of their tails; but it went no further.——'Twill anſwer by an' by, ſaid the novice.

Abbeſs, } Bou- bou- bou- bou- bou- bou-
Margarita, } —ger, ger, ger, ger, ger, ger.

Quicker ſtill, cried *Margarita*.

Fou, fou, fou, fou, fou, fou, fou, fou, fou.

Quicker ſtill, cried *Margarita*.

Bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou, bou.

Another resemblance between Sterne and Carroll's typography is their common use of rows of asterisks or similar stops to indicate either that there is a passage of time or that a change is occurring:

> "I think I'll go down the other way," she said after a pause: "and perhaps I may visit the elephants later on. Besides, I do so want to get into the Third Square!"
>
> So with this excuse she ran down the hill and jumped over the first of the six little brooks.
>
> * * * * *
> * * * * *
> * * * * *

> ——Lord have mercy upon me,— faid my father to himſelf——
> * * * * * * * * * * *

Finally, and perhaps the most important common ground of all between Carroll and Sterne is their understanding of the value of silence and innuendo as being at times paradoxically the writer's most effective tool towards which, in a sense, all the typographical devices looked at here are moving. For the most effective communication is in <u>implication</u> rather than definition. Indeed what William Holtz observes as being the function of the Shandean dash is in fact also applicable to other typographical devices - "[it] seems to function as

the graphic expression of the nuances of gesture inherent in language at its best ... it constantly suggests something else and that is the presence of the talker - the implicit substructure of tone, accent, rhythm, gesture and expression, all highly personal and charged with dramatic power."*

If the dash achieves implication then this is by extension, even more true of the carefully contrived innuendo which sparks off the fresh creation within the reader's own individual mind. Since language itself can never be more than a rough approximation to personal and hence universally differing experience, the consequence of the skilful innuendo is that one of the critical barriers to communication is removed. As Tristram quite logically observes (in The Author's Preface, which appears in the middle of Book III !):

> "above all things in the world, 'tis one of the silliest things ... to darken your hypothesis by placing a number of tall, opake words, one before another, in a right line, betwixt your own and your reader's conception, —— when in all likelihood, if you had looked about, you might have seen something standing or hanging up, which would have cleared the point at once."
>
> (Tristram Shandy, pp. 208 - 9)

The object closest to the author's hand is the reader's mind which, with guidance, can create answers and resolutions to situations with more immediacy and relevance to the reader himself than the author's dictatorship could ever hope to achieve. Hence, just as the visual caricaturists

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*op. cit., p. 250

saw that an individual response to the same object* is an essential part of their stock-in-trade since it is an essential way in which people differ from each other, so also the literary caricaturists Sterne and Carroll actively used this fact as they wrote. Accordingly they were both careful to refuse to allow the reader (and Alice and Tristram) to become accustomed to the context of their work so that they could be continually surprised and provoked into an individual and fresh response. Thus when Corporal Trim relates how his wounded knee was cared for by a young woman, there is no real meaning to the incident until the reader supplies it - and, more importantly, <u>understands</u> it:

> "... and yet, continued the corporal (making one of the strangest reflections on it in the world) ———.
>
> ——— '<u>It was not love</u>' —— for during the three weeks she was almost constantly with me, fomenting my knee with her hand, night and day —— I can honestly say, an' please your honour —— that ********** once.
>
> That was very odd, <u>Trim</u>, quoth my uncle Toby ——
>
> I think so too —— said Mrs. <u>Wadman</u>
>
> It never did, said the Corporal"
>
> (<u>Tristram Shandy</u>, p. 546)

Sterne's precise imprecision here manages to evoke a response from the reader who supplies the missing words with indelicate ones from his own vocabulary (one assumes).

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*See footnote p. 150.

Toby, Mrs. Wadman and Trim's remarks after the asterisks of course serve to heighten the effect of the innuendo. Even more daringly, though in the same manner, Sterne relies on the reader's imagination to actually finish A Sentimental Journey:

> "—— But the fille de chambre hearing there were words between us ... had crept silently out of her closet, and it being totally dark, had stolen so close to our beds, that she got herself into the narrow passage which separated them and had advanced so far up as to be in a line between her mistress and me ——
>
> So that when I stretched out my hand, I caught hold of the fille de chambre's ——— "

Let is quickly be said that Carroll could never have been capable of using the innuendo for such a bawdy effect (that is assuming that "Your Worship" fills the gaps in with words that are similar to mine) - but Carroll's technique of deliberately using the unresolved, and hence provocative, is unmistakeably similar. Here, for example, is Humpty Dumpty's poem that ostensibly says very little but carefully provokes considerably more from the attentive reader:

> In winter, when the fields are white,
> I sing this song for your delight ——
>
> In spring, when woods are getting green,
> I'll try and tell you what I mean ...
>
> In summer when the days are long,
> Perhaps you'll understand the song:
>
> In autumn, when the leaves are brown,
> Take pen and ink, and write it down,
>
> I sent a message to the fish:
> I told them "This is what I wish".

The little fishes of the sea,
They sent an answer back to me.

The little fishes' answer was
"We cannot do it Sir, because —— " ...

I sent to them again to say
"It will be better to obey."

The fishes answered with a grin,
"Why what a temper you are in!"

I told them once, I told them twice:
They would not listen to advice.

I took a kettle large and new,
Fit for the deed I had to do.

My heart went hop, my heart went thump;
I filled the kettle at the pump.

Then someone came to me and said,
"The little fishes are in bed."

I said to him, I said it plain,
"Then you must wake them up again."

I said it very loud and clear;
I went and shouted in his ear ...

And he was very proud and stiff;
He said "I'd go and wake them if —— "

I took a corkscrew from the shelf:
I went to wake them up myself.

And when I found the door was locked,
I pulled and pushed and kicked and knocked.

And when I found the door was shut,
I tried to turn the handle, but ——"

There was a long pause.

"Is that all?" Alice timidly asked.

"That's all," said Humpty Dumpty. "Good-bye"

(TTLG, pp. 273 - 275)

This poem has been quoted almost in its entirety because its effectiveness largely depends on its large number of innuendoes. The poem's achievement is that it confirms nothing

and yet evokes all possible violence - and, if we identify with the fish, a shrinking fear of just what the corkscrew was intended for. Hence, even though this is a comic poem, the savagery will happen in the very next verse - the one that the reader has been challenged to compose. Thus by giving the reader all the jig-saw puzzle pieces but one that make up the sequence of events, Carroll provokes us to imagine the shape of that one too - but, of course, no one solution is adequate in answering all the questions raised: why a kettle ("large and new") and a corkscrew, for example?! Such apparent incongruities mysteriously juxtaposed give Carroll his greatest surrealism, (which is something which will be returned to in a later chapter).

An even more sustained but similar achievement in this respect of using the innuendo by Carroll, is his masterly The Hunting of the Snark. In this poem he again activates the fears within the reader's imagination by contriving a carefully drawn frame-work which in itself has little meaning, but inside which the reader is invited to realise his profoundest fear - his personal Snark. Just as Melville's great monster, Moby Dick, becomes a great host of different things to the different members of Ahab's crew (and that despite, and in a sense because of Melville's long chapters that attempt to define the whale from every point of view) so Carroll's Snark/Boojum remains a matter of personal definition for each reader. It is interesting to note in this context that when Henry Holiday, who,as well as illustrating the rest of the

Snark, also submitted a drawing of the monster itself to Carroll for his approval and inclusion in the final version, found that it was hastily suppressed. For Carroll wrote to Holiday that he thought it was "a delightful monster" but "inadmissible ... [as] all his descriptions of the Boojum were quite unimaginable, and he wanted the creature to remain so".* Carroll, as Gardner points out, never spoilt his record and refused, as far as is known, at least five times to define his monster.ℓ The most significant of these refusals was one which was part of a letter to the Lowrie children∅ which welcomes the subjective and imaginative response and, yet again, emphasises the imprecise nature of language:

> "... As to the meaning of the Snark? I'm very much afraid I didn't mean anything but nonsense! Still, you know, words mean more than we mean to express when we use them: so a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer meant. So whatever good meanings are in the book, I'm very glad to accept as the meaning of the book ..."
>
> (Letter undated but c. 1896)

This again, is close in spirit to Sterne's ideas about the inadequacy of language and ordinary channels of communication:

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*Holiday, The Snark's Significance, The Academy, Jan 29, 1898. Referred to by Gardner, see The Annotated Snark, p. 18.

ℓThe Annotated Snark, pp. 21 - 22.

∅See Hatch, Letters to Child Friends, CLXVIII, pp. 242 - 3.

"We are endued with an imperfect power of spreading our happiness sometimes beyond [Nature's] limits: but 'tis so ordered, that, from the want of languages, connections and dependencies, and from the difference in education, customs and habits, we lie under so many impediments in communicating our sensations out of our own sphere, as often to amount to a total impossibility ..."

(A Sentimental Journey, Signet ed. p. 17)

The way that communication can be achieved despite, and perhaps because of, the "many impediments to communicating our sensations out of our own sphere" is by suggestion and intimation that allows for, and delights in, an individual, and hence forceful,response. This is best achieved, as Sterne taught, by intriguing, perplexing and at times astonishing the reader into collaboration with the writer; getting him to recreate his sense of what occurs by engaging his sentiment without ever resorting to an absolute statement. Hence the famous ending to the first chapter of Tristram Shandy manages to provoke the reader's imagination into some solution of the scene and its clues regarding events (or rather non-events) but does not exist without his help:

Pray, my Dear, quoth my mother, *have you not forgot to wind up the clock?*——— *Good G—!* cried my father, making an exclamation, but taking care to moderate his voice at the ſame time,——— *Did ever woman, ſince the creation of the world, interrupt a man with ſuch a ſilly queſtion?* Pray, what was your father ſaying?———Nothing.

Our assumption that books are about words and that it is only words that can be interrupted is beautifully mocked here, as also is Walter Shandy's mechanical love-making. Similarly Alice's mechanical response to life and her way of interpreting words on their face value only, is mocked many times in Wonderland. For example:

> "'Both [the Messengers have] gone to the town. Just look along the road, and tell me if you can see either of them.'
>
> 'I see nobody on the road,' said Alice.
>
> 'I only wish I had such eyes,' the King remarked in a fretful tone. 'To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too! Why, it's as much as I can do to see real people, by this light!'"
>
> (TTLG, p. 279)

The conclusion then, that both Carroll and Sterne wish us to draw is that no one interpretation or conclusion really does justice to a statement and that we should be open-minded enough to confess that the whole truth is never really understood and often not even intended. Their greatest congruity is, to put it another way, that neither of them was content to enable the reader to understand everything all the time, and that they were both aware that words paradoxically mean both more and less than is meant. Communication is therefore by gesture and appearance, by eye and heart, as much as by ear and tongue and this constitutes another vital way, especially for Sterne, of by-passing the sentimentality of the reader - and again, this Carroll also attempted though perhaps with rather less success (for example in the sequence with the White Knight). But

most importantly neither of them saw their work as being a blank stretch of road on which they could or should have erected easily recognisable ideas at regular intervals which the reader could have immediately assimilated the first time through; rather, both recognised that the reader as well as he, has an imagination which if treated properly will respond to transcend the limitations of words and engage the neglected power of perceptivity. In this Alice's response to the masterly poem "Jabberwocky" epitomises their mutual aim to always provoke and never to resolve (- "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas - only I don't exactly know what they are ...") quite as much as Sterne's daring end to Tristram Shandy ("L —— d! said my mother, what is all this story about? - A COCK and a BULL, said Yorick - And one of the best of its kind, I ever heard") as does the fate of the heroic Snark-hunting Baker:

> "'It's a Snark!' was the sound that first came to their ears,
> And seemed almost too good to be true.
> Then followed a torrent of laughter and cheers:
> Then the ominous words, 'It's a Boo-'
>
> Then silence. Some fancied they heard in the air
> A weary and wandering sigh
> That sounded like '-jum!' but the others declare
> It was only a breeze that went by.
>
> They hunted till darkness came on, but they found
> Not a button, or feather, or mark,
> By which they could tell that they stood on the ground
> Where the Baker had met with the Snark.
>
> In the midst of the word he was trying to say,
> In the midst of his laughter and glee,
> He had softly and silently vanished away -
> For the Snark was a Boojum, you see.

We will probably never know whether Carroll actually opened his calf-bound ten volume edition of Sterne's works but we might conclude that the evidence of the kind shown in this chapter infers that he probably did and that he would have been sympathetic and admiring as towards a cousin; even one that was perhaps once-removed.

III Carroll and the spirit of Cervantes

At the risk of seeming Shandean ("in writing what I have set about, I shall confine myself neither to [Horace's] rules, nor to any man's rules that ever lived. To such, however, as do not choose to go so far back into these things, I can give no better advice, than they skip over the remaining part of this chapter; for I declare beforehand, 'tis wrote only for the curious and inquisitive"*) - before going forward to the nineteenth century to approach Carroll by examining his friends and contemporaries, there is a figure of the early years of the seventeenth century who demands our attention and inclusion here: this is Don Quixote.

Though according to the Sale Catalogue, Carroll does not seem to have owned a copy of Cervantes' work (despite the fact that there were dozens of editions produced in the 19th century; the translations by Shelton and Motteux were current and Jarvis' went through eighteen editions before 1860, and there was one illustrated by Gustav Doré whose work Carroll did have in his library) there is nevertheless between Carroll and Cervantes an unmistakeable similarity of approach that they both made to similar ideas. Indeed Cervantes' influence not only on Carroll but also on a great deal of English writing - especially on the novel - was

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*Tristram Shandy, p. 38.

extensive and one which may have percolated through to Carroll via others whom he read. For if it is true that the spirit of the eighteenth century novel informed Dickens' comic sense, then it is equally true to say that <u>that</u> spirit was of course itself often informed by Cervantes' masterpiece. Fielding's debt to Cervantes is a well established case in point; <u>Joseph Andrews</u> is described in the half-title as "Written in Imitation of the Manner of CERVANTES Author of DON QUIXOTE" (<u>Works</u> 1771, vol. IV) and he also wrote a comedy called <u>Don Quixote in England</u> (1728). We also find, to use just two more examples, other evidence of these parallels in Washington Irving perceptively writing to Dickens that "Old Pickwick is the Quixote of commonplace life and as with the Don, we begin by laughing at him and end by loving him ...",* and the hardly surprising fact that Sterne himself was constantly acknowledging in the course of <u>Tristram Shandy</u> the Quixotic element that was a favoured touchstone for his own work. For both Sterne and Dickens such evidence can be seen as immediately appropriate since, in the figure of the Don, the art of Hobby Horse riding found its first and possibly greatest champion, and the tradition of the noble fool like Pickwick found its originator. But these parallels are not arbitrary - and especially as far as Sterne was concerned, the spirit of Cervantes was an essential element to invoke to ensure the success of his own writing - which

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*Letter dated 20.5.1841. Quoted by Ford, <u>Dickens and his Readers</u>, p. 13.

he appropriately did in the ninth volume of Tristram:

> "Gentle spirit of sweetest humour, who erst did sit upon the easy pen of my beloved CERVANTES; Thou who glided'st daily through his lattice, and turned'st the twilight of his prison into noon-day brightness by thy presence - tinged'st his little urn of water with heaven-sent Nectar, and all the time he wrote of Sancho and his master, didst cast thy mystic mantle oe'r his withered stump,[1] and wide extended it to all the evils of his life ——— "
>
> (Tristram Shandy, pp. 598 - 9)

Though typically interrupted at this point, this invocation to the spirit of Cervantes is an accurate indication of one of the recognised dominant influences behind even the creation of, for example, Uncle Toby himself who clearly shows the same obsession with the life of honourable warfare (with the stress on "honourable") as does Don Quixote. But an even more obvious and less often noticed congruency in this respect exists between Carroll's White Knight and Don Quixote, who not only has Uncle Toby's ability for singlemindedness, but also has the same brand of brave golden-age spirit that the Don defines as being the essence of chivalry and knighthood:

> "Let the knight errant search the corners of the world, penetrate the most intricate labyrinths, at every step encounter the impossible, at midsummer brave the burning rays of the sun on high and desert wastes, and in winter the harsh inclemency of winds and frosts. Let no lions alarm him, nor hobgoblins daunt him, nor dragons afright him; for to seek them, attack them and conquer them are his chief and proper exercises ..."
>
> (Don Quixote, translated by J. M. Cohen, Penguin 1970, p. 579. All subsequent page references to Don Quixote are to this edition)

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1. He lost his hand at the battle of Lepanto [Sterne's footnote].

Whereas Uncle Toby is largely only a military monomaniac, both the White Knight and Don Quixote are wrestlers with the world of the impossible (even the impossibilities of science: "I had just/Completed my design/To keep the Menai bridge from rust/By boiling it in wine") and fearless explorers of the intricate labyrinths that are as much in their own heads as in the outside world ("the more head downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things," confesses the Knight). Moreover Toby's codes and practices of war have none of the overtly moral function that both the White Knight and the Don have, and which they see to be the real point of their profession. Thus though Toby's militarism is telescoped and domesticated to fit comfortably in the bowling green in his back garden, the Don, and by implication the White Knight, are not only aged champion soldiers but more appositely are intended to combat the ills and errors of their times. In the White Knight's case such ills are specifically the Red Knight, and the difficulties of invention, but he is also chivalrous enough to tell Alice that "I'll see you safe to the end of the wood - and then I must go back, you know. That's the end of my move ..." For, like Don Quixote he is also the embodiment of an out-dated Golden Age, although neither would see it that way - as Don Quixote says:

> "... I am not trying to make anyone believe me wise when I am not. I am only at pains to convince the world of its error in not reviving that most happy age in which knights errant undertook and carried on their shoulders

> the defence of kingdoms, the protection of damsels, the succour of orphans and wards, the chastisement of the proud, and the rewarding of the humble. Most of our knights now prefer to rustle in damasks, brocades, and other rich clothes that they wear, than in armoured coats of mail ... Now sloth triumphs over industry, idleness over labour, vice over virtue, presumption over valour, the theory over the practice of arms, which only lived and flourished in the golden age and among knights errant ..."
>
> (Don Quixote, p. 477)

Considering that we associate the romanticising of medievalism with the Pre-Raphaelite Victorians it is perhaps surprising to find just such a romantic vision as early as 1604 and, of course, in the event, Cervantes partially satirises this point of view in the figure of the 'free enterpriser' Sancho, who continually tries to find a profit margin even in his master's most idealistic adventures. The fact is that they both live in different worlds and even wake up to different ones, for example: "Scarcely had the fair Aurora given shining Phoebus time to dry the liquid pearls of her golden hair with the ardour of his hot rays, when Don Quixote, shaking sloth from his limbs, stood up and called his squire Sancho, who was still snoring." (p. 594). Despite this they are not in practice mutually exclusive, and this gives the work its ambiguities and its comedy. For the surprising but plausible partnership between Sancho's animal, but often incompetent cunning, and his master's aesthetic and often courageous idealism, functions like two eyes in the same head that make for an incomparable total vision that celebrates the fact of human subjectivity.

Cervantes' skill in simultaneously satirising and arousing admiration for Quixote and Sancho, and dealing with the complexities that arise from this is an achievement that outclasses Carroll, but nevertheless perhaps had its effect as a satiric method on his work. For this complex presentation of gentle satire coupled with a true though indulgent admiration was also Carroll's achievement with his champion of chivalry, the White Knight. In this character he is implicitly careful not only to echo Don Quixote but also to satirise (as Cervantes did true medievalism) the often sentimental ideals of the mock-medievalist Pre-Raphaelites, who like the Don sought for nobility in the past and contrasted it with what they considered to be <u>their</u> ugly and materialistic present. We shall look more specifically in a later chapter at Carroll's relationship to the Pre-Raphaelites, so it is sufficient to note here that essentially both his target and that of Cervantes were the same: to prick (but not destroy) the admired polyamathic wisdom of the so-called Golden Age:

> "'Your worship,' said Sancho, 'would make a better preacher than a knight errant.'
>
> 'Knights errant, Sancho, knew - and have to know - about everything,' said Don Quixote; 'for in the olden times a knight errant would be as ready to deliver a sermon or make a speech in the middle of the royal camp as if he were a graduate of the university of Paris; whence it can be inferred that the lance has never blunted the pen, nor the pen the lance ...'"
>
> (<u>Don Quixote</u>, p. 140)

"There was a short silence after this, and then the Knight went on again. 'I'm a great hand at inventing things. Now, I daresay you noticed, the last time you picked me up, that I was looking rather thoughtful?'

'You were a little grave,' said Alice.

'Well, just then I was inventing a new way of getting over a gate - would you like to hear it?'

'Very much indeed,' Alice said politely.

'I'll tell you how I came to think of it,' said the Knight. 'You see, I said to myself, "The only difficulty is with the feet: the head is high enough already." Now, first I put my head on top of the gate - then the head's high enough - then I stand on my head - the feet are high enough, you see - then I'm over, you see.'"

(TTLG, pp. 301 - 2)

Carroll, of course, takes his simpler mockery further than Cervantes does, and since he is more straightforward and even sentimental in a way that Cervantes seldom is (because there is no Sancho) becomes eventually even crudely tear-jerking:

"Of all the strange things that Alice saw in her journey Through The Looking-Glass, this was the one that she always remembered most clearly. Years afterwards she could bring the whole scene back again as if it had only been yesterday - the mild blue eyes and kindly smile of the Knight - the setting sun gleaming through his hair and shining on his armour in a blaze of light that quite dazzled her ... and the black shadows of the forest behind ..."

(TTLG, p. 307)

This heavily significant contrast between the brightly shining armour and the darkness of the woods is simpler than Cervantes would ever have allowed it to be - to arouse

pity* was not his intention. The central ambiguity however of Don Quixote is also partly what rescues the White Knight from Carroll's sentimentality: for the Don's constant ability to see an enchanted world - windmills as giants, sheep as armies, puppets as Moors, cowgirls as princesses - is both madness but also inspirational, continually inventive, and even at times fantastically magical. Consequently it can never be wholly mocked or denied as the Don carries his fabulous world with him in his head creating it as he goes with imaginative logic and this by contrast exposes the mean drabness of sanity, doubting its value. This similar, though less pronounced ability of the White Knight to imagine, for example, that as sharks might bite his horse's feet he has therefore to invent and provide spiked anklets to protect them, is very much in the Cervantic mould. But the White Knight is simpler partially because the Quixotic tradition itself became simpler as it was reborn - for example as in Fielding's Parson Abraham Adams in Joseph Andrews (who is lost in the classics rather than chivalric romance, and is absentminded rather than single-minded) or in Dickens' Pickwick (who weaves his way naively but effectively through

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*Part of the reason for this arousal of pity may be, as many Carroll critics have pointed out, that the White Knight was intended as a self-caricature. As Gardner observes (AA, p. 296) Carroll looked something like the Knight and was, like him, "a great hand at inventing things."

a corrupt world of rogues and politicians, and fights a degenerate system of law rather than giants and dragons*). Despite the dilution of the larger Cervantic philosophy, however, there are details that link the Don and the Knight that are unmistakeable. For example, when the White Knight enters and falls off his horse (for the first time) in order to defend Alice, his Dulcinea del Toboso in distress, he does so as a true knight of Mancha:

"'She's my prisoner, you know!' the Red Knight said at last.

'Yes, but then I came and rescued her!' the White Knight replied.

'Well, we must fight for her, then,' said the Red Knight, as he took up his helmet (which hung from the saddle, and was something the shape of a horse's head) and put it on.

'You will observe the Rules of Battle, of course?' the White Knight remarked, putting on his helmet too.

'I always do,' said the Red Knight, and they began banging away at each other with such fury that Alice got behind a tree to be out of the way of the blows.

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*Another less-mentioned example from Dickens of this kind of "madness-vision" is Barnaby Rudge who exclaims to John Willet after a dispute about some clothes on a washing line:

"Clothes! ... Ha! ha! Why how much better to be silly, than as wise as you! You don't see shadowy people there, like those that live in Sleep - not you. Nor eyes in the knotted panes of glass, nor swift ghosts when it blows hard, nor do you hear voices in the air, nor see men stalking in the sky - not you! I lead a merrier life than you, with all your cleverness. You're the dull men. We're the bright ones. Ha! ha! I'll not change with you, clever as you are, - not I."

(Barnaby Rudge, pp. 81 - 2)

'I wonder, now, what the Rules of Battle are,' she said to herself, as she watched the fight, timidly peeping out from her hiding-place. 'One Rule seems to be, that if one Knight hits the other, he knocks him off his horse; and, if he misses, he tumbles off himself - and another Rule seems to be that they hold their clubs in their arms, as if they were Punch and Judy. - What a noise they make when they tumble! Just like a whole set of fire-irons falling into the fender! And how quiet the horses are! They let them get on and off just as if they were tables!'

Another Rule of Battle, that Alice had not noticed, seemed to be that they always fell on their heads; and the battle ended with their both falling off in this way, side by side.* When they got up again they shook hands, and then the Red Knight mounted and galloped off.

'It was a glorious victory, wasn't it?' said the White Knight, as he came up panting."

(TTLG, pp. 294 - 6)

The trusting "You will observe the Rules of Battle, of course?" which appeals to a code of behaviour that it is assumed both Knights strictly hold sacred (and far more important than the end result) means that civilisation is never far away despite the noise and earnestness of the battle itself. The demands of what we and Alice would

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*Cervantes and Carroll share also this very basic sense of humour; the possibilities of exploiting the ignominies that threaten the usually noble art of horse-riding delighted them both, especially Cervantes:

"Now Don Quixote rode up with his vizor raised and made as if to dismount, whereat Sancho hurried to hold his stirrup. But the squire was so unlucky as to catch one foot on a cord of the pack-saddle as he was dismounting from Dapple, and was unable to disentangle himself; so that he remained dangling with his face and his chest on the ground. Don Quixote was not accustomed to dismounting without someone to hold his stirrup, and thinking that Sancho had already caught hold of it, threw his body off with a jerk, carrying Rocinante's saddle, which must have been badly girthed, after him, so that he and the saddle fell to the ground together, to his no small discomforture, and to the accompaniment of a volley of curses which he uttered between his teeth at the unfortunate Sancho, who still had his foot in the noose ..."

(Don Quixote, p. 664)

consider to be reality, that is the need to win, take second place to the artificial Rules of the Battle and, since they are clearly absurd (to fight like Punch and Judy, for example) makes both the Knights' loyalty to them seem proportionately even more irrational and therefore in their context stronger and nobler. It is the fact that the fictional rules take precedence, and that faith in them gives a satisfaction that has little to do with actual achievement (the Knights after all both fall on their heads), that gives the world its glory when viewed through their eyes. Once believed in, moreover, everything seems to fit the unimpeachable chivalric code and the ordinary world is upgraded; hence just as falling off can seem the ultimate in equestrian art so also can windmills really be malignant giants (or at the very least an appropriate disguise for them), whilst a barber's basin can be the enchanted Mambrino's helmet. There is, moreover, an appropriate chivalric stance always available to call on in order to avoid the necessity of acknowledging what to the rest of the world seems obvious common-sense:

> "[Sancho then gave the basin] to his master, who placed it on his head, turning it round and round to find the vizor. But, unable to discover it, he remarked: 'Certainly the pagan to whose measure this famous head-piece was first shaped must have had an enormous head; and the worst of it is that one half of it is missing.'
>
> When Sancho heard the basin called a head-piece he could not restrain his laughter; but suddenly he remembered his master's anger, and stopped short.
>
> 'What are you laughing at?' asked Don Quixote.

'It makes me laugh,' he replied, 'to think what a big head that pagan must have had, who owned that head-piece. It's nothing so much as a barber's basin. Just like it, it is.'

'Do you know what I think, Sancho? This famous piece, this enchanted helmet, must have fallen by some strange accident into the hands of someone who did not esteem it at its true value. So, not knowing what he was doing, and seeing that it was pure gold, he must have melted down the other half for the sake of the metal, and made from this half what looks like a barber's basin, as you say. But, however that may be, its metamorphosis is of no consequence to me, who knows what it really is ...'"

(Don Quixote, pp. 162 - 3)

The ability of Quixote here continually to shape the real world to fit his own, seems the ultimate in myopic subjectivity, and as such doubtless makes him the real precursor of all those self-caricaturing characters of Dickens like Wemmick, Jaggers, Gradgrind, Pecksniff, Podsnap, etc., who were looked at in an earlier chapter. To read the world and its accidents as if they were almost pre-ordained events in a carefully worked out chivalric scheme is clearly absurd but nevertheless in Quixote's case is attractive because it is an act of creative and optimistic willpower and does actually upgrade the ordinary to something better. Most noticeably in Don Quixote, hovels become castles, cow-girls princesses and Sancho becomes a nobler character - and all because Quixote believes that these things are so. Dickens' similar characters, however, usually do the opposite to Quixote and censor to diminish rather than embellish the ordinary world - e.g. Podsnap's "Nothing Else To Be - anywhere". But in Don Quixote's case such vitality of imagination coupled with disarming innocence

gives him both a divine and childlike quality (there are moments when even a comparison to Christ is not invalid) that has made him an enduring hero of Spain* and given him such an influence over subsequent literature. As far as Carroll is concerned, despite the fact that there are over 250 years between Quixote and the White Knight, there are fundamental ways in which they are alike, not the least the fact that the latter similarly sees or hears nothing other than his own inventive world ("... [the aged aged man's] answer trickled through my head, / Like water through a sieve.")

There are also other moments and details in Wonderland that echo Quixote's world - for example when the fighting brothers Tweedledee and Tweedledum prepare for battle there is scarcely anything to choose between their respective helmets and Quixote's Mambrino's helmet or, more importantly, the conviction that their wearers feel as to their appropriateness as armour. We are told, for example, that in an atmosphere of total seriousness Alice has to help the two brothers arm with such things as bolsters, blankets, hearth-rugs, table cloths, dishcovers and coal-scuttles. Moreover when Tweedledum "came to have his helmet tied on [by Alice] ... he called it a helmet though it certainly looked much more like a saucepan." (TTLG, p. 242).

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*If Pickwick's contemporary popularity can be gauged by the enormous production of 'Pickwick figures' by the Staffordshire potteries in the 1850s, then Quixote's can still be assessed by glancing in the window of any souvenir shop throughout Spain, where, usually crudely carved in olive-wood, the Don and Sancho invariably outnumber similarly carved crucifixes and Virgin Marys.

Tweedledee's helmet, as Tenniel's drawing makes clear, is a coalscuttle - and neither that, nor a saucepan, nor a barber's brass basin (nor Toby's bowling-green/battle-field) seem inappropriate to those who believe in their own vision of a chivalric world. Alice's indulgence of their behaviour is similar to her toleration of the White Knight and Sancho Panza's of Don Quixote; though both Alice and Sancho often know the truth they suppress their laughter to avoid hurting the feelings of those who believe in and live for their hobby-horse fantasies:

"'Of course you agree to have a battle?' Tweedledum said in a calmer tone.

'I suppose so,' the other sulkily replied, '... only she must help us to dress up, you know.'

... Alice said afterwards she had never seen such a fuss made about anything in all her life - the way those two bustled about - and the quantity of things they put on - and the trouble they gave her in tying strings and fastening buttons - 'really they'll be more like bundles of old clothes than anything else, by the time they're ready!' she said to herself, as she arranged a bolster around the neck of Tweedledee, 'to keep his head from being cut off,' as he said.

'You know,' he added very gravely, 'it's one of the most serious things that can possibly happen in a battle - to get one's head cut off.'

Alice laughed loud: but she managed to turn it into a cough, for fear of hurting his feelings.

'Do I look very pale? ... [nevertheless] we must have a bit of a fight, but I don't care about going on long,' said Tweedledum. 'What's the time now?'

Tweedledee looked at his watch, and said 'Half-past four.'

'Let's fight till six, and then have dinner,' said Tweedledum.

'Very well,' the other said sadly.

(TTLG, pp. 241 - 243)

These reluctant and curious combatants recall a similar, and conspicuously parallel, non-event in Don Quixote. This is the moment when, whilst the so-called Knight of the Wood (the Bachelor Sampson Carrasco) is fighting the Don, Sancho is challenged by the Bachelor's squire who insists that since their respective masters are fighting, so must they. Sancho replies:

> "'That custom ... may obtain and hold good amongst the ruffians and fighting men you speak of. But amongst squires of knights errant - not a bit of it! ... I would rather pay such penalty as may be imposed upon peaceful squires like myself ... My head ... is as good as split in two at the mere thought of fighting. There's another thing: fighting is quite out of the question, for I haven't a sword and I've never worn one in all my life.'
>
> 'I know a good remedy for that,' said the Squire of the Wood; 'I've here two linen bags of the same size. You shall take one and I the other, and we'll fight a pillow fight with equal arms.'
>
> 'With those weapons I'll gladly fight,' replied Sancho. 'For that kind of battle's more likely to dust us down than to wound us.'
>
> 'No, that shan't be,' answered the other, 'for we'll put in half a dozen nice smooth stones of equal weight. Then the wind won't catch them, and in that way we shall be able to thump one another and do no hurt or damage.'
>
> 'Good heavens!' exclaimed Sancho. 'So that's [how we are to save ourselves from] bashing our skulls in and grinding our bones to powder! No, I tell you sir, I'm not fighting ...'
>
> 'All the same,' replied the Squire of the Wood, 'we must fight, if only for half an hour ...'"
>
> (Don Quixote, pp. 553 - 4)

If Sancho's head splits at "the mere thought of fighting" Tweedledee and Tweedledum are scarcely more capable of

entertaining the idea: they too manage to develop psychosomatic ailments in the hope of avoiding combat:

> "'Do I look very pale?' said Tweedledum ...
>
> 'Well - yes - a <u>little</u>,' Alice replied gently.
>
> 'I'm very brave, generally,' he went on in a low voice: 'only today I happen to have a headache.'
>
> 'And <u>I've</u> got a toothache!' said Tweedledee, who had overheard the remark. 'I'm far worse than you!'"
>
> (<u>TTLG</u>, pp. 242 - 3)

Such examples of similarities between Carroll and Cervantes' work have not been noted before, though recently John Hinz in his essay "Alice Meets the Don"* has drawn attention to a general resemblance between certain aspects of Alice's and Don Quixote's worlds.[/] Quoting the famous passage from the opening chapter:

> "A world of disorderly Notions, pick't out of his Books, crouded into his Imagination; and now his Head was full of nothing but Inchantments, Quarrels, Battles, Challenges, Wounds, Complaints, Amours, Torments, and abundance of Stuff and Impossibilities, insomuch that all the Fables and fantastical Tales which he read, seem'd to him now as true as the most authentick Histories."

- Hinz goes on to observe that "this list of particulars agrees almost completely with Alice's: for "Inchantments"

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*In <u>Aspects of Alice</u>, ed. Robert Phillips, Vanguard Press, N.Y., 1971.

[/]Mary Fuertes Boynton in her short article "An Oxford Don Quixote" (<u>Hispania</u>, Vol. XLVII, No. 4, (1964) pp. 738 - 51) has also written on certain similarities between Carroll's work and Cervantes'. She isolates certain textual resemblances in locations and events, in dreams, falling in dreams, etc. and in the fact that both use the "life is a chess game" and "looking-glass held up to life" metaphors. She also deals briefly with the White Knight/Don Quixote similarities (as Hinz does) and gives several small examples of textual congruence between Cervantes and Carroll by way of adding to an implicit proof that Carroll knew Cervantes' work.

recall the fantastic changes in size Alice undergoes, the vanishing cat, the shop that becomes a boat; for "Battles" and "Challenges" recollect Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Lion and the Unicorn, the White Knight and the Red; for "Quarrels" open to any page in Alice - there never was such a quarrelsome book. So it goes through all the "abundance of Stuff and Impossibilities". If the Don's dream-world is peopled with the characters of chivalric romance, Alice's is peopled with characters from Mother Goose - Humpty Dumpty, the Queen of Hearts, and others ..." (op. cit., p. 147).

It is difficult to make a complete equation between Alice's and the Don's worlds (where in Wonderland are the Wounds, Complaints and Amours?) but it is in this last sense particularly that they are significantly similar; that both Alice (and the characters of Wonderland) and the Don are living in a world of fiction and believing in its reality, with the related implication that the real world's sense of its own reality may itself be a fiction. They are moreover living according to literatures of similar kinds in that both Quixote's chivalric romances and Alice's fairy stories are about idealised worlds that essentially never were and existed only "once upon a time". And of course the experience of both by the time they reach the end of their stories is that they have irretrievably lost their faith in their respective fictitious worlds because of the sufferings consequent to living according to fiction: the real world is neither as wonderful nor as glorious, but nor is it so

demanding in that windmills remain windmills and flamingoes, flamingoes and chess pieces, chess pieces. Both seem forced to accept the commonplaces that govern ordinary life (that is the life of the majority) and as a consequence certain qualities are lost. For Don Quixote, disillusion is on the one hand cleansing: "My judgment is now clear and free from the misty shadows of ignorance with which my ill-starred and continuous reading of those detestable books of chivalry had obscured it." (p. 935); but on the other he dies because he had lost his raison d'être and because of his shame at discovering his previous madness and so-called misdirected life. For Alice, the implication is that she finds the sense of maturity by the end of both her stories, and erupts in adult anger fired by the certainty of disbelief: "Who cares for you? ... You're nothing but a pack of cards" (AAIW); and "'I can't stand this any longer' [and] she jumped up and seized the tablecloth with both hands: one good pull, and plates, dishes, guests and candles came crashing down together in a heap on the floor ..." (TTLG). Logically it would seem that if we view Alice's denial of the truth of Wonderland and the world through the looking-glass as appropriate, then we must also reject the imaginative qualities of childhood and join with her in condemning the unreality of the world of nursery books. Similarly, one intention of Don Quixote seems to be to show how the fictitious chivalric writings "drove the poor knight out of his wits". The essential ambiguity of both Alice and Don Quixote is, however, that

though both these points remain ostensibly in part true, both protagonists emerge from their stories diminished because they have learned how to disbelieve. During the course of their adventures, however, and whilst they believed, they were undoubtedly more impressive and in Don Quixote's case, truly noble. One of the larger implications of this inversion is of course that the enchantments of literature, in the sense of deliberate illusions, are double-edged in that they are both productive, provoking and inspiring Alice and Quixote to discover new qualities in themselves and new worlds, but in the last analysis false: and since Don Quixote and the Alices are themselves works of fiction, both Cervantes and Carroll clearly enjoy the infinite illusions produced by mirroring an image in a mirror in another mirror. The difficulties of being quite sure which is fiction and which is reality (and "who are you?" is the ultimate implication) create a dilemma that both Carroll and Cervantes liked to exploit:

> "The Unicorn ... turned round instantly, and stood for some time looking at her with an air of the deepest disgust.
>
> 'What - is - this?' he said at last.
>
> 'This is a child!' Haigha replied eagerly, coming in front of Alice to introduce her, and spreading out both his hands towards her in an Anglo-Saxon attitude. 'We only found it today. It's as large as life and twice as natural!'
>
> 'I always thought they were fabulous monsters! said the Unicorn. 'Is it alive?'
>
> 'It can talk,' said Haigha, solemnly.

The Unicorn looked dreamily at Alice, and said 'Talk, child.'

Alice could not help her lips curling up into a smile as she began: 'Do you know, I always thought Unicorns were fabulous monsters, too! I never saw one alive before!'

'Well, now that we have seen each other,' said the Unicorn, 'if you'll believe in me, I'll believe in you. Is that a bargain?'

'Yes, if you like,' said Alice."

(TTLG, p. 287)

"'When I [Sancho] went to welcome [Bachelor Sampson Carrasco] home he told me that your worship's story is already in print under the title of The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha. He says that I'm mentioned too under my own name of Sancho Panza and so is the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, and so are other matters which happened to us in private. It made me cross myself in wonder, to think how the story-writer could have learnt all that.'

'You may be certain, Sancho,' said Don Quixote, that the author of our history is some sage enchanter ...'"

(Don Quixote, p. 484)

The Cervantic/Carrollian implication that lies behind this comedy is that to make an absolute distinction between what is life and what is literature, or make-believe and dreaming, or even waking and sleeping, madness and sanity, are all impossibilities. Such distinctions are those demanded arbitrarily by sane adulthood which does so because it is this state alone that somehow manages to be distrustful, dismissive and cynical enough to find its way through what otherwise are the inherent difficulties of the everyday world. To succeed in this, only the reward and lure of tangible material profit is essential. If we ridicule its opposite - the noble fool, like Quixote or the White Knight or the child, like Alice - we tacitly favour such a self-motivated and unperceptive world. In later years

Carroll rather sentimentally set down what Alice had meant to him and what he had meant to convey in his writing and he emphasised, as Hinz points out, just those qualities that are in opposition to a materialistic view of the world which could equally apply to Don Quixote:

> "... trustful, ready to accept the wildest impossibilities with all that utter trust that only dreamers know; and lastly, curious - wildly curious, and with the eager enjoyment of Life that comes only in the happy hours of childhood, when all is new and fair, and when Sin and Sorrow are but names ..."
>
> ("Alice on the Stage," 1887, reprinted in LCPB, p. 170)

Though this is far too crude to apply to Cervantes' complex work - and it is, of course, also a gross simplification of Carroll's own - the cherished values for both are similar; that the fabulously fictitious, the childlike, the imaginative and the dreamlike can, at best, sometimes coincide. Don Quixote and his descendant the White Knight (as well as Alice herself) are, for Cervantes and Carroll, characters created in the hope that such coincidence is still possible.

LEWIS CARROLL AND THE EMINENT VICTORIANS

LEWIS CARROLL

H. FURNISS — illustrated SB and SBC — cartoonist for "Punch"; cartoonist for "Punch".

TENNIEL — illustrated AAIW and TTLG

WALTER CRANE — asked to illustrate TTLG

WATTS — visited 14/7/1864 — Carroll introduced to Watts by Prinsep

HOLMAN HUNT — visited regularly, photographed 24/7/1872, met 13/6/1857

WOOLNER — met 16/7/1863

W.A. COLLINS — met 13/6/1857

LEIGHTON — visited 4/7/1879

Pre-Raphaelites and associates

NOEL PATON — asked to illustrate TTLG

A. HUGHES — Carroll admired painting by; knew well

Hughes introduced Carroll to Tom Taylor

HOLIDAY — Illustrated "Hunting of the Snark"

PRINSEP — Prinsep introduced to Carroll 14/7/1864; introduced to Munro by Munro

MUNRO — Carroll took photographs of Munro and his sculpture

DOYLE — asked by Carroll to illustrate TTLG 21/1/1866

MILLAIS — photographed by Carroll, who also knew and photographed the family

Munro and the MacDonalds were friends; the MacDonald's son Greville was the model for Munro's "Boy with the Dolphin" sculpture at Hyde Park

photographed by Carroll, who contributed a few poems to "Punch" — TOM TAYLOR — editor of "Punch" — Doyle drew the first cover for "Punch"

photographed by Carroll; long-standing friend, admired as actress. — ELLEN TERRY — friends

at one time married

became a friend Hero' "Punch"; asked to illustrate AAIW in its French translation — G. DU MAURIER — cartoonist for "Punch"

met once 9/5/1857 — THACKERAY — Doyle illustrated "The Newcomes" etc

father of Alice and Greek Lexicon. Dean of Christ Church — H.G. LIDDELL — long-standing friends

met at Macs mutual publishers, Macmillans 7/1/1869 — C. KINGSLEY — brothers

called on 9/8/1864 — H. KINGSLEY

called on 4/10/1890 — COVENTRY PATMORE

visited 13/4/1859 photographed — ALFRED TENNYSON — photographed (continuing friendship as well as that of his sons (Hallam) with his photographs.

met 28/7/1864 admired her work — JULIA M. CAMERON — photographer

met once 26/7/1879 — MARK TWAIN

met once 18/4/1865 — SWINBURNE — Carroll introduced to Swinburne by Rossettis

photographed them and DGR's work; First met 30/9/1863 — D.G. & Wm ROSSETTI

sister

photographed, admired poetry introduced 6/10/1863 — CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

met through speech therapist in 1859; lifelong friends

G. MACDONALD — MacDonald introduced Lewis Carroll to Tennyson and Ruskin

Hughes illustrated much of MacDonald's work

Patons introduced to Carroll by MacDonald 15/10/1871

RUSKIN — Ruskin was a patron to the Rossettis

Carroll saw Ruskin's work and photographed him; first met 27/10/1857

Ruskin greatly admired Millais' work. Millais married Ruskin's ex-wife Effie Grey

all the Rossetti's were extremely important to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; D.G. Rossetti was a founder member.

Ruskin was a PRB enthusiast; a patron of the group, and its (largely self-) appointed philosopher

Doyle illustrated Ruskin's "King of the Golden River"

Patons illustrated Kingsley's "The Water Babies"

Hughes illustrated some of C. Rossetti's work, especially her "Speaking Likenesses"

Chapter 3 Carroll and some eminent Victorians

(i) Writers

It is not the intention of this thesis to go further than the diagram on page 214 in outlining who were the eminent artistic and literary Victorians that Carroll knew - that has already been amply done by his two standard biographers Hudson and Lennon. Rather the aim here in this chapter remains the same as in the previous ones; to show what the artistic and literary traditions and thematic preoccupations were that Carroll can be seen to be related to (either directly or implicitly); how he adapted these traditions and preoccupations and how he developed his art from them. Clearly, if we are to place Carroll in a literary tradition it matters less whether he knew or didn't know a particular artist, than whether he was following even implicitly (as in the cases of Laurence Sterne and Cervantes) a philosophy or literary technique. Consequently it is probably unimportant that Carroll knew many of the people that he did and much more central to consider him in comparison with what Dickens (whom he did not know) was doing or what Sterne (whom he does not specifically refer to) had done. It is time now, however, to examine those, among the many eminent Victorians that Carroll did personally know, who may have contributed to his achievement by way of providing a background to his thinking.

It will be seen by looking at the diagram, that Carroll's friends and acquaintances fall into two quite distinct categories that are virtually equal in number - painters and writers. Of the painters none except perhaps Arthur Hughes, Noel Paton and his own illustrators Tenniel, Holiday and Furness, could Carroll have been said to have known well, but he was nevertheless in some kind of contact with most of the original members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their later associates and friends. His acquaintanceship with the Pre-Raphaelites' champion John Ruskin should complete the picture of his intellectual milieu but it is actually only secondary to other and greater friendships. Although it might seem from the diagram that Carroll was at the very hub of Victorian intellectual life, the truth is much less colourful. In fact, he who was so disgusted by autograph collectors and lionisers who hunted <u>him</u> was not, at least in his younger days, at all averse to hunting out and if possible photographing the famous, the titled and the artistic. Hence most of his contacts with eminent Victorians were brief and no more than a polite exchange whilst he focussed his camera. Typical of this kind of contact is, for example, the way that Carroll used one slight acquaintanceship to gain others as his <u>Diary</u> shows:

"July 14th 1864: Called on Mr. Munro [Alexander Munro (1825 - 71) a well known sculptor - to whom he was introduced by Mrs. Acland the wife of Sir Henry Wentworth Acland (1815 - 70) Regius Professor of Medicine and honorary physician to the Prince of Wales, to whom he was introduced by Dean Liddell (5.11.1856)] and lunched there; he kindly

gave me a note of introduction to Mr. Valentine Prinsep [(1838 - 1904) the painter of The Gleaners etc.] I called there [and] saw both him and Mr. Martineau [Robert Braithwaite Martineau (1826 - 69)] who lodges in the same house. I saw many pictures of Mr. Prinsep's: the one he is now working at is from "The Rape of the Lock" where the lady is walking out of the room in a huff. Mr. Martineau showed me his picture (an old one he is repainting) called "The Last Chapter" - a girl kneeling by the fire reading a novel: a beautiful study of firelight. Mr. Prinsep gave me, at my request, a note of introduction to Mr. Watts, armed with which I at last found my way to Little Holland House. He also was at home, and received me most kindly, and showed me a room-full of pictures, including Tennyson, Henry Taylor and Garibaldi; and also his studio - he is working at a scene from the Fairie Queen, Una and the Knight riding side by side, and also at a figure of Britomart."*

(Diaries, pp. 219 - 220)

Certainly one can say of such a Diary entry that Carroll was interested in painters and their pictures - though celebrities also attracted him from all walks of life just because they were celebrities and a fitting subject for his camera.† We must be careful because of this not to confuse an interest in the individual celebrity with a real interest in his work/art. For example, if we took a Diary

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*Certainly Diary entries such as this (and many others especially in the years 1860 - 1875) give the lie to the insistent cry that runs throughout the first chapter of his book on Carroll (Lewis Carroll, Paris 1970) made by Jean Gattegno: "Dodgson refusait tout simplement à s'engager", p. 35.

†For the definitive account of Carroll's photography - and how and when he captured distinguished people, see Helmut Gernsheim's Lewis Carroll, Photographer (Revised edition, Dover, 1969).

entry like the following one, where no less than four eminent men are mentioned, and determined to trace a kinship between Carroll and them, the result would quite obviously be one of confusing conjecture. What we should admire is Carroll's industry at getting to know so many Victorian "greats" and his energy at doing so much in a single day!:

> "April 18th 1865. Called on ... Mr. Munro ... I [later] walked on to call on Millais. He was out but Mrs. Millais came home as I was at the door, and asked me in. I had never met her before and thought her very pleasing and ladylike. I left a ... music box there for Mary [her daughter] and then went on to Kensington, where I found Wilfred [Carroll's brother] and we went together to call on Rossetti. We found him at home and his friend Swinburne also in the room, whom I had not met before. He showed us many beautiful pictures, two quite new: the bride going to meet the bride-groom (from Solomon's Song) and Venus with a background of roses.
>
> In the evening I went to the Olympic [theatre] ..."
>
> (Diaries, pp. 229 - 230)

Though we must not therefore read too much into Carroll's acquaintanceship with many of the celebrities he knew, equally it does not seem chance alone that brought him into contact with so many visual artists - and we shall look closer at this later in the chapter.

Amongst the other group of "eminents" - the writers - there are some names that are as, if not more, famous than those of the artists. Ruskin, Kingsley, Tennyson, the Rossettis and Patmore all were men that Carroll was proud of having known. Here again, the standard biographies of Carroll go into the details of how and when he got to know

them. The significant point is, however, that in the standard biographies of <u>those men</u> Carroll is hardly, if at all, mentioned; none recorded (or if they did but rarely) any knowledge of Carroll; such men were above a writer of children's stories. Of course hindsight shows us how Carroll has become perhaps one of the most frequently and most enthusiastically read writers of his time, whilst copies of Ruskin's work along with Kingsley's fill the shelves of the secondhand bookshops and few copies of <u>The Angel in the House</u> are sold today: even Tennyson's standing as a poet is only recently and tentatively being revived. If, in comparison, Carroll's lack of status in the eyes of his famous contemporaries seems a strange fact we might remember that even C. L. Dodgson was a little wry about Lewis Carroll.

Who then amongst all of Carroll's friends and acquaintances could be said to have been an important personal friend as well as a possibly influential artist for him? Perhaps surprisingly it is a man whose standing in the League of Famous Writers has fallen in directly inverse proportion to Carroll's current heights in that League: George MacDonald.

I George MacDonald

The most conclusive evidence of the friendship that existed between Carroll and MacDonald comes from Carroll's Diaries. They met, as R. L. Green points out,* in 1859 having been introduced by a certain James Hunt, Ph.D. (1833 - 1869) editor of the Anthropological Review and the author of Stammering and Stuttering (1861) whom Carroll had consulted, appropriately enough, because of his speech impediment. "It was," as Green observes "during one of Dodgson's visits to [Hunt's] home at Ore in 1859, that Hunt introduced him to George MacDonald then living close by at Hastings, and these two, who had so much in common, soon became fast friends" (p. 154). Carroll's Diaries that would have covered the first three years of their friendship (1859 - May 1862) are unfortunately lost so there is no extant record of just how close he was to the MacDonalds at that time. As Carroll tended to write fuller Diary entries when he was younger (many of the later ones are mere notes) this means that perhaps much significant evidence has disappeared. Nevertheless the Diaries that do remain are enough to indicate the quality of the friendship, and the frequency of their meetings - though it does not appear to have lasted beyond 1882 since an entry on September 22 of

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*See Diaries, pp. 154 ff.

that year is the last reference by Carroll to the MacDonald parents (there are a few later ones to the children) and even that has a hard tone to it:

> "Spent day at Brighton. Took Ethel Barclay and Gracie Smith [child friends] to see the MacDonalds act [Corneille's] Polyeuctus, [acting was at one time a way that the MacDonald's - somehow always impoverished - made a living], and afterwards had a short interview with Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald." (p. 409).

What the word "interview" means in this context is difficult to ascertain (Carroll was, after all, formal enough to sometimes sign his letters to his sisters "C. L. Dodgson") - but the MacDonalds are no longer referred to by him.

In the years between this last entry (22.9.1882) and the first entry of the extant Diary that covers the years of their friendship (9.5.1862) there are nearly thirty references to actual meetings between them, several more to Carroll's reading of MacDonald's books as well as at least fifty to Carroll's friendship with MacDonald's wife and children. The references to the meetings between MacDonald and Carroll undoubtedly cluster around the decade of 1862 - 1872 and, except for their quantity, like the Diaries as a whole, tell us very little about Carroll's thoughts about what conversation or discussion they may have had. The most that the entries tell us is that Carroll was on "dropping in" terms, and that he often stayed in MacDonald's company for some time:

17.5.1864: "First to the Royal Academy ... Then called on the MacDonalds, with whom I lunched and spent most of the afternoon; then on Holman Hunt for a few minutes. Back to Oxford at night."

Mostly the entries are of this mundane variety and there are lots like it; "went to the MacDonalds, where I spent a most pleasant evening" (2.2.1863); "Vere Street chapel ... Mr. MacDonald and Mary [a daughter] were there; I went back with them and joined their early dinner" (19.7.1863); "... Walked on to ... Kensington, where I succeeded in finding the MacDonald's [new] house, and stayed two hours or more" (4.10.1863); "Had dinner with the MacDonalds, then went to see Hamlet at the Lyceum ..." (20.6.1864); "In the afternoon played croquet with the MacDonalds" (15.7.1864); "Spent the evening with the MacDonalds and met all the usual set of friends" (6.4.1865); "After leaving Mr. Holiday, I had two days photographing with the MacDonalds" (24.7.1870); "Went up to town, to the MacDonalds, where I arrived just after the play had begun. It was one of Mrs. MacDonald's dramas, Snowdrop, and was acted by the children, and two or three friends ..."* (1.7.1871); "called at the MacDonalds and stayed luncheon" (6.7.1872) - and so on.

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*DFC/19 has a letter from Carroll to a Mrs. Brown dated 16.7.1880 regarding another of the MacDonald's performances:

"Is the 'Pilgrim's Progress' now being played at the Steinway Hall by Mr. George MacDonald & family (very old friends of mine) the kind of thing you would ~~like~~ et (sic) Mary go to?"

Apart from such Diary notes as these, the mutual respect and friendliness that existed between the two men shows in the way that they were prepared to help each other when and where they could. When, for example, Carroll wanted to meet Sir Noel Paton (whose work he had long admired, as we shall see later, MacDonald responded affectionately but perfunctorily:

The Retreat,
Hammersmith, W.

Thursday - [c. August 31, 1871]

My Dear Dodgson,

I am very sorry my delay ~~has~~ [sic] should have caused you the least inconvenience. I am dreadfully busy - in the hope of getting away for a while, & laid your letter aside for a day, & then forgot how pressing it was.

There is not the slightest impediment in the way of my giving you an introduction to Sir Noel. I fear, however, that he may be out of town at present. Arran is a favourite haunt of his. Yours most brief

George MacDonald

(Letter in the Harvard College Library, gift of Mrs. Harcourt Amory. Jan 14 1927. Numbered, perhaps by Carroll (?) 12057).

But perhaps the most significant help that Carroll got from MacDonald (and his children) was a nudge to get Alice's Adventures in Wonderland published. As Greville MacDonald relates:

"It was about [1862 - 3] that [Carroll] asked my father's opinion of a story he had written and named Alice's Adventures Underground illustrated with pen and ink sketches by himself and minutely penned in printing characters. My father suggested that an experiment

should be made upon his young family. Accordingly my mother read the story to us. When she came to the end I, being aged six, exclaimed that there ought to be sixty thousand volumes of it. Certainly it was our enthusiasm that persuaded our Uncle Dodgson, as we called him, to present the English speaking world with one of its future classics, Alice in Wonderland. How happily could my father laugh over this loving humorist's impromptu drawings, full of the absurdities, mock maxims and erratic logic so dear to the child-heart, young or old!"

(George MacDonald and his Wife, George Allen & Unwin, 1924, p. 342)

The MacDonalds and their children, to whom Carroll wrote many magnificent nonsense letters, were perhaps the most important stimulus for Wonderland amongst people whom he actually knew.

Who, then, was George MacDonald?:

"Of later-day authors, the name of George MacDonald as poet and a weaver of prose romance takes its place among those the most familiar."

- So runs the introduction by A. H. Hyatt to The Pocket George MacDonald (Chatto and Windus 1906). An author popular enough to be condensed for the pocket in 1906 should, one might suppose, still be at least known of today, yet in fact his work is hardly ever read.* But because he was important to Carroll as a friend and influence some details of his life and work must be given here.

The first point to be made is that not only was MacDonald important for Carroll but he was also an extremely

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*This was true until very recently when because of the growing interest in folk tales through Tolkien et al, some of MacDonald's work has been re-issued in paperback.

important writer of his time - there even exists a Victorian "artist's reconstruction-of-the-scene" photograph* of contemporary writers in which MacDonald is squashed in with nine literary "greats", amongst them Dickens, Thackeray, Collins, Carlyle and Trollope. Moreover the reviews that greeted the publication of his books themselves give ample evidence of his contemporary standing:

> "George MacDonald is one of the few living authors, who, while they enjoy a considerable reputation, are greater than their repute. His books are well known, are largely read, and are highly esteemed; but, much as they have been praised, there is matter in them which has never been praised enough ..."
>
> (Pall Mall Gazette quoted on the fly leaf of the first edition of Lilith 1895)

Other contemporary reviews were also in no doubt about MacDonald's quality as a writer, the dispute, if there was one, was over which novel was the masterpiece. Of Alec Forbes the Daily News (edited by Dickens) said that "The whole story is one of surpassing excellence and beauty" whilst the Examiner exclaimed that MacDonald in that novel read "life and Nature like a true poet." The Times thought David Elginbrod was "a novel which is the work of a man of genius" whilst the Pall Mall Gazette used the word "Genius" of MacDonald's later novel Sir Gibbie as did the Graphic. The British Quarterly Review thought that, on the other hand, MacDonald's Robert Falconer "is the noblest work of fiction" - with which the Illustrated London

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*See Greville MacDonald's George MacDonald and his Wife, 1924, facing p. 23.

News agreed, saying that it "displays to the best advantage all the powers of Dr. MacDonald's genius."*

In a literary life time of forty-two years, MacDonald produced fifty-two volumes, twenty-five of these were novels, three of them were prose-fantasies, eight were tales for children, five volumes were of sermons, three of literary and miscellaneous critical essays, three of collections of short stories and five volumes were of verse.† Today despite his Victorian admirers perhaps only two or three of MacDonald's children's stories and fantasy tales remain in print and the other fifty volumes have vanished leaving only a very slight ripple of enthusiasm kept alive by a handful of scholars, nineteenth-century obscurantists and Scottish nationalists. The answer to the obvious question "Why did MacDonald's work not survive?" is also obvious; MacDonald was not really the genius the reviews judged that he was - or at least not as often as they said. To find why we must look a little closer at the details of his life.

MacDonald, so the Dictionary of National Biography (1901 - 1911) tells us, was born in December 1824 in West Aberdeenshire of a long and proud Scots line that could trace its family roots back to one of the 120 MacDonalds who escaped from the massacre of Glencoe in 1692.

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*All these reviews are quoted on the back fly of the 1st edition of MacDonald's Salted with Fire, 1897.

†See George MacDonald and his Wife, p. 563.

His Gaelic speaking grandfather was a farmer and banker, and his strictly congregational father was the head of a weaving business. MacDonald won a bursary to King's College Aberdeen when he was sixteen, and graduated from there in 1845 having kept himself by teaching. In 1848 he entered the theological college at Highbury to prepare for the congregational ministry which he found uncongenial and left before he finished his course. He was ordained to his first and only charge, the Trinity congregational chapel at Arundel in 1850, but he resigned by 1853 because his "intellectual independence dissatisfied his congregation". From that point onwards MacDonald followed a literary career and, moving to Manchester, by 1855 he had finished his first book, a poem Within and Without, which both Tennyson and Lady Byron admired and on which he started to build his literary reputation. He married in 1851 and in the years that followed produced eleven children and, in order to support them, up to three or even four volumes per year in addition to preaching regularly as a layman. Although he lived to be 81 his health was never good and necessitated spending much of his time abroad, though the years 1860 - 1872 which were the years of his friendship with Carroll were spent in London. Despite the high sales of his books MacDonald was always rather poor which spurred him on to write more, to edit the periodical Good Words for the Young, and to lecture publically both at home and on tour in America. His reputation and his poverty were

so well-known that in 1877 he was granted by the special desire of Queen Victoria a Civil List pension of £100. His friends were many; besides his illustrator Arthur Hughes and Carroll he knew the Carlyles, Noel Paton, William Morris, Burne Jones, Tennyson, and Browning as well as Ruskin intimately. He died in September 1905 after a lifetime of constant authorship.

Even this brief outline of MacDonald's biography makes three obvious points clear; first, because of poverty MacDonald wrote too much too quickly. He wrote nearly twice as many novels as Dickens though they were admittedly shorter than his, and these themselves were less than half of his total output. This was a remarkable performance considering that Dickens, as is obvious from Edgar Johnson's biography, was himself a phenomenally energetic and hard-working writer. MacDonald was neither as healthy nor as brilliant as Dickens and yet produced over twice as much; obviously it could only be fractionally as good. Secondly, his Scottishness may have contributed to his current obscurity; for he was justifiably proud enough of his origins to write vast portions of dialogue in many of his novels in a Scots dialect and as a consequence it is scarcely surprising that this has tended to keep the few readers of these novels today mainly Scots themselves. Though doubtlessly an added incentive for them to read him, such dialect is

wearying to the English eye and even the partisan Carroll thought so.

The third factor that similarly goes some way to explaining his lack of modern readers (and perhaps his popularity in his own time) is MacDonald's obvious life-long sense of religious conviction; he preached and he wrote, and most of the time both energies got mixed up together. Though not, of course, in itself a bad thing MacDonald's strong didactic purpose did tend to make his novels sermons. He himself, however, regarded this as a legitimate way of furthering his religious calling and he could not resist expounding them as they progressed as if they were parables. Other novelists, greater than MacDonald, have had Christianity as the foundation of their work, but are able to persuade without intrusion; MacDonald could not resist that temptation. In his memoir Greville MacDonald records that his father was actually proud of his tendency to preach:

> "'People' [George MacDonald] once remarked, 'find this great fault with me - that I turn my stories into sermons. They forget that I have a Master to serve first before I can wait upon the public.'"
>
> (George MacDonald and his Wife, p. 375)

Gillian Avery even goes so far as to note that:

"Of all the Victorian allegorists, George MacDonald was the greatest. Religion was the centre of his life, a Christianity intense and fervent, astringent and humane, but so individualistic that he was compelled to resign from the Congregational ministry ... for heresy."

(19th Century Children, Hodder and Stoughton, 1965, p. 58)

If MacDonald had been asked whom he considered to be his spiritual and literary inspiration and guide he would probably have said William Blake; he even had his bookplate crudely made up from an adaptation of one of Blake's designs called "Death's Door" for Blair's poem The Grave (1808). Greville MacDonald further notes in the memoir that he "did unquestionably get help from Blake," in certain respects and that four of Blake's engravings for The Grave hung in his father's study. He notes also that his father probably knew at least Blake's lyrics and that he had a facsimile of the original Jerusalem and an early hand-coloured reproduction of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, besides Gilchrist's biography and edition of the poems, his Life of Blake.*

What, then, did Blake teach MacDonald, or rather what of Blake did MacDonald understand and allow to survive? Unquestionably it was a much simplified version of Blake's subtle mystical and prophetic vision but some of Blake's positives came through. We are not concerned, however, here with tracing the whole of MacDonald's philosophy, much

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*George MacDonald and his Wife, pp. 554 - 555.

of which has been done already by Robert Wolff,* but rather only with that part of MacDonald's thinking which may have contributed to Carroll's background. In this context there were two important ideas both of which were doubtless reinforced by MacDonald's admiration for Blake's work; the ideal of childhood and the recognition of the value of the dream, both of which were fundamental to Carroll's art.

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*The Golden Key: A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald, Yale U.P., New Haven, 1961.

II MacDonald, the ideal of childhood and the fairy tale

MacDonald's ideal of childhood was not in essence different from the thinking of other Victorians such as Dickens for example, but it was more concentrated and intense. For he was, like Tennyson, a <u>deliberate</u> mystical bard wearing long hair and a flowing beard and looked, as far as he could, just like Blake's Job. Such a presence that he undoubtedly had made his voice authoritative and one which Carroll most probably listened to. For it was from MacDonald who went even further than Dickens in this respect, that Carroll found ultimate authority for his most extreme idealisation of children. They were divine beings for certain Victorians whose ultimate beauty came from the fact that, as Professor Morton Cohen has observed,* "they had recently come from God, and they still possessed a modicum of divine knowledge. [Therefore] to idealise childhood, to devote oneself to its advancement, to be a witness as it were of the visionary gleam and the miracle of the expanding mind and yearning heart - to help mould them, to help divert them, in fact to love them and be loved by them - those were more than acceptable human

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*"Love and Lewis Carroll," <u>The Times Saturday Review</u>, 20.11.71.

occupations, they were acceptable in the sight of God."* Dickens also largely believed this, but MacDonald believed it all the time. Here, for example, is a sample from what is perhaps his most famous poem: Baby:

"Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here.

Where did you get those eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?
Some of the starry twinkles left in.

Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here ...

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?
From the same box as the cherubs' wings.

How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you Dear?
God thought about you, and so I am here."

Even at a glance it is clear that this poem manages to include a surprising amount of bad Victorian thinking,

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*This remained true despite the fact that the Victorians more than any others before or since were merciless exploiters of children - maiming and shortening their lives daily on that other authorised altar, Industrialisation. It is a curious fact that despite Millais' "Bubbles" and Jo the Crossing-Sweeper both being children no one much seemed to object that their respective positions were unequal and could hardly both be the product of the same idealism. It would be tempting to conclude that this kind of double-thinking made hypocrisy and a kind of deliberate schizophrenia an essential of this part of the infamous Victorian frame of mind, but it has always been (and, presumably, will always be) possible for one part of society to shut out the miseries of another part. (The West's ability to tolerate the photographs of the starving third world, or England's indifference to the bombs of Northern Ireland seem cases in point).

for it is sentimental, quasi-mystical, links children with heavenly cherubs, and manages to talk about birth without sex - a perfect poem for the Victorians in general and (in the last respect) for Carroll in particular. But MacDonald's muse was usually far more accomplished and successful than this poem suggests. As a poet especially he has been neglected largely because he was overproductive and unselfcritical. These following lines, for example, from a longer poem, My Room show this same message again killing his medium:

> "Baby, with her pretty prate
> Molten, half articulate,
> Full of hints, suggestions, catches
> Broken verse, and music snatches!
> She, like seraph gone astray,
> Must be shown the homeward way;
> Plant of heaven, she, rooted lowly,
> Must put forth a blossom holy,
> Must, through culture high and steady,
> Slow unfold a gracious lady;
> She must therefore live in wonder,
> She nought common up or under;
> She the moon and stars and sea,
> Worm and butterfly and bee,
> Yea, the sparkle in a stone,
> Must with marvel look upon;
> She must love, in heaven's own blueness,
> Both the colour and the newness;
> Must each day from darkness break,
> Often often come awake,
> Never with her childhood part
> Change the brain, but keep the heart ..."

This is not the place to discuss what is wrong with this poem - it is sufficient to note that Carroll whole-heartedly agreed with what MacDonald here could have said better. Nevertheless the epigraph for Alice in Wonderland

might have been the eleventh line of this extract: "She must therefore live in wonder". Further, as Cohen shows,* some of Carroll's letters indicate the high mystical level that MacDonald's poem recommends with which he in turn viewed his relationship with many of his child-friends. Thus he wrote to the mother of one of them:

> "... many thanks for again lending me Enid. She is one of the dearest children. It is good for one (I mean, for one's spiritual life, and in the same sense in which reading the Bible is good) to come into contact with such sweetness."

The religious tone here is virtually identical with certain of MacDonald's pronouncements on childhood; for example the following from David Elginbrod (Bk. I, Ch. VI):

> "There is a childhood into which we have to grow, just as there is a childhood which we must leave behind; a child-likeness which is the highest gain of humanity, and a childishness from which but few of those who are counted the wisest among men, have fired themselves in their imagined progress toward the reality of things."

Similarly Carroll wrote to another mother whose little girl he had "borrowed":†

> "... you need not thank me for kindness to her! Who could help being kind to her? And where is the merit of doing what one cannot help? It is very sweet to me to be loved by her as children love ... You speak of my having seen into Marion's inner nature, and having seen what she is in herself. Well, I think I have not done that, as yet.

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*"Love and Lewis Carroll", op. cit.

†Quoted by Cohen, op. cit.

We are excellent friends, but I don't think she yet regards me as so intimate a friend as to show any of her real inner life to me. I have, before now, reached such terms and certainly a child's nature appears in a new and wonderful light when she knows one well enough to say anything about her thoughts about God, and death, and such subjects as underlie all other thoughts and words. Such intercourse is rather 'aweful' to me: one's own nature comes out so poor and mean in the new light thus thrown on it ..."

Again we find that MacDonald says what amounts to the identical thing:

"The wise and prudent interprets God by himself, and does not understand him; the child interprets God by himself and does understand him. The wise and prudent must make a system and arrange things to his mind before he can say, I believe. The child sees, believes, obeys."

(Unspoken sermons)

But MacDonald's abstract philosophy, like most abstract philosophy when it intrudes in literature, is paradoxically less effective than his more robust and less passionate fiction. When he wrote even his simplest fairy-tale we find that his most extreme ideals have more effect in the event than in such isolated dogma as we find here and indeed this is why these stories have remained in print.

There are three major stories that MacDonald wrote for children that are still known today, At the Back of the North Wind (1871), The Princess and the Goblin (1872) and The Princess and Curdie (1883) as well as less important ones such as Dealings with the Fairies (1867) and The Wise Woman (1875). As Robert Lee Wolff, in his study of MacDonald, The Golden Key, very adequately summarises the

plots of these tales there is little need to repeat that process here, except in so far as MacDonald's work can be said to help our understanding of Carroll's. Again, as with Dickens' work, there is no question of plagiarism (for one thing much of MacDonald's work was published after Carroll's) but it might be useful to isolate some common ground and indicate at the same time some common methods.

At the Back of the North Wind can be dealt with briefly since its rampant didacticism makes it resemble Carroll's work least. Its purpose seems to be to teach children about death for which the title is a euphemism that is concretely realised. For the North Wind takes the shape of a beautiful woman who befriends Diamond, the son of a coachman, whom she visits at night and takes with her on her errands. She is both a character and also an imaginary being since, significantly, she "visits" Diamond when he is unwell; i.e. she is in part at least the result of the delusions caused by high temperature and fever, and she is also a "person" within the terms of the story. As Diamond becomes progressively sicker she, of course, visits more often but she teaches him not to fear but ominously rather to enjoy her visits. Because of this lack of fear Diamond is able to face the hardships of the real world with greater proficiency, helping amongst others, a drunken cabdriver, a crossing sweeper, and his parents. The important similarity

between this story and Carroll's is that both expose the needs of childhood, the difficulties of coming to terms with the adult world and the need for respect for the fantastic world of the imagination. Unlike Carroll's Alice, however, At the Back of the North Wind seems to be too long and often heavily didactic so that the element of "wonder" is often displaced by over-explanation on MacDonald's part.

More successful are the Princess stories which, like the two Alices are in a sense a continuation of each other. The first volume (The Princess and the Goblin) tells the story of how Curdie, a miner's son, saves the Princess Irene from being abducted by the goblins who live in labyrinthine earthworks under her father's Kingdom. These goblins were once humans but rebelled against their king and, having been literally forced underground, have evolved into bestial forms better suited to their unwholesome environment (and there are obvious echoes here of Paradise Lost and the fallen angels.) They are in a constant state of war with those above ground but have one vulnerable point in that they cannot tolerate either verse or song (imagination) - which consequently are the much-used and loved weapons of the miners and villagers against them.

The source of beneficent power in the story is a mysterious and magical great-great-grandmother of the little Princess Irene who, like an Olympian goddess, influences the course of things from her hidden realm at the top of the

Palace into which only the favoured can enter - and then only after perseverance and adventure:

> "Up and up [Irene] ran - such a long way it seemed to her! - until she came to the top of the third flight. There she found the landing was at the end of a long passage. Into this she ran. It was full of doors on each side. There were so many that she did not care to open any, but ran on to the end, where she turned into another passage also full of doors. When she had turned twice more, and still saw doors and only doors about her, she began to get frightened. It was so silent! And all those doors must hide rooms with nobody in them! ... She turned and started at full speed, her little footsteps echoing through the sounds of the rain - back for the stairs and her safe nursery. So she thought, but she had lost herself long ago ...
>
> She ran for some distance, turned several times, and then began to be afraid. Very soon she was sure that she had lost the way back. Rooms everywhere, and no stair! ... At last her hope failed her. Nothing but passages and doors everywhere! She threw herself on the floor and burst into a wailing cry broken by sobs ... [Then] she resolved to walk through the passages, and look in every direction for the stairs. This she did, but without success. She went over the same ground again and again without knowing it, for the passages and doors were all alike."
>
> (<u>The Princess and the Goblin</u>, Chapter 2)

Eventually "in a corner, through a half-open door, she did see a stair" and going up it she discovers her magical ancestor. The spirit of this adventure and the nightmarish way in which Irene loses her sense of direction and has to fend for herself, is so like something which Carroll could have written that it is not difficult to recognise their common ground. Even early reviewers noted this link between Carroll and MacDonald and the most recent comment on it occurs in W. H. Auden's introduction to the 1954 reprint of <u>Phantastes</u> and <u>Lilith</u>:

"George MacDonald is pre-eminently a mythopoeic writer ... In his power ... to project his inner life into images, events, beings, landscapes which are valid for all, he is one of the most remarkable writers of the nineteenth century. The Princess and the Goblin is, in my opinion, the only English childrens' book in the same class as the Alice books, and Lilith is equal if not superior to the best of Poe."*

When, to return to the story, Irene penetrates the magical attics she is accordingly rewarded, (like Alice who similarly wants to enter the Wonderland garden) for her resourcefulness, her courage and for her imagination. By way of contrast, however, when she takes Curdie to see her grandmother later in the story he does not have faith in the purely imaginative and like Alice's sister sees nothing beyond the literal evidence of his eyes. This perhaps is MacDonald's most central theme: that certain poetic and magical visions are only open to those who are trusting and open-minded; namely unprejudiced, uncontaminated children. For those who are able to trust, as Curdie eventually comes to do, help is always offered and at hand. Of course, the Christian implications of this are not neglected by MacDonald since once Curdie can believe, the goblins are routed and a kind of paradisal state is reached. The literally undermining powers of animal darkness can most effectively be dispelled by faith in the highest being -

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*It is perhaps worth noticing that there is bibliographic evidence to support this view: Carroll had in his library "3 vols. of E. A. Poe, half mor[occo]" (lot 401 DSC) "E. A. Poe's Poetical Works" (lot 841 DSC) and "Life and Letters of E. A. Poe" (lot 881 DSC).

a faith that is almost exclusively both an attribute of childhood and which is symbolised by it.

Ten years later MacDonald wrote the sequel to this story which again emphasised certain of his ideas concerning childhood. This subsequent volume, The Princess and Curdie, opens with an important portrait of Curdie himself who has diminished in spiritual stature as he has grown into adulthood:

> "... he was becoming more and more a miner, and less and less a man of the upper world where the wind blew. On his way to and from the mine he took less and less notice of bees and butterflies, moths and dragonflies, the flowers and the brooks and the clouds. He was gradually changing into a commonplace man.
>
> There is this difference between the growth of some human beings and that of others: in the one case it is a continuous dying, in the other a continuous resurrection. One of the latter sort comes at length to know at once whether a thing is true the moment it comes before him; one of the former class grows more and more afraid of being taken in, so afraid of it that he takes himself in altogether, and comes at length to believe in nothing but his dinner: to be sure of a thing with him is to have it between his teeth. [...] The boy should enclose and keep, as his life, the old child at the heart of him, and never let it go. He must still, to be a right man, be his mother's darling, and more, his father's pride, and more. The child is not meant to die, but to be forever freshborn ..."
>
> (The Princess and Curdie, Chapter 2)

The Blakean vision of the child as innocence and therefore the touchstone that will enable life to be regenerated and evil dispelled, is also at the centre of this story. Hence it is the trust that Curdie begins to experience again in the wise and magical great-great-grandmother that enables her magic to have effect and he becomes the

medium through which it works. Without itemising all the events of the story, Curdie eventually manages to penetrate the King's castle where he finds certain traitors attempting to reduce the King to a puppet by adulterating his food with drugs. With the help of a few loyal subjects Curdie manages to foil their plot and nurses the King back to health. Vitally influential in this is the small child of one of the few remaining patriots:

> "When [Curdie] re-entered the chamber, he found the King sitting up in bed, fighting the phantoms of some hideous dream. Generally upon such occasions, although he saw his watcher, he could not disassociate him from the dream and went raving on. But the moment his eyes fell on little Barbara [carried by Curdie] whom he had never seen before, his soul came into them with a rush, and a smile like the dawn of an eternal day overspread his countenance; the dream was nowhere, and the child was in his heart. He stretched out his arms to her, the child stretched out hers to him, and in five minutes they were both asleep, each in the others embrace." (Ch. 29)

This respect and love for childhood (pursued here to the very border of sentimentality) which regenerates and purifies adulthood is the keynote of the story and eventually all wrongs are thereby righted. Curdie then marries Irene, the old King's beautiful daughter and all seems to be well. The story strangely ends however with a vision of the degeneration of the society and this constitutes MacDonald's warning to his Victorian world:

> "The old King died, and [Curdie and Irene] were King and Queen. As long as they lived [it] was a better city, and good people grew in it. But they had no children, and when they died the people chose a king. And the new King went mining and mining in the rock under the city, and grew more and more eager after the gold, and paid less

> and less heed to his people. Rapidly they sank towards their old wickedness. But still the King went on mining and coining gold by the pail-full, until the people were worse even than in the old time. And so greedy was the King after gold, that when at last the ore began to fail, he caused the miners to reduce the pillars which [the miners of the old days] had left standing to bear the city. And from the girth of an oak of a thousand years, they chipped them down to that of a fir tree of fifty.
>
> One day at noon, when life was at its highest, the whole city fell with a roaring crash. The cries of men, and the shrieks of women went up with its dust, and then there was a great silence ..." (Chapter 35).

MacDonald's thesis then is plain; that materialistic society is doomed unless its children, whose powers are so often abused or neglected, are allowed to cure it of its sickness. Carroll also thought that children could often point out the best direction to confused adulthood and wrote in a letter to one of his child friends:

> "But we don't always do what we ought. I think you children do it more than we grown up people do: we find so many faults in one another."*

In such a sentimental statement there is little doubt that MacDonald's ideas and teaching had some part - and perhaps vindicated for Carroll some of his more extreme affection for his legions of little-girl friends. If MacDonald's King in The Princess and Curdie could be restored to life by child-company so too could a rather dry mathematical don.

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*Quoted by Cohen, op. cit.

III George MacDonald, the dream and the fantasy story

The second respect in which the friendship and admiration that Carroll had for MacDonald may have been important to his own art is in the way in which MacDonald understood the value of the dream and used it in his fiction. Thus Carroll had both precedent and example from his friend for his own stories - and the dream, with all its complexities and possibilities was a motif and device that both used often and well.

Although they often occur in his fairy tales for children, MacDonald wrote two strictly adult dream stories and it is these that have been reprinted recently because of a new interest in fantasy literature. The first, Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women was published almost at the beginning of his literary life in 1858, and the second Lilith, a Romance almost at the end of it in 1895. Considering that one was written almost forty years after the other they are remarkably similar. They are both ambitious dream stories (and contrast in this respect to the tight didacticism of the other fiction) and together they constitute perhaps MacDonald's greatest claim for attention today. As Wolff has noted, they end at the same point, with Novalis' compairson of human life to a dream - "Our life is no dream, but it ought to become one, and perhaps it will"; and through the dream motif

share the distinction of freedom from dogma so that MacDonald could escape his own inhibitions and examine ideas that he could not have examined otherwise. MacDonald himself realised that dreams were indeed special and that, though he could not analyse them or their properties fully, they had a correspondence with mystical experience which he valued highly:

> "Our life would be much poorer without our dreams; a thousand rainbow tints and combinations would be gone; music and poetry would lose many an indescribable exquisiteness and tenderness ... For I believe that those new mysterious feelings that come to us in sleep, if they be only from dreams of a richer grass and a softer wind than we have known them awake, are indications of wells of feeling and delight which have not yet broken out of their hiding places in our souls, and are only to be suspected from these rings of fairy green that spring up in the high places of our sleep."
>
> (Adela Cathcart)

But besides such "richer grass and softer wind" dreams can, as MacDonald also shows in both Phantastes and Lilith, reveal a usually hidden side of life, and in using the dream both he and, in a lesser way, Carroll, were able to show something of this underbelly to a society that prided itself in its decorums and facades. For in the same way as we shrug off a nightmare with "it was only a dream" so, as Freud pointed out, dreams (and thus by inference the dream story) are able to avoid the censor by making symbolic what otherwise would be unacceptable. But as J. A. Hadfield points out in his standard introduction to the subject, Dreams and Nightmares (Pelican, 1961) the dream and dream story have other equally important attributes:

"The difference between [waking] ideation and dreams is that whilst the former is deliberate, rational, and logical, dreams are spontaneous, automatic, and dramatic. Ideation or thinking things out has the advantage over dreams in that by such means we can work out by the cold light of reason the logical chain of cause and effect with much greater accuracy and in much greater detail. But what dreams lack in precision they make up in vivid representation." (p. 71)

It is just this vividness that marks out Phantastes and Lilith from MacDonald's over-large opus, just as it marks the Alices out from the vast quantity of sentimentally mawkish children's literature that preceded it: the dream-stories of both have an immediacy and a penetrating quality that was a direct result of their authors' recognition of the value of the dream as a revelatory process. We tend mistakenly to think that the sub-conscious and the unconscious did not exist until Freud - forgetting that though he named them and pointed them out, he did not actually create them. But it was both Macdonald's and Carroll's understanding of just such a life other than a conscious one, that gives them their greatest contact with each other and perhaps is the source of their most potent insights.

Again this is not the place to go very extensively into summaries of MacDonald's work where it deals with these aspects (it has, as before, been done by Wolff) but at least a sample of MacDonald's extraordinary power of recognising, like Carroll, the way the dream works might properly be looked at here. From Phantastes, for example, here is the moment when the hero, Anados, wakes into a metamorphosing and bizarre fairy landscape:

"I suddenly ... became aware of the sound of running water near me; and looking out of bed, I saw that a large green marble basin in which I was wont to wash and which stood on a low pedestal of the same material in the corner of my room, was overflowing like a spring; and that a stream of clear water was running over the carpet all the length of the room, finding its outlet I knew not where. And, stranger still, where this carpet, which I had myself designed to imitate a field of grass and daisies bordered the course of the stream, the grass blades and daisies seemed to wave in a tiny breeze that followed the waters' flow; while under the rivulet they bent and swayed with every motion of the changeful current, as if they were about to dissolve with it, and, forsaking their fixed form, become as fluent as the waters.

My dressing-table was an old-fashioned piece of furniture of black oak with drawers all down the front. These were elaborately carved in foliage, of which ivy formed the chief part. The nearer end of this table remained just as it had been, but on the further end a singular change had commenced. I happened to fix my eye on a little cluster of ivy-leaves. The first of these was evidently the work of the carver; the next looked curious; the third was unmistakeable ivy; and just beyond it a tendril of clematis had twined itself about the gilt handle of one of the drawers. Hearing next a slight motion above me, I looked up, and saw that the branches and leaves designed upon the curtains of my bed were slightly in motion. Not knowing what change might follow next, I thought it high time to get up; and, springing from the bed, my bare feet alighted upon a cool green sward; and although I dressed in all haste, I found myself completing my toilet under the boughs of a great tree, whose top waved in the golden stream of the sunrise of leaf and branch gliding over leaf and branch, as the cool morning wind swung it to and fro, like a sinking sea-wave."

(pp. 7 - 8*)

The metamorphoses here have, of course, clear counterparts in Carroll's work, not only in Alice's changes in size but in her entrances and exits from her adventures.✓

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*Everyman edition repr. 1940. Subsequent page references are to this edition.

✓See also the way that the White Queen metamorphoses into a sheep; her shop into a boat; her knitting needles into oars, and an egg into Humpty Dumpty in Ch. V of TTLG.

Though there are important differences in tone and language between them, the moment when the White Rabbit becomes suddenly human seems similarly to capture the twilight world of slipping into a dream and the inter-relationship of these worlds:

> "[Alice] was considering, in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.
>
> There was nothing so <u>very</u> remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so <u>very</u> much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself 'Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!' (when she thought it over afterwards it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but, when the Rabbit actually <u>took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket</u>, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge."
>
> (<u>AAIW</u>, p. 25)

But not only do Carroll and MacDonald get their respective protagonists into the world of dreams in similar ways but their experiences once they are there are also similar. There are basic resemblances between their general advantures and there are also resemblances in details; for example, Anados, like Alice, meets a white rabbit (p. 39) and talking animals;* ("The mice talked;

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*Such animals, particularly white animals, are also often guides to the supernatural other world in traditional fairy literature of the Middle Ages. (See H. R. Patch, <u>The Otherworld</u>, Cambridge, Mass., 1950).

but the hedgehogs seemed very phlegmatic; and though I met a couple of moles above ground several times, they never said a word to each other in my hearing." (p. 40), and even a Knight in armour (p. 48). More fundamentally the question of self-identity within the dream is also probed be MacDonald and, like Carroll, he also understood how movement in such a context seems to be exhausting yet often largely ineffective. Here, for example, is the moment when Anados meets his shadow which is well worth quoting almost in its entirety:

> "In one corner [of the cottage] was a door, apparently of a cupboard in the wall, but which might lead to a room beyond ... I must open that door and see what was beyond it ... I gently opened [it] ... and looked in. At first, I saw nothing worthy of attention. It seemed a common closet, with shelves on each hand, on which stood various little necessaries for the humble uses of a cottage. ... But, as I looked, I saw that there were no shelves at the back, and that an empty space went in further; its termination appearing to be a faintly glimmering wall or curtain, somewhat less, however, than the width and height of the doorway where I stood. But as I continued looking, for a few seconds, towards this faintly luminous limit, my eyes came into true relation with their object. All at once with such a shiver as when one is suddenly conscious of the presence of another in a room where he has, for hours, considered himself alone, I saw that the seemingly luminous extremity was a sky, as of night, beheld through the perspective of a narrow dark passage, through what, and built of what, I could not tell. As I gazed, I clearly discerned two or three stars glimmering faintly in the distant blue. But suddenly, and as if it had been running fast from a far distance for this very point, and had turned the corner without abating its swiftness a dark figure sped into and along the passage from the blue opening at the remote end. I started back and shuddered, but kept looking, for I could not help it. On and on it came, with a speedy approach but delayed arrival, till, at last, through the many gradations of approach, it seemed to come within the sphere of myself, rushed up to me, and passed me into the cottage. All I could tell of its appearance was that it seemed to be a

dark human figure. Its motion was entirely noiseless, and might be called a gliding, were it not that it appeared that of a runner, but with ghostly feet ..."

(Phantastes, pp. 69 - 70)

Though MacDonald's tone here is perhaps more akin to Poe than Carroll "A speedy approach but delayed arrival" is the same kind of nonsensical race that the Red Queen drags Alice through; their feet too seem to "skim through the air":

"Alice never could quite make out, in thinking it over afterwards, how it was that they began: all she remembers is, that they were running hand in hand, and the Queen went so fast that it was all she could do to keep up with her: and still the Queen kept crying 'Faster! Faster!' but Alice felt she could not go faster, though she had no breath left to say so.

The most curious part of the thing was, that the trees and the other things round them never changed their places at all: however fast they went, they never seemed to pass anything. 'I wonder if all the things move along with us?' thought poor puzzled Alice. And the Queen seemed to guess her thoughts, for she cried 'Faster! Don't try to talk!'

'Now! Now!' cried the Queen. 'Faster! Faster!' And they went so fast that at last they seemed to skim through the air, hardly touching the ground with their feet, till suddenly, just as Alice was getting quite exhausted, they stopped, and she found herself sitting on the ground, breathless and giddy."

(TTLG, pp. 208 - 9)

Though Alice does not meet her shadow she does try to look through a door into a different world (the garden) and her perspectives, like Anados's, are subject to sudden change. Indeed she comes to something very near to his conclusion that it is only possible to accept the bizarre nature of events rather than really explain them because

as MacDonald says "... it is no use trying to account for things in fairy land; and one who travels there soon learns to forget the very idea of doing so, and takes everything as it comes; like a child, who, being in a chronic condition of wonder, is surprised at nothing."* This lack of surprise is the same kind of off-handedness with which we are all capable of greeting the peculiar dislocated adventures and events of our dreams - we also usually "take everything as it comes" - it is only upon waking that the nonsensical in dreams is called as much because it is easier to dismiss than understand, or even contemplate.

MacDonald's later novel, Lilith (written of course after the Alices)continues his exploration of the dream. There are again here motifs that are similarly to be found in Carroll's work. For example there is a magical mirror:

> "... A few ... dim sunrays ... fell upon a tall mirror with a dusty face, old-fashioned and rather narrow - in appearance an ordinary glass ... I had been looking at rather than into the mirror when suddenly I became aware that it reflected neither the chamber nor my own person. I have an impression of having seen the wall melt away, but what followed is enough to account for any uncertainty: - could I have mistaken for a mirror the glass that protected a wonderful picture?
>
> I saw before me a wild country."
>
> (Lilith, p. 108)/

- and talking/advice giving animals:

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*Phantastes, p. 27.

/Chatto & Windus edition, 1895. Subsequent page references are to this edition.

"... I turned to the raven, which stood a little way off regarding me with an expression at once respectful and quizzical. Then the absurdity of seeking counsel from such a one struck me, and I turned again, overwhelmed with bewilderment, not unmingled with fear. Had I wandered into a region where both the material and psychical relations of our world ceased to hold? Might a man at any moment step beyond the realm of order and become the sport of the lawless? ...

'How did I get here?' I said - apparently aloud, for the question was immediately answered.

'You came through the door,' replied an odd, rather harsh voice.

I looked behind, then all about me, but saw no human shape. The terror that madness might be at hand laid hold upon me: must I henceforth place no confidence either in my senses or my consciousness? The same instant I knew it was the raven that had spoken."

(p. 12)

- and it is an environment where identity is easily lost:

"[after a bewildering conversation with the raven] I became at once aware that I could give him no notion of who I was. Indeed who was I? It would be no answer to say I was who! Then I understood that I did not know myself, did not know what I was, had no grounds on which to determine that I was one and not another. As for the name I went by in my own world I had forgotten it, and did not care to recall it, for it meant nothing, and what it might be was plainly of no consequence here. I had indeed almost forgotten that it wasa custom for everybody to have a name!"

(p. 14)

- and, finally, there are riddlesto be answered:

"'Enigma treading on enigma!' I exclaimed. 'I did not come here to be asked riddles.'

'No [the raven replied]; but you came, and you found the riddles waiting for you! Indeed you are yourself the only riddle. What you call riddles are truths, and seem riddles because you are not true.'

'Worse and worse!' I cried.

'And you must answer the riddles!' he continued. 'They will go on asking themselves until you understand yourself. The universe is a riddle trying to get out, and you are holding your door hard against it.'

Paradoxical as this statement is, it is, at the same time an astoundingly accurate observation about the life of our dreams; that the deliberate enigma of the dream is perhaps the only way in which a particular problem can be presented to us which we otherwise struggle to evade or repress, and certainly if we set out to explain all that happens in the Alices or Phantastes and Lilith we come up against ideas that neither MacDonald nor Carroll would consciously acknowledge having meant* and this, again, is a large part of the dream's power and purpose. For, to summarise Freud, the unconscious may be the first to recognise that certain problems exist, and will try to make the conscious mind aware of them. Since speech is unobtainable as a medium of communication only pictorial and concrete language is available to the subconscious, so that dreams are vivid presentations of symbols which will perplex the consciousness until it will solve what is meant by them. Dreams express what we would wish to avoid but also disguise meaning, perhaps to give us time to consider what would otherwise be unpalatable problems that would be merely postponed. Dreams considered in this way are not merely unanswerable riddles just as the nonsense of Wonderland is not without meaning.

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*See Empson's Freudian analysis of Alice in his Some Versions of the Pastoral.

Though both may be bizarre they are both ways of potentially broaching the truth to a dreamer, or to an age that is reluctant or incapable of recognising the truth about itself, and the riddling of the dream is, even in itself, a process that is actually an attempt to achieve forceful clarity. For dream symbolism is often a return to simple language origins rather than a complex development from them so that dreams seem to recognise fundamentals of communication which ordinary life ignores, for as Hadfield points out* "there is hardly a sentence which does not express itself in ... obvious symbols - as in this sentence, for the word 'hardly' refers to something difficult, the word 'express' to push out, and the word 'obvious' suggests something staring us in the face." In everyday speech we usually ignore the fundamental process of the metaphor but dreams do not do this - they take the image as the event and reverse the process. Thus though in waking life we may say of a fat child "he's a pig" in our dream life the child will metamorphose into one. Hadfield also argues (this time from Freud) that a dream often starts from ideas in words and retranslates them into the images from which they are drawn or by which they will be most forcefully expressed so that, for example, the idea of progress (like Alice's progress across the chess board in Through the Looking-Glass) might take the form of a railway journey, and to be examined by the Guard might well mean

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* Op. cit., pp. 157 - 8.

that in a dream "the Guard was looking at her, first through a telescope, then through a microscope, and then through an opera-glass". As Hadfield says:

> "There are numerous illustrations of [the] process by which we first apply to abstract ideas, phrases which we have originally taken from material experiences and then in dreams transfer them back to the original physical form when we want to express those abstract ideas. Thus we speak of a man bristling with rage, since an animal's bristles stand straight when it is aroused; that is to say, we call an emotion by the name of one of its manifestations. In the dream the anger is expressed by the actual bristling. So in dreams we actually explore avenues, we turn over every stone to 'leave no stone unturned' and literally 'walk into danger' ... A clown is a man whose stupid antics make us laugh; therefore if the dream wants to tell us that we are being silly, it depicts us as a clown; our self-righteousness is represented as a policemen, our slyness as a spiv. Thus symbols, by expressing themselves in such concrete and realistic forms, can be far more effective than words, and can have a correspondingly greater influence upon our lives because of their more primitive mode of expression ... Dreams ... are always mixing their metaphors, and this is what makes dreams so bizarre."
>
> (Op. cit., pp. 137 - 8)

The symbolic nature of the dream's images and events are then, just as MacDonald saw, deliberate riddles created to avoid the conscious censor "and seem riddles because <u>you</u> are not true". We may pass over the inconsistencies of our waking life but dreams will pose them again. For dreams can, by the reproduction, forceful presentation and nightly repetition of an experience stand in place of reality in order to make it easier for us to face it.* By pointing to both the causes of our troubles

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*See Hadfield, p. 96.

and our defects and the consequences of them, dreams can force us to attend to disagreeable problems that we might otherwise try to avoid. Furthermore the recurring dream ensures that we will have to face a problem until it is solved - and, according to even the most basic tenets of psychoanalysis, dreams themselves often offer solutions to these problems. Finally, dreams can also demonstrate to us our strengths and potential qualities (just as Alice refuses to be bullied and finds her power) and compensate or punish us for our unthinking or undynamic day-time behaviour (the tyrant becomes Goliath; a timid person becomes David) and we are restored to a more healthy equilibrium. Rather than evade our problems and our character, dreams make us face up to them both and eventually insist on solutions and changes.

The people whom Alice meets then are caricatures that reflect the self-enclosure and imprisonment of wonder on the Dickensian model, and yet are by their juxtaposition with each other and in the context of Wonderland, at the same time also types of dream symbol by which Alice can begin to be alive to the force of mystery and wonder. Thus the White Queen/Sheep is, say, a composite caricature of a bleating shopkeeper, Nanny and Schoolmistress, and yet her very presence forces Alice to find contrasts between them, and look around all the more. We might therefore take the sheep as a figure of authority, simultaneously knitting her wool and her brow in disapproval whom Alice has to learn to disobey but tolerate in order to reach the beautiful scented rushes.

The claim for Carroll's Alices, and incidentally for certain of MacDonald's work, is therefore a large one; that the frustrations that Alice has to undergo and the crazed people she has to deal with are, though perhaps bizarrely presented, yet essentially a sample of the real world of Victorian childhood and of the people that a Victorian child would have to deal with. Such frustrations and such people are symbolic in the way that dreams are, that is symbolic in Jungian terms because they imply something more than their obvious and immediate meaning. They have, to quote Jung, "a wider 'unconscious' aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason."*

"Ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason" are as we have seen of course, close to what Dickens' Mr. Sleary has to offer and exactly what Gradgrindery seeks to deny. For though Carroll's nonsense through the motif of the dream may be more expert than Dickens' rather crude idea of 'fancy' it is not very far from it and grew from similar roots. It is more successful in comparison because where the circus of Hard Times had to bear the burden of a positive to set against the negative world of Coketown,

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*Jung; "Approaching the Unconscious" in Man and his Symbols, Aldus 1964.

Carroll's motifs on the other hand do not have to be grounded in the "real" world and are more sufficient and effective. This is primarily because they recall the events and images of our own dreams which contrast sharply with the controlled thoughts of our waking life in their vividness and sheer quantity. Again, Jung saw why there is such a contrast between the conscious and dream images:

> "... in our civilised life, we have stripped so many ideas of their emotional energy, we do not really respond to them any more. We use such ideas in our speech, and we show a conventional reaction when others use them, but they do not make a very deep impression on us. Something more is needed to bring certain things home to us effectively enough to make us change our attitude and our behaviour. That is what 'dream language' does; its symbolism has so much psychic energy that we are forced to pay attention to it."
>
> (Man and his Symbols, p. 49)

Dreams then, avoid the insensitivity that prejudiced consciousness uses to block the potential effectiveness of an idea or image. They, on the contrary, vividly force the truth out into the subconscious; our problems begin in trying to translate this from the subconscious to the conscious - something which Jung himself never pretended was easy:

> "Unfortunately, dreams are difficult to understand ... [since] a dream is quite unlike a story told by the conscious mind. In everyday life one thinks out what one wants to say, selects the most telling way of saying it, and tries to make one's remarks logically coherent ... But dreams have a different texture. Images that seem contradictory and ridiculous crowd in on the dreamer, the normal sense of time is lost, and commonplace things can assume a fascinating or threatening aspect ..."
>
> (Ibid., p. 39)

How then is interpretation possible of dreams or stories like Carroll's and MacDonald's which grew from dreams? The answer is that there can never be a single interpretation, which is why all those who have sought in the past to subject to psychoanalysis the Alices and their author have not only contradicted each other but also have actually never seemed to have offered anything else but a self-examination. As we saw earlier, Carroll for his part knew that there could never be a single interpretation of his work and he rather enjoyed the knots the interpreters got themselves into ("... words mean more than we mean to express when we use them: so a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer meant ..."). Similarly MacDonald also knew that his best work should never be subject to solution and in his volume of papers A Dish of Orts (1893) which appeared nearly at the end of his literary life, he explained in the final dialogue-essay, The Fantastic Imagination, not only how important the fairy-tale was to him but how its supreme function was the very antithesis of definition (and again we cannot help but remember Bitzer's horse):

> "'You write as if a fairytale were a thing of importance: must it have a meaning?'
>
> It cannot help having some meaning; ... Everyone, however, who feels the story, will read its meaning after his own nature and development: one man will read one meaning in it, another will read another.
>
> 'If so, how am I to assure myself that I am not reading my own meaning into it, but yours out of it?'

Why should you be so assured? It may be better that you should read your meaning into it. That may be a higher operation of your intellect than the mere reading of mine out of it: your meaning may be superior to mine.

... 'But words are ... at least ... meant and fitted to carry a precise meaning!'

It is very seldom indeed that they carry the exact meaning of any user of them! And if they can be so used as to convey definite meaning, it does not follow that they ought never to carry anything else. Words are live things that may be variously employed to various ends. They can convey a scientific fact, or throw a shadow of her child's dream on the heart of a mother. They are things to put together like the pieces of a dissected map, or to arrange like the notes on a stave. Is the music in them to go for nothing? It can hardly help the definiteness of a meaning: is it therefore to be disregarded? They have length, and breadth, and outline: have they nothing to do with depth? Have they only to describe, never to impress? Has nothing any claim to their use but the definite?

The greatest forces lie in the region of the uncomprehended ... The best thing you can do for your fellow, next to rousing his conscience, is - not to give him things to think about, but to wake things up that are in him; or say, to make him think things for himself."

Carroll was never as eloquent as MacDonald is here about the way in which Wonderland was to provoke by its lack of definition and by its deliberate strangeness - nevertheless the lengths he went to in his work to avoid giving solutions implies agreement with MacDonald. For, of course, the fact that the "Snark <u>was</u> a Boojum, you see" will not help the unimaginative. In this we are, in effect, in a critical wood where things have no names and at a point where our inability to classify is itself part of the purpose. The fundamental and vital implication is that, just as with Bitzer's horse, the more classification there is the less spontaneous recognition and imagination there can be (as against the way that Sissy Jupe recognises what a horse is, for example). To classify is an act of knowledge

but knowledge is itself a post-Eden state; Carroll and MacDonald (and Dickens for that matter) - wish us to be able to see again with the trust and lack of prejudice of childhood but really this is only possible in an ideal or primitive world where "things have no names". We might, nevertheless, bear this in mind when we ask questions about Wonderland itself and avoid the obvious errors of rigidly classifying it just as (perhaps surprisingly considering the mistakes that are perpetrated in his name) Jung himself refused to be dognatic about the interpretation of the wonderland of dreams. He recognised that the very lack of definition could have a force because it would allow for subjective interpretation, and that absolute "solutions" are inappropriate in trying to come to terms with what is essentially a question of personal response:

> "... it is plain foolishness to believe in ready-made systematic guides to dream interpretation, as if one could simply buy a reference book and look up a particular symbol. No dream symbol can be separated from the individual who dreams it, and there is no definite or straightforward interpretation of any dream. Each individual varies so much in the way that his unconscious complements his conscious mind that it is impossible to be sure how far dreams and their symbols can be classified at all.
>
> It is true that there are dreams and single symbols (I should prefer to call them 'motifs') that are typical and often occur. Among such motifs are flying, falling, being persecuted by dangerous animals or hostile men, being insufficiently or absurdly clothed in public places, being in a hurry or lost in a milling crowd, fighting with useless weapons or being wholly defenceless, running hard yet getting nowhere. A typical infantile motif is the dream of growing infinitely small or infinitely big, or being transformed from one to the other - as you find it, for instance, in Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland."
>
> (Ibid, p. 53)

The fact that Jung himself, who here shows that he knew Carroll's work, refrained from being dogmatic about it, should be enough to deter us from making the mistakes that he himself never committed. Nevertheless Carroll's extraordinary ability to include within the Alices so many of what Jung calls "dream motifs" are myopically ignored by other critics.* To ignore this is to ignore a large part of Carroll's ability as an observer and recorder of the human psyche - and also to ignore the very quality that gives the best of Carroll's work a potency that is out of all proportion with its length and its avowed intention of being a "story for children".

Part of the reason for this is to be found, as Hadfield again shows, in the relationship between the fairy tale and the dream which both reproduce unsolved problems for solution. Indeed folk-stories and fairy stories have profound effects especially on the young child. These are quite disproportionate to the actual amount that is positively understood. It is for this reason that the child demands repetition of a story because it responds to its psychological appeal without any obvious conception of conscious meaning. The lonely child responds to Cinderella; Jack-the-Giant-Killer has an obvious attraction to the child

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*This is in reaction to the "psychoanalysts" (e.g. Greenacre, Taylor and Lennon) who in the past have fixed with perhaps unnecessary enthusiasm on Carroll's peculiarities.

who desires strength to correct his own present helplessness. If the stories are repeated, the problems are clarified and the child can work towards a solution. As Hadfield says: "it is indeed because we do not understand our deeper emotional problems that we have to work them out by analogy, by myth, and by parable, and that is precisely the function of dreams ... Dreams are parables, symbolic stories, carrying a deeper meaning, and they have an effect on the mind even when they are not consciously understood or interpreted. The story carries its own moral".*

If Hadfield is correct here - and there seems little reason to doubt him - we have discovered just what the special power was that Carroll harnessed with the Alices. For his stories drew from both the kind of "fairy-story fancy" that Dickens advocated, and the dream stories of his friend MacDonald, but more than superseded both in combining them. Alice is then, both the princess from the fairy-tale but who, simultaneously, is capable like Louisa (from Hard Times) or Irene (from The Princess and the Goblin) of showing where adulthood is misdirected and misdirecting - and she is a guide who will lead us through experiences very like our own dreams and safely bring us back again to a reality that we can accordingly better understand. (That is not to say that Alice is endorsing the adult world, but able to see her way through it). If dreams allow us a chance to work out our

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*Op. cit., pp. 102 - 3.

problems through giving us the luxury of being able to throw off the restrictive demands of logic and so give free rein to our imagination and inspirational ideas, then Alice's Wonderland is perhaps the best possible fictional example of how we are to cope. For virtually all the common Jungian dream-motifs (and more) are included in the Alices; falling slowly through the air; walking through infinite corridors; muddling up words; seeing inanimates become animate (live flowers); shrinking small; swimming; being in alien company; running without direction and without getting anywhere; being ordered to do impossible things by those who usually have no authority; seeing animals become human and vice versa; witnessing impossible events and conversations; being in a claustrophobic environment; witnessing - and sometimes participating in - strange metamorphoses; going through mirrors; being in infinite landscapes; accepting impossibilities; being lost in a wood; travelling without moving; losing identity and the names of things; having things disappear and - finally - seeing homophones and puns accepted as literal truths. We find moreover that the very largest of philosophical problems are posed via the dream motif:

> "'[The Red King's] dreaming now,' said Tweedledee: 'and what do you think he's dreaming about?'
>
> Alice said 'Nobody can guess that.'
>
> 'Why, about you!' Tweedledee exclaimed, clapping his hands triumphantly. 'And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?'

'Where I am now, of course,' said Alice.

'Not you!' Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. 'You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!'

'If that there King was to wake,' added Tweedledum, 'you'd go out - bang! - just like a candle!'

'I shouldn't!' Alice exclaimed indignantly. 'Besides, if I'm only a sort of thing in his dream, what are you, I should like to know?'

'Ditto,' said Tweedledum.

'Ditto, ditto!' cried Tweedledee.

He shouted this so loud that Alice couldn't help saying, 'Hush! You'll be waking him, I'm afraid, if you make so much noise.'

'Well it's no use your talking about waking him,' said Tweedledum, 'when you're only one of the things in his dream. You know very well you're not real.'

'I am real!' said Alice, and began to cry.

'You won't make yourself a bit realler by crying,' Tweedledee remarked: 'there's nothing to cry about.'

'If I wasn't real,' Alice said - half-laughing through her tears, it all seemed so ridiculous - 'I shouldn't be able to cry.'

'I hope you don't suppose those are real tears?' Tweedledum interrupted in a tone of great contempt.

(TTLG, 238 - 9)

As Gardner annotates regarding this sequence "this ... discussion of the Red King's dream ... plunges poor Alice into grim metaphysical waters. The Tweedle brothers defend Bishop Berkeley's view that all material objects, including ourselves are only 'sorts of things' in the mind of God. Alice takes the common-sense position of Samuel Johnson who

supposed that he refuted Berkeley by kicking a large stone. 'A very instructive discussion from a philosophical point of view,' Bertrand Russell remarked, commenting on the Red King's dream in a radio panel discussion of Alice. 'But if it were not put humourously, we should find it too painful.'" (AA, p. 238). Russell's concluding remark here reveals Carroll's strength: for especially in an age where the reality of, for example, a horse, could supposedly be a matter of a Bitzer-like calculation of its different kinds of teeth, Carroll's dream stories which question so much that is ordinarily assumed to be true and stable, are the only way of avoiding the censor of solemn consciousness; just as our dreams do every night.

Surely it is only the most prejudiced and dogmatic of critics who could (and do) assert notwithstanding, that all this has nothing to do with the subconscious life of our dreams. Carroll and his friend George MacDonald would themselves doubtless have put them right if they had possessed the vocabulary of psychoanalysis, for the use of elements from the world of dreams that run throughout their stories cannot be ignored. As a brand of dream wish-fulfilment we find, for example, in Carroll's Alices adults being or becoming the very metaphors that the child (or the perceptive adult) would use to describe them. The three interlocking mechanisms of the dream, nonsense and the fairy-tale remove these stories from the reach of the censor's sissors and in Wonderland we find, in order of appearance (of

the major stars only) various adults scathingly criticised for being (1) jumpy and twitchy (as a white rabbit); (2) worried about persecution (as a mouse is about a cat); (3) dead (as a dodo); (4) creepy and bizarre (as a caterpillar); (5) small minded and bird-brained (as a pigeon); (6) cold-blooded (as a fish and frog); (7) crazy (as a cat); (8) mad (as a March hare); (9) sleepy (as a dormouse); (10) obsolete (as a griffin); (11) pretentious (as a mock-turtle, who pretends to be a turtle) and (12) dictatorial and imperious (as kings and queens). Through the Looking-Glass of course continues this type of witty "wildest-dream" caricature as a kind of revenge on the adult world for all that it tries to do to children. But, most importantly, it is the dream and its strange visual logic that makes these metamorphoses possible and Alice's criticisms so vitally acute. For just as dreams do not deal in half-measures nor do the worlds of wonderland/looking-glass and the criticisms are accordingly levelled at the roots of virtually every type of solemn adult activity or institution - such as the law (the trial of the knave of hearts); war (the battle of the Lion and the Unicorn, and of the Red and White Knights); commerce ("the smoke alone is worth a thousand pounds a puff"); royalty ("Off with his head!"); politics (Disraeli as the man dressed in white paper); science ("Bread-and-butter-fly") and indeed all intellectual pretention:

"'I,' [said Humpty Dumpty] 'can explain all the poems that ever were invented - and a good many that haven't been invented just yet.'"

(TTLG, p. 270)

The conclusion to be drawn then is that Alice's adventures are no less than a hazardous journey through a minefield of adult failings, prejudices and pretentions - which she survives because of two vital factors; (a) Carroll's rampant sense of humour and (b) the cool acceptance that is intrinsically part of the dream consciousness. The dream thus sharpens Carroll's arrows but at the same time makes them strangely more acceptable; it in part excuses its surrealism whilst also heightening the colour. In all this his friend George MacDonald's voice was perhaps the one he listened to most.

IV Tennyson, Christina Rossetti and others

Apart from George MacDonald, who else amongst Carroll's artistic friends and acquaintances can be considered to have been important in relation to Carroll's own artistic achievement? There are facts that are misleading: for example, though Carroll knew and admired Tennyson this does not also mean that Tennyson influenced Carroll's significant art in any important way.* For though it is true that with the help of his sisters Carroll produced An Index to In Memoriam (1862); that he recorded in his Diary his reading of Tennyson's poetry, usually praising it, and that he photographed Tennyson and his children, it is difficult to say that this was influential beyond the parody of Tennyson's The Two Voices by his The Three Voices, and the parody of Maud in the "Garden of Live Flowers" chapter in Looking-Glass. There are, on the other hand, quasi-Tennysonian poems written by Carroll in his markedly less successful "serious" vein - for example the sentiments if not the rhetoric of these lines from Tennyson's Supposed Confessions ... (1830) are very close to Carroll's expressed in the first stanza of the dedicatory poem to The Nursery Alice (1890), which follows them:

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*For the full biographical details of Carroll's rather abortive friendship with Tennyson, see Hudson's account: Lewis Carroll, pp. 103 - 112.

"... Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee!
Who lets his waxen fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
They comfort him by night and day;
They light his little life alway;
He hath no thought of coming woes;
He hath no care of life or death ..."

"A Mother's breast:
Safe refuge from her childish fears,
From childish troubles, childish tears,
Mists that enshroud her dawning years!
See how in sleep she seems to sing
A voiceless psalm - an offering
Raised, to the glory of her King,
In Love: for Love is Rest."*

But this is Carroll and Tennyson at their lowest ebb; a shallow level which does not merit more than our regret. For there was certainly a side to Carroll (and Dickens and MacDonald for that matter) that was traditional and unradical in its view of childhood, where the child was merely a vulnerable round-faced cherub with a tear in its eye. Apart, therefore, from confirming certain of Carroll's nostalgic and melancholic tendencies which will be returned to later, and subscribing to that aspect of the contemporary viewpoint which treated childhood as an innocent paradise, Tennyson can hardly be said to have been a major influence on Carroll's most important work.

Indeed, it would be true to say that the vast majority of Carroll's literary friends and acquaintances had very

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*For similar Carrollian sentiments see his poems Solitude (N, p. 958) and Puck lost and found (N, p. 978).

little to do with that very special world of Wonderland.* His meetings with Tom Taylor, Du Maurier, Thackeray, Patmore, Twain and Swinburne were really no more than social highlights in his Diary. But there were other meetings which had more significance; that between Carroll and the Rossetti family, for example.

Carroll met the Rossettis through Munro the sculptor (and friend of MacDonald); the first meeting between them is recorded in Carroll's Diary as having taken place on September 30th 1863:

"Called with Mr. and Mrs. Munro at Mr. Rossetti's and saw some very lovely pictures, most of them only half finished: he was most hospitable in the offers of the use of the house for picture taking, and I arranged to take my camera there on Monday ..."

It is clear that what Carroll was primarily concerned with was his own art of photographing the famous, and his glimpses of Rossetti's paintings were, at this stage a bonus,

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*One figure who deserves a brief mention here is Ellen Terry - whom some critics have thought, mistakenly in my opinion, Carroll was actually in love with. Roger Manvell in his Ellen Terry (Putnams Sons, N.Y. 1968) traces their friendship and prints a long and revelatory letter by Carroll to a certain Mrs. Baird in which he explained to her Ellen Terry's background, as he saw it. The actress's chequered career (she married Watts at the age of 17, left him to live with another man and bore his two children - Watts divorced her, her lover left her; she then married an actor who killed himself through drink) embarrassed but intrigued Carroll but there was a long period when, despite not blaming her, he, in his own words "had no communication with her. I felt that she had so entirely sacrificed her social position that I had no alternative but to drop the acquaintance" (op. cit., p. 238).

though one which had its own effect as we shall see in the next chapter. On the Tuesday following this entry, Carroll saw Christina and some more of Rossetti's art:

"Went over to Mr. Rossetti's, and began unpacking the camera, etc. While I was doing so Miss Christina Rossetti arrived and Mr. Rossetti introduced me to her. She seemed a little shy at first, and I had very little time for conversation, but I much liked what I saw of her. She sat for two pictures, Mr. Rossetti for one ..."

Carroll was virtually unknown at this time (it was 1863; Alice appeared in 1865*) and yet he had penetrated one of the great citadels of art in Victorian England. It would have been surprising if such an encounter had had no effect on him - yet it was by no means an obvious one.

What could Carroll have found in the three Rossetti's and their art that would have pleased him and endorsed some of his own ideas? To begin with as with George MacDonald he may have found some talk about Blake in their home for it is perhaps significant that merely one week later than the "memorable day" - on October 19th 1863 - there is the important Diary entry:

"Went to Combe's in the evening to meet the publisher MacMillan and got him to print me some of Blake's Songs of Innocence on large paper ..."

Blake was undoubtedly one of the most revered and influential voices in the Rossetti household and both

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*It was, incidentally, a cousin of the Rossettis who first translated Alice in Wonderland into Italian. He was Teodorico Pietrocola-Rossetti; his translation appeared in 1872.

Dante Gabriel and Christina responded in some measure to him and William edited an edition of his work.* After Gabriel had managed in April 1847 to buy from an attendant in the British Museum "a large manuscript replete with Blake's verse, prose and designs, which he had procured in a second-hand bookstore and offered to sell for ten shillings"[/] Blake's influence had entered the house and the effect was substantial. According to Fleming "Rossetti had received his greatest artistic influence from Blake"[ø] and his brother William certainly later clarified a way of thinking about Blake and particularly those poems which Carroll had MacMillan print for him:

> "Some of the little poems included in this series [i.e. The Songs of Innocence] are the most perfect expression ever given (so far as I know) to babe-life - to what a man can remember of himself as an infant, or can enter into as existing of other infants, or can love as the essence of infancy. Blake was a believer ... in the pre-existence of the human soul. These poems are very like the utterance of a babe, sentient at once of its present infantine and of its past matured existence; feeling the life and thinking the thoughts of infancy, yet feeling and thinking all this through the medium of a higher consciousness, a fullness of spiritual stature which once was, and again shall be ..."
>
> (Prefatory Memoir to his edition of Blake's Works, 1891, p. cxvi)

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*It was Dante Gabriel Rossetti who was vitally supportive of the widow of Alexander Gilchrist to get her to finish her late husband's Life of Blake for the press. As his letters for the period around Gilchrist's death show (1862 - 3), Rossetti advised and guided her a great deal, reading proofs, superintending the plates etc.

[/]See G. H. Fleming, Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Hart-Davis, 1967, pp. 22 - 23.

[ø]Op. cit., p. 178.

L. M. Packer, in her standard biography, Christina Rossetti (University of California Press, 1963) notes, moreover, that Gabriel considered a poem of Christina's called Mother and Child "Blakean", and she marked Sleep, Sleep (a poem that is unpublished but extant in the MS notebook) "from Blake". Such remarks, then, give us some notion of the Rossetti's interest in Blake, and it seems likely that Carroll would have known of it. Indeed William Michael's phrase "sentient at once of its present infantine and its past matured existence" could even be an apt description of Alice herself.

Aside from Blake's ghost and the two brothers, Carroll could, however, have found a readily recognisable like-spirit in the Rossetti household in Christina. For she was, as Lennon points out, both prudish and poetic, superlatively spiritual ("Holman Hunt found her eyes the only ones he could use for the Christ in his famous, "Light of the World",")* and a writer for children - and all of these attributes would have appealed to Carroll. He owned copies of her Speaking Likenesses; A Pageant and other poems; The Prince's Progress; Verses, 1874, (dedicated to her mother and privately printed - hence a rarity); Sing Song and Goblin Market, all in their first editions, as well as a copy of her 1894 Verses which was inscribed to him "from his old acquaintance the Author"

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*Lennon, p. 163.

(see DSC lots 427 - 433 and 840). For his part he presented her with copies of his books, and that they got on well is clear from the following letter of thanks for her copy of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland:

"A thousand and one thanks - surely an appropriate number - for the funny pretty book you have so kindly sent me. My Mother and Sister as well as myself made ourselves quite at home yesterday in Wonderland: and (if I am not shamefully old for such an avowal) I confess it would give me sincere pleasure to fall in with that conversational rabbit, that endearing puppy, that very sparkling dormouse. Of the Hatter's acquaintance I am not ambitious, and the March Hare may fairly remain an open question. The woodcuts are charming. Have you seen the few words of strong praise already awarded to your volume by the Reader.

To descend to very prosy prose. Please do not forget that we are still in your debt for the last vignettes of my Sister: 9 copies, I think. Two or three months ago her carte [de visite] was taken at Harrogate and turned out an admirable likeness.

My Mother and Sister unite in cordial remembrances. Pray believe me very truly yours, Christina G. Rossetti
1865"

(DFC 20/3)

But apart from such social compatibility with its polite expression of friendship, Carroll and Christina Rossetti had a certain artistic kinship and undoubtedly influenced each other. That she was influenced by him has been noticed before: her Speaking Likenesses, especially, was cited by Muir in 1954 as being "by no means free, in either conception or illustration, from the influence of Alice".* But Carroll

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*See Muir, English Children's Books, Batsford, p. 153.

especially early on in his literary career, was not above being influenced by her and by her greatest poem, Goblin Market, which appeared in 1862. Carroll noted in his Diary for May 12th of that year:

> "I have been reading in these last few days Miss Rossetti's Goblin Market etc., and admire them very much ..."

In "these last few days" around May 12th 1862, Carroll had also himself written a poem which was called Stolen Waters* and was dated (presumably by him) "May 9th 1862" when it appeared in Three Sunsets and other poems, the volume of poems published shortly after his death in 1898. Not only the style but the mood and theme of both Stolen Waters and Goblin Market are similar, and to compare them and find the common ground between their authors let us look first at Christina Rossetti's poem.

Goblin Market tells the story of two sisters, Laura and Lizzie, and their encounters with the dangerous "other world" of goblins and spirits. Because they are both virgin-maids they hear "morning and evening ... the goblin's cry: / 'Come buy our orchard fruits, / Come buy, come buy'". They both know the sensual and sexual appetites that the goblins have and can 'infect' them with, and agree

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*Stolen Waters is a poem that is often instanced as being autobiographic, i.e. Carroll's confessions of a lost love (see for example Gattegno, Lewis Carroll, p. 38). Actually it is a poem in the Goblin Market genre rather than anything else.

"We must not look at goblin men / We must not buy their fruits / Who knows upon what soil they fed / Their hungry thirsty roots." One evening, however, hearing the goblins going by singing and carrying their fruit produce, Laura finds that she can no longer resist temptation: "They sounded kind and full of loves / In the pleasant weather." She buys fruit from them with a lock of her golden hair and sheds an irrepressible tear "more than a pearl". Then "she sucked and sucked and sucked the more / Fruits which that unknown orchard bore; / She sucked until her lips were sore ..." Transported by her sensual adventures (and the sexuality of her adventures doubtless, though it is not possible to say whether this occurred to Christina) she returns home to Lizzie who rebukes her. But Laura is addicted and determines to repeat her experience. Yet on the next evening she discovers to her dismay that she cannot hear the goblin's inviting cry, although Lizzie, who has remained untouched, can. "Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit? / Must she no more such succous pasture find? ... [She] gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept/ As if her heart would break."

This torture continues and she dwindles ("as the fair full moon doth turn / To swift decay and burn / Her fire away"), only to be saved by Lizzie's noble self-sacrifice. For <u>she</u> determines to buy fruit for her from the goblins. But in the attempt, when it becomes clear to the goblins that she is not going to eat the fruit herself, their fury

mounts and they feel that they have been cheated. Baulked in their seductive plan, they abuse her and virtually rape her with their sinful fruit:

> "Lashing their tails
> They trod and hustled her,
> Elbowed and jostled her,
> Clawed with their nails,
> Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
> Tore her gown and soiled her stocking
> Twitched her hair out by the roots,
> Stamped upon her tender feet,
> Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
> Against her mouth to make her eat ..."

She, of course, resists; a pre-Raphaelite martyr to her cause:

> "White and golden Lizzie stood,
> Like a lily in a flood, ...
> Like a beacon left alone
> In a hoary roaring sea,
> Sending up a golden fire ...
> Like a royal virgin town
> Topped with gilded dome and spire
> Close beleaguered by a fleet
> Mad to tug her standard down ...
> Lizzie uttered not a word;
> Would not open lip from lip
> Lest they cram a mouthful in
> But laughed in heart to feel the drip
> Of juice that syruped all her face ..."

Badly beaten, she returns to her sister whom she tells to

> "Come and kiss me.
> Never mind my bruises,
> Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
> Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
> Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
> Eat me, drink me, love me ..."

Laura realises what her sister has done for her and thinks that consequently they are now both doomed to a

terrible fate ("Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden ...") and runs to comfort her full of pity and with tears in her eyes. This selflessness reawakened in her is, of course, the antidote, though she has also to re-taste the juice which crazed her in the first place. This time however "Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart / Met the fire smouldering there / And overbore its lesser flame ..." She is thus eventually regenerated and the sisters become even more devoted to one another. Later both marry and warn their children of the danger of the goblins.

Carroll was right to admire this poem "very much" for it is, among all the rest of Christina's often sombre verse by far her most powerful poetic achievement. Whether or not she herself recognised that it is a poem that is highly charged with sexual motifs, this rape and abuse of the virgin is so blatant that one would have to be deliberately myopic not to recognise it as such.* For here the tensions between the love and fear of sex and the virtues of virginity in contrast to the torment of sinful indulgence tells us a great deal about Victorian sexuality and expose all that dozens of polite novelettes concealed. But whatever Christina thought she had written (and she <u>does</u> seem to have been a remarkably pure and innocent lady) Carroll, in his poem, certainly caught its tone.

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*See also Maureen Duffy, <u>The Erotic World of Faery</u>, Hodder and Stoughton, 1972, pp. 288 - 91 for an analysis that is determined to expose the sexuality of the poem.

Carroll's poem, Stolen Waters, which was written during precisely those "few days" around May 12th 1862 when he was reading Goblin Market, also has its tempted virgin - but this time, appropriately enough, it is a man:

"The light was faint, and soft the air
That breathed around the place;
And she was lithe, and tall and fair,
And with a wayward grace
Her queenly head she bare.

With glowing cheek, with gleaming eye,
She met me on the way:
My spirit owned the witchery
Within her smile that lay:
I followed her; I know not why.

The trees were thick with many a fruit,
The grass with many a flower:
My soul was dead, my tongue was mute,
In that accursed hour.

And in my dream, with silvery voice,
She said, or seemed to say,
"Youth is the season to rejoice" -
I could not choose but stay:
I could not say her nay.

She plucked a branch above her head,
With rarest fruitage laden:
"Drink of the juice, Sir Knight," she said:
"'Tis good for knight and maiden."

Oh, blind my ear that would not trace -
Oh, deaf mine ear that would not heed -
The mocking smile upon her face,
The mocking smile of greed!

I drank the juice; and straightway felt
A fire within my brain:
My soul within me seemed to melt
In sweet delirious pain.

"Sweet is the stolen draught," she said:
"Hath sweetness stint or measure?
Pleasant the secret hoard of bread:
What bars us from our pleasure?" ..."

Not only is there here a comparable encounter to the one in Goblin Market, that is, between innocent virtue and sinister, sinful sensuality, but the concept of the fruit with its dangerous juices is also substantially the same, as is the "fire" and the "sweet delirious pain" of indulgence. The subsequent events are also similar (although Carroll cannot tell them so well) except that the sexes are reversed. After his indulgence, like Laura's in Goblin Market, the Virgin-Hero of Stolen Waters, begins to go into a rapid decline ("My happier life was dying") and his tempter having taken over his heart, changes to the "withered, old and gray" being that she really was all the time. The Knight attempts to flee from her but "still behind me seemed to hear / Her fierce unflagging tread; / And scarce drew breath for fear," and eventually contemplates suicide because, "The heart that once had been mine own ... / I bore instead / A cold, cold heart of stone." Luckily however whilst on his mournful travels he hears "a clear voice singing / So sweetly that, like summer-rain, / My happy tears came springing: / My human heart returned again." The song that the Knight hears is about the trusting nature of childhood and "The simple joy of being,":

"'A rosy child,
Sitting and singing, in a garden fair,
The joy of hearing, seeing,
The simple joy of being -
Or twining rosebuds in the golden hair
That ripples free and wild.

A sweet pale child -
Wearily looking to the purple West -
Waiting for the great For-ever
That suddenly shall sever
The cruel chains that hold her from the rest -
By earth-joys unbeguiled ...

Be as a child -
So shalt thou sing for very joy of breath -
So shalt thou wait thy dying,
In holy transport lying -
So pass rejoicing through the gate of death,
In garment undefiled.'"

The Knight's tears, like Laura's, bring him comfort and relief from the consequences of his indulgences and he wins back some of his serenity by recognising that selflessness - as described in the song - is a quality that can compensate, in part at least, for his former wilfulness. The final stanzas show however that unlike the maidens in Goblin Market, the Knight has suffered some permanent damage:

"For if I weep, it is that now
I see how deep a loss is mine,
And feel how brightly round my brow
The coronal might shine,
Had I but kept mine earthly vow:

And if I smile, it is that now
I see the promise of the years -
That garland waiting for my brow,
That must be won with tears,
With pain - with death - I care not how."

The inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the similarities that exist between these poems is not merely that Carroll knew Goblin Market but that he both subscribed and responded to the ideas expressed in it. Because they

seem so different it may seem astonishing to reflect that there was only eight weeks between the writing of Stolen Waters and the first telling of Alice on that famous boat-trip with Alice and her two sisters. Yet there is one vital link: as in Goblin Market and Stolen Waters, so also in Alice, the notion of purity and pre-adulthood is preferred because the worlds of all three are potentially anarchic and damaging to the uninitiated, and this initiation by its nature means that though there are certain gains, the valuable quality of innocence is necessarily totally lost. Such initiation is a correlative to being attracted to what are seen as the miserable fruits of the adult world - according to these two chaste Victorians. Such pessimism - a direct result of inhibiting more fundamental sensual pleasures - was Carroll's view even more than Christina Rossetti's. For Laura and Lizzie recover and profit by their experience (though that remained sinful) and have a happy life with their children; Carroll's Knight, on the other hand, gained nothing but heartache and melancholy, and the ability to appreciate the qualities of innocence and childhood that he had previously so willingly surrendered. The implication here is that to escape the goblins and witches of adulthood and their destructive sensuality one must know something about them; to know something about them is already to be dangerously involved. To know that paradise can be lost

is in itself to lose this particular kind of paradise - and not knowing that it is possible to lose it is only a matter of time:

> "'Seven years and six months!' Humpty Dumpty repeated thoughtfully. 'An uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you'd asked my advice, I'd have said 'Leave off at seven' - but it's too late now.'
>
> 'I never ask advice about growing,' Alice said indignantly.
>
> 'Too proud?' the other enquired.
>
> Alice felt even more indignant at this suggestion. 'I mean,' she said, 'that one can't help growing older.'
>
> 'One can't, perhaps,' said Humpty Dumpty; 'but two can. With proper assistance, you might have left off at seven.'"
>
> (TTLG, p. 266)

This bitter-sweet dilemma is always in the background of Carroll's work - and significantly in the work of many of the Victorians whom he knew and admired like Christina Rossetti. For, as Ifor Evans in his standard English Poetry in the Later Nineteenth Century (rev. ed. 1966), notes; her most determined poetic motive was virtually consistent throughout her work: "A warm desire kindles within her for joy and love, the pleasurable and sensuous acceptance of life. Before she can gain this breath of warm experience, fear chills her: life is insecure refusing to yield what it has promised, its joys but brief preludes to enduring sin ..." (p. 89). Perhaps Carroll too was close to this sombre melancholy - certainly a gloom pervades his Diary, and his life parallels hers in its chasteness. Like her too

he never seemed to face adult maturity and its demands, but whereas she avoided it by looking to its conclusion, that is death, he looked backwards to the years of childhood. It is, however, more than coincidental that at times these motives come together as in Goblin Market and Stolen Waters and that at other times they almost exchanged home territory; Christina writing nonsense verses in Sing Song and Carroll writing poems of death such as Solitude and Only a Lock of Hair. It is important to recognise that the melancholy that is an obvious ingredient of the fuel for Christina in her work and for Carroll in these poems, and the Sylvie and Bruno volumes, is also present in the master-work Alice, and that it was an important and contemporary Victorian source of artistic energy. Carroll's friendship with Christina Rossetti demonstrates yet again that he was not an isolated eccentric Oxford don, that is at least during his most creative years.

(4) Lewis Carroll and some eminent Victorians

(ii) Painters (or "Drawling, Stretching and Fainting in Coils")

If we take into account Alice's plea that books should have pictures as well as conversations then it is not perhaps surprising that Carroll's enthusiasm for the visual arts was marked, even at a conservative estimate. Considering also that he was a professional mathematician and that painting and geometry are less obvious relatives than literature and painting, his enthusiasm was doubly striking and all the more important to examine in any study of him and his work. Accordingly, if we are surprised at the lack of any real sympathy with painters and paintings on Dickens' part, then we might be surprised by the interest that the mathematician Carroll in comparison showed towards the subject. Yet Carroll's enthusiasm here is something that has been largely ignored by his critics and only lightly touched on by his biographers despite the fact that his contact with a large circle of artistic acquaintances (see the diagram "Lewis Carroll and the Eminent Victorians", p. 214) is all the more important since it was sustained during his own most creative years (c. 1860 - 1876). The aim of this chapter is to rectify this neglect of what was a significant contributing factor to the life of the creator of Wonderland - and hence to Wonderland itself.

Carroll's lively feeling for art and artists can best be demonstrated by looking at his Diary where there is repeated evidence of his enthusiasm: He watched painters:

29.9.1856: "... While on the pier [at Whitby] I stayed to watch an artist who is painting a view of the harbour, and we fell into conversation, which ended in his inviting me to come and see his pictures: his name is Witherby ..."

read about them:

7.4.1857: "... Finished Young's Pre-Raphaelitism [Pre-Raphaelitism, or a Popular Enquiry into some newly asserted Principles of Art, 1857, by Edward Young] having only skimmed the latter part, he makes out a strong case against Ruskin here and there, and proves contradictions in his writings, but I can detect neither definite aim nor method in his book; he is perpetually shifting the question, and keeps the reader in a constant state of transition, without the satisfying feeling that any of the questions raised have been properly settled."*

bought reproductions of their work:

21.11.1857: "... Ordered various photographs, including some exquisite ones at Colnaghi's [a famous print dealer] of paintings in the Manchester Exhibition ..."

photographed original pictures himself:

6.10.1863: "[At the Rossetti's] I looked through a huge volume of drawings, some of which I am to photograph - a great treat as I had never seen such exquisite drawings before ..." [which he did photograph the following day].

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*Young's book is indeed irritating to read since it is pompously negative in its attempts to discredit Ruskin and is extremely long-winded and verbose. G. H. Fleming in his study of the Pre-Raphaelites calls it "tedious [and] unintentionally amusing." (That Ne'er Shall Meet Again, p. 144).

gave pictures their titles:

8.4.1865: "... Visited Holman Hunt, whom I found working at a very large picture (life size or nearly so) of Mrs. Fairbairn and children - for which I suggested the name of "The Children's Holiday", which he ultimately adopted ..."

made suggestions and criticisms:

9.4.1867: "... Called at Mr. Ward's [Edward Matthews Ward (1816 - 79) the historical painter]. His picture [for the British Artist's Exhibition] is Juliet, with the friar giving her the phial of poison; hers [i.e. his wife's - Henrietta Mary Ada Ward] was Joan of Arc, (before she went to the wars) watching an old soldier who is resting in the house: the girl ... is a great success. I made one or two suggestions, which she seemed to approve of; one, to make his hand browner, and one to make the dog lick his hand with the upper surface of its tongue ..."

and visited Art Schools:

21.12.1881: "I went to Mr. Heatherley's [Art School] and stayed talking to Theo Heaphy, partly watching her draw, partly watching some dozen students painting from "the life" - a handsome Egyptian girl in gorgeous robes ..."

23.6.1882: "... went to the Slade School of Art to call on Lucy Waters, but she was not there. The attendant offered to take us through the studios, and showed us 3 - one for male students (drawing casts), one for females (do.), and one for females drawing from life. I thought it injudicious to show strangers through such a studio, and that some of the ladies wd not like it, as the model (a man) had nothing on but a pair of drawers ... The attendant offered to take me (alone) through the "life" studio for male students, but I did not agree to go - if as I guessed from his manner, they were drawing from a nude female model, I think the practice of showing strangers in a very bad one - ."*

12.1.1884: "To town. Went to the 'Slade' and spent some time in the Ladies 'Life' School with Lucy Walters. The model was a young man, standing. Some of the students were drawing and some painting ..."

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*This entry is omitted from R. L. Green's version of The Diaries.

Carroll also owned several original drawings, paintings, prints and books on paintings, such as the following as itemised in The Dodgson Sale Catalogue:

" [lot] 128 Proof Engraving in gilt frame, after J. Noel Paton, "Christ and Satan" (presented to the Rev. C. L. Dodgson by J. Noel Paton).

271 Royal Academy Pictures, 1888 to 1895, 2 vols., half morocco.

407 Ruskin's Pre-Raphaelitism and Notes on Pictures, in 1 vol., 8vo, half morocco, and 8 Ruskin pamphlets. [See also lots 402 - 11 all of which were Ruskin items*].

417 [The] Germ, with 5 plates by Holman Hunt and others. 8vo, 192 pp., half morocco, gilt.[/] "

But by far the most important item in Carroll's collection was an original oil painting by Arthur Hughes called 'The Lady with the Lilacs' that he purchased in 1863 (this will be discussed later in this chapter).

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*See also lots 123 - 144, 237 - 296, all of them visual items.

[/] Carroll had evidently written to D. G. Rossetti to ask for a copy of this volume - it was virtually the Pre-Raphaelite manifesto - since Doughty prints what he calls "an elaborately detached reply" born of Rossetti's sensitivity over the Germ's failure:

> "I really have not the least idea where that precious publication could be obtained, and if I had, should feel no irresistible impulse to put anyone on the scent of it. An exhaustive enquiry among some of the trades class - Buttermen for instance - might I fancy have produced some results in the year 1850 ..."

(in A Victorian Romantic, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 2nd ed., 1963, p. 98).

Also significant was the fact that Carroll had access to the private studios of an astonishing number of the most famous artists of the day: not only did he know the Rossettis, Munro, Prinsep and Watts, but also Holman Hunt:

30.9.1863: "Called ... at Mr. Rossetti's ... Thence I went on to Mr. Holman Hunt. I found him at work on the great picture he has been at for six or seven years - an Egyptian girl carrying a wheatsheaf and surrounded by pigeons ["The Afterglow in Egypt" (?)] ... we soon adjourned to the garden for a game of croquet, as it was getting too dark to paint ..."

Sir Frederick Leighton:

4.6.1879: "Called, by appointment on Sir Frederick Leighton whom I had never seen before ... and whom I was much taken with. He showed me some lovely unfinished paintings: a sort of 'Hero' on the shore (nude figure seated, back view); a standing figure in green drapery, with a child leaning over and kissing her, painted from two sisters; and a female figure which looks very queer at present, as the (unfinished) drapery only reaches to the waist ..."

Arthur Hughes:

21.6.1863: "Called on Mr. Munro ... we went together to Wandsworth and called on Mr. Arthur Hughes, and saw some lovely pictures, and his four little children, one of whom is painted in "The Woodman's Return" ..."

and John Millais:

7.4.1864: "Took Mr. Holman Hunt's letter to Mr. Millais at 7 Cromwell Place: I first went to 7a by mistake and while waiting at the door noticed a gentleman who was walking up and down in front of the next house, and whom I thought like the pictures of Millais: we exchanged some remarks about the difficulty of getting the door answered: then came some children with a governess, and I said to myself "there comes [the sitter for] "My First Sermon" [one of Millais more famous pictures during his post Pre-Raphaelite period] but they passed the door I was at, made a rush at

> the gentleman (evidently their father) and went into the next house. At last I found out my mistake, and that the gentleman was Millais himself: he was very kind and took me into his studio (where there was very little to see five [pictures] having gone to the Royal Academy) ..."

Moreover some of the painters Carroll knew, he clearly cultivated because he felt that there was a sympathy between him and their work. For example, Sir Noel Paton's painting he actively responded to (as his Diary again shows) simply because it was directly concerned with the world of fairy - a world which was intrinsically important to Carroll and his work:

> 12.9.1857: "Wilfred [one of Carroll's brothers] and I visited the Edinburgh National Gallery in the morning. Among the more modern pictures ... there were two wonderful and really beautiful pictures by Noel Paton - the quarrel and reconciliation of Oberon and Titania: in the first we counted a hundred and sixty-five fairies ..."

Ten years later and we find that Carroll's admiration had not waned:

> 11.5.1867: "Made an expedition to town. Went to pick up Wilfred and we visited the Royal Academy together. There are a good many pictures, among those I particularly noticed was "The Fairy Raid" by Noel Paton - a delicious scene of a troop of fairies going through a wood, carrying off a changeling; the whole place is full of fairies and of queer little elves and gnomes ..."

Only a year after this and Carroll had begun to feel that Paton would have been the ideal illustrator for Through the Looking-Glass (Tenniel was not over-anxious to work for Carroll again because he was so fastidious; Paton had successfully illustrated Charles Kingsley's Water Babies):

8.4.1868: "I went down to Hammersmith, and spent a very pleasant evening with Mrs. MacDonald and the children. I left a message for Mr. MacDonald, begging him to apply to Sir Noel Paton for me about pictures for Looking-Glass House [the original name for Through the Looking-Glass]"

Though he was disappointed in this hope, Carroll did get good advice from Paton:

19.5.1868: "Heard from Mrs. MacDonald enclosing Sir Noel Paton's letter to Mr. MacDonald. He is too ill to undertake the pictures for Looking-Glass House and also urges Tenniel is the man ..."

Most importantly, by 1871 Carroll had got to know Paton personally (see Diaries p. 304) and had got to know his work well as the following letter to his sister Mary amply demonstrates:

"My dearest Mary,

In former days I remember I used to consider you as the proper recipient for any news of a specially artistic nature, so I am going to try the experiment again, by telling you of my visit to Sir Noel Paton, in spite of the distracting influences of your new life to prevent your taking any interest in the account. First, however, do you know who he is? He illustrated "The Water Babies," and he has painted "Hesperus", "The Relief of Cawnpore" (or Lucknow, was it?) "A Fairy Raid", "Mors Janua Vita", "Who lived in here?" (a child looking into an old helmet) "The quarrel of Oberon and Titania", and many others. If you have seen none of these, you had better simply regard him as one of the best painters of figure pictures now living. He is a great friend of George MacDonald, which was one motive for wishing to know him, and he was said to have beautiful and charming children, which was another. So, as I failed to find him in his house in Edinburgh, I made an expedition to Arran, to call on him in his house at Lamlash. I had sent on the letter of introduction which Mr. M.D. had given me, and I had contrived to mention my idea of calling, after which I allowed him time, if the idea should occur to him, of offering a bed. But no such offer came, and when I went there, and saw how small a house it was, and that there were 8 children, I was not surprised at the omission. Both he and Lady Paton are

thoroughly genuine and very charming. What I call "real" people are rare, and I delight in them when found. He is a grand-looking man, tall and strong, looking much more of a soldier than an artist.

His children are most complete "children of nature". They are quite unique in my experience - something like South Sea Islanders with the instincts of gentlemen and ladies: no "manners", but simple natural politeness. I can't quite describe it, but it charmed me very much, as being thoroughly "real".

The eldest girl, Mona, about 11, would make a grand subject for a picture - rather a melancholy expression (as all Scotch children have), but the very picture of rude health. We all went out in a heavy sailing-boat, which had to be rowed mostly, there was so little wind, and she and I pulled it some way and I had fairly hard work to pull equally with her. Many of Sir N. P's pictures contain the children.

I had <u>such</u> a treat in Edinburgh, by his invitation, in visiting his studio there,* and looking over a number of pencil drawings, some only half-finished, a kind which always interests me much more than finished pictures. I spent an afternoon and evening there, and need hardly say that when I left I was fairly good friends with all the children, as well as with their parents, and Mona asked in bread Scotch "When are ye comin' again?" This we hope to do (Uncle S. and I) tomorrow morning ...

your very loving brother

C. L. Dodgson

(<u>DEC</u>, 18.5.11)

This letter has been quoted almost in its entirety because it emphasises Carroll's enthusiasm by giving it first hand. Since both he and Paton considered themselves to be rather special observers of the magic world of fairy it does not seem strange that Carroll was enchanted by this meeting with

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*See <u>Diary</u> entry 23.9.1871 where he describes the drawings as "perfectly exquisite, and almost come up to <u>my</u> highest ideals of beauty".

Paton and his family. The effect of Paton's work was not, however, wholly helpful to the quality of Carroll's, since the element of sweet sentimentality that almost invariably compromises his paintings seems to have affected Carroll also - in, for example, the flawed Sylvie and Bruno stories. Suddenly in these the world of surreal dream nonsense became virtually a simple act of observation and Carroll a mere onlooker; and indeed this is how he portrays himself in his own sketch for the story "Bruno's Revenge" (see illustration 13). It is clear that Paton alone was not responsible for this but the friendship between him and Carroll was evidently a long-lasting one, for he sent him a photograph of himself on Christmas Eve 1888 with the following fond dedication: "To the Dreamer of Wonderland and Hunter of the Snark, with every good wish from his sadly silent but not forgetful friend Noel Paton". (Centenary Catalogue, item 337, p. 69).

Another painter of the fairy world with whom Carroll also had some contact and who possibly had some influence over him in this respect was Richard Doyle. Carroll also discussed with him as with Paton the possibility of illustrating Through the Looking-Glass; an idea which again did not materialise (see Diaries 24.1.1866). Doyle was well known as a Punch illustrator and as the illustrator of Ruskin's King of the Golden River and William Allingham's poems. This last was admired by Carroll: he gave a copy of

Illustration 13

Carroll's own sketch of the story teller of Bruno's Revenge drawn for a child friend. The clumsy (and clumsily drawn) adult contemplates the delicate and enchanting fairy world.

(Bruno's Revenge was a short story first published in Aunt Judy's Magazine for Young People Dec. 1867, IV, XX, 65 - 78. This story was later incorporated in SB (1889). This drawing was first reproduced by E. M. Hatch in her Letters of Lewis Carroll, 1933, facing p. 50.)

The Fairies to the Duchess of Albany's little girl (see Diaries 16.11.1891) and there are other Diary entries showing his enthusiasm for Doyle's work:

> 21.2.1885: "To town. Theo and I went first to the Grosvenor to see the collection of Doyle's pictures - some quite lovely, especially an old favourite, the fairies trimming the goat's beards, and a large one (new to me) of the Pied Piper ..."

Such a visit by Carroll to an art exhibition was moreover by no means rare, and indeed the Diaries are virtually punctuated with them. He went to the Royal Academy almost every year between 1856 and 1896; to the "Exhibition of British Artists"; the Grosvenor Gallery, and to special one-man exhibitions of, for example, Maddox Brown (19.4.1865); "The Millais Exhibition" (19.4.1881); "Rossetti's pictures at Burlington House" (6.1.1883) and the Holman Hunt Exhibition at "The New Gallery" (13.7.1891). Altogether there are over sixty exhibitions that are mentioned in the Diaries, not including the visits to private collections like the following one:

> 2.10.1864: "Some of the Croft party came over, and we made an expedition to Newcastle, and went (a party of nine) to Mr. Leathart's, who has a large collection of pictures. [Leathart was a lead merchant and had one of the finest Pre-Raphaelite collections of his day]. I got a note of introduction from Mr. Arthur Hughes, who is painting a picture of Mrs. Leathart and children. She only was at home, and most kindly gave up about one and a half hours to showing us the pictures [which gives some idea of the magnitude of the collection!]: Millais' "Autumn Leaves", Hughes' "Home from Work" and "The Rift Within the Lute"; Maddox Brown's "[Pretty] Baa Lambs", and "Cordelia" and

> others: [Burne] Jones' extraordinary picture [The Merciful Knight] of the figure on the crucifix bending down to kiss a knight who had forgiven his enemy; and a great many others."

His enthusiasm was so considerable that he would make great efforts to see a painting that he knew was of importance, even if, as in the following case, it were on private view and hence officially out of bounds:

> "I was at Mr. Cundalls ... and he happened to mention that Holman Hunt's great new picture "Christ in the Temple" was on private view (being open to the public on Wednesday) and thought that if I told them that I was going on to Oxford the next day, they might possible admit me. I tried, but the doorkeeper was inexorable: as a last resource, I sent my name in to Mr. Hunt, remembering that I had once been introduced to him, and he most kindly admitted me, and I re-introduced myself. There were very few people there so I saw it capitally, and had also the treat of talking to the artist himself about it. It is about the most wonderful picture I ever saw ..."*
>
> (Letter to his sister, August 1860, quoted in Diaries, p. 164).

Not only did Carroll visit exhibitions but he also often had a well-formulated point of view about what he saw. Sometimes this was informed by the critical opinion of the time. Here, for instance, is Carroll's Diary entry about

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*By way of celebrating the picture, Carroll was fired to compose a poem "After Three Days". Though a rather poor narrative effort ("The wisest of the land / Had gathered there, three solemn trysting-days / for high debate") it does demonstrate how moved Carroll could be at the sight of a picture:

> "... as a sunless deep
> Mirrors the shining heights that crown the bay,
> So did my soul create anew in sleep
> The picture seen by day ..."

(See N, pp. 972 - 4).

Millais' "Christ in the House of his Parents" (1849), (he calls it by its alternative title "Carpenter's Shop") after he had managed to see it in 1862:

> 13.6.1862: "Saw Millais' "Carpenter's Shop" at Ryman's. It is certainly full of power but hideously ugly: the faces of the Virgin and Child being about the ugliest. The figure of John the Baptist, bringing the water to wash the wounded hand, is one of the best - wonderful in flesh colouring. The hand of Our Lord is wounded in the centre, and some of the blood has dropped onto his naked foot - a fanciful idea such as Hunt's pictures are full of ..."

This judgement though better informed (it <u>was</u> 12 years later) clearly has echoes of Dickens' outburst against the picture in his famous <u>Household Words</u> review "Old Lamps for New Ones" (15.6.1850) where it was characterised as "the lowest depths of what is mean, repulsive and revolting". Similarly Carroll initially agreed with Ruskin's remark in his <u>Academy Notes</u> for 1857 on another of Millais' paintings, "Sir Isumbras at the Ford" (see illustration 31) that it was "too ill painted to be dwelt upon" as his <u>Diary</u> makes clear:

> 1.7.1857: "Went with [my brothers] Skeffington and Wilfred to the Royal Academy Exhibition: many fair pictures, none, I think, remarkable, except perhaps Millais' two "Sir Isumbras at the Ford" and "The Escaped Heretic", which were remarkably ugly. In the first of these there are three people on a horse, but so much smaller than the average human stature, as to be hardly any load at all; an additional gigantic effect is given to the animal by its being partly out of the picture. The girl's face is earnest but coarse, and her eyes unnaturally large; the knight is good though with an expression like an honest old gardener; the face of the boy behind is lubberley and wooden to a degree. In the Heretic picture the woman's face is marvellous; a perfect embodiment of the incredulous, shuddering joy one may conceive to be produced by unhoped escape from immediate and honourable death, as if she feared to "wake and find it but a dream", and she is panting like one newly arrived from a nightmare.

> The face of the lover rescuing her is simply hideous and revolting - his lips are forced into a violent pout, but whether for kissing or whistling it would be hard to say; speaking is out of the question with his mouth in such a shape. The details of both pictures are wonderful as one might expect ..."

We shall return to "Sir Isumbras" later, but, apparently, this opinion about it was the general one about the picture at the time* and Ruskin did not much like "The Escaped Heretic" either; but Carroll did at least go back to the Royal Academy the next day and modify his view about the first painting:

> 2.7.1857: "Spent the morning in shopping and the afternoon at the Royal Academy. As to "Sir Isumbras" I formed too hasty a judgement of the boy's face - it is wooden, but tolerable ..."

Because there is a coincidence between what he and the art critics of the day said, it seems likely that Carroll formed these opinions with their help. In any case the major voice amongst the critics was John Ruskin's who, as

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*See G. H. Fleming <u>That Ne'er Shall Meet Again</u> who says of the response to the painting "<u>The Times</u> gave nearly one full column to its review: 'The proportions of the horse are impossible, and the drawing of the animal is throughout faulty, and the texture of his coat is untrue to nature. The knight himself appears stunted and dwarfish, and his foot ... is out of all proportion to the rest of his body ... Much of the picture is carelessly painted, while the composition invites criticism, so daringly does it depart from all received notions of agreeableness and grace'. <u>The Times</u> critique, a passage of almost unmitigated abuse, set the tone for the critical response to "Sir Isumbras". <u>The Athenaeum</u> called it "monstrous", <u>The Art Journal</u> said "it is not entitled to occupy space", and for the <u>Literary Gazette</u> it was "simply a piece of clap-trap intended to decoy and amuse the tastes of a few stray sentimentalists". And it was similarly treated by all the major and most of the minor journals ..." (pp. 114 - 5).

an Oxford man, was regarded by Carroll as something of an authority and of some eminence. His reaction when they met, for instance, has all the flavour of a cat looking at a king and being surprised to find him human:

> 27.10.1857: "At Common Room breakfast met, for the first time, John Ruskin. I had a little conversation with him, but not enough to bring out anything characteristic or striking in him. His appearance was rather disappointing - a general feebleness of expression, with no commanding air, or any external signs of deep thought, as one would expect to see in such a man. Dies notabilis."

Later entries in his Diary show that the contact between them was maintained and that Carroll took advantage of having a professional critic at hand:

> 23.11.1874: "Ruskin came, by my request, for a talk about the pictures Holiday is doing for the "Boojum" - one (the scene on board) has been cut on wood. He much disheartened me by holding out no hopes that Holiday would be able to illustrate a book satisfactorily ..."

R. L. Green, the editor of The Diaries, notes that "during November 1875, Dodgson received "specimens" from E. and A. Fairfield, F. W. Dawson, and Herdschel; as usual he consulted Ruskin - and in the end they were all refused. Ruskin thought them 'inferior to Holiday' and 'none of them came near to Tenniel', in his opinion." (p. 37). Though he did give his professional opinion on artistic matters to Carroll in this way, Ruskin does not seem to have been particularly fond of Carroll's company at times, and there are at least two Diary entries that show this:

3.6.1875: "With some difficulty I persuaded Ruskin to come and be photographed, and to stay luncheon with us ..."

1.12.1877: "Canon King, Ruskin, and Sampson dined with me: a very pleasant evening to me at any rate: and I hope to them ..."

Despite a natural reluctance to being lionised on Ruskin's part, he and Carroll would have almost certainly have remained on good terms in any case, if for no other reason than that they had a mutual friend in George MacDonald who acted as go-between for the ageing Ruskin and the extremely young Rose La Touche.* Certainly Carroll's admiration of Ruskin led him in later years to write a letter:

> "... to the Dean to suggest that Christ Church should, if, as seems likely, Ruskin is elected Slade Professor, offer him rooms this time in Christ Church, and not leave to Corpus the honour of housing him."
>
> (Diaries, 20.11.1882)

As a consequence of all this evidence it seems sensible to conclude that Carroll probably listened to the apostle of

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*It is a rather remarkable coincidence that just as Carroll's affection for Alice Liddell was reaching its height, so also was Ruskin's for Rose La Touche. As Joan Evans states in her biography, John Ruskin (1954):

> "Rose La Touche wrote to him every week [in 1861] and no other girl-child replaced her in his dreams. Yet even she, he feared was escaping from him. "It's another Rose every six months now", he wrote to Georgiana Burne-Jones; "Do I want to keep her from growing up? Of course I do ..." [letter in Works, 36, 375].

Given the emphasis that Ruskin placed on the beauty and desirability of immature girlhood, and his power of dictating artistic taste, it is scarcely surprising to find that Carroll had such interest in the very artists that Ruskin influenced and encouraged.

Pre-Raphaelitism, and paid particular attention to his dictates concerning artistic taste.

One final contemporary of Carroll's needs further mention; this is Edward Burne-Jones. Carroll's enthusiasm for his painting "The Merciful Knight" in the Leathart collection has already been quoted, but there were other occasions when further admiration was shown, for example in the following Diary entries:

> 30.3.1880: "Went to London ... to the Grosvenor Gallery. Burne-Jones' drawings were the gem of the gallery ..."
>
> 31.5.1898: "To town. Went to the Royal Academy ... then to see Burne-Jones' lovely series of four pictures on "The Legend of the Briar-Rose".

Such Diary entries are anything but surprising from the creator of Wonderland about a painter who was described by Tennyson as "the only guide worth following into dreamland" and by Rossetti as "one of the nicest young fellows in - Dreamland".* Despite the fact that they were also virtually exact contemporaries; (Carroll was one year older, though they both died in 1898) they never seem to have actually met each other though they did have mutual friends in George MacDonald and the Pre-Raphaelites and their associates. Most significantly Burne-Jones went up to Oxford two years after Carroll so that for a time they were part of the same world. As far as we are concerned here perhaps the most

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*Quoted J. E. Pythian; Burne-Jones, Grant Richards, 1908, p. 17.

important result of this is the fact that they both made and enjoyed the journey from Oxford to Godstow which seems to have been as vital for one as for the other. Carroll, recollecting the first telling of Alice in his essay ""Alice" on the Stage" (LCPB p. 163 ff) talks of "many a day had we rowed together on that quiet stream - the three little maidens and I ..." each story told living and dying "in its own golden afternoon" and he conjures "from the shadowy past, "Alice", the child of my dreams. Full many a year has slipped away since that 'golden afternoon' that gave thee birth, but I can call it up almost as clearly as if it were yesterday - the cloudless blue above, the watery mirror below, the boat drifting idly on its way, the tinkle of the drops that fell from the oars, as they waved so sleepily to and fro, and (the one bright gleam of life in all the slumberous scene) the three eager faces, hungry for news of fairy-land, and who would not be said "nay" to: from whose lips "Tell us a story please", had all the stern immutability of Fate!"

Carroll's biographers quote the Meteorological Office's report for that day - "cool and rather wet"* - but such facts are unimportant where Fate is directing inspiration. Burne-Jones' recollection of a similar trip made eight years earlier emphasises the quality of the experience to a sensitive mind and is the best record we have by way of

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*See Hudson, Lewis Carroll, p. 129.

shedding light on how the dream of escape has similar roots for both of them, be it into the idealised medieval past or into a beautiful rose-garden:

> "I have just come in from my terminal pilgrimage to Godstow ruins and the burial place of Fair Rosamond. The day has gone down magnificently; all by the river's side I came back in a delirium of joy, the land was so enchanted with bright colours, blue and purple in the sky, shot over with a dust of golden shower, and in the water, a mirror'd counterpart, ruffled by a light west wind - and in my mind pictures of the old days, the abbey, and long processions of the faithful, banners of the cross, copes and crosiers, gay Knights and ladies by the river bank, hawking parties and all the pageantry of the golden age - it made me feel so wild and mad I had to throw stones in the water to break the dream. I never remember having such an unutterable ecstasy, it was quite painful with intensity, as if my forehead would burst. I get frightened of indulging now in dreams, so vivid that they seemrecollections rather than imaginations, but they seldom last more than half-an-hour; and the sound of earthly bells in the distance, and presently the wreathing of steam upon the trees where the railway runs, called me back to the years I cannot convince myself of living in."
>
> (cit. Georgiana Burne-Jones, Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones, 2 vols. 1909 (repr.) I, 97 - 8.

Finally, in this survey of Carroll's enthusiasm for the visual arts, it is important to recognise that he did not restrict himself always to being a mere spectator, but was himself an extremely active and often able amateur artist in his own right. By far the most important part of this activity was his hobby of photography which he admitted in his Diary (22.1.1856) was taken up in the first place "as I want some other occupation here [i.e. at Christ Church] than mere reading and writing". From such a casual beginning Carroll's enthusiasm for the new art grew, and at one time

he did very little else but take photographs. As Helmut Gernsheim has pointed out in his definitive study Lewis Carroll, Photographer, this hobby did occupy much of his time, especially during the important years when Wonderland was being created:

> "[In The Diaries] the years 1863 and 1864 particularly have more frequent and longer entries [regarding his photography] than any other years, and may be regarded as the most important period ... many of his best pictures were created at this time ..."
>
> (Op. cit., Dover reprint, 1969, p. 15)

Gernsheim's appraisal of Carroll's photographic work is important because as author of the standard History of Photography; From the Camera Obscura to the beginning of the Modern Era as well as nearly a dozen other volumes on the history of photography, he has been able to employ an informed and expert opinion of Carroll's work and its comparative quality with other early photographers. Accordingly the following opinions are useful:

> "[Turning the pages of the first volume of Carroll's photographs I had seen] I was struck first by the fertility of his imagination; later I became aware that each picture possessed a strong individual character, and the more I studied the 115 photographs it contains, the more I was convinced that here was a genius at work, the like of which is rare in nineteenth-century photography ..."
>
> (Lewis Carroll, Photographer, preface p. vii)

> "Considering ... Lewis Carroll's many other activities, his photographic achievements are truly astonishing: he must not only rank as a pioneer of British amateur photography,

but I would also unhesitatingly claim him as the most outstanding photographer of children in the nineteenth century. After Julia Margaret Cameron he is probably the most distinguished amateur portraitist of the mid-Victorian era ..."*

(Ibid., p. 28)

We might note in passing that the Victoria and Albert Museum also thought that Carroll's photographs were significant enough to feature in its exhibition of early photography "From Today Painting is Dead", in 1972, and they also featured that year in a similar exhibition, "Victoria's World", staged by the University of Texas. This is not the place, however, to go over ground that Gernsheim has already adequately covered, but rather to emphasise again, with Gernsheim as expert witness, that photography was more than a mere hobby during the years of Carroll's most successful literary creativity. Accordingly, and hardly surprisingly, the one art had some bearing on the other in that they were both celebrations of the same thing - at least most of the time; the qualities of childhood, or rather, preponderantly, girlhood. Edward Lucie-Smith, in his New Statesman review of the exhibition of photography at the Victoria and Albert Museum (24.3.72) observes in this context:

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*An opinion echoed and confirmed by Graham Overden and Robert Melville in Victorian Children, (Academy, 1972) - a remarkable collection of photographs of mainly little girls - several of which are by Carroll, which again establishes him as a member of an artistic group, rather than a mere eccentric.

"... As with one or two other Victorian photographers, Lewis Carroll's work is not independent but is put at the service of an obsession - his passion for his 'child friends'. In a painter, this obsessive drive would perhaps be fatal to the quality of the work; Carroll's photographs are strengthened by it. Here is further proof, if any is needed, that photographs have different roots from paintings in the psyche of those who create them. The painter recreates the world; the photographer spies on it. His excitement lies in preserving what should be ephemeral, in making public what is essentially private ..."

To trap what is essentially ephemeral, to capture theoretically forever what should be only available for the actual onlooker for that actual moment, seems to make the camera (like the Alices themselves in that they also freeze the life of Alice Liddell) a method of "leaving off growing" Humpty-Dumpty style: "With proper assistance, you might have left off at seven". Was Carroll's magical camera a way of offering such "proper assistance"? Certainly if Lucie-Smith is accurate in the distinctions he draws between the roots from which photography and painting grow, then this does go some way to explaining why Carroll's other art - that of drawing - was so markedly less successful than his photography. For though he often flourished his pen as readily to draw as to write (and he goes from one to the other with ease in quite a number of his letters to children, for example) most of his drawings of his child-friends were no more than inferior substitutes for his photography when, in later years (and for no known reason) he gave up that art. His Diary entries again speak for themselves:* (the first

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*The following Diary entries differ substantially from those in the published version edited by R. L. Green, who has carefully (and without notice in the text) expurgated anything that is either of a sexual nature or otherwise morally dubious, presumably in his, or in Carroll's family's opinion in 1953.

two refer to photographic sessions, the others to drawing):

17.7.1879: "As previously planned, Miss E. G. Thomson [herself an artist and illustrator of Carroll's Three Sunsets and other Poems, (1898)] arrived from London about 11, bringing little Ada Smith cet. 11, who is one of Sir F. Leighton's models - I did an ordinary portrait of her, and 6 'studies' [i.e. in the nude] in arranging which Miss Thomson was of great use. She has very plain features, but is well formed. They left at 5.25."

18.7.1879: "Mrs. Henderson brought Annie and Frances - I had warned Mrs. H. that I thought the children so nervous I would not even ask for "bare feet" and was agreeably surprised to find that they were ready for any amount of undress and seemed delighted at being allowed to run about naked. It was a great privilege to have such a model as Annie to take: a very pretty face, and a good figure: she was worth any number of my model of yesterday ..."

2.7.1885: "A new experience in Art. Little Lilian Henderson (age 5½) was brought down by Annie and Frances for me to try some sketches of her, naked, up in my studio. She has a charming little figure, and was a very patient sitter. I made four studies of her. The only previous occasion when I have had a naked child to draw from was a hasty attempt (which quite failed) at Beatrice Hatch (I think) wh[ich] w[oul]d have been in [18]72. To draw the figure from life seems to give one quite new powers ..."

28.1.1888: "To town for the day. Went to Mrs. Shute's studio in Chelsea, as she had arranged with Ada Frost (a model, aged 14 ...) that I might come and draw her too. It was quite a new experience - the only two studies of naked children I have ever had opportunities for having been each at about 5 years old. Ada has sat as a model ever since she was 5, and it was very comfortable to see how entirely a matter of business it was to her, and also what a quiet dignified manner she had. I think a spectator would have to be really in search of evil thought to have any other feeling about her than simply a sense of beauty, as in looking at a statue. She has a fairly pretty face, and a quite lovely figure, and kept almost perfectly still for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time. In the rest periods, she put on a dressing-gown and sat by the fire while I showed, to her and Mrs. Shute, some photographs I had with me. She seemed to me a good and modest girl, with every prospect of growing up a pure and good woman, in spite of the peculiar surroundings of her profession ... Dies creta notandus!"

14.10.1893: "To town by the 8.30. Reached the Bells abt 10½. Miss E. G. Thomson arrived soon afterwards, and, till past 12, she made, and I tried to make, sketches of Iris and Cynthia, who were very willing and very patient models, with lovely figures, and yet more lovely innocence. It purifies one even to see such purity. Then I made two hasty calls, on Miss Rossetti and Loui Dingley, with Iris as my companion ..."

This interest in little girls - and especially in little nude girls - has and had often got Carroll in trouble with their mothers, his admirers and his critics. Fundamentally this controversy has concerned itself with the question of Carroll's "real motive" (whatever that is) - whether he was a "nympholept"* or merely like other similar Victorians (the diarist Reverend Kilvert comes to mind) in his adoration of

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*The nympholept has been celebrated most sustainedly in Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita and it is largely a question of emphasis that determines the final diagnosis in Carroll's case for those who feel impelled to arrive at one. Here, for the record, is Nabokov's definition; the most sympathetic and illuminating "explanation" of the phenomenon:

> "... Now I wish to introduce the following idea. Between the age limits of nine and fourteen there occur maidens who, to certain bewitched travellers, twice or many times older than they, reveal their true nature which is not human, but nymphic (that is demoniac); and these chosen creatures I propose to designate as "nymphets" ... It will be remarked that I substitute time terms for spatial ones. In fact, I would have the reader see 'nine' and 'fourteen' as the boundaries - the mirrory beaches and rosy rocks - of an enchanted island haunted by those nymphets of mine and surrounded by a vast misty sea. Between those age limits, are all girl-children nymphets? Of course not. Otherwise, we who are in the know, we lone voyagers, we nympholepts, would have long gone insane. Neither are good looks any criterion; and vulgarity, or at least what a given community terms so, does not necessarily impair certain mysterious characteristics, the fey grace, the elusive, shifty, soul-shattering, insidious charm that separates the nymphet from such coevals of hers as are incomparably more dependent on the spatial world of synchronous phenomena than on that intangible island of entranced time where Lolita plays with her likes ... You have to be an artist and a madman, a creature of infinite melancholy, with a bubble of hot poison in your loins and a supervoluptuous flame permanently aglow in your subtle spine ... in order to discern at once, by ineffable signs - the slightly feline outline of a cheekbone, the slenderness of a downy limb, and other indices which despair and shame and tears of tenderness forbid me to tabulate - the little deadly demon among the wholesome children; she stands unrecognised by them and unconscious herself of her fantastic power ..."
>
> (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1959, pp. 18 - 19)

Coincidentally (or is it?) one of Nabokov's first publications was his translation of Alice in Wonderland into Russian.

innocence in childhood, or both. There is, of course, no real single conclusion that can or should be drawn from the facts and in any case such a conclusion would have little value. Suffice it to say, that for him the nude little girl-child was as good a symbol of purity for a man who was always over-dressed (in black), tall, stooping, stammering and shy, and always elderly (as he described himself in middle-age) as he and his age could have possibly found. It is certainly this emblematic quality that he at any rate seems to have treasured whilst drawing and taking photographs of such subjects ("It purifies one even to see such purity"). In any case, whether nudity per se, or what he took the nudity to mean - the image or the symbol - can ever really be separated in this way, Carroll was certainly no more than a chaste theorist, though he was also aware that he was not above criticism. Harry Furniss, who illustrated the Sylvie and Bruno volumes, prints in his Confessions of a Caricaturist (1902) two letters to him from Carroll that make this quite clear:

> "... As to the dresses of these children in their fairy state (we shall sometimes have them mixing in Society, and supposed to be real children; and for that they must, I suppose, be dressed as in ordinary life, but eccentrically, so as to make a little distinction). I wish I dared dispense with all costume; naked children are so perfectly pure and lovely, but Mrs. Grundy would be furious - it would never do. The question is, how little dress will content her? Bare legs and feet we must have, at any rate ..."
>
> "... As to your Sylvie I am charmed with your idea of dressing her in white; it exactly fits my own idea of her; I want her to be a sort of embodiment of Purity. So I think

that, in Society, she should be wholly in white - white frock ('clinging' certainly; I hate crinoline fashion): also I think we might venture on making her fairy dress transparent. Don't you think we might face Mrs. Grundy to that extent? ...'"

(Op. cit., I. 106)

Mrs. Grundy's displeasure notwithstanding, Carroll's three arts,, writing, photography and drawing, had essentially one object - the celebration of what was for him, and for many other Victorians, the ideal human state; the child.

(i) D. G. Rossetti

So far this chapter has dealt mainly with the biographical facts of Carroll's enthusiastic engagement with the visual arts, and besides his admiration of Paton's and Doyle's painting little has been said about the effect of this on his great achievement, Alice and her Wonderland. Moreover by far the most significant effect of this enthusiasm was, in its way, quite fundamental since it concerned the image and status of Alice herself. It came from the acquaintance-ship that Carroll had with D. G. Rossetti.

It has been recognised for some time now that Rossetti was virtually obsessed by a particular image (see illustrations 14 - 18) - "it seems incontrovertible that he painted with variations only one basic type of female face"* and this coming from a kind of Spenserian belief that "soule is forme and doth the bodie make". Certainly J. D. Hunt in The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination argues this case:

> "... Pre-Raphaelite ideal beauty has often been described as 'soulful'. But the gibe contains an important truth: for Rossetti, a beautiful woman was an image of his soul. This ideal beauty dominates his poems and paintings because much of his work, introspective at its best, seeks in her features an adequate mode of articulation ..."
>
> (pp. 177 - 178)

As early as 1856 his sister Christina Rossetti had arrived at a similar conclusion in her poem "In an Artist's Studio":

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*G. H. Fleming; That Ne'er Shall Meet Again; p. 260.

Illustrations 14-19
(left to right, top to bottom.)

14 Dante Gabriel Rossetti; "Joan of Arc", Oil,1863, 28½ x 26 (Mrs. C. B. Scully, U.S.A.)

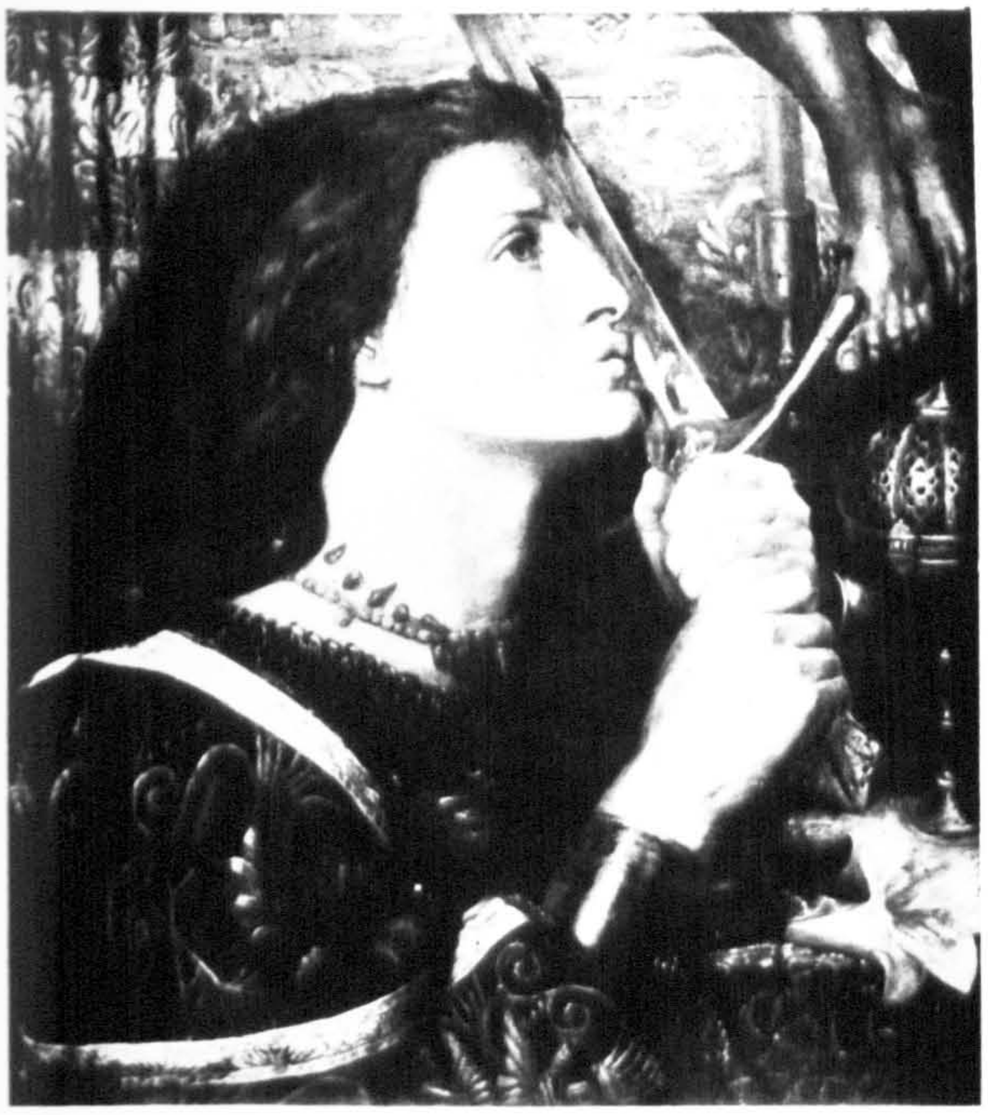
15 Dante Gabriel Rossetti; "Lady Lilith", Oil, 1868 (a version of the painting in the Bancroft Collection, Wilmington Society of Fine Arts, Delaware, U.S.A.).

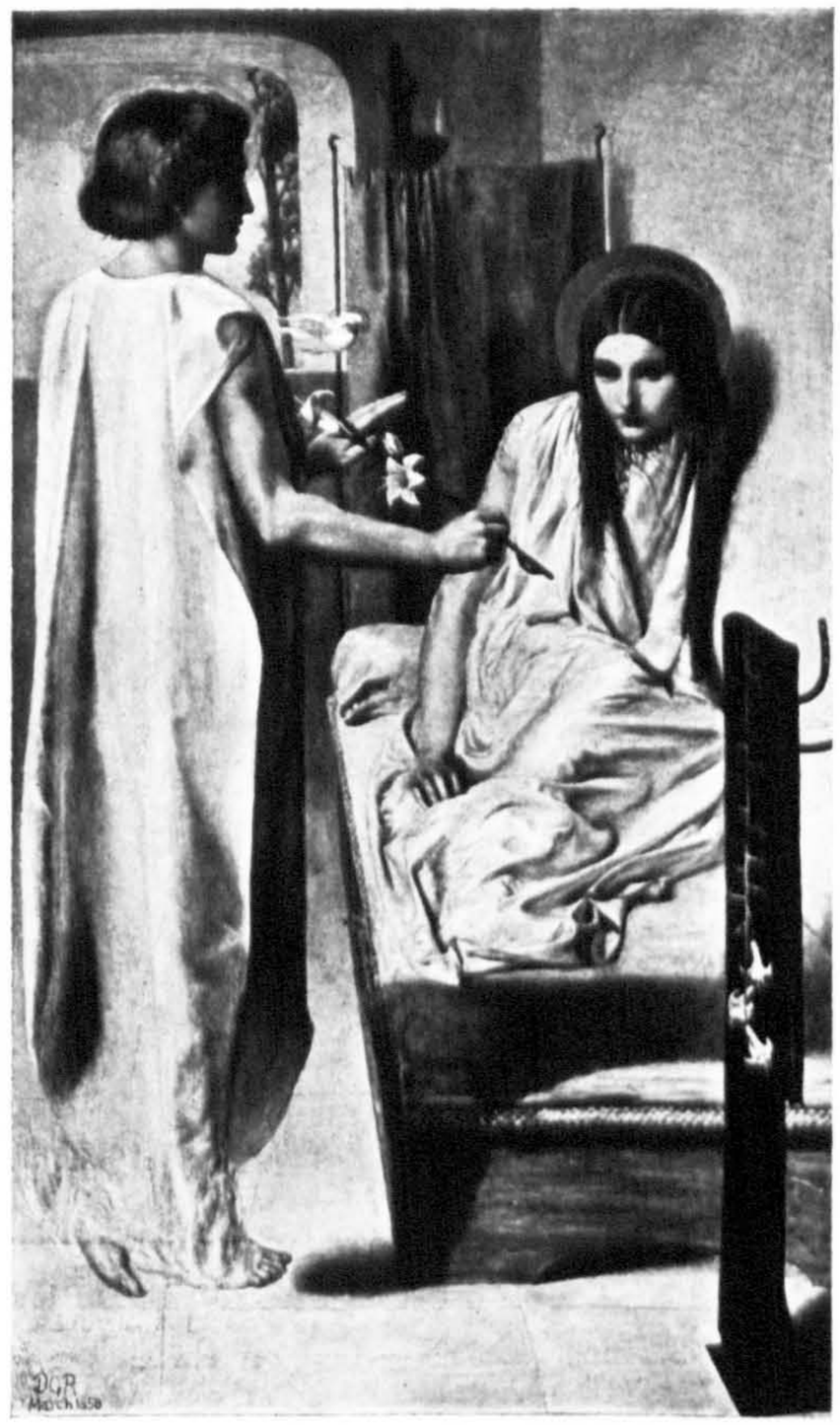
16 Dante Gabriel Rossetti; "Fair Rosamund", Oil, 20½ x 16½, 1861, (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff).

17 Dante Gabriel Rossetti; "Ecce Ancilla Domini!" oil, 28⅝ x 16½, 1850 (Tate Gallery, London).

18 Dante Gabriel Rossetti; "Bocca Baciata", Oil, 13¼ x 12, 1859, (Mrs S. M. Zarcher).

19 Tenniel; Alice infringes Rule Forty-Two: "All persons more than a mile high to leave the court" (AAIW Ch. XII).




DGR
March 1958

One face looks out from all his canvases,
One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans:
We found her hidden just behind those screens,
That mirror gave back all her loveliness.
A queen in opal or in ruby dress,
A nameless girl in freshest summer-greens,
A saint, an angel - every canvas means
The same one meaning, neither more nor less.
He feeds upon her face by day and night,
And she with true kind eyes looks back on him,
Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:
Not wan with waiting, not with sorrow dim;
Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright;
Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.

And we find that Carroll, at certain frankly nostalgic moments, as, for example, here in the terminal poem to Through the Looking-Glass, confessed to the same kind of obsession with an image and a type:

"Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies
Never seen by waking eyes ..."

Perhaps one of the most productive ways in which to understand such a phenomenon is to attempt an explanation from a basic Jungian viewpoint. For, in even the simplest psychoanalytical terms such obsessions with an image of a person or personality that no one living individual actually has (the MS drawings of Alice by Carroll in Alice's Adventures look nothing like Alice Liddell) is, for the Jungian school at least, most usually categorised as the appearance of the "anima"; the eternal feminine, the ideal woman, or (most significantly for Carroll) the "woman of one's dreams". Any actual discrepancy between the real and ideal would not be noticed by the dreamer or obsessed person,

so that Alice is seen as an angel instead of a child who doubtless had the real imperfections that all children must have. Significantly Rossetti, according to Holman Hunt, similarly converted the truth about his model to his own needs:

> "Rossetti's tendency ... in sketching a face was to convert the features of his sitter to his favourite ideal type, and if he finished on these lines, the drawing was extremely charming, but you had to make-believe a good deal to see the likeness, while if the sitter's features would not lend themselves to the pre-ordained form, he, when time allowed, went through a stage of reluctant twisting of lines and quantities to make the drawing satisfactory ..."
>
> (Holman Hunt, Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, I, 341)

Jungians trace the anima to the great female figures in history, literature, mythology and the Bible; to Helen of Troy, Venus, Lilith, Beatrice, Joan of Arc, Ophelia, the Virgin Mary (all these incidentally being subjects of Rossetti paintings, see illustrations 14, 15 and 17 for example) and so on - each of them being a personification, or deification, or both, of an exclusively feminine quality as seen by the men who created them. As such they are, so the Jungian theory goes, expressions of the suppressed feminine part of the male voiced in these myths and stories and they often occur in dreams and day dreams in order to maintain a personal psychological equilibrium. Certainly one might suppose that some process of this kind was observed by the acute Christina Rossetti in her brother, and is what she meant by the lines: "A saint an angel - every canvas means / The same one meaning, neither more nor less / He

feeds upon her face by day and night / And she ... looks back on him / ... Not as she is, but as she fills his dream".

According to Jung moreover, the anima (along with much else in our dreams) represents a quality in ourselves; we do not necessarily create the anima image because we are threatened by or attracted to the female; we sometimes dream of the female in order to explain the feminity we feel. Thus we dream, if male, of the feminine qualities which exert an influence upon our personal lives and behaviour and are in everyday life repressed and made subordinate to the overt rôle and position. If female, then the animus is a feature of our dreams, and for similar reasons.* Such theories can be pushed further; for example, M. L. von Franz in "The Process of Individuation" (in Man and His Symbols ed. Jung, op. cit.) categorically states that, in dreams:

> "The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche, such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, and - last but not least - his relation to the unconscious. It is no mere chance that in olden times priestesses (like the Greek Sibyl) were used to fathom the divine will and to make the connection with the gods ..."
>
> (p. 177)

What light does this kind of theory throw on Rossetti and, more importantly here, on Carroll? Certainly Rossetti spent much of his time painting portraits of the anima in many obvious manifestations that mostly looked alike

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*See J. A. Hadfield, Dreams and Nightmares, p. 60 ff.

(although none the less impressive for that). Certainly also it would seem that Carroll's friendship with those countless little girls did allow legitimate expression of an often female tenderness on his part towards them, and a chance to escape into the world of (female) childhood unreason from his severely guarded male world of strict logical sense. But can there truly be said to be any connection between Rossetti and Carroll in this respect - and are their images of the ideal feminine soul related?

Carroll was in Rossetti's studio, it will be remembered, in 1863. The relevant Diary entries are as follows:

6.10.1863: "Went over to Mr. Rossetti's, and began unpacking the camera, etc. ... [After taking portrait photographs of the Rossetti family] I looked through a huge volume of drawings some of which I am to photograph - a great treat, as I had never seen such exquisite drawings before. I dined with Mr. Rossetti, and spent some of the evening there ... A memorable day."

7.10.1863: "Spent the day at Mr. Rossetti's photographing ..."

8.10.1863: "Was at work most of the day photographing drawings of Mr. Rossetti's ..."

Oswald Doughty and John Robert Wahl include two letters in their edition of The Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (Oxford, 4 vols. 1965) that are relevant here. The first, a letter to Jane Morris (William Morris' wife) indicates that she is expected to appear before Carroll's camera (5th July 1863, "My dear Janey, The photographer [Dodgson]* is coming at 11 on Wednesday. So I'll expect you as early

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*"Dodgson" is Doughty and Wahl's identification; as Carroll does not refer to this meeting they are either mistaken or it was called off. There are no extant photographs by Carroll of Janey Morris.

as you can manage ..." II, 490). The second letter, to his mother, refers to the encounter that Carroll records:

16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.
30th September 1863.

"My dear Mamma,

> The photographer (Revd. W [sic] Dodgson) is coming here on Wednesday to do the lot of us, - this day week. Will you stay dinner that day and I will ask the Munros - Mr. and wife - who are the means of bringing Mr. D. I suppose Wm. will be back then will he not? If not we must put it off ..."

(cit. ed. cit. II, 495)

Some of the photographs that Carroll took evidently came out well for he received the following letter shortly afterwards from Christina Rossetti:

"My dear Mr. Dodgson,

> We are not at all uneasy about the Clergy Trading Act, but sincerely obliged for your kind trouble taking agency. I hope my list will prove intelligible. We want, please:- [here follows a list of 50 photographs, mostly of the family. The last five however are:] from my brother's sketches
> His wife standing. (numbered 91) .... 3 [copies]
> A lady at work. (numbered 73) .... 2 [copies] ..."

(letter quoted by Gernsheim, Lewis Carroll, Photographer, p. 55)

It is difficult to know just which sketches of Rossetti's Carroll did photograph from Christina's description of the two that she requests here, and presumably in any case Carroll took many more than those, since on the 8th of October

he was "at work most of the day photographing drawings of Mr. Rossetti's."* The Gernsheim Collection of Lewis Carroll's photograph albums at the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas does have one photograph that is identified by Carroll (in his hand is the index of the album) as being of a drawing by Rossetti (see illustration 20) and there is also a print of a Rossetti drawing in another album and we shall return to consider their significance later.

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*Doughty and Wahl also print a letter that Rossetti sent to Carroll, three years later, referring to payment for photographic services rendered, which probably also refers to the same meeting. The letter is also interesting in that it gives Rossetti's reaction to Alice and so is included here in full:

16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea
23rd January, 1866.

My dear Sir,

Things go in and out of my head perpetually, which is the reason (not at all the excuse) for this reaching you thus late, with many thanks. Pray excuse my muddleheadedness. I cannot remember the exact debt, but I believe the enclosed covers it and as I hope you will pay me another visit one day when in London, we can then consider the difference, if any.

May I suggest that you should bully your photographic printer within an inch of his life? The last prints he sent were all full of white specks (the result doubtless of his carelessness in handling the plates) which entirely destroy and render them useless, as life is not long enough for the filling up process.

I saw Alice in Wonderland at my sister's, and was glad to find myself still childish enough to enjoy looking through it very much. The wonderful ballad of Father William and Alice's perverted snatches of school poetry are among the funniest things I have seen for a long while. Let me suggest that you should get (if you have not already seen it) No. 11 of the Argosy (for January) which contains a capital fairy tale by my Sister which I am sure would please you.

Yours sincerely,

D. G. Rossetti

(cit. ed. cit. II, 588 - 9)

Illustration 20

Photograph by Carroll of a drawing by D. G. Rossetti in Album III (picture 7) of the Gernsheim Collection of Carroll's photograph albums at the Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin, U.S.A. The original drawing is 2¼ x 3¼ inches and is identified as being Rossetti's in Carroll's own hand in the index of the album.

But with this imprecision about which particular sketches (apart from these) Carroll did photograph, it may be more illuminating to look at the general effect of his contact with Rossetti at this time, and then look for a possible influence from particular paintings.

We find, in this context, as a major piece of circumstantial evidence, the following details about the composition and execution of the MS Alice's Adventures Underground entered in Carroll's hand on a blank page in the ninth volume of the Diaries:

> "It was first told July 4 (F.) 1862.
> Headings written out (on my way to London) July 5, 1862.
> MS copy begun Nov. 13 (Th.) 1862.
> Text (of Alice's Adventures Underground) finished before Feb. 10, 1863.
> Pictures in MS finished Sept. 13 (Tu.) 1864.
> MS finally sent to Alice, Nov. 26, 1864."

Effectively this means that Carroll had been in Rossetti's studio and photographed some of his work before he had illustrated (though after he had written) the embryonic Alice in Wonderland - and this fact perhaps explains why Alice in Carroll's MS looks absolutely nothing like Alice Liddell. How else can we account for the fact that Alice in the MS has long, waved and luxurious hair, large sad eyes and a pursed melancholic mouth (see illustration 22) when, in fact, Alice Liddell had short straight hair and a rather impish face? Carroll's image is, it seems, unmistakeably less like Alice Liddell and more like Rossetti's image of, for example, "Helen of Troy" (a painting which was still in his studio in 1863) (see illustration 21) or, even more

Illustrations 21 - 22

21 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Helen of Troy", Oil, 12¼ x 10½, 1863 (Kunsthalle, Hamburg).

22 Lewis Carroll's own illustration for Alice's Adventures Underground of Alice in White Rabbit's house.

certainly like the drawing of Rossetti's, a print of which he owned (see illustration 23) - i.e. the visualisation of the anima. The Gernsheim Collection photograph and print also might have been taken/collected by Carroll because they also corresponded with both his and Rossetti's ideas about the perfect image of the female soul.

This resemblance between images may be more than merely coincidental in another important way if the face of Alice/Helen is considered in the light of what is known about the original model who sat for both "Helen of Troy" and the Rossetti drawing in Carroll's album - Annie Miller. For she, in a way, epitomised much of what the Pre-Raphaelites and their followers thought about (and expected from) women. As Rosalie Glynn Grylls puts it in her Portrait of Rossetti, (1964):

> "It all began with Holman Hunt who had used [Annie Miller] as a model for "The Awakened Conscience"* and then decided that she was an innocent in danger of corruption whom it was his duty to save. To this end he undertook to pay for her education and to improve her health under a good doctor ... When she had been cured and educated, she was to be rewarded with a wedding ring.
>
> The Pre-Raphaelite group were particularly addicted to this form of matrimony; there was Maddox Brown and his Emma; Stephens and Clara (whom he later taught to write in school copybooks); Frederick Shields, a later friend,

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*Hunt later (1856 - 7) retouched the face and altered its expression because the buyer of the picture found it too painful. Hence there is very little resemblance between Rossetti's "Helen of Troy" and Hunt's painting, although originally, and significantly, they used the same model.

Illustration 23

Print of a Rossetti drawing initialled 'DGR' and dated 1860 from Carroll's photograph album "(A.) III" in the Gernsheim Collection, Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin, U.S.A. The print is titled "Miss Miller".

who was about as unsuccessful in his marriage with the sixteen-year old Matilda Booth, as the better-known "classic" cases of Watts and Ellen Terry, Ruskin and Effie Gray.

It was part of the Victorian ethos, a passion for improvement that went with faith in progress. If a woman were succoured she would be grateful and become good and devoted to the man responsible ..." (p. 70).

To say that the male desire to be Pygmalion is "part of the Victorian ethos" overstates the case (Pygmalion was, after all, an ancient Greek) but there do seem to have been a number of men who cast themselves in this rôle - particularly amongst the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Unlike, however, the good fortune of the original Pygmalion and his sculpture, far from beautifully awakening as it did in Hunt's picture, Annie's conscience positively deteriorated and she never collected her wedding-ring reward from him. For during the years he left her so that she might become educated whilst he travelled to Palestine in order to paint "The Scapegoat", she used her growingly eloquent charms to help her to the enjoyment of a gay social life. As a consequence, she almost certainly had an affair with Rossetti, and thereby caused the rift between him and Hunt, and sat as a model (an infamous profession) to more artists than Hunt stipulated she could. Eventually she became Lord Ranelagh's mistress and was consequently loathed and scorned by Hunt on his return. Curiously enough, despite the soap opera, Annie's name is actually less well known than the other Pre-Raphaelite models (Lizzie Siddal, Effie Ruskin/Millais, Jane Burden/Morris and so on) yet as Violet Hunt reports:

"Grant Allen saw "the makings of a novel in the whole affair" but never wrote it. Annie Miller is the one Pre-Raphaelite heroine who has, perhaps out of consideration for those two great men [Rossetti and Hunt] been 'kept dark' ... though in the 60s and 70s her name was on every tongue."

(The Wife of Rossetti; Her Life and Death, 1932)

It seems somehow inadmissible that Carroll's innocent heroine should look so like such a notorious woman, yet as we have seen it seems possible nevertheless to conclude that there are certain factors that they have in common. For though physically Annie meant more to Hunt and Rossetti than Alice meant to Carroll, it was above all the ideal and almost spiritual light in which both were viewed (so that Annie could hardly help cast a shadow) that makes their similar visual identity seem after/appropriate. all

For they were both virtually seen as an intellectualised visualisation of an emotional and psychological need. To men who were captivated by an image it may also have been important for them both to have been intellectually inferior to their admirers (as were Effie Gray, Ellen Terry, Emma Brown, Clara Shields, and Lizzie Siddal, as Rosalie Grylls has noted). For this idealisation, moreover, the image rather than the actual person had also to be submissive and as diametrically opposite in every possible way to the dreamer. The consequent gap between the loved image and the "lover" could then become an occasion for melancholy joy - at least as far as Carroll was concerned (who was wiser than his fellow idealists and never went through a

poor marriage as they usually did in chasing their dreams), as he makes clear in the introductory poem to Through the Looking Glass:

"CHILD of the pure unclouded brow
And dreaming eyes of wonder!
Though time be fleet, and I and thou
Are half a life asunder
Thy loving smile will surely hail
The love gift of a fairy tale."

To have the love object always beyond grasp, effectively meant that it became more a symbol than a reality. It also meant that the idealist could be constantly gratified by the righteousness borne of impeccable abstention mixed with chaste desire. It is doubtless irrelevant (and it would be tasteless to dwell on it) to note that Carroll's Diaries are full of self-chastising prayers* and it is probably our corruptness that draws harmful conclusions from, for example, his plea to the "Gracious Lord [to] send thy Holy Spirit to dwell in this sinful heart - to purify this corrupt affection"/ but we are bound to note that the date when this was written, 5th June 1866, was when the first part of Carroll's literary homage to Alice had just been published, and Through the Looking-Glass was in the process of being created. To assume that a kind of love did not inform Carroll's creation at this time is as fallacious - and for very similar reasons - as to suppose that Rossetti's soulful women had nothing to do with his

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*That is in the original MS Diaries; Green has edited them out of his version.

/c.f. Florence Nightingale's Diary (quoted by Pearsall, The Worm in the Bud, pp. 511 - 512) and Ruskin's Diaries (Ibid., p. 533 ff).

idealised sexual tastes as well as corresponding to his vision of the spiritual female. (Annie Miller was the perfect example of this duality; she looked like an angel but was, it seems, extremely earthy). Just as Carroll must have detected the ambiguity of Rossetti's pictures where both divine and human passions are interlocked, then his contact with them might be said to have stirred his human love for Alice, or rather what she stood for, and stimulated his idealism to find an adequate expression for it. Their solution, in selecting the female face that epitomised their preferred and adored image of heavenly and human beauty, was identical or nearly so; "Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright; / Not as she is, but as she fills his dream".

(ii) Arthur Hughes

Besides Rossetti there was also another artist in particular whom Carroll knew, admired and was probably influenced by; this was Arthur Hughes whose influence was very similar to Rossetti's in determining the way in which Alice is visualised. But since Hughes was also the illustrator for the work of both George MacDonald and Christina Rossetti, as well as a member of the Pre-Raphaelite* group who painted murals in the Oxford Union Building, he can be seen with some justice as being doubly important as he was a link between many of those who have some relevance to Carroll and his creativity.

Carroll first met Hughes on July 21st 1863 through the introduction of Alexander Munro, the sculptor. Carroll's interest in Hughes and his work had however been aroused a year earlier when he saw some illustrations that had been done for George MacDonald:

> 9.7.1862: "Went to Tudor lodge where I met Mr. MacDonald coming out. I walked a mile or so with him, on his way to a publisher with the MS of his fairy tale "The Light Princess" in which he showed me some exquisite drawings by Hughes ..."

These drawings by Hughes - and he illustrated a large number of other books by MacDonald including Dealings with the Fairies, At the Back of the North Wind, Ranald Bannerman's Boyhood, Phantastes and The Princess and the Goblin as well

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*Hughes also was a member of Morris' "Firm", though it seems in name only.

as The Light Princess - are at best described as uneven in quality. This is largely because they are often anatomically strange despite often being imaginatively composed (see illustrations 24 - 26). Percy Muir in his Victorian Illustrated Books (1971) observes of these drawings that "there can be no doubt that ... there was a very close and very special kind of sympathy between MacDonald and Hughes, especially in the fairy tales" (p. 144), and cites MacDonald's son Greville's, introduction to the 1905 edition of Phantastes who remarked:

> "I know of no other living artist who is capable of portraying the spirit of Phantastes; and every reader of this edition will, I believe, feel that the illustrations are a part of the romance, and will gain through them some perception of the brotherhood between George MacDonald and Arthur Hughes ..."

In the same vein Forrest Reid in his standard Illustrators of the Sixties (1928) cites the occasional naïvety on Hughes' part as the laudable result of his entering into the childlike imagination celebrated by MacDonald's stories - a subtlety doubted by Muir, but which is certainly the very effect of Carroll's own illustrations to Alice's Adventures Underground. In these, for example, Derek Hudson in his biography of Carroll goes as far as discerning a "Blake-like intensity". Notwithstanding the hyperbole, Carroll's drawings do have an immediacy that Tenniel's

Illustrations 24 - 28

(left to right, top to bottom)

24 Arthur Hughes; illustration for George MacDonald's At the Back of the North Wind (1871) Ch. XXVI.

25 Arthur Hughes; "Fancy" a drawing which first appeared in Good Words in 1870.

26 Arthur Hughes; illustration for George MacDonald's At the Back of the North Wind (1871) Ch. VI

27 Arthur Hughes; "April Love", Oil, 35" x 19½" (1855 - 6), Tate Gallery, London.

28 Arthur Hughes; "The Long Engagement", Oil, 41½" x 20½" (1859), Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery.

controlled minor masterpieces do not have;* undoubtedly also they look at times distinctly Hughesian in their energies.

Most significant of all, however, in this last respect, is the fact that the only important original painting that Carroll actually owned was one by Hughes called "The Lady with the Lilacs"[/] (see illustration 29). This, as the relevant Diary entries make clear, was painted by Hughes in 1863 and bought by Carroll in the same year:

8.10.1863: "Was at ... Mr. Rossetti's ... Mr. Munro and Mr. Arthur Hughes came in afterwards, and Mr. Hughes told me that the picture I bought of his is finished, and we arranged that he should bring it (as well as his children to be photographed) to the MacDonalds' on Monday ..."

12.10.1863: "Mr. Hughes came over to be photographed with his children, and brought the picture I bought of him some time ago - "The Lady with the Lilacs". Got a splendid picture of him with Agnes [his daughter]"

In the famous photograph taken by Carroll of his own study (it is reproduced in Collingwood's Life and Letters on p. 134 and elsewhere) this painting can be seen as being

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*Tenniel's Alice was in fact modelled on a little girl whom Carroll did not even know - a Miss Mary Hilton Badcock. Nevertheless he doubtless approved of Tenniel's drawings despite the fact that they do not convey the beauty that he saw in his version of Alice.

[/]Owned now by the Art Gallery of Toronto; oil on wood; 44.5 by 22.5 cm. and called by them "Girl with Lilacs". Collingwood notes that: "Poetry, music, the Drama, all delighted [Carroll] but pictures more than all put together. I remember his once showing me "The Lady with the Lilacs" which Arthur Hughes had painted for him, and how he dwelt with intense pleasure on the exquisite contrasts of colour which it contained - the gold hair of a girl standing out against the purple of lilac blossom." (LLLC, p. 362).

Illustrations 29 - 30

29 Arthur Hughes; "Girl with Lilacs", Oil, 44.5 cm x 22.5 cm., 1863 (Art Gallery of Toronto.) Painted for and once owned by Lewis Carroll.

30 Lewis Carroll's own illustration for Alice's Adventures Underground of Alice.

against the ceiling, and she stooped to
her neck from being broken, and
put down the bottle, saying to herself
quite
I hope
grow a
I wish
drunk
Ala
was to
she w
growin
growing
soon he
kneel

another minute there was not room e
this, and she tried the effect of
down, with one elbow against the

on the wall over the fireplace. Effectively this means that Hughes' painting (just like Rossetti's drawings etc.) was freshly in Carroll's mind as he illustrated the MS of Alice's Adventures Underground for Alice Liddell. It does not, therefore, seem coincidental that there are certain obvious similarities between Alice and Hughes' Lady with her lilacs in pose, dress and especially in facial characteristics (see illustrations 29 and 30).

But Carroll was not merely following Hughes under the influence of this one picture alone (good though it is*). Rather, Carroll was sympathetic to the point of imitation because Hughes' paintings were mostly variations on a single constant theme: the celebration of feminine innocence and fragility, and this had an obvious and direct appeal to Carroll. In such paintings as, for example, "Ophelia" (1852 - painted when Hughes was 19); "The Long Engagement" (1859); "Madeleine" (n.d. c. 1860); "Mariana with Lute" (c. 1855); "Silver and Gold" (c. 1860); "Girl with Swans" (c. 1870); "Girl with Calf" (c. 1870) and "The Dangerous Path" (c. 1870) amongst many others, Hughes' preoccupation is with the essential fragile virginity of the central female character. It is this sense of fragility that,

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*Hughes' painting is of course in itself a traditional treatment of a portrait of a young woman - see, for example, Titian's "Young Woman at her Toilet" (Louvre, 1512 - 1515). But whereas Hughes may have known of this tradition, Carroll was undoubtedly following Hughes not Titian.

despite obvious influence from his master Rossetti*, is the greatest distinction between their work. For Rossetti's women are monumental and eternal; Hughes' are perfect, one feels, just for the moments in which they posed for him to paint them. This sense of imminent decay because of the inherent transience of the beautiful, is conveyed by Hughes at his best - as in "The Long Engagement" (see illustration 28) and "April Love" (see illustration 27) for example - partly by the claustrophobia of his overfilled canvases and partly by the often overpowering colours. These latter, usually vivid greens and violet, serve to emphasise the subtlety of the colouring of the faces of the people in the picture. Emblematically therefore the delicate portraits of the young women are often threatened, like virginity itself, by an environment that can readily engulf and destroy them.

It does not seem coincidental that Ruskin with his penchant for virgin beauty fixed on "April Love" (illustration 27) in his Academy Notes for 1856, saying of it that it was:

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*"Mariana with Lute" for example, is described by Leslie Cowan in the notes to his Catalogue of the National Museum of Wales exhibition of Hughes' paintings (October 1971) as being "so close to Rossetti's style that it can only be explained by his having painted it beside Rossetti and having shared the services of one of his models. It is known that in 1855 Hughes was painting in Rossetti's studio ..." One of the models used by Hughes was, incidentally, Annie Miller. There is also an obvious similarity between Rossetti's 'anima' figure and that of Hughes (see illustrations 14 - 18 and 24, 26 - 29).

"exquisite in every way; lovely in colour, most subtle in the quivering expression of the lips, and sweetness of the tender face, shaken, like a leaf by winds upon its dew, and hesitating back to peace".

Such quivering at the precise moment of change from innocence to commitment, from childhood to adulthood, is seen as the first step to decay, which once taken is irreversable. This moment is the subject of one of Millais most successful paintings "Autumn Leaves" (1856) which Carroll admired as well* (and in which even the often-sceptical Timothy Hilton detects a "haunting quality and a genuine concern with grief" (The Pre-Raphaelites, p. 78)). This is then surely also the quality that informs the saddest passage in Through the Looking-Glass:

"'Oh, please! There are some scented rushes!' Alice cried in a sudden transport of delight. 'There really are - and such beauties! ... may we wait and pick some?' Alice pleaded.

... So the boat was left to drift down the stream as it would, till it glided gently in among the waving rushes. And then the little sleeves were carefully rolled up, and the little arms were plunged in elbow-deep, to get hold of the rushes a good long way down before breaking them off.

'I only hope the boat won't tipple over!' she said to herself. 'Oh, what a lovely one! Only I couldn't quite reach it.' And it certainly did seem a little provoking ('almost as if it happened on purpose', she thought) that, though she managed to pick plenty of beautiful rushes as the boat glided by, there was always a more lovely one that she couldn't reach.

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*Diary entry 19.4.1881: "Went with Sampson to the "Millais Exhibition" [seventeen pictures by Millais exhibited in the rooms of the Fine Art Society]. I was very glad to see "Autumn Leaves" once more, and several other old favourites ..."

'The prettiest are always further!' she said at last, with a sigh at the obstinacy of the rushes in growing so far off, as, with flushed cheeks and dripping hair and hands, she scrambled back into her place, and began to arrange her new-found treasures.

What mattered it to her just then that the rushes had begun to fade, and to lose all their scent and beauty, from the very moment that she picked them? Even real scented rushes, you know, last only a very little while - and these, being dream-rushes, melted away almost like snow, as they lay in heaps at her feet - but Alice hardly noticed this, there were so many other curious things to think about ..."

(TTLG, pp. 256 - 7)

Though this passage is averted from the full implication of its gloomy conclusion, it remains the most explicit expression in the whole of Carroll's work of what was essentially both a dread of death and a delight in the contemplation of it, which is an attitude found not only in his writing but also in much else Victorian.* Most importantly it was Hughes' speciality.

More than simply being about the transience of life such moments in Carroll's Alices, and many of the paintings that he saw and admired, are also vitally concerned with the proposition that growing up is itself a kind of death, and so in one sense they celebrate the death of the chrysalis at the moment of the birth of the butterfly. This certainly seems to be the dominant theme not only behind many of

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*C.f. Watt's "Divine Song" called The Danger of Delay, which in its high Victorian edition (c. 1850) is illustrated with a vignette of a tombstone inscribed "Annie, Aged 4 years". It opens with the stanza:

"Why should I say, "Tis yet too soon
To seek for heaven or think of death?"
A flower may fade before 'tis noon,
And I this day may lose my breath ..."

Hughes' best paintings but one which also informs such paintings of Rossetti's as "Ecce Ancilla Domini" (1849 - 1850, see illustration 17), "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" (1848 - 1849) and even his simultaneous homage to Dante and tribute to his dead wife Elizabeth Siddal; "Beata Beatrix" (1863 - 1865) which also looks beyond that death towards reincarnation. This theme can also be traced, most explicitly in Millais' "Christ in the House of His Parents" where the blood and pain of the future crucifixion is already rehearsed in childhood - which is itself already saddened by the inevitable event. Millais manages to evoke this even more in his painting "Autumn Leaves" which brilliantly conveys the intuitively felt sadness that overshadows the four girls who sweep up autumn's debris. The unconsciousness, or at least partial awareness only, of the children in these pictures is the origin of their poignance. With a similar degree of sadness Carroll recognised in his heroine just such a death of childhood, foreshadowing the difficulties of impending adulthood, as, for example, when she destroys her belief in the world behind the looking-glass:

> "'I can't stand this any longer!' Alice cried as she jumped up and seized the table-cloth with both hands: one good pull, and plates, dishes, guests, and candles came crashing down together in a heap on the floor.
>
> 'And as for <u>you</u>,' she went on, turning fiercely on the Red Queen, whom she considered as the cause of all the mischief - but the Queen was no longer at her side - she had suddenly dwindled to the size of a little doll [...]
>
> '... As for <u>you</u>,' she repeated, catching hold of the little creature in the very act of jumping over a bottle which had just lighted upon the table, 'I'll shake you into a kitten, that I will!'
>
> .....

She took her off the table as she spoke, and shook her backwards and forwards with all her might.

The Red Queen made no resistance whatever; only her face grew very small, and her eyes got large and green: and still, as Alice went on shaking her, she kept growing shorter - and fatter - and softer - and rounder - and -

.....

- and it really <u>was</u> a kitten, after all."

(<u>TTLG</u>, pp. 337 - 339)

It is not so much that the world behind the glass is really so pleasant, for the frustrations of childhood are all there too, but because it cannot be reached again (just as Millais' boy Christ will no longer be ignorant of pain after the event in the painting), that this moment is one of anguish rather than of liberation. In this context it does not seem mere coincidence that Shakespeare's Ophelia, the archetypal doomed virgin-heroine, was painted by no less than three of the artists whom Carroll knew and admired. It certainly seems probable that in so doing, Hughes, Rossetti and Millais were all fired by a vision of threatened virgin beauty (literally on the brink of death in Hughes' picture) akin to Carroll's in his more intense moments of melancholia. For though these moments intrude only occasionally in the <u>Alices</u>, as in the "scented rushes" sequence, they do so repeatedly in <u>Sylvie and Bruno</u>; that is they increased naturally enough as Carroll aged and are a sad testimony to his mounting disquiet about the fact of mortality. The deaths of Ophelia, Diamond, Little Nell and Paul Dombey, or the metamorphosis of Alice from childhood

to adulthood,* are ways in which such a personal inevitability can be entertained in its most pleasing, because controlled, form and is in a sense preparatory rather than anything else:

> "... she waited for a few minutes to see if she was going to shrink any further: she felt a little nervous about this; 'for it might end, you know', said Alice to herself, 'in my going out altogether like a candle. I wonder what I should be like then?' And she tried to fancy what the flame of a candle looks like after the candle is blown out, for she could not remember ever having seen such a thing ..."
>
> (AAIW, p. 32)

What essentially is happening here is that Carroll (and the reader if he takes the point) is entertaining an otherwise difficult problem easily because it is in an abstracted symbolic form. To face such a problem in such a way is easier than facing the reality, and at the same time it gives the opportunity of 'seeing how it feels'. If the symbolic event can be faced then the reality is brought under some kind of control.

Such a mimetic purpose has, of course, always been one of art's functions, and yet it is perhaps significant to

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*It is no exaggeration to say that Carroll's attitude was that most of his child friends did virtually die as far as he was concerned when they grew up. He wrote to one, for example, the exception to the rule:

> "I always feel especially grateful to friends, who, like you, have given me a child-friendship and a woman-friendship. About nine out of ten, I think, of my child-friendships get shipwrecked at the crucial point, 'where the stream and river meet', and the child friends, once so affectionate, become uninteresting acquaintances, whom I have no wish to set eyes on again ..."
>
> (quoted LLLC pp. 368 - 9)

Actually he did maintain contact with quite a number of his his child-friends; one suspects that he lost contact with most of them because they, once adult, had no wish to set eyes on him again!

note that in a sense it reached its apotheosis with the Victorians and their so-called "narrative pictures". These pictures, which were often a vulgarisation of the Hogarthian principles of narration, did, as Raymond Lister points out (Victorian Narrative Paintings, 1966, p. 10) speak "particularly to the condition of that age [since they] provided the bourgeois with his parables; he could look comfortably at the sad moral tales told by "The Last Day in the Old Home" and feel secure ...". Alternatively, and more importantly, such a painting would tell the onlooker what it felt like to be in such a situation by its skilful emotional manipulation and either prepare him for it or warn him to keep away. That said, it can readily be seen that famous memento mori paintings such as Hughes' celebrated "Home from the Sea" (1863) where a young sailor boy lies by his mother's grave and weeps, or Landseer's "The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner" (1837) - his faithful dog - or Windus' "Too Late" (1859) - amongst many others - prepare the onlooker for his own death, evoking, and often exceeding, the licence of art in order to do so.* Such blatant instruction is both the object of Carroll's satire and often his own purpose:

> "'Crawling at your feet', said the Gnat (Alice drew her feet back in some alarm), 'you may observe a Bread-and-Butterfly. Its wings are thin slices of Bread-and-Butter, its body is a crust, and its head is a lump of sugar.'
>
> 'What does it live on?'

---

*c.f. also, for example, poems such as Christina Rossetti's Prince's Progress (1861 - 1865) and George MacDonald's Within and Without (1855).

'Weak tea with cream in it'.

A new difficulty came into Alice's head. 'Supposing it couldn't find any?' she suggested.

'Then it would die, of course'.

'But that must happen very often', Alice remarked thoughtfully.

'It always happens', said the Gnat."

(TTLG, p. 223)

It seems valid to conclude that although Carroll's comedy and delicacy of presentation here contrasts very favourably with the laboured efforts of many painters whose work was well known to him and who tried to make the same point, there is an element (which will be returned to later) of morbid delight that "it always happens". This inevitability, presented comically here by Carroll, was always a wholly serious subject for Arthur Hughes; but nevertheless it was a mutual preoccupation and the melancholic bitter-sweetness that gives Hughes' best work such power, is also a quality that was never far away in Wonderland. It seems predictable therefore that Carroll liked a Hughes' canvas of a melancholic maiden enough to buy it and proudly hang it on a wall of his study.

(iii) John Everett Millais (and others)

One final painter deserves at least a brief mention as being more than casually relevant to Carroll and his work - this is John Millais. We have already looked at "Autumn Leaves", "Christ in the House of his Parents", "Ophelia", and "Sir Isumbras at the Ford" (illustration 31) and the last painting at least has been cited as the source of Carrollian inspiration and needs to be noted. For Timothy Hilton, quoting Ruskin, says of this painting:

> "'I have not patience much to examine into the meaning of the painting', said Ruskin, and criticised it on what he took to be its technical defects, though he did speculate that it would be possible to take the painting 'as a fact or as a type', and that it might therefore be meant to convey 'noble life, tried in all war, and aged in all counsel and wisdom, finding its crowning work at last to be the bearing of the children of poverty in its arms'. Or, he continued, 'there might be a yet deeper theme, a pictorial realisation of the Christian Angel of Death'. Even if we cannot pin it down, some such symbolic message must surely have been intended, and once more the theme relies on the pathos aroused by baffled yet trusting children (those dispirited by such reflections might like to note that John Tenniel's drawing of the White Knight in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking-Glass is a caricature of Sir Isumbras)."*
>
> (The Pre-Raphaelites, p. 82)

It is, of course, the implication of the final parenthesis that most concerns us here (c.f. illustrations 31, 32 and 37).

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*Tenniel certainly was not above parodying Millais' pictures; see his cartoon "Little Victims" - a skit on Millais' "The Princes in the Tower", Punch, 28.8.1880.

For though it has long been recognised that Carroll was an accomplished literary parodyist (R. L. Green in The Lewis Carroll Handbook (rev. ed. 1970) itemises 41 such parodies) it has scarcely been recognised that Carroll could have the interest or expertise to parody paintings. In fact, however, as this Chapter has shown, it would have been surprising considering Carroll's enthusiasm for paintings and painters if they had not been the target for his wit, or the source of some part of his creation.* Moreover, as regards "Sir Isumbras ..." since Carroll was not alone in his mockery, it is more likely that it was a conscious jibe (see illustrations 31 and 37). For as Fleming notes:

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*There are at least three other pictures that are "quoted" in Carroll's work and therefore worth itemising. These are (see illustrations 33 - 36):

(1) Augustus Egg's "The Travelling Companions" which has been noted by Raymond Lister (Victorian Narrative Paintings, p. 52) as having some distinct echoes of Tenniel's illustration for Chapter III of Through the Looking-Glass of Alice in the railway carriage, though Alice also bears some resemblance to the little girl in Millais' "My First Sermon" in this illustration.

(2) Landseer's "Fawn and Child" which resembles the illustration of Alice's encounter with the fawn in the wood "where things have no names".

(3) As R. L. Green has noted in his edition of the Diaries the White Rabbit "... probably ... owed his origin to Landseer's picture "Titania" which Dodgson saw on November 17, 1857, and concerning which he noted: "There are some wonderful points in it - the ass's head and the white rabbit especially" (see Diaries pp. 171 - 2).

Illustrations 31 - 32

31. J. E. Millais, "Sir Isumbras at the Ford", Oil, 49" x 67", 1857, (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight). C.f. illustration

32. Frederick Sandys, "A Nightmare", (British Museum).


JR

Illustrations 33 - 34

33 Augustus Egg: "The Travelling Companions" Oil, 25⅜" x 30⅛", 1862 (City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham).

34 Tenniel: Alice in the railway carriage (TTLG, Ch. III)

Illustrations 35 - 36

35 Sir E. Landseer; "Fawn and Child" Line Engraving

36 Tenniel; Alice with the Fawn.
(TTLG, Ch. III)

"Because of its notoriety, Sir Isumbras inspired a number of contemporary jokes and caricatures, the most famous of which was a large pen-lithograph which appeared in the windows of print-sellers not long after the opening of the Exhibition and was called "A Nightmare" [illustration 32]. Most of its details were closely copied from Sir Isumbras, but there were a few notable alterations: the horse had become a braying donkey branded J. R[uskin] Oxon.; the knight in gilded armour bore the youthful head of Millais, whose equipage included a maulstick, a bunch of peacock feathers and paste-pot inscribed "P.R.B."; the knight's two companions were still dressed as juveniles, but their faces were those of Rossetti and Hunt ... The print aroused almost as much interest as Sir Isumbras and stimulated the curiosity of many who had not seen or heard of Millais' painting: Hunt recalled that he had seen "a crowd in Fleet Street trying to settle that Sir Robert Peel was the knight, the child in front Disraeli, and the hindermost Lord John Russell". The creator of this parody was ... Frederick Sandys."

(That Ne'er Shall Meet Again, p. 116)

Certainly if these three - the spirit of Ruskinism, Sir Isumbras and the White Knight - were considered by the public at one time to be identical - linked by their often over-solemn polymathic wisdom - or at least if the White Knight were to parody the earnest medievalism of the Pre-Raphaelite hero as embodied in Sir Isumbras, then episodes like the following gain meaning:

"[The White Knight] fell headlong into a deep ditch ... However, though she could see nothing but the soles of his feet, she was much relieved to hear that he was talking on in his usual tone. "All kinds of fastness", he repeated: "but it was careless of him to put another man's helmet on - with the man in it, too."

"How can you go on talking so quietly, head downwards?" Alice asked, as she dragged him out by the feet, and laid him in a heap on the bank.

The Knight looked surprised at the question. "What does it matter where my body happens to be?" he said. My mind goes on working all the same. In fact, the more head downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things".

"Now the cleverest thing of the sort that I ever did", he went on after a pause, "was inventing a new pudding during the meat-course"."

(TTLG, p. 304)

This particular joke has more meaning moreover when Carroll's other jibes against the Pre-Raphaelite cult of medievalism are remembered. One would not expect in the progress of the Alices anything like a consistent attack, but there are moments here and there when the past, and especially romantic overtures to the past, come in for quite an amount of mockery. The first of these is when the mouse gives his dry history lesson after the animals and Alice have emerged from the pool of tears:

> "'Sit down, all of you, and listen to me! I'll soon make you dry enough!' They all sat down at once ...
>
> 'Ahem!' said the mouse with an important air. 'Are you all ready? This is the driest thing I know. Silence all round, if you please! William the Conqueror, whose cause was favoured by the Pope, was soon submitted to by the English, who wanted leaders, and had been of late much accustomed to usurpation and conquest. Edwin and Morcar, the earls of Mercia and Northumbria - '
>
> 'Ugh!' said the Lory with a shiver ..."
>
> (AAIW, p. 46)

When contemporary paintings were drawing on the past for inspiration and subject matter as heavily as Holman Hunt's "A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Priest from the Persecution of the Druids"; Millais' "The Disentombment of Queen Matilda", "Bruce at the Siege of Acre", "The Romans Leaving Britain" and Rossetti's "Sir Galahad and Sir Percival Receiving the Grail" their creators were made obvious targets for Carroll's satire. In Through the Looking-Glass there is more of this kind of joking to be

found in, for example, "Jabberwocky" itself which was originally conceived as a "stanza of Anglo-Saxon poetry"* and which is clearly based on a medieval-type saga[/] (note Tenniel's broad-sword carrying "beamish boy" with his tunic and hose). Other instances of Carroll's satirising Pre-Raphaelite medievalism may be found in the very un-ideal soldiers of the King ("[Alice] had never seen soldiers so uncertain on their feet: they were always tripping over something or other, and whenever one went down, several more always fell over him, so that the ground was soon covered with little heaps of men ..." (TTLG, p. 277, see illustration 41)) and in the King's curious messenger (see illustration 38):

> "'I see somebody now!' [Alice] exclaimed at last. 'But he's coming very slowly - and what curious attitudes he goes into!' (For the Messenger kept skipping up and down, and wriggling like an eel, as he came along, with his great hands spread out like fans on each side).
>
> 'Not at all', said the King, 'He's an Anglo-Saxon Messenger - and those are Anglo-Saxon attitudes. He only does them when he's happy. His name is Haigha ...'"
>
> (TTLG, p. 279)

Such "curious attitudes" (see illustrations 37 - 44) as Alice discerns here Carroll doubtless also discerned in his

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*See Gardner's annotation, Annotated Alice, p. 191.

[/]R. L. Green detects a possible source in Fouque's "The Shepherd of the Giant Mountains". See LCH, pp. 278 - 280.

Illustrations 37 - 44

"Curious attitudes"; the middle ages
(left to right, top to bottom)

37 Tenniel; the White Knight and Alice (TTLG, Ch. VIII).

38 Tenniel; Haigha, The Anglo-Saxon Messenger and the White King (TTLG, Ch. VII).

39 Tenniel; the White Knight sliding down the poker (TTLG, Ch. I).

40 Tenniel; the White Knight demonstrates the art of riding (TTLG, Ch. VIII).

41 Tenniel; All the King's horses and all the King's men (TTLG, Ch. VII).

42 Tenniel; the Red and White Knight demonstrate the rules of battle (TTLG, Ch. VIII).

43 Tenniel; the White Knight "the more head downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things" (TTLG, Ch. VIII).

44 Tenniel; Alice arms Tweedledee and Tweedledum for "a bit of a fight" (TTLG, Ch. IV).

painter-friends' enthusiasms for the Middle Ages, though one can hardly say that they associated them with happiness: on the contrary their picture of the golden age was of a special environment where melancholy could find a voice.* Indeed that world which had similarities to the world of innocent childhood was an example of how to escape through art into a paradise regained through the contemplation of instances where it had never been lost.

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*This serious application to the muse of melancholy on the part of the Pre-Raphaelites was the target of another of Carroll's friends who may have had an influence on his satire here - this was the Punch cartoonist George du Maurier, who, in a brilliant series of illustrated poems called "A Legend of Camelot", hit hard at this element of Pre-Raphaelitism. Here, for example, are the opening stanzas of Part III (first printed in Punch 17.3.1866 (the refrain here also seems to be in parody of Wordsworth's "The Thorn"):

A little castle she drew nigh,
With seven towers twelve inches high ...
O Miserie!

A baby castle, all a-flame
With many a flower that hath no name,
O Miserie!

It had a little moat all round:
A little drawbridge too she found;
O Miserie!

On which there stood a stately maid,
Like her in radiant locks arrayed ...
O Miserie!

Save that her locks grew rank and wild,
By weaver's shuttle undefiled! ...
O Miserie!

Millais' contribution to this other world of idealised melancholy in childhood was, if anything, even greater than his medievalising and, incidentally, started in earnest at about the time when Carroll got to know him personally. Art historians have always considered Millais' career as two distinct parts; first, fearless Pre-Raphaelitism until he became famous, followed by a second long period of creating money-making sentimental pictures. As his popularity rose, so his integrity progressively vanished (culminating in "Bubbles"), and one of the ablest British painters of all time squandered his talent in a prodigious display of easily painted and quickly sold "charm canvases". As G. H. Fleming has shown,* quite a distinctly new Millais emerged in 1863 (i.e. around the time when Alice was being written) "The Eve of St. Agnes" and "My First Sermon" both appearing that year. The latter painting was of five-year old Effie Millais - later one of Carroll's child friends - sitting in church captivated by the sermon she is listening to. Millais himself was apparently surprised by the success of this picture, but it certainly seemed to capture public attention. He wrote to his wife that September " they are making an immense deal with the "First Sermon" and have risen the price of the engraving as they can't print fast enough."† Though many of

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*See That Ne'er Shall Meet Again ed. cit. pp. 223 - 4.

†Cit. ibid. p. 223.

Millais' earlier pictures contained children - for example, "The Carpenter's Shop", "The Woodman's Daughter", "The Order of Release", "Autumn Leaves" and many others - he now started on a long succession of paintings that were wholly centred round them. Pictures such as "Sleeping" (1866), "Waking" (1866), "The Minuet" (1866, illustration 45), "Cherry Ripe" (1879), "Princess Elizabeth in the Tower" (1879), "Sweetest Eyes" (1881) are typical in this respect, in that they are sentimentally presented, ultra-pretty girls. All the poignant melancholy of "Autumn Leaves" was sacrificed to the mawkish demands of those who, by buying his paintings and prints, created a market and Millais could not resist the financialrewards. As Fleming puts it; "Millais apparently realised that nothing could so easily catch the eye of the public as a well-dressed, well scrubbed pretty girl ... And so with the greatest of ease [he] turned out his seemingly interminable successions of pictures of children"*.

If the reason for Millais' canvases readily finding homes as they did was that they reflected the public taste of the period, then Carroll's Alice, born of the same need but of a far greater intelligence, must have entered partly on the same ticket. Certainly Carroll himself was not above admiring such poor paintings as Millais' "My Second Sermon" which he saw at the Royal Academy in 1864. He even

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*Ibid., p. 224.

noted in his Diary that it was "very beautiful". On 8th April 1867, he further noted: "I went to Millais': the studio was more like a public exhibition, so many people were coming and going. The four pictures were all beautiful. Mary sitting up in bed - called "Waking", the one he was at when I photographed there; Carry asleep ["Sleeping"]; Effie dancing a minuet, a most charming picture ["The Minuet" see illustration 45] and the great picture "Jephthah ['s Daughter]" ... it is a noble picture."

This last painting (see illustration 46) is especially melodramatic and full of heavy emotion. Yet it was not simply because Carroll knew Millais that he was enthusiastic; rather it was because, again, he would have found a rendering of the subject attractive in itself. For the story of the Gileadite warrior, Jephthah's, over-hasty promise to sacrifice to Jehovah the first person who came to meet him after the battle if he was victorious, and who then finds that he has to offer up his beautiful daughter, is no more than a variation of the theme of the threatened fragile virgin that Carroll always noticed and admired. The daughter in the picture clings to her horrified father whilst her nurse looks on in anguish: a picture that could only be described as "great" and "noble" by someone with Carroll's well-defined taste for the subject, a taste which as we have seen was undoubtedly not his alone in Victorian England.

Illustrations 45 - 46

45 J. E. Millais; "The Minuet", Oil, 1866.

46 J. E. Millais; "Jephthah's Daughter" Oil, 1867.

We might conclude, therefore, that though in the event of his actual writing Carroll moved well beyond, for example, the simple-mindedness displayed sometimes by painters who belonged to the late-Millais school, it is important to recognise that the roots of his pre-occupations were shared by those of other, quite major, Victorian artists whom he admired, emulated and often even knew personally. Luckily for his own art - at least in the Alices - his sense of humour managed to keep the full mawkish effects of these "charm canvases" of Millais' out of Wonderland, but, nevertheless, many of the major ideas that provided the background to Wonderland did come from his enthusiams for the visual arts. Though neither Rossetti's passionate seriousness about his "woman of dreams", nor the melancholy with which Arthur Hughes viewed and celebrated virgin beauty, nor the sweetness of the fairy world of Paton and Doyle, are overlaboured in Carroll's Alices, all these are constantly in the background of Wonderland and even occasionally come to the fore. For it is their kind of seriousness and sense, simultaneously mocked, abridged, adopted and even believed in, that goes some way to giving Carroll's humour and nonsense its extremely pertinent power.

One last point needs to be made: Carroll, particularly in common with the Rossettis, Arthur Hughes, Millais and other Pre-Raphaelites, and, indeed, in common with many other

of his contemporaries, never escaped his constant sense of the past and his own mortality. Again, like them, when at his most maudlin Carroll could work this sense into an obsession, but even if it was not in the forefront it was, as we have seen, always one important focal point for his art as for other art of the period. In general terms the source of this may well be precipitated at the moment of maturity when the word "forever" in the future tense is seen as logically impossible, so that the past tense is, by contrast, viewed as timeless and dream-like. The artists who have created similar lost worlds and then devoted their lives and art to a rediscovery of them are legion (Nabokov's Ada seems a perfect modern example of this, L. P. Hartley's The Go-Between seems another) but it was undoubtedly in the nineteenth century that the greatest number of lost paradises were founded. There have been many reasons put forward to account for this: Sir Walter Scott's ability to sharply focus in his novels a fictional medievalism that "brought to an increasingly urbanised, industrialised and atomistic society, the vision of a more stable and harmonious order."* - a vision moreover that was presented so convincingly and to such a wide audience that it seemed like an historical fact; urbanisation that also brought with it vulnerability

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*Alice Chandler; A Dream of Order, The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature, Routledge, 1971, p. 12.

to new epidemic diseases that underlined human mortality; a Queen who at the death of Albert in 1861 became a professional mourner for over forty years; a Poet Laureate whose masterpiece was In Memoriam; an historical period that used millions of soldiers in adding over 3½ million square miles of territory to the Empire; large families where the mother seemed perpetually ill because pregnant and where some siblings usually died in infancy; - and all this, above all, taking place when the scientific advance was so fast that progress made the previous year seemed a decade away and continual changes were increasingly hard to assimilate.* It would be difficult to claim that these facts of history had any specific effect on a single writer like Carroll (as difficult as to claim positively that he had any effect on it) but there are obvious parallels to be drawn, say, between the beginning of the idea in Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey ("I cannot paint / What then I was ... / That time is past, / And all its aching joys are now no more") and Carroll's poem Solitude which was quoted in the opening chapter:

> ... "To live in joys that once have been,
> To put the cold world out of sight,
> And deck life's drear and barren scene
> With hues of rainbow light.
>
> ... Ye golden hours of Life's young spring,
> Of innocence, of love and truth!
> Bright, beyond all imagining
> Thou fairy-dream of youth!"

(N, p. 959)

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*See for example the end of Ch. 52 of Eliot's Adam Bede (1859).

Though obviously inferior poetically and less convincing psychologically (where is Wordsworth's "Abundant recompense" of mature vision, for example?) this poem does demonstrate how, even at 21, Carroll's personal past was set apart to be looked at only through a small door which precludes the clumsy entry of adulthood. From this it is only a short but quite logical step to the belief that:

> "...there is, I verily believe, a sensation of pain in the realisation of our highest pleasures, knowing that now they must soon be over; we had rather prolong anticipation by postponing them. In truth we are not intended to rest content in any pleasure of earth, however intense: the yearning has been wisely given us, which points to an eternity of happiness, as the only perfect happiness possible - "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose soul is stayed on Thee"."
>
> (Diary, 3.9.1855)

It does not seem co-incidental that the other great nonsense writer and follower of the Pre-Raphaelites, Edward Lear, wrote in a letter to Emily Tennyson (even that very year):

> "... I really do believe that I enjoy hardly any one thing on earth while it is present: always looking back, or frettingly peering into the dim beyond."
>
> (Letter dated 28.10.1855, quoted by Noakes; Edward Lear, The Life of a Wanderer, Houghton, Boston, 1969, p. 130).

The yearning of the Yonghy-Bongy-Bo for Lady Jingly, the loss of Daughter Dell ("Oft, in the long still nights of June, / We sit on the rocks and watch the moon; - / She dwells by the streams of the Chankly Bore, / And we probably never shall see her more"); and the wanderings of the

"Dong with the Luminous Nose" - all these protagonists in Lear's poetry (and there are many others) are as sadly pathetic in the same way and for similar reasons as the White Knight or the Mock Turtle. For such characters it almost seems that abstention from happiness, from fulfilment, is more important than any rewards that could come from decisive or assertive action. Just as Thomas Mann's von Aschenbach fails to make contact with Tadzio so for Carroll perhaps it was essential that, like the scented rushes that Alice tries to pick in Looking-Glass, the ultimate is always just out of reach and half illusory, for if caught it would immediately decay and lose its beauty. In that the portrayal of this precise moment was a primary Pre-Raphaelite concern, Carroll was more than a mere art gallery visitor; he was a Pre-Raphaelite.

(5) Lewis Carroll and the Surrealists

"The true sign of genius is a posthumous productivity" -

Goethe

In order to try and demonstrate the significance of Carroll's art, the approaches to it so far have been made from the point of view of both his precursors and his contemporaries. With the same purpose this final chapter will attempt to give some idea of one area of his "posthumous productivity" - the art of the Surrealists which he can be said to have anticipated and partially inspired.

From the outset the point must be made that it is necessary to beware of overstating the case, or of simplifying the often complex subtleties of the surrealist movement in order to emphasise Carroll's part in it. It would be equally wrong to claim that Carroll was either any more than partially or only surrealist, or that the movement could not have existed without the knowledge of his work. Nevertheless his name occurs in André Breton's list of so-called 'sponsors' of the movement in the pamphlet What is Surrealism? which was "specially prepared for the occasion of the first International Surrealist Exhibition to be held in London" in 1936. Thus amongst

> "Swift is Surrealist in malice,
> Sade is Surrealist in sadism,
> Poe is Surrealist in adventure,
> Baudelaire is Surrealist in morality,
> Rimbaud is Surrealist in the way he lived, and elsewhere,
> Jarry is Surrealist in absinthe ..."

we find:

"Carroll is Surrealist in nonsense".*

Although there is an element here of self parody (where is Rimbaud's "elsewhere"?) there is nevertheless an awareness by the surrealists of their own ancestors and a keenness to claim them in order to demonstrate their impressive pedigree and importance as a movement. At the same time, however, this careful research into the family tree was not because of any sense of intellectual elitism or bravado but, as Cardinal and Short show in their Surrealism, Permanent Revelation (1970), was almost from a need for reassurance:

"... Far from pretending to be absolutely sui generis, Surrealism has always displayed great anxiety to situate itself. As a movement which has called the irrational world into existence to redress the balance of an unnaturally rationalistic world, it has sought reassurance that it was not gratuitously releasing what might prove to be a sorcerer's apprentice. The surrealists have drawn up long lists of 'sponsors' from the past whom they claim as ancestors or as surrealists avant la lettre ..."

(op. cit., p. 10)

It is appropriate, and by now familiar, to find that the surrealists, just like so much that has already been discussed in earlier chapters (Hard Times, fairy-tales, Pre-Raphaelitism, for example) were motivated by the need to react against

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*What is Surrealism? translated by David Gascoyne, Faber and Faber, 1936, p. 61. This list, from which the above names are only a selection is, except for Carroll and a few others, substantially the same as the one that Breton drew up for The First Surrealist Manifesto of 1924.

rationalism and it is, of course, related to this fact that it is also appropriate to find that they chose amongst others Carroll as one who "called the irrational world into existence to redress the balance of an unnaturally rationalistic world." As we have seen they were perceptive to do so for Carroll clearly disliked the rationalists for whom necessarily only half the world existed. Where Dickens hit out against his personification of rationalism, the government officer and inspector of Gradgrind's school (at the beginning of Hard Times) when he admonishes Sissy Jupe for her fancy for flowers, Carroll actually made his flowers admonish Alice for her lack of imagination in Looking-Glass. For, as he implies in this sequence, it is only human stupidity that maintains the rigid boundaries that detrimentally fences people in and keeps them apart from each other:

"'Oh Tiger-lily' said Alice ...'I wish you could talk!'

'We can talk,' said the Tiger-lily, 'when there's anybody worth talking to.'"

(TTLG, p. 200)

In generalising about the "sponsors" of surrealism chosen by the members of the movement, Cardinal and Short also make the point that they "had all, in their ways, been rebels". Certainly (as in the above exchange) in his gentle way, this was true of Carroll whose rebellion against sense through nonsense, sober waking life through the fantastic dream, England through Wonderland and so on, was

made in part for the same reason that prompted (to take just two examples) Dickens to the idea of 'fancy' examined earlier, and Burne-Jones to exclaim that "the more materialistic science becomes, the more angels shall I paint ...".* Such qualities are precisely those that Cardinal and Short isolate in the sponsors of surrealism who

> "... had rebelled against a hyperlogical view of the world, against the railings put up by conventions to fence in desire, against mechanical conceptions of time and space expressed in chronological description or perspective, and against the classical idea that art's task is to imitate or interpret exterior reality. In so far as they anticipated or registered the discredit of commonsense reality, they had all sought to enable a liberated imagination to benefit from this."
>
> (op. cit., p. 12)

Rebellion and reaction against the approved status quo has often been an important source of artistic energy, but the significant point here is that the surrealists and Carroll reacted in similar ways to similar things. For clearly Wonderland and the world through the looking-glass are both vitally concerned with breaking down fences of convention; ("I've tried to say 'How doth the little busy bee,' but it all came different ...") and even ideas of space;

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*Quoted by J. D. Hunt, The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination, p. 20. This was an idea that was also voiced by other artists; Walter Crane, for example, in his Third Cantor Lecture of 1879 asserted that he was attracted to the designing of children's books because "in a sober and matter-of-fact age they afford perhaps the only outlet for unrestricted flights of fancy open to the modern illustrator who like to revolt against the despotism of facts ... " (Quoted by E. M. Field, The Child and his Book, Wells, Gardner, Darton, 1891, p. 313. This book incidentally, was one owned by Carroll, see DSC, lot 310).

("Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place") and time; ("If you knew Time as well as I do," said the Hatter, "you wouldn't talk about wasting it. It's him ..."). Indeed, Alice's problem is that there is no stable so-called "reality", and Carroll's standard joke that punctuates virtually every page of her adventures is that when anything is challenged by her it nearly always retreats into an unexpected second or third meaning, usually by breaking the accepted idiom: ("I see nobody on the road" said Alice. "I only wish I had such eyes," the King remarked ...) or by punning;("it isn't etiquette to cut anyone you've been introduced to. Remove the joint!"). With this in mind it would have been uncharacteristically ill-informed of the surrealists to have missed the connection between their work and Carroll's. As Paul C. Ray observes in The Surrealist Movement in England (Cornell U.P. 1971) there was a quite striking similarity between them, so that the intention is often identical; only the degree to which the idea is taken differs:

> "The surrealist program to discredit conventional reality included an attack on the object, the basic irreducible component of that reality. The first and easiest step in this procedure is to remove the object from its habitual surroundings, or simply to change the angle from which it is customarily perceived. Lewis Carroll in a mild way was doing precisely that in the following: "I like very much a little mustard with a bit of beef spread evenly under it; and I like brown sugar - only it should have some apple pudding mixed with it to keep it from being too sweet. I also like pins, only they should always have a cushion put around them to keep them warm." Marcel Duchamp went several steps further than Carroll by violently wrenching real objects from their normal contexts and claiming that he was raising them to

the level of works of art simply by the act of choosing them. In 1914 Duchamp signed an ordinary bottle rack made of galvanised iron. Three years later, he submitted a urinal standing on its side, signed "R. Mutt" and titled "Fountain", to the Salon des Independants in New York ... As he said, he took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its usual significance disappeared under the new title and point of view and created a new thought for the object.

The banal object deliberately and systematically torn from its realistic context and put to an unbecoming use becomes a source of radiating energy. Duchamp's signed urinal, elevated to the status of a work of art, comments eloquently on the sentimental and cosmetic role usually assigned to art in a bourgeois society. From the surrealist point of view it goes a long way towards achieving the shock to 'normal' categories essential to the achievement of the 'alienation of sensation' on which the surrealist revolution is predicated ..."

(op. cit., pp. 28 - 30)

Ray's choice of an example from Carroll, though apposite, is almost the mildest he could have found and looks almost insipid and whimsical in comparison with "R. Mutt's" work. But in fact it could rightly be said that the very practice of wrenching Alice herself from her ordinary and realistic context to place her in an environment where everything is alien and nothing is normal and expected, and where even she does not seem to stay the same size or retain her name, actually radiates more provocative energy than Duchamp's misplaced urinal. The only reason for there seeming to be a difference in effective power between them is that Carroll's work was immediately acceptable and Duchamp's was not (his urinal was refused by the Salon des Independants on the grounds of plagiarism and immorality). But since Carroll's work slipped past the censorship of adult reason under the authorised licence of the children's fairy-tale consequently the revolutionary spirit that it contains has not often been

recognised. Once it arrived in the nursery it was in an environment where it would not be thought out of place because, so the surrealists (and Carroll) argue, the children who read it do not have the rigidity of conception of their parents anyway. (For if, as Breton remarked, "the acceptance of the absurd reopens for man the mysterious kingdom of childhood", then childhood obviously will not reject the absurd). But whilst Carroll's work does not seem to have a revolutionary aspect until seen out of the nursery context, the surrealists found that they had to deliberately court and provoke outrage so that they might, in theory at least, force the individual spectator to discovery and stimulation. As Cardinal and Short explain:

> "... At all times the surrealist artist works with a view to provoking images that will work upon the mind in a way that by-passes reason. The more disturbing an image, the more likely it will be to produce a numbing of the rational faculties, whereby the unconscious is directly contacted. The criterion of good surrealist art is its effectiveness in this special sense ..."

Though Carroll's work is not in this sense deliberately and crudely out to shock the reader, nevertheless to numb and thereby qualify her 'good sense' is precisely his aim with Alice. He provokes her (or rather the sense that she has learnt from her teachers), shows her an environment where reason will not work and disturbs her equanimity and confidence whenever he can - as, for example, in this exchange where the Red Queen carefully demolishes Alice's (and our) security about terms of comparison and measurement:

"'I only wanted to see what the garden was like, your Majesty - '

'That's right,' said the Queen ... 'though when you say 'garden', - I've seen gardens, compared with which this would be a wilderness.'

Alice didn't dare to argue the point, but went on: ' - and I thought I'd try and find my way to the top of that hill - '

'When you say 'hill',' the Queen interrupted, 'I could show you hills, in comparison with which you'd call that a valley.'

'No, I shouldn't,' said Alice, surprised into contradicting her at last: 'a hill can't be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense - '

The Red Queen shook her head. 'You may call it 'nonsense' if you like,' she said, 'but I've heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary!'"

(TTLG, pp. 206 - 7)

But this kind of nullification is mild in comparison with some of Carroll's questioning directed towards Alice; "Who are You?" for example (asked by the Caterpillar) and "Where do you come from ... And where are you going?" (asked by the Red Queen) which though hidden are actually as large as, for example, those asked by Gauguin's masterpiece painted, incidentally, in 1897 the year before Carroll died, which asks the same questions in its title, "D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?"* Such questions, both concealed but also allowable through the humour in Carroll's work are nevertheless a large part of his purpose, and are

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*Now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.

his small doorway into the strange garden of the unconscious. He, of course, did not have as the surrealists did, the benefit of Freud's discoveries so that he might label what he found, but then (as has already been pointed out) Freud explained rather than invented what literature and philosophy had often in any case been aware of, as he himself acknowledged. The surrealists, sure (perhaps oversure*) of what Freud had meant were anxious to use his discoveries in their own work and demonstrate again something that was akin to "what Alice found there" decades earlier; that is, that there are levels of life and thought that are often tantalisingly out of the reach of reason and yet still extremely worthy of exploration. Though he never formulated his own theories of the unconscious it is not difficult to argue that Carroll himself was aware of this 'other life' to which a key should be able to be found: "How Alice longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains ..."/

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*Breton in the First Surrealist Manifesto of 1924 confessed that at that time he was "completely occupied ... with Freud" and that he was "familiar with his methods of examination which he had had some slight occasion to use on some patients during the war ..." See also Wallace Fowlie's Age of Surrealism (Indiana U.P. 4th printing 1966, pp. 104 - 5 ff). The enthusiasm that the surrealists had for Freud seemed paradoxically to conceal from them the essentially rational basis of his work and methods - or at least they ignored this element.

/The most famous and most extensive Freudian-based critique of the Alices is William Empson's of 1935 in Some Versions of Pastoral: "[Alice] is a father in getting down the hole, a foetus at the bottom, and can only be born by becoming a mother and producing her own amniotic fluid." etc.

The surrealists' method of effecting the transition between the two worlds was hardly as simple as Carroll's (that is, in that he used, developed and superseded the traditional formulae of the fairy-tale) yet they effectively arrived at three solutions similar to his. These were, first; to pay full attention to what the phenomenon of the dream had to offer, second, to explore the idea of inspirational creation that by-passes the censoring reason of consciousness, and finally to question the validity of so-called 'reality' through probing the nature of language, space and time. The surrealists learnt to do the first, that is to listen to the dream, again as a direct result of Freud's influence. As Breton says in the First Manifesto:

> "Freud very rightly brought his critical faculties to bear upon the dream. It is, in fact, inadmissible that this considerable portion of psychic activity ... has still today been so grossly neglected. I have always been amazed at the way an ordinary observer lends so much more credence and attaches so much more importance to waking events than to those occurring in dreams ..."
>
> (Quoted in Surrealists on Art, ed. L. R. Lippard, Prentice Hall, N.J., pp. 12 - 13)

There were a number of Victorians, like George MacDonald and Carroll (and also despite Breton here, a good few other literary figures at other times) who were not "ordinary observers" and who were not guilty of this "gross neglect", and we have already seen that this, and the fact that for both of them the dream was the springboard for virtually all of their best work, was an important point of contact between them. For the additional dimension by which to understand so-called reality that the dream could offer, demonstrated

both that consciousness was more complex than at first apparent ("Who in the world am I") and that such consciousness was in any case a limited mode of exploration since, where only logic (or sense as opposed to nonsense) are the permitted tools of expression and communication, there are whole realms that cannot be experienced. The supreme value of the dream for both Carroll (and MacDonald) and the surrealists was that it was a constant demonstration that absolutes, distinctions and oppositions that seem to be totally proven, can nevertheless be shown as false because they can be regrouped and even reconciled. Thus a fish, a bird and a bowler-hatted man stand posed side by side and are all the same height in Magritte's painting "Presence of Mind" (1958); thus flowers can talk and Rocking-horse flies (made entirely of wood and living on sap and sawdust) get about by swinging from branch to branch in the world through the looking-glass. For the surrealists especially in the world of dreams there is nothing real in opposition to the imaginary, no licence or restriction, no morality or immorality, indeed nothing that can hold as constant or coherent and that might not find itself in a new combination or reconciliation. It does not seem coincidental therefore to find that despite the differences in tone, vocabulary and confidence, Carroll and Breton both questioned the nature of reality and sanity in similar ways. Here, for example, is a Diary entry of Carroll's for 9.2.1856, followed by a passage from The Second Surrealist Manifesto (1929):

"Query: when we are dreaming and, as often happens, have a dim consciousness of the fact and try to wake, do we not say and do things which in waking life would be insane? May we not then sometimes define insanity as an inability to distinguish which is the waking and which the sleeping life? We often dream without the least suspicion of unreality: 'Sleep hath itsown world', and it is often as lifelike as the other ..."

"From an intellectual point of view, it was and still is necessary to expose by every available means the factitious character of the old contradictions hypocritically calculated to hinder every unusual agitation on the part of man, and to force its recognition at all costs, if only to give mankind some faint idea of its abilities and to challenge it to escape its universal shackles to some meaningful extent. The bugbear of death, the music-halls of the beyond, the shipwreck of the future, the towers of Babel, the mirrors of inconsistency, the insurmountable silver-splashed wall of the brain - all of these striking images of human catastrophe are perhaps nothing but images. There is every reason to believe that there exists a certain point in the mind at which life and death, real and imaginary, past and future, communicable and incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived in terms of contradiction. Surrealist activity would be searched in vain for a motive other than the hope to determine this point ..."

For Carroll, as well as for Breton, the implications of his dreams and the concomitant complexity of then deciding to distinguish what is reality, was also a root cause for his own constant curiosity which in turn informed the creation of Wonderland. For like the surrealists in their art, in his writing Carroll could change the rules at the moment when Alice begins to win, just as the unconscious does in the dream, in order, in Breton's words, to "challenge it to escape its universal shackles":

"... For, you see, so many out-of-the-way things had happened lately that Alice had begun to think that very few things indeed were really impossible". (AAIW, p. 30).

Moreover, despite the humour as we have seen earlier, there are many moments of real tension in Carroll's work when

these complex questions come close to the surface (just as the dream becomes real): when, for example, Tweedledee tells Alice "Why you're only a sort of thing in [the Red King's] dream", to which his brother adds "If that there King was to wake ... you'd go out - bang! - just like a candle". The play here is obviously beyond the realm of the nursery and has all of the metaphysical implications of surrealist questioning about the nature of reality.

Another way in which Carroll anticipated the surrealists was in a method of creative writing that they came to call "automatism". Paul C Ray again relates the history of this idea:

> "Andre Breton, the founder and principal theoretician of surrealism, in [his First Surrealist Manifesto, 1924] recounts how, just before falling asleep one evening, he heard a sentence that had nothing to do with his preoccupations of the moment: "There is a man cut in two by the window." This sentence was accompanied by a weak visual image of a man bisected by a window perpendicular to the axis of his body. Other sentences, equally gratuitous, followed the first. He concluded from the experience that any control he thought he exercised over his mental processes was entirely illusory. These imaged sentences struck him as being valuable poetic elements; and the subsequent attempt to produce them led him, together with Philippe Soupault, to the discovery of automatic writing and the production of the first book written automatically, Les Champs Magnetiques (1919).
>
> ... The important discovery of surrealism is that there is a continuous discourse going on below the level of consciousness to which one needs only to pay attention in order to register it; equally important is the surrealist insistence that this discourse deserves the most intense attention, even when it seems discordant or incoherent. Automatism, shortly after Breton's discovery, became the very basis of surrealism, and Breton's first definition of surrealism is really a definition of automatic writing:

'SURREALISM, n.m.: Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing, or by any other means, the real process of thought, without any control exercised by reason, outside of all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.'"

(op. cit., pp. 2 - 3)

Through using methods akin to those used by spiritualists and mediums, automatic writing, drawing and painting were meant to liberate the unconscious and allow it a tangible expression other than the always fugitive natural expression of the dream. In this way the artist was to be the agent of the unconscious. Because it had no part to play, repressive reasoning would not be able to interfere or censor this creativity and the result, since it would be absurd, would by-pass the spectator's consciousness to penetrate and communicate to the unconscious. This quite special approach made by the surrealists meant that the art medium (words, images) was to regain fluidity and expand in its own way and with almost its own life to find a new integrity in strange combinations and juxtapositions. The results were not, in the event, to be wholly arbitrary since the conscious and unconscious are obviously related in the individual personality.

As a philosophy of art the complete concept of surrealist automatism was more complex than has been suggested here, and it significantly changed as the movement grew. There is scarcely space however to elaborate beyond this outline and in any case J. H. Matthews' <u>An Introduction to Surrealism</u>

(Pennsylvania State U.P. 1965) and Paul C. Ray's opening chapter of The Surrealist Movement in England, "Definitions" make another rehearsal of the history redundant. From what has been said already however, it is remarkable how Carroll's own methods of working anticipated something of the surrealist concept of automatism as a creative method. We find, for example, his confession that he wrote Alice in Wonderland in the first instance with no real concentration of conscious effort - the Liddell sisters, to use his words, "goaded" his "jaded Muse into action [which] plodded meekly on, more because she had to say something than she had something to say", or else, again without deliberation, "fancies unsought came crowding thick" upon him.* We might compare this with what Breton in the First Surrealist Manifesto, under the sub-heading of "secrets of the Magical Surrealist Art", gives as the conditions necessary for successful automatic writing:

> "... Put yourself in as passive, or receptive, a state of mind as you can. Forget about your genius, your talents, and the talents of everyone else ... Write quickly, without any preconceived subject, fast enough so that you'll not remember what you're writing and be tempted to re-read

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*"Alice on the Stage" reprinted LCPB, p. 165. This is confirmed by Robinson Duckworth (at that time a Fellow of Trinity) who rowed stroke to Carroll's bow on that "golden afternoon" when Alice's Adventures Underground was first told. He testified that it "was actually composed and spoken over my shoulder for the benefit of Alice Liddell, who was acting as "cox" of our gig. I remember turning round and saying, 'Dodgson, is this an ex tempore romance of yours?' And he replied, 'Yes, I'm inventing as we go along.'" (quoted Hudson, Lewis Carroll, p. 128).

what you have written. The first sentence will come spontaneously, so compelling is the truth that with every passing second there is a sentence unknown to our consciousness which is only crying out to be heard. It is somewhat of a problem to form an opinion about the next sentence; it doubtless partakes both of our conscious activity and of the other, if one agrees that the fact of having written the first entails a minimum of perception ... Go on as long as you like. Put your trust in the inexhaustible nature of the murmur. If silence threatens break off without hesitation with an overly clear line. Following a word the origin of which seems suspicious to you, place any letter whatsoever, the letter "l" for example, always the letter "l" and bring the arbitrary back by making this letter the first of the following word."

(From The First Surrealist Manifesto in Surrealists on Art, ed. cit., pp. 21 - 22)

The relaxed unforced conditions necessary for automatic writing, with no real thought of "genius" or "talent", prestige or permanent result, was almost exactly the condition under which Carroll's first Alice story was written, as he himself said:

"... none of these ... many extemporised ... tales [told to Alice and her sisters on the river] got written down: they lived and died, like summer midges, each in its own golden afternoon until there came a day when, as it chanced, one of my little listeners petitioned that the tale might be written out for her. That was many a year ago, but I distinctly remember now as I write, how, in a desperate attempt to strike out some new line of fairy-lore, I had sent my heroine straight down a rabbit-hole, to begin with, without the least idea what was to happen afterwards ..."*

Again, despite differences in tone, what Carroll says here can effectively be compared with what the surrealists

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*"Alice on the Stage" reprinted in LCPB, p. 165.

said about their own working methods - for example this from Jean Miró:

"Rather than setting out to paint something ... I begin painting and as I paint the picture begins to assert itself under my brush, or suggest itself under my brush. The form becomes a sign for a woman or a bird as I work ... The first stage is free, unconscious ..."

(cit. W. S. Rubin, Dada, Surrealism and their heritage, N.Y., 1968, p. 68)

- or this from Andre Masson:

"Often I feel I have no need of images. I have only to let my brush run ... But when the image appears I do not chase it away, I accept it, I even multiply it ..."

(cit., Matthews, op. cit., p. 91)

- or even this from Dali:

"The fact that I myself, at the moment of painting, do not understand the significance of my pictures cannot mean that my pictures have no meaning; on the contrary their meaning is so profound, complex, coherent, involuntary, that it escapes mere analysis by logical intuition."

(cit., Matthews, op. cit., p. 124)

When Carroll's comment about the meaning of the Snark is remembered ("I'm very much afraid I didn't mean anything but nonsense! Still, you know, words mean more than we mean to express when we use them: so a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer meant") then Dali's remark in particular dovetails with some of

Carroll's ideas. Moreover such was the element of chance and lack of conscious effort, both factors essential to automatism, that Carroll's stories by definition were potentially more naturally surreal than even the productions of the concentrated lack of concentration could be as practised by the surrealists. For he had even been able to avoid one of the greatest pitfalls that threatened the success of automatic writing; the conscious control that intruded because of the writer's awareness of the possibility of publication.* Of course, when such a possibility presented itself Carroll did consciously intrude into his stories but, according to his own account, unpredictably very little:

> "In writing Alice's Adventures Under-Ground out, I added many fresh ideas, which seemed to grow of themselves upon the original stock; and many more added themselves when, years afterwards, I wrote it all over again for publication: but (this may interest some readers of "Alice") every such idea and nearly every word of the dialogue, came of itself. Sometimes an idea comes at night, when I have had to get up and strike a light to note it down - sometimes when out on a lonely winter walk, when I have had to stop, and with half frozen fingers jot down a few words which should keep the newborn idea from perishing - but whenever or however it comes, it comes of itself. I cannot set invention going like a clock, by any voluntary winding up: nor do I believe that any original writing ... was ever so produced. ... "Alice" and the "Looking-glass"

*See Ray, op. cit., p. 9.

are made up almost wholly of bits and scraps, single ideas which came of themselves ..."*

("Alice on the Stage", ed. cit., pp. 166 - 7)

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*Carroll's claim that he was almost an agent spiritualist-style for the Alices interestingly coincides not only with the surrealist's preoccupation with the subject as a way in to the unconscious, but also gives significance to the large number of books he personally owned on the subject, viz.: Mather's Wonders of the Invisible World; Howitt's Supernatural; System of Magic; A History of Apparitions; Burton's Vikram and the Vampire; Heaton's The Deamon; Wright's Narrative of Sorcery and Magic; The Occult World; Lee's The Other World; Wallace's Miracles and Modern Spiritualism; Spiritual Dynamics; Home's Lights and Shadows of Spiritualism; Townshend's Facts in Mesmerism; Thomson's Philosophy of Magic; H. Christmas's Phantom World; Ingram's Haunted Homes; Miracles Past and Present; Confessions of a Medium; Superstition of Witchcraft; Magic and Magicians, and 11 volumes of the Psychical Research Proceedings. (see DSC).

Although it is perhaps surprising that the Rev. C. L. Dodgson should be so fascinated by the subject; in fact, again, he was being no more than in tune with a contemporary preoccupation (even Queen Victoria approved, and practised table turning). However he did have a long and real interest in spiritualism; here, for example, in a letter to Langton Clarke (dated 4.12.1882) he argues against "the scientific sceptics, who always shut their eyes ... to any evidence ... beyond materialism":

"... trickery will not do as a complete explanation of all the phenomena of table-rapping, thought-reading, etc., I am more & more convinced. At the same time I see no need as yet for believing that disembodied spirits have anything to do with it. I have just read a small pamphlet, the first report of the "Psychical Society", on "thought reading." The evidence ... excludes the possibility that "unconscious guidance by pressure" (Carpenter's explanation) will account for all the phenomena. All seems to point to the existence of a natural force allied to electricity & nerve-force, by which the brain can act on brain. I think we are close on the day when this shall be classed among the known natural forces, & its laws tabulated, & when the scientific sceptics, who always shut their eyes, till the last moment, to any evidence that seems to point beyond materialism, will have to accept it as a proven fact in nature".

(cit. Hudson, Lewis Carroll, p. 228. See also SBC, pp. 656 - 7)

Carroll here is talking partly of what has always been recognised as a virtually essential element for successful art - nothing less than inspiration; but he implies the presence of more than just that. For he, like the surrealists,* had not only a belief in inspiration but also a total trust in it and listened to and valued its findings whether they were coherent or not and so just as Breton found poetic value in the sentence "There is a man cut in two by the window", from the same kind of awareness so also did Carroll in the line "For the Snark <u>was</u> a Boojum, you see". Furthermore he explains this in the "Alice on the Stage" essay that has already been cited, when he relates how <u>The Hunting of the Snark</u> was composed:

> "I was walking on a hill side, alone, one bright summer day, when suddenly there came into my head one line of verse - one solitary line - "For the Snark <u>was</u> a Boojum, you see". I knew not what it meant then: I know not what it means now; but I wrote it down, and, sometime afterwards, the rest of the stanza occurred to me, that being its last line: and so by degrees, at odd moments during the next year or two, the rest of the poem pieced itself together, that being its last stanza. And then periodically, I have received courteous letters from strangers, begging to know whether "The Hunting of the Snark" is an allegory, or contains some hidden moral, or is a political satire: and for all such questions I have but one answer, <u>I don't know</u>!"
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> (ibid., pp. 167 - 8)

Notice that Carroll does not say that the <u>Snark</u> is without meaning; it has meanings although some he himself

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*See Ray, op. cit., p. 2.

recognised that he would have difficulty in understanding. Each individual should properly bring his own ideas to bear on the poem which are as valid or invalid as any others; one should not be able, as he himself put it "to explain things which you don't yourself understand".* Yet again this approach was one that the surrealists also adopted, each picture and poem being for them a deliberate journey into the unknown, like a Snark hunt, where conclusions are irrelevant to the value of the actual exploration itself.† The vocabulary that the surrealists used differs from Carroll's but not their purpose; Eluard's revolutionary comment that "poems always have big margins, big white margins of silence in which ardent memory is consumed to re-create a delirium that has no past. Their principal quality is not to evoke but to inspire",ø is essentially no more revolutionary than the Bellman's map:

> "He had bought a large map representing the sea
> Without the least vestige of land:
> And the crew were much pleased when they found it to be
> A map they could all understand.
>
> 'What's the good of Mercator's North Poles and Equators,
> Tropics, Zones, and Meridian Lines?'
> So the Bellman would cry: and the crew would reply,
> 'They are merely conventional signs!

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*cit. Gardner, Annotated Snark, p. 22.

†See Matthews, op. cit., pp. 93 - 4.

øcit. ibid., pp. 140 - 1.

'Other maps are such shapes with their islands and capes!
But we've got our brave Captain to thank'
(So the crew would protest) 'that he's bought us
the best -
A perfect and absolute blank!'"

(HS, pp. 55 - 6)

Breton's remark that lucidity was "the great enemy of revelation" or Humpty Dumpty's "Impenetrability! That's what I say!" are more than relevant here, and also seem to be at least a large part of Carroll's purpose. Certainly as we have seen earlier, he regarded the Snark as an exercise in reader-revelation rather than as having any single solution; he wrote to one childfriend, for example, shortly after the poem appeared: "When you have read the Snark, I hope you will write me a little note and tell me how you like it, and if you can quite understand it. Some children are puzzled with it. Of course you know what a Snark is? If you do please tell me: for I haven't an idea what it is like."*

In order to ensure that the Snark especially was generative rather than explicative, Carroll even achieved arbitrariness in a thoroughly Bretonian surrealist way. For whereas Breton advocated the letter "l" as the first letter to "bring the arbitrary back" when self-consciousness intruded in automatic writing, Carroll seems to have anticipated him in the way in which he chose the Snark-hunters themselves, since their names (actually their

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*cit., Gardner, Annotated Snark, p. 21.

professions) all begin with the letter "B" (Bellman, Boots, Bonnet-maker, Barrister, Broker, Billiard-marker, Banker, Beaver, Baker and Butcher). When asked by Henry Holiday (who did the illustrations for the poem, which incidentally are not without surreal qualities themselves, see illustrations 47 and 48) "why he made all the members of the crew have occupations beginning with B, he replied, 'Why not?'"* Such deliberate fostering of the lack of finite meaning to the very point of freedom for its own sake, so that interpretation could also be free, was again also very much a part of the surrealist's manifesto. Though obviously more intense, and often with a specific revolutionary or political end in view, the surrealists, like Carroll, defied explication and championed intuition from a similar standpoint to his. For them, as at times for him, such an assertion of freedom was perhaps in reaction to the respective periods in which they lived and it is attractive to suppose that Carroll was positively protesting about some of the difficulties of living in Victorian England. Certainly the surrealists reacted strongly against the restrictions of a world war believing that "In our period, only the imagination can restore to menaced man the feeling of being free".† As

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* cit., Gardner, Annotated Snark, p. 53.

†From the "Catalogue of the International Surrealist Exhibition", Amsterdam, 1938. Cit., Matthews, op. cit., p. 77.

Illustrations 47 - 48

Henry Holiday; illustrations to The Hunting of the Snark

47 The Snark hunting crew

48 "To pursue it with forks and hope ..."

Paul C. Ray has shown, however, the surrealists' purpose was virtually to promote an entire way of life - Carroll's nonsense was hardly that, yet his influence can be detected in at least one other of the surrealist's preoccupations that were contributory to such a revolutionary stance. This can be traced in the surrealists' formulation of a theory of language which was, in a sense, only a development (though a fairly extensive one) of something rather like Carroll's own ideas which they certainly knew. Ray's explanation of the surrealist view touches on several of these points of potential similarity:

> "Breton's surrealist view of language and the role of images is destructive of conventional notions of reality and of the conventional view of the function of language that such notions entail. The surrealist plea for freedom from conventional reality, from logic, taste, and morality, extends to language also: one of the steps in freeing man from the mediocrity of the universe is to dissolve the forced marriage between words and their meanings. Words, for the surrealists, exist outside of their common denotive or connotive functions. Words have a far more active life than any dictionary or etymology can guess; for ... associations of sounds, of ideas, even of the shapes of words play their part ..."
>
> (op. cit., p. 45)

As we have seen earlier, Carroll's nonsense world also gives words an extra-dictionary life and at the same time demonstrates how inaccurate but nevertheless evocative they can be. Continually in the Alices as Robert D. Sutherland exhaustively shows in his Language and Lewis Carroll (Mouton, The Hague, 1970) Carroll is both exhilarated and disturbed by the ambiguity of words. His understanding of

the "forced marriage" between them and their meanings which tries to prevent their "active life", is nowhere more apparent than in the philosophy of Humpty Dumpty whose way with language seems to be akin in effect with Duchamp's with a urinal: a Machiavellian determination decides the meaning and context on <u>their</u> terms so that: "When <u>I</u> use a word," Humpty Dumpty said ... "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less ... The question is ... which is to be master - that's all." (<u>TTLG</u>, p. 269). But more significant than Humpty Dumpty's new definitions is the way in which verbal freedom gives imaginative and perceptual freedom so that distinctions and oppositions become "artificial fabrications of the rational mind"* which prevent the occurrence of the marvellous or wonderful. Once such distinctions disappear analogies are also abolished and every combination of thought and image becomes a possibility. Moreover the resultant image, word or idea becomes far more powerful than the sum of its parts and, theoretically at least, artistic creation is infinite - as in Humpty Dumpty's interpretation of "Jabberwocky":

> "... '"<u>slithy</u>" means "lithe and slimy". "Lithe" is the same as "active". You see it's like a portmanteau - there are two meanings packed up into one word.'
>
> 'I see it now,' Alice remarked thoughtfully: 'and what are "<u>toves</u>"?' ...

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*See Ray, op. cit., p. 12.

'Well, "toves" are something like badgers - they're something like lizards - and they're something like corkscrews.'

'They must be curious-looking creatures.'

'They are that,' said Humpty Dumpty: 'also they make their nest under sun-dials - also they live on cheese.'"

(TTLG, p. 271)

The surrealist's attempts at "verbal collage", though less memorable and perhaps less successfully evocative, clearly owe their origin to Carroll's portmanteaux words:

"What is a phallustrade? It is an alchemical product composed of the following elements: the autostrade, the balustrade and a certain quantity of phallus. A phallustrade is a verbal collage. One might define collage as an alchemy resulting from the unexpected meeting of two or more heterogeneous elements, those elements provoked either by a will which - from a love of clairvoyance - is directed towards systematical confusion of all the senses (Rimbaud), or by chance, or by a will favourable to chance."

(Beyond Painting in Surrealists on Art, ed. L. R. Lippard, ed. cit., p. 130)

In the same way many surrealists like Paul Delvaux, Giorgio de Chirico and Dali used just this collage or portmanteau type of technique in their mock story-telling paintings to provoke confusion or elation (or both). Moreover it does not seem coincidental that Magritte, the most literary of the surrealist painters, executed a whole series of canvases that were concerned with exposing the categories that we use to tie down what we see and to defuse the impact of the image. Paintings such as "Homage to Alphonse Allais" 1964 (a fish that has become a burning cigar by the time we come to look at its tail, or vice versa);

"The Red Model" 1935 (shoes that have become feet or feet that have become shoes); "The Explanation" 1952 (a wine bottle that has become a carrot, or vice versa); "Collective Invention" 1935 (a nude woman lying on a beach who has become a fish or vice versa); "Acrobatic Ideas" 1927 (illustration 50) and "The Listening Room" 1952 (illustration 54) are "curious-looking" in a similar way and for similar reasons as those that Humpty Dumpty describes and Alice discovers (see illustrations 49 - 57). As well as this series about the ambiguity of images, Magritte also painted a series of related pictures that were concerned with exposing the ambiguities of words and their fragile relationship with the object that they are supposed to be eternally attached to. As a surrealist he could not trust the conventions of semantics (or indeed any other convention) if its only truth was in that it was established, and in paintings such as "The Use of Speech" 1928, "Person Walking Towards the Horizon" 1928 - 9, "The Empty Mask" 1928, "The Air and the Song" 1928 - 9, "The Key of Dreams", 1936, "The Proper Meaning IV" 1928 - 9, "The Two Mysteries" 1966 and "The Use of Words I" 1928 - 9 (all of which are concerned with labels that ostensibly do not relate to the objects to which they are attached) Magritte enjoyed dismantling ideas about the fixed nature of language, which, as Suzi Gablik in her recent book Magritte (Thames and Hudson, 1971) has shown is not unrelated to similar philosophical explorations made

Illustrations 49 - 53

"acrobatic ideas" and "curious creatures"

(left to right, top to bottom)

49 Tenniel; Alice opens out like a telescope (AAIW, Ch. II).

50 Magritte; "Les idées de l'acrobate"/ "Acrobatic Ideas", Oil, 45⅜ x 31⅞ , 1927 or 1928, (Urvater Collection, Belgium)

51 Tenniel; the Rocking-horse-fly (TTLG, Ch. III)

52 Tenniel; brillig, slithy, tove, gyre, gimble, the wabe, mimsy, a borogove, mome raths, to outgrabe (TTLG, Ch. VI).

53 Tenniel; the Cheshire Cat appears in the sky (AAIW, Ch. VIII)

Illustrations 54 - 57

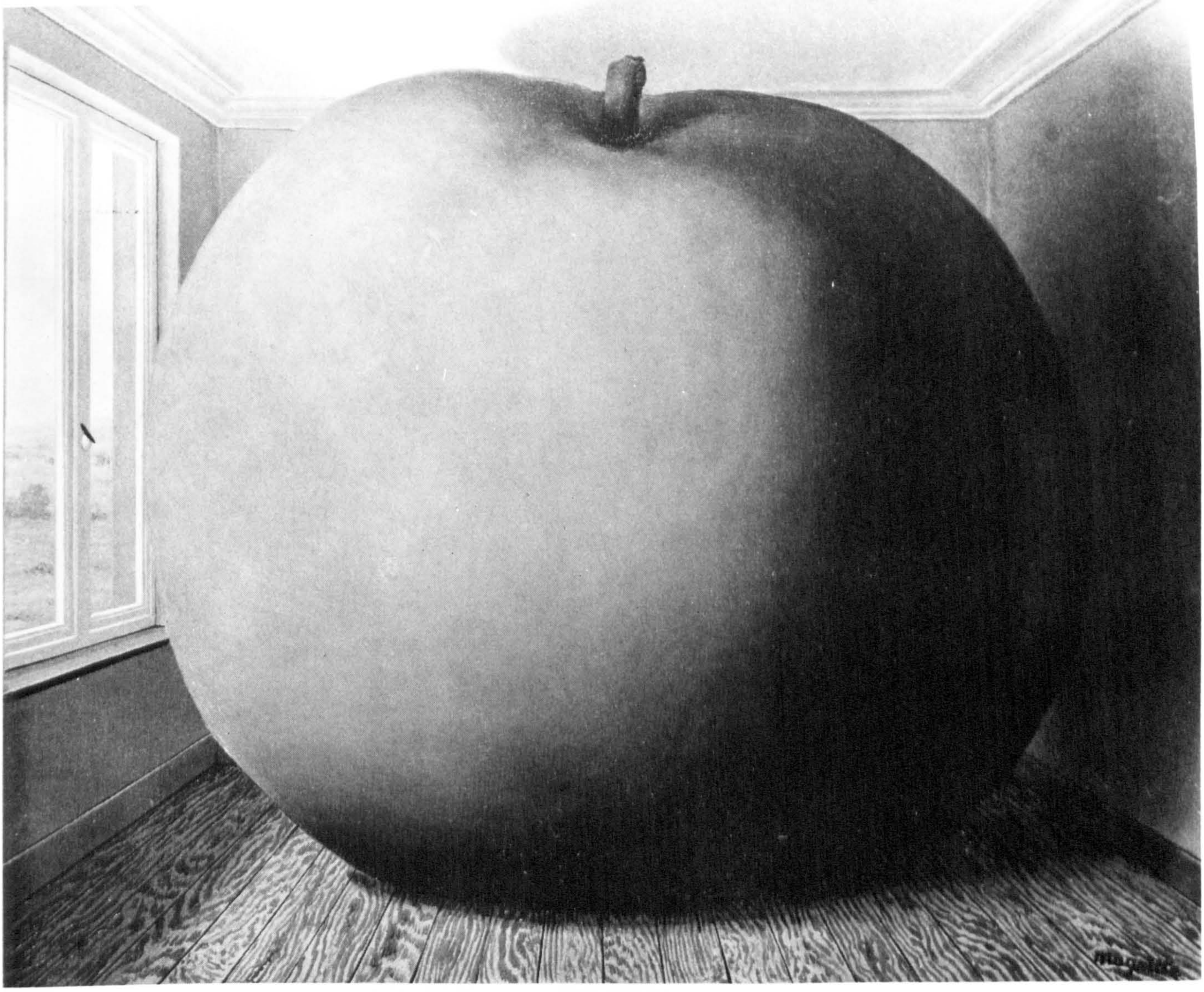
(top to bottom, left to right)

54 Magritte; "La chambre d'écoute"/The Listening Room, Oil, 17¼ x 21¼, 1952 (Collection Philippe de Meriel, Houston, Texas)

55 Tenniel; Alice grows large in White Rabbit's house (AAIW, Ch. I).

56 Tenniel; Alice and the small door to the garden (AAIW, Ch. I)

57 Tenniel; Alice and the White Rabbit (AAIW, Ch. II)



by Wittgenstein. The naming word is seen in this light as a symbol with its own substance and vitality, and consequently can be exchanged with another image or object: as Magritte says "an object is not so possessed of its name that one cannot find for it another which suits it better," - a proposition that brings us back to

> "'... but tell me your name and your business.'
>
> 'My <u>name</u> is Alice, but - '
>
> 'It's a stupid name enough!' Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently. 'What does it mean?'
>
> '<u>Must</u> a name mean something?' Alice asked doubtfully.
>
> 'Of course it must,' Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: 'my name means the shape I am - and a good handsome shape I am - and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.'"
>
> (<u>TTLG</u>, p. 263)

"Humpty Dumpty" does not mean "egg-shaped" of course, except to those intent on believing it; equally "Alice" does not mean "little English girl", and logically she could have any name. (Gablik instances a certain chief of an African tribe who was called Oxford University Press and some girls in Nyasaland whose name was Frigidaire). The central issue for Magritte in particular and the surrealists in general was, as Gablik points out, that

> "... non-paradoxical statements about reality are merely selective conclusions attempting to proclaim that the universe is <u>only</u> this or <u>only</u> that. ... What appears inevitably true in one sense, because it has been endorsed by reason, is an oversimplified and limited notion of the possibilities of experience, since it does not take into

account the ambivalent, paradoxical nature of reality. In Magritte's paintings, everything is directed towards a specific crisis in consciousness, through which the limited evidence of the commonsense world can be transcended ..."

(op. cit., p. 126)

Though Carroll's work cannot be said to be entirely directed towards this crisis, nevertheless, as we have seen, it is one of its central if less earnestly pursued concerns. His sense, moreover, that what is often accepted as truth can be merely a matter of chance rather than investigation in a world where to call in doubt, change, or revise anything is sinful, gives an exchange like the following one its point:

"'What is the cause of lightening?'

'The cause of lightening,' Alice said very decidedly, for she felt quite certain about this, 'is the thunder - no, no!' she hastily corrected herself. 'I mean the other way.'

'It's too late to correct it,' said the Red Queen: 'when you've once said a thing, that fixes it, and you must take the consequences.'"

(TTLG, p. 323)

It was exactly a reaction against the sense that difficult consequences are inevitable with change (so that indeed changes of all kinds were part of the point so that no opinion or idea was considered stable or fixed) that was one of the driving forces behind the surrealists and which made them seek ways in which to celebrate the "ambivalent, paradoxical nature of reality". Again like Carroll, early

on in their experiments they saw that the most potent and provocative method by which to attack the commonsense world and "the selective conclusion attempting to proclaim that the universe is only this or only that" was to deliberately juxtapose alien elements in the way that they are in, for example, "Jabberwocky" or Magritte's paintings. In this way the resultant energy is often more effective (in being nonsense and surrealism) than sense and reality could be, in that the latter could hardly attack themselves unless by negative proof. The classic example of such juxtaposition, and virtually the model for nearly every subsequent surreal work, was the poet Lautremont's image of the fortuitous encounter of an umbrella with a sewing-machine on a dissecting table, which Max Ernst analysed as follows:

> "Let a ready-made reality with a naive purpose apparently settled once for all (i.e. an umbrella) be suddenly juxtaposed to another and no less ridiculous reality (i.e. a sewing-machine) in a place where both must be felt as out of place (i.e. on a dissecting table), and precisely thereby it will be robbed of its naive purpose and its identity; through a relativity it will pass from its false to a novel absoluteness, at once true and poetic: umbrella and sewing-machine will make love. This very simple example seems to me to reveal the mechanism of the process. Complete transmutation followed by a pure act such as the act of love must necessarily occur every time the two given facts make conditions favourable: the pairing of two realities which apparently cannot be paired on a plane not suited to them."
>
> ("Inspiration to Order", reprinted in Beyond Painting, 1948)

Apart from this there was hardly a theoretic surrealist view which was not elaborated and metamorphosed by them

out of recognition, since the whole movement was in part dedicated to the eradication of absolute rules. Thus though Breton's definitions of surrealism changed every few years, this one remained a firm principle of surrealism because it incorporated much of the basic ingredient of its magic. For apart from including the movement's theory of the juxtaposition of alien elements it also pinpointed its inherent throw-away wit (so often used to exasperate the bourgeoisie), and the deliberate avoidance by the movement of "art subjects" and the love of the ephemeral and unheroic. Partially these ideas were inherited from the dadaists whose delight in basic questioning systematically reduced usually accepted norms of art (and much else) to uncertainties as an exercise in wit and cultural anarchy. Partially also though, such ideas were inherited from less strident precursors like Carroll who delighted in "pairing the unpairable" as in

> "He thought he saw an Elephant,
> That practised on a fife:
> He looked again, and found it was
> A letter from his wife.
> 'At length I realise,' he said,
> 'The bitterness of Life.'
>
> ... He thought he saw a Rattlesnake
> That questioned him in Greek:
> He looked again, and found it was
> The Middle of Next Week.
> 'The one thing I regret,' he said,
> 'Is that it cannot speak!'

... He thought he saw an Argument
That proved he was the Pope:
He looked again, and found it was
A bar of Mottled Soap.
'A fact so dread,' he faintly said,
'Extinguishes all hope!' ..."

(From "The Mad Gardener's Song" in SB*)

Aside from actual examples such as this one (and there are many more) Carroll's part in the ancestry of these ideas about the dream, about 'automatism' and about the nature of language is not difficult to determine for his work was well known by the surrealists and commented on by them. Louis Aragon, for example, had translated The Hunting of the Snark into French in 1929 and had written a two page article about Carroll in the magazine Le Surrealismeau service de la revolution in 1931 (number 3, pp. 25 - 6). This essay was rather wild and often inaccurate - it opens for example with the sentence: "Almost nothing is said about Lewis Carroll, who was a professor and wore a fair pointed beard and lived towards the middle of Victoria's reign ..." Actually Carroll was not a professor and did

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*Though there has not been space to include a consideration of him here, the other great 19th century exponent of this technique was, of course, Edward Lear:

"Mrs. Jaypher found a wafer
Which she stuck upon a note;
This she took and gave the cook
Then she went and bought a boat
Which she paddled down the stream
Shouting: "Ice produces cream,
Beer when churned produces butter!
Henceforth all the words I utter
Distant ages thus shall note -
From the Jaypher Wisdom-Boat."

very little teaching, was brown-haired, clean shaven, and lived from 1834 - 98 and since Victoria was on the throne from 1837 - 1901 can be said to have lived nearly his entire life during her reign.* Despite this, Aragon's essay was not without interest in that it drew the surrealist's attention to Carroll and what he had to offer them. The major purpose was to recommend his work because "The success of Alice is perhaps the greatest of modern times from the poetic point of view ... The works of Lewis Carroll, via childhood, are presented for the admiration of men ...". Aragon accordingly suggests editions, complains of abridged French versions and poor translations of Carroll's work and especially recommends the nonsense poetry. He also enjoys the parodies of the pious poems of the bourgoisie, the fact that Alice's adventures all take place during an escape from the restrictive parental or adult Victorian world, and that

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*Unfortunately, however, such mistakes have prejudiced English critics' attention to the relationship between the surrealists and Carroll, the only work of any substance on the subject having been intent mostly on laughing at the blunders. This article, "Lewis Carroll and the Surrealists" (20th Century, Vol. 163 (May 1958), pp. 427 - 34) by Philip Thody, begins from the unworthy premise that:

"What is astounding is the ability of the French to build up intellectual theories about those figures in English literature who seem to us to be least suitable to such treatment. A particular example of this is the case of Lewis Carroll ..." (p. 427)

This, of course, begs the question of what that "case" is; something which, if nothing else, these chapters have tried to show as being at least more interestingly complex than Thody allows.

the school-room is mocked. Such a recommendation to potential French readers was necessary according to Aragon, because "it goes without saying that it is in France, the country of self-complaisant ignorance, that Alice has been less read [than elsewhere]." But, most importantly, Aragon also saw Alice in a kind of English Joan-of-Arc role, delivering the innocent from the horrors of contemporary hypocrisy in a very positive way:

> "In those shameful days of massacres in Ireland, of nameless oppression in the mills - where was now established the ironic compatibility of pleasure and pain advocated by Bentham - when, from Manchester there rose like a challenge, the theory of free-trade, what became of human liberty? It lay wholly in the frail hands of Alice where it had been placed by this curious man Carroll whom no-one mistrusted because he had never said anything irreverent except about chess queens, and because he showed to children the absurdity of a world which exists only on the other side of the looking-glass ..."

Philip Thody takes pleasure in poking fun at such statements and certainly Aragon's rhetoric is ambitious here - though, of course, if compared with Dickens' similar statements in Hard Times for example (in 1854) and those in other of his novels (which as has been shown Carroll probably knew and which were in part the contemporary background to his work) then Aragon's point is not after all so misdirected. What does seem inappropriate except from Aragon's viewpoint, is his implication that Carroll wrote to a formulated political thesis, but even so, though there are no soap-boxes or barricades in Carroll's support for the cause of freedom, there is an implied love for the principle

of imagination that is, in its potential effect, as strong as any party manifesto. At the time though, as now, Aragon was seen as being too stridently committed in his view of Carroll, and in his introduction to an extract from Alice in Wonderland in the Anthologie de l'humour noir, 1939, Breton himself questioned Aragon's insistence on a simple political motive on Carroll's part, preferring a less defined interpretation:

> "It seems no less an abusive distortion to present Lewis Carroll as a "political" rebel than to give his work specific satirical targets. It is pure and simple fraud to insinuate that the substitution of one regime for another might bring to an end such a kind of claim. Carroll's work is more concerned with the basic resistance that the child will always oppose to those who are inclined to form him and consequently reduce him in order to more or less arbitrarily limit his magnificent field of experience. All those who preserve their sense of revolt will recognise in Lewis Carroll the first teacher of how to play truant ..."
>
> (L'Anthologie de l'humour noir, (reprint) 1966, p. 184)

This sense of "basic resistance" rather than a particularised aim and a clear plan of attack detected by Breton here, was in itself attractive to the surrealists. For the lack of a system where this necessarily means the censorship of conflicting notions and the rejection out of hand of other possibilities of approach, was on its own account a championed surrealist cause. For if formulae are abandoned, then the whole experience of life can be seen as having value if viewed by unconditioned eyes (one of the effective points of Duchamp's urinal which out of context we are forced to reconsider as a work of art.)

Nothing, according to the early surrealists, was to be relegated below the level of significance and nothing was seen as being above reproach and questioning (thus the "Mona Lisa" earns a moustache). "The marvellous" wrote Aragon in his Challenge to Painting* "is opposed to the mechanical, to that which is so good that it is no longer noticeable, and thus it is generally believed that the marvellous is the negation of reality. This rather summary view is conditionally acceptable; certainly the marvellous is born of the refusal of one reality [only], but also of the development of a new relationship, a new reality liberated by that refusal."

It follows from this that, like Carroll himself, the surrealists saw that the experiences of childhood - a time when there is no innate or automatic acceptance or refusal of anything that any experience had to offer because none has been inherently instilled - was a period of life to be remembered and even in certain aspects relived. In short, like Carroll, the surrealist movement almost aimed at the re-instatement of something near to child-vision in adulthood. Breton, for example, in the First Manifesto, claimed that:

> "The mind which plunges into surrealism re-lives with glowing excitement the best part of its childhood. For such a mind, it is similar to the certainty with which a person who is drowning reviews once more, in the space of less than a second, all the insurmountable moments of his life. Some may say to me that the parallel is not very

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*In Surrealists on Art, ed. L. R. Lippard, (ed. cit., pp. 36 - 7)

encouraging. But I have no intention of encouraging those who tell me that. From childhood memories, and from a few others, there emanates a feeling of being unintegrated, and then later of _having gone astray_, which I hold to be the most fertile that exists. It is perhaps childhood that comes closest to one's "real life". Childhood, beyond which man has at his disposal, aside from his laissez-passer, only a few complimentary tickets; childhood, where everything nevertheless conspires to bring about the effective, risk-free possession of oneself. Thanks to Surrealism, it seems that opportunity knocks a second time ..."

(In _Surrealists on Art_, ed. cit., p. 25)

The "fertile feeling" of being "unintegrated" and of "having gone astray" is precisely what happens to Alice as she goes through her adventures both in Wonderland and through the looking-glass. She is continually challenged by the marvellous and adjusts to retain her balance and self-possession usually whilst accommodating, not rejecting, what she sees around her. To choose just one example, Alice finds herself in an extremely unstable situation, as unintegrated as anything in a surreal painting's landscape or in Ionesco, Beckett or Genet, when the White Queen perplexes her by turning into a Sheep in charge of a "little dark shop", a fact which Alice is forced to accept ("was it really a _sheep_ sitting on the other side of the counter?"). Accordingly she tries to do what is ordinarily done in shops and buy something in order to restore equilibrium. This Carroll prevents, first by making the goods unstable, then by thwarting her plan to "follow [the article] up to the very ceiling", and then by conjuring the whole shop into a rowing boat and the knitting needles into oars with Alice using them:

"The shop seemed to be full of all manner of curious things - but the oddest part of it all was, that whenever she looked hard at any shelf, to make out exactly what it had on it, that particular shelf was always quite empty: though the others round it were crowded as full as they could hold.

'Things flow about so here!' she said at last in a plaintive tone, after she had spent a minute or so in vainly pursuing a large bright thing, that looked sometimes like a doll and sometimes like a work-box, and was always in the shelf above the one she was looking at. 'And this one is the most provoking of all - but I'll tell you what - ' she added, as a sudden thought struck her, 'I'll follow it up to the very top shelf of all. It'll puzzle it to go through the ceiling, I expect!'

But even this plan failed: the 'thing' went through the ceiling as quietly as possible, as if it were quite used to it.

'Are you a child or a teetotum?' the Sheep said, as she took up another pair of needles. 'You'll make me giddy soon, if you go on turning round like that.' She was now working with fourteen pairs at once, and Alice couldn't help looking at her in great astonishment.

'How can she knit with so many?' the puzzled child thought to herself. 'She gets more and more like a porcupine every minute!'

'Can you row?' the Sheep asked, handing her a pair of knitting-needles as she spoke.

'Yes, a little - but not on land - and not with needles - ' Alice was beginning to say, when suddenly the needles turned into oars in her hands, and she found they were in a little boat, gliding along between banks: so there was nothing for it but to do her best."

(TTLG, pp. 253 - 4)

The giddiness here is not only the sheep's but also must be shared by the reader, especially since the boat subsequently metamorphoses back again into the little shop in which Alice tries to buy an egg which itself eventually turns into Humpty Dumpty. If surrealism can

be broadly defined as "the reconciliation of distant realities on a new and unexpected plane" then, with such sustained bewilderment as we have here as being just a sample from Carroll, it is scarcely surprising that the Alices were a favourite surrealist text and that Alice herself was a special talisman that often featured in their own work. Thus she is a presiding spirit over most of Breton's last large oeuvre, Arcane 17 (transposed into the femme-fée of Bretagne myth, Mélusine); she is found throughout surrealist painting in her role as spectator of marvels; in Dali (who also recently illustrated Alice), Leonor Fini, Hans Bellmer, Leonora Carrington, Toyen and others; she (or someone very like her) features in many of Bunuel's films (especially Viridiana),* and she - or a first cousin - is also to be found in absurd and surreal drama. Max Ernst (the German dadaist and surrealist) was another who was typical of those surrealists who actively responded to Carroll's work - perhaps mainly in that Carroll was at hand as one who had already approached problems that Ernst himself was interested in and that therefore homage was due in the form of illustrations to Carroll's work (both the Alices, the Snark, see illustration 58, and the Game of Logic) and in paintings such as "Pour les amis d'Alice"

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*I am indebted to Robert Short, the co-author of Surrealism, Permanent Revelation, for these instances of Alice's appearance in the surrealist oeuvre. (Private letter to me, dated 29.11.71).

Illustration 58

58 Max Ernst; an illustration for <u>The Hunting of the Snark</u> (Stuttgart, 1968)

("For Alice's Friends", 1957) and "Alice envoie un message aux poissons" ("Alice's Message to the fish", 1964).

By way of a conclusion it might be rightly said that the ideas of the surrealists enumerated in this chapter, though heterogeneous, have affinities with some of Carroll's - in their mutual use of the dream; their employment of "automatism" as a mode of creation; in their exploration of reality by questioning the status quo through challenging ideas of language, logic, time and space; in their admiration of childhood and the child's capacity to perceive new relationships between things and details that escape the flawed adult eye. Most fundamentally a central conviction for both Carroll and the surrealists (and, for that matter, many of the other figures that have been looked at in the course of these chapters) is that thoughts, ideas and feelings do not have to be totally consciously, rationally or logically comprehensible, in order to be communicated. As J. H. Matthews observes:

> "... one does not have to understand Surrealism to participate in its search or in its revelations. There is a logic here that has too often passed unnoticed. Surrealism ceases to be generative at the moment when it becomes explicative. One may go further, and suggest that true Surrealism defies explication, but is no less compelling for that. The response it demands owes nothing to the intervention of the rational mind. The Surrealist image therefore - be it pictorial or verbal - having found release through automatism, makes its appeal not to the mind, or to the aesthetic sense ... but to deeper levels of the human personality, where rejection is instinctive, and acceptance intuitive ..."
>
> (op. cit., p. 97)

The danger of this kind of art is clear and cries of "Emperor's new clothes" have always been voiced by its detractors, especially about Pop art, surrealism's immediate offspring. For this lack of adequate (i.e. conscious, provable) ways in which to judge either nonsense or surrealism has meant that critics have always justifiably been at a loss to finally analyse either because, as we have seen, to compromise and even destroy the weapons of rational certainty has itself been a fundamental preoccupation for both movements; that 'loss' which critics feel has always been part of the point. But to demonstrate also that things are not always just what they seem largely because they are not adequately observed or experienced (since presumption and prejudice is an adult habit) is as much the valid point of a bottle marked "DRINK ME", the contents of which we find tastes of "cherry-tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffy, and hot buttered toast" as it is of a cup, saucer and spoon which we find covered in fur (a 'ready-made' with additions, by Oppenheim of 1936), or a typewriter that has become a "Soft Typewriter" (by Oldenburg, 1963 - 4) and is made not of metal but vinyl. Expectation is foiled in order to jolt the observer's slumbering imagination and demonstrate that classification of the world is not as easy as it is assumed to be, and that the sense of the possible and impossible is often arbitrarily determined by those who have gone before us rather than by our own eyes and experience ("What-is-this?" [said the Unicorn]. "It's as large as life, and twice as

natural!"). In the same way it is because there is essentially little difference in the point that both wish to make, despite there being almost a century that separates them, that Dickens' "A Preliminary Word" to Household Words (30.3.1850) which was quoted in an earlier chapter* and his similar campaign in Hard Times especially resembles the following statement from Magritte in the final number of the surrealist magazine VVV (1944):

> "The principle value of Surrealism seems to me to be that it has reintroduced the marvellous into everyday possibilities. It has taught that if reality seemed baleful and flat it is because mandid not know how to see, his glance was limited by an education deliberately intended to blind him and by an aesthetic censor inherited from past ages ..."
>
> (cit. Matthews, op. cit., p. 144)

The idea that the marvellous is always at hand if only our delimiting expectations can be foiled or perception increased by stimulating the natural (but usually repressed) sense of curiosity, is one which Dickens and surrealists like Magritte obviously have in common with Carroll. Exchanges like the following, for example:

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*i.e.: "No mere utilitarian spirit, no iron binding of the mind to grim realities, will give a harsh tone to our Household Words ... To show to all, that in all familiar things ... there is Romance enough if we will find it out: - to teach the hardest workers at this whirling wheel of toil, that their lot is not necessarily a moody, brutal fact, excluded from the sympathies and graces of imagination ... is one main object of our Household Words ..."

"... 'Now I'll give you something to believe. I'm just one hundred and one, five months and a day.'

'I can't believe that!' said Alice.

'Can't you?' the Queen said in a pitying tone. 'Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes.'

Alice laughed. 'There's no use trying,' she said: 'one can't believe impossible things.'

'I daresay you haven't had much practice,' said the Queen. 'When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast ...'"

(TTLG, p. 251)

have prepared us for "ready-made" sculptures like Duchamp's "Why Not Sneeze" (a bird cage containing lumps of marble cut to resemble sugar cubes, which we are invited to lift and find surprisingly heavy; a seemingly impossible fact that we are forced to believe) and countless other similar surrealist works designed to surprise and perplex us. We are prompted to be wary of our facts and curious about things which are not necessarily what they seem and only remain true because unquestioned, whilst at the same time we are warned to be alive to unforeseen possibilities. Nonsense of Carroll's kind then, like surrealism, uses a brand of disruptive and almost anarchic humour in order to call in question our sense of certainty. Once more the ideal is to induce in the reader a feeling like Alice's after she has read "Jabberwocky":

"... it's rather hard to understand! ... Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas - only I don't exactly know what they are!"

(TTLG, p. 197)

(6) Conclusion

One of the epigraphs which opened these chapters - "every writer creates his own precursors" - was taken from a short essay by J. L. Borges the Argentinian writer who has himself voiced his enthusiasm for Carroll* and whose inventive fantasy stories, because they are themselves full of the absurd and the surreal, makes his an appropriate voice to both begin and end this thesis. More specifically though, the particular two-page essay on Kafka from which the epigraph comes was one which instances a critical method which has been virtually the model on which these chapters are based: that there are resemblances between writers and artists that are almost catalytic in producing further paths that extend beyond their own obvious boundaries. Borges, for example, after citing several texts that have a Kafkaesque quality (from Zeno, Kierkegaard, Browning, Leon Bloy and Lord Dunsany) concludes:

> "... If I am not mistaken, the heterogeneous pieces I have enumerated resemble Kafka; if I am not mistaken, not all of them resemble each other. This second fact is the more significant. In each of these texts we find Kafka's idiosyncrasy to a greater or lesser degree, but if Kafka had never written a line, we would not perceive this quality; in other words it would not exist ... In the critics' vocabulary the word "precursor" is indispensible, but it should be cleansed of all connotations of polemics or rivalry. The fact is that every writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future ..."

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*In Richard Burgin's Conversations with Jean Luis Borges, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1969, p. 55 ff.

On a larger scale, but with the same end in view, this thesis has attempted not only to locate Carroll by comparing him with others who are, as it were, on different floors but in similar rooms, but also, as here with Borges on Kafka, to find the quality in them that is especially Carrollian and locates them all (Dickens, Sterne, Cervantes and the rest) in the very same building. The Carrollian quality in Dickens or Magritte, for example, did not exist until he started to write and in a sense was created by him and the recognition of this quality as a common factor leads to the observation that they have up to now been largely silent and unacknowledged neighbours. Though, of course, it would be erroneous to claim that all the figures looked at during the course of these chapters have a great deal in common that is mutually illuminating (clearly, despite Carroll, Sterne does not share the same corridor with Arthur Hughes for example) there is nevertheless enough that links many of them to be able to gain some important information about just where Carroll himself is located. Indeed it has been possible to place him in a tradition and context that, though not historically sequential in the ordinary sense, does emphasise the pattern of thought of which he is an important part and which has itself been generated from and generative for the pattern both before and after him, and is, moreover, one which doubtless will have a continued future life. Martin Esslin,

for instance, in his <u>The Theatre of the Absurd</u> has devoted a long chapter on "The Tradition of the Absurd", and in it catalogues an enormous number of those who have employed the absurd or nonsense in their work. He cites figures seemingly as far apart as Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Grimaldi, Dan Leno, Joham Nestroy, The Keystone Cops, Büchner, Chaplin, Samuel Johnson, Buster Keaton, Charles Lamb, The Marx Brothers, Monsieur Hulot, Raimund, Grabbe, Rabelais, Victor Hugo, Corbet, Morgenstern, Thomas Hood, Wilhelm Busch, Lichtenburg, Mark Twain, Ring Lardner, Flaubert, S. J. Perelman, T. S. Eliot, Swift, Kafka as well as Carroll and Lear of course, and many dadaists, surrealists and the playwrights of the absurd (Beckett, Adamov, Ionesco, Genet, Pinter) and many, many others. This list is one which will also do very well as a family tree for Carroll's work, the more recent branches of which are more vigorous and extensive than ever before, partially because Carroll's <u>Alice</u> has enabled us both to appreciate its ancestors and has thereby generated successors: because we wait for the Snark we are also willing to wait for Godot; because we have learnt not to expect Godot we are also in a better position to understand the Snark. Partially also, and perhaps more influentially, fantasy and the absurd have been legitimised for art because science has a comparatively new trust in the dream, and the child and his perceptions have become a focus of attention and analysis for modern educationalists.

The approaches made to Carroll's work in these chapters have had to be selective.* To define with any accuracy the specific ways leading to and from his breakthrough is difficult and essentially unnecessary beyond this list of names, simply because Carroll's effect, though coupled with other ideas, somehow often brings life and energy to many of the individual instances we might choose to examine closely. It is often inappropriate to make strong claims, but the lines in Eliot's Burnt Norton, for example, about the footfalls that "echo in the memory / Down the passage which we did not take / Towards the door we never opened / Into the rose garden" echo Carroll's rose

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*One area of Carroll's interest in particular has been deliberately neglected in this study; this is his love of the theatre. This has been done primarily because, as Jerome Buckley has observed "The theatre, from Macready to Irving, was completely dominated [in Victorian England] by the star system; the play as a rule was written for the leading actor and directed to his best advantage, since producer and spectator were alike more concerned with the versatile protagonist than with coherent story or firm structure, most significant attempts at dramatic art were doomed from the first to failure ..." (The Victorian Temper, pp. 132 - 3). The effect of such "art" is also difficult to assess since it was essentially ephemeral. Nevertheless we might trace some of Carroll's preoccupations (especially in the melodramatic Sylvie and Bruno volumes) in Michael R. Booth's definition in his English Melodrama, (Herbert Jenkins, 1965, p. 14):

> "Essentially, melodrama is a dream world inhabited by dream people and dream justice, offering audiences the fulfilment and satisfaction found only in dreams."

The second reason for the neglect of this aspect of Carroll's interests is that it has been dealt with fully by Hudson and Lennon in their biographies of Carroll, and it is more of biographical interest than anything else.

garden in Alice in Wonderland a fact that Eliot himself has admitted.* The one certainty is that almost everyone has read Carroll's masterpieces, a fact that their incredible popularity ensured and Bertrand Russell's experience seems a good example to cite. In a radio panel discussion in 1941 he explained:

> "I was brought up on the two [Alice] books. Through the Looking Glass was published the year I was born, and they were still comparatively recent books when I was young. I was brought up with first editions, which I had in the nursery. It didn't occur to anybody that they had any value and I just had them to wear out. I knew them by heart from an early age. [All the children in my generation] knew them by heart." †

Just as surely as having read them, so also everyone has had moments that were somehow like Alice's, and these two factors combined are yet another reason for the effectiveness of Carroll's work which is out of all proportion with its length. The key to this as we have seen elsewhere and as Virginia Woolf (possibly another Carrollian descendant) has noted, was that Carroll's life even when he was an adult contained an indestructible sense of childhood:

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*In conversation with Louis Martz (cit. Unger, Leonard; T. S. Eliot, a Selected Critique, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1948, p. 448). Another essay that links T. S. Eliot and Carroll is Elizabeth Sewell's "Lewis Carroll and T. S. Eliot as Nonsense Poets" (Repr. Kenner, Hugh; T. S. Eliot, A Collection of Critical Essays, Prentice Hall, 1962, pp. 65 - 72).

†cit. The New Invitation to Learning ed. Van Doren, Mark, New Home Library, N.Y., 1944, p. 209.

"... And this is very strange, for childhood normally fades slowly ... But it was not so with Lewis Carroll ... it lodged in him whole and entire and therefore he could do what no one else has ever been able to do - he could return to that world; he could recreate it, so that we too become children ... It is for this reason that the two Alices are not books for children; they are the only books in which we become children. President Wilson, Queen Victoria, The Times leader writer, the late Lord Salisbury - it does not matter how old, how important or how insignificant you are, you become a child again. To become a child is to be very literal; to find everything so strange that nothing is surprising; to be heartless, to be ruthless, yet to be so passionate that a snub or a shadow drapes the world in gloom. It is so to be Alice in Wonderland ..."

(Collected Essays, I, 254 - 5)

It is so also to be, as Vladimir Nabokov puts it in his masterly Ada or Ador: A Family Chronicle (1969), "Ada in Adaland" who is yet another cousin of Alice's. Though the list of such kinships is endless, Carroll's influence on Nabokov might well be taken as an appropriate sample in order to indicate its quality and extent. Thus when Nabokov writes "The nostalgia I have been cherishing all these years is a hypertrophied sense of lost childhood", and (as was earlier noted) one of his first publications was a translation of Alice into Russian (Anya v strane chudes, Berlin, 1923) which his novels and his critics affirm has had an essential effect on him,* then he can

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*"There is one writer translated by Nabokov with whom he has a strong and clear affinity - Lewis Carroll ... " Andrew Field, Nabokov, his life in Art, 1967, p. 266.

"His Russian version of Alice in Wonderland ... has long been recognised as one of the keys to the whole Nabokov oeuvre ..." George Steiner, "Extraterritorial" in Nabokov, Criticisms, Reminiscences etc. ed. Appel and Newman, 1971, p. 122.

be one means of also estimating Carroll's influence on current literature. We find moreover that Nabokov shares other interests with Carroll such as a devotion to chess and its logic; (see The Defence) and has lectured on Dickens and "acknowledged his special affection and respect for Sterne"* (a fact that shows itself most obviously in narrative manipulations and the deliberate pseudo-scholarly devices, especially in Bend Sinister and Pale Fire[/]). In Nabokov's work moreover there are particular references to the Alices usually at the rate of at least once per novel, to claim them as a touchstone for his own success, and there is a sense in which Nabokov's magic is especially effective because, though his repertoire is all his own, it is performed on a stage on which Carroll himself also once appeared.

Another literary figure for whom this is perhaps even more true was James Joyce. James Atherton, for example, in his study of the literary allusions in Finnegans Wake, The Books at the wake (Faber, 1959), is in no doubt about the importance of Carroll and his work to Joyce, and devotes a whole chapter (one of seven on literary sources) to "Carroll, the unforeseen precursor". Though Joyce's attention was drawn to Carroll after he was well into the writing of

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*See "A Conversation with Vladimir Nabokov", Twentieth Century, 1959.

[/]See Frank Kermode, Puzzles and Epiphanies, 1962.

Finnegans Wake,* Atherton makes it clear that once discovered, Joyce began to look closely at Carroll and his work, especially the Alices and Collingwood's Life and Letters. The result was significant:

> "Joyce's situation at this stage, when confronted with the work of Lewis Carroll, was something like Captain Scott's when he reached the South Pole to discover that Amundsen's flag was already there ..."
>
> (op. cit., pp. 127 - 8)

Carroll had arrived earlier at a whole range of discoveries and experiments that Joyce subsequently used: portmanteau words, palindromes, "Doublets", word condensing and accretion, anagram names, fake etymology, mock logic, punning, punctuation variations, typographical devices and

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*Finnegans Wake was started in 1923 and not finished for publication until 1939. In a letter dated 31.5.1927 Joyce said that he had never read Carroll "till Mrs. Nutting gave me a book, not Alice, a few weeks ago - though, of course, I heard bits and scraps ... I will read Carroll when I get back ..." (Letters ed. Stuart Gilbert, Faber, 1957, p. 255). He wrote later to Harriet Shaw Weaver:

> "I have been reading about the author of "Alice". A few things about him are rather curious. He was born a few miles from Warrington (Daresbury) and he had a strong stutter and when he wrote he inverted his name like Tristan and Swift. His name was Charles Lutwidge of which he made Lewis (i.e. Ludwig) Carroll (i.e. Carolus)."
>
> (Letters ed. Richard Ellman, Faber, 1966, III, 174)

A few months later and Joyce was again writing about Carroll:

> ... "I also solved L.C.'s problem about the creatures. On thinking it over I suspect the Jabberwock is really a transformation of the Cheshire cat which was all grin: C.f. "the claws that scratch" etc. and Longtime the Manx-mome foe he sought." Now the least manx cat is short of a tail so I suppose a manxmost cat has neither head nor tail. ..."
>
> (Letter dated 22.5.1928, ibid., I, 262).

numerous others. But as Atherton also spotted, it was not simply in verbal similarities, but in the foundation of an entire dream world with similar freedoms of movement, association and metamorphosis, that Joyce was following Carroll. Since many of these ideas have already been discussed in earlier chapters,* and in any case Atherton's volume makes another rehearsal unnecessary, it will be sufficient to note here Joyce's other interest in Carroll; the abundance of his child-friends and his enormous success with them. Joyce seems to have been in no doubt what he thought about this aspect of Carroll (his "lewd's carol" has already been quoted), but in any case an objective appraisal of Carroll's life story was irrelevant for his purpose, which was to make Carroll a part of the texture of his own work, to add to Swift and King Mark another element

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*It is interesting to note how many of the figures already discussed here in the Carrollian context also found their way into Finnegans Wake, for example, Cervantes ("sansa pagar" 404.11. (all page and line references are to the standard Faber 1939 text); "queasy quizzers of his ruful continence" 198. 35); Dickens ("Doveyed Covetfilles", 434. 28; "The old cupiosity shape" 434. 30); Breton ("breretonbiking" 437. 6.) and Laurence Sterne ("treestirm shindy" 621. 36). Sterne especially seems relevant to Finnegans Wake since Tristram Shandy has so many of the typographical devices and jokes as well as the verbal similarities and narrative techniques, which Joyce himself acknowledged:

> "... I might easily have written this story in the traditional manner. Every novelist knows the recipe. It is not very difficult to follow a simple, chronological scheme which the critics will understand. But I, after all, am trying to tell the story of the Chapelizod family in a new way ... There is nothing paradoxical about this. Only I am trying to build many planes of narrative within a single esthetic purpose. Did you ever read Laurence Sterne?"

(cit. David Thomson; Wild Excursions, The Life and Fiction of Laurence Sterne, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972, fn.p.57).

of the father figure in Finnegans Wake. Likewise Alice is identified as one element of an elaborately concocted symbol of the Virgin (with "Iseult, the dissociated personality girl Christine Beauchamp, and Swift's two Stellas" according to Atherton), so that both she and Carroll are metamorphosed into the Joycean landscape:

"And there many have paused before that exposure of him by old Tom Quad, a flashback in which he sits sated, gowndabout, in clericalease habit, watching bland sol slithe dodgsomely into the nethermore, a globule of maugdleness about to corrugitate his mild dewed cheek and the tata of a tiny victorienne, Alys, pressed by his limper looser."

(Finnegans Wake, 57. 23.)

Here, as Atherton notes, are Carrollian references to sexual and photographic exposure; the place where Carroll lived for many years in "Tom Quad"; photography again in "flashback"; his cocooning dress in "gowndabout in clericalease habit; Jabberwocky ... in "slithe"; his real name in "dodgsomely"; his wistful sentimentality in "maugdleness" (from "maudlin"?) and of course Alice in "Alys". Another similar attack is noticed by Atherton in:

"... Ignorant invincibles, innocents immutant! Onzel grootvatter Lodewijk is onangonamed before the bridge of primerose and his twy Isas Boldmans is met the blueybells near Dandeliond. We think its a gorsedd shame, these godoms ..."

(Ibid., 361. 20)

Here "Isas Boldmans" is undoubtedly Isa Bowman the young actress who first played Alice on the stage; "Grootvatter" is nearly the Dutch for Great Father or grandfather; "Lodewijk" is Dutch for Lewis; "Onaangenaam"

is Dutch for "disagreeable" but also carries the suggestion of onanism as does "Godom" of Sodom.

These are only two examples of Joyce's use of Carroll and things Carrollian; others that need no explanation are; "Jest jibberweek's joke" (565.14); "my linkingclass girl" (459.4); "Secilas through their linking classes" (526.35); "Alicious, twinstreams, twinestraines, through alluring glass or alas in jumboland ..." (527.17); "Alesse, the lagos of girly days!" (203.8) amongst many other "loose carolleries" (294.7).

Indeed this last pun is a suggestive indication of how Carroll and his work were to be part of the enriching background to Joyce's novel, a keynote to be often sounded, but not a finite symbol.* If Joyce seems to wink and nudge overmuch at the nude photography ("What had she on , the liddel oud oddity?" 207.26) and at Carroll's friendships with little girls, it is primarily because he needs that particular element in Dodgson as a "carollerie" to events in his own novel. Atherton argues that the other reason even stems from a need for a kind of revenge; the avant-garde innovator Joyce satirising the stuffy mid-Victorian in minor Anglican orders who had anticipated him! If that is what it was nevertheless Joyce's love/hate fascination with Carroll

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*Indeed Joyce seems to satirise those who wish to specify the symbols in Alice as "we grisly old Sykos who have done our unsmiling bit on alices, when they were yung and easily freudened, in the penumbra of the procuring room and what oracular comepæssion we have had apply to them! ..." (115.21).

meant that "All old Dadgerson's dodges one conning one's copying and that's what wonderland's wanderlad'll flaunt to the fair" (371.1). It is for this reason that so many of Carroll's characters find their way into Finnegans Wake, simultaneously celebrated and disguised; for example, the White Knight; "Whitest night ever mortal saw" (501.31), "Hatter's hares" (83.1), "Muckstails turtles" (393.11), the messenger Hatta (383.36), the "Stew of the evening, booksyful stew" (268.14), the cook; "I am a quean. Is a game over? The game goes on. Cook cook!" (269.21), the caterpillar; "Mr Lhugewhite Cadderpollard" (350.10), the White Rabbit; "O my goodmiss! O my greatmess! O my prizelestly presholes!" (237.7), Humpty Dumpty; "Bothall-choractorschumminaroundgansumuminarumdrumstrumtrumtruminah-umptadumptadumpwaultoproofoolooderamaunsturnup!" (314.8), and almost everybody else from "tweedledeedums down to twiddledeedees" (258.24). Moreover, in passages such as:

> "Though Wondelawn's lost us for ever. Alis, alas, she broke the glass! Liddell lokker through the leafery, ours is mistery of pain ..." (270.19)

- Joyce also cleverly isolates the sadness of Carroll's world, with its inherent sense of melancholy and transience, and it is this sympathy that should allow us to forgive as a joke his gleeful cry "lewd's carol!"

In the final analysis however neither the boundaries of Carroll's territory stretching backwards or forwards from his own particular creative years can be wholly defined: N. F. Simpson himself compares his A Resounding Tinkle to "a regimental sergeant major reciting Jabberwocky over and over again through a megaphone"* and Alice seems to have left her mark on the pupil in Ionesco's play The Lesson and on Albee's play Tiny Alice, quite as much as Swift's maps of Gulliver's travels have influenced the Bellman's charts. Alistaire Crowley features the Alices and The Snark in the bibliography to his book Magick, and there are Carrollian elements in the work of the American fantasist James Branch Cabell, just as there are moments in Carroll's work that are anticipated in Baron Munchausen's adventures. Robert Bresson's films such as Le Journal d'un curé de campagne (1950) and Mouchette (1966) have young girls in them who seem to echo certain aspects of Alice herself; the painter Robyn Denny uses "titles from Alice in Wonderland to suggest the stepping through into that other life"† (paintings such as Drink Me (1965) and Garden (1966 - 7)). In the same way Jean Cocteau's mirrors in his film Orphée, or the living candelabra in the film Beauty and the Beast, seem to have elements of similar objects in the Alices, and, of course,

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*See Eslin, Theatre of the Absurd, p. 292.

†Thompson, David, Robyn Denny, Penguin New Art 3, Penguin, 1971, p. 21.

Carroll has also had an enormous effect on other fantasy stories, especially those written for children. To trace his specific effect is an endless task since an idea does not have a definable mortality. For though Carroll's work is part of a locsely formed tradition as we have seen, and though he is owed more by his descendants than he owes to his predecessors, the conclusion that must be made is that his effect has been so elemental as to be in the very bloodstream of literature and art.

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ERRATA

Page/line.	
Abstract/2	for "eccentricity" read "eccentric".
1/35	add "The full text of the Diaries has never been printed but is available on microfilm. There is a copy in the Dodgson Family collection, which was kindly loaned to me through the express permission of Mr Philip Jaques, the executor of the Dodgson estate. The original Diaries (called "Private Journals" by Carroll) are in the British Museum. See also p.306 f.n. "
8/9	for "are" read "is".
12/14	The obituary notice was not written by him; it was his obituary sermon for Dickens that was reported in The Times.
17/f.n.	delete.
24/2	are (sic).
27/17	for "that" read "when".
28/26	for "magicing" read "magicking".
30/23	delete "back".
32/30	for "Nurse's" read "Nurses'".
34/1	delete "the".
34/4	for "c.f." read "a parody of".
38/4	delete "A".
38/6	for "phenomena" read "phenomenon".
38/23	for "to" read "in".
38/f.n.2	for "Cheprells" read "Cheppell's".
40/6	for "enter" read "go through".
40/7	for "into" read "enter".
40/f.n.	after "Letters" read "ed.".
41/1	for first line read "emphasis on rationality and fact precipitated by the Industrial Revolution".
41/19	for "not" read "neither"; for "or" read "nor".
45/4	for "skillfully" read "skilfully".
48/f.n.	underline "Cornhill Magazine".
56/6	for "to" read "from".
63/8	add reference; "(Letter to Dr. Trusler, 23/8/1799)".
63/f.n. line 6	delete first "the".
68/8-9	for "most readily found uniquely" read "principally found".
68/31	for "in their ineffability" read ", because ineffable".
69/11	for "as we have already discussed" read "as has been noted".
70/23	for "encomium" read "self-justification".
71/18	for "know" read "known".
73/4	for "which perhaps was" read "and".
73/8	for "by" read "but".
75/16	for "perceptive" read perceptual".
76/7	for "at" read "against".
77/30	for "wild" read "wide".
77/32	delete "the".
77/21	for "nature" read "nurture".
77/23	for "the" read "that".
77/34	for "than a change" read "than to effect a change".
79/f.n.1	for "surrealists" read "surrealist's"; for "only in" read "was only in".
84/11	for "disect" read "dissect".
87/16	for "randering" read "rendering".
87/17	delete "simultaneously".
90/9	for "hear" read "heard".

99/19	add page reference; "p.275".
100/23	for "are" read "is".
101/22	for "and ignore or hide" read "and the ignoring and hiding of".
103/14	for "Deadlock" read "Dedlock".
104/8	for "she is" read "she herself is".
121/13	for "Philipe" read "Philippe".
124/33	for "through" read "for".
127/14	for "in" read "into".
128/19	delete "contemporary".
149/37	for "for" read "in".
163/22	for "unvulnerable" read "invulnerable".
174/25	for "been" read "seen".
185/14	for "is" read "it".
198/19	for "polyamathic" read "polymathic".
216/27	for "Mrs" read "Lady".
223/6	close bracket after "admired".
225/19	delete "(edited by Dickens)".
226/13-14	for "nineteenth-century obscurantists" read "obscurantists, lovers of nineteenth-century minor literature".
226/19	add "because they give us vital clues about the deficiencies of his art."
240/f.n.	for "this view" read "an affinity, since Carroll also read Poe as well as MacDonald; he had in his library..." etc.
249/6	for "be" read "by".
253/6	delete "astoundingly".
258/22	for "out into" read "towards the realm of".
266/27	for "sissors" read "scissors".
272/21	add "that was mentioned earlier" after "entry".
277/19	for "danty" read "dainty".
296/13	for "possible" read "possibly".
302/5	for"""Alice"" read ""Alice...""
311/3	for "besides" read "apart from".
314/7	for "feminity" read "femininity".
315/28	open quotation before "My Dear Janey".
322/26	for "fallacious" read "erroneous".
322/30	for "quoted" read "cit".
323/6	for "then" read "so".
326/20	for "Life and Letters" read "<u>Life and Letters</u>".
330/14	for "averted from" read "stops short of".
340/6	for "medievalism" read "medievalism and other golden ages".
349/7	for "Ascherbach" read "von Aschenbach".
352/11	for "flowers <u>admonish</u>" read "<u>flowers</u> admonish".
352/14	for "fence" read "fences".
355/33	for "plagarism" read "plagiarism".
359/21	for "Quoted in" read "cit".
364/12	for "alse" read "else".
366/12	for "fell" read "feel".
378/15-16	for "lightening" read "lightning".
379/12	for "Lautremont" read "Lautreamont".
381/15	for "Surrealism" read "Surrealisme".
392	mark page number "392a".
392/3	add reference; ""Kafka and his precursors", reprinted in <u>Labyrinths</u> (Penguin, 1971, pp.234-6."
404/10	for "Alistaire" read "Alistair".
404/21	for "Orphée" read "<u>Orphée</u>".
404/f.n.	for "Eslin" read "Esslin".
407/18	for "Rhyme and Reason" read "Rhyme? and Reason?"
408/1	add "(cyclostyled by Dodgson, see <u>LCH</u> p.92.)"

408/7	add "(published by Dodgson; one copy known, see LCH p.166)".
408/10	add "Macmillan".
408/12	add "(published by Dodgson, see LCH p.175)".
408/13	add "(published by Dodgson; one copy known, see LCH p.176)".
408/16	for "Symbolic Logic" read "Symbolic Logic, part I, Elementary".
408/17-18	add "(published by Dodgson, see LCH p.184)".
413/10	for "Calfornia" read "California".
414/8	for "Weidenfeld" read "Weidenfeld and Nicolson".