

silence, the Cat's remark may be the answer she has been groping toward in her incessant question, "who am I?" As an alter ego, the Cat is wiser than Alice—and safer—because he is the only character in the book who is aware of his own madness. In his serene acceptance of the fury within and without, his total control over his appearance and disappearance, he almost suggests a post-analytic version of the puzzled Alice.

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We return once more to the anomaly of Carroll's Alice, who explodes out of Wonderland hungry and unregenerate. By a subtle dramatization of Alice's attitude toward animals and toward the animal in herself, by his final resting on the symbol of her mouth, Carroll probed in all its complexity the underground world within the little girl's pinafore. The ambiguity of the concluding trial finally, and wisely, waives questions of original guilt or innocence. The ultimate effect of Alice's adventures implicates her, female child though she is, in the troubled human condition; most Victorians refused to grant women and children this respect. The sympathetic delicacy and precision with which Carroll traced the chaos of a little girl's psyche seems equalled and surpassed only later in such explorations as D. H. Lawrence's of the young Ursula Brangwen in *The Rainbow*, the chaos of whose growth encompasses her hunger for violence, sexuality, liberty, and beatitude. In the imaginative literature of its century, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* stands alone.

MARAH GUBAR

Reciprocal Aggression[†]

* * *

Crucially, one of the adult ideas Alice resists most vehemently during her adventures is the message that she should remain a child forever. "Now if you'd asked *my* advice," Humpty Dumpty pompously observes, "I'd have said 'Leave off at seven.'" Unmoved by this absurd proposal, Alice indignantly informs him that "I never ask advice about growing" and—when he continues to press her—she firmly changes the subject: "They had had quite enough about the subject of age, she thought." Similarly, when the officious railway guard tells her, "You're traveling the wrong way," Alice completely

[†] From *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 120–24. Copyright © 2009 by Oxford University Press, Inc. Reproduced by permission of the licensor through PLSclear.

ignores this complaint, even when another gentleman on the train seconds it by suggesting that she take a return ticket. "Indeed I sha'n't!" Alice retorts, and a few pages later she reaffirms her commitment to moving forward: "for I certainly won't go *back*."

Rather than interpreting such moments as unproblematic evidence for Carroll's own desire to arrest the girlchild in place, we should instead recognize that they represent his willingness to grapple, quite self-consciously, with the question of how damaging this particular adult yearning is, and how young people should respond to it. In other words, Carroll acknowledges this arresting impulse as one of the impositions that pushy adults place on children. What should children do when confronted with such nudging? If we assume that Alice is intended to function as a positive role model, the foregoing incidents send the message that young people should refuse to listen to such nonsense and get away from the adult in question as fast as possible. Alice's encounter with the White Knight toward the end of *Through the Looking-Glass* likewise promotes this idea. Many critics maintain that the White Knight functions as a stand-in for Carroll, interpreting his determination to hold Alice prisoner as an admission of the author's own longing to freeze the child in place. Indeed, this scene does stage a skirmish between an adult who wants to capture and slow down a child and the child herself, who is determined to move forward and graduate to more grown-up status: "I don't want to be anybody's prisoner," Alice announces, "I want to be a Queen."

What critical accounts of this scene rarely acknowledge is that this conflict is *instantly* resolved in favor of Alice; in response to her declaration, the Knight promptly gives up his claim on her and agrees to help her move forward: "So you will, when you've crossed the next brook. . . . I'll see you safe to the end of the wood—and then I must go back." Like many other scenes in the *Alice* books, then, this one invites children to regard adult desires as something they can say no to: it is less about arrest than about *resisting* arrest, something Alice does over and over again during the course of her adventures. Constantly disengaging herself from a variety of unpleasant interactions, Alice operates as an escape artist from the very first scene—in which she flees the prosaic company of her sister—to the final moments of both adventures, when she busts out of the chaotic fantasyland created by Carroll.

Moreover, Carroll strongly implies that Alice is right to resist the pressure to remain childlike by introducing readers to a number of characters who are absurd and unattractive precisely because they are cases of arrested development. Although they are clearly identified as "men," for example, the Tweedle brothers look "like a couple of great school-boys" and behave like infants; besides their fussing and fighting over a rattle, their extreme egotism leads Alice to denounce

them as "Selfish things!" They and the equally querulous Humpty Dumpty are literally arrested; when Alice first sees the Tweedles, they stand so still that she forgets they are alive and gazes at them as if they are "wax-works." Here Carroll links being frozen in place with being objectified; elsewhere he goes so far as to link this state with death. When Alice spots Humpty Dumpty, his expression is so "fixed" that she assumes "he must be a stuffed figure." Although this embryonic character tries to persuade Alice of the benefits of remaining frozen at an early age, his own dire fate demonstrates the nonviability of that kind of life. By emphasizing the self-centeredness of these childlike figures, Carroll anticipates [J. M.] Barrie's un-Romantic habit of associating eternal innocence with "heartless" egocentrism.

Despite these indications that Carroll intends to deride the adult yearning for eternal youth, the characterization of the White Knight shows how conflicted he remains in regard to this issue. A decidedly childish figure himself, the Knight seems designed to elicit amused sympathy rather than harsh ridicule. Although he clearly desires to detain Alice and delay her development, this "gentle," "mild," "kindly" figure is hardly portrayed as a villain. Indeed, the narrator informs us that in later years, Alice recalls the occasion of listening to his song very fondly. Moreover, however problematic the Knight's desire to control and arrest Alice may be, this "foolish" character is so ineffectual, so easy to resist, that such solicitations wind up seeming fairly harmless. Yet at the same time, *** this scene rather ruthlessly exposes and mocks the tendency of narcissistic adults to assume ownership over and project their own feelings onto children. Wandering through the world "with his eyes shut, muttering to himself," the Knight ignores and misreads Alice, making this one of many scenes in the second *Alice* book that explore the "subjective distortions by which we remake others into imaginary self-reflections."¹

Moreover, by having the White Knight spout a parody of Wordsworth, Carroll associates such self-involved fantasizing specifically with Romantic discourse. Like so many other interpolated texts in the *Alice* books, the Knight's song dwells on the perils of entering into a relationship characterized by fake or failed mutuality. In it, Carroll sends up the self-absorption of the poet-narrator of "Resolution and Independence" (1807), suggesting that his efforts to draw the old leech-gatherer into conversation do not attest to any desire for genuine communication or reciprocity. Thus, in Carroll's version, the Wordsworthian narrator ignores everything the "aged aged man" says in response to his questions. His extreme egotism is hilarious, but the parody conveys a real concern that artists, in their narcissism, can

actually harm the hapless objects of their attention. Thus, Carroll's poet-narrator physically abuses the subject of his tale, shaking the old man "from side to side, / Until his face was blue" and accompanying his often-reiterated question with violence: "I cried, 'Come, tell me how you live!' / And thumped him on the head."

As Ruth Berman notes, Carroll's phrasing here recalls another Wordsworth poem in which the object under interrogation is a child; in "Anecdote for Fathers" (1798), the speaker repeatedly demands that his child explain himself ("Why? Edward, tell me why?") while physically accosting him ("I said and took him by the arm") [lines 48, 26]. Rather unfairly, Carroll suggests that the Wordsworthian narrator is himself unaware of how his desires constrain the liberty, self-expression, and well-being of his child addressee. Keen to avoid what he views as a highly unself-conscious and aggressive authorial stance, Carroll repeatedly emphasizes his own recognition that being figured as the subject of other people's imaginings can constitute a painful form of subjection for the child.²

Indeed, Alice so dislikes the idea of belonging to another person's dream that a few scenes after she tearfully dismisses this possibility as "nonsense," she contemplates going back to rouse the Red King in order to reassure herself that her Wonderland adventure really is "*my* dream"—and this despite the fact that the Tweedles have warned her that waking him up might make her vanish like a blown-out candle. Just as Carroll's photographs often alert viewers to his own invisible presence, the many moments in the *Alice* books that raise the possibility that Alice is "fabulous" rather than "real" draw our attention to the author hovering behind the scenes. Indeed, the very last line of *Through the Looking-Glass* invites such exposure; although it asks child readers to decide whether the Red King or Alice dreamed up the preceding story, an astute audience member might well propose another answer entirely.

* * *

Carroll's decision to represent Alice as immersed in discourse not of her own making and his habit of dwelling on his heroine's artificiality—her status as a figment of someone else's imagination—are closely related. If we acknowledge that outside influences strongly shape selfhood, we must face the possibility that even our dreams are not our own—an idea that might make anyone weep. Alice's tears attest to how painful it is to conceive of oneself as a scripted being

1. U. C. Knoepfelmacher, *Ventures into Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1998), 222.
2. Ruth Berman, "White Knight and Leech Gatherer: The Poet as Boor," *Mythlore* 33 (Autumn 1982): 29–31. As Berman notes, this is a very unsympathetic reading of Wordsworth, since the father himself recognizes that he has dealt with his son in a rough, insensitive way at the end of "Anecdote for Fathers." Clearly, Wordsworth was not incapable of perceiving the boorishness of his own narrators.

rather than an autonomous, totally authentic agent. Yet rather than regard this problem as unique to childhood, Carroll conceives of such belatedness as another point of connection between young and old. For the White Knight scene vividly illustrates that children are not the only ones imbued with ideologies not of their own making; adults, too, must cope with their profound unoriginality. Although the Knight prides himself on his power of invention, his ideas are either absurd or—in the case of his song—derivative. Not only does the plot of his poem come from Wordsworth, “the tune *isn't* his own invention”; according to the highly acculturated Alice, “it’s ‘*I give thee all, I can no more.*’” Adults, Carroll suggests, absorb, conform to, and improvise on various cultural influences, too, including and especially the kind of Romantic discourse about childhood that he himself frequently reiterates, reanimates, and caricatures.

Such keen recognition about the difficulty of being genuinely inventive and innovative might help explain why Carroll never allows his heroine to evolve into a full-fledged creative agent. Despite her willingness to say no, Alice ultimately remains a relatively unresistant reader: just as she wants to echo Watts when she first arrives in Wonderland, so too she promises after her final departure to “repeat ‘The Walrus and the Carpenter’” to Dinah the next morning. And although Carroll flirts with the idea that children can wrest away the pen, he does not really take it seriously as a genuine possibility. It is grown-ups who control the world of children’s fiction, as Alice herself recognizes. ***

ELIZABETH SEWELL

[The Game of Nonsense]†

A game may presumably be regarded as an independent system with its own brand of relationship structure. Chance may enter into it, but it is not necessarily an essential element. *** A game is, if considered in the abstract, a system in the mind, requiring at least one mind for the playing of it, requiring also, and this is important, a set of objects, or one single object, with which it is to be played. It appeals to an undying instinct in human beings of all ages, gives delight while limiting emotion to that generated by the game itself, resists intrusion and affords the mind a clearly defined field in which to carry on the activity proper to the game in hand.

† From *The Field of Nonsense* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1952), pp. 3, 5–6, 23–26, 37–38, 41–42, 46, 48, 53–54, 121–22, 128–29. Copyright © Elizabeth Sewell 1952. Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Limited.

Since Nonsense is made up of language, its playthings will be words. These are not simple objects like tennis balls or tiddlywink counters; strictly speaking, they are scarcely objects at all. The nature of words, half abstract and half concrete, will affect the types and variations of play, just as the fact that it is being played with will affect the language in its turn. The notion of a Game, however, may give us the analogy of structure we have been looking for. This is not going to lead to frivolity and emptiness. St. Thomas Aquinas compares wisdom and games by saying that each is to be pursued for its own sake. The *play* of thought is a normal enough phrase. A mental structure need be no less excellent in its design just because it is a game. Any structure is worth studying, an exercise in mapping relations and tracing out a peculiar logic. With Nonsense we are faced with the finished product, and we have to discover the field of the game and the rules by which it is played. It is worth noticing that so far we have collected, by way of assistance, logic, dialectic and St. Thomas Aquinas. Things begin to look mediæval, and promising.

*** Nonsense as practised by [Edward] Lear [1812–1888] and Carroll does not, even on a slight acquaintance, give the impression of being something without laws and subject to chance, or something without limits, tending towards infinity. Sir Edmund Strachey, writing about Lear’s Nonsense in the *Quarterly Review*, 1888, called it a child of genius, one of the Fine Arts. Now a Fine Art is not the product of chance, nor is it the result of absence of limitation, for the mind can do nothing with infinity, that most unmanageable commodity. The unfailing mental delight, if one may use such a phrase, afforded by Lear and Carroll does not suggest an endless succession of random events, than which nothing is more boring, nor does it point to a universe out of control, frighteningly akin to lunacy. The mention of Art in connection with this Nonsense and the absence of boredom or disquiet suggest that we may be able to rule out both chance and surrealism. We are going to assume that Nonsense is not merely the denial of sense, a random reversal of ordinary experience and an escape from the limitations of everyday life into a haphazard infinity, but is on the contrary a carefully limited world, controlled and directed by reason, a construction subject to its own laws.

* * *

If Nonsense is an art, it must have its own laws of construction, and the investigation of these brings us at once into touch with logic, as a study of mental relations within a particular field. The limitation of the field will explain certain omissions. For instance,

this is not going to be a study of Humour or of the Comic. Laughter is incidental to Nonsense but not essential to it. *** Neither shall we be concerned with psychoanalysis. This would be a possible approach to the minds of both writers, but the aim here is logical and not psychological. *** We shall not bring to light the 'Sub-conscious' of either artist, a term I do not propose to employ at all. What we can hope to do is to discover the structure of Nonsense itself, and to do this there will be no need to embrace any particular school of thought, for logic has this great advantage over psychology, that the mind's processes in logic are not a matter of controversy. And after all, one of our two Nonsense writers was a professional logician himself.

* * *

We can begin *** by describing nonsense as a collection of words or events which in their arrangement do not fit into some recognized system in a particular mind. In practice the term 'nonsense' is more often applied to collections of words than to collections of things; this is understandable, since language is one of the mind's principal instruments for making sense of things and events. The inference is that sense no less than nonsense is largely a verbal matter, but we cannot do more than remark on this now. The appearance of nonsense—a lack of conformity in the material in question—may be due either to an absence of internal relations in the material or to the presence of a system of which the mind is unaware. *** These two possibilities may look as if they amount to much the same thing, since, for the conscious mind, a relationship system which is unperceived is equivalent to there being no system at all. There is a difference, however, and one that has practical results. If you assume an absence of relations, you can get no further; but if you are ready to postulate relations as yet unperceived in the particular material, something may happen. ***

Nonsense may take the form of verse, but we should presumably agree that there is a distinction between this and poetry. This distinction may lie in what one might call the dream element in poetry, its ambiguity, its imagery by which, as in a dream, fusions may take place between images in the mind, its sudden breaks in sequence. Poetry, so Coleridge said, is at its best when only imperfectly understood. There is nothing of this in Nonsense verse. Far from being ambiguous, shifting and dreamlike, it is concrete, clear and wholly comprehensible:—

'You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair'.

(*The Lobster-Quadrille*, [Wonderland])

A sea-green Porpoise carried away
His wrapper of scarlet flannel.

(*The Pobble Who Has No Toes*, [Lear])

The Queen was in the parlour,
Eating bread and honey.

Ambiguous? Only imperfectly understood? They are as clear as day.

Nonsense verse is too precise to be akin to poetry. It seems much nearer logic than dream. Critics have denied this, M. Cammaerts [see Selected Bibliography] for example, who says, 'Nonsense poems and stories . . . do not tell a connected story; indeed their main purpose is to upset all logic, for they scorn any rational or comprehensible language' (*The Poetry of Nonsense*, p. 15). Experience does not bear this out. Poets may, by the nature of their art, have dealings with fine frenzy, madness and dream, but the Nonsense writer may not. Nonsense is very careful about the point. Carroll introduces a hint of lunacy into Wonderland with the Mad Hatter and March Hare, but this episode is prepared for by the Cheshire Cat's remarks:—

'But I don't want to go among mad people,' Alice remarked.

'Oh, you can't help that,' said the 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.'
(*Pig and Pepper*, [Wonderland])

At the end of *Through the Looking-Glass* where the vision starts getting out of control and threatens to turn into madness or nightmare, Alice puts an abrupt end to it, saying, 'I can't stand this any longer!' and waking herself up. ***

If neither prose nor poetry can provide the necessary structure for Nonsense, is there some other system by which language could be organized into an independent and consistent, if nonsensical, structure? The answer, or hint after hint at a possible answer, shouts at us from the Alices; and yet here again we have grown so used to these stories that their peculiar features are blurred in our minds and we miss the point. In Wonderland Alice observes the Fish Footman delivering to the Frog Footman 'an invitation from the Queen to play croquet'. When she eventually reaches the rose garden she finds it tenanted by playing cards, and she herself a little later joins in the croquet game. Looking-Glass begins with a diagram of a problem in chess. The principal characters are chess pieces, and the landscape that Alice sees from the hill in Looking-Glass country is a chequerboard:—

'I declare it's marked out just like a large chess-board!' Alice said at last. 'There ought to be some men moving about somewhere—and so there are!' she added in a tone of delight, and her heart began to beat quick with excitement as she went on. 'It's a great huge game of chess that's being played—all over the world—if this is the world at all, you know!'

(*The Garden of Live Flowers*, [Looking-Glass])

Remarks of the following kind seem to say the same thing:—

'I love my love with an H,' Alice couldn't help beginning, 'because he is Happy. I hate him with an H, because he is Hideous. I fed him with—with—Ham-sandwiches and Hay. His name is Haigha, and he lives—'

'He lives on the Hill,' the King remarked simply, without the least idea that he was joining in the game.

(*The Lion and the Unicorn*, [Looking-Glass])

'In that case we start afresh,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'and it's my turn to choose a subject——' ('He talks about it just as if it was a game!' thought Alice.)

(*Humpty Dumpty*, [Looking-Glass])

'Just as if it was a game'—suppose it is a game. Could Nonsense be an attempt at reorganizing language, not according to the rules of prose or poetry in the first place but according to those of Play? I do not mean here the simplest forms of games of energy and horseplay, but the more highly developed and complicated types of play. Each game of this type is an enclosed whole, with its own rigid laws which cannot be questioned within the game itself ***.

It can already be seen how this concerns the Alices. It may seem strange to say that Nonsense is a game and that games are hostile to the dream, for both the Alices are set in dream form. Critics have in fact emphasized a connection between Nonsense and dreams. M. Cammaerts says that the world of Nonsense is not so much Fairyland as Dreamland (*** p. 32). *** Mr. Empson says in *Some Versions of the Pastoral* [see Selected Bibliography] that 'the rhymes affect one as conventions of the dream world, and this sets the tone about conventions' (p. 290). ***

The general view of Nonsense is that it creates disorder out of order as a dream does:—

Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.

We're all in the dumps
For Diamonds are trumps,
The kittens have gone to Saint Pauls,
The babies are bit,

The moon's in a fit
And the houses are built without walls.

* * *

Then fill up the glasses with treacle and ink,
And anything else that is pleasant to drink.

(*Queen Alice*, [Looking-Glass])

This certainly looks like disorder, as if the writer had put a spoon into the remembered stuff of our normal solid universe and given it a good stir. But of what nature is this disorder? The words, as groups of letters and sounds, are not disordered. In certain cases Nonsense does embark on private manipulations and creations of word units, producing such results as the Jabberwock vocabulary, and this will have to be looked into; but on the whole, as in the examples above, it employs familiar words. The syntax and grammar are not disordered. Carroll was enough of a stickler for exactitude in these matters to insist that his printers use the form 'ca'n't' and 'sha'n't' and 'wo'n't' instead of the usually accepted, if more slipshod, forms. *** It is noticeable, too, how often Nonsense takes the form of verse, which by its organization is the reverse of disordered. There is only one aspect of language which Nonsense can be said to disorder, and that is reference, the effect produced by a word or group of words in the mind. It is the sequence of references which is disordered by Nonsense, if the familiar sequence of events in everyday life is to be taken as the standard of order and sense.

* * *

Dream and game meet particularly clearly at one point in Wonderland, when Alice is trying to play croquet. She finds the game very troublesome because the objects with which it is played are only partially under her control and refuse to remain quiet and bidable. They have the mobility of dreams, and are characteristic dream substitutions. Instead of a mallet she has a flamingo, instead of a ball a hedgehog and instead of a hoop a soldier. This suggests that the only really safe things, the reliable unchanging things suitable for play, are dead. If Nonsense is itself a game, this becomes rather sinister, and may begin to explain why the Queen of Hearts keeps shouting 'Off with his head!' and why, according to Mr. Empson's view, the fear of death is one of the crucial topics of these books (*Some Versions of the Pastoral*, p. 291).

We could follow either of these two threads, the Dream or the Game, through the Alices and Nonsense. The dream element in

the croquet upsets the game, and it seems better to concentrate on what appears the more characteristic activity rather than on the intrusion; but the point to realize is that either would be possible, and in the end they would probably come to the same thing. We are merely making a choice in a matter of dialectic—or call it a game—deciding to throw in our lot on the side of Nonsense-as-a-Game rather than on the side of Nonsense-as-a-Dream. It may seem perverse to emphasize the feasibility of the contrary argument, but to do so is literally half the battle. Exercises in dialectic, like games, have nothing to do with such a notion as 'truth'. We shall not find out the truth about Nonsense, any more than we should if we were to follow the contrary argument, or both at once. Perhaps there is no truth to find out, any more than there would be in a nightmare or a game of chess, the notion being out of place.

This situation raises one question, however, which is as important as it is difficult to answer and which is thrown up by dream and game alike: who is playing, or who is dreaming? In the Looking-Glass we are left with the unresolved problem whether the narrative recorded was Alice's dream or the Red King's dream. That question can be asked not merely about the dream but about the game which gives the book its framework. Who was playing it? It is clear that Alice is not so much playing as being played with. 'Her companion only smiled pleasantly, and said, "That's easily managed. You can be the White Queen's pawn, if you like, as Lily's too young to play"' (*The Garden of Live Flowers*, [Looking-Glass]). If Alice is a pawn, someone else is playing with her. We can leave the dream problem alone; but if Nonsense is a game, we still have to find out who is the player.

It would be so simple if we could say it is the Nonsense writer, and leave it at that; but that would be a most doubtful answer. In analysing Nonsense, or poetry, or any other system, one can work out for oneself a form of systematics of the particular construction, but it is practically certain that the poet or constructor was unaware of systematics while making his construction. Yet this need not disqualify the systematics as a way of thinking about the construction or the constructor's mind. The difficulty is that any enquiry into a system is an enquiry into the mind which makes systems, and that is any mind, examiner or examinee, object or subject. I do not want to suggest that Lear and Carroll knew they were playing a game. All we need at the moment is the suggestion that Nonsense can be looked at as if it were a game. We will play our own game on those terms, and hope to see in time who plays the game—Lear, Carroll, the reader of Nonsense, the mind enquiring into Nonsense processes, or perhaps all of these together. A mind may play with itself, forming its own internal dialectic from time to time, each momentary half playing with the other. * * *

We have come back to the phraseology of play again when we speak of Nonsense being on the side of order. Disorder is on the opposite side, the opponent to be played against. This characteristic of tension or struggle is regarded by some writers on the subject as one of the basic characteristics of play. If dialectic belongs to the nature of play, this particular case of it, the order-disorder dialectic in the mind, may be the defining characteristic of the game of Nonsense. It is perhaps necessary to point out that dialectic does not require two actually separate minds for its operation. One mind that can diversify itself for the purposes of argument or play will be sufficient. One recalls that Carroll says of his heroine, 'once she remembered trying to box her own ears for having cheated herself in a game of croquet she was playing against herself, for this curious child was very fond of pretending to be two people' (*Down the Rabbit-Hole*, [Wonderland]). If the two forces of order and disorder in the mind form the two poles of the dialectic in the Nonsense game, a distinction between Nonsense and poetry at once becomes possible, for poetry aims at an equilibrium, even if only momentary, between the two forces, an enchanted instant of reconciliation; whereas Nonsense is going to be a battle, with our lot thrown in on one side and all available energy directed towards keeping the opponent in play, lest he in turn seize the initiative and establish control. * * *

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The game of Nonsense may, then, consist in the mind's employing its tendency towards order to engage its contrary tendency towards disorder, keeping the latter perpetually in play and so in check. The apparent disorder in the Nonsense world may be the result of such an encounter.

The next thing is to discover the nature of the side we are playing on and playing against. It has already been suggested that order in the mind tends in the direction of number and logic, while disorder moves towards dream and nightmare. The investigation of the two forces will probably be best begun at the two extremes.

We will begin with order, and logic. Logic is the science of relation in the abstract. The nature of the terms constituting the intersection points or meeting-places of those relations is of no importance; only the relations matter. The terms can be words, symbols, numbers, letters. If words are used they will, by virtue of the fact that they are words, have some reference to experience, but that reference is irrelevant to the construction of the logic. It does not matter of what nature the terms are that are to be related; but terms there must be, and *terms* in the plural, for relations cannot be established or manipulated between a nothing and a nothing, so to speak. * * *

Equally you cannot establish relations and a logic where there is only one term; if everything were all one, the only relation that could be established would be self-identity, and that does not get one very far. So we come to the conclusion that 'every real relation requires and implies in reality two terms' (*Summa*, Pt. I, Q. 28, Art. 1) and those two must be distinguishable. * * *

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It has taken us a long time to come back to the middle field of language, where words, and the game with words which is Nonsense, belong. We have cleared the ground, however, for if the game of Nonsense takes the side of order and plays against disorder in the mind, we now have some idea what that implies. Nonsense will presumably have to organize its language according to the principles of order, i.e. it will have to concentrate on the divisibility of its material into ones, units from which a universe can be built. This universe, however, must never be more than the sum of its parts, and must never fuse into some all-embracing whole which cannot be broken down again into the original ones. It must try to create with words a universe that consists of bits. * * * In *Queen Alice in Through the Looking-Glass* the White Queen asks, 'What's one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one?' Alice cannot answer, and that is not just accident. The point is that the sum-total is unimportant; it is the composition of it that matters, for this is to be the composition of the universe of Nonsense, a collection of ones which can be summed together into a whole but which can always fall back into separate ones again. This is one half of the game. The other half will be to see that the mind retains its sense of separateness from whatever is being manipulated, and it all has to be done with words.

* * *

* * * If a word does not look like a word, so to speak, the mind will not play with it. Carroll coins examples of this sort, *Mhruxian* and *grurmstipths* from *Tangled Tales* or the 'occasional exclamation' of the Gryphon, *Hjckrrh*, from *The Mock Turtle's Story*. Words such as these do not interest the mind; but [Lear's] dongs and [Carroll's] toves look strangely familiar, and the mind can enjoy itself with them. * * * We are left with a half-conscious perception of verbal likenesses, and, in consequence, the evocation of a series of words.

It looks as if nonsense were running on to dangerous grounds here, for two of its rules are (a) no likenesses are to be observed, and (b) no trains of association are to be set up. * * *

One might suppose the danger to be that these Nonsense words break two important rules of the Nonsense game. In fact, however,

this infringement is only apparent. We have already seen that although Nonsense plays on the side of order, its aim and method is to defeat disorder with disorder's own weapons. It allows disorder in the mind a certain amount of selected material apparently suitable for dream purposes (images and so on), and in this way draws the disordering faculty into play, but manages never to let it gain control. Exactly the same thing is happening here. The mind is encouraged by means of these Nonsense words to notice likenesses; but the likenesses are to other words. It is the purely verbal memory and associative faculty which is called into play.

* * *

Nonsense is a game with words. Its own inventions wander safely between their respective pitfalls of 0 and 1, nothingness and everythingness; but where words without things are safe enough, things without words are far more dangerous. To have no name is to be a kind of nothing:—

'What do you call yourself?' the fawn said . . .
She answered rather sadly, 'Nothing just now.'

But it is also to have unexpected opportunities for unity and that is the step toward everythingness. We are safe with *brillig* and the *Jabberwock* because that is a fight, a dialectic and an equilibrium; but * * * something has crept in here which words cannot cover, cannot split up and control. There is nostalgia in each of these scenes:—

Alice stood looking after it, almost ready to cry with vexation at having lost her dear little fellow-traveller so suddenly. * * *

But Nonsense can admit of no emotion—that gate to everythingness and nothingness where ultimately words fail completely. It is a game to which emotion is alien, and it will allow none of its playthings, which are words and those wielders of words, human beings. Its humans, like its words and things and Nonsense vocabulary, have to be one, and one, and one. There is nothing more inexorable than a game.