

LEWIS CARROLL IN JAMES JOYCE

By Elaine Mingus

"One pill makes you larger
And one pill makes you small.
And the ones that mother gives you
Don't do anything at all.
Go ask Alice
When she's ten feet tall."

This is from a song by Grace Slick, 1966.

It is very well known that Joyce used Dodgson/Carroll and his works in Finnegans Wake, but I plan to show that we find Carroll in all of Joyce's work from the first story of Dubliners. Of course resemblance does not always mean copying. They also had characteristics in comm. & some common sources. Some references to Lewis Carroll in Finnegans Wake and some references to children also, acknowledge a literary debt to Carroll, as James Atherton says.

Lewis Carroll, really Charles Dodgson, was born in Cheshire in 1832, in the Victorian Age. Dodgson was one of 10 and as a youngster, invented games to amuse his siblings, Later at Oxford finally he became a mathematics teacher at Christ Church College, got into logic then symbolic logic. Dodgson was a model Victorian but with a wildly imaginative, humorous side and liked to invent games, toys, puzzles, etc. to amuse children. One summer in 1862 when he was on a river in a boat with Dean Liddell and his three daughters ages 8-13, Dodgson told the story of Alice and they begged him to write it down. He finally did, under the name Lewis Carroll. It was later published as Alice in Wonderland. Then followed Through the Looking Glass, The Hunting of the Snark, Phantasmagoria, and Sylvie & Bruno. Victorian fiction for children up to this time, had pious morals. The devil could lead a child into evil ways, they thought. The Alice books became popular and were primers for many children.

Dodgson continued as a teacher, was also ordered as a deacon, became a resident at Oxford and stayed there his whole life, a shy bachelor. He died in 1898, having moved a marginalized group - children - into the center of existence. "A greatly gifted human being."

Joyce was 16 when Dodgson died and, among others, read Lewis Carroll growing up, knew the Alice books well and loved them as a child. "The Mad Hatter" was one of Joyce's college nicknames. Hugh Kenner devoted a whole chapter in Dublin's Joyce to the influence of Lewis Carroll. Joyce carried forward the spirit of Carroll into modern literature. In the 1930s Carroll's books attracted literary critics, philosophers and serious writers and are now literary classics.

When one thinks of Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy, barmaids, in the "Sirens" chapter of Ulysses, we cannot connect a scene like that with Alice in Wonderland. One big difference between them is that Carroll wrote for children. His Alice books make fun of the adult world. Joyce not only wrote for adults, he was considered to be a free thinker and unorthodox. But he *includes* children. The first three stories of Dubliners are not only *about* children but from their point of view. A Portrait of The Artist As A Young Man (subsequent references as Portrait) begins "Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moo cow coming down along the road and this moo cow coming down along the road...", and we wonder, "Is this an adult novel?" Then "when you wet the bed, first it is warm then it is cold."

Ulysses is primarily about adults, but we see the Dedalus children, the ones in the "Nausicaa" chapter, and Bloom's memories of Milly Bloom. In Finnegans Wake the twins Shem and Shaun and the girl Issie, but also the idea of the childish, the child-like, even baby talk. In Ulysses Lenehan, quoting from Aesop, says "Ah fox met ah stork. Said thee fox to thee stork..." and you are right back in that second grade reading class.

Now about nursery rhymes, both Carroll and Joyce use nursery thymes, and/or the rhythm of them, like Joyce and "The House that Jack Built"; also characters from fairy tales, like witches for Carroll's ugly Duchess and Joyce's Maria in "Clay", who is witch-like. Humpty Dumpty appears in both Through the Looking Glass (subsequent references Looking Glass) and Joyce, and Humpty Dumpty says that words have the meaning he gives to them. "One can't help growing older", says Alice. "But two can", answers Humpty Dumpty.

Carroll used real people as models, and Joyce of course did also; Alice speaks for the mass of mankind as does Bloom and HCE in Joyce.

Another thing Carroll and Joyce had in common was photography. Carroll became a well known photographer, especially of children. Then Joyce experimented with the cinema in his Volta Cinema in Dublin in 1909. This was still the time of silent films.

Perhaps where we see Lewis Carroll most in Joyce, is in some of the *language*. They both loved to play with words and Joyce has literary tricks and techniques sprinkled throughout all of his writing, some of them surely caught from Carroll. This includes: ACROSTICS, AESTHETICS, ALLEGORIES, ANALOGY, , ARCHAISMS, BURLESQUE, CARICATURE, CONUNDRUMS, COUNTERPOINT, HOMONYMS, IRONY, METAPHOR, MOTIF & LEITMOTIF, MYTHICAL, NATURALISM, SATIRE, SYMBOLS, AND ETC.

There are many rhetorical devices in Carroll and Joyce, including made up words, word scrambling, and words falling over each other; the *sound* of words are important to both writers, perhaps moreso than meaning. "The music of the words". In the "Sirens" chapter of Ulysses: "They heard steel from anear, hoofs ring from afar". Or a series beginning with one letter, as all names in Carroll's Hunting of the Snark begin with a B and we find many instances of this in Joyce. Parody can be a mockery but also recognition of the original. Writings parodied by Lewis Carroll or Joyce have been mostly forgotten except for their poking fun at them.

There is a well-known tale, t-a-l-e from Carroll about a mouse's tail, t-a-i-l. The Fish riddle is a comic poem in Looking Glass. Joyce has a fox riddle early in Ulysses and many more. Some nonsensical riddles have no answer. One can guess what the answer might be just for fun. Carroll had a contest for answers to his riddle about the raven and the writing desk. Joyce follows his riddle "When is a man not a man?" with some questionable answers.

Portmanteau words combine two words to make a third. Carroll actually coined that term. His "frumious" means furious and fuming, frumious. Some guesses of what Carroll's Snark is, are "snail and shark", snark. Joyce has been called "The *master* of portmanteau words". I opened Ulysses at random and found "downwardtending" and "otherwither" immediately, for example.

The language of Carroll as well as Joyce, does not fit stereotypes. Words are cut to pieces and united again, and no utterance is insignificant; even silence has a message. For both, words are not merely signs but have substance of their own, like Joyce's use of the Irish word "stirabout".

Also language identifies the person. We know it is the queen speaking to Alice: "The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday - but never jam today." Joyce's Uncle Charles "repaired to the outhouse"; also his doggerel, as in the "Oxen" chapter: "Did uns blubble bigsplash crytears?" Linear discourse is constantly interrupted at the Mad Tea Party, also many times in Ulysses, especially for Bloom.

Foreign words are common in Carroll. Alice is advised, "Speak French, if you can't think of the English for a thing", and of course Joyce is noted for foreign words, and when both are translated into so many languages, their writing *must* contain archetypes! Hats, keys, doors, mirrors, twins, just to name a few used by both. The Fall - of Alice, as the fall of Stephen and HCE's fall in Finnegans Wake; finally Humpty Dumpty's fall - doomed to tumble.

What Lewis Carroll and James Joyce both demand of the reader: we must look at language as deaf people look at those who speak, or as *children* look at language. Then we have the capacity for something new and put aside expectations or anticipation.

The importance of names and need for names to mean something we know to be true in Joyce: Stephen Dedalus's name is meaningful. Carroll's White Knight has a perfect name. In the Wood-of-Things-With-No-Name, Alice has no name till she leaves that wood. This is disorienting.

"Noman", thus "nobody" as in Homer's Odyssey is used by Joyce and in Wonderland Alice says "I see nobody on the road". The King answers "To be able to see *nobody*." And "Worst of all, the dreadful boojum of nothingness."

Now, mathematics was a major thing for Carroll. I am sure that Joyce was fascinated with Carroll's play with figures and with math, as he too

liked to make puzzles, riddles, conundrums, etc. Six little brooks Alice crosses in Looking Glass. She leaps over them and is queen, and then the chess game is over. The Threefold verbal repeat is an old, old thing in stories and myths, used by Carroll and then Joyce. The "Rule of 3". Even with absurdity they both number things: "70 times as high as the moon".

How much of his nonsense did Joyce get from Carroll? We don't know, but we see a resemblance in the comic procession and strong elements of pantomime, only alluded to in Joyce till the Mime chapter in Finnegans Wake which *is* a pantomime. Carroll said he meant nothing but nonsense in telling stories, and Joyce made similar remarks. Both attack stuffiness and prudence, and promote comic anarchy.

Nonsense as we see it does not fit a dictionary definition like "devoid of sense". It is not gibberish but a system that can be learned, and defies rules of any *other* system. Nonsense has careful structure but has comic life, and assaults insistence on logic and order. This is according to Elizabeth Sewall in Field of Nonsense. Word play for instance, in Alice In Wonderland; to answer the door: "what's it asking?" And in Sylvie and Bruno, "It would be usual, if we said it often enough". So in Joyce; when in doubt, one is "In twosome twiminds", for instance. Children are a good audience for nonsense, they let it remain strange.

Also social customs are reduced to the absurd. The queen's empty threats to Alice and others are not unlike the ineffective missile thrown by the irate citizen at Bloom in the "Cyclops" chapter of Ulysses, both amid some chaos. In Hunting of the Snark, East is West and forward is backward and - the map is blank! Both Carroll and Joyce may turn any language to nonsense, whether it is the language in Irish pubs or in Wonderland.

In Carroll there are talking animals, creatures humanized. like a Hookah-smoking caterpillar, insects made of wood, and roses being painted - even talking flowers! Alice sees a baby turned into a pig and in Joyce, Bloom is also; especially in the "Circe" chapter, there are many examples of inanimate objects or animals speaking. In Finnegans Wake there is "The Ondt And The Gracehopper" with other insects included.

Sewell also says that nonsense is a *game* with its playthings as words, as Carroll's "Jabberwocky", with its own rules. Rhyme and rhythm is the stuff of nonsense as in Looking Glass: "The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things". In Joyce's "Circe" chapter: "London's burning! London's burning!" from an old round.

At the Mad Tea Party, they offer wine, but there is none! Since the context is sane, this is *insane*. There is preoccupation with meaning amid meaninglessness, like "One can never get there - because then 'there' is 'here'".

Carroll mixed the *grave* with the nonsensical, and Joyce followed. We see humor in the Walrus and the Carpenter eating their friends the oysters, as well as Bloom's remarks in Joyce's serious "Hades" chapter. Bloom is a Chaplinesque figure in the "Aelous" chapter. Alice's "Let's pretend". takes her through that mirror. There is magic in mirrors. The mirror image and twins starts with Looking Glass. Backward and inversion can be fun but also leads to serious stuff. as the mirror image can seem quite different than one's usual self. Joyce makes it a motif and in his story "The Dead", there is Gretta Conroy's significant look in the swinging mirror. In the "Circe" chapter where magic happens all the time, Bloom and Stephen look in the mirror at the same time and see William Shakespeare!

Carroll demands exactitude and details. The king says to Alice, "write that down!" In Joyce also of course we see precision and detail, as the famous water passage in the "Ithaca" chapter. But there can be incongruity, like food is often strange mixtures. There is incompatibility in lists as: treacle, ink, cider, and wool in Carroll. Joyce's catalogues can also be totally unrelated objects or people - like bits of broken glass.

In Wonderland, space is stretched and shrunk and - time? At the Mad Tea Party "It's always teatime". As in Fairy tales there is no regular causality, and things disappear. In Joyce, a picture on the wall comes alive and speaks to Bloom! "To believe six impossible things before breakfast", says the Duchess, and "We're all mad", says the Cheshire Cat

There are big trial scenes in Carroll and the trials are absurd, as are Joyce's trials which are greatly expanded in Finnegans Wake. The trial of Bloom in

Ulysses certainly follows the same reasoning as the one in Alice in Wonderland which says in conclusion to Alice's amazement: "Such a sentence would not have the slightest effect, as the accused had been *dead* for some years."

Is nonsense logical or illogical? Well, *both*, because as a game it has a back and forth. We cannot find "truth" in nonsense or in a dream - and the dream is another way we return to childhood with Carroll and Joyce. Both of the Alice books are introduced as dreams. In his poem at the end of Looking Glass Carroll adds "Life, what is it but a dream?" Joyce's characters have dreams from the very first story in Dubliners. The first one in Portrait, Stephen dreams of dying; in Ulysses Haines has a nightmare, and Finnegans Wake is a dream on one level. Also related to dreams is the inner monologue, fantasy, visions, other instances of the unconscious. Thus whether we are down the rabbit hole or in Joyce's territory, we may find ourselves in a dream-like world.

There are at least two clear character types in Carroll: The authoritative characters who are more powerful. They determine rules, as queens in the Alice books. The other type may be innocent & powerless - as Alice, and she is sometimes treated like a figure of fun. The challenge is to be reasonable, to adjust to any situation; constantly in a state of wonder, often estranged from other figures. We see the same thing in Joyce when Stephen Dedalus is powerless at times, as for instance in Portrait where the priests have power, but also in Ulysses, and Bloom also finds himself powerless at times. In the story "Eveline", the father and others wield their power, leaving her powerless.

Whether intended or not, both Carroll and Joyce were part of a very important process going on in the world of literature. As Lewis Carroll was a precursor of Joyce, so were both forerunners of the liberated speech and writing of today. Their experimental treatment of language anticipated and influenced modern and post-modern, and especially pop culture and the avant-garde. An example is the song I began with, "Go Ask Alice", and other pop songs of the 60s. Joyce took Carroll's nonsense more seriously than he himself and Joyce went on to transform literature and to bring us forward into the 20th century really.

We see both Carroll and Joyce in the *mood* of modern times, as The Red Queen runs to get nowhere. "Takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place." This fits with the fast pace of today. Our mobs are similar to that one scene with Alice: "The whole pack of cards came flying down on Alice". We see it also in A Portrait with Stephen on the playground "caught in the whirl of the scrimmage". Also loneliness in a crowd was experienced by Alice as well as by Stephen Dedalus and Bloom.

Now as then we need to not lose our sense of humor. In Finnegans Wake Joyce advises "Give back those stolen kisses"

This is from a poem in Alice in Wonderland:

"You are old, Father William", the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head -
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

Love is a theme in Carroll's Sylvie and Bruno and also Joyce echoes it many times. Love is *always* in style. There are numerous stage versions and films of Alice in Wonderland as well as the works of Joyce and both were clearly forerunners of theatre and films of today, especially the experimental.

"Yellow Submarine" is so Joycean! Finally, Jorge Luis Borges tells us, "Every writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our concept of the past as it will modify the future."

LEWIS CARROLL IN Finnegans Wake: Besides the text of FW - Hugh Kenner, James Atherton, Grace Eckley, and Adaline Glasheen are sources for this list which is *INCOMPLETE*.

48.04	"Treacle" & "liddled" & Great White caterpillar
57.23-29	Image of HCE as Dodgson (pge 288, Kenner)
57.28	"alys"
83.01	"Hatter's hares"
115.22	"Alices"
146.17	"Isabeaubel" and Isa Bowman
148/9	Riddles (rhymes)

- 155 Mookse & Gripes = Mock Turtle & Gryffin?
- 159.05 "a lass", Alice
- 203.08 "Alesse lagos of girly days"
- 207.26 "liddel"
- 226.4-20 Iseult as Isa
- 234 Mookse and Gripes & Hookah smoking caterpillar
- 240.36 "his portmanteau" - LC and Look. Glass
- 241.9,14 "creature cuddlepuller"
- 258.25 "Tweedledums down to Twidfdleleedees".
Also mirror image of TW. & TW.
- Entire "Homework Chapter", 260-308, uses Euclid as Carroll did, and mathematics of Carroll.
- 260 Jabberwocky with its portmanteau words
- 262.F2 "kool in the salg" (Looking glass backwards)
- 266 L.note "Bet you fippence"...(And Dodgson did not believe in Hell)
- 270.19-22 "Though Wonderlawn's lost us for ever.
Alis, alas, she broke the glass!
Liddell lokker through the leafery", etc.
- 276 fn7 "A liss in hunterland"
279. fn 31 "Isabella"
- 288.10/11 "Fourthermore and filthily", (logician Dodgson:
Secondly, thirdly, fourthly)
- 294.08 "Ellis threw his cookingclass."
& A.J. Ellis: Algebra identified With Geometry.
- 350.11 "cadderpollard" (caterpillar)
- 358.21,22 "Amick amack amock in a mucktub" & Mock Turtle
- 361.22-25 "Isas" (Isa Bowman)
- 367.34 "dodos"
- 374.02 "Dodgerson"
- 393.11 "muckstails turtles" (Mock Turtle)
- 396.34 "mummurrlubejubes", portmanteau word
- 405.16.17 "beamish brow" & Jabberwocky
- 418.27 "Gwyfyn" = gryphon
- 439.19 "Mary Liddlelamb's flitsy tales"
- 440.18 "Liddlelamb"
- 445.31 "Doppeldoorknockers"
- 481.35 "Christy" meaning Dodgson
- 482.01 "Dodgfather, dodgson & Coo"

- 501.31, 36 "whitest night" (White Knight) & "Lewd's Carol"
 502.10 "galumphantes", distortion of "galumphing" (Jabberwocky)
 526.34,35 "Nircississies" "Secilas" (Alice as in a mirror)
 527.31 "mon ishebeau", Isa Bowman?
 528.04 "Alliten's looking"
 528.17,18 "Alicious, twinstreams, twinestraines through alluring
 glass or alas in jumboland"
 565.14 "jibberweek's joke" (jabberwock)

(Humpty dumpty references are in Grace Eckley's
Childrens Lore in Finnegans Wake.

There is also a list of children in The Wake in John Bishop's
Joyce's Book of the Dark

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