

Carroll's Adventures in 'Wordsland': In Anticipation of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake**

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I. Introduction

“This must be the wood,” she [Alice] said thoughtfully to herself, “where things have no names. I wonder what’ll become of *my* name when I go in? I shouldn’t like to lose it at all — because they’d have to give me another, and it would be almost certain to be an ugly one. But then the fun would be, trying to find the creature that had got my old name! . . .” “Well at any rate it’s a great comfort,” she said as she stepped under the trees, “after being so hot, to get into the — into the — into *what?*” she went on, rather surprised at not being able to think of the word. “I mean to get under the — under the — under *this* you know!” putting her hand on the trunk of the tree. “What *does* it call itself, I wonder? I do believe it’s got no name — why, to be sure it hasn’t!” (*TL* 61-62)

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In *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*, a sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll presents Alice wandering the “wood where things have no names,” wondering the nature of language. In this weird wood, Alice keeps forgetting the names of things such as the wood, tree, fawn, and even her own name. Here, the theme of ‘forgetting’ of names is quite crucial because it reveals the very possibility of separation between names and things, or between signifiers and signifieds, to put it in Saussurean terms. Perhaps, arguably, it is not Alice but Carroll himself who is wandering/wondering in the forest of language. Then, what Carroll is doing in his *Alice* books is not just a hilarious escapade of childish adventures but also a philosophical exploration of language as a sign system.

Although Carroll and Ferdinand de Saussure partly lived in the overlapping age, it is most likely that Carroll never heard of anything about his theory: Saussurean theory of linguistics was known only after his death and the publication of *General Course of Linguistics* by his disciples in 1916. Interestingly enough, nonetheless, Carroll's novels exemplify the basic concepts of language as a sign system and seem to play it into full swing. More interestingly, Carroll's word play in ‘Jabberwocky’ anticipates James Joyce's full-blown language experiment in *Finnegans Wake*, an enigmatic text written in a hundred years later.

Lewis Carroll's fantasy novels portray Alice's adventures in Wonderland both under the ground and behind the looking-glass. In some sense, however, these novels can be said to portray Carroll's own adventures in wonderland of language or ‘wordslan.’ As much as Carroll's adventure stories involve the theme of language, Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* also touches upon the theme of fantasy. Accordingly, Margot Norris, a well-known Joyce critic, mentions, “*Finnegans Wake* genetically resembles a fairy tale or the fantasy genre of the Wonderland sections of Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books” (418). It will be

revealing to look at Carroll's and Joyce's texts from the perspectives of both fantasy literature and language experiment.

Mapping the genetic genealogy between Carroll and Joyce, thus, this essay will analyze how Carroll scrutinizes the nature of language and performs language experiment in *Alice* series, how they exemplify Saussurean theory and linguistics, and how Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* pushes Carroll's precursory experimentation even further to the extreme. Through this analysis, ultimately, it will be argued that both Carroll's and Joyce's language experiments dismantle the rigid social order of Victorian society and British colonialism, respectively.

II. Carroll's Adventures in 'Wordsland'

The quotation of the Introduction above on the so-called "nameless wood" demonstrates Carroll's ventriloquism through Alice's mouth, reminding readers of Saussurean theory of linguistics. As is well-known, Saussure's investigation is focused on the linguistic unit or sign, described as a "double entity," made up of the signifier and the signified. According to Saussure, both components of the linguistic sign are inseparable. One way to understand this is to think of them as either side of a piece of paper or coin — one side simply cannot exist without the other. The relationship between signifier and signified is, however, not that simple. Saussure is adamant that language cannot be considered a collection of names for a collection of objects. According to him, language is not a nomenclature. Indeed, the basic insight of Saussure's thought is that denotation, the reference to objects in some universe of discourse, is mediated by system-internal relations of difference.

This system of difference can be called 'langue,' and Saussure explains it

using various metaphors. Considering that the chess game is the very framework of *Through the Looking-Glass*, the fact that Saussure also makes use of the metaphor of ‘the chess game’ in explaining some of the key terms in *Course in General Linguistics* is quite illuminating: “But of all the comparisons one might think of, the most revealing is the likeness between what happens in a language and what happens in a game of chess. In both cases, we are dealing with a system of values and with modifications of the system. A game of chess is like an artificial form of what languages present in a natural form” (Saussure 87). It is an interesting coincidence that Carroll also uses the chess game as a frame of his second story. The overall plot of Alice’s adventures through the mirror is weaved into the finely-elaborated law of the chess game, a sort of ‘langue’ of the whole story. The episodes of the text in which Alice encounters various mirror characters are the result of successive moves of the chess pieces, differentiated by the functions they play.

Above all, what really mattered to Saussure is the principle of arbitrariness, which means that there is no natural relation between a signifier and a signified. Of course, it does not mean that individuals can have the freedom to readjust these relations between signifiers and signifieds at random because such links should be agreed on conventionally in advance. However, as an inventive writer, Carroll dares to shake these existing links and invent new ones of his own.

Carroll imagines the possibility of the separation of this inseparable relationship between the signifier and the signified in the scene of ‘the wood of nameless things.’ This insightful scene anticipates both Joyce and poststructural theorists who argued about the slipperiness of this link. In this wordless wood, Alice not only keeps forgetting names of things; she also becomes friends with a deer who is not scared of human beings just like in Eden before Adam and Eve tasted the forbidden fruit. Then, names mean not

just language, but also identity, hierarchy, and a social order.

Dismantling this seemingly fixed social order, Carroll shows striking insight in terms of language experimentation when he scatters a number of puns throughout his text. The *Alice* series are flooded with many examples of language experimentation. The linguistic games in Carroll's puns such as "tail/tale," "lesson/lessen," "horse/hoarse," "purpose/porpoise," and "tortoise/taught us" lay bare the trickiness of the arbitrary bonds between signifiers and signifieds. Let us take a look at the Mock Turtle's scene for an example:

"When we were little," the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, "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!" (*AAW* 141-42)

"They were obliged to have him with them," the Mock Turtle said: "no wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise."

"Wouldn't it really?" said Alice in a tone of great surprise.

"Of course not," said the Mock Turtle: "why, if a fish came to *me*, and told me he was going a journey, I should say 'With what porpoise?'"

"Don't you mean 'purpose?'" said Alice.

"I mean what I say," the Mock Turtle replied in an offended tone. (*AAW* 154-55)

Here, the puns of "tortoise/taught us" and "porpoise/purpose" are worth analyzing. The mismatched words out of the context arouse unexpected fun. Carroll breaks up the seemingly firm connection between words and meanings which has been constructed and upheld conventionally. Instead, he posits these words onto unfamiliar circumstances and forces readers including Alice to take them as proper usages of language. In this way, Carroll unfamiliarizes

language itself; he invites readers into a new dimension of unconventional language.

We also need to examine the peculiar role the Mock Turtle plays in the scene.¹⁾ As the name suggests, the Mock Turtle is not a real turtle. According to Martin Gardner's annotation, "Mock turtle soup is an imitation of green turtle soup, usually made from veal. This explains why Tenniel drew his Mock Turtle with the head, hind hoofs, and tail of a calf" (98). As the character Mock Turtle is not a real turtle, Carroll is also mocking and imitating language itself through his words. The jokes and puns he makes in this and the following scenes expose both how signifiers are based on the system of difference and how this system is shaky: reeling/reading, writhing/writing, ambition/addition, distraction/subtraction, uglification/multiplication, derision/division, mystery/history, seaography/geography, drawling/drawing, stretching/sketching, fainting/painting, and coil/oil (*AAW* 143-44).

The Mock Turtle makes fun of school education by tinkering a few syllables without changing the overall sound. These minute changes in spelling result in unexpected amusement. The peculiar appearances of the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon do also embody Carroll's project of language experimentation. According to Gardner, "The gryphon, or griffin, is a fabulous monster with the head and wings of an eagle and the lower body of a lion" (98). This imaginary animal assembled with parts from different animals embodies the working principle of portmanteau words, which will be discussed in the following section of this essay more in detail.

The Mock Turtle, who chides Alice for not understanding his word plays, seems to play a similar role as Humpty Dumpty in the sequel: "As Peter Heath

1) The text of *Finnegans Wake* also mentions Mock Turtle several times: "The Mookse and The Gripes" (*FW* 152.15), "the muckstails turtles" (*FW* 393.11), and "mocktitles" (*FW* 567.14).

has pointed out in *The Philosopher's Alice*, the Mock Turtle is telling Alice that she has just said 'I didn't.' Heath reminds us of how Humpty, in the next book, catches Alice in a similar verbal trap by referring to something she *didn't* say" (Gardner 101). Beyond the role as high-handed teachers, both the Mock Turtle and Humpty Dumpty symbolize the function of the writer who tries to master and invent his or her own language.

Humpty Dumpty, embodying the image of an authoritative and omniscient writer, delivers a lecture on language and writing process:

"... There's glory for you!"

"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 or less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master — that's all." (*TL* 123-24)

Here, Humpty Dumpty creates his own vocabulary positing a new meaning on a word beyond its conventional one. He uses the word "glory" as "a nice knock-down argument" not as "something that brings praise or fame to someone or something, or something that is a source of great pride," as the dictionary dictates. It must be the dream of all writers to determine the meanings of words transcending social convention — especially in case of modernists who sought for unconventional form of literature.

What the modernists who were sensitive to dynamics of language like Joyce tried to do must have been to convert all common nouns into proper

ones and to privatize language on their own uses. In this way, *Through the Looking-Glass* “shows an individual able to introduce changes to the system through speech and to ‘change the rules’ at will, a possibility precluded in *langue*” (Rivero 21). As for the matter of ‘*langue*’ in Joyce’s literature, Gerald Bruns mentions that “The *Wake* is a product, not of *langue*, but of *lalangue*, which is Jacques Lacan’s word for that which *langue* excludes. *Lalangue* is language in its heterogeneity, its materiality, its irreducibility to the functions of reasons, its uncontainability within any framework, system, or limit” (524). If language was traditionally seen as made up of signifiers, each of which was linked to another signifier, Lacan proposes that there is a signifier without such links, which makes up “*lalangue*,” an amalgam of libido and signifiers. Simply put, here, ‘*lalangue*’ means a pure form of *jouissance* resulting from language play, both Carroll and Joyce were deeply indulged in. Now, it is crucial to discuss what they tried to arrive at through their ‘*lalangue*’ or language play.

III. Carroll and Joyce’s Encounter in ‘Wordsland’

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 [Tristan Tzara] and Swift [Jonathan Swift]. His name was Charles Lutwidge of which he made Lewis (i. e. Ludwig) Carroll (i. e. Carolus). (*Letters III* 174)

Dear Miss Beach

Solved Lewis Carroll riddle in train. A Russian had 3 sons. The 1st named R A B became a lawyer. The 2nd named Y M R A, became a soldier. The 3rd became a sailor. What was his name. The answer is Y V A N. Read

the names backward and you will see.

kindest regards

J.J. (Joyce, *James Joyce's*, 135)

In the first letter quoted above Joyce mentions a few interesting facts about Carroll: that he was a stutter; and that he made up his penname by inverting his real name. The second letter quoted above is from a photo card sent to Sylvia Beach, and here, Joyce mentions that he solved Carroll's riddle. These two pieces of evidence indicate the fact that Joyce knew and regarded Carroll as an interesting writer. Considering that Joyce rarely expressed indebtedness to any precursory writers, these examples are more than enough to prove his acknowledgment of influence by Carroll.²⁾

James S. Atherton argues in his book *The Books at the Wake* that both Carroll and Joyce tried to pursue originality and made it. However, Atherton takes side of Carroll and points out that Joyce is deeply indebted to Carroll: "Yet many of the wildest and most startling features of *Finnegans Wake* are merely the logical development, or the working out on a larger scale, of ideas that first occurred to Lewis Carroll" (124). Although Atherton's statement requires clarification in reducing Joyce as a mere follower of Carroll, it is doubtless that both Carroll and Joyce grappled with the same issue of language and that Joyce acknowledged Carroll's influence.³⁾

Joyce admits his borrowings from Carroll insinuatingly through the text of

2) Joyce mentions Carroll's name several times in the text of *Finnegans Wake*: "dodgsomely" (*FW* 057.26), "Dodgesome Dora" (*FW* 228.16), "looiscurrals" (*FW* 234.15), "loose carollaries" (*FW* 294.07), "grootvatter Lodewijk" (*FW* 361.21), "Dadgerson's dodges" (*FW* 374.02), "Dodgfather, Dodgson and Coo" (*FW* 482.01), and "Lewd's carol!" (*FW* 501.34).

3) See Kyoungsook Kim's article for further analysis in terms of the correlation between Carroll and Joyce: "'Finnegan's Alice' or 'Alice's Wake': Reading *Finnegans Wake* through Lewis Carroll."

Finnegans Wake: “To tell how your mead of, mard, is made of. All old Dadgerson’s dodges one conning one’s copying and that’s what wonderland’s wanderlad’ll flaunt to the fair. A trancedone boyscript with titivits by. Ahem” (*FW* 374.1). Here, “old Dadgerson” must be Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll. The “wanderlad” refers to Joyce as an exile; at the same time, it reminds readers of Alice’s ‘wonderland.’ Not only does the overall mechanism of *Wakean* wordplay resemble ‘Jabberwocky,’ the text of *Finnegans Wake* is flooded with allusions of Carroll’s eerie language experimentation such as “Jest gibberweek’s joke” (*FW* 565.14). In this respect, Margot Norris also argues: “*Finnegans Wake* shares some of the compromised linguistic compatibility of ‘Jabberwocky’ although its unintelligible words are not necessarily restricted to nouns and verbs and may be capable of analysis and interpretation” (416).

In the text of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce directly mentions *Alice* series⁴): “Through Wonderlawn’s lost us forever. Alis, Alas, she broke the glass! Liddell Lokker through the leafery, ours is mistery of pain” (*FW* 270.19-22). “Wonderlawn” reminds readers of the “wonderland” Alice traveled and ‘Eden’ from which Adam and Eve were expelled. “Alis, Alas” is a word play using the letters of Alice, and a similar scene exists in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*: “alas for poor Alice!” (12). “Liddell” is Alice’s surname⁵) and “Lokker” refers to Alice as a ‘looker’ who travels and looks around the

4) There are many examples of textual evidence of mentioning Alice’s name: “Measly Ventures of Two Lice and the Fall of Fruit” (*FW* 106.21), “Wonderlawn’s lost us for ever. Alis, alas” (*FW* 270.20), “A liss in hunterland” (*FW* 276.12), “Why, wonder of wenchalows” (*FW* 333.01), “limbs wanderloot” (*FW* 354.23), “wonderland’s” (*FW* 374.03), “Alicious, twinstreams twinestraines, through alluring glass or alas in jumboland?” (*FW* 528.17), and “on Wanterlond Road” (*FW* 618.22).

5) Alice’s last name is mentioned several times in the text: “He addle liddle phifie Annie ugged the little craythur” (*FW* 4.28).

wonderland and the world behind the looking-glass.⁶⁾ Here, the phrase "Wonderlawn's lost us forever" makes us recall Eden. If we read Alice's story as a process in which she grows up out of childhood, the theme of "fall" becomes crucial for both Carroll and Joyce: Carroll's novels record the process in which Alice loses her innocence and grows up; Joyce's novel also allegorizes the great fall of Finnegans, HCE, and the humankind in general.

As the critic Michael Mays notes, in the center of this fall remains the overall theme of sexual misconduct, deviance, and the guilt. Arguably, "the exploitation of a young girl by an older father figure," in spite of its far-fetched presumption, reminds the reader of the interconnection between Carroll and Joyce: "This leitmotif gets developed throughout with references to an ostensible act of sexual exposure ("the copperstick the presented") and appears repeatedly in the text in other configurations, from Jarl Van Hoother and the Prankqueen to Lewis Carroll's relationship to Alice Liddell" (Mays 28). The following part referring to Tom Quad, where Carroll stayed, also suggests Carroll:

And there many have paused before that exposure of him by old Tom Quad, a flashback in which he sits sated, gowndabout, in clerical-ease 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 loser. (*FW* 57.23-29)

The words such as "slithe, dodgsomely" and "Alys" can be appropriately

6) Joyce also mentions the word "looking-glass" several times in *Finnegans Wake*: "ever Ellis threw his cookingclass" (*FW* 294.08), "nurse Madge, my linkingclass girl" (*FW* 459.03), "Secilas through their laughing classes becoming poolermates in laker life" (*FW* 526.35), "Alicious, twinstreams twinestraines, through alluring glass or alas in jumboland?" (*FW* 528.17), and "We pass through grass behush the bush" (*FW* 628.12).

ascribed to Carroll. First of all, “slithe” is the first portmanteau word Humpty Dumpty takes as an example in explicating “Jabberwocky.” Next, “dodgsomely” is a word play of “Dodgeson,” Carroll’s real name; “Alys” is Alice as a “tiny victorienne” or a child of the Victorian Age. Last, the words of exposure and flashback are related to picture, and Carroll is well known as a photographer, who took Alice’s pictures several times.

As discussed above, Carroll shows remarkable examples of word play through his works, which anticipates Joyce’s further experimentation: “Both Carroll and Joyce were constantly being surprised at the enormous difference which a slight change in the letters of a word can make to its meaning” (Atherton 125). The two novelists put full swing to language so that it can create some chasms where tension and unexpected fun are lurking. Most of all, Carroll’s poem “Jabberwocky” epitomizes two crucial principles of writing: inventing and compounding. As for inventing, Carroll makes up words out of context almost at random. As for compounding, he combines several words and their meanings, too. In both cases, the writer takes the total authority in creating language:

*’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
 All mimsy were the borogoves,
 And the mome raths outgrabe. (TL 21)*

After reading this poem, Alice confesses “it’s *rather* hard to understand! . . . Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas — only don’t exactly know what they are!” (TL 24). Alice’s confession is not an exaggeration because it is full of invented words such as “brillig” (“four o’clock in the afternoon — the time when you begin *broiling* things for dinner”), “toves” (“badgers — they’re something like lizards — and they’re something like corkscrews”),

“gyre” (“to go round and round like a gyroscope”), “gimble” (“to make holes like a gimblet”), “wabe” (“the grass-plot round a sun-dial”), “borogove” (“a thin shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round – something like a live mop”), “mome” (“short for ‘from home’ – meaning that they’d lost their way”), “rath” (“a green pig”), and “outgrabe” (“something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle”) (*TL* 126-29). These words were all invented by Carroll’s pen.

The most obvious legacy from Carroll is the portmanteau-word, also represented in the poem of “Jabberwocky.” Carroll’s definition of the portmanteau-word through the mouth of Humpty Dumpty⁷⁾ is quite crucial: “‘Slithy’ 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” (*TL* 126-27); “Well then, ‘mimsy’ is ‘flimsy and miserable’ (there’s another portmanteau for you)” (*TL* 128-29). This portmanteau-word becomes the basic principle of composition in *Finnegans Wake*, an amalgam of dozens of languages crammed together into a portmanteau of various, nearly limitless, meanings.

Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* itself is a portmanteau packed in countless words from countless languages. For example, “threed” (*FW* 196.9) combines “try” and “three” meaning “pierce, penetrate.” The word “wik” on line 13 of the page 196 also shows a combination of “wick” and “week.” Next, “isthmass” (*FW* 197.14) combines “Christmas,” isthmus (GR, strip of land between two seas), and isthmus of Sutton. And, “eegit” (*FW* 198.2) means “idiot” and “Egypt” at the same time. The word “bundukiboi” (*FW* 201.25) comes from “bunduki” (Kiswahili), which means ‘gun, rifle’ and “boi” (Kiswahili), which

7) Not only as a principle of word play does Joyce also use Humpty Dumpty to represent the theme of fall of man and resurrection: “Humps when you hised us and dumps when you doused us!” (*FW* 624.13).

means ‘houseboy, servant’ (from English ‘boy’). Countless other examples cannot be mentioned all here; the whole text of *Finnegans Wake* in itself is a giant portmanteau of languages.

Another interesting strategy of word play is writing words backwards. In her article “Allusions on Lewis Carroll in James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*,” Tamar Gelashvili points out that both Joyce and Carroll were deeply immersed in reading words backwards: “one example of this could be Bruno’s words that Evil is the same as Live (Evil read backwards gives us Live and vice versa). It is noteworthy that allusion to this passage from *Sylvie and Bruno* is also found in *Finnegans Wake*, when Joyce writes ‘Evil-it-is, lord of loaves in Amongded’ (*FW* 418.6). We can argue that one of the reasons, why Joyce was so interested in anagrams, was that it can be an allusion to the mirror, where the written word alters and changes” (48).

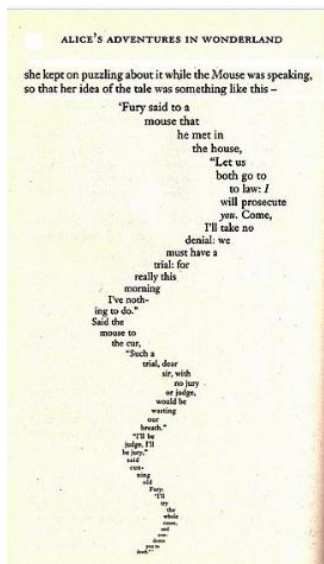
As language investigators, more interestingly, both Joyce and Carroll also tried to materialize language, treating language as things themselves. Beyond the conventionally fixed signifieds, they tried to represent their own signifieds only through signifiers. Like a picture or an image, signifiers embody their meanings transcending the conventional process of signification. For example, Carroll shows the mouse’s “long tail” and “long tale” at the same time, by presenting the mouse’s tale in the shape of the long tail.⁸⁾

Two different words get combined in the following typographical arrangements of letters on a page (*AAW* 37). Here, “the text of the story (‘tale’) retold by the mouse is an iconic representation of the mouse’s tail. Any correlation between iconicity and language stands in sheer violation of the

8) In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce also makes use of this pun: “What was it he did a tail at all on Animal Sendai?” (*FW* 196.18-19) Of course, the word “tale” should have been written instead of “tail” because the text deals with HCE’s incident. In the same chapter, Joyce repeats this pun: “haven’t I told you every telling has a tailing” (*FW* 213.11-12).

arbitrariness principle" (Rivero 19). The mouse's tale takes a form of a tail. Here, the word becomes a thing itself: a long tale/tail.

A similar example appears in the 8th chapter of *Finnegans Wake*. Here, the first few lines of the text construct the form of the delta of the river. Since Anna Livia Plurabelle represents the River Liffey, this textual embodiment is quite meaningful in itself. ALP's siglum is the delta shape: Δ . The delta shape (Δ) is significant. Dublin, where the novel takes place, is the delta of the River Liffey which runs through it. ALP is the embodiment



Q

tell me all about

Anna Livia! I want to hear all

about Anna Livia. Well, you know Anna Livia? Yes, of course,

of the River Liffey. Again, as typographical arrangements of letters on a page show, the text/language becomes the thing itself.

As discussed so far, Carroll's and Joyce's language experiment, in which they coin new words, combine words in an unconventional way, spell words backwards, and visualize the meanings of words typographically, represents a whole new level of signification and requires rereading in the social and political context.

IV. Conclusion: Beyond ‘Wordsland’

Let us now, weather, health, dangers, public orders and other circumstances permitting, of perfectly convenient, if you police, after you, policepolice, pardoning me in, ich beam so fresch, bey? drop this jiggerypokery and talk straight. (*FW* 113.23-26)

After all, one of the most outstanding commonalities between Carroll and Joyce is scorn and contempt toward using normal and standard English in grammatical sense. That is why the two were deeply immersed in using puns, enjoying word plays, and avoiding idioms in their conventional meanings. In the quotation above, Joyce does not “talk straight” by using German as well as English such as “mein, ich beam[bin], frisch.” In this way, Joyce compares control of English as an official and standard language to the official power of police and makes fun of this official authority of English.

Both Carroll and Joyce are monumental writers in history of literature in that they explored untrodden territory using their own epoch-making sense of language. However, this literary innovation should be reinterpreted in the context of history and politics. In Joyce’s case, in particular, his experiment of language needs to be analyzed against the background of colonialism. As David Spurr argues, “If we are to consider Joyce as a proto-theorist of colonial discourse, he would seem to belong to the incendiary camp which equates language with power itself, and whose own discourse thus conducts a kind of guerilla warfare with traditional and dominant modes of writing” (885). Carroll’s word play also can be interpreted as a rebellion against the stifling Victorian hierarchy and religious rigidity. Both Carroll and Joyce are rebels wielding language as a weapon in order to construct their own “wordsland.”

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Abstract

Carroll's Adventures in 'Wordsland': In Anticipation of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*

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Mapping the genetic genealogy between Lewis Carroll and James Joyce, this essay analyzes how Carroll scrutinizes the nature of language and performs language experiment in *Alice* series, how these texts exemplify Saussurean theory and linguistics, and how Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* develops Carroll's precursory experimentation. Carroll's word play in 'Jabberwocky' anticipates Joyce's full-blown language experiment in *Finnegans Wake*. Carroll's and Joyce's language experiment, in which they coin new words, combine words in an unconventional way, spell words backwards, and visualize the meanings of words typographically, represents a whole new level of signification and dismantles the rigid social order of Victorian society and British colonialism, respectively. Both Carroll and Joyce are rebels using language as a weapon in order to construct their own "wordslan."

■ **Key words** : James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, Lewis Carroll, Jabberwocky, language experiment

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