

KNIGHT LETTER

THE LEWIS CARROLL SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA



SPRING 2019

VOLUME III ISSUE 2

NUMBER 102

The *Knight Letter* is the official magazine of the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, a literary society whose purpose is to encourage study and appreciation of the life, work, times, and influence of Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), and is in affiliation with the Fales Library, New York University.

It is published twice a year and is distributed free to all members.

Editorial correspondence should be sent to the Editor in Chief at morgan@bookgenius.org.

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for *The Rectory Umbrella* and *Mischmasch* should be sent to morgan@bookgenius.org.

Submissions and suggestions for *Serendipidity* and *Sic, Sic, Sic* should be sent to andrewogus@gmail.com.

Submissions and suggestions for *All Must Have Prizes* should be sent to matt.crandall@gmail.com.

Submissions and suggestions for *From Our Far-Flung Correspondents* should be sent to farflungknight@gmail.com.

© 2019 The Lewis Carroll Society of North America

ISSN 0193-886X

Chris Morgan, Editor in Chief

Cindy Watter, Editor, Of Books and Things

Mark Burstein, Editor, From Our Far-Flung Correspondents

Foxxe Editorial Services, Copyeditor

Mark Burstein, Production Editor

Sarah Adams-Kiddy, Proofreader

Andrew H. Ogus, Designer

THE LEWIS CARROLL SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

President:

Linda Cassady, linda.cassady@gmail.com

Vice-President:

Amy Plummer, amyplummer@aol.com

Secretary:

Sandra Lee Parker, secretary@lewis Carroll.org

www.LewisCarroll.org

Annual membership dues are U.S. \$35 (regular),

\$50 (international), and \$100 (sustaining).

Subscriptions, correspondence, and inquiries should be addressed to:

Sandra Lee Parker, LCSNA Secretary

PO Box 197

Annandale, Virginia 22003

Additional contributors to this issue: Mary DeYoung

On the cover: from Sempé's De L'Autre Coté du Miroir. See p. 39.



CONTENTS

THE RECTORY UMBRELLA

Live from San Diego: The Aurora Gorey-Alice! 1
CHRIS MORGAN

*The Alice Books and Twentieth-Century
Declarations of Children's Rights* 11
EDNA RUNNELS RANCK

Not a Fan Parker Fan 16
DMITRY YERMOLOVICH

*Is the American Voting System
Ready for a Change?* 26
FRANCINE F. ABELES

Two Sculptors in Conversation 28
BRIDGETTE MONGEON & KAREN MORTILLARO

MISCHMASCH

Leaves from the Deanery Garden— Serendipity 32

Ravings from the Writing Desk 35
LINDA CASSADY

All Must Have Prizes 37
MATT CRANDALL

Arcane Illustrators: Sempé 39
MARK BURSTEIN

What Is It but a (Lucid) Dream? 41
CHRIS MORGAN

A Modest Proposal 43
MARK BURSTEIN

Alice in Advertising-Land 45
DAYNA NUHN

CARROLLIAN NOTES

Alice by Heart 47
PATT GRIFFIN

The Tell-Tile Hearth 48
MARK BURSTEIN

The Wayne in Maine 50
JANN GILMORE

OF BOOKS AND THINGS

*The Fabulous Journeys
of Alice and Pinocchio* 51
STEPHANIE LOVETT

Lewis Carroll: The Worlds of His Alices 52
CINDY WATTER

witzend 53

*Seeking It with Thimbles: Fine Press
and Artist's Books* 54

FROM OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

*Art & Illustration—Articles & Academia—
Books—Comics and Graphic Novels—Events,
Exhibits, & Places—Internet & Technology—
Movies & Television—Music—Performing Arts
—Things* 55

*The Fabulous Journeys of Alice
and Pinocchio: Exploring
Their Parallel Worlds*

Laura Tosi with Peter Hunt
McFarland, 2018

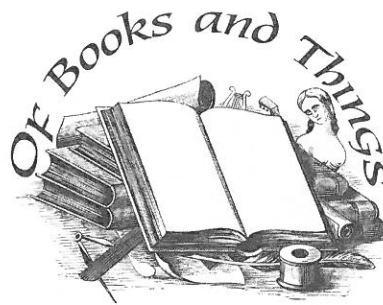
ISBN: 978-1-4766-6543-6

Stephanie Lovett

The present volume, intriguingly, is not positioned as children's lit research, but is number 61 in McFarland's series *Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy*. It is written almost entirely by Italian scholar Laura Tosi. British professor Peter Hunt has contributed two chapters and a coda, a *jeu d'esprit* bringing the two characters together. In her Preface, Tosi notes that although *Alice* and *Pinocchio* are among the most translated books in world literature and of tremendous influence on literature and culture, they have never been considered together in a book-length study, though she cites her predecessors Anne Lawson Lucas, Emer O'Sullivan, and many others who have in the past considered the works together and separately.

Americans in particular may not have given much thought to this, being probably less likely than Europeans to have actually read *Pinocchio*, and it is fascinating to see the similarities abound. Both books are known widely through Disney adaptations, both involved literary innovations, both have generated cultural tropes (tea-party chaos, nose-growing lies), both are dominated by themes of metamorphosis, both "transcend their origins and have become transnational classics despite and because of their national characteristics," and "both books broke new ground with their subversive representation of inquisitive children who were very far from being models of virtue."

Fabulous Journeys is divided into three sections: The first examines the books in terms of their context, that is, the nations in which they are situated, their status as



gendered books, and the lives and intentions of their authors. The second section looks at how they do and don't fit onto the armatures of fable, folktale, fairy-tale, and fantasy, and the third section covers some of their influence on postmodern literature and national identity.

Many LCSNA members will be particularly interested in the first section, with its focus on a nineteenth-century context. Tosi visits the general perception that *Pinocchio*, with his impulsiveness and childish passions, represents the Italian character, and *Alice* is a quintessential Brit, "driven by the quiet inner self-confidence that the rest of the world is simply *wrong*." We are given a lot to mull over, including the ways in which the characters both fulfill and undermine such stereotyping and what that might mean to how we think about national character—and about *Alice* and *Pinocchio* as both specific and universal. Part One concludes with a chapter on the lives of authors Carlo and Charles, which, when described in broad strokes, are remarkably similar. Carrollians will enjoy learning about Carlo Lorenzini (Collodi, like Carroll, was a pen name). Tosi finds it instructive to situate them in their historical moment, at the height of the Pax Britannica and at the dawn of the unified Italy, and to consider those eras' differing needs from narratives that told them stories about who they were and could become.

Part Two shifts to more literary considerations of structure, intent, and genre. Tosi discusses aspects

such as both books' being in conflict with their mawkish predecessors and contemporaries; both being quite theatrical in nature; both being picaresque, but also being about their protagonists' growth and change; and both "begin[ning] with a careful negotiation of the status of books, which turns into a rebellion against the book itself." (Collodi is as hard on "Once upon a time" as Carroll is on books without pictures and conversations.) Most readers will be intrigued with Tosi's exploration of the many ways in which *Alice* and *Pinocchio* belong to and undermine the folktale and fairy-tale traditions, riffing on the cautionary tradition and making playful use of tropes such as talking animals, roads, gardens, woods, and food.

The taxonomy of fable, folktale, and fairy-tale gives us useful ways to understand what the two authors were doing and what kind of expectations we as readers might be bringing to the stories. The examination of the fairy-tale tradition is particularly profound, dealing as it does with death, violence, and metamorphosis. One has to reflect on the usefulness of the fairy-tale space for examining the violence and death in our lives (and *Pinocchio* is far more grisly than *Alice*), protecting the reader from events that a naturalistic depiction would render unbearable. The metamorphosis themes in both books are also compelling, with flux and hybridity and doubling driving the psychological engines of the stories—and yet both *Alice* and *Pinocchio* manage to emerge better able to control themselves and their worlds, and they are seen at the very end in an adult role.

This middle section concludes with considerations of the ways in which the books are also literary fantasies and bildungsromans. "The hero wonders and wanders: What does this world want/expect

from me? What are the rules of this world? How do I want to behave in this specific situation and how am I expected to behave?" Tosi has escorted us to a place where we see how skillfully these two books use all manner of folk/fairytale tropes and genre expectations to craft a more nuanced literary journey for these young protagonists.

This reviewer found Part Three to be a bit of an emotional letdown after the more crucial human concerns of the second section. The last third of the book locates the ongoing lives of the books in two different places. The first of these is the world of post-modern literature, where *Alice* and *Pinocchio* are highly portable, lifted into a multiverse of remixes, both because of the tremendous variety of imagery and concepts they bring with them and because they each per se have come to signify a kind of postmodern, posthuman quality. Tosi illustrates this with a lengthy examination of their use in the works of Angela Carter and Robert Coover, which is surprisingly accessible even if one has not read those works. Her analysis is also illustrative of the asserted postmodernity of the characters, in the same sense that a description of a car would make it easier to understand a monograph about what gasoline is. Getting to see them function helps.

We end the tour of the books' universality with a return to the local, looking at the function of school and adventure stories in the U.K. and Italy. "Childhood and children's books have always had a symbiotic relationship," Tosi says. "Each contributes to the construction of the other; and one of the most revealing ways of understanding how different cultures and nations construct childhood is to reflect on the remarkably different ways in which individual genres are constructed and perceived within different national settings."

This is an academic book and cannot be skimmed, but it is not jargon-ridden and is suitable for a general reader; anyone who wishes to write about *Alice* will find fresh insights. For the Carrollian, bringing in *Pinocchio* breathes an invigorating energy into the endless conversation about what and how *Alice* means.

[*Alice and Pinocchio have a history of intertwining. A translation of Col-lodi's fable by the splendidly yclept Hezekiah Butterworth (take that, Dickens!) published by Jordan, Marsh & Co. of Boston in 1898 was titled "Pinocchio's Adventures in Wonderland," and the books are sometimes issued together in one volume (e.g., by Ramboro in 1981) and in various compendia and treasures, Disneyfied and otherwise. — Ed.]*



*Lewis Carroll: The Worlds
of His Alices*

Edward Guiliano

Edward Everett Root, 2019

ISBN: 9781912224807

Cindy Watter

In one densely informative volume, using both pictures (many of them Carroll's photographs and drawings) and conversations (in this case references to previous Carroll critics), Edward Guiliano makes his case for the imaginative talent of Lewis Carroll, and Carroll's relevance today. *Lewis Carroll: The Worlds of His Alices* is heavily researched, gracefully written, and thoroughly enjoyable.

Guiliano is a founding member of our Society and the author or editor of several books on Lewis Carroll. In this book, Guiliano discusses Carroll's life and times, his writings, and his photography, as well as what he calls Alice's "afterlife"—the everlasting interest in *Under Ground*, *Wonderland*, and what lies beyond the *Looking-Glass*.

[*This review assumes the reader has read the write-up of Guiliano's talk at our Spring meeting on p. 4; many*

details are omitted here to avoid redundancy. — Ed.]

What makes this book particularly valuable is that Guiliano has been able to make use of recent research and publications. Since the release of Morton Cohen's inimitable biography of Carroll in 1995, there has been a mass of new scholarship. Works by Edward Wakeling, Gillian Beer, Jenny Woolf, and the latest edition of *The Annotated Alice* have added to the knowledge base, not to mention other works that appeared, thick and fast, upon the 150th anniversary of *Wonderland*. Guiliano draws upon Wakeling's catalogue raisonné of Carroll's photography, for example.

Many readers of *Alice* are curious about Carroll's private life, as are, apparently, even more people who have never read the *Alice* books. Guiliano speaks to that. First, Carroll's life was *private*, a foreign concept today. Second, he was very much of his times. Guiliano quotes Wakeling's description of Carroll:

... a devout Christian, close to his family and friends, loyal to his country and monarch, unwavering in his support for his college and its traditions and yet creative in his thinking and writing, inventive in his ideas, and hugely popular as a storyteller and novelist for children.

As to his friends, most of them were adults, and several of those were female. Guiliano calls them a "retinue of women"! Carroll went with them to the theatre, exhibitions, and the like. His social life was certainly more varied than the picture that is so often presented: the nervous stuttrer who was only comfortable among children. Guiliano states, "In an effort to cement his 'patron saint of children' image, his executors may have actually overestimated his preoccupation with children, not anticipating in a post-Freudian milieu it