

## **Annihilating Nihilistic Nonsense** **Tim Burton Guts Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky***

*Alice in Wonderland* seems to beg for a morbid interpretation. Whether it's Marilyn Manson's "Eat Me, Drink Me," the video game "American McGee's Alice," or Svankmajer's "Alice" and "Jabberwocky," artists love bringing out the darker elements of Alice's adventures as she wanders among creepy creatures. The 2010 Tim Burton film is the latest twisted adaptation, featuring an older Alice that slays the Jabberwocky. However, unlike the other adaptations, Burton's adaptation draws most of its grim outlook by gutting *Alice in Wonderland* of its fundamental core - its nonsense. *Alice in Wonderland* uses nonsense to liberate, offering frightening amounts of freedom through its playful use of nonsense. However, Burton turns this whimsy into menacing machinations - he pretends to use nonsense for its original liberating purpose but actually uses it for adult plots and preset paths. Burton takes the destructive power of Alice's insistence for order and amplifies it dramatically, completely removing its original subversive release from societal constraints. Under the façade of paying tribute to Carroll's whimsical nonsense verse, Burton directly removes nonsense's anarchic freedom and replaces it with a destructive commitment to sense. This brutal change to both plot and structure turns Alice into a mindless juggernaut, slaying not only the Jabberwock, but also the realm of nonsense, non-linear narrative and real world empires.

At first, nonsense in Lewis Carroll's books seems to just a light-hearted play with language. Even before we come into Wonderland, the idea of nonsense as just a simple child's diversion is given by the epigraph. The children hope that "there will be nonsense in" the story (Carroll, 3), revealing that they just see it as a fun amusement. Likewise, when Alice is at the caucus race, the story reads like an Abbott and Costello routine - trying to become dry by reciting boring passages, doing a literal race for a caucus race, and confusion over the Mouse's tail/tale (Carroll 20-23). These passages take the

inherent inconsistency of language to absurd extents - one word can have multiple meanings, and switching unexpectedly to another context causes confusion and amusement.

By freely playing with these word associations, Carroll reveals the inherent inconsistency of language and encourages us to subvert our preconceived linguistic notions. Most of the Looking-Glass creatures question the relationship between a word and its meaning. The White Knight's differentiation between the name of a song ("The Aged Aged Man"), what the name of the song is called ("Haddock's Eyes"), what the song is called ("Ways and Means"), and what the song is ("A-sitting On a Gate") helps highlight the fact that names and the actual meaning behind them are completely separate (Carroll, 185). All of these variations just reveal that all of the terms are just placeholders; it doesn't matter what the song is or what the song is called, for it's still the same thing. This is reinforced by the many times Alice's identity is called into question by Wonderland denizens. Just because Tweedledee or the Caterpillar doesn't believe that Alice is who she is, she's still fundamentally the same person, even if the name or description differs.

This innate ridiculousness of language is demonstrated again by words that seem nonsensical but actually have a structured meaning. When Alice is in the boat with the Sheep, the Sheep seems to be saying ridiculous things about "catching a crab" and "feather[s]" (Carroll, 153), but these are real rowing terms with actual meaning! With the real and nonsense so conflated, it becomes clear to both Alice and the reader that language is merely a convention, and there are no constraints to what you can or could say. In other words, as Humpty Dumpty so famously stated: "When *I* use a word, [...] it means just what I choose it to mean" (Carroll, 161). There's no way to tell nonsense and true sense apart, so why can't you just say anything? The members of Wonderland are definitely well aware of this fact and view it as just another logical extension of the original playful nature of nonsense. Indeed, in *Looking Glass*, the Gnat repeatedly suggests Alice make "a joke" through wordplay on horse/hoarse and

wood/would (Carroll, 128). Instead of directly saying “look how arbitrary language is,” Carroll stays within the system and reveals how ludicrous it is, a delightful act of subversion.

These principles of freedom and positive rule-breaking are exemplified by the finest example of nonsense verse, Carroll’s “Jabberwocky”. “Jabberwocky” skillfully rides the line between structure and chaos by keeping just enough formal elements to make its nonsensical statements sound reasonable. The poem still maintains a lot of formal structure; the poem has correct grammar and syntax and employs extensive symmetry, bookending the action with the “’Twas brillig” stanza and highlighting the fight with the Jabberwock in the very center of the poem (Rose, 7-8). Thus, there’s just enough context so that the strange words are not just random noise on a page; the reader is given the freedom and power to choose whatever they want words to mean, given the context that they have. Indeed, “there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ associations to individual words” so reading “Jabberwocky” is an inherently “personalising” action (Rose, 11). Even though Carroll later gives his own definitions of what some words mean through Humpty Dumpty and the prefaces of *Through the Looking Glass* and “The Hunting of the Snark,” most of the poem is left uninterpreted without a direct equivalence. We’re free to fill in the blanks with our own choices of meaning.

However, Carroll quickly takes this nonsensical freedom to a terrifying conclusion; not only is there no order within language - there isn’t any order in the entire world! If the rules of language are meaningless and arbitrary, what’s so special about time, etiquette or social hierarchies? They are all just universally agreed structures imposed by societal convention. Indeed, in both Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world, the same principles behind all of these things are broken. The morality plays are turned into drivel, causality goes backwards for the White Queen, and the legal system is turned into a sham trial. Even time and space are up for contention! As Alice travels through the Looking-Glass world, scenes melt rapidly into one another with no transition, going from storefront to rowboat to

Humpty Dumpty's wall. Through the same nonsensical perversion, these previously steadfast codes of ethics, physics and logic lose all meaning. Humpty Dumpty's insistence that he chooses the meaning behind words now takes on a sinister air – just as the mapping between words and meaning is entirely arbitrary, any formal, socially agreed upon system is meaningless without mutual buy-in. This realization is known and used by everyone in Wonderland, allowing them to take the anti-causal, nonsensical nature of their world in stride. In essence, “all pattern, save the consistency of chaos, is annihilated” in Wonderland (Rackin, 36-37).

While the Wonderland residents want Alice to take part in their subversive fun, she ultimately craves for sense, devolving into a destructive rage to maintain it. Despite the freedom that the nonsensical perspective provides, Alice despises the breakdown of rules around her. She goes through the novels trying to achieve her goals (reach the garden or become queen), but is constantly ridiculed for so steadfastly trying to stick to an idea of coherence. She “swallow[s] down her anger” when confronted by the Caterpillar, annoyed by the “stupid[ity]” of the Mad Tea Party and is literally driven to tears by Tweedledee and Tweedledum (Carroll, 35, 58, 142). While she does valiantly fight off all of these obstacles, Alice ultimately finds out that her goal – the one thing that she was striving towards to force some order of progression in the text - turns out to be just more of the same nonsense. It's telling that *Wonderland* ends with a trial – the perfect ending for a quest for law and order! There, Alice realizes that Wonderland itself, fueled by nonsensical subversion, is too strong-willed and independent to acquiesce to her demands for meaning and sense. “Stuff and nonsense!” she yells at the Queen of Hearts, right before she destroys Wonderland, revealing how frustrated she is with its arbitrary nature (Carroll, 95). Similarly, in *Looking Glass*, Alice is much more in control of the frame story than she was in *Wonderland*; rather than fall down the rabbit hole, she says “Let's pretend” and sets up the cat as the Red Queen, the looking glass as something you can enter, etc (Carroll, 108-109). With this control,

she sets up a much more linear narrative than in Wonderland, imposing her need for order on the structure of the universe. Even so, despite her increased control over the universe, the nonsensical Queen's Feast at the end still frustrates Alice enough into destroying the world. We clearly see that Alice simply cannot accept the nonsensical anarchy and resorts to violence in order to maintain any semblance of order.

Burton applies a similar rage through his adaptation – he completely inverts Carroll's original nonsensical intent by destroying the Jabberwocky both literally and metaphorically. At first glance, Burton seems to pay immense tribute to the poem. The entire plot of the movie now revolves around obtaining the Vorpal Sword and slaying the Jabberwocky, with many nonsense words showing up as cameos (the Bandersnatch, the Jubjub bird, "Frabjous Day," the tulgey wood, etc.). However, once you dig in a little deeper, you find that all of the freedom that these nonsense words originally brought are now gone! Rather than giving the viewer the opportunity to imagine their own meanings for the words, providing the chance to exercise agency, Burton now ties things down concretely from a name to a visual. While "frabjous day" in the text could mean "day of joy" or "day of great achievement" or any number of things that would make sense as a call of celebration, in the film, Frabjous Day now has one fixed definition: "day when the Jabberwocky will be slain" . This is in direct opposition with the liberating sense given by nonsense in Carroll's version. Instead, the nonsense words become a substitution cipher between the word and whatever Burton decides is the "correct" definition. The words may be foreign, but they all have a meaning associated with them, while Carroll left everything free for interpretation.

Burton even goes out of his way to provide names for things that previously didn't, continuing to force a place and expectation on them. The "Eat Me" cake and "Drink Me" vial are now "upelkuchen" and "pishalver," while the animals all now have names as well (the Caterpillar is

Absolem, the White Rabbit is McTwisp, etc.). Although these names try to fall under the guise of nonsensical words like those in "Jabberwocky," they instead continue to promote Burton's perspective of a fixed meaning. Contrast this insistence of names with Carroll's Forest with No Names. When Alice steps into the forest and meets the Fawn, neither of them can remember their names, thus allowing them to break free from all societal expectations. Alice is able to become fast friends with the Fawn, who allows Alice to place "her arms lovingly" about its neck (Carroll, 132). However, as soon as they leave the forest, the Fawn runs off because humans and fawns can't get along, despite the friendly time they had in the Forest! This reveals that a name is ultimately a constructed concept that accomplishes nothing more than to divide via societal expectations, a conclusion consistent with what we previously established as the Carrollian perspective. So, by forcing everything to have a name, Burton exhibits the very antithesis of Carroll's Forest With No Names. Everything needs to have a name, so that they have a place and construct they must follow, a view consistent with Burton's denial of the freedom of nonsense.

Perhaps the most egregious display of Burton's disregard for the original purpose of nonsense is the phrase "Downal wyth bluddy behg hid," a secret code phrase used to connect members of the rebellion. While it looks and sounds like nonsense, it, in fact, has a very clear meaning, as seen when the Mad Hatter tells Bayard the hound this code, encouraging Bayard to run off and protect Alice (Burton, 35:10 - 35:20). Nonsense is no longer Carroll's lighthearted jest at the need for rules and order. Instead, it is now part of adult politics and regimes - everything has a meaning and everything has a place. The phrase is even offered as the answer to the famed riddle "Why is a raven like a writing desk?" (Carroll, 53), which is known for being nonsensical and not having a concrete answer. Although Burton's Hatter later claims that he doesn't know the answer, "Downal wyth bluddy behg hid" was shouted immediately after he first posed the question, heavily implying that this is the answer to the

riddle (Burton, 32:05 - 32:11). This is perhaps the ultimate corruption; even the famous riddle with no answer now has an answer, in the disguise of the original whimsy it promoted.

(As a strong aside, note that while the poem is called Jabberwocky, the beast is actually called the Jabberwock. However, the film intentionally calls the monster "the Jabberwocky," implying that Alice is going to slay the poem, not the monster! Indeed, when the Mad Hatter reads out excerpts from "Jabberwocky" in the film, he says "Beware the Jabberwock" (Burton, 37:10-37:17), making it abundantly clear that the characters are aware in-universe that they are using the wrong name! So, Burton really is having Alice slay nonsense! As one critic summarizes well, "The poem [Jabberwocky] is the epitome of nonsense; to kill the Jabberwocky is to kill nonsense." (Elliott, 194). There is no longer any nonsense in Burton's adaptation - all of the freedom that used to be there is now replaced with forcing things down into their correct specific societal place.)

By so adamantly fighting Carroll's idea of nonsense, Burton turns Wonderland, a frightening nihilistic anarchy into Underland, a constrained, predetermined monarchy. By removing the idea of nonsense as something liberating, Burton instead nurtures Alice's destructive nature and turns her into a killing machine. Instead of the rage being the culmination of chapters of frustratingly nonsensical conversation, Burton's Alice has been predestined to be a slayer - the Frabjous Day is coming up whether you like it or not, and you will have to slay the Jabberwocky. Without the liberation of nonsense, she has no choice but to continue on the preordained path. Within the first minute of Alice arriving in Underland, the other characters are already immediately judging that she is "the wrong Alice" even before she has a chance to define who she wants to be! (Burton, 16:30). The ideal has already been set up for her via the Oraculum, and the entire rest of the film is her transformation from her original identity (cruelly labeled "Not Alice" - shouldn't Alice get to decide if she's Alice or not?) to the person that all of the Underland residents want her to be ("Alice"). Underland's Oraculum

compounds the idea that Alice has no choice over her actions; the entire arc of Alice's story has been entirely preordained and it's just a matter of her getting there. Perhaps, most strikingly, Alice is not even allowed to choose her own gender! When the Mad Hatter first meets Alice, he exclaims "You're absolutely Alice! [...] I'd know him anywhere!" (Burton, 31:25 - 31:30). It seems at first that this scene is just played for laughs to show that the Hatter is insane and can't tell gender differences apart.

However, it's later revealed when the Mad Hatter recites the lines from "Jabberwocky" that he's basing his gendering of Alice on the poem, with its lines "He took his vorpal sword [...] He left it dead" and so on (Burton, 37:20 - 37:28). Alice is not allowed to be female because it would break the prophecy that's already been devised for her! It's yet another example of how "Jabberwocky" has been corrupted - originally a liberating work of self-expression is now being used to constrain people into a pre-contrived schema. Even in Underland, this magical place that's far away from England, she's faced with the same sort of preset destiny that she was trying to escape. Instead of Victorian England's societal conceptions, Alice now faces Underland's hidden manipulations, as they turn Alice away from any identity of her own and mold her into what they need.

So, what is ultimately the identity that Underland chooses for Alice? A violent destructive juggernaut with no moral core. As soon as Alice meets the creatures of Underland, she is immediately dragged away to see if she's the slayer that they wanted. We only see two scenes from the Oraculum - when Alice comes into Underland and when Alice slays the Jabberwocky, implying that all of the parts in the middle don't matter. Alice just needs to do whatever it takes to become a murderous slayer, a role which everyone in Underland pushes her to fulfill. When Alice even begins to think about straying from this role, protesting that "I'm not slaying anything. I don't slay." (Burton, 37:38 - 37:40), the Mad Hatter physically abandons her even though she's in her smallest and most vulnerable form. Alice has no worth to him or the rest of Underland unless she stays within this destructive role. Even though

Alice is seemingly given a choice to choose to fight the Jabberwocky or not on the Frabjous Day, she ultimately comes back to fight when Absolem finally convinces her that Underland is not a dream, but an actual real place, effectively guilt tripping her into going back to fight to save her friends.

Amusingly, when Alice finally arrives at the battlefield, we find that she doesn't even matter herself.

The Jabberwocky says to Alice, "So my old foe, we meet on the battlefield once again. [...] Not you [Alice], insignificant bearer." (Burton, 87:00 - 87:18). Alice literally does not matter at all to the whole plot of Underland! She is simply just a tool that they need to bring the Vorpal Sword to the Jabberwocky, a mindless carrier of destruction. Absolem even admits this to Alice: "The Vorpal Sword knows what it wants. All you have to do is hold on to it" (Burton, 82:00 - 82:08). The Underland denizens don't care about Alice having any sort of identity whatsoever. Instead, they have spent all of this time breaking down Alice's identity in order to craft the new destructive force they need.

Finally, we see this destructive mentality carry through from Underland back into England.

Although the ending is intended to be a triumphant conclusion where Alice finally asserts herself and throws off restricting societal expectations, it instead fully cements the idea of Alice, the sadistic destroyer. Alice already was bucking social conventions at the beginning of the film in her own subversive way. She refuses to wear stockings or corsets, likening them to codfish, and snarkily asks her potential mother in law if she fears "the decline of the aristocracy" (Burton, 08:24 - 08:27). Alice pokes holes at social conventions by pointing out that the order can be quickly subverted, similar to how Carroll used nonsense to laugh at the conventions of language. However, after her adventures in Underland, this sense of playful jest is slain with the Jabberwocky, replaced with a sadistic pleasure in destroying things. When she comes back to England, Alice calls out Hamish's digestive problems in front of all of his friends and family for no reason, publicly blackmails her sister's husband and essentially flashes the entire party by dancing and revealing that she's not wearing stockings. While it's

good to see Alice being assertive (unlike the typical Victorian girl stereotype), all of these actions have an extra degree of malice that seem just a bit uncalled for. At the very least, they definitely lack the subtlety and wit of Alice's earlier rebellions against society. Likewise, the "gender norm shattering" ending where Alice goes to China? She is instead turning into the most quintessential conquerer - the British imperialist. If Alice is "the first to trade with China" (Burton, 97:50 - 97:57), then she is literally ushering in the fall of one of the oldest empires by sparking the Opium Wars. Perhaps most cruelly, Alice tells Aunt Imogene to "talk to someone about these delusions" (Burton, 97:47 - 97:55). Alice had just seen that all of her dreams were real five minutes ago, and here she is telling her aunt that she's insane! This further shows that Alice is not actually interested in trying to help Aunt Imogene or give any sort of hope that fantastical things can happen. Instead, Alice just cruelly wants to destroy everything around her, regardless of whether it is the right thing to do. The triumphant music and connotations of a "Disney ending" tells us that we're supposed to cheer for the newly empowered Alice. In reality, we just witnessed the final transformation: from a clever Alice with her own identity who pokes holes at society's inconsistencies into Alice, the apathetic destructive force of nature.

Ironically, by so adamantly tying down nonsense to a fixed meaning, Burton actually makes a less dark film than he could have! Perhaps fooled by the playful pretense of Carroll's nonsense, Burton completely drains the source texts of nonsense – from plot all the way down to its fundamentally meandering structure. By nailing down any chance where there could be chaos or anarchy, Burton creates a standard linear narrative that loses the 'curiouser' nature of *Wonderland*. Instead of Carroll's postmodern questioning of words and meaning, we get a pretty classic bildungsroman with overused Hero's Journey archetypes. (ex. godteacher in Absolem, slays the Jabberwock to find her true self, etc.). By staying close to known tropes, Burton avoids dealing with the nihilistic uncertainty that nonsense originally gave Carroll's text. Yes, Burton invokes creepy imagery, twisted settings, and rampant

violence to promote an edgier narrative, but ultimately it's just not as spiritually troubling as the implications of the original *Alice in Wonderland*.

In conclusion, by turning the nonsense words of *Alice in Wonderland* into concrete meanings, Burton completely ignores the nuances of Carroll's nonsense in favor of tacking a hard meaning to everything. In the original *Alice in Wonderland*, nonsense held a surface-level whimsy that hid dark anarchic undertones, where no societal constructs are sacred and sense is just an arbitrary construction. Alice plays along with this idea for a while, but ultimately violently rejects this chaos by destroying Wonderland. Burton nominally pays lipservice to the anarchic nonsense by casting his tale as a rebellion narrative, but ultimately, he instead trumps up Alice's destructive rage until it consumes everything. The subversiveness of nonsense, the meandering plot, the freedom of choosing your own meanings - all lie waste from Alice and Burton's rampage. In a sense, by removing nonsense so completely from the world of Wonderland, Alice becomes the Jabberwock herself, a creature more fitting to the underworld of Underland than the wonder in Wonderland. .

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Elliott, Kamilla. "Adaptation as Compendium: Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland*." *Adaptation* 3.2 (2010): 193-201. *Oxford Journals*. Web. 9 Apr. 2015.

Rackin, Donald. "*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*" and "*Through the Looking-glass: Nonsense, Sense and Meaning*". New York: Twayne, 1991. Print.

Rose, Adam. "Lewis Carroll's 'Jabberwocky': Non-sense Not Nonsense." *Language and Literature* 4.1 (1995): 1-15. *Adam\_Rose-Lewis\_Carrolls\_Jabberwocky\_Non\_sense\_Not\_Nonsense.pdf*. Longman Group Limited. Web. 9 Apr. 2015.

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[www.nytimes.com/2010/03/07/opinion/07bayley.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/07/opinion/07bayley.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

This article analyzes Alice in Wonderland as an allegory for the state of mathematics at the time, saying that Alice was more of a satire for Carroll than just a whimsical story. She cites a lot of research about what the current state of mathematics was at the time. At the very least, it gives some fodder for writing a controversial review about Alice.

Bonner, F., and J. Jacobs. "The First Encounter: Observations on the Chronology of Encounter with Some Adaptations of Lewis Carroll's Alice Books." *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 17.1 (2011): 37-48. *Sage Journals*. Web. 9 Apr. 2015.  
[con.sagepub.com/content/17/1/37.full.pdf+html](http://con.sagepub.com/content/17/1/37.full.pdf+html)

This article focuses on the idea of adaptations - both how they can supplant the original text as the primary entry into a cultural phenomenon as well as draw on previous adaptations to nurture a sense of nostalgia, even when the original text has not been consumed. By taking the 1951 Alice as a starting point for this new chronology, the article shows how one's perception can be changed - the 1951 Alice is now taken as something that is child appropriate with the original Carroll text filled with darker undertones, a much more different reading than if one took the Carroll text as the starting point and seeing the 1951 version as a bowdlerized, saccharine, child-pleasing version. The interplay between child and adult impressions creates a stark contrast that is echoed throughout the different adaptations of Alice and their intended audience.

Elliott, Kamilla. "Adaptation as Compendium: Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland." *Adaptation* 3.2 (2010): 193-201. *Oxford Journals*. Web. 9 Apr. 2015.  
<http://adaptation.oxfordjournals.org.proxy.library.emory.edu/content/3/2/193.full>

This article looks past all of the negative reviews for Burton's "Alice in Wonderland" to argue for a new definition of adaptation. Although most of the reviews were unhappy with Burton's take because it lost most of the whimsy and wordplay of the original Alice, the author suggests that an adaptation should be more than just a faithful copy of the original source material, Burton's film instead is a postmodern pastiche of many different forms of media and source material, much like the portmanteaus and referential humor that Carroll himself employed

Interesting quote: "Killing the Jabberwocky is a structuring principle not only for the film's plot but also for its destruction of Carroll's nonsensical aesthetic. The poem is the epitome of nonsense; to kill the Jabberwocky is to kill nonsense."

Flescher, Jacqueline. "The Language of Nonsense in Alice." *Yale French Studies* 43 (1969): 128. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Apr. 2015.  
[www.jstor.org.proxy.library.emory.edu/stable/2929641?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.emory.edu/stable/2929641?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

This article analyzes the structure and effect of nonsense in Alice. They find an overall pattern where the "nonsensical" parts of Alice tend to come from the establishment of pattern (ex. alliteration) and a sudden abrupt deviation from the pattern, the juxtaposition of which causes the effect of nonsense. Nonsense also tends to play with the differences between figurative and concrete meaning, playing with the miscommunication of assuming one or the other.

Huttner, Toby. "Nonsense in Wonderland." *Discoveries* (2008): 67-71. Web. 9 Apr. 2015.  
[http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight\\_institute/publicationsprizes/discoveries/discoveriesspring2008/huttner.pdf](http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight_institute/publicationsprizes/discoveries/discoveriesspring2008/huttner.pdf)

When critics look at Alice in Wonderland, they correctly observe the fact that the work is full of nonsense. However, by directly trying to categorize and catalogue the nonsense into a framework we can understand, the critics insist that there is an underlying orderly structure behind the nonsense that may just be self-imposed. Rather than being a replacement for sense, the nonsense within Alice may just be something fundamentally discomfiting when taken on its own terms - that we shouldn't expect an answer on something that is inherently meaningless.

Rackin, Donald. "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking-glass: Nonsense, Sense and Meaning. New York: Twayne, 1991. Print.

Two chapters in this book perform a close reading of both Alice novels to see the effects of the nonsensical setting, language and verse on Alice's growth and identity. It concludes that the first Alice book is about the universal struggle to impose order on an inherently chaotic world (which Alice ultimately rebels against by destroying the world), while the second Alice book reflects a much more mature Alice who is much more in control of the situation and now takes a retrospective look at the characters.

Rose, Adam. "Lewis Carroll's 'Jabberwocky': Non-sense Not Nonsense." *Language and Literature* 4.1 (1995): 1-15. *Adam Rose-Lewis Carrolls Jabberwocky Non sense Not Nonsense.pdf*. Longman Group Limited. Web. 9 Apr. 2015.  
[www.adamrose.com/public/documents/Adam\\_Rose-Lewis\\_Carrolls\\_Jabberwocky\\_Non\\_sense\\_Not\\_Nonsense.pdf](http://www.adamrose.com/public/documents/Adam_Rose-Lewis_Carrolls_Jabberwocky_Non_sense_Not_Nonsense.pdf)

The author argues that although Jabberwocky is championed as an example of nonsense poetry, the large amount of structure within the poem such as overall narrative, consistently English phonemes and parallelism of the verses make it better described as "non-sense" rather than "nonsense". Much like in child development, where they do not know most of the words of the language, so too does this poem reflect merely a lack of understanding of specific words, not an overall lack of sense.

Shires, Linda M. "Fantasy, Nonsense, Parody, and the Status of the Real: The Example of Carroll." *Victorian Poetry* 26.3, *Comic Verse* (1988): 267-83. *JSTOR*. Web. 09 Apr. 2015.  
[www.jstor.org.proxy.library.emory.edu/stable/40001965?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.emory.edu/stable/40001965?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

This article connects Carroll's wordplay and nonsense to broader philosophical themes of breaking and

playing with established rules as established by Lacan and others. Carroll uses nonsense to not only play with the idea of communication but also the inherent uncertainty of identity. Both parody and nonsense discount the idea of meaning by preserving the form and structure of an original poem or of correct grammatical constraints, but replacing the content with games and mockery.

Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew. "Tim Burton's "Filled" Spaces: Alice in Wonderland." *The Works of Tim Burton: Margins to Mainstream*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. 83-96. *The Works of Tim Burton: Margins to Mainstream - Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock - Google Books*. Google Books. Web. 10 Apr. 2015. [books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=oh5EAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA83&dq=jabberwocky+burton&ots=XLKOADgXej&sig=G7y7heWqJsYxcn2get-09cRzPXQ#v=onepage&q=jabberwockyburton&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=oh5EAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA83&dq=jabberwocky+burton&ots=XLKOADgXej&sig=G7y7heWqJsYxcn2get-09cRzPXQ#v=onepage&q=jabberwockyburton&f=false)

This book chapter analyzes how Burton's mix of live action with animation helps create the sense of blurring the boundaries between the fictional world and the real constrained Victoria era world. With characters like the Red Queen that depend so heavily on both CGI and live action acting, Burton creates a space where both of these elements can coexist and interact with one another, creating a space that is simultaneously both grotesquely realistic and fantastically dreamlike.