III. Nonsense and the Dialectic of Order

It may well strike as a paradox that two classical anthropological and philosophical studies probing into the meaning of order, Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966) and Elizabeth Sewell's *The Field of Nonsense* (1952) appeared shortly before the peak of a massive global wave of political protests, at a time, that is, when thinking and writing about order was not exactly fashionable. Many years after the first publication of her book, Mary Douglas remembered the circumstances responsible for its tardy success and termed it, half-jokingly, *a sleeper*, i.e. a book that „comes out of obscurity after lying dormant for some time."[1] Yet in spite of the fact that these studies may not have been in accord with the spirit of the time when first published both proved to be path-breaking for further research on the subject and hardly any work that has been written over the past seventy years on Nonsense leaves aside what once was so perceptively captured by Sewell's intuition, namely, that order, as strange as it would sound, is essential to literary Nonsense. Apart from the subject of order, which connects the names of Douglas and Sewell, both adopt a similar approach to and both emphasize from the outset the importance of dialectics for our understanding of order, i.e. that any analysis of order necessarily throws up questions as to the meaning of disorder. As Douglas says of dirt and pollution, which are among the key concepts in her study: „Reflection on dirt involves reflection of the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death."[2]

Sewell's approach to the dialectics of order and disorder in her analysis of Nonsense might be judged more complex, for, contrary to expectation, she aligns Nonsense primarily with order rather than with disorder:

„Nonsense…takes the side of order and plays against disorder in the mind…Nonsense will presumably have to organize its language according to the principles of order, i.e. it will have to concentrate on the divisibility of its material into ones, units from which a universe can be built. This universe, however, must never be more than the sum of its parts, and must never fuse into some all-embracing whole which cannot be broken down again into the original ones. It must try to create with words a universe that consists of bits."[3]

In her investigation of Carroll's and Lear's literary productions, she thus does not identify Nonsense with illogicality, with reasons for constant misunderstandings between different figures or with confusing word meanings, since these would be but a few from a broad range of means, on which the Nonsense game relies.

To Sewell, Nonsense is basically a principle of organization: it carefully weighs up what semantical groups of words can be used (concrete, simple and precise reference, no variability), what aesthetical categories to allow (e.g. ugliness rather than beauty), what kinds of relations may be established between its parts (disproportion, distinctness of separate elements), and so on. Therefore it is taken to mean a through and through rational business, which is wholly controlled and directed by reason. In turn, disorder is understood by her rather as a means of contrast by which order may gain the maximum of visual sharpness:

„True Nonsense, as we have seen, is sane enough, for although it sides with order against disorder, it needs the latter for its antagonist and aims at keeping it engaged, not at suppressing it."[4]

One of the properties which is said to dominate the world of Nonsense is its absolute precision. This is directly associated by the author with the delight in number and logic, which characterized the minds of Lear and Carroll.[5]

In regard to the *Alice*-books Nonsense is said to become a *consecutive narrative*[6], that is, the whole of the story is to be understood as Nonsense. This particular idea is illustrated by a rich variety of examples, e.g. Carroll's love for natural numbers, pseudo-series, rhymes, all of which are used to

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[1] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger,* Preface to the Routledge Classics Edition (2002.)
[2] Mary Douglas, *op. cit.*, 1966, p. 5.
[3] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense* (1952), London: Dalkey Archive Press 2015, pp. 53-54.
[4] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 163.
[5] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 44.
[6] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 7.

maintain "the principle of organization in Nonsense."[7] Speaking about linguistic manifestations of Nonsense, Sewell specifies the following:

„The syntax and grammar are not disordered…There is only one aspect of language which Nonsense can be said to disorder, and that is reference, the effect produced by a word or group of words in the mind. It is the sequence of references which is disordered by Nonsense, if the familiar sequence of events in everyday life is to be taken as the standard of order and sense."[8]

While it is undoubtedly true that Nonsense heavily relies on a mutual relation between order and disorder and that in its game *reference*, compared with other linguistic levels, is given a predominant position, the term *reference* in Sewell's use deserves an exact specification, for in her theory it is not to be confused with objects of reality. It may be regarded as a particularly controversial point in her book that she holds a view of the world of Nonsense as well as of the order from which it is said to arise as one that is hermetically sealed up against reality, on which she constantly lays great stress. Since for most of the later studies on literary Nonsense its relation to reality has turned out to be quite a challenging issue, it seems important to realize what exactly Sewell seeks to achieve by rigorously separating Nonsense from reality.

   As the first of the above quoted passages from her study suggests, Nonsense is a world made of words. According to Sewell, words are not to be mistaken for things from reality, since in this case Nonsense would stop being Nonsense and become magic[9]. Hence, reference that is disordered by Nonsense proves to have no connection with the world of things and, in short, is to be taken merely as a word meaning, so that the whole Nonsense-game comes to be reduced exclusively to meanings of words, i.e. as a rational activity under the mind's control. Since it carefully separates meanings from things in reality, to which the words may refer in the speakers' minds, according to Sewell, once this has been understood, it does no longer matter how exactly we specify the relation of Nonsense to reality:

„In Nonsense all the world is paper and all the seas are ink. This may seem cramping, but it has one great advantage: one need not discuss the so-called unreality or reality of the Nonsense world."[10]

Sewell's attitude to this relation proves to be rather ambivalent: For one thing, it is said to be not as important as it would seem, yet at the same time in her theory it is required that Nonsense should be seen strictly as a world on its own, one that is separated from reality and the only purpose it serves is an intellectual amusement with which it provides its players, i.e. Carroll, Lear and their readers.

   One might object that although Nonsense does not intend to change the world of things as magic does, its "disordered reference" is much more than a product of playing with word meanings. Again, psychology proves to be among the most crucial areas of the origin of Nonsense. On the one hand, Nonsense reveals specific traits that are characteristic of an excessively free treatment of reference (verbal arbitrariness, disbanding conventional codes, calculated deviations from logic, etc.) On the other, in *Alices*, Nonsense is not only a rational but also quite a provocative business: it openly challenges logic and in so doing it constantly confuses the heroine, becoming one of the propelling forces of the plot. Alice's reactions to Nonsense, that range from tacit puzzlements[11] to vigorous protests[12], are discussed by the author in acute detail, that is, Nonsense is not only being played, it is also subject to continuous reflections that accompany the story and the scale against which statements are measured as nonsensical is nothing but everyday life, that is, the world of things. The importance of reality is revealed by the fact that it constantly intervenes in the world of disordered reference through the heroine's mind. Therefore it seems rather problematic that Sewell insists on separating not only words and reality but Nonsense and the psychology of Carroll's characters, too, which she repeatedly stresses in her book. As an example, her view of Nonsense as a hermetically closed universe consisting of words is accompanied by the observation according to which it admits of no

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[7] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 45.
[8] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 38.
[9] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 38.
[10] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 17.
[11] *Alice*, p. 103.
[12] *Alice*, p. 129.

emotion.[13] And the protagonist herself, who so often openly opposes the disorder of reference, is regarded as part of Nonsense, which, among other things, is called to corroborate the idea that Nonsense requires precision:

„The demand for exactitude … can also take the form of insistence on temporal order, or what is to come first, second and third: 'No, no!' said the Queen. 'Sentence first – verdict afterwards.' 'Stuff and nonsense!' said Alice loudly. 'The idea of having the sentence first.' (*Who Stole the Tarts?*) "[14]

Ironically, in these words both the Queen and Alice are being equally approached as guardians of Nonsense, Alice may appear even more so than the Queen, since it is Alice who insists here on a *rational* sequence of events. It is most notably in this point, I believe, that the fundamental premise of Sewell's, i.e. her conviction that Nonsense arises from order rather than from disorder raises serious questions. The order (and the disorder) of numbers in Carroll's book may serve as another example. Even though it is perfectly correct that numbers play an important role in it, precision in dealing with them and careful attention to their sequence are in themselves by no means to be understood as pertaining to Nonsense. Whereas Alice defends rationality in number relations (as she does in the Trial-scene alluded to by Sewell in the above quote), the very opposite is the case with the Queen as with most of the inhabitants of Wonderland. In what follows, I would like to reproduce three episodes, which follow a similar mathematical pattern and which can demonstrate differences in how characters of the story perceive order and disorder.

In Chapter VII, „A Mad Tea-Party", after the Hatter finishes his story about how he once offended Time so that time refused to move forward at his tea-party, Alice expresses an idea which triggers a new telling conversation in terms of Nonsense:

A bright idea came into Alice's head. "Is that the reason so many tea-things are put out here?" she asked.
"Yes, that's it," said the Hatter with a sigh: "it's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles."
"Then you keep moving around, I suppose?" said Alice.
"Exactly so," said the Hatter: "as the things get used up."
"But what comes when you come to the beginning again?" Alice ventured to ask.
"Suppose we change the subject," the March Hare interrupted, yawning. "I'm getting tired of this."[15]

Even if a great number of tea-things is put out on the table, this number as that of all possible seat changes is not unlimited. Hence, by asking what happens when the series of possible changes is completed Alice raises a fairly plausible and reasonable question which, however, remains unanswered since its obvious logic corners the Hatter completely. Now consider an episode from Chapter IX in which other inhabitants of Wonderland confront Alice with a free etymology of the noun *lessons*:

"And how many hours a day did you do lessons?" said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.
"Ten hours the first day," said the Mock Turtle: "nine the next, and so on."
"What a curious plan!" exclaimed Alice.
"That's the reason they're called lessons," the Gryphon remarked: "because they lessen from day to day."…
"Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?"
"Of course it was," said the Mock Turtle.
"And how did you manage on the twelfth?" Alice went on eagerly.
"That's enough about lessons," the Gryphon interrupted in a very decided tone.[16]

Since according to the rule which is freely invented by the Mock Turtle eleven is a number that concludes *any* series consisting of ten units it is entirely unclear, e.g. how the series proceeds after the number *twelve*. Alice clearly sees that no other new series of numbers can be produced which would end with *eleven*. By her quite simple remark she again questions disorder in dealing with numbers, at which point the conversation gets promptly interrupted by Alice's opponents exactly like in Chapter

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[13] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 129: "Nonsense can admit of no emotion…It is a game, to which emotion is alien."
[14] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 88.
[15] *Alice*, p. 77.
[16] *Alice*, p. 103.

VII. And, finally, consider a dialogue between Alice and the King during the trial (Chapter XII, „Alice's Evidence") in which the King invents a rule demanding that Alice should leave the court of justice:

> The King…read out from his book, „Rule Forty-two. All persons more than a mile high to leave the court."…
> "Well, I sha'n't go, at any rate," said Alice; "besides, that's not a regular rule: you invented it just now."
> "It's the oldest rule in the book," said the King.
> "Then it ought to be Number One," said Alice.
> The King turned pale, and shut his note-book hastily.[17]

Other than, e.g. in Chapter I in which Alice is guessing how many miles she has fallen down the Rabbit-hole (incidentally, this is also taken by Sewell as an instance of Nonsense[18]), in the above episodes she does not engage herself in guesses or assumptions concerning numbers but is rather reflecting on their exact mutual relations. Whereas the Mock Turtle and the King show an absolute arbitrariness in their dealing with numbers, Alice insists on their precise logical reference. In this point it would, again, be possible to draw a clear borderline in the psychological motivation of approaching words, numbers and their reference between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland, between order and disorder, sense and nonsense, rationality and arbitrariness, fixed rules of reason and the free flow of a nightmare.

Since Sewell considers all characters in the book to be equally representative of a rational order, this raises questions concerning obvious differences in their psychology. Though, on the whole, psychology is not among Sewell's chief concerns, there is one particular area of it to which she repeatedly turns in her discussion of Nonsense, being at the same time an area which – as in the case with the world of things – she actively seeks to separate from Nonsense, i.e. the dream. Sewell takes it to be a kind of disorder in which the distinctness of thought units is blurred and since dreams cannot be controlled and cannot be played with[19] she discards the idea of Nonsense-as-a-Dream and proposes instead one of Nonsense-as-a-Game:

„Nonsense is hostile to the dream. It is important to differentiate between this type of disorder, fluidity, the synthesis, the running together of pictures in the mind, and the type with which Nonsense works and which we have tentatively called a rearrangement in the series of word references."[20]

Among her arguments for opposing Nonsense to dreams, there is an observation concerning Carroll's mathematical orderly mind and a way of dealing with numbers which does not betray a dreaming disposition[21]. Yet, as I have tried to illustrate above, in the *Alice*-books, Carroll's way of operating with numbers is not the same with all figures and, for example, Alice's belief in logic and order makes her appear clearly different to the ways of handling numbers that are peculiar to the Hatter, the Mock Turtle and the King. In other words, I do not believe that the admittedly very important role with which order is invested in Carroll's work should be identified with an attempt to evoke disorder by means of rationality so as to appear visually sharp against its background, which is roughly the main assumption of Sewell's, but rather the other way around, i.e. with a quest for sense, an urgent need of clear reference and rules by which to secure success in interhuman communication.

By claiming that Nonsense is opposed to the dream, Sewell in effect tries to unsay the dream of Alice. Yet the story *is literally* about a dream and, what is more, the world of Wonderland, that is, the world of which Alice is dreaming might also be understood as a dream metaphorically, i.e. as one that is governed by irrationality and is opposed to the heroine's rational mind. When seen in this light Nonsense can hardly be reduced to mean a rational play intended for amusement. I believe that it rather arises from a deep concern about a possible loss of sense and meaning, confronting the

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[17] *Alice*, p. 125.
[18] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, pp. 86-87.
[19] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, pp. 37-38.
[20] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 40.
[21] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 63: „The absolute reliability of the arithmetic in Carroll's Nonsense does not suggest the dreaming mind."

protagonist and the reader with a situation in which all rules that make rational thought and speech possible are suddenly abandoned. This particular aspect of *Alice*, i.e. an acute awareness of unparalleled dangers of arriving at the very limits of language, when logic and conventions could no longer guarantee mutual understanding, may be interpreted as a most significant drama faced by the modern world. Yet, of course, its meaning gets obscured if Nonsense is regarded as a product of order.

Sewell's explicit refusal to consider that there is a clear psychological side to the issue of Nonsense, her claim that Alice's dream is in effect no dream at all but something that is inimical to dreams and defeats them[22], her laying great stress on rationality as the only source of Carroll's Nonsense paradoxically result in Nonsense' losing its sense and aesthetical objective. I think, the crux of the problem in the view held by Sewell is that Nonsense is taken to mean solely a game and that the whole of the *Alice*-books is indiscriminately understood by her as Nonsense. In short, it is a refusal to recognize the limits that are set to Nonsense by Carroll and Sewell is by no means alone in taking this view. Anyone would, e.g. easily see parallels between Sewell's theory of Nonsense and that proposed later by Wim Tigges in his monograph on this subject, among other things, the following assumption: „Carroll makes use of nonsensical reasoning, reasoning which is nonsensical because it is logical.“[23] Here, again, it may be objected that Carroll makes different characters follow different ways of reasoning, e.g. Alice's ways are opposed of those of the King who freely invents rules and numbers (Rule Forty-two) and who therefore can hardly be regarded as someone who is thinking logically. However, since Tigges is as little interested in the psychology of Carroll's characters as Sewell before him and, similarly to Sewell, states that one of the characteristics of Nonsense is a lack of emotional involvement[24], he is equally unaware of the limits posed to Nonsense in *Alices*. And in this respect it is also notable what he says of the relation between Nonsense and reality:

„Nonsense is not a priori meaningless. Neither does it merely suggest a topsy-turvy world. Nonsense does not describe an absurd world or absurd events, nor does it primarily demonstrate the absurdity or unreliability of language. In nonsense, language as such is dominant; it works on the assumption that the word is autonomous, and demonstrates this by creating a reality with language rather than either representing a reality, as in mimetic or naturalistic literature, or playing with language as in the curiosity. It is this creative use of language that makes nonsense effective and aesthetically pleasing.“[25]

And, again, it is left out of consideration that in *Alices* Nonsense works effectively only owing to the fact that it is being reflected by the dreaming heroine's logical mind. Alice's rational thinking is that scale against which sense and nonsense are being measured and to her Nonsense is usually anything but pleasing. Hence, reality is here not simply newly created, e.g. by Carroll's introducing a Mouse that has to offer both a tale and a tail, but rather it is constantly present in the story providing those rules of order that are continually rejected by the inhabitants of Wonderland, which seems to be the principal source of Nonsense in the book.

As in the case with Sewell, Tigges' views are, on the whole, representative of a widely maintained claim that every linguistic creation of the author's wit is to be interpreted as Nonsense. I don't believe that this view is accurate. Consider, for example, two puns, one from Chapter IX („The Mock Turtle's Story“) which is produced by the Mock Turtle („We called him Tortoise because he taught us“[26]) and one based on the homophones *tail*/*tale* in Chapter III „A Caucus-Race and a Long Tale“.[27] The former is, of course, an instance of Nonsense: it is based on an arbitrary confusion of reference, which is among the main aesthetical domains of Nonsense. Yet the latter is an actual enactment of both homophones, i.e. of both *tale* and *tail* in the plot: in Alice's imagination, the Mouse provides a *tale* in the form of a *tail*. Though it is true that this causes confusion and at some point Alice misunderstands the words in the Mouse's use, most readers of the story will easily recognize the reason of this

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[22] Elizabeth Sewell, *The Field of Nonsense*, p. 111: "one of the Nonsense ways of defeating dream is to pick up the latter's principle elements, images, and use them for its own end."

[23] Wim Tigges, *An Anatomy of Literary Nonsense*, Amsterdam: Rodopi 1988, p. 151.

[24] Wim Tigges, *An Anatomy of Literary Nonsense*, p. 55.

[25] Wim Tigges, *An Anatomy of Literary Nonsense*, pp. 256-257.

[26] *Alice*, p. 100.

[27] *Alice*, p. 34.

confusion, exactly because it does not arise from verbal arbitrariness. Thus it is not quite plausible why all instances of Carroll's playing with words should be taken to be Nonsense. [28]

Among those rather rare scholars who have seen in Carroll's Nonsense more than an amusing intellectual play with language and who have also recognized the importance of both reality as a source of rational order and as a spiritual atmosphere of an epoch in which the *Alice*-books were created for our understanding of them, Donald Rackin and George Steiner should be particularly mentioned. The concepts of order and modernity are placed at the heart of critical enquiry in Chapter VI „Blessed Rage: The *Alices* and the Modern Quest for Order" of Rackin's monograph *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass: Nonsense, Sense, and Meaning* (1991.) The general atmosphere of Wonderland is interpreted by Rackin as one of a God-less void imposed on Victorian intellectuals by Darwinian and post-Darwinian science. In his opinion, the inhabitants of Wonderland represent a model of nature which is entirely driven by laws of natural selection, the instinctual, endless round of adaptation and self-preservation[29], a nature without spirit and without any signposts of intelligible order. The confrontation between Alice and these creatures is said to symbolically suggest one between order and disorder, sense and nonsense:

„In the *Alices*, as in twentieth-century existential thought, human meaning is made in spite of the void, and, in making her order and meaning out of, essentially, nothing, the brave child Alice spitefully makes…what we may call sense out of nonsense, something out of nothing…Alice, in resisting her instinctive fears and the moral nothingness of her adventures, somehow makes of her spitefulness an affirmation of the human spirit."[30]

On his part, George Steiner takes the phenomenon of Victorian Nonsense to be closely bound up with the concept of 'the lacking word' which marks modern literature and which stands for a period in the history of Western culture between the seventies of the 19th century and the 'linguistic turn', an epoch that is marked by losing the belief in the capacity of natural languages to capture the truth, by a breach between *word* and *world*, between meaning and reference, by dividing „a literature essentially housed in language from one for which language has become a prison."[31]

Both Rackin and Steiner, thus, take an entirely different approach to Nonsense compared with those theoreticians who interpret it as a purely amusing entertainment. To them, Nonsense reveals deep dramatic dimensions and the drama which is enacted in it is one of a lost order.[32]

Hence, Nonsense allows to be interpreted as a key category within an aesthetic program which continuously refers to sense and order. Its order is both a conceptual background of the whole story and the material to which the author resorts in designing the confrontation between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland, i.e. linguistic and logical order. Since, when understood this way, Nonsense in itself cannot be part of order, it is invested with a purely dialectical role: in being opposed

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[28] Wim Tigges takes the wordplay *tale* vs. *tail* to be a typical example of Nonsense, *An Anatomy of Literary Nonsense*, p. 155. Cf. the essay by Zhang Qunxing, „Creation for Fidelity – Zhao Yuanren's Translation of Lexical Nonsense in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*", in: *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 2017, pp. 71-79, in which all cases of word-play in the story are indiscriminately regarded as Nonsense. The purpose of this playing with words is usually described either as amusing and pleasing the audience or as didactic. Cf. the following opinion by Robert D. Sutherland, *Language and Lewis Carroll*, The Hague/Paris: Mouton 1970, p. 201: „In revealing the essential illogicality of some of the language's most common expressions, he (Carroll – V. V.) was, I have no doubt, trying to awaken his readers to the resources and limitations of English, encouraging them to pay attention to what they were saying, and warning them against carelessness in their linguistic habits."

[29] Donald Rackin, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass: Nonsense, Sense, and Meaning*, Twayne's masterwork studies, No. 81, New York: Twayne Publishers 1991, pp. 90-92. Cf. for the prominence of the motif of Nonsense in the spiritual life of a great number of Victorian intellectuals, see Daniel Brown's monograph *The Poetry of Victorian Scientists: Style, Science and Nonsense*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013.

[30] Donald Rackin, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p. 96.

[31] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 1975, esp. the Chapter „Word against Object", pp. 115-247, here pp. 184-185.

[32] Cf. the study on Nonsense and its influence on other modern literary genres, among other things, on the metaphysical poetry of T. S. Eliot by James Rother, „Modernism and the Nonsense Style", in: *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1974, pp. 187-202. The author equally warns against regarding Nonsense as simply an amusing game, p. 187: „Certainly it is a rare occasion when Nonsense as literary discipline (not to be confused with "nonsense", indicating mere lack of sense) impresses us as simply amusing, without serious aspects or consequences…On the contrary, it is almost always a solemn business, maintaining the strictest of controls over both its inferences and its effects…Nor is Nonsense merely technique reserved for the portrayals of owls and pussycats, mad hatters and mock trials, since it has shown itself capable of creeping into more conventional forms of literature when least expected to do so."

to sense, it perpetually refers to it, and so, it demarcates a borderline running between things that make sense and those that do not. Although philosophical readings of *Alice* will be in the focus of a separate chapter („The Philosophers' *Alice*"), it is worth pointing out in this connection the debates about the concept of Nonsense in Wittgenstein's philosophy and the parallels that are often drawn between Wittgenstein and Carroll.

In Wittgenstein's writings, Nonsense is not always understood as absence of sense but sometimes also as a tool by which to refer to sense. In order to emphasize this particular aspect of Nonsense in Wittgenstein's thought, Danièle Moyal-Sharrock quotes the following passage from his *Philosophical Grammar*:

> „…when we hear the two propositions, "This rod has a length" and its negation "This rod has no length", we take sides and favour the first sentence, instead of declaring them both nonsense (Unsinn). But this partiality is based on a confusion: we regard the first proposition as verified (and the second as falsified) by the fact that "the rod has a length of four meters"."[33]

That the first of the propositions is likely to be favoured as verified is due to linguistic conventions within a language community whose members normally employ it in exactly the form indicated by Wittgenstein as part of defining sentences, i.e. whenever speaking about the length of objects. In a similar context, Denis McManus addresses the intelligibility of nonsense in Wittgenstein's philosophy and draws on his saying „Language sets everyone the same traps…"[34] It is important to notice both the affinity which he observes between this phrase and Carroll's aesthetics and the problematics which he ascribes to Wittgenstein's use of the words *same* and *everyone* in intercultural context:

> „I have suggested that the philosophical confusions Wittgenstein examined can be seen as possessing a recognizable logic and that I am rendered vulnerable to them by virtue of speaking particular languages, a feature which is not a peculiarity of me as an individual… The *Tractatus* identifies some of "the same traps" that language "sets everyone" by tracing the confusing influence on our thinking of particular, multiple sources of items of pseudo-sense to which we speakers of that language are vulnerable. But, of course, in this sense, "the same traps" are precisely not set for *everyone*. Just as Carroll's humor cannot be translated into some languages, neither can the speakers of some languages succumb so some of the confusions that Wittgenstein targets…"[35]

The basic idea behind this passage concerns the question of universal intelligibility of Nonsense: since its intelligibility is generally dependent on specific conventional codes within a given language community it would be plausible to assume that the *traps* addressed in the works of Wittenstein and Carroll would be different in kind to those found in languages that typologically and genetically are quite distinct from German and English. In what follows, I would like to focus attention on the translatability of Nonsense bearing in mind the above mentioned issue of the dialectic pertaining to Nonsense, i.e. Nonsense as a means of demarcating sense in both referring to order and being opposed to it.

It deserves being mentioned at this point that the translatability issue is closely connected to another problem which has also been addressed earlier in this chapter, i.e. the limits set to Nonsense in Carroll's work. When thinking which strategy is suited best for making Nonsense perform a similar task to that of the original the interlingual translator is confronted with a very specific kind of language traps in Carroll's work, i.e. with cases that in themselves do not suggest anything nonsensical, yet tend to appear nonsensical when rendered literally. Most of these cases are purely semantic in nature, e.g. in an episode from Chapter XII „Alice's Evidence" where the King is referring to a mysterious poem, „the most important piece of evidence" in his eyes. One of its lines („But said I could not swim") are taken by the King to be particularly suggestive of its author's identity so that he asks the Knave whether he can swim:

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[33] Danièle Moyal-Sharrock, „The Good Sense of Nonsense: a reading of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* as nonself-repudiating", in: *Philosophy*, Vol. 82, No. 319, Jan. 2007, pp. 147-177, here p. 160.

[34] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, Ed. G.H. von Wright, Oxford: Blackwell 1998, p. 25: „Language sets everyone the same traps; it is an immense network of easily accessible wrong turnings…"

[35] Denis McManus, „Austerity, Psychology, and the Intelligibility of Nonsense", in: *Philosophical Topics*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2014, pp. 161-199, here p. 188.

„…you ca'n't swim, can you?" he added, turning to the Knave. The Knave shook his head sadly. "Do I look like it?" (Which he certainly did *not*, being made entirely of cardboard.)"[36]

While rendering this passage even in languages like Chinese and Japanese that are greatly distinct from English is not accompanied by any problems, it is different with Russian where the verb *plavat* (*to swim*) also covers the meaning of *to float on the surface of a liquid* and can refer to both animate and inanimate things (cardboard, wood, paper, etc.) A literal reproduction of the last phrase from the passage is therefore completely incomprehensible in Russian. This is, for example, the case with Demurova's (p. 258): «Куда мне!» - сказал он. (Это было верно – ведь он был бумажный.) („"How could I?" he said, which was true since he was made of paper.") Since the Knave admits being made of paper, any Russian reader will be likely to ask why in the world he cannot swim. A cautious translator will try to bypass this kind of semantic trap leading to an almost automatic production of Nonsense which is new to the original. Consider, e.g. the solution found by Nabokov (p. 111): „Этого, конечно, подумать нельзя было, так как он был склеен весь из картона и в воде расклеился бы." („Which he certainly did *not*, since he was glued together of pieces of cardboard and would fall apart in water.") Hence, the translator provides his reader with information that is needed to understand why the Knave cannot swim: even though Nabokov is moving away from the original semantics, he neatly side-steps the problem of adding new Nonsense to it. Consider, as a comparison, another episode from Chapter IV in which Alice hears the White Rabbit say the following:

„The Duchess! The Duchess! Oh my dear paws! Oh my fur and whiskers! She'll get me executed, as sure as ferrets are ferrets!"[37]

The Rabbit expresses his certainty about the punishment by referring to *ferrets*, that is, to an animal with which he is more than familiar in English culture. In Martin Gardner's commentary (p. 39) some cues are given as to this intimate relation between ferrets and rabbits: „Ferrets are a semidomesticated variety of the English polecat, used mainly for hunting rabbits and mice." To follow the logic of the Rabbit's words, the translator would need to refer to some appropriate object with which the rabbits are equally well familiar in a given target-language rather than reproduce the original literally, as, for example, Yamagata Hiro'o 山形浩生 does in his version (p. 49): „フェレットがフェレットであるくらい確実に、処刑されちゃうぞ！"[38]) Here, again, Nabokov's rendition reveals a better awareness of dangers to become unintelligible and to create Nonsense that is not part of the original. He does not translate the noun *ferrets*, since it refers to an animal which is entirely exotic to Russian readers but substitutes it for *cabbage* (p. 29): „Она меня казнит, это ясно, как капуста!" („She'll get me executed, as sure as cabbage is cabbage!")

Occasionally, new Nonsense comes about as a result of lacking attention to the negations. Chapter IX contains, for example, the following dialogue between Alice and the Duchess:

„I dare say you're wondering why I don't put my arm around your waist," the Duchess said, after a pause: "the reason is, that I'm doubtful about the temper of your flamingo. Shall I try the experiment?"
"He might bite," Alice cautiously replied, not feeling at all anxious to have the experiment tried.[39]

The Duchess does not put her arm around Alice's waist, since she is fearful of the flamingo; Alice, in turn, does not wish to be embraced, for the Duchess is extraordinarily ugly. Thus, neither of them produces Nonsense in this instance. Now consider the following Chinese rendition of the passage by Zhao Yuanren (p. 119):

„我猜你一定在那儿想我为什么拿胳巴抱着你的腰。我是因为有点疑惑你那个红鹭鹚的脾气。让我来试验一下，好罢？" 阿丽思一点不在乎作这个试验。她小心地答道，"他许会咬疼你的。" („I guess you're certainly wondering why I'm putting my arm around your waist. The reason is, that I'm a little doubtful about the temper of your flamingo. Let me try the experiment." Alice was absolutely indifferent about the experiment being tried. She answered cautiously: "He could bite you.")

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[36] *Alice*, p. 128.
[37] *Alice*, p. 39
[38] Yamagata Hiro'o 山形浩生 (Tr.), *Fushigi no kuni no Arisu* 不思議の国のアリス, Tokyo: Asahi shuppansha 2003.
[39] *Alice*, p. 96.

What is left implicit and completely unclear by the translator is why the Duchess embraces Alice, why Alice is indifferent about the experiment alluded to by the Duchess and, after all, what is meant by the experiment which the Duchess desires to try. And so, Chinese readers will have every reason for recognizing an impressive amount of Nonsense in this passage, although no Nonsense is involved here in the original at all.

In the above examples produced by Demurova, Hiro'o and Zhao Yuanren, the reader faces a kind of Nonsense which is neither part of the original nor invested with any perceivable dialectical quality, since it does not demarcate sense, which seems among its most important aims in the *Alices*. The second section of this chapter will provide detailed illustrations of how translators render what in effect is Carroll's Nonsense in Chapters IV and V. Yet before doing so, let us consider briefly some of the key-areas of linguistic order on which Nonsense continually relies, i.e. the exact nature of those traps that language sets its users and translators. One particular group among these traps is purely semantic, consisting of puns and malapropisms that are generated by the arbitrary language use of the inhabitants of Wonderland, who constantly alienate words from their conventional reference. Since this group will be in the focus of two separate chapters (in „The Language of Violence" and, contrastively, in „Through the Eyes of a Child") they are not going to be addressed at this point. Here I would rather like to concentrate on three other instances of linguistic material which might help elucidate the issue of the translatability of Nonsense: first, rhymes and alliteration, i.e. cases in which Nonsense is a result of phonemic and semantic properties of words; second, cases in which it is produced by means of grammar (morphology) and, third, situations where Nonsense is determined by an intersection between semantics and syntax.

Contrary to the assumption that Nonsense does not admit of emotions and is rather alien to psychology I would like to illustrate the first of these groups by examining two examples where language use is quite obviously motivated by the heroine's state of mind. Even though Alice normally appears in the text as opposing Nonsense, her first experience of Wonderland, i.e. her falling asleep in the first chapter and her being suddenly confronted by a series of wonders make her lose control of her language and say the following:

„…But do cats eat bats, I wonder?" And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, "Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?" and sometimes "Do bats eat cats?" for, you see, as she couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it.[40]

In her dreaming mind, *cats* and *bats* merge, as do the borders separating all things that one perceives as distinct when being awake. This psychological disorder of dream manifests itself in connecting two rhyming nouns that differ only in the initial consonant. In terms of the translatability issue it would, perhaps, be natural to suppose that a literal rendition in languages that do not possess a pair of equally similar nouns would result in the creation of quite a different kind of Nonsense than that of the original, i.e. in a mere absence of sense rather than in referring to order. Rather than doing so, the translator would be expected either to search for nouns that in a given language would rhyme with one of the two original nouns or develop some other strategies for making Nonsense appear in its dialectical function. Surprisingly few translators have chosen the first option, e.g.:

Olenič-Gnenenko, p 28: Ест ли кошка сороконожку? (Do cats eat myriapods?) Zimmermann, p. 4: Fressen Katzen gern Spatzen? (Do cats eat sparrows?) Demurova 80: Едят ли кошки мошек? (Do cats eat blackflies?)

In these rhymes, the translators have found an easy and effective way to make Nonsense intelligible: *koška* (*cat*) rhymes with *sorokonozhka* (*myriapod*) in Russian and *Katzen* (*cats*) with *Spatzen* (*sparrows*) in German as naturally as *cats* and *bats* do in English, which reproduces the psychological pattern of Nonsense, the dreaming mind, precisely as it is designed here by Carroll. No less impressing are solutions found by Nabokov and Zhao Yuanren, both of whom keep the original pair of nouns although they do not rhyme in their target-languages. Let us consider Nabokov's version (p. 8):

"Кошки на крыше, летучие мыши..." А потом слова путались и выходило что-то несуразное: летучие кошки, мыши на крыше." („Cats on the roof and the bats…" And then the words got confused and seemed to mean something very odd: flying cats, mice on the roof….")

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[40] *Alice*, p. 14.

Although the nouns *koški* (*cats*) and *letučije myši* (*bats*) do not represent a pair of rhymes, by making cats sit *on the roof* (*na kryše*) the translator succeeds in finding a perfect rhyme for *bats*. In the second sentence, mice are sitting on the roof and cats are flying, which is rhythmically a felicitous phrasing and, again, the reader may feel why Nonsense comes about here, i.e. owing to the heroine's dream in which images are running together into a unity. Zhao's Chinese rendition (p. 9) which equally relies on combining nouns *mao* (*cats*) and *bianfu* (*bats*) that do not rhyme reads as follows:

„猫子吃蝙蝠子吗？猫子吃蝙蝠子吗？" 有时候说说说乱了，变成 "蝙子吃猫蝠子吗？吃子蝙猫蝠子吗？"

It would be difficult to provide a good back-translation of this creation since the sense that is being demarcated here by Nonsense, most notably in the concluding phrase, is secured solely by the graphical design: first, the translator attaches the nominal suffix –*zi* to both of the nouns (*cats/bats*) and then he proceeds by changing the character combinations, and so *bianfu* (*bats*) turns into *bianfuzi* and *mao* – into *maozi*. Finally, in the last phrase, even the verb *chi* (*to eat*) is added the same suffix, thus turning into a *noun* (*chizi.*) In so doing, Zhao goes one step further than Carroll and makes three units – instead of the original two - merge in his calculated linguistic disorder. His solution is, therefore, based on suffixation as well as coinage of words, the latter method being, e.g. also represented in the German version by Teutsch (p. 16): „Fressen Katzen Fledermäuse? Flederkatzen fressen Mäuse oder fressen Lederfläuse Katzenmäuse?" Here, again, the conventional nominal semantics of *Katzen* (*cats*) and *Fledermäuse* (*bats*) fuse into one unity giving birth to hybrid dream creatures *Flederkatzen* (*flying cats*) und *Katzenmäuse* (*cat-mice*)

Another individual creation of an impressive linguistic disorder may be found in the following Japanese version prepared by Seriu Hajime (p. 19):

ネコはコウモリを食べるかしら。ネコをコウモリは食べるかしら。

Though the nouns *neko* (*cats*) and *kōmori* (*bats*) do not rhyme, the translator makes the language follow the dream's nature by reversing the SOV (subject-object-verb) order which is normal in Japanese, changing the positions of *o* を / *wa* は particles and thus getting quite an unusual order of OSV (object ネコ（を）– subject コウモリ（は）– verb 食べる.)

In all these inventive translations, an absolute harmony is established between Alice's psychological experience of falling asleep and her linguistic adventure with *cats* and *bats*: the words get confused and the boundaries between imagined objects get blurred as she enters Wonderland. By contrast, literal renditions of the passage appear to be much less felicitous. Consider the following examples from some Chinese and Italian versions:

Ma Teng (p.12) 猫喜欢吃蝙蝠吗？蝙蝠喜欢吃猫吗？
Zhu Hongguo 9 猫儿吃蝙蝠吗？蝙蝠吃猫儿吗？
Oddera (p.13): I gatti mangiano pipistrelli? I pipistrelli mangiano gatti? (the same in Battistutta, p. 7)
D'Amico 21: I gatti mangiano i pipistrelli? I pipistrelli mangiano i gatti? (the same rendition in Giglio, p. 47)

No means has been found here by which to reproduce dream's disorder and this could not be explained by any deficits in the semantics of the two target-languages but should be rather ascribed to the strategy adopted here for translation, to the individual feeling and understanding of Nonsense in its relation to order.

As to the second group of linguistic manifestations of Nonsense at the morphology level I would, again, like to cite an example that may throw light on the psychology of Nonsense, more specifically, on how emotional Nonsense can occasionally be. It is in the very first phrase of Chapter II („The Pool of Tears") in which Alice, being completely overwhelmed by her recent adventures, forgets the rule prescribing that polysyllabic words in English cannot be attached the comparative – *er* suffix and cries: „Curiouser and curiouser!"[41] In this case, again, the translators have to demonstrate great resourcefulness so as to match the author's wit. Admittedly, this time the problem is not as

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[41] *Alice*, p. 20.

complicated as in the afore-mentioned situation with rhymes and the task in hand is to find some fixed rule in a given target-language, a violation of which would produce an effect comparable to that of the original. For example, in d'Amico's version (p. 26, „Stranissimissimo!") the siperlative suffix is used twice to serve this goal and Giglio (p. 61) attaches the adverb *molto* (*much*) to a superlative form: „Stranissimo, molto stranissimo!" Now consider some Russian renditions of the phrase:

Nabokov (p.13): Чем дальнее, тем страньше.
Oleni č-Gnenenko (p. 38) Все страньше и страньше. (The same rendition can be found in Demurova, p 90)
Zachoder (p. 45): Ой, все чудесится и чудесится!
Ščerbakov (p. 39): Все необычайшей и необычайшей.

For the most part, the reproduced texts recreate a grammatical pattern of the original by building up inaccurate comparative forms (*страньше*, *странше*, *необычайшей*.) Zachoder is the only one to create a new verb: he takes a somewhat antiquated *čudesit'* (*to work wonders*, also: *to behave strange*) and turns it into a reflexive *čudesitsja*, which also is an obvious morphological disorder.

Of the Japanese and Chinese renditions, consider the following two in which it is not the grammar but rather the graphical design which results in Nonsense: Seriu Hajime (p. 29) renders the phrase by *tekohen da wa* てこへんだわ, which is a reversal of syllables in *henteko* へんてこ (変梃 *strange*, *weird*) and Zhao Yuanren (p. 17) translates it by *Yue bian yue xi han le, yue bian yue qie guai le!* 越变越希汉了，越变越切怪了! Here, it is a confusion of the characters in the words *xihan* 希罕 and *qiguai* 奇怪 which makes Alice's expression weird.

In short, even a cursory first examination reveals a vast potential for neatly recreating Nonsense by means of grammar in all the languages under discussion: to make its dialectical quality visible, it is usually enough to find some basic rule in a given target-language violating which Alice would as naturally express her emotions as in the original.

Finally, one of arguably the best Nonsense instances at the syntactic-lexical level may be found in a conversation between Alice and the Duchess in Chapter IX, shortly after the Duchess strikes both the protagonist and the reader by her verbal sleight-of-hand in paraphrasing the proverb „Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves" as „Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves."[42] This is one of very rare cases where the dialectics of Nonsense, i.e. its task to refer to sense and order, is made explicit. The passage in question, known as the Duchess' sentence, runs as follows:

„ 'Be what you would seem to be' - or, if you'd like it put more simply – 'Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.' "[43]

When looking for the exact sources of logic and dis/order that produce a Nonsense effect in this case the following points seem to be most significant: First, the sentence is clearly embedded within the topic of the whole conversation, i.e. the relation of being to appearing, the question as to their mutual compatibility, which may be regarded as the key to the whole Nonsense scheme in the passage. Second, it is already at the level of form that the sentence contradicts the goal (the sense) which according to the Duchess it is going to serve: the Duchess announces it namely as *putting more simply* the initial dictum (*Be what you would seem to be*.) Finally, the dictum itself is understood as an explanation of or as a conclusion to what has been said before on the essence of mustard. Whatever Alice means to know about it (mustard is no bird, then, mustard is a mineral and, at last, it is a kind of vegetable[44]), the Duchess agrees with everything, which is equal to saying that to her mustard is anything what in this particular case it appears to be to Alice.

Both an exact understanding of the grammatical dis/order of the long sentence and an interpretation of it in the context of the mustard-definition as well as of the dictum seem to be necessary for discussing properties of its various translations. Since the Duchess' sentence belongs among the most complicated propositions made in the *Alice*-books, an issue which it makes particularly prominent is

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[42] *Alice*, p. 96.
[43] *Alice*, pp. 96-97.
[44] *Alice*, p. 96.

the freedom of interpretation. Among questions which have to be elucidated in this regard are the following: How much sense is being revealed by Nonsense? What kinds of order are demarcated by its dialectics in this situation and what possibilities do Carroll's translators uncover for reproducing this highly challenging text passage?

Probably no other passage from Carroll's work has been so much subject to scholarly scrutiny as the Duchess' sentence. It has been interpreted as an amusing logical absurdity[45], derisive caricature[46], paralogism[47], an example of carnival aesthetics[48], of scholasticism[49], etc. Sometimes the sentence has been taken to reveal deep dimensions of meaning[50], yet, for the most part, scholars point out its extreme impermeability. I have devoted much effort to searching for studies which would not simply state its complexity but also explore what exactly figures among its challenges. Unfortunately, even in those works that are explicitly conceived as thorough investigations of Nonsense, I could find only some brief remarks concerning the impossibility of a linguistic analysis of this particular passage. For example, in his *Philosophy of Nonsense* (1994) Jean-Jacques Lecercle explicitly refuses to provide such an analysis in his following interpretation of the sentence:

But here it is not a question of the readers' memory being inadequate to the length of the sentence, but rather of their powers of linguistic analysis failing them because a syntactic trick is being played for them, the exact nature or location of which they (this reader at least) cannot pinpoint. There may be a psychological explanation for this after all – I can take any amount of semantic incoherence in my stride, but syntactic chaos, because of the centrality of syntax, provokes the deepest unease. And, truly, the sentence is incomprehensible for syntactic, not semantic, reasons.[51]

In Robert D. Sutherland's comprehensive monograph *Language and Lewis Carroll*, the idea to look into the exact nature of the grammatical disorder in this sentence has equally been dismissed from the outset. Here, the question whether the sentence may be regarded as an explanation of the Duchess' dictum is cautiously entrusted to the symbolic logicians.[52] While I am also acutely aware of the complexities pertaining to the issue, it would be awkward to leave the question unanswered, for it is of paramount importance for examining translation versions, i.e. in order to see how free an interpretation actually is, at least some evidence is required of what exactly the translators set out to reproduce from the original phrase and, by contrast, what elements of its message they actively seek to avoid translating. Therefore, in what follows, I would like to present my tentative interpretation of the phrase.

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[45] Roger W. Holmes, „The Philosopher's "Alice in Wonderland", in: *Aspects of Alice*, p. 160. Cf. Salahuddin Choudhury, "Symbol as Boundary", in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 37, 1979, pp. 433-443, here p. 439.

[46] Jerry Farber, „Towards a Theoretical Framework for the Study of Humor in Literature and the Other Arts", in: *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 41, No. 4, 2007, pp. 67-86, here pp. 83-84.

[47] Alwin N. Baum, „Carroll's "Alices": The Semiotics of Paradox", in: *American Imago*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1977, pp. 86-108, here pp. 95-96.

[48] Mark M. Hennelly, „Alice's Adventures at the Carnival", in: *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2009, pp. 103-128, here p. 122.

[49] E. Boyd Barrett, „Can There Be Tolerance without Understanding?", in: *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1929, pp. 20-37, here pp. 31-32.

[50] Roger D. Abrahams, Barbara A. Babcock, „The Literary Use of Proverbs", in: *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 90, No. 358, 1977, pp. 414-429, esp. pp. 427-428. Cf. Martin P. J. Edwardes, *The Origins of Self: An Anthropological Perspective*, London: UCL Press 2019, p. 29: "The Duchess' admonition to Alice is probably indecipherable (at least, I cannot find any unambiguous meaning in it, even when written down), but it does represent an important feature of selfness: the self seems to be defined through the interaction of different external viewpoints about the self. It is not simply an internal description...I am aware of myself because I am aware of you being aware of me."

[51] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Philosophy of Nonsense: The intuitions of Victorian nonsense literature*, London: Routledge 1994, p. 57. Cf. Lecercle's comment to the passage from one of his later essays: „The Duchess's sentence in *Alice in Wonderland*, where multiple negation provides an image within *langue* of the limit that separates language from the silence of the ineffable." Jean-Jacques Lecercle, „"Bégayer la langue" – Stammering Language", in: *L'Esprit Créateur*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 1998, pp. 109-123, here p. 121.

[52] Robert D. Sutherland, *Language and Lewis Carroll*, The Hague/Paris: Mouton 1970, pp. 188-189: „The Duchess' intended import for the expression *Be what you would seem to be* may or may not be accurately embodied in the alternative statement *Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise*…(I leave the final judgment to the symbolic logicians); but whether it is or it is not potentially, the latter utterance does not convey that meaning to Alice." Cf. the judgment about the reader's losing sight of the sense in the Duchess' sentence provided by Jacqueline Flescher: „Another way of deflecting the meaning is by complicating thought and syntax to such an extent that we lose sight of the meaning: „Never imagine yourself etc."" Jacqueline Flescher, „The Language of Nonsense in Alice", in: *Yale French Studies*, No. 43, 1969, pp. 128-144, here p. 140.

I think that the moral of the dictum „Be what you would seem to be" is in full accord with the mustard-definition, yet in her explanation sentence the Duchess is moving away from this moral since the explanation suggests that it is impossible to be what one seems to be. This is at first clearly seen in the first section of the sentence: the words "Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others" may be paraphrased as "You are always different to what it might appear to others." Thereafter the argument gets complicated owing to a long series of negations and their relations to each other. The logical core of this second section of the phrase is, in my opinion, the following: "(appear to others)…not otherwise than….what …would have appeared to them to be otherwise", or, still shorter, "not otherwise than…otherwise." Thus, it suggests a double reinforcement of the idea of "seeming being otherwise", i.e. what one seems to be is different from what one in effect is, which is quite in line with the first part saying that one is always unlike what might appear to others. And it is here that the problem arises: according to this proposition it would be impossible to be what one seems to be to others, that is, the sentence refutes the original claim of the very same moral which it is intended to confirm and to explain. I think that it is this point which serves as a source of Nonsense in the whole passage.

It is widely argued that Nonsense of the Duchess' sentence is rooted in syntax, yet the only problem with its syntax is its length. I believe that its semantics, first of all the mutual relations of its numerous negations, is far more intricate. First, it contains direct explicit negations (*never*, *not* (used three times).) Second, the adjective *otherwise* serves also as a negation meaning *being different to*, = *not being like something*[53]: it is also used three times throughout the sentence and two of these three instances are themselves directly negated: "*not* (to be) *otherwise*." Third, the semantics of *to appear* belongs here, too. Even though it is not a direct negation it serves as a means by which to question an affirmation of *being*. There are two direct combinations of negations in the sentence: one consisting of three units at the very beginning (*never … not … otherwise*) and a shorter one (*not otherwise*.) The first and the last words in the sentence are also negations: *never* and *otherwise*. Thus, in view of its form, the Nonsense effect produced by the sentence should principally be ascribed to the density of its negations and the complexity of modes in which these are related to one another.

With all this in the mind, I would like to turn to the translatability issue and explore a number of inter-lingual versions of this highly challenging piece of Nonsense. First, it would probably be reasonable to focus on the overall subject of the sentence in translation texts. Since the relation of *being* to *seeming* appears to be the actual source of the disorder, which is as central to the sentence as to the dictum (the moral) and the discussion about the essence of mustard, it is crucial to ask whether this subject has been mirrored in the translations at all. Second, the form level shall receive sustained scrutiny, i.e. close attention has to be paid to the frequency of negations and to the question whether a given translation consists of one single period in which the relations between negations are as complex as in the original.

That contrasting *seeming* and *being* is by no means axiomatically part of every *Alice*-translation is easily seen from a comparison of the following two Russian versions by Demurova and Zachoder:

А мораль отсюда такова: всякому овощу свое время. Или, хочешь, я это сформулирую попроще: никогда не думай, что ты иная, чем могла бы быть иначе, чем будучи иной в тех случаях, когда иначе нельзя не быть. ("And the moral of that is: every vegetable has its season. Or, if you'd like it put more simply: never imagine yourself to be otherwise than you could be otherwise than being otherwise whenever it is impossible not to be otherwise.") (Demurova, p. 206)

«Будь таким, каким хочешь казаться», или, если хочешь, еще проще, «Ни в коем случае не представляй себе, что ты можешь быть или представляться другим иным, чем как тебе представляется, ты являешься или можешь являться по их представлению, дабы в ином случае не стать или не представиться другим таким, каким ты ни в коем случае не желал бы ни являться, ни представляться.» („Be what you would like to seem to be", or, if you'd like it put more simply: Never imagine yourself to be able to be or to appear to others otherwise than what you imagine or are or might appear to others, in order not to become or to appear to others the way you would neither like to be nor to seem to be.") (Zachoder, p. 91)

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[53] This negative semantics of *otherwise* is probably most obvious when compared with its Russian and Chinese equivalents, cf. *ne takoj* не такой, *ne takaja* не такая, *bu tong* 不同, *bu ran* 不然, etc.

In Demurova's text, nothing whatever suggests a confrontation between *being* and *seeming*: her sentence deals only with the question how Alice should be and entirely omits the image of Alice in the eyes of the others. At the same time, the initial dictum does not allow any associations with the Duchess' sentence. The translator, thus, provides a piece of Nonsense, yet it differs markedly from that of the original, for it represents merely an absence of sense and is not invested with any dialectical quality.

Zachoder's rendition is, by contrast, more complex: his dictum is much closer to the original and he also reproduces the problematics of *being* and *seeming*, yet their relation is again different to the original since the verb *byt'* (*to be*) is taken to correlate with *predstavljatsa* (*to appear*), i.e. as „to be or to appear", rather than to contrast with it. It is also notable that already the first section of the sentence which is quite easy to follow and reproduce (Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others) and which clearly suggests a contrast between being and appearing is absent here, although, on the whole, the translator seeks to provide a much more literal rendition than, for examample, Demurova. And he is by no means alone in eliminating any cues suggesting order in the Duchess' words. Consider the following Chinese rendition of the passage by Chen Fuan (p. 143):

'别人觉得你是怎么个人，你就是怎么个人。'- 或者，如果你喜欢说得简单些，就是：'不要想象你自己不是别人心目中认为你是的那种人，你过去是怎么个人或者可能是怎么个人也并非不是更早以前他们认为你不是的那种人。' („You are what you appear to be to others." Or, if you'd like it put more simply: "Do not imagine yourself to be otherwise than what you appear to others to be; what you were in the past or might have been is not otherwise than what previously had appeared to others to be otherwise.")

Here, too, any trace of contrasting *being* and *seeming* has been eliminated and the sentence clearly corroborates the initial dictum which in itself is also a far cry from that of the original. The Duchess' sentence proves different from the original not only in terms of its subject but also at the formal level: its phrasing is much simpler and the number of negations has been significantly reduced, e.g. instead of the three unit negation at the beginning („never … not otherwise") it provides a double negation („Do not imagine yourself to be otherwise than what you appear to others.") A similar reduction of negations in the first section of the Duchess' sentence may be observed in a great number of *Alice*-renditions, e.g. in d'Amico's (p. 89: „Non immaginarti mai diverso da come potrebbe apparire agli altri……"), Zimmermann's (p. 63: „Bilde dir nie ein verschieden von dem zu sein was Anderen erscheint, etc."), Battistutta's (p. 83: „Non immaginare mai di essere diverso da come potrebbe sembrare agli altri…"), Olenič-Gnenenko's (p. 167: „Никогда не воображай себя иным, чем это может показаться другим…")

By contrast, versions that reproduce here the exact pattern of the original are much less frequent than those that immediately adjust the Duchess' sentence to her original dictum. A correct rendition of the three unit negation may be found, e.g. in Berman's (p. 203: „Ne vous imaginez jamais ne pas être autrement que ce qu'il pourrait apparaître aux autres…") as well as in Hansen's (p. 80: „Bilde dir niemals ein, nicht anders zu sein, als es anderen scheinen könnte…") versions. In these two rare renditions Carroll's nonsense retains its dialectical function of revealing elements of order from which it continually desires to move away.

As already mentioned, the density of negations is not the only source of Nonsense in the original, one further being the textual sequence of the mustard-definitions, the dictum and the Duchess' sentence. Among those rare renditions which make the dictum immediately follow the mustard-definitions is that prepared by Ma Teng:

'你觉得它看着像什么就是什么'; 或者，你可以把话说得简单一些: '永远要把自己想象成和别人心目中的你一模一样，因为你曾经或者有可能曾经在别人心目中是另外一个样子。' „It is just what it seems to you", or you can put it more simply: „You should always imagine yourself to be exactly like what you seem to others, for, in the past, you appeared or might have appeared different to them." (Ma Teng, p. 82)

Here, *mustard* has been made subject of the dictum and the explaining sentence is – contrary to the original – a clear corroboration of the dictum, i.e. since any object is precisely what it appears to others one need not try to be otherwise than what one seems to be. It is only in the concluding causal clause that Nonsense is allowed to show itself: it pretends to provide a cause for the main clause yet refrains from doing so. This is again an interesting solution to the issue of translatability. It minimizes

Nonsense, the frequency of negations is reduced (e.g., the initial „Never …not otherwise" is substituted for a positive imperative in which the equality of *being* and *seeming* is being affirmed) and the original idea behind the sequence of the mustard-definitions, the dictum and the sentence (the dictum corroborates the definitions and is, in turn, negated by the sentence) is not reproduced.

From these examples, then, we can see that of all elements that are characteristic of Nonsense in the original translators tend to omit those that demarcate order. However, some renditions do furnish evidence of the translators' acute awareness of the actual role with which order and logic are invested in Carroll's Nonsense. Let us, for example, consider Nabokov's rendition:

„Мораль: Будь всегда сама собой. Или, проще: не будь такой, какой ты кажешься таким, которым кажется, что ты такая, какой ты кажешься, когда кажешься не такой, какой была бы, если бы была не такой.") "The moral of this is: Be always yourself, or, to put it more simply: Never be what you seem to be to those to whom it seems that you are what you seem to be whenever you seem otherwise than what you might be if you were/had been otherwise. " (Nabokov, p. 80)

Nabokov's passage is marked by quite comprehensible logical relations between *being* and *seeming*. Both the dictum and the Duchess' sentence express a call for action, i.e. you have to be different from what you may appear to a specific group of others. The Nonsense disorder comes about through restricting the range of this group (of others): be different from those (sic) who believe that you are what you seem to be. In other words, it is a call to being different from what one seems and, at first sight, this reading of the sentence may be regarded as corroborating the dictum (*Be always yourself*), yet this would be inaccurate since, according to the sentence, one cannot be oneself so long as one continues to appear at least to one different person to be what one is. Nabokov's Nonsense is, thus, accompanied by both humor and logic. Finally, a version of the Duchess' sentence prepared by Ščerbakov shall illustrate a similarly careful handling of Nonsense in its relation to order:

«Будь, кем хочешь казаться». Или, проще говоря: «Никогда не считай себя не таким, каким тебя считают другие, и тогда другие не сочтут тебя не таким, каким ты хотел бы им казаться.» „Be what you would like to seem," or, putting it more simply: „Never imagine yourself to be otherwise than what it appears to others, and then others will not take you to be otherwise than what you would like to appear to them." (Ščerbakov, p. 115)

Although this version of the sentence distinguishes between *yourself* and *others*, there is no confrontation between them, since, according to it, one automatically is what one appears to others. Therefore this sentence can be taken to mean an exact logical explanation of the initial dictum: Whilst it is possible to be what one pleases, one will never cease to seem what one is. The dismissal of a contrast between *being* and *seeming* does not result in minimizing Nonsense but, rather, increases its dialectical relation to order and makes it in the end appear as Sense, which represents quite a harmonic solution to the translation problem in question.

No matter whether the passage has been interpreted by the translators as marked by a mere absence of sense (which is by far the easiest option to take) or, the other way round, as invested with meaning (which represents a more complex reading), in none of the versions under discussion did the translatability issue turn out to be a problem of language in itself, laying bare its basic incapability to map the disorder of the original sentence onto its own surface expressions. In turning now to a long continuous text portion (Chapters IV and V), the question to consider is, what exact pitfalls are set here by the language and how the difficulties have been mastered in different translation acts.

III. II

One potent affinity shared by Chapters IV and V is that in both Alice's body appears as the main source of wonders and at the same time they are the last in which Alice is not yet able to exercise control over her own size. Nonsense – as the possibilities of language to keep up with the heroine's changes – is in both chapters closely related to this general subject. Consider, for example, the following passage from Chapter IV "The Rabbit Sends in a Little Bill":

"It was much pleasanter at home," thought poor Alice, "when one wasn't always growing larger and smaller, and being ordered about by mice and rabbits. I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit-hole…There ought to be a

book written about me, that there ought! And when I grow up, I'll write one – but I'm grown up now," she added in a sorrowful tone: "at least there is no room to grow up any more *here*." "But then," thought Alice, "shall I *never* get older than I am now? That'll be a comfort, one way – never to be an old woman – but then – always to have lessons to learn! Oh, I shouldn't like *that*!"[54]

Apart from the comparative form *pleasanter* which is reminiscent of the first phrase of Chapter II and underscores the emotional charge of the heroine's words, her agitation and nostalgia, in this passage, Nonsense rests primarily upon the semantics of *growing up*: its meaning suddenly appears relative to a given place and it is not the age but rather the bodily size which is taken as the basic criterion of judgement about being *grown up*. Thus, Alice is thinking of her age as secondary to her size and the logical conclusion that she is drawing from this consideration is the following: Since in this particular place (i.e. the Rabbit's house) there is no place for her to continue growing she would probably never get any older. This idea rests on interpreting *growing up* as *growing* and here the language suggests to her a development which in effect is beyond conventional reasoning, i.e. a new kind of relation between place and time (age) in which time appears to have got stuck, for the place in question does not permit any further growth and aging. And so Alice thinks that she would never get an old woman but instead she would have to learn lessons forever, that is, she weighs up advantages and disadvantages of the new logical relation she has just drawn which are completely comprehensible to the reader. Thereafter, the chain of logical conclusions which her interpretation of *growing up* suggests to her continues for some time till she becomes aware of some apparent flaws in it: „Oh, you foolish Alice!" she answered herself. „How can you learn lessons in here? Why, there's hardly room for you, and no room at all for any lesson-books!"[55]

In order to achieve a similar Nonsense effect, the translator would need to search for a corresponding conventional pattern in the semantics of his/her language which could equally well be transgressed by the wonder of growing (up), that is, Nonsense should remain recognizable (as disorder) without getting entirely illogical. Consider the following French and Italian versions of the „…and when I grow up" vs. „but I'm grown up now":

Berman, p. 87: quand je serai grande vs. mais je suis grande maintenant; Sueur: quand je serai grande vs. mais je suis une grande maintenent; Bué, p. 46: quand je serai grande vs. mais je suis déjà bien grande; Petricòla-Rossetti, p. 46: quando sarò grande vs. ma sono di già grande; D'Amico, p. 42: quando sarò grande vs. ma sono già grande; Giglio, p. 105: quando crescerò vs. ma io *sono* cresciuta; Battistutta, p. 33: quando crescerò vs. ma già adesso *sono* cresciuta

Apart from the last two versions, the translators have employed here an adjective (*grande*) which links up the meanings of *big* and *adult*. Since the reader clearly sees that in this episode Alice is confronted with a new wonder and has grown as big as a house the chain of conclusions triggered in her mind by this new experience is quite comprehensible. The same is the case with the verb *crescere* in the Italian versions of Giglio and Battistutta: it means both *to grow* and *to grow up* (e.g. ‚Sono cresciuto in Italia.' (‚I grew up in Italy.')) and thus it exactly reproduces the semantical pattern of the original. Now consider some Russian, Japanese and Chinese renditions of the phrases:

Demurova, p. 124: Вот вырасту и напишу ...но ведь я уже выросла; Nabokov, p. 31: когда я буду большой...я уже и так большая; Zachoder, p. 58: когда я буду большая... да ведь я и так большая; Ščerbakov, p. 60: когда вырасту большая ... Но ведь я уже выросла большая; Seriu Hajime, p. 67: 大きくなったら、… だって、いまだってもう大きいじゃないの; Tada Kōzō, p. 46: わたし、大きくなったら書くわ。vs. でも、今でも大きくなっているんだわ; Shōno Kōkichi, p. 55: 大きくなったら vs. でもわたし今だってこんなに大きくなっているんだわ; Ishii Mutsumi, p. 30: 大きくなったら vs. でも、今ももう大きくなってるのよね; Zhao Yuanren, p. 45: 等我长大了 vs. 我现在可不是已经长大嘞吗？; Chen Fuan, p. 49: 等我长大了 vs. 不过现在我已经长大了: Ma Teng, p. 31: 等我长大了 vs. 可现在我已经长大了啊; Zhu Hongguo, p. 37: 等我长大了 vs. 可是，眼下我不是已经长得够大了吗?

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[54] *Alice*, p. 40.
[55] *Alice*, pp. 40-41.

The consistency of all these versions is in fact baffling, which again reveals that Nonsense is by no means necessarily accompanied by insurmountable language traps. On the contrary, the above renditions demonstrate how transparent the chain of conclusions drawn by Alice in the original from the semantics of *growing (up)* proves to the translators and how easily they reproduce it in their languages by expressions that mean both *big* and *becoming an adult*: *vyrastu / budu bol'šaja* in Russian, *ōkiku nattara* in Japanese and *deng wo zhang da le* in Chinese. Consider, as another example, an episode from Chapter V in which, having nibbled a little of the right-hand bit of the mushroom, Alice's body begins shrinking rapidly and nearly disappears:

„Her chin was pressed so closely against her foot, that there was hardly room to open her mouth; but she did it at last, and managed to swallow a morsel of the left-hand bit."[56]

Similarly to the previous example, *room* is used here as a mass noun. However, the experience of her body is different to that in Chapter IV, for now it is not changing proportionally but is rather shutting up like a telescope, i.e. it is the space between her head and her feet that is dwindling away. Here, again, the reader is faced with a game that involves both logic and linguistic conventions, yet this piece of Nonsense is not conceived as arising from Alice's linguistic imagination but as one that rests entirely on the author's ability to work wonders: relativity belongs among those numerous peculiar principles designed by Carroll which govern time and space in Wonderland. To translate this kind of wonder, the translator does not even need to search for expressions that link up various meanings and can naturally follow the semantics of the original, as, for example, Knut Hansen, pp. 43-44:

„Ihr Kinn war so dicht auf ihren Fuß gedrückt, daß kaum so viel Platz da war, daß sie den Mund öffnen konnte, aber es gelang ihr schließlich, ein Stückchen von dem Bissen aus der linken Hand zu verschlucken."

Translation versions are, of course, not exactly the same in phrasing this passage, yet variations do not arise from a problem of understanding or one of an exhausting search for an adequate expression to map the idea of the original. They are rather due to different interpretations of some minor details, which can be seen in the following Russian renditions:

Ščerbakov, p. 73: „Подбородок так прижало к туфлям, что рта было не раскрыть. Но наконец ей удалось откусить чуточку от левого куска." („Her chin was pressed so closely against her shoes, that she couldn't open her mouth. But at last she managed to bite a bit off the left piece."); Nabokov, p. 45: „Подбородок ея был так твердо прижат к ноге, что не легко было открыть рот. Но, наконец, ей это удалось, и она стала грызть кусочек, отломанный с левого края." („Her chin was pressed so closely against her foot, that it was not easy to open the mouth. But she did it at last and began nibbling the bit broken off the left side."); Demurova, p. 144: „Алиса взялась за другой кусок, но подбородок ее так прочно прижало к ногам, что она никак не могла открыть рот. Наконец, ей это удалось – и она откусила немного гриба из левой руки." („Alice took up another bit but her chin was pressed so closely against her feet that she couldn't open her mouth. But she did it at last, and managed to bite off a little piece of the mushroom from her left hand.")

Textual variations involve the semantics of number (plural vs. singular), individual objects (*foot* vs. *shoe*, *left hand* vs. *the left side of the mushroom*), etc., yet in no way do they affect the meaning of what is happening, i.e. the disorder of Alice's shrinking away from the viewpoint of ordinary thinking, which seems to be the vital source of Nonsense in the episode. And, similarly, no significant challenges to the translation can be found in the further progress of wonders caused by the left-bit of the mushroom when Alice begins growing, again, not proportionally but strikingly asymmetrically: her neck comes to resemble a huge serpent and her head is diving in among the tops of high trees. [57]

While in Chapter V Alice's metamorphoses are entirely due to the specific laws that determine the order of growing large and small and that are quite different to the standards of everyday life, in the first example from Chapter IV („And when I grow up" vs. „but I'm grown up now") it is the conventional semantics which does not keep up to the wonders and here Alice is not alone in bumping against language limits. Consider another dialogue from Chapter IV in which the Rabbit is discussing with his friends a big strange object hanging down from the window:

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[56] *Alice*, p. 55.
[57] *Alice*, p. 56.

"Now, tell me, Pat, what's that in the window?"

"Sure, it's an arm, yer honour!"…

"An arm, you goose! Who ever saw one that size? Why, it fills the whole window!"

"Sure, it does, yer honour: but it's an arm for all that!"

"Well, it's got no business there, at any rate: go and take it away!"[58]

As it was the case with the first example from Chapter IV, the size of an object (*an arm*) is fundamental to the Rabbit's understanding of its semantics: since the strange object fills the whole window it cannot be an arm. By saying this, he actually repeats the language experience of Alice, for his language cannot keep up to the wonder which he is forced to witness. Yet by adding „at any rate" and thus granting the possibility for the object in question to actually be an arm he immediately levels the importance of its semantics: no matter whether it is an arm or not, the object has to be removed. This time, it is the semantics of parts and wholes which serves as a source of Nonsense. The *arm* is conceived of as a separate object whose essence is being reduced to its visible properties (*bulky*, *huge*, *obstructing*, etc.) rather than connected to a whole (a body), which would be suggested by the conventional semantics of this noun. Following this line of reasoning, the Rabbit anticipates one further episode of Nonsense from Chapter VIII „The Queen's Croquet-Ground" in which the King, the Queen and the executioner are discussing the possibility of beheading a Cat that has no body:

„The King's argument was that anything that had a head could be beheaded, and that you weren't to talk nonsense.

The Queen's argument was that, if something wasn't done about it in less than no time, she'd have everybody executed, all round."[59]

By ordering that the arm be removed from the window, the Rabbit uses similar argumentation and Nonsense principally results from his conviction that the obstacle should be removed even if it is an arm. Let us consider some renditions of this particular phrase:

Shōno Kōkichi, p. 58:　まあいい、どう見ても、あの窓には無用の長物だよ。行ってとりはらってしまえ！　Well, anyway, it has nothing to do in the window (lit.: for that window it is a useless bulky thing), go and take it away.

Zhao Yuanren, p. 47: 那么，无论如何，它没有在那里的理，你去拿掉它！ (Well, anyway, it has no reason to be there, go and take it away.)

Pietrocòla-Rossetti, p. 49: Bene, ma ei non ha niente da fare con la mia finestra, va, portalo via! (Well, but it has nothing to do in my window, go and take it away.)

Hansen, p. 32: Na ja, aber er hat hier jedenfalls nichts zu suchen; geh und nimm ihn weg!" (Well, it has nothing to do here, go and take it away.)

As one can easily see, all the renditions follow more or less the same pattern and, again, apart from differences in minor detail the reproduction of Nonsense in this episode is not accompanied by any significant challenges. Thus, among all instances of Nonsense in the book, those that ironically prove to be the easiest to translate are ones that explicitly address the limits of linguistic conventions and situations in which language is falling short of the Wonderland experiences. The same is also true of the concluding episodes of Chapters IV and V: at the end of Chapter IV Alice encounters *an enormous puppy*[60] and in Chapter V she has to go to great lengths to convince the Pigeon that she is *a little girl*, which is heavily contradicted by her huge size and the serpent-like neck.[61] In both situations, language is again incapable of capturing the relations of sizes and their permanent confusing changes. The puppy is perceived by Alice as obviously dangerous and the Pigeon frantically tries to protect its nest from Alice as soon as it sees her face pop up high in the crowns of the trees. Thus, once again, the disorder produced by Nonsense involves limits of semantical conventions and whenever translators have to deal with similar contexts, they do not encounter any notable difficulties.

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[58] *Alice*, pp. 42-43.

[59] *Alice*, p. 93.

[60] *Alice*, p. 46.

[61] *Alice*, p. 57.

One of the theories that have been discussed in the introductory part to this chapter holds the view, according to which Nonsense in Wittgenstein's and in Carroll's work has to be understood as resulting from conventional semantical properties of natural languages and the specific traps set by languages might represent unsurmountable obstacles for translation. Among the examples provided by Wittgenstein has been the phrase „the rod has a length": here Nonsense can be interpreted as a means to demarcate sense on the ground that it is customary to define the length of an object in English or German using precisely the same expression "an object x has a length of, etc." In Carroll's work, as I have pointed out, this dialectical property of Nonsense to demarcate sense by resorting to conventional semantical codes may also be clearly seen. However, in some of the book's episodes, language itself becomes a scene of action making its idiomatic expressions become part of the plot. Since such cases also involve conventional codes one would again expect them to confront translators with significant difficulties. Admittedly, this is quite a special kind of Nonsense, i.e. not one that contrasts with order and sense but, rather, one that in itself may perfectly be interpreted as revealing order. Consider, as an example, an episode from Chapter V „Advice from a Caterpillar" in which several expressions are employed to serve this goal and which is highly relevant to the discussion of the translatability issue. It is a passage from the conversation between Alice and the Caterpillar at the chapter's beginning:

"Explain yourself!"
"I ca'n't explain *myself*, I'm afraid, Sir," said Alice, "because Í'm not myself, you see."
"I don't see," said the Caterpillar.
"I'm afraid I ca'n't put it more clearly," Alice replied, very politely, "for I ca'n't understand it myself, to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing."
"It isn't," said the Caterpillar.[62]

In contrast to the earlier discussed examples where Nonsense mirrored the limits of linguistic conventions (*a (huge) arm, an enormous puppy, a little girl,* etc.), in this situation ordinary meanings of words are quite sufficient for capturing the reasons for confusion. Three particular expressions are involved here in Carroll's play with language: 1) *I can't explain myself, because I'm not myself* (Alice is in fact literally *not herself* after all the changes she has just gone through in Wonderland); 2) *you see* vs. *I don't see* (the Caterpillar literally cannot see what is wrong with Alice, since it encounters the heroine for the first time and can make no judgement concerning her transformations); 3) *confusing* vs. *it isn't* (to a caterpillar, there is nothing confusing about changes of size and form and Alice should take it into account if she expects her conversation partner to sympathize with her.)

A comparison of different renditions again reveals a high degree of closeness to the original and this is not only the case with languages that are as closely related to English as, e.g. German, which can be demonstrated by the following examples: 1) Shōno Kōkichi, p. 67: わたし自身ではないのですから (*because I'm not myself*), Chen Fuan, p. 63: 因为我现在不是我自己 (*because I'm not myself now*), Zachoder, p. 63: я – это не я (*I'm not myself*); 2) Shōno Kōkichi: ごらんのように (*as you see*) vs. 何もごらんにはなっておらん (*I don't see anything*); Chen Fuan:你知道 (*you know, you see*) vs. 我不知道 (*I don't know, I don't see*); Zachoder: Видите (*you see*) vs. Не вижу! (*I don't see*); 3) Shōno Kōkichi: まごつきはせん (*I's not confusing*); Chen Fuan: 不会的 (*It is not /It cannot be*); Demurova: 138: Нисколько (*By no means.*)

All Nonsense episodes from Chapters IV and V, thus, represent cases that do not confront translators with any significant challenges and the main requirement for a felicitous rendition seems to reside in the translator's attention to what precisely constitutes the source of disorder in each individual episode and causes misunderstandings and confusions among the characters of the story. Quite a special case is represented by manifestations of Nonsense that arise from arbitrary linguistic behavior. Yet this will be the subject of two later chapters.

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[62] *Alice*, p. 49.

Conclusion

One of the central issues that have been raised in the theoretical part of this chapter was an understanding of Nonsense not as an all-encompassing element of the story but rather as one that is clearly delimited from order and that – thanks to its dialectical quality – regularly demarcates order and sense. Though the examples from Chapters IV and V discussed in the practical part do not yet evoke associations with the vast dramatic potential of Nonsense as it is revealed towards the end of Alice's journey through Wonderland, they still bear testimony to the fact that there is much more to Nonsense than a mere absence of sense exploited for intellectual amusement: even in the dialogue between Alice and the Caterpillar (Chapter V), in which Nonsense appears as a clear enactment of idiomatic meanings of words or in the mental soliloquy from Chapter IV, in which Alice is weighing up the possible consequences of her new unnervingly huge size and has to assume that she would never get any older, Nonsense displays an inherent tension between order and disorder which is accompanied by confusion and reflects an exhaustive search for meaning and sense.

Abstract: In this chapter, Nonsense is approached as a category that reveals a close relation both to order and disorder, rationality and illogicality, conventionality and arbitrariness, reality and dream. Among its various illustrations, quite a prominent role is assigned to the Duchess' sentence, which, in spite of being universally acknowledged as one of the best pieces of Nonsense, is rarely discussed in detail in philosophical and literary investigations: 'Be what you would seem to be' - or, if you'd like it put more simply – 'Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.'