

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

dodo/nododo proves that the Lewis Carroll Genootschap is not extinct

Dear Editor,

While I was doing research for my paper about Dutch translations of the Alice books back in 2003 I found most of the information I needed in a series of discoloured stacks of 1970s' paper, held together by rusty staples. But even if the five issues of *Wauwelwok* (1977-1982) weren't much to look at, I was very excited to discover that there once existed a Dutch Lewis Carroll Society, and that there were actually people in Holland who admired the writer and his work as much as I did. I would never have thought that 15 years later the Society would be brought back to life, and with it, of course, a brand new magazine.

According to the Lewis Carroll Genootschap, the magazine is 'an important symbol of the second youth the society is experiencing'. The name *dodo/nododo* was chosen because the magazine doesn't just offer information about Lewis Carroll and Alice, but also aims to publish articles that touch on the original style which made Carroll unique.

The result is a thick, 96-page booklet containing a colourful potpourri of different texts relating to language, logic, art and, of course, nonsense. Far better-looking than its predecessor, what catches the eye right away is the unusual font in which the captions are written. Inside the cover designer Michiel Terpelle explains that Carroll inspired him to play with our logic of letters, and that by recombining and repositioning existing symbols, the new font creates an experiential space of postponed understanding. He also mentions 'Initial Illegibility,' but although I do admire the effort, I'm afraid I suffered 'Chronic Illegibility.' That's why I thought the committee's note was written by 'Bad Davende', but I later realised that this warm, welcoming letter was written by the LCG's Chairman Bas Savenije.

The opening article of dodo/nododo is a fictional narrative in Dutch by writer Rob van Essen. The story, *De Wereldkampioen* (The World Champion), is a short but powerful submersion in a sea of absurdism. It makes readers choose their own logic in their own Wonderland, even though it's just for a minute or three; they were a good three minutes. The following interview with Brazilian artist Adriana Peliano is down-to-earth, but moving and sentimental at the same time. We cannot but admire Peliano's enthusiasm that even led to the foundation of the *Sociedade Lewis Carroll do Brasil*. Also, some interesting questions are posed here like 'If the texts are so complex, why should most of their illustrations be so literal?' Bas Savenije contributes to the illegibility by publishing his article about *Reductio ad absurdum* on dark green, horizontal pages. Even though he uses very clear and plain English, the article is quite hard to follow for someone who struggles with mathematical logic (me). However, he gives quite a few nice examples of how Lewis Carroll/mathematician Charles Dodgson, used *Reductio* in the Alice books. The article that made me the happiest though - and probably a lot of Dutch fans with me - is the announcement that the *Genootschap* has plans to publish a facsimile of the very first Dutch translation of Alice, which is *Lize's avonturen in het Wonderland* first published in 1875. It is not a very good translation, and far from complete, but what makes this edition so special are the eight coloured lithographs after Tenniel's illustrations, and the fact that they inspired Carroll to publish the Nursery edition. To my amazement the announcement came with an illustration of the front cover, which I had never seen before. Having said this, most of the articles in dodo/nododo contain new, interesting information about a children's book written over 150 years ago. I sincerely hope the flood of Lewis Carroll-related information will fill up a second issue of dodo/nododo soon. The editorial proclaimed the motto 'The dodo is dead - long live the dodo!', so I can do nothing but add: 'long life to this magazine, and may it prosper from this auspicious day.'

Yours etc.

Judith van den Berg