

Review *dodo/nododo* in *Bandersnatch*

While I was doing research for my paper about the Dutch translations of *Alice* back in 2003 I found most of the information I needed in a series of discoloured stacks of seventies paper, hold together by rusty staples. But even if the five issues of *Wauwelwok* (1977-1982) weren't much to look at, I remember I was very excited to find out 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 fifteen 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 want to offer more information about Lewis Carroll and *Alice*, but also wants to publish articles that touch the original style which made Carroll so unique. The result is a 96 pages thick booklet with 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 by recombining and repositioning existing symbols, the new font creates a new 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 of course I later realized that this warm, welcoming letter was written by 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, being 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* (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 a 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 quite new and interesting

information, which is great, because you would think that some day there would come an end to all the information available about a children's book that has been written over 150 years ago. I sincerely hope the flood of Lewis Carroll-related info 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.'

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