

Intertextuality in Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* – An Analysis of Tone in Affecting Parody and Satire

Directions:

Working with one other class member, consider all three of the following Carroll parody poems of British didactic poems well-known by children at during the original publication time of *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass*. For each pair of poems, develop responses to the critical thinking questions below

Critical Thinking Question

Consider the following: what are the characteristics of the original poem upon which Carroll bases his new version? What are the major changes that Carroll makes between his version and the one upon which it is based?

With those considerations in mind, how do these changes **affect tone**? How do these changes perhaps **satirize** the overt didacticism of the original poems?

Original Text or Form	Carroll’s Text
Southey’s “The Old Man’s Comforts and How He Gained Them”	“You Are Old, Father William”
Bates’ “Speak Gently”	“Speak Roughly”
Watts’ “The Sluggard”	“’Tis the Voice of the Lobster”

<p>The Old Man’s Comforts And How He Gained Them <i>Robert Southey</i></p> <p>‘You are old, father William,’ the young man cried, ‘The few locks which are left you are grey; You are hale, father William, a hearty old man; Now tell me the reason, I pray.’</p> <p>‘In the days of my youth,’ father William replied, ‘I remember’d that youth would fly fast, And Abus’d not my health and my vigour at first, That I never might need them at last.’</p> <p>‘You are old, father William,’ the young man cried, ‘And pleasures with youth pass away. And yet you lament not the days that are gone; Now tell me the reason, I pray.’</p> <p>‘In the days of my youth,’ father William replied, ‘I remember’d that youth could not last; I thought of the future, whatever I did, That I never might grieve for the past.’</p> <p>‘You are old, father William,’ the young man cried, ‘And life must be hast’ning away; You are cheerful and love to converse upon death; Now tell me the reason, I pray.’</p> <p>‘I am cheerful, young man,’ father William replied, ‘Let the cause thy attention engage; In the days of my youth I remember’s my God. And He hath not forgotten my age.’</p> <p>The Duchess’s song to the pig baby.</p>	<p>You are old, Father William <i>Lewis Carroll</i></p> <p>‘You are old, Father William,’ the young man said, ‘And your hair has become very white; And yet you incessantly stand on your head - Do you think, at your age, it is right?’</p> <p>‘In my youth,’ Father William replied to his son, ‘I feared it might injure the brain; But, now that I’m perfectly sure I have none, Why, I do it again and again.’</p> <p>‘You are old,’ said the youth, ‘as I mentioned before, And have grown most uncommonly fat; Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door - Pray, what is the reason of that?’</p> <p>‘In my youth,’ said the sage, as he shook his grey locks, ‘I kept all my limbs very supple By the use of this ointment - one shilling the box - Allow me to sell you a couple?’</p> <p>‘You are old,’ said the youth, ‘and your jaws are too weak For anything tougher than suet; Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak - Pray how did you manage to do it?’</p> <p>‘In my youth,’ said his father, ‘I took to the law, And argued each case with my wife; And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw, Has lasted the rest of my life.’</p> <p>‘You are old,’ said the youth, ‘one would hardly suppose That your eye was as steady as ever; Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose - What made you so awfully clever?’</p> <p>‘I have answered three questions, and that is enough,’ Said his father; ‘don’t give yourself airs! Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff? Be off, or I’ll kick you down stairs!’</p>
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Speak Gently*G. W. Langford*

Speak gently! It is better far
 To rule by love than fear
 Speak gently; let no harsh word mar
 The good we may do here!

Speak gently to the little child!
 Its love be sure to gain;
 Teach it in accents soft and mild;
 It may not long remain.

Speak gently to the young, for they
 Will have enough to bear;
 Pass through this life as best they may,
 'Tis full of anxious care!

Speak gently to the aged one,
 Grieve not the care-worn heart;
 Whose sands of life are nearly run,
 Let such in peace depart!

Speak gently, kindly to the poor;
 Let no harsh tone be heard;
 They have enough they must endure,
 Without an unkind word!

Speak gently to the erring; know
 They must have toiled in vain;
 Perchance unkindness made them so;
 Oh, win them back again.

Speak gently; Love doth whisper low
 The vows that true hearts bind;
 And gently Friendship's accents flow;
 Affection's voice is kind.

Speak gently; 'tis a little thing
 Dropped in the heart's deep well;
 The good, the joy, that it may bring,
 Eternity shall tell.

Speak Roughly*Lewis Carroll*

Speak roughly to your little boy,
 And beat him when he sneezes:
 He only does it to annoy,
 Because he knows it teases.

Chorus

Wow! wow! wow!

I speak severely to my boy,
 I beat him when he sneezes;
 For he can thoroughly enjoy
 The pepper when he pleases!

The Sluggard*Isaac Watts*

'Tis the voice of the sluggard; I heard him complain,
 'You have wak'd me too soon, I must slumber again.'
 As the door on its hinges, so he on his bed,
 Turns his sides and his shoulders and his heavy head.

'A little more sleep, and a little more slumber;
 Thus he wastes half his days, and his hours without number,
 And when he gets up, he sits folding his hands,
 Or walks about sauntering, or trifling he stands.

I pass'd by his garden, and saw the wild brier,
 The thorn and the thistle grow broader and higher;
 The clothes that hang on him are turning to rags;
 And his money still wastes thill he starves or he begs.

I made him a visit, still hoping to find
 That he took better care for improving his mind;
 He told me his dreams, talked of eating and drinking;
 But he scarce reads his Bible and never loves thinking.

Said I then to my heart, 'Here's a lesson for me,
 This man's but a picture of what I might be;
 But thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding,
 Who taught be betimes to love working and reading.'

The Lobster*Lewis Carroll*

'Tis the voice of the Lobster; I heard him declare,
 'You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair.'
 As a duck with its eyelids, so he with his nose
 Trims his belt and his buttons, and turns out his toes.

When the sands are all dry, he is gay as a lark,
 And will talk in contemptuous tones of the Shark,
 But, when the tide rises and sharks are around,
 His voice has a timid and tremulous sound.
