

## Staging Childhood: Lewis Carroll's Costumed Photographs of Children

In the "Photographic Scrap Book Vol. II," one of four volumes of Lewis Carroll photographs in the Morris L. Parrish Collection at Princeton University, is the photograph titled "The Beggar-Maid."<sup>1</sup> [slide #1] This has become one of the most famous and frequently reprinted images Carroll made of Alice Liddell, for whom he wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). According to Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, Carroll's nephew and first biographer, when Carroll presented a copy of this photograph to Alfred Lord Tennyson during one of his visits to the poet's summer home at Farringford, the Poet Laureate declared it to be "the most beautiful photograph he had ever seen."<sup>2</sup> Tennyson's praise of Carroll's "The Beggar-Maid" is a bit of a backhanded compliment in that Carroll may have based his image on Tennyson's poem "The Beggar Maid" that was published in *Poems* (1842):

Her arms across her breast she laid;  
She was more fair than words can say:  
Bare-footed came the beggar maid  
Before king Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way;  
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,  
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,

She in her poor attire was seen;  
 One praised her ancles, one her eyes,  
 One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
 So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
 In all that land had never been:  
 Cophetua sware a royal oath;  
 'This beggar maid shall be my queen!'<sup>3</sup>

Alice Liddell as "The Beggar-Maid" was first published in half form in Collingwood's *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll* (1898) shortly after Carroll's death. While this was forty years after Carroll took the photograph during the summer of 1858, Carroll thought highly of the image since he circulated it among friends at Oxford. Carroll's photographs were popular among his circle, many of whom were influential Victorian artists and writers including John Ruskin, George MacDonald, and Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. But it was with the publication of Helmut Gernsheim's *Lewis Carroll, Photographer* (1949) that Carroll has been recognized as one of the great amateur photographers of the nineteenth century.[slide #2] Gernsheim discovered several of Carroll's photograph albums by accident in a bookshop while researching his *Julia Margaret Cameron: Her Life and Photographic Work* (1948). Gernsheim declared that — in addition to being one of the pioneers of British amateur photography — Carroll was "the most outstanding photographer of children of the nineteenth century."<sup>4</sup> Following Gernsheim's lead, Carroll is generally paired with Julia Margaret Cameron as one of the two great amateur photographers of children during the Victorian period. [slide #3] Both Carroll and Cameron shared a number of the same child and adult models for

their photographs, including Alice Liddell. Since the publication of Gernsheim's study of Carroll's photography, Carroll has found a small, but lasting, niche in the history of Victorian photography, with most critics praising his images of children.<sup>5</sup> Interest in Carroll's photography and his motivations for his extensive photographing of young girls has intensified since the publication of Morton Cohen's *Lewis Carroll, Photographer of Children: Four Nude Studies* (1978) that published, for the first time, the four surviving images of nude girls. [slides # 4-7] Carroll's nude photographs had been long acknowledged, but since he stipulated that after his death all such prints should be returned to the models, their nearest relatives, or destroyed, scholars had assumed that none of these photographs had survived. Roger Taylor points out that during Carroll's twenty-five year photographic activity, from 1856-1880—a period in which he produced 25,000 negatives, 34 albums of photographs--the sum total of Dodgson's nude photographs was limited to eight sessions during the thirteen-year time span from 1867-1880 (Taylor and Wakeling 100). While the nudes are a minor feature in Carroll's photographic output, they remain a topic of great interest for contemporary critics.

Taken out of their photographic context, these images come as a shock many readers of Carroll's children's books. These four images have encouraged some critics to reexamine Carroll's other photographs in a different light, although Carol Armstrong has observed that,

When one thinks of Victorian images of come-hither children, it is Lewis Carroll that one probably thinks of first, but in fact it is Julia Margaret Cameron, the good mother and grandmother, who has left us with the more obsessive, the more

insistent, and I think the more perverse record of a fascination with the allure of childish bodies.”<sup>6</sup> [slides #8-12]

Carol Mavor in *Pleasure Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs* concurs that Cameron’s more accessible “photographs of sexual(ized) children”<sup>7</sup> have managed to escape critical censure simply because of “her material lifestyle, which included a house full of children” (25). I would suggest the same is the case for Sally Mann, who also used her own children as models in *Immediate Family* (1992), and maintains that, “childhood sexuality is an oxymoron” (Woodward 52). [slides #13-17] While I think it is possible to assume that Carroll naively accepted the Romantic notions of childhood innocence which were widespread during the Victorian period, I think it is much more difficult to make those same claims for Mann in contemporary American culture. Two different standards seem to be used in evaluating Carroll and Mann’s photographs of children. Carroll is seen as an obsessive (male) amateur whose images reveal pedophilia, while Mann is an edgy (female) artist whose photographs present us with a troubling view of childhood. Taylor notes that “Dodgson’s nude photographs have been the subject of more intense speculation and ill-formed judgement than any other aspect of his entire photographic oeuvre” (Taylor and Wakeling 100).

However, when Carroll’s costumed photographs of children, including the nude photographs, are situated within the other work nineteenth-century art photographers that Carroll was emulating -- such as Margaret Julia Cameron, O.G. Rejlander and Lady Clementina Hawarden -- the images fit Victorian conventions of staged images of children. [slide #18] Undress is one of the many, but rarely used forms of costumed photographs that Carroll employed. Examining theatrical photographs of children by

contemporary photographers such as Sally Mann, Mary Ellen Mark, or Laura Greenfield, Carroll's photographs seem to be an significant aesthetic precursor. [slide #19 -20]

In focusing on Carroll's photograph of "The Beggar-Maid," I hope to suggest a cultural context, social implication, and set of photographic influences that may have affected the production of the image, and by extension, Carroll's other photographs. "The Beggar-Maid" has often been viewed as just one of Carroll's many costumed images of young girls.

Anne Marsh has noted in *The Darkroom: Photography as the Theatre of Desire*, until recently art historians have tended "to undervalue the staged narrative of early art photographers."<sup>8</sup> It is appropriate to recognize Carroll as a practitioner of Victorian high-art photography in the manner of William Lake Price, Henry Peach Robinson and O.G. Rejlander in that many of these images attempt to produce photographs that aspired to the level of painting and shared the Victorian appreciation of theatricality and storytelling. [slide #21] Gernsheim, in particular, held this approach in contempt, arguing in *Creative Photography: Aesthetic Trends 1839 to Modern Times* (1962) that "England was the only country in which photography was perverted in a mistaken attempt to rival painting" (88). Carroll experimented with various approaches to photography, including staged performances that are distinctive from his portraits, still lifes, and even scientific images, such as his photographs of skeletons. [slide #22] In situating this photograph within the social context of the mid-Victorian recognition and growing concern for the urban poor, particularly children, I will try to establish some of the social and literary influences that led Carroll to produce such a tableau.

“The Beggar-Maid” is an arresting image of six-year-old Alice Liddell costumed as a street urchin in a ragged white dress and bare feet leaning against a garden wall with her outstretched hand presumably requesting a spare coin from a passerby. [slide #23] Collingwood dates the photograph as 1858 (*Life and Letters*, xviii). Wakeling, in his “Register of All Known Photographs by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson,” also dates it to Summer 1858 in the Deanery garden of Christ Church Oxford (Taylor and Wakeling *Lewis Carroll Photographer*, 247) The French photographer Brassai has suggested that it is “the most unforgettable and doubtless most revealing picture” Carroll ever took.<sup>9</sup> Alice, with her slightly cocked head and tattered dress slipping off her left shoulder, gazes directly at the viewer, suggesting a much older, worldly wise, child. The photograph reveals a strong-willed child, who, as Mindy Aloff suggests, “knows exactly what is wanted from her and takes charge of providing it, with amazing combination of disapproval (the lifted brow) and flirtation (the tilted head and upward directed gaze).”<sup>10</sup> Aloff suggests that if nothing was known of the photographer one might assume another child had taken the picture (27).

Taylor has argued “of all the child studies by Dodgson, his portrait of Alice Liddell as *The Beggar-Maid* has caused the most intense speculation.” (6). Others have argued that this clothed photograph of Alice, with her disheveled dress, is a far more seductive and erotic image of a young girl than the four nude photographs. Nina Auerbach has attempted to compare Alice's fall down the rabbit hole in *Wonderland* to the fate of fallen women by linking this image to prostitution via Dante Gabriel Rossetti's “Found” (1853), which was one of Carroll's favorite narrative paintings.<sup>11</sup> [slide #24]

A more accurate link would be “The Beggar-Maid” in Henry Mayhew’s *London Labor and the London Poor* (1861-1862), which is his systematic study of the urban poor. Mayhew was quick to note that many female street children “fall into a course of prostitution.”<sup>12</sup> A second Carroll photograph of Alice in the same costume, presumably taken at the same time, is shot indoors with the girl standing on a rug; however, this second image of Alice as a beggar-maid looks decidedly more charming, and much less dramatic or suggestive.<sup>13</sup> [slide # 25]

Marsh concurs and suggests that “Alice Liddell and all the girls in Carroll’s photographs are presented as knowing subjects” (137). Another photograph, which is often paired with “The Beggar-Maid,” is “Alice Liddell Dressed in Her Best Outfit.” [slide #26] In *Lewis Carroll Photographer*, Taylor suggests that, like many of O. G. Rejlander’s photographs, this pair of images was intended to be viewed as a contrast between “a demure young women of good breeding and deportment with a ragged beggar girl” (64).

Given his professed aversion to the lower classes, what motivated Carroll to pose Alice Liddell, the daughter of Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, as a beggar? Indeed in *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), when the apologetic Alice uses the phrase “I beg your pardon,” in addressing the White King, she is reminded, “It isn’t respectable to beg.” (196). If he modeled the beggar-maid on Tennyson’s poem, Carroll was placing the costumed scene, in the romanticized past, than rather contemporary urban squalor. Carroll did a significant number of photographs of boys and girls dressed up in historical costumes..[slide #27] This was similar to Cameron’s staging of scenes from Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King and Other Poems* (1874-1875) and Cameron included a photograph of

"King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid" in the second volume of her illustrated edition of *Idylls of the King*. [slide #28, have print version] King Cophetua is a legendary figure who appears in a ballad in Percy's *Reliques* (1765) and is mentioned by Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* (1623).

While a Pre-Raphaelite School of photography was never formally established, there was much debate in art circles of the time about whether photography could be considered an artistic medium or simply a method of mechanical reproduction. Michael Bartram and Graham Ovenden have shown that several Victorian photographers, including Carroll, shared many of the same artistic goals and assumptions of the Pre-Raphaelite painters. Carroll frequently applied his knowledge of Pre-Raphaelite paintings to the composition of his photographs. He was an acquaintance of many of the artists within this group including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Millais, and Arthur Hughes. Yet, the Alice of "The Beggar-Maid" is hardly a typical Pre-Raphaelite stunner, although she retains some of the state of vulnerability and virginal beauty that was prized by the Pre-Raphaelites.

While Carroll's image of Alice as a Beggar Maid appears suggestive to contemporary viewers, especially in light of the discovery of Carroll's four nude images, as Anne Higonnet has argued "To Carroll's contemporaries, however, Alice's beggar portrait did not look prurient at all." (125). Even James Kincaid suggests in *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*, "Alice eludes, even her own photographs, smiling slyly out of them with an enticing knowledge of her own reserve, declining our invitation to be captured by the frame." (276).



Carroll's photograph is strikingly different from Edward Burne-Jones subsequent "King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid" painted in 1884, based on the same Tennyson poem and which secured him membership in the Royal Academy a year later. [slide #29] One of the best known of his oil paintings, Burne-Jones's features both the king and beggar maid as adults caught in a mutual gaze, but places a bunch of anemones, the symbol of rejected love, in the hands of the beggar maid.<sup>14</sup>

Analyzing the tinted version of the photograph, Mavor suggests that Carroll's "The Beggar-Maid" is a sort of "Alice as Cinderella," noting that such an image is a story that only that the rich could believe (Mavor 35). [slide #30] As Higgonnet has observed, "The whole beggar pretext seems obvious, since Alice exudes health, wealth and the arrogance of privilege" (125). Alice Liddell posing as a beggar maid is akin to Frances Hodgson Burnett's use of Sara Crewe as a poor servant girl in *A Little Princess* (1905), which is another Victorian version of Cinderella. Dressed in rags as she does her errands on the streets of London Sara is mistaken as a beggar by an upper class child who gives her a six pence. But on closer inspection of her behavior, other members of the family realize that Sara is "the little-girl-who-is-not-a-beggar" (94). The same is true of Carroll's "The Beggar-Maid." Mavor argues that the photograph confirms Carroll's "uneasy relationship" with children outside the upper classes (35). Mavor contrasts the colorized version of "The Beggar-Maid," with Carroll's 1857 photo of Annie Coates, one of Carroll's few photographs of actual working class children. [slide #31] She suggests that what becomes apparent in the pairing of the photographs is the class difference which is not "usually apparent in Carroll's work" (Mavor 36). However, the world of street children--or in Victorian terminology street arabs--is a very different social sphere

from that of the able working class such as Annie Coates, a class distinction that Carroll would make. This class distinction is very much at play in Carroll's *Alice* books, which were written for the upper-middle class children.

Henry Mayhew published his sweeping study of the subculture of poverty *London Labour and the London Poor: A Cyclopedeia of the Condition and Earning of Those That Will Work, Those Than Cannot Work, and Those That Will Not Work* in 1851-1852. Carroll owned three volumes of Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (Stern Library 30). *Street Folk*, volume I, includes a lengthy analysis "Of The Children Street-Sellers of London" where Mayhew estimates there were 10,000 to 20,000 street arabs under the age of fifteen in London (Mayhew, 1:479). Street arabs, which would include beggar maids, were a visible aspect of the urban poor. Carroll, who frequently attended the theatre in London, would have had first-hand knowledge of these conditions.

Mayhew's journalism and Charles Dickens's fiction--such as *Sketches by Boz* (1834), *Oliver Twist* (1837), *Bleak House* (1853) helped to establish the urban poor in the consciousness of middle-class Victorians. Carroll was strongly affected by Dickens's sentimental version of the suffering slum child and owned nearly all Dickens's novels in first edition.<sup>15</sup> At the same time that Carroll photographed Alice Liddell as "The Beggar-Maid," he also produced a series of costumed photographs of the Oxford undergraduate Quintin Twiss, as "The Artful Dodger." [slide #32]

Hebsa Stretton, the popular Evangelical writer and a founder of the London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, firmly established the literary figure of the street arab in Victorian children's literature. The pathetic figure of the poor, urban

child features prominently in her series of inspirational novels such as *Jessica's First Prayer* (1868) and *Alone in London*.<sup>16</sup> [slide #33] While Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is considered the pivotal children's book, it was not as popular as the didactic *Jessica's First Prayer*,<sup>17</sup> during the Victorian period which according to Richard Altick sold almost ten times as many copies as *Wonderland*.

While these literary influences indicate that Carroll's "The Beggar-Maid" fits comfortably into the growing Victorian representation of the urban poor, there is a more specific photographic influence on Carroll's composition: the art photography of O.G. Rejlander. [slide #34] While Carroll's photographs are usually compared to those of Cameron, Carroll instead owes a much greater photographic influence to Rejlander and his photographs. "The Beggar-Maid" in particular, ought to be read in relationship to those photographs produced by O.G. Rejlander. Gernsheim maintains the chief value in "Professional and Other Photographs," the volume of photographs collected by Carroll is that it reveals the "choice of photographs which he considered worth collecting" and adds "By far the largest proportions of the photographs are by O.G. Rejlander."<sup>18</sup> [slide #34]

Rejlander, along with Henry Peach Robinson and William Lake Price, was a member of a group of mid-Victorian professional photographers who tried to elevate photography to a fine art to an equal status with painting. [slide #35] A painter who found much success as professional photographer, Rejlander, who was Swedish, opened his photographic studio in Wolverhampton in 1855 and eventually moved to London in 1860. He showed twelve photographs in 1855 at the Photographic Society annual exhibition that were well received. Not only did Carroll admire and collect Rejlander's photographs, he visited Rejlander's photography studio on several occasions for

photographic advice. In this relationship, Rejlander acted as a professional mentor to Carroll. Rejlander took one of the best known and frequently reprinted photographs of Carroll in 1863. His image of Carroll holding in his hands what is most likely one of Rejlander's camera lens reinforces the mentor/apprentice relationship between the two men. [slide #37] Taylor notes "Dodgson required Rejlander's success to sanction his own artistic aspirations" (Taylor and Wakeling 61).

Rejlander's most widely discussed and controversial photograph was his allegorical "The Two Ways of Life" that was first exhibited at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857 and subsequently at the Photographic Society of London of 1858, which Carroll attended. [slide #38] Besides being the first London viewing of Rejlander's "The Two Ways of Life," this exhibition was the only time that Carroll publicly displayed his photographs.

"The Two Ways of Life, or Hope in Repentance" is a large, complex, narrative photograph for which Rejlander used twenty-five models. Gernsheim calls it "the most ambitious allegorical photograph ever made."<sup>19</sup> Taylor writes that "this large-scale and complex study remains the most ambitious and technically accomplished photograph of the nineteenth century" (Taylor and Wakeling 60). It is a combination of thirty, separate negatives that Rejlander assembled through combination printing. Although the Rejlander photograph is compositionally based on Raphael's *School of Athens* (1511), it is intended to be read as a narrative in the manner of William Hogarth's "Industry and Idleness" (1747) in that it tells the story of two choices youth may take: Industry or Dissipation.

While the photograph was widely discussed in photographic circles because of its combination development process, it created public controversy since the image

prominently featured several female nudes. The 1857 Scottish Photographic Society refused to show it on moral grounds, and only relented the following year by curtaining off the Dissipation side, which included nudes.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, Queen Victoria, an amateur photographer herself, perhaps approving of its moral theme, purchased three copies for Prince Albert.<sup>21</sup> Carroll's two versions of Alice Liddell can be read as to be juvenile versions of Rejlander's "The Two Ways of Life."

Rejlander also sold photographs of models to artists, including nudes. He was one of the few professional photographers who produced nude infant allegories during the Victorian period.[slide #39] Stephanie Spencer notes that Rejlander was "the only major photographer to exhibit nude child allegories at midcentury" (Spencer, *O.G. Rejlander*, 105). Roy Flukinger has argued that "Of those who chose to interpret or reinterpret the nude in nineteenth-century photography, none occupies a more important place than O.G. Rejlander."<sup>22</sup> Carroll's interest in nude photography was inspired and perhaps justified, in his mind, by the professional work of Rejlander.

Carroll's "The Beggar-Maid" was produced under the direct influence and admiration for Rejlander's series of fifteen photographs of street arabs that he created between 1859 and 1871.[slide #40] Carroll owned several of these photographs, which are found in his "Professional and Other Photographs."<sup>23</sup> Street arabs or street urchins are a significant category of genre photography produced by Rejlander (Spencer, *O.G. Rejlander* 28) and provide a visual counterpart to Mayhew's detailed overview of the life and occupations of London's street children. [slide #41]

Rejlander was among the first British photographers to represent urban poor in photography, although subsequent photographers -- such as Robert Crawshaw and John

Thompson -- would document the urban poor in a more systematic and realistic fashion. While urban poverty became an increasingly prominent subject in Victorian photography by the 1870s, Rejlander and Carroll were a decade ahead of the general trend (Spencer *O.G. Rejlander*, 82). Mayhew suggests that street children survived by selling various items ranging from matches to food or by providing services, such as street sweeping or delivering messages. Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Girl" (1845) and Jo, the Street Sweeper, from Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852-1853) are two of the more memorable examples of literary Victorian street children.

Rejlander created these images of street children to evoke sympathetic emotions in his viewers who were supposed to respond to the scene with feelings of compassion and charity. This is best exemplified in Rejlander's most famous representation of a street arab, "A Night in Town," which is also known as "Poor Jo." [slide #42] The second title refers to the name of the homeless street-sweeper in Dickens's popular *Bleak House*. The photograph "was first exhibited in 1861, when it immediately attracted notice and comment" (Jones 27). This photograph was frequently exhibited and was used in marketing materials by the Shaftesbury Society of London until the 1970s to solicit funds for homeless children (Jones 27). The image, which Carroll owned, shows an exhausted young boy huddled in doorway. Rejlander later used the same boy as a model for the complimentary, but more humorous, photograph, "A Day in Town," which features the child performing a handstand. [slide 43]

Like Carroll's "The Beggar-Maid," Rejlander's street urchin photographs were not documentary photographs, but studio re-creations intended to tell a story or evoke a strong emotions in the viewer and remind middle-class viewers of their obligations

toward the poor. [slide #44] Rejlander records that "Night in the Town" was based on a scene that he observed as he returned home one evening through Haymarket. He observed a poor child asleep in a doorway whose crouched attitude expressed dejection and hopelessness (Jones 27). Rejlander's inspiration for the photograph confirmed Mayhew's observation that "Many street children who are either 'alone in the world,' or afraid to return home after a bad day's sales, sleep in the markets or under the dry arches"(Mayhew 1:475). Like his other street arab photographs, this is a recreation using a model in a studio (Spencer, *O.G. Rejlander* 87). Douglas R. Nickel notes that "of course, neither Dodgson nor Rejlander would have felt it appropriate to use real street children as their subjects. Good taste. . . demands that the viewer understand these were unendangered child-models, posed as types."<sup>24</sup> Rejlander was not so much interested in accurately reproducing a scene, but composing a powerful narrative image that expressed that evoked powerful emotional reaction in the viewer.

Both Rejlander and Carroll produced sharp, clean images rather than Cameron's consciously blurred images that closely approximate the appearance of oil paintings. Rejlander, like Carroll, preferred complete figures rather than partial portraits, rather than the close-ups that Cameron favored. Taylor notes that Cameron's "handling of the collodion process was slapdash, with fingerprints and smudges commonplace" (Taylor and Wakeling 83). This style of working was an anathema to the fastidious Carroll. The difference in the clarity of the images between Carroll and Rejlander's and Cameron's are obvious.

The backgrounds of Rejlander's photographs are vague; most of the images were shot indoors at his studio. Like Carroll's photographs of children, many of Rejlander's

models wear costumes or use props. Marsh suggests, "They are actors on a stage, everything about the pose is artificial and constructed." Carroll's storytelling ability and his photographic practice collide as little girls dress up, often acting out adult personas in their amateur theatricals."<sup>25</sup> (Marsh 137). But Marsh argues it would be misleading to suggest that Carroll's enticement to play was sinister in any way (Marsh, 131). Spencer argues that Rejlander did not use actual children from the streets but models, since the figures are much too clean and well fed to be actual street arabs and speculates that he hired some of his models from the Chalk Farm Ragged School for Boys, which was located close to his studio (Spencer *O.G. Rejlander*, 23).

Carroll's "The Beggar-Maid," which is dated 1858, appears to be patterned after Rejlander's "Night in Town," which is dated 1857 (Taylor. *LC at Texas*, 205). The two photographs featuring a homeless boy or girl work extremely well as visual companion pieces and suggest that Carroll may have carefully modeled his composition after Rejlander's earlier image. The two genre photographs use the abandoned street children as dramatic symbols of urban poverty and are intended as narratives intended to raise awareness of the growing social problem. Carroll produced "The Beggar-Maid" in the same year in which he was presenting his photographs to dealers in Oxford with hopes that he could "make photography pay its own expenses" (Diaries, 1:113). Photography was a expensive hobby; the cost for equipment as well as the development and printing materials made this a fashionable pursuit that only the well-to-do could afford.

The sales of Rejlander's photographs seem to have inspired Carroll to try his hand at securing additional income from his photographs. In 1869, Carroll self published a list of his photographs, which intriguing, considering how entrepreneurial Carroll later



became with the multiple versions of Alice books. The list was produced after Carroll had exhibited his photographs at the Photographic Society of London in 1858. Of the 137 photographs listed, 104 are portraits of well-known individuals and most of the rest are anatomical specimens or landscapes (Taylor 40). In 1872 Carroll even sent one of his photographs to Charles Darwin as a sample in hopes that Darwin might use photographs to illustrate another one of scientific texts, as he had with Rejlander's photographs in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). [slide #45] But nothing came of Carroll commercially selling his photographs.

Gernsheim maintains, "It goes without saying that most of these costumed pictures have to be condemned as errors of taste" (Gernsheim *Carroll*, 20). He considers Carroll's costumed photographs "a lamentable concession to Victorian taste" and "always banal" (Gernsheim *Carroll*, 20). Examining these nineteenth-century art photographs through the lens of modernist photographic aesthetics, perhaps Gernsheim is correct. [slide #46] But given the increasing performative aspects of contemporary photograph, images such as Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* (1998) come to mind, [slide 47] it is worth re-evaluating nineteenth century art photographers who emphasized artificially theatrical poses. More obviously influenced by Carroll's costumed images of children in the series of photographs by the Australian lawyer turned photographer Polixeni Papapetrou who first photographically restaged John Tenniel's illustrations of the two Alice books and is in the process of restaging Carroll's child photographs using her daughter Olympia as the model in her "Dreamchild" series. [slides 48-54]

Victorians often expected paintings or photographs to tell a story. Both "The Beggar-Maid" and "Night in Town" should be viewed as highly effective and successful

visual narratives. As a professional photographer who depended on the commercial market for his livelihood, Rejlander was “extremely conscious of popular tastes” and consequently “attempted to create artistic and ideal images which appealed to a wide spectrum of patrons.”<sup>26</sup> Reviewers frequently praised Rejlander’s photographs of street arabs when they were exhibited and preferred them to his other narrative work. Carroll was clearly one Victorian who admired Rejlander’s photographs, avidly collected them,<sup>27</sup> and attempted to emulate his style in his own photographs. He considered Rejlander’s photographs “very beautiful” (Diaries, 1:194), but he did not hold Cameron’s photographs in the same esteem. In a letter to his sister Louisa, Carroll describes Cameron’s photographs as, “all taken purposely out of focus--some are very picturesque--some merely hideous--however she talks of them as if they were triumphs of art.”<sup>28</sup> While recent critics have criticized Rejlander’s street arab photographs as “extremely sentimentalized images” (Da Costo Nunes, 107) that do not reflect the realities of urban poverty, this evaluation misses the photographer’s intention. Rejlander and Carroll had no interest in being street photographers and these images were never intended to record actual lives of street arabs. [slide 55] They are visual counterparts to the sentimental representations of street children found in Dickens and Stretton's novels, rather than Mayhew’s investigative reporting. Jennifer Green-Lewis argues that in its “deliberate inauthenticity” Carroll’s “Beggar-Maid” is not about recording a reality, but producing a theatrical response in the viewer (61). But the artistic emphasis on pathos and sentimentality that makes “The Beggar-Maid” one of Carroll’s most memorable photographs in the manner that makes “Night in Town” one of Rejlander’s most striking images. To view Carroll’s “The Beggar-Maid” within the context of O.G. Rejlander’s

series of street arabs is to provide a more accurate artistic and social context to the image and a more appropriate understanding of Carroll's photographic aesthetics.

#### Notes

1. Roger Taylor and Edward Wakeling, *Lewis Carroll Photographer. The Princeton University Library Albums* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 176.
2. Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll* (Rev. C.L. Dodgson, 1898 (Detroit MI: Gale Research Company, 1967): 79.
3. Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Beggar Maid," *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks. (New York: Longman, 1969), 552.
4. Helmut Gernsheim, *Lewis Carroll, Photographer*, 1949 (New York: Dover 1969): 22.
5. Many photographic critics have praised Carroll's photographs. Some of these are the following. Graham Clarke, *The Photograph* (Oxford History of Art, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 53. Elizabeth Heyert, *The Glass-House Years: Victorian Portrait Photography 1839-1870* (London: George Prior, 1979), 118. Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography From 1839 to the Present Day* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964), 92. Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography*, 3rd ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1997), 92. Grace Sieberling. *Amateurs, Photography and the Mid-Victorian Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 91.
6. Carol Armstrong, "Cupid's Pencil of Light: Julia Margaret Cameron and the Maternalization of Photography," *October* 76 (spring 1996), 115.
7. Carol Mavor, "Dream-Rushes: Lewis Carroll's Photographs of Little Girl" *Pleasures Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 22.

8. Marsh, Anne. *The Darkroom: Photography and The Theatre of Desire* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 2003), 118.
9. Brassai, "Carroll the Photographer," *Lewis Carroll: Photos and Letters to His Child Friends*, trans. Warren Weaver, ed. Guido Almansi, notes by Brassai and Helmut Gernsheim (Parma, Italy: Franco Maria Ricci, 1975), 197.
10. Mindy Aloff, "Charles Dodgson V," *Threepenny Review* 64 (winter 1996): 28.
11. Nina Auerbach, "Falling Alice, Fallen Women, and Victorian Dream Children," *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 151.
12. Henry Mayhew, *The London Street Folk. 1861-1862, London Labour and the London Poor*, 4 vols. (New York: Dover, 1968), 1:469.
13. Lewis Carroll, *The Diaries of Lewis Carroll*, 2 vols., ed. Roger Lancelyn Green. (London: Cassell, 1953), 1:311.
14. Russell Ash, *Sir Edward Burne-Jones* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1993): plate 24.
15. Jeffrey Stern, *Lewis Carroll's Library*, Carroll Studies 5 (Silver Springs, MD: Lewis Carroll Society of North America, 1981), xi.
16. See chapter 4 for a comparison of the popularity of Stretton's *Jessica's First Prayer* with Carroll's *Alice Adventures in Wonderland* during the Victorian period.
- <sup>17</sup> The sentimental story of saving a street-waif was published in 1866, a year after *Wonderland*, sold a million and a half copies by the end of century, almost ten times the number of copies of Carroll's masterpiece sold during the same period. See Richard D Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 389.

18. Helmut Gernsheim, *Lewis Carroll, Photographer*, 1949 (New York: Dover 1969), 102.

19. Helmut Gernsheim, *Creative Photography: Aesthetic Trends 1839-1960* (Boston: Boston Book & Art Shop, 1962), 77.

20. Stephanie Spencer, *O.G. Rejlander: Photography as Art*, Studies in Photography 8 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1985), 102.

21 In *Lewis Carroll Photographer* (61), Taylor notes these were to be put in Prince Albert's dressing rooms at the castles at Windsor, Osborne, and Balmoral. Edgar Yoxall Jones in *Father of Art Photography: O.G. Rejlander, 1813-1875* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1973) notes on page 27 that "The Prince was the first patron of photography in England, and his loss was keenly felt" (27).

22. Roy Flukinger, *The Formative Decades: Photography in Great Britain, 1839-1920* (Austin, TX: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, 1985), 61.

23. Robert N. Taylor, *Lewis Carroll at Texas* (Austin, TX: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, 1985), 205-07.

24. Douglas R. Nickel, *Dreaming in Pictures: The Photography of Lewis Carroll*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 62.

25. Marsh, *The Darkroom* (137).

26. Jadviga M Da Costo Nunes, "O.G. Rejlander's Photographs of Ragged Children: Reflections on the Idea of Urban Poverty in Mid-Victorian Society" *Nineteenth Century Studies* 4 (1990): 109.

27. Nickel notes that Carroll owned Rejlander's photographs of "crossing sweepers and bootblacks" (62).

28. **Carroll to his sister Louisa. Location. Date.** Lewis Carroll, *The Letters of Lewis Carroll*, ed. Morton N. Cohen, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 1:66.