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### INTRODUCTION

"No! No! The adventures first," said the Gryphon in an impatient tone: "explanations take such a dreadful time." ("The Lobster-Quadrille")

"Even a joke should have some meaning — and a child's more important than a joke, I hope." ("Queen Alice")

#### 1: The Child, Nonsense and Meaning

"The adventures first", says Carroll's Gryphon, with his dread of 'explanations', and all readers know this is the right order. Yet introductions inevitably come before adventures and introductions tend to mean explanations. Lots of things happen the wrong way round in these texts — "Sentence first — verdict afterwards"; shouts the Queen of Hearts<sup>2</sup> — so readers who share the Gryphon's priorities can always read the introduction after the stories, or not at all. You simply follow the instructions of the King of Hearts: "Begin at the beginning... and go on till you come to the end; then stop."<sup>3</sup>

Yet Carroll's heroine, at the heart of these adventures, is very much concerned with questions of meaning. When she dreamily finds her way to the other side of the looking-glass, one of the first things she encounters is a poem called 'Jabberwocky'. After reading it, Alice remarks "It seems very pretty; but it's rather hard to understand!" "Somehow it fills my head with ideas", she reflects, "only I don't exactly know what they are!"<sup>4</sup>

In this respect, the nonsensical mirror-poem 'Jabberwocky' stands as a mirror of the classic literary double-act of which it is part. All readers of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, those

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prefatory poem to *Wonderland*, and they abound in the spontaneous enigmatic coinings of dreams, slips of the tongue, jokes and improvisatory free-association. On the other hand they are also riddling, aesthetically highly wrought, products of a child-haunted adult, obsessed by questions of meaning, and have something of the eerie perfection of the literary sphinx about them; of Wildean contrivance as well as the vertiginous spontaneity of improvisation. On the one hand, these are two of the few widely acknowledged classics of children's literature which helped in themselves to redefine the possibilities of writing for children. On the other hand, they are two of the most original, experimental works of literary fiction in the nineteenth century and have had a huge impact on subsequent fiction and culture. Translated by Nabokov into Russian; adopted by the Surrealists as proto-surrealist dream books in France; taken up by T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, W. H. Auden and more recently Peter Ackroyd as models, the Alice books have been taken to prefigure modernism at its most experimental as well as children's writing at its most elemental.<sup>10</sup> This double fate may embarrass some readers but is surely inherent in the stories Carroll wove around his heroine Alice, and surely part of their challenge and appeal to all readers, young and old.

In a sense this dispute represents a reaction to something beyond the Alice books themselves. It represents a dispute about the meaning of children's literature (whatever that is), about childhood and literary representations of childhood, about the relation between books for children and books for adults, about 'nonsense' as a genre and classification, about dreams, and of course about reading. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* originated as a children's story and was marketed as a book for children, yet since the day of its first publication it has always appealed to adults too and, with the Bible and Shakespeare, is reputed to be the most quoted of English texts. Carroll's two dream books about a seven-year-old middle-class Victorian girl offer themselves as absurd and riddling parables of narrative and linguistic innocence, but they are also allegories of experience: incarnations of philosophical sophistication and perverse intellectual wit constructed around the adventures of a child. What is ultimately at stake in disagreements about the 'innocence'

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of such children's classics as the Alice books is, I suspect, a debate about the relationship between adulthood and childhood — and where in that complex, troubled and mesmerizing relationship the interest of 'innocence' is to be found and in whose interest. Talking about Carroll, W. H. Auden wrote that 'there are good books which are only for adults, because their comprehension presupposes adult experiences, but there are no good books which are only for children'.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, it is natural for children's books to become adult books if they are any good; since all adults have been children, books for and about children are always potentially for and about adults too. William Empson has said that the Alice books are about 'growing up', which is certainly true.<sup>13</sup> They are also, perhaps more surprisingly, about grown-ups. Alice, after all, is, apart from a fleeting baby (who turns into a pig) and those stuffed archetypal schoolboys Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the only child in the books at all. Like Henry James's *What Maisie Knew*, the stories give us not so much an adult's view of childhood as a child's view of adulthood. Seen through the lens of Alice, the world of adulthood is as dismayingly bizarre and perverse as those of Dickens and James.

Virginia Woolf resolves the question of readership in a different way. 'The two *Alices* are not books for children', she wrote in 1939; 'they are the only books in which we become children'.<sup>14</sup> According to Woolf, his childhood, 'lodged whole and entire' inside Dodgson, forming 'an impediment at the centre of his being' which 'starved the mature man of nourishment' but enabled him in fiction to 'do what no one else has ever been able to do', to return to that world and 'recreate it . . . so that we too become children again'. This is a large claim and magically dissolves the barrier between adult and child. In *Jacob's Room*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, Woolf herself tried to 'recreate' that childhood world too, so her tribute to Carroll is born out of a sense of affinity. Carroll should be placed with the modernist novelists, Proust, Joyce and Woolf, as well as the Oedipal father of modern childhood, the psychoanalyst Freud, as part of a cultural movement placing the child's story at the heart of adult culture.

The Alice books are children's literature, but also, as much as Dickens's *Great Expectations*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* or Henry James's *What Maisie Knew*, part of the nineteenth century's expanding

literature about childhood. In foregrounding problems of language and meaning, they are as formally disorienting and psychologically searching representations of childhood subjectivity as Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist* or Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. 'Adventures' and 'Wonderland' suggest 'fairy tale' and 'romance', but Alice's most parlous adventures underground and through the mirror are intellectual and social rather than physical, dialectical rather than folkloric. The Gryphon, Monstrous Crow and Jabberwocky are comparatively harmless antagonists compared to all the querulous logicians and niggling philosophers of meaning she meets on her travels, all ready to pounce like vultures on any phrase or idiom, however 'normal', that can be wrested into the discomfiting abnormality of 'nonsense'. The author of the Alice books was an Oxford logician, and at every turn of her looking-glass quest, Alice's conversations bring her into close encounters not only with figures from games of cards and chess like the Queen of Hearts and the White Knight, or from the traditional repertoire of nursery rhymes like Humpty Dumpty and the Unicorn, but with the persistent puzzles, paradoxes and riddles which haunt the apparently stable-mirror theories of language which have dominated the philosophy of the West.<sup>15</sup>

The question of the meaning of nonsense haunts Alice and many of her interlocutors. "It's really dreadful!", Alice reflects at one point, "the way all the creatures argue. It's enough to drive one crazy!"<sup>16</sup> Many of these maddening arguments concern the questions of meaning, identity, names, logic and the philosophy of language which have vexed philosophers since Plato. The seven-year-old Alice is caught up in a series of bad-tempered dialectical duets which call in question or put into play the conceptual foundations of her world. It is no wonder that the relation between children, jokes and meaning raised by the Red Queen should haunt readers of Lewis Carroll's story.

## 2: Biographical

One familiar — and familiarizing — way of re-framing the riddle of the Alice books is biographical, to look to the life of the author for clues

to the meaning of his dream texts. One answer to Alice's last question in *Through the Looking-Glass*, as to 'who it was that dreamed it all?' is 'Lewis Carroll'.<sup>17</sup> 'Lewis Carroll' was the pseudonym of the Reverend C. L. Dodgson. And if during his lifetime, as Virginia Woolf said, 'The Rev. C. L. Dodgson had no life',<sup>18</sup> since his death he has been subjected to innumerable posthumous Lives, starting with his nephew Stuart Dodgson Collingwood's *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*, published in 1898, the year of his death.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately the Dodgson that emerges from the densely documented pages of these Lives is almost as enigmatic and controversial a figure as Alice. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson was born in 1832, the year of the Reform Act, into a rural parsonage in Daresbury, Cheshire. He was the third of eleven children and the eldest son. His father, a High Churchman in the mould of his friend Pusey, was a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford, where he took a First in classics and mathematics. Though his son rarely mentions him in letters or diaries, his father and Christ Church were to cast a long shadow over his entire life. The Reverend Charles Dodgson had married his cousin, Frances Jane Lutwidge (about whom we know dismayingly little beyond the family's image of her as ideal Victorian Mother), and six years after he left Oxford, they settled in the remote parish of Daresbury, where he was appointed curate (it was in the gift of Christ Church). The first eleven years of young Charles Dodgson's life were spent in this crowded rural parsonage, dominated by his father's strong intellectual personality and the rituals of Anglican piety and family games. During these first years of what his nephew called 'complete seclusion from the world',<sup>20</sup> young Charles, his seven sisters and two brothers, were educated at home by their mother, and subjected to a heavy daily dose of High Church Christianity from their father.

Though Stuart Dodgson Collingwood retails family anecdotes about his climbing trees and making friends with snails and toads or encouraging 'civilised warfare' among earthworms,<sup>21</sup> modern biographers have little to go on when trying to imagine Dodgson's formative years in this formative place. His child friend Isa Bowman called him 'the man who above all others has understood childhood'<sup>22</sup> and Virginia

Woolf thought that 'childhood remained in him entire' all his life, persisting as an 'impediment in the centre of his being'.<sup>23</sup> He said himself that children were 'three-fourths' of his 'life',<sup>24</sup> and the cult of childhood was clearly central to his entire adult life. This makes it the more surprising that, apart from in a couple of early poems, Dodgson never talked about his own childhood, his family, early games or reading. In 'Faces in the Fire', written in 1860, he evokes 'the happy place where I was born', 'an island farm' amid 'broad seas of corn',<sup>25</sup> and in 'Solitude' (the first poem to bear the signature of 'Lewis Carroll', written when he was twenty-one) he invokes 'the golden hours of Life's young spring / Of innocence, of love and truth', affirming he would give all his adult wealth 'To be once more a little child / For one bright summer-day'. These are surprising sentiments for a twenty-one-year-old student perhaps, but not for the period.<sup>26</sup> They tell us more about the post-Wordsworthian romance of childhood than about Dodgson's own early life.

In 1843, the Reverend Charles Dodgson, who by then had completed an edition of Tertullian commissioned by Pusey in addition to running his quiet Cheshire parish, acquired the larger, altogether less secluded parish of Croft on Tees in North Yorkshire, thanks to Bishop Longley's intervention with the Prime Minister, Robert Peel. The vicarage at Croft was much grander, set in a big well-tended garden, close to the newly built railway and industrial Darlington. The family grew larger too, since before long Mrs Dodgson gave birth to another son. Thereafter the eleven Dodgson children seemed to thrive in the new rectory, with its greater space and access to the wider world. They were to remain a close-knit family throughout their long lives. One of their odder shared characteristics was a chronic stammer. Charles himself had to battle with a stammer all his life (he had regular speech therapy as an adult), and six of his seven sisters were stammerers too. The 'Dodo' of *Wonderland* represents the first syllables of his stammered surname — 'Do-Do-Dodgson' — and it may be that his 'fine ear' for linguistic nonsense, and for semantic and logical impediments of all kinds, had some relation to his speech impediment.

In 1844 Charles's school education began, setting up the rhythm that shaped the rest of his life. Henceforward, there was to be an oscillation

between serious all-male academic life on the one hand and the company of young children — mainly girls — on the other. He went first as a boarder to Richmond School, ten miles from home, where his headmaster noticed 'an uncommon share of genius' and what was to become a highly characteristic inability to 'rest satisfied without a most exact solution of whatever seems to him most obscure'. Two years later the fourteen-year-old Dodgson found himself further from home and from happiness in that archetypal nineteenth-century public school, Rugby, where he arrived shortly after the death of Thomas Arnold. This was the period of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, but Dodgson was no Tom Brown. 'I cannot say I look back on my life at a Public School with any sensations of pleasure', he wrote later in the privacy of his diary of 1855 in a rare moment of class disloyalty, 'or that any earthly considerations would induce me to go through my three years again'.<sup>27</sup> However uncongenial he found the all-male, sport-dominated culture of public school, he typically won prizes in almost every subject, and soon found himself, under the patronage of his father's mentor Dr Pusey, at his father's college, Christ Church, Oxford, where he took up residence in 1851. Dr Pusey wrote to his father, commending his 'uniform, steady and good conduct', and young Charles continued to follow in his father's footsteps. He read classics and mathematics like him, like him emerged with a First in mathematics (falling short of his father's Double First), and like him ended up with a studentship at Christ Church with the expectation of going on into the Church. Though young Charles was eventually ordained in 1861, after some soul-searching, he didn't go on, like his father, to a parish and family of his own. Christ Church was not to be a stepping-stone but his home for the rest of his life.

His childhood was over, but the idea of it lived on. Nothing could be much less like the Brontës' childhood in that other Yorkshire parsonage than the Dodgsons' at Croft, but as for the Brontës at Haworth, the children's home-made writing culture helped shape Charles's future career. As Donald Thomas notes, 'the most impressive and durable memorial of Croft was the succession of magazines for the younger children that Charles wrote, edited and produced'.<sup>28</sup> A far cry from the Brontës' chronicles of Angria, these largely comic productions were

full of spoofs, parodies and jokes. They included the ironically entitled 'Useful and Instructive Poetry' written for Wilfred and Louisa in about 1845 and 'The Rectory Magazine' of 1848, culminating in 'The Rectory Umbrella', christened after the giant yew tree in the garden, which Charles wrote and illustrated on his own for a year and a half before going up to Oxford.<sup>29</sup> There is a sense in which these occasional performances established the pattern he was to follow for the rest of his life. In the closed environment of the God-fearing, conservative vicarage of his childhood, Charles discovered a quasi-magical rôle as children's entertainer in contrast to that of preacher like his father. Though he did eventually become a clergyman and a reluctant preacher, he remained a comic writer, puzzle-maker and spellbinder, whose inventive gifts were largely directed towards an audience of children (or, in the Oxford squibs and pamphlets, his fellow dons at Christ Church). 'The Rectory Umbrella' seems an inspired umbrella title for all the comic household magazines devised in the school holidays, in the margins of his serious, prize-laden academic career in Rugby. The frontispiece of 'The Rectory Umbrella' shows a figure sheltering below an umbrella of Jokes, Riddles, Fun, Poetry and Tales, taking refuge from the stones slung at him by the demons of woe, crossness, ennui and spite. Dodgson's long career as a solo entertainer was lived out under sheltering familial umbrellas — first that of the parental rectory at Croft, then that of Christ Church, Oxford, which in 1851 became his permanent home. In both places, the comic art of this most defensive personality clearly functioned as a defence against anxieties that could not be held at bay even there.

In his diary for 1855, which he calls 'the most eventful year of his life', Dodgson notes that he had begun it 'as a poor bachelor student', and ended it as 'a master and tutor in Ch. Ch., with an income of more than £300 a year, and the course of mathematical tuition marked out by God's providence, for at least some years to come'.<sup>30</sup> In fact, providence ordained that Dodgson would be a mathematics lecturer for twenty-five years and persist in the even tenor of his way at Christ Church until his death in 1898, nearly half a century later. His subsequent career as a bachelor clergyman and successful children's writer, living at the heart of the academic and social establishment as a Christ

Church don, was, like his childhood, an impeccably conventional one in almost all respects — but it had one deep-rooted anomaly at its heart: a dream of childhood, focused on the figure of a beautiful young girl.

It was in 1853, in his third year at Oxford, and after the death of his mother, that Dodgson wrote 'Solitude', in which he evoked an infant sobbing itself asleep 'Upon a mother's breast', recalling 'the golden hours of Life's young Spring', before declaring he would give everything to be once more a little child. For one bright summer's day.<sup>31</sup> This anomalous cult of the child was to bring him fame through the Alice books and a certain social cachet through his camera, but in its wake it also woke shadowy rumours of scandal as a result of his increasingly obsessive fascination with girls before puberty, and his growing preoccupation with photographing them in as scantily clad a state as possible, in bathing drawers, for example, or, preferably, in the nude. 'A girl of about twelve is my ideal beauty of form', he wrote in 1893, and 'I don't hardly see why the lovely forms of girls should ever be covered up'.<sup>32</sup>

The anomaly's first name and incarnation was Alice Liddell, and it was in the shadow of Alice's name and the pseudonym of Lewis Carroll, author of the Alice books, that Dodgson lived his later life. The Liddell children first entered the young mathematics tutor's life in 1856; the year after their father, Henry Liddell, previously head of Westminster School, co-author of the famous Greek lexicon and a high-profile reformer, was, to the conservative Dodgson's alarm, appointed Dean of Christ Church. It was Harry Liddell he met first ('the handsomest boy I ever saw'),<sup>33</sup> then Lorina. In April, however, the twenty-four-year-old Dodgson, then very much a novice at what was called the 'black art' of photography, tried to photograph the new Dean's three small daughters, including the three-year-old Alice, in the Deanery Gardens.<sup>34</sup> It wasn't a success aesthetically (they wouldn't keep still), but this first of innumerable attempts to photograph Alice and her sisters established him at the Deanery: 'The three girls were in the garden most of the time, and we became excellent friends', he wrote in his diary.<sup>35</sup> In June he took the ten-year-old Harry Liddell rowing with him on the river, and soon afterwards the unchaperoned seven-year-old Lorina on another river trip. He noted that day in his diary with a

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'white stone' (as he marked all special days).<sup>36</sup> During the next few years (there were many such days and Dodgson, despite his political differences with the Dean on many college issues, became a regular intimate of the Dean's family, taking pictures, playing cards and croquet, telling jokes and stories, and messing about on the river. While he was by most accounts a rather dreary college tutor for undergraduates, he seems to have been in his element with the Deanery children, who clearly put him in touch with his familiar role as family entertainer under the Rectory Umbrella at Croft. During these years his intimacy with Alice grew, as the series of haunting, yet subliminally creepy photographs of her and her sisters show. As Michael Bakewell says, these 'pictures tell us, if nothing else, he was in love with Alice.'<sup>37</sup>

But they don't tell the whole story, and there is a frustrating gap in the written records just at this crucial point. Dodgson began keeping a diary in his third year in Oxford and went on doing so until his death. The thirteen volumes of these were available to his first biographer, but the two volumes that cover the years from April 1858 to May 1862, during which Dodgson's intimacy with Alice was maturing, have disappeared (either lost, as the family subsequently maintained, or, more likely, destroyed).<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, though they fortunately resume just in time to record the weeks leading up to the genesis of *Wonderland* and the famous river expedition that June, the diaries are interrupted once again for the three days in late June 1863 when Dodgson's intimacy with Alice and the other Liddells was abruptly terminated for ever by her mother, the formidable, socially ambitious Lorina Liddell. Mrs Liddell also destroyed all his letters to Alice.<sup>39</sup> It is one of the great ironies of Dodgson's life that by the time *Wonderland* was published in 1865, making her about the most famous seven-year-old girl in history and him the most famous children's writer, their relationship was a thing of the past and Dodgson was banned from the Deanery. We don't know why the kissing had to stop, or what brought to an end the stories, photos and river expeditions which provide the frame for *Wonderland*, but stop they did. When he saw the Liddell children again the following December, the diary records 'I held myself aloof from them, as I have done all this term.'<sup>40</sup>

There were family rumours that Dodgson proposed to Alice, but

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was rejected – either because she was too young, or that he in his thirties was too old, or that this obscure young mathematics don didn't match Mrs Liddell's notoriously snobbish expectations for her daughters (she liked hobnobbing with royalty and is probably parodied in the references to 'Kingfishers' in Dodgson's skit on the Dean's architectural taste, 'The Vision of the 3 T's').<sup>41</sup> Romance with teenagers, like stuttering, was evidently something to which the Dodgson boys were prone, for at about the same time Dodgson was head over heels in love with Alice, his younger brother Wilfred fell in love with another teenage Alice, the fourteen-year-old Alice Donkin. Unlike Charles, however, Wilfred went on, after a decent interval, to marry her (in 1862 Charles had photographed her prophetically as a teenage bride in a bizarrely composed photo 'The Elopement'). In a diary entry in 1866 Dodgson describes a conversation about Wilfred and 'A.L.' (presumably, Alice Liddell) as 'a very anxious subject'. It was such an 'anxious subject' for everyone concerned that none of the interested parties ever discussed it again in public. Recalling her memories of Wonderland seventy years later, Alice Hargreaves (as she then was) steers well away from any mention of her or the celebrated author's feelings, and though Dodgson spoke later of Alice as his 'ideal child friend',<sup>42</sup> he never explained the nature of their friendship or the dramatic rift that separated them.

By the time he published *Through the Looking-Glass* in 1872, he was writing 'as if she was dead'.<sup>43</sup> Its opening verses ('Child of the pure unclouded brow') speak of Alice and the author being 'half a life asunder', while the closing poem ('A boat beneath a sunny sky') reads like an elegy for Alice, though it was written when she was still in her teens. In fact, the coda to her adventures through the mirror is almost Hardy-esque in its wintry words and lyric attenuations: 'Long has paled that sunny sky;/ Echoes fade and memories die;/ Autumn frosts have slain July./ Still she haunts me phantomwise;/ Alice moving under skies/ Never seen by waking eyes.' Alice has become a figure in his dream.

The nature of Dodgson's love of Alice remains a subject of speculation. On the evidence of his surviving letters and diaries, Dodgson, though a most self-conscious writer, was not a man with a very intense

self-consciousness; or interest in his own motives or feelings. Dodgson the photographer 'had a horror' of being photographed himself.<sup>44</sup> Similarly while his diaries and letters diligently record his daily visits, meetings, and journeys, including his rendezvous with children, they tell us remarkably little about his feelings — in complete contrast to the diaries of his younger contemporary Kilvert with their vivid insights into that other bachelor cleric's voyeuristic interest in young girls. In his diaries Dodgson regularly commemorates his meetings with Alice and the other Liddells during their years of close contact (he was obviously half in love with the whole family) by marking the days in his diary by a 'white stone', his usual code for a day of exceptional pleasure. After the boating expedition in 1856 with Harry and Ina Liddell, for example, he wrote 'Mark this day, annalist, not only with a white stone, but as altogether, 'Dies mirabilis'.<sup>45</sup> Another entry, for 26 June 1857, goes:

Spent the day at the Deanery, photographing, with very slender success. Though I am disappointed in missing this last opportunity of getting good pictures of the party, it was not withstanding one of the pleasantest days I have ever spent there. I had Alice and Edith with me till 12; then Harry and Ina till the early dinner at 2, which I joined; and all four children all afternoon. The photographing was accordingly plentifully interspersed with swinging, backgammon, etc. I mark this day most specially with a white stone.<sup>46</sup>

This is as close as the diary ever comes to telling us what the children meant to him, but it conceals as much as it reveals. The 'annalist' is no analyst. The cryptically jubilant sign-post of the 'white stone' is also a burial stone, a symbol of what his contemporary Matthew Arnold called 'The Buried Life'. When we look for evidence of Carroll's 'inner life', what kinds of experience might lie buried behind the rigidly 'externalized' record of the diaries and letters, the pamphlets and memoirs, this is what meets us: a white stone.

A number of 'serious' poems dating from these years and published later in *The Three Sunsets* (1898) suggest a preoccupation with sexual guilt, contrasted with visions of childlike innocence: 'The Valley of the Shadow of Death', 'Beatrice', 'Stolen Waters', 'Only a Woman's Hair'. They may tell us something of Dodgson's mysterious paedophile sexuality. The watery guilt scenario played out in 'Stolen Waters' of 1862,

for example, though largely stolen from Coleridge and Keats's exercises in the Gothic ballad form, invokes a 'happy, innocent child' (apparently five years old), and this 'sainted, ethereal maid' is threatened by a 'grim wild beast', a 'savage heart in human guise'.<sup>47</sup> During the same period, Dodgson's diaries are particularly racked with conventionally pious expressions of guilt and resolutions to change his life, as his best recent biographer, Morton N. Cohen, notes.<sup>48</sup> Such entries occur overwhelmingly in the decade 1862 to 1872, his great creative decade, most intensively in the years from 1862 to 1867, culminating in 1863, the year of the break with the Liddells and the time of the genesis of the Alice books. Some time later, his friend Lord Salisbury wrote, 'They say Dodgson has gone out of his mind in consequence of having been refused by the real Alice (Liddell)', adding that 'It certainly looks like it'.<sup>49</sup> Dodgson himself, while noting the fact of his banishment from the Liddells, says nothing of this — or anything else about his state of mind at the great watershed in his life represented by the publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1866 and the break with its only begetter, Alice Liddell.

There's a telling moment in *Through the Looking-Glass* which bears on Dodgson's resistance to autobiography. "The horror of that moment", the King cries after Alice has put the little royal chess piece down, "I shall never, never forget!". Advised by the Queen to make a note of this in his memorandum book, he starts to do so, only to have Alice force his hand and write: '*The White Knight is sliding down the poker. He balances very badly*'. Reading it, the Queen exclaims, "'That's not a memorandum of your feelings!'" The same holds true not only of Dodgson's diaries but Carrollian nonsense: they hold both 'horror' and 'desire' at bay. In fact nonsense can convert the disorderly world of unbalanced feeling into externalized absurdity.<sup>50</sup> Much of the obsessional inventiveness of Dodgson's life, in particular his imaginative life — his investment in inventing games, puzzles, ingenious gadgets like his Nictograph for night-writing, his lists and catalogues — can be seen as a defensive construction against not only anxiety but his own subjectivity, and its potential for disorder. In the Preface to the revealingly entitled *Pillow Problems* (1893); Part II of the less revealingly entitled *Curiosa Mathematica*, he recommended his mathematical puzzles and

exercises as a way of diverting people's minds from troubling thoughts and disturbing feelings:

There are sceptical thoughts, which seem for the moment to uproot the firmest faith; there are blasphemous thoughts, which dart unbidden into the most reverent souls; there are unholy thoughts, which torture with their hateful presence, the fancy that would fain be pure. Against all these some real mental work is a most helpful ally.<sup>51</sup>

This tells us something about his thoughts, as well as his thoughts about how to divert and disperse them by 'mental work'. His taste for mathematical problems, such as those in *A Tangled Tale*, for new word games such as Doublets and Syzgies, for logical puzzles such as are described in *The Game of Logic*, obviously provided him with harmless, obsessional activity which deflected him from the dangerous world of subjective feeling. This must have been one of the attractions of nonsense too, with its systematic, playful derangements of sense; its experiments in disorder from within an unshaken framework of orderliness. Yet in the nonsense of the Alice books, as nowhere else, Dodgson found a licence to explore not only his identifications with his child heroine, but the disorienting, 'sceptical' dimension of his own intelligence, which most of his life he had to hold at bay.

Dodgson by all accounts was profoundly preoccupied by balance, orderliness and control. As Isa Bowman noted, 'all the minutiae of life received an extreme attention at his hands and his hands always wore a pair of grey cotton gloves'.<sup>52</sup> There were two sides to this. It made him a stickler for detail, principle, rules and regulations when it came to running the college, which led to regular altercations with the Dean, college servants, and fellow dons when he was Curator of the Common Room. 'Except to little girls, he was not an alluring personage', wrote William Tuckwell of New College. Tuckwell characterized him as 'austere, shy, precise, absorbed in mathematical reverie, watchfully tenacious of his dignity, stiffly conservative in political, theological, social theory, his life mapped out in squares like Alice's landscape'.<sup>53</sup> Yet to girls he clearly *was* an alluring personage, as many of them testified later, and his rooms in Tom Quad appeared to Isa Bowman as 'a fairy-land for children'.<sup>54</sup> If so, it was a fairy-land which, like the squares in

Alice's landscape, was precisely mapped out. As *Through the Looking-Glass, The Game of Logic* and his popularizing works on logic all show, Dodgson remained a Euclidean even at play.

At the heart of the Alice books is Dodgson's dream identification with his child heroine. The writer sees through Alice's eyes. In his later work he never attained this kind of identification again. In his other literary and pictorial representations of children, they remain very much objects of adult manipulation. They are viewed through the sentimentalist's or the voyeur's lens, as idealized fictional innocents like the protagonists of *Sylvie and Bruno* or as the carefully staged beauties, captured clothed, partially clothed or unclothed in the huge archive of his photographs of child models. The newly invented camera was Dodgson's passport to respectable middle-class and artistic homes, allowing him to gratify his passion for capturing the famous social, literary and artistic 'lions' of the day on the one hand — Tennyson, the Rossettis, Millais, George MacDonald, Ellen Terry, Prince Leopold and other Oxonian and national celebrities — and little girls on the other. The girls might be dressed as themselves or in theatrical costume, or in what came to be his 'favourite costume', wearing nothing at all. Alice Liddell was his passport to Wonderland — and *Alice in Wonderland* became his passport to fame, a fame that, for all his notorious touchiness about his incognito (he would return letters addressed to 'Lewis Carroll'), was central to his relationship to the host of little girls who succeeded Alice. Writing to her in 1885, he wrote that his 'mental picture' of his 'ideal child friend' was as 'vivid as ever'. He had had 'scores of child friends' since her time, he said, 'but they have been quite a different thing'.<sup>55</sup>

Dodgson's life, with the exception of his unlikely trip to Moscow in 1867, was lived at the heart of upper-middle-class England, anchored to Christ Church, Oxford. From this base, he kept an eye on his many unmarried, stuttering siblings, who went to settle in Guildford after their father's death, and took long seaside holidays, first on the Isle of Wight, then at the more respectable Eastbourne, where he could indulge his passion for other people's young daughters. During the rest of the year, he took regular trips to London, to photograph the famous, visit family and friends, and pursue his main cultural interests by visiting theatres and galleries. As with photography, however, his cultural

interests too revolved almost exclusively around little girls. He enjoyed their company, and regularly took them to plays and pantomimes, art galleries and exhibitions, where he was particularly interested in viewing other girls on stage or in the picture frame. His taste in theatre was largely determined by his taste for child actresses -- like Ellen Terry -- and by the real or imagined taste of his child friends. He disapproved of music-hall and in Podsnappish vein told Marianne Richards, 'I have a dream of Bowdlerising Bowdler', that is, editing a Shakespeare that shall be absolutely fit for girls'.<sup>56</sup> He disapproved of Isa Bowman when she played morally questionable roles, and was a ceaseless campaigner to keep theatre free of any remote sexual innuendo or whiff of 'irreverence'.<sup>57</sup> Much the same can be said of the visual arts. Though he was a keen admirer of the Pre-Raphaelites, the views on art recorded in his diaries are largely confined to remarks about the beauty or otherwise of the children represented there. It was fortunate for him, in this respect, that Victorian painting catered so generously for his particular tastes -- had he been born in the heyday of Cubism or Abstract Expressionism, he would not have fared so well. Year by year, his diaries scrupulously record not only these visits to studios, galleries and theatres, but the list of child conquests made on trains, beaches and in other places of public amusement. Dodgson was the Casanova of the Victorian nursery. In 1863, he listed in his diary the names of 108 children (all girls) that were 'Photographed or to be Photographed', arranging them alphabetically (there were five Alicés, five Beatrices, six Constances and so on). His diaries year by year are a roll-call of conquests. Eastbourne 1877 was a particularly good year for cruising at the seaside ('I could, if I liked, make friends with a new set of nice children every day!' he wrote in August) and when he set off for Guildford in late September, he listed thirty-four children's names in his diary, all female.<sup>58</sup> He was writing *Euclid and His Modern Rivals* at the time. In 1879 he told the twelve-year-old Kathleen Eschwege, one of the many girls he met on trains: 'I am fond of children (except boys) and have more child friends than I could possibly count on my fingers, even if I were a centipede (by the way have they fingers? I'm afraid they're only feet, but, of course, they use them for the same purpose and that is why no other insects, except centipedes, ever succeed in doing *Long Multipli-*

*cation*'.<sup>59</sup> Dodgson's particular variation on Long Multiplication with little girls earned him Jean Cocteau's title of 'Impuñi Don Juan des naïves amours'.<sup>60</sup>

With the exception of his anomalous pursuit of this endless sequence of little girls, he led a thoroughly conventional, industrious and parochial life as a don in Oxford, and, after his father's death in 1868, as head of the largely unmarried Dodgson family (he had six unmarried sisters), now housed at Guildford. In addition to his children's books and comic verse, he published over 200 books and pamphlets, as Warren Weaver calculated.<sup>61</sup> These include over sixty popularizing works on mathematics and logic, from *Euclid and His Modern Rivals* (1879) to *Symbolic Logic* (1896); thirty or so devoted to games and puzzles, from *Croquet Castles*, devised for the Liddells in 1863, to *Lawn Tennis Tournaments: The True Way of Assigning Prizes* (1883) and his own *Game of Logic* (1886); a further fifty, taking part in quarrels and contentions at Christ Church, mostly revolving around disputes with the two reformers Jowett and Liddell (the most important of these being collected in *Notes by an Oxford Chiel* in 1874); and a further fifty or so on miscellaneous public subjects ranging from proportional representation, antivivisectionism (*Some Popular Fallacies about Vivisection*, 1875); to *The Stage and the Spirit of Reverence* (1888) -- one of the perennial bees in his clerical bonnet -- and a belated pamphlet, 'Resident Women Students' (1896), finally endorsing the principle of higher education for women, not at Oxford itself but in a separate women-only university.<sup>62</sup> Many of these ephemeral works cast some light on the mind-set which gave the world the Alice stories and are important for that reason, but it is doubtful that they would be read today were it not for the enduring appeal of the Alice books and *The Hunting of the Snark*.

Dodgson's great period was from 1862 to 1876, when he published his dark parodic nonsense epic, *The Hunting of the Snark*. 'Had he died in his mid-forties', one of his biographers reminds us, 'posterity would have lost much of C. L. Dodgson and little of Lewis Carroll'.<sup>63</sup> Even the ultimately misconceived *Sylvie and Bruno* was originally conceived between the two Alice stories. Dodgson resigned his mathematics lectureship in 1881, but stayed on as a Senior Student of his college, preferring to give occasional lectures on logic at girls' schools than teach

undergraduates. After retirement, he published his most ambitious book on logic, *Symbolic Logic*, in 1896; his one collection of serious poems, *Three Sunsets* (1893); and his most ambitious children's books, the two parts of *Sylvie and Bruno*, in 1889 and 1893. These were intended, he said, to combine the "innocent merriment" of childhood, with "thoughts . . . not wholly out of harmony with the graver cadences of Life."<sup>64</sup> Though *Sylvie and Bruno* has its place in the donnish tradition of romance-oriented children's writing that leads from George MacDonald to C. S. Lewis, it's largely unreadable and unread. Despite its dizzying experiments with time and interlocking narrative, the intrusive adult viewpoint of the narrative and the increasingly didactic preoccupations of the narrator prevent the huge contraption taking off. At its close, "not Sylvie's, but an angel's voice was whispering: "IT IS LOVE!"<sup>65</sup> Here, as throughout his last years, the graver cadences have taken over.

Dodgson became increasingly reclusive, "lonely", and moralistic, and, though he liked to dub himself the "aged aged man" (after the character in the song from *Through the Looking-Glass*) his work rate never slackened. Nor, despite his increasingly moralizing public persona, did his taste for the company of young girls, as can be seen in a characteristic letter of 1892:

For my old age I have begun to set 'Mrs Grundy' entirely at defiance, and to have girlfriends to brighten, one at a time, my lonely life by the sea: of all ages from ten to twenty-four. Friends ask, in astonishment, 'did you hear of any other elderly clergyman having young lady-guests in this way?' and I am obliged to confess I never *did*; but really I don't see why they shouldn't. It is, I think, one of the *great* advantages of being an old man, that one can do many pleasant things, which are, quite properly, forbidden to a younger man.<sup>66</sup>

In fact, he had been setting Mrs Grundy at defiance for years, and even as a much younger man doing just these things which he suggests are "properly" forbidden. He had given up nude photography in 1880, soon after Mr and Mrs Owen began to "condemn" this (to him) innocent pastime.<sup>67</sup> Once more the pages of the diary that record this crisis have been torn out.<sup>68</sup> In 1885, however, undeterred, he took up sketching young girls in the nude in the studio, and to commission pic-

tures of them from his artist friend Gertrude Thomson. Many of his late letters concern these interests in nude children, and in a letter to his sister Mary of 1893 he had to defend himself against "a good deal of utter misrepresentation" about all this. Rumours had continued to circulate. In another letter of 1893 he calls himself a "sentimental old fogey",<sup>69</sup> but quite how all this related to the Christian vision of Love in his sermons and at the close of *Sylvie and Bruno* is an open question. Nowadays, no doubt, the police and the Social Services would have become involved, but in general the families of his child friends appeared to raise no objections. He died in January 1898 in Guildford, working to the end on the proofs of *The Three Sunsets* and the second part of *Symbolic Logic*. After a small-scale family funeral, he was buried in a modest tomb in the churchyard there.

However we understand it, Dodgson's intense fascination with young girls is the prismatic anomaly at the heart of his life — and his two unparalleled masterpieces, the Alice books. Though he never matched their art or popularity again, they transformed his life, and the rest of it was lived in their shadow. Dodgson continued to take an obsessional interest in their fate until he died. He not only went on revising the lay-out and punctuation of the twin Alice books until 1897, when he produced his final corrected text, but he also published the MS facsimile of *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* in 1886; marketing the cheaper 'People's Edition' in 1887 to reach a wider audience, producing the embarrassingly awful shorter 'Nursery Alice' for younger children in 1890; kept an eye on translations into European languages; fostered stage adaptations, coached actresses who played Alice in the theatre, wrote "Alice" on the Stage for *The Theatre* in 1887, and revelled in a series of commercial spin-offs like Alice biscuit tins and umbrellas. Part of the reason for this was no doubt commercial — Dodgson was a shrewd business man — part of it was aesthetic — he loved to supervise and control every stage of the production of his works, and make them as near perfect as possible. More than this, however, I would guess that such activity linked him to his most creative moment, his literary birth as an author, his ever-multiplying audience of children, and the story's first listener and heroine, Alice Liddell.

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The story of the composition of Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is almost as well known as the book. Indeed it forms part of the story itself. If the character of the author has an intimate bearing on the book, so does the character of its first listeners, its setting and its heroine.

Most of the protagonists have left accounts of the origin and development of *Alice's Adventures*; but the most prominent of them is condensed in the opening poem of the book itself. The verse prelude or 'frame' poem anchors the text in the 'golden afternoon' when he first improvised it for three children in a boat on a river:

Thus grew the tale of Wonderland:  
 Thus slowly, one by one,  
 Its quaint events were hammered out—  
 And now the tale is done,  
 And home we steer, a merry crew,  
 Beneath the setting sun.

On this model the whole 'tale', though growing 'slowly', was hammered out on that one golden afternoon and was finished by the journey home that evening.

When they came to record their recollections of Dodgson after his death, two of the other passengers on the boat confirmed this miraculous tale of the tale. Canon Duckworth told his first biographer:

I was very closely associated with him in the production and publication of 'Alice in Wonderland'. I rowed *stroke* and he rowed *bow* in the famous Long Vacation voyage to Godstow, when the three Liddells were our passengers, and the story was composed and spoken *over my shoulder* for the benefit of Alice Liddell, who was acting 'cox' of our gig. I remember turning round and saying, 'Dodgson, is this an extempore romance of yours?' And he replied, 'Yes, I'm inventing it as we go along.' I also well remember how, when we had conducted the three children back to the Deanery, Alice said, as she bade us good night, 'Oh Mr Dodgson, I wish you would write out Alice's adventures for

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me. He said he should try, and he afterwards told me that he sat up nearly the whole night, committing to a MS. book his recollections of the drolleries with which he had enlivened the afternoon. He added illustrations of his own, and presented the volume, which used often to be seen on the drawing-room table of the Deanery.<sup>70</sup>

According to Duckworth's miraculously condensed account, Dodgson narrated the story one afternoon, wrote it all up that evening at a sitting, and presented it to the Deanery soon after.

Alice herself left two accounts, confirming the golden-afternoon story but also modifying it. She told Dodgson's first biographer:

I believe the beginning of "Alice" was told one summer afternoon when the sun was so burning that we had landed in the meadows down the river, deserting the boat to take refuge in the only bit of shade to be found, which was under a new-made hayrick. Here from all three came the old petition of 'Tell us a story', and so began the ever-delightful tale. Sometimes to tease us -- and perhaps being really tired -- Mr Dodgson would stop suddenly and say, 'And that's all till next time.' 'Ah, but it is next time', would be the exclamation from all three; and after some persuasion the story would start afresh. Another day, perhaps, the story would begin in the boat, and Mr Dodgson, in the middle of telling a thrilling adventure, would pretend to go fast asleep, to our great dismay.<sup>71</sup>

She elaborated on this in an article written with her son in the *Cornhill* during the centenary year of Dodgson's birth:

Nearly all of *Alice's Adventures under Ground* was told on that blazing summer afternoon with the heat shimmering over the meadows where the party landed to shelter for awhile in the shadow cast by the haycocks near Godstow. I think the stories he told us that afternoon must have been better than usual, because I have such a distinct recollection of the expedition, and also, on the next day I started to pester him to write down the story for me, which I had never done before. It was due to my 'going on and on' and importunity that, after saying he would think about it, he eventually gave the hesitating promise which started him writing it down at all. This he referred to in a letter written in 1883 in which he writes of me as the 'one without whose infant patronage I might possibly never have written at all.'<sup>72</sup>

She acknowledges, however, that both the poem and the Canon telescope the time of composition more than a little:

The result was that for several years, when he went away on vacation, he took the little black book about with him, writing the manuscript in his own peculiar script, and drawing the illustrations. Finally the book was finished and given to me. But in the meantime, friends who had seen and heard bits of it while he was at work on it, were so thrilled that they persuaded him to publish it.<sup>73</sup>

Alice Liddell (Alice Hargreaves by then), looking back nearly seventy years later, extends the timescale of writing but also of oral composition. On her account, the 'golden afternoon' was only one of a series:

As it is, I think many of my earlier adventures must be irretrievably lost to posterity, because Mr Dodgson told us many, many stories before the famous trip up the river to Godstow. No doubt he added some of the earlier adventures to make up the difference between *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice's Adventures under Ground*, which latter was nearly all told on that one afternoon. Much of *Through the Looking-Glass* is made up of them too, particularly the ones to do with chessmen, which are dated by the period when we were excitedly learning chess.<sup>74</sup>

Though we are bound to be a little sceptical about Canon Duckworth's turning his walk-on part into a starring role, there can be no question about Alice's role as heroine, audience and patron. Nevertheless, like most of the other accounts, Alice plays up her participation in the production of the whole thing, in this case also attributing most of the second book to stories improvised for herself and her sisters.

In "Alice" on the Stage, written in 1887, over twenty years after the event, Dodgson gives his own fullest account of the story:

Many a day had we rowed together on that quiet stream — the three little maidens and I — and many a fairy tale had been extemporised for their benefit — whether it were at times when the narrator was "in the vein," and fancies unsought came crowding thick upon him, or at times when the jaded Muse was goaded into action, and plodded meekly on, more because she had to say

something than that she had something to say — yet none of these many tales got written down: they lived and died like summer midges, each in its own golden afternoon until there came a day when, as it chanced, one of my little listeners petitioned that the tale might be written out for her. That was many a year ago, but I distinctly remember, now as I write, how, in a desperate attempt to strike out some new line of fairy-lore, I had sent my heroine straight down a rabbit-hole, to begin with, without the least idea what was to happen afterwards. And so, to please a child I loved (I don't remember any other motive), I printed in manuscript, and illustrated with my own crude designs — designs that rebelled against every law of Anatomy or Art (for I had never had a lesson in drawing) — the book which I have just had published in facsimile. In writing it out, I added many fresh ideas which seemed to grow of themselves upon the original stock; and many more added themselves when, years afterwards, I wrote it all over again for publication: but (this may interest some readers of 'Alice' to know) every such idea and nearly every word of the dialogue, came of itself.<sup>75</sup>

What is striking about Dodgson's account is his insistence on the automatism of it all, a founding state of dissociation comparable to psychoanalytic or Surrealist 'free association'. The story and the ideas 'came of themselves', he insists, without his conscious intervention or control. Though Dodgson reinforces the myth of the 'golden afternoon' of its origin, he identifies two other stages in its composition: firstly the manuscript stage completed for Alice soon afterwards and secondly ('years afterwards') the stage of writing up for publication. In all three stages, however, the narrative material is self-generating.

If we turn from these public and retrospective accounts of the genesis of *Alice's Adventures* to the evidence of Dodgson's diaries and letters of the time, we get a more detailed sense of its progress from improvised open-air children's story to published book. The 1862 diary entry for the day in question sets the scene but curiously doesn't mention storytelling at all:

July 4. (F). Atkinson brought over to my rooms some friends of his, a Mrs. and Miss Peters, of whom I took photographs, and who afterwards looked over my album and stayed to lunch. They then went off to the Museum, and Duckworth and I made an expedition up the river to Godstow with the three

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Liddells: we had tea on the bank there, and did not reach Christ Church again till quarter past eight, when we took them on to my rooms to see my collection of micro-photographs, and restored them to the Deanery just before nine.<sup>76</sup>

It was only the following February he annotated this on the opposite page:

On which occasion I told them the fairy-tale of *Alice's Adventures under Ground*, which I undertook to write out for Alice; and which is now finished (as to the text) though the pictures are not yet nearly done.<sup>77</sup>

On this evidence, the first written text of the *Adventures* was completed six months after the day the oral story was pulled spontaneously out of Dodgson's hat like the white rabbit with which it begins.

Dodgson's diaries record other incidents from before and after the 'golden afternoon', which find their way into the final text -- such as the visit to Nuneham on 17 June where Duckworth, Dodgson and the three girls got drenched (this resurfaces in the Pool of Tears episode, in which Duckworth and Dodgson feature as the Duck and Dodo and everyone gets soaked), and the game of croquet at the Deanery on 3 July which must have contributed to the Queen's croquet party in Wonderland. The story continued to evolve and grow after 4 July. On 1 August he mentions going to hear the children sing the song 'Beautiful Star', which is the source of the soupy parody 'Turtle Soup'.<sup>78</sup> On 6 August, a month after the 'golden afternoon', on another river trip to Godstow he records he 'had to go on with my interminable fairy-tale of *Alice's Adventures*'.<sup>79</sup>

It was not until 13 November, in fact, that he records the strictly literary genesis of the tale, the day after an embarrassingly frosty encounter with Mrs Liddell -- he had been 'out of her good graces' since the hushed-up showdown in June:

Began writing the fairy-tale for Alice, which I told them July 4, going to Godstow -- I hope to finish it by Christmas.<sup>80</sup>

In the diary, as in other accounts, Dodgson makes it clear the story was written for Alice, but there were other influences. In May he

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expressed his pleasure in Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* and on 9 July he records a meeting with George MacDonald 'on his way to a publisher with the MS of his fairy-tale "The Light Princess" in which he showed me some exquisite drawings by Hughes'.<sup>81</sup> These contemporary precedents must have encouraged Dodgson to think in terms of working up his own story for publication. If Alice eventually prompted him to think of writing it four months after the golden afternoon, the diaries offer a much less telescoped account of the shift from oral tale to writing than either Duckworth or Alice. They also suggest Dodgson was ripe for the suggestion.

According to the diaries he finished the MS of *Alice's Adventures under Ground* on 10 February 1863 and his illustrations for it on 13 September of the following year. He finally sent the book to Alice herself in November 1864. However, by this stage Dodgson was no longer thinking of the manuscript version as the end of Alice's adventures. By then he had fallen out with Mrs Liddell and was in very strained professional relations with the Dean. In fact after 25 June 1863 he was to see very little of Alice or her sisters<sup>82</sup> and when he encountered her in Christ Church quadrangle in May 1865, he noted 'Alice seems changed a good deal, and hardly for the better -- probably going through the usual awkward stage of transition'.<sup>83</sup> This was clearly a personally difficult period for Dodgson too. As his dearest 'child-friend' began to undergo the 'awkward' changes associated with puberty, he himself began to undergo their awkward effects upon himself -- and the aftermath of the break with the Liddells. By the time the MS was completed, Alice was already a figure from his past. Everyone had moved on a long way from the golden afternoon.

In October 1863 he met the future publisher of *Alice*, Alexander Macmillan, to arrange for some of Blake's *Songs of Innocence* to be printed for him. Soon, in December 1863, he was writing to Tom Taylor for an introduction to Tenniel:

Do you know Mr Tenniel enough to be able to say whether he could undertake such a thing as drawing a dozen wood-cuts to illustrate a child's book, and if so, could you put me into communication with him? The reasons for which I ask . . . are that I have written such a tale for a young friend, and illustrated

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it in pen and ink. It has been read and liked by so many children; and I have been so often asked to publish it, that I have decided on doing so.<sup>84</sup>

Greville MacDonald remembers his father George MacDonald being one of those Dodgson consulted and remembers himself, aged six, exclaiming 'there ought to be sixty thousand volumes of it'. 'It was our enthusiasm', he wrote, 'that persuaded our Uncle Dodgson . . . to present the English-speaking world with one of its future classics'.<sup>85</sup>

Dodgson was confident enough by late 1863 to pursue publication at his own expense and to apply to one of the foremost cartoonists of the day to illustrate it. As illustrations had played an integral part in his conception of the book from the start — even in the MS, the story begins with Alice asking 'where is the use of a book . . . without pictures or conversations?' — and as he had no confidence in his own draughtsmanship, he needed a pictorial collaborator. Tom Taylor having cleared the way, Dodgson met Tenniel in January and heard from him on 5 April 1864 that he consented to 'draw the pictures for *Alice's Adventures under Ground*'.<sup>86</sup> The stage was set for a classic double-act. Though there have subsequently been numerous brilliant illustrators of the Alice books — including Rackham, Peake, Dahl and Steadman — none have dislodged Tenniel's foursquare Victorian embodiments of Carroll's dream text.

Dodgson sent Tenniel the first slip for *Alice's Adventures* in May 1864, and one reason for the close bond between text and image is the tight control he exerted over the production of the book. Throughout the next year there was a close, often tense collaboration between writer and illustrator, until the appearance in June 1865 of 2,000 copies of the finished book printed by Clarendon Press for publication by Macmillan and Company. A special presentation copy was sent to Alice Liddell on 4 July, exactly three years after the legendary boat trip to Godstow. Soon afterwards, however, Tenniel expressed himself 'entirely dissatisfied with the printing of the pictures', and Dodgson decided to scrap it, ordering a total reprint and sending off the unbound sheets to D. Appleton and Company, New York, who issued the book in America in 1866. If he was dismayed by the cancellation of the first edition and what it cost him to withdraw it from circulation, he was more

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than satisfied by the second. Dated 1866 but actually published in November 1865, this second edition he found 'very far superior to the old, and in fact a perfect piece of artistic printing'.<sup>87</sup> It is an ironic token of Dodgson's perfectionism that what was effectively the first edition of his classic was in fact a second edition.

Reviews were not long in coming and, though mixed, were mainly highly favourable. *The Reader* on 18 November described it as 'a glorious artistic treasure', 'an antidote to a fit of the blues', and thought it 'sure to be run after as one of the most popular of its class'. On 16 December, the *Athenaeum*, however, wrote it off as a 'stiff, overwrought story' and the *Illustrated Times* as 'too extravagantly absurd to produce more diversion than disappointment and irritation'. It was not long, however, before the public were won over to Dodgson's book and Macmillan undertook the first of many republications during the author's lifetime.

By 1867, Dodgson was engaged in arrangements for French and German translations and by as early as August 1866 he was telling his publishers he had 'a floating idea of writing a sort of sequel to *Alice*'.<sup>88</sup> *Alice* had well and truly entered the public domain, but in a sense her adventures there had only just begun.

*Through the Looking-Glass* does not advertise its own origins in the same way as the first book. The prefatory poem harks back to 'the tale begun in other days', that is the moment *Alice's Adventures* was conceived rather than the new book. By representing the relationship with *Alice* so firmly in the past it hints at the break with the Liddells as well as establishing a new wintry tone to the story.

In February 1867, six months after first mooted the idea, Dodgson wrote to Macmillan saying he was 'hoping before long to complete another book about Alice'.<sup>89</sup> In 'Alice' on the Stage', Carroll claimed that both the Alice books were 'made up of bits and scraps, single ideas that came of themselves'. Nevertheless the essay confirms that the plot of *Wonderland* came to him on the trip to Godstow and became the magnet which attracted the 'bits and scraps' he subsequently added. *Through the Looking-Glass* had no such single narrative genesis; its twin structural ideas of the chess game and mirror journey appear to have come from different sources. Reminiscing from the distance of 1932,

Alice Liddell claimed the second book, like the enlarged *Wonderland*, was made up of the 'many, many stories' he had told them 'before the famous trip up the river to Godstow', 'particularly the ones to do with chessmen, which are dated by the period when we were excitedly learning chess.'<sup>90</sup> In that same year (1932) Dodgson's cousin Alice Raikes, also a child-friend from the 1860s, provided a rival account. She claimed it was she who had provided the inspiration for the idea of the mirror. While visiting his family in Onslow Square, where she also lived, Dodgson apparently called her over, saying 'You are another Alice. I'm fond of Alices. Would you like to come and see something which is rather puzzling?' She then followed him into his house and 'into a room full of furniture with a tall mirror standing across one corner'.

'Now', he said, giving me an orange, 'first tell me which hand you have got that in.' 'The right', I said. 'Now', he said, 'go and stand before that glass, and tell me which hand the girl you see there has got the orange in.' After some perplexed consternation, I said, 'The left hand.' 'Exactly', he said. 'And how do you explain that?' I couldn't explain it, but seeing that some solution was expected, I ventured, 'If I was on the *other* side of the glass, wouldn't the orange still be in my right hand?' I can remember his laugh. 'Well done, little Alice', he said. 'The best answer I've had yet.'

I heard no more then, but in after years was told that he said that this had given him his first idea for *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*, a copy of which, together with each of his other books, he regularly sent me.<sup>91</sup>

There is no record in his diary of Carroll meeting Alice Raikes before June 1871, by when the text was completed. As reported, his remark that hers was 'the best answer' he'd heard 'yet' suggests the mirror-game was a standard trick of Dodgson's and he never credited her directly with being his inspiration, even in her inscribed copy of the book. Incidentally, another correspondent to *The Times* in February the same year claimed *she* had furnished Carroll with the idea of the Red Queen turning into 'the Black Kitten' at the close.<sup>92</sup>

The three rival accounts of child friends' contributions to *Through the Looking-Glass* are now all part of the legend that has grown up around the composition of *Alice*. Though they have all come to acquire

gospel status in the Carrollian literature, it is worth bearing in mind that they all date from the year of the Carroll centenary over fifty years after its publication and need to be treated with a grain of salt. What is certain is that Alice Liddell, if not the 'onlie begetter' of the stories, remained their heroine – and inspiration. Though no longer in communication with her in person, Dodgson made arrangements to send her a presentation copy of *Through the Looking-Glass* 'with an oval looking-glass let into the cover'.<sup>93</sup> Behind the figure in the mirror of Tenniel's Alice, or in front of it in this case, stands the face of Alice Liddell.

The letters and diaries of the time tell us nothing about the details of composition, only glimpses of the timetable between conception and completion. By January 1868, after working on it in Ripon, he is asking Macmillan whether he can print a page or two of the new volume 'in reverse', which suggests that both 'Jabberwocky' and the idea of the looking-glass are settled.<sup>94</sup> In his diary for 8 April he refers to it as *Looking-Glass House* and on 1 November he confirms that he has finally signed up his reluctant illustrator. 'The second volume of *Alice* will after all be illustrated by Tenniel, who has reluctantly consented, as his hands are full: I have tried Noel Paton and Proctor in vain.'<sup>95</sup> By December the same year he is able to inform Macmillan that he will 'have a lot of MS ready'<sup>96</sup> to set up in proof for the new volume, and he tells a child correspondent that he hopes Tenniel will have the pictures done by the following Christmas. In fact, three more years were to pass before Tenniel, whose hands were indeed full, had completed the pictures and the book was ready for publication. In January 1869, he refers to it as *Behind the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, and it was not until March 1870 that Macmillan confirms the final title, endorsing '*Through*' as 'just the word'.<sup>97</sup> On 4 January 1871, he noted in his diary that he had 'finished the MS of *Through the Looking-Glass*' and on 13 January that 'nothing remains to be printed but the verses at the end', adding that 'the volume has cost me, I think, more trouble than the first, and *ought* to be equal to it in every way'.<sup>98</sup> In April, he records it 'lingers on though the text is ready'. The first copy of the finished book arrived on 6 December and on 8 December he was finally able to send copies to the Deanery and to await its reception in the wider world.

The success was instantaneous. There were over 7,000 advance orders and by the end of January 1872 it had sold 13,000 copies. Henry Kingsley wrote that it is the finest thing we have had since *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and, when he compared it to the earlier book, called it a more excellent song than the other.<sup>99</sup> The *Examiner* found the sequel 'hardly as good' as the original, but praised its 'wit and humour' and found it 'quite good enough to delight every sensible reader of any age'. The *Illustrated London News* of 16 December described it as 'quite as rich in humorous whims of fancy, quite as laughable in its queer incidents, as lovable for its pleasant spirit and graceful manner as the wondrous tale of Alice's former adventures underground'.<sup>100</sup>

If *Through the Looking-Glass* never won quite the same popularity as the earlier book and never attained quite the same place in most readers' hearts, it is none the less one of the most successful sequels in literary history. *The Hunting of the Snark* followed soon after and thereafter Carroll, though he continued to write for another twenty-five years, was never to produce anything of comparable inventiveness or resonance. What he found in *Wonderland* and through the *Looking-Glass* during the 1860s he was never to find again.

*Alice's Identity* near to the end of the book asks, "Who in the world am I? That's the great puzzle!"

In the opening chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* we are told Alice is 'fond of pretending to be two people'; but early in her shape-changing adventures she fears 'there's hardly enough of me left to make one comfortable person'. Wondering if she'd been changed in the night, she asks, "Who in the world am I?" In a book humming with puzzles, this is probably the greatest puzzle of all for Alice.

It is the question that the best novels and children's stories return to again and again. If the heroine is at one level the straight guy in a series of bizarre comic turns, at another her adventures compose a miniature *Bildungsroman* in nonsensical form. It is as if what Harold Bloom called 'the internalization of the Quest Romance' in Romantic poetry, with

its obsession with questions of identity, were rewritten as a utopian comedy of manners—a combination of Shelley's *Alastor* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The queerness of nonsense language and the bizarre rules and regulations the creatures try to impose on Alice tell us much about the terrifying arbitrariness of the world she has to operate in, but also about who she is. One of the great appeals of the Alice books is that, like Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle*, they dramatize the puzzling nature of identity in a world dominated by rules and rulers that remain obstinately unpredictable and indecipherable. In one of the early shape-changing scenes in *Wonderland*, Alice goes to a table to measure herself by it. There is a sense in which this is what is happening all through both narratives.

In fact, when Alice worries about her identity, she reveals herself to be very much a child of her time and class. In this she is like Alice Liddell, the daughter of the Dean of Christ Church, born into the heart of the English establishment, a well-educated upper-middle-class Oxonian girl, versed in good manners, good verse, and the rules of chess, cards and croquet.<sup>101</sup> Christ Church was the smartest Oxbridge college, where the Prince of Wales became an undergraduate in 1859, and Queen Victoria visited the Liddells in the Deanery in 1860. Not long after *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice was briefly involved with Prince Leopold (who'd attended her sister Lorina's wedding in 1874 and had been photographed by Dodgson), so that the royal scenario that pervades both stories reflects on her own social status, as well as on the romance conventions of fairy tales and the games of cards and chess she is caught up in. The fictional Alice measures herself by her superior knowledge and social status: "I'm sure I can't be Mabel for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh, she knows such a very little! Besides, she's she, and I'm I, and—oh dear, how puzzling it all is!" Her adventures test her sense of identity to the full. Her worries have something in common with those Elizabeth Bishop dramatizes in her searching autobiographical poem 'In the Waiting Room' about a young girl exactly Alice's age, who, looking into the mirror of other people, reflects on who she is herself. "Why should I be my aunt, or me, or anyone?" she asks.

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I said to myself: three days  
 And you'll be seven years old.  
 I was saying it to stop!  
 the sensation of falling off  
 the round, turning world  
 into a cold, blue-black space.  
 But I felt: you are an I,  
 you are an Elizabeth,  
 you are one of them!<sup>101</sup>

Alice's fall down the rabbit-hole induces a comparable identity crisis. The descent into the 'deep well' shakes all the assumptions of her waking self. When she tries to re-establish her poise by reciting the improving verses of Isaac Watts's 'How doth the little busy bee', the admirably industrious bee turns into a predatory crocodile with 'gentle smiling jaws.' Having travestied the pious hymn, she fears she must be Mabel after all: "I shall have to go and live in that poky little house, and have next to no toys to play with, and, oh, ever so many lessons to learn! No, I've made up my mind about it: if I'm Mabel, I'll stay down here!"

When the White Rabbit takes her for a 'housemaid' soon afterwards, Alice exclaims, "How surprised he'll be when he finds out who I am." Whoever she is, she couldn't be one of the servant classes in a 'poky little house'. Hers is a world of governesses, school-rooms, middle-class etiquette, tea-parties, croquet lawns, visiting royalty, and querulous pedants — just like Alice Liddell's (and Dodgson's own). By and large those she meets in her adventures are upper and middle class too; with the exception of the Rabbit's stage-Irish gardener, Hattan and Haigha and a few other bit-part players with vaguely cockneyfied voices, the creatures generally speak what Alice calls 'good English'. As I hope the notes to this edition show, Dodgson constructed Alice's dream worlds out of the details of Alice Liddell's actual environment, and did so with something of the meticulous literalism of contemporary paintings such as Ford Maddox Brown's *Work*, Frith's *Derby Day*, or the domestic genre scenes of painters admired by Dodgson, such as Arthur Hughes and Millais. Tenniel therefore proved an inspired

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choice of illustrator for Alice and her world. His graphic idiom, however fantastic and allegorically grotesque, is as pedantically referential as an exhibition catalogue of Victorian social types, settings, furniture and costume — just like Dodgson's own. When Alice travels underground and through the glass, it is not only her unconscious dream world that she finds — but Victorian England, and the world of the Oxford establishment she shared with Dodgson.

Alice's unconscious parody of Watts's hymn about the busy bee invokes not Protestant industry and moral purposiveness, but a crocodile's 'jaws' and 'claws', and William Empson has pointed out how high a proportion of the jokes, poems and parodies in the Alice books hinge upon death and eating. The secure domestic order of Alice's moral universe is exposed to reveal terror and appetite. 'Wonderland' sounds Edenic, as do many of Dodgson's accounts of childhood, but the world of the stories is grim as well as comic. There's a 'lovely garden' there but also a 'pool of tears'; nature in Wonderland is more akin to Tennyson's 'Nature red in tooth and claw' than Wordsworth's 'fair seed-bed'; it's overshadowed by the fear of death and extinction (think of the Dodo), and reverberations of the Darwinian debate about evolution that had taken place in Oxford in 1859–60. The Wonderland garden is no childhood Eden, but a life-and-death croquet match presided over by a homicidal Queen shouting 'Off with their heads' every second minute. Faced with all this random violence and competitiveness, Alice notes "they're dreadfully fond of beheading people here", "the great wonder is there's anyone left alive". Even Alice herself, when she gets to the 'lovely garden' is taken to be a marauding snake (a 'serpent') by the outraged maternal Pigeon of Wonderland, not a 'human child' (she inspires comparable terror in the fawn of *Looking-Glass* as soon as they leave the wood of no names): "We're all mad here", says the grinning Cheshire Cat; the Carrollian grin, like the crocodile's, reveals a disconcerting madness and violence at the heart of its order — both the 'natural' order of the garden, and the legal order of the Trial, with its travesty of justice. In all this, Alice emerges as the book's nonsensometer (she dismisses the court's verdict as 'stuff and nonsense'), and, as much as any Jane Austen heroine, its intellectual conscience. Sense-making is imperative in this world, but it's a lonely business.

deaths and eating

In the ~~tonally bleaker, more~~ elegiac *Through the Looking-Glass*, the winter sequel to the ~~Maytime~~ trip to Wonderland, Alice's sense of self hardens in the ~~colder, more political climate~~ she finds six months later behind the glass. The ~~air grows cold in~~ the region of mirrors. The looking-glass, like Keats's 'magic casement', leads into the world of Victorian medievalism and the 'dark wood' of Spenserean Romance, albeit in a comically warped form. It is a world where modern railways, newspapers and postal systems interlock with Quixotic knights, lions and unicorns. It is ~~dominated by political battling~~ – the competing Kings and Queens, the ~~battling Tweedle~~ brothers, the Lion and Unicorn, the ~~White and Red Knights~~, and the ~~political~~ images of Gladstone and ~~Disraeli in the~~ railway carriage. In the carriage, as in the shop, wood and palace, Alice's attempts to decipher the world around her become more critical and anxious. Even the garden of live flowers offers a pricklier, colder pastoral than that of Wonderland, as can be seen in the less than rosy world-view of the Rose Alice chats to:

"You're beginning to fade, you know—and then one ca'n't help one's petals getting a little untidy."

Alice didn't like this idea at all: so, to change the subject, she asked "Does she ever come out here?"

"I daresay you'll see her soon," said the Rose. "She's one of the kind that has nine spikes, you know."

"Where does she wear them?" Alice asked with some curiosity.

"Why, all round her head, of course," the Rose replied. "I was wondering *you* hadn't got some too. I thought it was the regular rule."<sup>102</sup>

Against the ~~cruel pathos of seeing the seven-and-a-half-year-old~~ Alice as a fading flower, the Rose presents adulthood with a certain grim realism. She is referring to the ~~Red Queen~~ with her spiky chess crown ('the ~~essence of all~~ Governesses', as Dodgson called her),<sup>103</sup> and the Queens as representatives of the queenliness Ruskin ascribed to all women, are at best a grisly duo – the one all bossiness and bile, the other all slovenliness and resignation, the one manically over-assertive (like Humpty Dumpty and the Tweedles), the other ineffectually depressive (like the gnat and Knight). In the chess world of *Through the Looking-Glass* it seems to be the regular rule that creatures (even the

two bona fide children, the Tweedles) protect themselves by a rather acerbic style of conversational prickliness; though they tend to be sticklers for their own rules and regulations, their style is domineering and their order profoundly irrational.

Despite this, Alice, who starts out as a pawn in the game, 'would like to be a Queen best'. These Queens are not like the idealized stereotypes envisaged by Ruskin in his tract on women's education, 'Of Queens' Gardens', but studies in power and powerlessness. However well-mannered Alice may be, she aspires to be a Queen too, and a powerful one, and as the story draws towards a close, she aspires towards an impressive vision of feminine autonomy in the face of the bullying she faces on all sides.

When Tweedledum says she is only part of the Red King's dream and isn't real, Alice retorts "I am real!" and begins to cry. Though she succumbs to tears, she is able to argue her corner ("If I wasn't real . . . I shouldn't be able to cry") and attempts to dismiss the disconcerting Berkleyan idealism of the Tweedles as 'nonsense'. Still, faced by the dark wood, the battling philosophical twins and the monstrous crow, she keeps her composure as best she can. When she meets that arrogant egghead Humpty Dumpty, who murderously advises her to 'Leave off at seven', she comes out with one of the great defiant lines of nineteenth-century childhood literature (not unlike *Oliver Twist's* 'I want some more'): "I never ask advice about growing". After the battle between the Lion and Unicorn, she says, "I do hope it's *my* dream"; "I don't like belonging to another person's." Later, after the shambolic battle between the two knights which the White Knight calls a 'glorious victory', she affirms her freedom with characteristic defiance, "I don't want to be anybody's prisoner. I want to be a Queen." Having shown admirable kindness and good humour towards the absent-minded quixotic Knight, she eventually gets her crown, but this isn't the end of her subjection to the bossiness endemic in Carrollian nonsense. She immediately finds herself peppered with regal advice by the other Looking-Glass Queens and finds she really doesn't like 'being found fault with so much'. Eventually, when she rises to give a speech at her coronation banquet, and the tediously formal dinner-party breaks up into pandemonium, she cries out with her most

powerful blast of self-assertion; "I can't stand this any longer!"—thus freeing herself from the game, the dream and the mirror. Though she 'wins' her crown and the game, it seems she outgrows both at the very moment when the dream of being a Queen is realized and found to be as nightmarish as her time as a child and pawn.

Though Dodgson inherits the first generation of Romantic poets' sense of childhood (Humpty Dumpty's 'glory' recalls Wordsworth's as does the opening poem of *Looking-Glass*) and the second generation's interest in romance and dreams, his own 'dream-child' pursues her quest through a world which is as profoundly social as that of Jane Austen. In the frame poems of each book, and in the account he gives in "Alice" on the Stage, the author writes as if Alice travels to some fairyland of pastoral childish innocence. As Isa Bowman noticed, however, Dodgson himself 'cared for neither flowers nor animals',<sup>194</sup> and the language of *Wonderland* is a product of culture, not nature. In it Alice is confronted by grave travesties of most of the institutions which govern her and her author's life — the monarchy, the rule of law, education, grammar and social etiquette. So, after the fall and bodily metamorphoses of the opening chapters of *Wonderland*, Alice is caught up first with a Caucus Race, with wild animals (a parody of competitive 'natural selection' and democratic procedure), then the fussy domestic life of a fastidious bachelor rabbit (complete with maid and gardener). Having discussed growth and reproduction with a caterpillar and pigeon, and madness with a brainy disembodied cat, Alice finds herself in the more complex rituals of Wonderland society: first the endlessly rotating Mad Tea Party, with its parodies of a parlour-song recital, children's story (as told by the dormouse) and tea-time etiquette; then the shambolic royal Croquet Game, with the Queen, her courtiers and minions all flaunting the rules of that popular new middle-class game (regularly played by the Liddells on the Deanery lawn); and playing havoc with the garden; then, to cap it all, the Mock Turtle and Gryphon's nostalgic Old Boys' duet about their schooldays. The Mock Turtle and Gryphon are two highly artificial creatures, fathered not by biology but language, and their mournfully punning chronicle of distant school-days recollected in tranquillity parodies not only the established curriculum of private education in the public schools of the day,

but the entire educational system based on 'reeling and writhing'. There's a particular pungency in the allusions to classical 'Laughing and Grief' (Latin and Greek, but also the classical genres of comedy and tragedy), since these were intimately associated with Alice's father, Dean Liddell, co-author of the famous Greek lexicon used in schools. "How the creatures order one about, and make one repeat lessons"; Alice observes, "I might just as well be at school at once": The Gryphon and Mock Turtle are parodic products of the education system they romanticize so tearfully; just as their performance of 'The Lobster Quadrille' is a galumphing parody of fashionable ballroom dancing (an institution that played a positively Darwinian role in the struggle of nineteenth-century girls for suitable husbands). Nonsense thrives on travesty of authority, and Alice's last view of Wonderland is the absurd court scene, where the Knave of Hearts is accused of stealing tarts, and tried before a court dominated by an incompetent King, tyrannical Queen and abject jury. The nonsense theatre of Wonderland, with its haywire kings and queens, comes to a climactic finale in this finely tuned satire on the social order. It offers a deadpan comedy of (bad) manners.

The social world of *Through the Looking-Glass* is dominated by the nominal kings and queens of chess; and is, if anything, more systematically constricting than that of the earlier book. It begins in an untidy Janus-faced version of the *haute bourgeoisie* drawing-room of Alice's home; peopled by quarrelling kings and queens; but soon moves into another garden, a caricature of the lush flower garden evoked by the disappointed lover in Tennyson's *Maud* and part of a wider landscape which is modelled, not on any natural or picturesque order, but on a geometrically mapped-out chessboard. This may seem less anarchic than *Wonderland* but it's no less threatening as a mirror of modernity. 'It's all a great game of chess that's being played — all over the world'; we are told, where it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place! as the Red Queen says, and where people in the railway-carriage think (in chorus) that 'time is worth a thousand pounds a minute', and 'a thousand pounds an inch'; and language 'a thousand pounds a word'. In the 'Looking-Glass Insects' episode where she takes the train, Alice is caught up as a cypher in the communication

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networks of Victorian England. She has to produce a ticket to validate her travel, but is told she could as well be sent by luggage, telegraph or post (since, like a stamp, she had a head on her) and gets classified in terms of ticket-offices, alphabets and (in a chapter about names) her name. Throughout all this, she is confronted by two imposing male figures who in Tenniel's drawing look suspiciously like the two politicians who dominated parliamentary politics at this time, William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli (the latter appropriately dressed in paper and reading a newspaper). She is also subjected to aggressive public scrutiny.

All this time the Guard was looking at her, first through a telescope, then through a microscope, and then through an opera-glass. At last he said "You're traveling the wrong way," and shut up the window, and went away.

Alice's progress, as befitting a pawn in the game of chess, is made through a series of bewilderingly abrupt and involuntary jumps from place to place and from time to time. Despite the projections of the modern political order of Victorian Britain that shape so much of the looking-glass world, and those archetypal modern settings, the train and the shop, *Looking-Glass* is haunted by the past—in disconcertingly parodic, nonsensical forms. "Jabberwocky," the first poem Alice encounters, is a telegraphic *reductio* of a dragon-slaying northern epic, and after her railway journey Alice finds herself in the wood of no names—an eerie place where she loses her own name ("and who am I?" she wonders) and, during her brief Pan-like communion with the Fawn, her identity as a human child. Though she recovers her name, she isn't out of the wood yet. The bulk of the rest of her journey is set against the backdrop of a dark forest that is a legacy of both Spenserian romance and German fairy tales. It is there that she meets a series of characters from traditional nursery rhymes<sup>105</sup>—Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Lion and the Unicorn and Humpty Dumpty—and the White Knight, a sad quixotic figure who is both an eccentric inventor (like Dodgson) and a travesty of the heroic Pre-Raphaelite medievalism of Rossetti, Morris and the Laureate's *Idylls of the King* (Tenniel's frontispiece illustration of the White Knight guys the lumbering pictorial medievalizing of Sir Isambard at the Ford in the same

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vein). *Through the Looking-Glass* has some affinity with the Gothic revivalism of Pugin's Houses of Parliament and, nearer home for Dodgson, the fake antique frescos recently designed for the Oxford Union, but revels in its own nonsensical anachronism. Even as the book takes us through the iconography of the chivalric and royal past—Humpty Dumpty characteristically assumes Alice has read about him in a *History of England*, and the Lion and the Unicorn survive in the royal coat of arms—its conversational style, manners and tone are unmistakably modern. In *Through the Looking-Glass*, Tenniel dresses Alice in the newly fashionable hair-band and striped stockings of her time, and the author always presents her as a thoroughly contemporary girl. Though the story veers back and forth between past and present as dizzily as Twain's *Connecticut Yankee*, Alice's final coronation banquet is clearly represented in the text and illustrations as a Victorian dinner party, complete with decanters and soup tureens. The text ends with a *Dunciad*-like apocalypse of that hierarchical social world, as the story dissolves in Alice's final impatient gesture of revolt. "I can't stand this any longer!" she cried, as she jumped up and seized the tablecloth with both hands; one good pull, and plates, dishes, guests, and candles came crashing down together in a heap on the floor.

Alice's protest is against the irrational nonsense of the mad chess game she has dreamed she is part of—with its comic, but potentially threatening, dream logic. To re-establish her town identity and her faith in the real world of social conduct, she has to reject the awful travesty of proper social life played out by the Queens, Kings and subjects of the Looking-Glass world. Despite his subsequent canonization by the Surrealists, Dodgson was a Euclidean logician, a pious Christian and a political conservative, whose life was fanatically devoted to tidiness and order. Alice mirrors him in this. Nevertheless, it is possible to read her dream adventures as a protest against the world of governesses, teachers, bullies and pedagogues, and all the social rituals they impose on her. The hall-of-mirrors discovered in the Looking-Glass inevitably reflects back on the world of the Victorian drawing-room, school-room and play-room, and the ordinary assumptions of a comfortable middle-class childhood. This side of the mirror had to bring with it a certain

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'Who dreamed it?' asks the last chapter, and the book's dream-realism is clearly a reflection of the fictional Alice's waking world. It can also be read as a reflection of the real Alice Liddell's domestic universe, as I've suggested earlier. Beyond that, however, we can read the two books as reflexes of their author, Charles Dodgson, also of Christ Church. He appears to have so closely identified with his dream heroine that his problems of identity, of establishing coherent selfhood in the face of the violent changes inherent in human life and the disorder at the heart of the order, seem mirrored in hers.

*Looking-Glass* is much preoccupied by passing time, violence, ageing and death, as well as the potential for linguistic aberration and disorder discovered in *Wonderland*. The obsessively tidy Dodgson was acutely concerned by contemporary debates which threatened the established order. The dreams of Alice, that Oxford child, and her author abut on to the universe of mid-nineteenth-century Oxford, a place that considered itself with good reason to be at the centre of British intellectual life at the time. In *An Oxford Chiel*, published in 1874, only four years after *Through the Looking-Glass*, Dodgson published a series of highly political satirical squibs on university issues written over the previous nine years — about the new belfry commissioned by Liddell for Christ Church, the defeat of Gladstone as MP for Oxford, the salary and status of the Liberal Jowett (who was Professor of Greek and a notoriously 'heretical' contributor to the *Essays and Reviews* of 1861), the terms of Max Müller's professorship of comparative philology, among other burning issues of the time. Though Dodgson disclaimed making any such topical or political allusions in the Alice books, controversy is the very air breathed by the embattled creatures in both; Humpty Dumpty is the most belligerently radical of the many philosophers of language who haunt their pages, but the majority of the creatures Alice meets are comparably argumentative, and constitutionally prone to wrangle about the interpretation of words, names, rules and logic. We should remember that in between the two Alice books in 1869, Dodgson published one of his own most sustained exercises in academic controversy, *Euclid and His Modern Rivals*, a work intended to champion (and popularize) Euclidean geometry for a modern audience. It's a dramatic dialogue, featuring the ghost of Euclid, in which a modern mathemat-

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ics lecturer (ominously called Minos) and his antagonist Professor Niemand (the German for 'Nobody'), sit in judgement over thirteen rival theorists who challenge the secure order of Euclidean geometry which Dodgson wished to defend. In the disputatious world of *Wonderland* it is possible to hear echoes of such controversies, as well as the more stirring controversies aroused by the Oxford Movement, the Darwinian debate of the 1860s, Ruskinian aesthetics, Max Müller's brand of comparative philology and Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). In one of his Popean satires of the time, Dodgson ironically takes the Liberal side, warning readers to 'shun Conservatism's evil star' and affirm 'the march of Mind' against Oxford's 'wisely slow' traditional order, in which intellectual values were tempered by moral and Christian ones:

Neglect the heart and cultivate the brain —  
Then this shall be the burden of our song,  
'All change is good — whatever is, is wrong —'  
Then Intellect's proud flag shall be unfurled,  
And Brain and Brain alone, shall rule the world!<sup>106</sup>

Possible ripples and aftershocks of these ideological contests may be detected playing over and under the elusively nonsensical surface of the two children's books the conservative Dodgson wrote for the daughter of the Dean of Christ Church the christened 'the relentless reformer' Liddell.<sup>107</sup>

But if there are echoes of such contemporary debates, they are muted and indirect. The main focus of the two books is Alice's own consciousness, as she struggles to make sense of a world through the looking-glass that is more unstable, changeable and radically nonsensical than her author could acknowledge elsewhere. The 'innocent' language of nonsense associated with Alice, 'the child of [his] dreams',<sup>108</sup> gives expression to more things than are dreamed of in Dodgson's conscious philosophy — or his culture's dream of order.

5: *Decoding Nonsense, Decoding the Child*. When: the Red Queen, in one of the book's many 'knock-me-down arguments', makes the typically grand claim "I could show you hills in comparison with which you'd call that a valley"; Alice contradicts her: "a hill *can't* be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense." Not to be put down so easily, the Queen trumps her with: "I've heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary!" Alice rarely speaks nonsense — and rarely enjoys it when it's served up to her; if the readers laugh, the heroine almost never even smiles. Yet what Freud calls 'the pleasure in nonsense',<sup>109</sup> for Dodgson was part of the repertoire of childhood — or at least part of the repertoire of tricks, puzzles, games and jokes with which he amused and amazed his child friends. Freud associates the pleasure in nonsense with other infantile pleasures — with word-play, punning, oral thrills of all kinds — and it may be that there is a developmental logic in all this, whereby 'nonsense' signifies 'innocent' ways of thinking and feeling that are left behind when adulthood is attained. Yet Dodgson's interest in little girls is of questionable 'innocence', and the dream-worlds he devises for Alice, though free from obvious sexual feeling, are often highly disturbing, as many children and adults alike feel.

To see how Dodgson used nonsense in his relations with children, but not with adults, we could look at a group of letters, written in 1870, the year he completed *Through the Looking-Glass*. Two are to his sister Mary about her son's christening, written in his role as brother and clergyman. They show Dodgson at his most familial and serious. They are interspersed, however, with two very different letters to one of his little girlfriends, Edith Jebb, written in his role of children's entertainer. They neatly illustrate the split between the sensible and nonsensical selves of the author, a split that in almost diagrammatic fashion reproduces the more fundamental cultural split between adulthood and childhood.

First a note to his sister, written on 13 January:

My dearest Mary,  
I must write one line to *yourself*, if only to say — God bless you and the little one now entrusted to you — and may you be to him what our own dear mother was to her eldest son! I can hardly utter for your boy a better wish than that: Your loving brother,  
© L. Dodgson.<sup>110</sup>

This is a dutiful brotherly note, blessing the arrival of his nephew (and eventual biographer), little more. We might notice, however, the way Dodgson envisages the love of mother and son as a mirror image of his own relationship to his mother, and the way the letter (as such letters often do) foregrounds itself as a speech act: 'I must *write*', 'if only to *say*', 'I can hardly *utter*'. The nonsensical letter he writes to little Edith a few days later is very different, as you would expect — though in some ways more sophisticated:

My Dear Edith,

Did you happen to notice that curious-looking gentleman who was in the railway-carriage with me, when I left Doncaster? I mean the one with a nose in

this shape —  (I don't know any name for that sort of nose) and eyes

like this —  He was peeping with one eye out of the window, just

when I was leaning out to whisper 'good-bye' into your ear (only I forgot where your ear was exactly, and somehow fancied it was just above your chin), and when the train moved off he said, 'She seems to be VS: Y?' Of course I knew he meant 'Very sorry. Why?' So I said, 'She was sorry because I had said I meant to come again.' He rubbed his hands together for half an hour or so, and grinned from ear to ear (I don't mean from one ear to the other, but from one ear round again to the same) and at last he said, 'SSSS.' I thought at first he was only hissing like a snake, so I took no notice — but at last it crossed my mind that he meant 'She shows some sense,' so I smiled and replied, 'SSS' (meaning of course 'Sensibly said, Sir') but he didn't understand me, and said in a rather cross tone, 'Don't hiss at me like that! Are you a cat or a steam-engine? SS! I saw that this meant 'Silence, stupid!' and replied, 'S', by which you will guess at once that I meant to say 'Certainly.' All he said after that was,

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'Your head is MT,' and as I couldn't make out what he meant, I didn't say anything. But I thought I had better tell you all about it at once, that you might tell the police, or do anything else you thought ought to be done. I believe his name was 'HTIDE BBEJ' (isn't it a curious name?)...

Yours affectionately,  
Lewis Carroll<sup>111</sup>

In contrast to the letter to his sister signed 'C. L. Dodgson', over the signature of 'Lewis Carroll' the writer engages in the kind of extravagant but weirdly perverse nonsense that characterizes so many of his letters to his child friends.

Like so much of Dodgson's nonsense, however, this is not only a nonsense letter but a letter *about* nonsense. The gags depend on questions of naming and intending, and involve implausible acts of encoding and decoding. It begins with a joke about a nameless sort of nose and then an innuendo-style allusion to Dodgson's kissing another orifice — this time renamed — the girl's mouth, which is here represented in code by the whispered good-bye into an 'ear' which is 'just above [her] chin'. What follows is an absurd dialogue between the two men about what the girl's behaviour means, conducted entirely in terms of single letters which are presumed to stand for unsaid, but implicitly understood, sentences. The comedy turns on verbs of construing and interpreting: 'I know he meant', 'meaning of course', 'I couldn't make out what he meant', and so on. Dodgson turns his farewell to the girl on the train into a kind of everyday hermeneutic farce based on the idea of imputed, concealed and deciphered meanings, meanings that are attributed to the hissing sound (or letter) 'S'. We are close here to the strange idea Dodgson expresses elsewhere of an innocent conversation in ordinary English which might mean something 'horrendous' in another language.<sup>112</sup> The crotchety tone of the interlocutor ('HTIDE BBEJ') is reminiscent of the querulous creatures Alice encounters on her adventures, and what is satirized here is the confidence of both parties that they know what the other means. The letter writer is told his head is 'MT', but whether this language is 'empty' or 'full' of significance remains in question. The joke about telling 'the police' at the end declares this is all innocent fun but also tellingly

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invokes the idea of guilt and the law. What fascinates Dodgson in all this is the idea of nonsense as a code, a secret language which in the letter is that which he shares with his reader 'Edith Jebb', but which depends on meanings which they cannot fully share and which remain indecipherable, held in brackets as it were, like the interpretations of the code offered by the writer of the letter.

This is to make heavy weather of some light-hearted playing about but the joke letter makes light of some complicated interpretative manoeuvres and shows us something on which the Alice books depend: Dodgson's assumption that children are interested in the comedy of meaning itself.

Having sent off another letter to his sister, praying for 'present and future blessings' for her son at his baptism, he writes a second note to Edith, addressing her as 'My poor dear puzzled child'.

I won't write you such a hard letter another time. And can't you really guess what the gentleman meant when he said, 'Your head is MT'? Suppose I were to say to you, 'Edith my dear! My cup is MT.' Will u B so kind as 2 fill it with T? Shouldn't you understand what I meant? Read it loud and try again.<sup>113</sup>

We all switch linguistic registers and degrees of seriousness in our conversation and letters, especially when we shift between addressing adults and children. Nevertheless the switch in Dodgson's case is marked to an unusual degree and plays a structural role in the way he organized his life and writings. In his letters to his sister we hear the don and clergyman, in those to Edith and other child friends we hear the author of *Alice*, the puzzling creator of games and dreams for a 'dear puzzled child'. The cup is MT is relatively easy to decode, but the 'sense' of the apparently 'empty' letters has to be deciphered on quite different lines to those required to decode 'SSSS' in the earlier letter; they aren't a phonetic pun but a series of initial letters which the letter writer construes as abbreviations for utterly disparate terms. At the end, after some jokes about the exchange of letters between them, Dodgson asks Edith for her other names, so that he will make a monograph for her 'for writing all the initials at once', — another play on isolating initial letters and devising new patterns for them. This, of course, is one of

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Dodgson's specialities, as his many acrostic verses on the names of child friends illustrate — not least, the final poem of *Through the Looking-Glass*, where the initial letters of each line spell the full name of Alice Pleasance Liddell. The letter is partly about letter writing in the usual sense — a subject that preoccupied Dodgson who later published 'Eight or Nine Wise Words About Letter Writing' to accompany the *Wonderland Stamp-case* in 1888<sup>114</sup> — it is largely taken up with the writing of alphabetical letters (such as 'MT') as a code for other things. Such empty play is obviously full of meaning for the figure who signs himself in one letter 'Yours affectionately, Lewis Carroll', and in the other with another abbreviation, 'Ever yours affely, C. L. Dodgson'. My reading of the letter is undoubtedly pedantic, but so was Dodgson, as Oxford don and children's writer too. Making a 'dear child' puzzled was a central thread in Dodgson's puzzling relationships with children, and clearly this is central to the Alice stories. It is Alice's combination of curiosity ('curiouser and curiouser' indeed) and puzzlement which offers the reader a mirror through which to read the nonsense she encounters. Quite as much as Maisie in Henry James's *What Maisie Knew*, Alice is engaged in a quest to interpret and master the complex and strange phenomena of the largely adult world she encounters — there are no other children in her dream. What Alice knows, and how she interprets it, holds centre stage, giving her a paradoxical intellectual authority. In his letter to Edith Jebb, as apparently in many of his relationships with children, Dodgson engineers a semantic equivalent of a sado-masochistic relationship between himself as powerful adult creator of puzzles and the 'poor dear puzzled girl' who encounters them. Yet in the books, where variations of the same scenario occur in every episode, the same psychic economy produces a different psychological (and literary) effect. The adults in the stories — the March Hare, the Duchess, Humpty Dumpty and the Red Queen — are, for all their bossiness and superiority, shown up as perverse and childish weirdos, recognizable contemporaries of Dickens's Quilp, Scrooge, Miss Havisham and Mr Dick. In creating Alice's dream, and making it the centre of the books, Dodgson found not only a fertile channel for his genius for nonsense, but transformed the ways it might be meaningful. Alice, even as a seven-year-old, emerges as more than

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equal to her intellectual as well as social adventures, more than equal too to bullying interlocutors such as Humpty Dumpty, the first bona fide philosopher of nonsense. His presumptuous boast: "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean" provokes Alice's retort, "The question is whether you *can* make words mean so many different things." Not to be fazed, Dumpty replies, "The question is which is to be master — that's all."

The Alice books mean 'many different things'; as the huge critical literature they have inspired makes clear, but Alice's struggle for mastery and meaning is at their centre. This is clear from the vertiginous start of *Wonderland*, where Alice, inspired by her curiosity (that key word in the book), follows the rabbit underground. During the fall down the 'deep well' Alice sees cupboards and bookshelves flash by, maps and pictures hung up on pegs, and neatly labelled jars (one marked 'ORANGE MARMALADE'). As she falls, she calls up snippets learned in geography 'lessons in the school-room'; and enjoys the consolations of 'nice grand words to say' like 'Latitude or Longitude'. At the end of the dreamily time-suspended fall, she comes to earth with a 'thump' on a 'heap of sticks and dry leaves'. Maps, pictures, labels, words: Alice's free fall takes her through the models of linguistic order she has learned at home and in the school-room. In her dream adventures, such tools cease to offer stability yet they are never lost sight of, and the world she travels through is always composed of language.

Comically transfigured, it is nevertheless built out of the familiar, educational and social world of a middle-class child of her time. The playing-cards and chess-pieces which provide the narrative coherence for her dreams have no supernatural or magical dimension: they are part of familiar rule-bound household games (despite the label 'fairy tale', there are no fairies or supernatural powers in the Alice books, such as you find in the children's fiction of those other religious dons, George MacDonald and C. S. Lewis). Alice clings on to her received codes even as they are put under pressure from all sides; she keeps her composure as best she can, as she travels through the discomposed linguistic halls of mirrors which are her dreams. As she says to the discouragingly moralistic Ugly Duchess, "I've a right to think!"

Dodgson was a logician with a taste for children, and he brings his

professional thinking about questions of meaning to bear upon his fascination with childhood. The result is a 'fairy tale' about a seven-year-old which is not only an adventure story but a philosophical joke-book; a mixture of genially grotesque pantomime and surreal Socratic dialogue. Despite the mind-bending series of jokes about language and logic, however, this is not a philosophical *divertissement*, disguised as a children's book, and if Alice is subjected to perverse logical jokes, the joke is never on Alice. "You shouldn't make jokes", Alice tells the gnat, "if they make you so unhappy", and the jokes other creatures tell — she makes none herself and she doesn't generally seem to find other people's very funny — don't make her happy either. They do, however, enlarge her, and our sense of the possible ways the world and words have meaning. Dodgson's genius was to make the construction of meaning an intrinsic part of the narrative of the child's dream experience. Like later books, such as *The Gnat's Logic* in its different way, they assume that the idea of meaning is meaningful to children. The publication of the Alice books marks a watershed in the literature about childhood, as well as children's literature. For all their originality, they are a product of a culture with a huge and developing investment in the idea of childhood. Childhood had begun to play an increasing role in adult fiction of the period: Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837), *Dombey and Son* (1848), *David Copperfield* (1850) and *Great Expectations* (1861) all played a large part in colonizing modern childhood for literary representation. During the same period a new literature for children rapidly developed. In the 1820s Taylor's translation of the Grimm brothers' *Household Tales* acted as an 'open sesame', and Lewis Carroll's thoroughly 'modern' transformation of the traditional 'fairy tale' in the Alice books is part of a much broader development of writing specifically directed at children in the Victorian period, much of it associated with the major writers of the time. Edward Lear's *Book of Nonsense* had appeared in 1846, Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 and Thackeray's pastiche fairy tale *The Rose and the Ring* in 1854, all of which helped clear the way for Carrollian nonsense.<sup>115</sup> Dodgson gave the Liddell girls a copy of Catherine Sinclair's *Holiday House* for Christmas in 1861, read Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* when it came out

in 1862 and the MS of his friend George MacDonald's 'exquisite' 'Light Princess' in the same year, while 1863 was the year *The Water Babies* of Charles Kingsley appeared (Dodgson met him in 1869). MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) appeared the same year as *Through the Looking-Glass*, and *The Princess and the Goblin* the following year. By the end of his life, Dodgson had collected a series of other books on the Alice model, as he notes in his diary:

Got *Mabel in Rhymeland*, by Edward Holland, as part of the collection I intend making of books of the Alice type. Besides this, I have *From Nowhere to the North Pole* by young Tom Hood; *Elsie's Expedition* by F.E. Weatherly, and *A Trip to Blunderland*, by Jambo; and *Wanted — A King* by Maggie Browne. One more book I have added, *The Story of a Nursery Rhyme*.<sup>116</sup>

By the end of the century Twain, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Stevenson and Kipling had extended the scope of children's literature further; but Dodgson had every reason to be conscious of the importance of his own work in this development. The Alice books combine modern and 'romance' elements, psychology and comedy, in a highly original, liberating way that was at home with the real world of Victorian childhood on the one hand, and the kinds of meaning coded in fantastic fairy tales on the other, and had no truck with the ugly didacticism associated with the Ugly Duchess's 'Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it.'

This brings us back to the altercation between Alice and the Red Queen with which we began:

"I'm sure I didn't mean" — Alice was beginning, but the Red Queen interrupted her impatiently.

"That's just what I complain of! You *should* have meant! What do you suppose is the use of a child without any meaning? Even a joke should have some meaning — and a child's more important than a joke, I hope. You couldn't deny that, even if you tried with both hands."

The nonsense jokes, and the jokes about meaning in particular, get their resonance in the end because of the importance of the child's experience of the contestation of meanings in which she is caught up. Dodgson was frightened of the best sources of jokes — sex and

religion—and worked hard to keep his writings untainted by even the faintest humorous allusions to either; nevertheless the jokes the child Alice encounters make free with the most 'important' issues in her world:— food and the food-chain, growing and ageing, manners and madness, childhood and adulthood, freedom and rules, authority and identity.

It was only in the twinned Alice books, and in *The Hunting of the Snark* of the same period, that Dodgson found a medium to explore his puzzling temperament, with its anomalous investment in young girls and questions of meaning. In these works he transformed his perverse imagination into works of art that have not only survived their moment, but have gone on to generate new meanings with every generation of readers, enlarging the possibilities not only of children's literature, but all literature. As the countless subsequent interpretations, translations and adaptations show, Alice's adventures continue and are 'to be continued'.

## Notes

- 1 'The Lobster-Quadrille', *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, chapter 10; 'Queen Alice', *Through the Looking-Glass*, chapter 9.
- 2 *AAIW*, chapter 12.
- 3 *AAIW*, chapter 12.
- 4 *TLC*, chapter 1.
- 5 *AAIW*, chapter 12.
- 6 *TLC*, chapter 6.
- 7 R. L. Green, Introduction, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, Oxford, 1982.
- 8 William Empson, 'Alice in Wonderland: The Child as Swain', *Some Versions of Pastoral*, London, 1935.
- 9 Martin Gardner ed. *The Annotated Alice*, with an introduction and notes by Martin Gardner, Harmondsworth, 1965/1970.
- 10 On this, see Hugh Haughton, Introduction, *Chatto Book of Nonsense Poetry*, London, 1988; J. S. Atherton, 'Carroll: The Unforeseen Precursor', *The Books at the Wake*, New York, 1960; Michael Holquist, 'What is a Boojum? Nonsense and Modernism', *Yale French Studies*, vol. XLIII, 1970; Elizabeth Sewell, 'Lewis Carroll and T. S. Eliot as Nonsense Poets' in Nevillé Braybrooke ed. *T. S. Eliot*,

New York, 1958; Jeffrey Stern, 'Lewis Carroll the Surrealist' in Edward Guiland ed. *Lewis Carroll, Observed*, New York, 1976.

11 See Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan: or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*, London, 1984.

12 'Today's wonder-world needs Alice', *The New York Times Magazine*, 1 July 1962; reprinted in W. H. Auden, *Forewords and Afterwords*, ed Edward Mendelson, 1973, p. 291.

13 'The books are so frankly about growing up that there is no great discovery in translating them into Freudian terms; it seems only the proper exegesis of a classic even when it would be a shock to the author'. Empson, 'The Child as Swain', *Some Versions of Pastoral*, p. 203.

14 Virginia Woolf, 'Lewis Carroll', *The Collected Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf, vol. 1, London, 1966, pp. 254ff.

15 See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, 1979, for an historical account of the dominance of the mirror as a philosophical paradigm of truth. See also George Pitcher, 'Wittgenstein, Nonsense, and Lewis Carroll', *The Massachusetts Review*, VI (1965) for a discussion of Wittgenstein's reading of Carroll; Peter Heath, ed. *The Philosopher's Alice*, London, 1974; Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *The Philosophy of Nonsense: The Intuitions of Victorian Nonsense Literature*, London, 1994.

16 'Pig and Pepper', *AAIW*, chapter 6.

17 'Queen Alice', *TLC*, chapter 9.

18 Virginia Woolf, 'Lewis Carroll', *The Moments and Other Essays*, London, 1952.

19 Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*, London, 1898. For a selection of the many Lives of Dodgson, see under Biographical in Further Reading.

20 Collingwood, *Life*, p. 11.

21 Collingwood, *Life*, p. 11.

22 Isa Bowman, *Lewis Carroll as I Knew Him*, London, 1899; Reprinted, New York, 1972, p. 3.

23 Virginia Woolf, 'Lewis Carroll', *Collected Essays*, vol. 1.

24 Quoted in Bowman, *Lewis Carroll as I Knew Him*, p. 60.

25 'Faces in the Fire', *Three Sunsets and Other Poems* (1898), *The Complete Works*, ed. Alexander Woollcott, London, 1939, reprinted Harmondsworth, 1988, p. 875.

26 'Solitude', *Three Sunsets and Other Poems, Complete Works*, p. 861.

27 Quoted in Collingwood, *Life*, p. 30.

28 Donald Thomas, *Lewis Carroll: A Portrait with Background*, London, 1996, p. 60.

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- 29 For an account of the 'Rectory Umbrella', see Collingwood, *Life*, chapter 1. For reproductions of these family magazines, see Lewis Carroll, *The Rectory Umbrella and Mischmasch*, ed. Florence Milner, London, 1932; and the facsimile *The Rectory Magazine edited by Lewis Carroll*, Austin, 1975.
- 30 *The Diaries of Lewis Carroll*, 2 vols, ed. R. L. Green, London, 1953, vol. 1, p. 70.
- 31 'Solitude', *Complete Works*, p. 860.
- 32 *The Letters of Lewis Carroll*, 2 vols, ed. Morton N. Cohen, with the assistance of R. L. Green, London, 1979, vol. 2, p. 947.
- 33 *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 79.
- 34 Entry for 25 April 1856. *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 83.
- 35 *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 83.
- 36 Entry of 5 June. *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 86.
- 37 Michael Bakewell, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, London, 1996, p. 104.
- 38 Stuart Dodgson Collingwood quotes from the missing diaries frequently in Chapters 2 and 3 of his *Life*. The editor of the *Diaries*, R. L. Green, gives the family's account of their loss on pp. xi-xiii of vol. 1. Cohen discusses this in *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, London, 1995, pp. 46-7 and p. 100.
- 39 Diary entries for 27, 28 and 29 June, have been torn out. See Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p. 100.
- 40 Entry for 5 December 1866. *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 208.
- 41 *Complete Works*, p. 1038.
- 42 Letter to Alice (Liddell) Hargreaves, 1 March 1885. *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 561.
- 43 Thomas, *Lewis Carroll: A Portrait*, p. 149.
- 44 'Of being photographed he had a horror.' Bowman, *Lewis Carroll as I Knew Him*, p. 14.
- 45 *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 86.
- 46 *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 13.
- 47 *Complete Works*, pp. 861-3.
- 48 Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, pp. 203-5.
- 49 Letter to Lady John Manners of August 1878, quoted in Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p. 101.
- 50 Elizabeth Sewell argues that true nonsense depends on playful detachment from feeling ('insulation against emotion and dream'), and that when 'the heart is affected', as in Lear's lyrics and Carroll's *Hunting of the Shark*, the genre collapses, *The Field of Nonsense*, London, 1952, p. 135 and pp. 149-62. This is highly suggestive, but confuses method and function.
- 51 Introduction to *Pillow Problems Thought Out During Sleepless Nights*, 1893. Quoted in Florence Becker Lennón, *The Life of Lewis Carroll*, New York, 1972, pp. 108-9.

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- 52 Bowman, *Lewis Carroll as I Knew Him*, p. 37, p. 9.
- 53 William Tuckwell, *Reminiscences of Oxford*, Oxford, 1900, pp. 161-2.
- 54 Bowman, *Lewis Carroll as I Knew Him*, p. 21. See also the numerous recollections by other children in Morton N. Cohen ed. *Lewis Carroll: Interviews and Recollections*, London, 1989.
- 55 *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 561.
- 56 *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 457.
- 57 See for example 'The Stage and the Spirit of Reverence', *The Theatre*, June 1888. This is reprinted in *The Complete Works*, pp. 1102-10.
- 58 Entries for 20 August, 27 September 1877. *Diaries*, vol. 1, pp. 365-6.
- 59 Letter to Kathleen Eschwege, 24 October 1879. *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 351.
- 60 Quoted in Bakewell, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p. 345.
- 61 Warren Weaver, quoted in Thomas *Lewis Carroll: A Portrait*, p. 212.
- 62 See the 'Miscellany' section of *The Complete Works* for these, pp. 1009 ff.
- 63 Thomas, *Lewis Carroll: A Portrait*, p. 223.
- 64 Preface to *Sylvie and Bruno*, *Complete Works*, p. 257.
- 65 *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, *Complete Works*, p. 674.
- 66 *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 887.
- 67 For a fuller discussion, see Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p. 188.
- 68 Thomas, *Lewis Carroll: A Portrait*, p. 352.
- 69 *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 983.
- 70 From a letter from Canon Duckworth to Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, quoted in *The Lewis Carroll Picture Book*, ed. Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, London, 1889, pp. 358-60.
- 71 Collingwood, *Life*, p. 96.
- 72 'Alice's Recollections of Carrollian Days, as Told to her Son', *Cornhill Magazine*, 73, July 1932, 1-12, reprinted in Cohen, *Interviews and Recollections*, pp. 86-7.
- 73 Cohen, *Interviews and Recollections*, pp. 86-7.
- 74 Cohen, *Interviews and Recollections*, p. 84.
- 75 'Alice' on the Stage', *The Theatre*, 1887. See pp. 293-8.
- 76 *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 181.
- 77 Entry dated 10 February 1863, quoted in *Diaries*, vol. 1, pp. 181-2.
- 78 *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 185.
- 79 *Diaries*, vol. 1, pp. 185-6.
- 80 *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 188.
- 81 *Diaries*, vol. 1, pp. 176 and 184.
- 82 *Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 208.
- 83 *Diaries*, vol. 1, pp. 230-31.
- 84 *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 62.

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- 85 Quoted in Cohen, *Interviews and Recollections*, pp. 149-50.
- 86 *Diaries*, vol 1, p. 212.
- 87 *Diaries*, vol 1, p. 236.
- 88 *Lewis Carroll and the House of Macmillan*, ed. Morton N. Cohen and Anita Gandolfo, Cambridge, 1987, p. 44.
- 89 *Lewis Carroll and the House of Macmillan*, p. 48.
- 90 'Alice's Recollections of Carrollian Days', in Cohen, *Interviews and Recollections*, p. 84.
- 91 From a letter to *The Times*, 15 January 1932, in Cohen, *Interviews and Recollections*, pp. 196-7.
- 92 Cohen, *Interviews and Recollections*, pp. 197-8.
- 93 *Lewis Carroll and the House of Macmillan*, p. 84.
- 94 Letter of 24 January 1868, *Lewis Carroll and the House of Macmillan*, p. 58.
- 95 *Diaries*, vol 1, p. 275.
- 96 Letter of 9 December 1868, *Lewis Carroll and the House of Macmillan*, p. 73.
- 97 *Lewis Carroll and the House of Macmillan*, p. 85.
- 98 *Diaries*, vol 2, pp. 294-5.
- 99 Quoted in Collingwood, *Life*, pp. 142-3.
- 100 For a fuller account of Alice Liddell, see Anne Clark, *The Real Alice: Lewis Carroll's Dream Child*, London, 1981; and Colin Gordon, *Beyond the Looking-Glass: Reflections of Alice and her Family*, London, 1982.
- 101 Elizabeth Bishop, 'In The Waiting Room', *The Complete Poems 1927-1979*, London, 1983.
- 102 'The Garden of Live Flowers', *TLG*, chapter 2.
- 103 In "'Alice" on the Stage'. See p. 296.
- 104 Bowman, *Lewis Carroll as I Knew Him*, p. 73.
- 105 J. O. Halliwell, collector of *Popular Rhymes & Nursery Tales of England* (1849), a book owned by Dodgson, calls his prefatory essay 'Nursery Antiquities'. He argues there that 'the humble chap-book is found to be descended from medieval romance, but also not infrequently from the more ancient mythology; whilst some of our simplest children's rhymes are chanted to this day by children of Germany, Denmark and Sweden, a fact strikingly exhibiting their great antiquity and remote origin' (p. 1).
- 106 'The Elections to the Hebdomal Council', 1866-8, *The Lewis Carroll Picture Book*, pp. 88-9.
- 107 *The Works of Lewis Carroll*, ed. R. L. Green, Feltham, 1965, p. 950.
- 108 "'Alice" on the Stage'.
- 109 'Since the pleasure from jokes has the same origin - a core of verbal pleasure and pleasure from nonsense, and a causing of pleasure in the lifting of inhibitions or in the relief of psychical expenditure - this similar relation to

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- inhibition explains the internal kinship between the naive and jokes.' Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), trans. James Strachey, London, 1960, p. 185.
- 110 *Letters*, vol 1, p. 146.
- 111 *Letters*, vol 1, pp. 146-7.
- 112 'No word has a meaning inseparably attached to it; a word means what the speaker means by it, and what the hearer understands by it, and that is all. I meet a friend and say 'Good morning!' Harmless words enough, one would think. Yet possibly, in some language he and I have never heard, these words may convey horrid and loathsome ideas. But are we responsible for this?' 'The Stage and the Spirit of Reverence' (1887), *Works of Lewis Carroll*, p. 1105.
- 113 *Letters*, vol 1, p. 147.
- 114 *Works of Lewis Carroll*, p. 1075 ff.
- 115 Dodgson never refers to his fellow nonsense writer Edward Lear, but it is hard to think he was unaware of him, when literary acquaintances like Tennyson and Ruskin admired the children's writing of both.
- 116 11 September 1891, *Diaries*, vol 2, p. 486.