

Dreaming (and) Insanity: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* Through the Looking-Glass of Victorian Psychology

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Comparing Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) with medical essays found in Carroll's private library, this article argues that an examination of *Alice's Adventures* "through the looking-glass" of Victorian psychology can generate new perspectives of the novel. It demonstrates that Carroll's literary treatment of nonsense—illustrated by the characters' linguistic and cognitive incongruities, identity issues, forgetfulness, and altered perception of time—builds upon mid-nineteenth-century psychological investigations of the similarities between sleeping and madness. This article also shows that while little is known about the meanings that psychology and psychiatry bestowed upon the novel before the emergence of psychoanalysis in the 1930s, *Alice's Adventures* supplied Victorian writers of psychology with a means of illustrating their ideas. My exploration of the two-way influence between *Alice's Adventures* and Victorian psychology aims to shine a light on Carroll's representation of the madness that characterizes Alice's dreamworld of Wonderland. By likening Alice's behavior to that of the "mad" characters in the novel, Carroll portrays Wonderland as a place where childhood dreaming and adult insanity converge in their capacity to provide escape from dull, everyday reality into the absurdities of nonsense.

IT did not take long for Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) to become a classic work of children's literature. In the twenty years following its first publication, Carroll's fantasy novel appeared in various authorized and unauthorized editions in Britain and the United States while also being pirated and serialized in popular U.S. magazines and translated into such languages as French, German, Swedish, Italian, Dutch, Danish, and Russian. Its success also spawned numerous imitations, like Jean Ingelow's children's novel *Mopsa the Fairy* (1869). A review of *Mopsa the Fairy*, published in 1869 in the Chicago literary magazine the *Western Monthly*, points to *Alice's Adventures*' growing popularity in the anglophone cultural world. Perhaps more

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unexpectedly, it also reveals a tendency to interpret certain linguistic and narrative aspects of Carroll's novel as expressions of abnormal psychological conditions. The anonymous reviewer describes *Alice's Adventures* as a "fairy tale that has become household property," before claiming that *Mopso* is "just a little suggestive" of Carroll's novel.¹ Tellingly, this comparison is not centered on the similarities in the plot, in the fantastical worlds of Fairyland and Wonderland, or in the characters populating *Mopso* and *Alice's Adventures*. It focuses exclusively on the bizarre features of their style and language examined from a psychological perspective, juxtaposing the absurdities occurring in the (fictional) dreamworlds of *Mopso* and *Alice's Adventures* with those of (real-life) insanity:

There are certain unconscious resemblances between the two—the same odd transitions and queer way of putting things, so marked in "Little Alice" [*sic*]. This is particularly noticeable in Jack's dream, when charmed to sleep by little Mopso's story in the land of the "one-foot-one" fairies—that same wonderfully grotesque imagery, that stepping over into the realm of careless vagaries, which almost unpleasantly suggests insanity.²

The noun "insanity," with its contemporaneous medical and psychiatric connotations, serves to introduce the reviewer's negative assessment of one of the most distinguishable characteristics of Carroll's novel—namely, literary nonsense. The reviewer appears to be concerned that the nonsensical world of Wonderland may cause a disagreeable reading experience analogous, in its absurdity, to insanity, which is deemed incompatible with children's literature: "We consider this a decided blemish on 'Little Alice's Adventures,' but doubt whether it is marked enough to be censurable in 'Mopso.'"³ Significantly, the extensive and quasipathological representation of nonsense in *Alice's Adventures*, featuring much more prominently than in *Mopso*, results in the reviewer's preference for Ingelow's fantasy novel over Carroll's.

It should not be surprising that the anonymous reviewer of *Mopso* considered *Alice's Adventures* as a literary reproduction of the odd workings of the mind and the linguistic incongruities that typify states of sleeping and madness. Particularly from the 1850s onward, medical texts started to include discussions of psychological concerns such as the nature of dreaming, its relation to madness, and the mental processes of sleep talking, depersonalization, impairment of memory, and alteration of the sense of time. In the following pages, we shall see how these psychological issues as described in Victorian medical treatises influenced

Carroll's portrayal of Alice's dream of Wonderland and of the illogical behavior of the "mad" and sleeping characters in the novel, such as the members of the "Mad Tea-Party." Wonderland is a place where childhood dreaming and adult insanity converge in their capacity to provide escape from dull, everyday reality into the absurdities of nonsense: how, then, did Carroll represent the psychology of Alice's dreaming state and the madness of the Mad Tea-Party?

CARROLL AND THE MEDICAL SOURCES OF *ALICE'S ADVENTURES*

Carroll's connection to Victorian psychiatric and psychological circles has been well established in recent scholarship.⁴ The presence of medical texts concerning dreaming and insanity in Carroll's library has also been noted by scholars. In her discussion of Carroll's representation of Alice's dream-state as the narrative structure of the book, Stephanie L. Schatz claims that Carroll's library "suggests a particular interest in mental health and the science of mind as evinced by an extensive collection of psychological studies."⁵ While underlining the influence of these essays on Carroll, Schatz also points out the differences between the pathologization of child dream-states and waking dreams in psychiatry, considered as expressions of mental illness, and Carroll's depiction of daydreaming in *Alice's Adventures* as an example of healthy imagination in children.⁶ Schatz identifies Alice's dream with a reverie, used by Carroll as a metaphor for the creative power of childhood fancy: Alice's "adventures in Wonderland are more akin to a daydream than a deep slumber."⁷ A connection can certainly be drawn between Alice's dream and the imaginative mind of a child prone to fantasy and wonder, and indeed daydreaming does feature in the conclusion of the story, but it is not Alice who daydreams, as we will see. As Gillian Beer has observed, "Alice does not daydream, though she exists in a dream."⁸ A more literal interpretation of *Alice's Adventures* suggests that Alice's experience of Wonderland is not a waking reverie but a dream that she has while asleep. At the beginning of *Alice's Adventures*, before seeing the (talking) White Rabbit, Alice feels "very sleepy."⁹ The last chapter confirms the oneiric nature of Alice's visions of Wonderland: "'Wake up, Alice dear!' said her sister. 'Why, what a long sleep you've had!' 'Oh, I've had such a curious dream!' said Alice" (124–25). As Carroll himself confessed to Tom Taylor in a letter dated June 10, 1864, "The whole thing is a dream, but *that* I don't want revealed till the end."¹⁰ This is a literary device that also frames, among other Carrollian works of fiction, Alice's subsequent

adventures in *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871).¹¹ In her doctoral thesis that compares discourses on dreaming in Victorian psychology and fantastic literature, Franziska E. Kohlt also highlights the influence of contemporaneous psychological treatises on Carroll's representation of madness.¹² Kohlt interprets insanity metaphorically as the "moral hypocrisy" of the adult characters who attempt to educate Alice throughout the novel; according to Kohlt, Alice's satirical rendition of moralistic poems would expose this hypocrisy, making her gradually realize the madness that characterizes the didactic adult world and leading her, as a result, to a journey toward healthy psychological development.¹³

Contrary to Schatz's and Kohlt's analyses of *Alice's Adventures* that oppose madness to Alice's supposed mental sanity, this essay argues that Alice's oneiric behavior is an expression of the insanity typifying Wonderland that comprises the comportment of the adult characters of the novel, who are described as either—and occasionally both—mad or (and) sleeping. As will be demonstrated, throughout her dream Alice is as "mad" as the adult characters: she displays similar psychological issues that closely mirror debates on dreaming and insanity in Victorian psychology and psychiatry. A closer reading of the medical books published before *Alice's Adventures* (pre-1865) that were present in Carroll's private library, extensively cataloged by Charlie Lovett,¹⁴ can therefore offer new insights into Carroll's description of such mad or sleeping characters as Alice, the Cheshire Cat, the Hatter, the March Hare, and the Dormouse. A close comparative reading of *Alice's Adventures* and medical essays that Carroll likely owned at the time of writing the novel reveals the similarities between the insanity of Wonderland's inhabitants and psychological concerns as represented in Victorian medical treatises. These concerns include sleep talking and the asking of unsolvable riddles in dreams; the questioning of one's personal identity and the related feeling of depersonalization; impairment of memory and the inability to remember and combine known ideas; and the alteration of the sense of time perceived as an unending, endless moment—all of which are represented by Carroll, following Victorian psychological theories, as telltale signs of a dreaming state and/or symptoms of insanity. In Victorian psychology, debates on these aberrant mental states were part of a broader discourse on the role of the unconscious mind in the construction and perception of selfhood. Particularly, dreaming and delirium were considered as prime examples of states in which conscious awareness and voluntary control of the mind are similarly surrendered. As

Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth have noticed, “Dreaming was perhaps the most obvious way in which, as John Abercrombie put it, ‘ideas and images of the mind follow one another according to associations over which we have no control.’”¹⁵

Central to mid-nineteenth-century formulations of the unconscious mind was W. B. Carpenter’s notion of “unconscious cerebration,” first developed in the 1853 edition of the treatise *Principles of Human Physiology*, which underlined the porosity of the boundaries between different levels of (un)consciousness, blurring the distinctions between dreaming and wakefulness, derangement and sanity.¹⁶ Carpenter was a significant figure in the materialist or physiological psychology that was developing at the time, which conceived mental processes not in abstract terms but as “embodied in the physical workings of the mind as an evolving organism.”¹⁷ Carpenter’s ideas on the unconscious mind and its relations to will, identity, and memory influenced some of the most prominent psychologists in Victorian Britain who were concerned—with different degrees of involvement and conviction—with the new biological theories of the links between body and mind, including Henry Holland, Benjamin Collins Brodie, and G. H. Lewes.¹⁸

While Carroll probably did not share the more extreme views promoted by certain materialist psychologists on the physicality of mind,¹⁹ it is safe to say that he was familiar with the works of the above authors at the time *Alice’s Adventures* was being written. Holland’s *Chapters on Mental Physiology* (1852), Brodie’s *Psychological Inquiries* (1856), and Lewes’s *The Physiology of Common Life* (1859–60) are all listed in Lovett’s catalog of Carroll’s library, alongside another essay on psychology published before 1865 that is relevant to the present analysis, Forbes Winslow’s *On Obscure Diseases of the Brain, and Disorders of the Mind* (1860).²⁰ Henry Holland was a physician to Queen Victoria, and his *Chapters on Mental Physiology* “was one of the most influential psychological studies to be published in the mid-nineteenth century.”²¹ G. H. Lewes was an eclectic writer and an amateur psychologist well versed in both physiology and literature, whose *Physiology of Common Life* would later be quoted from by Carroll in a note on “The Fasting Man” published by the *St. James’s Gazette* on April 10, 1890.²² Forbes Winslow was one of the most important psychiatrists of the time and the founder in 1848 of the *Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology*, “the first British journal to be concerned exclusively with mental illness.”²³ The popularity of Winslow’s *On Obscure Diseases of the Brain* is attested by the fact that four editions were published in eight years, between 1860 and 1868,²⁴ with a second revised edition appearing

as early as 1861. We can safely assume that Carroll came into possession of his copy in the 1860s, and most probably at the beginning of that decade: he owned a first edition, which came out in 1860, inscribed with his name (“C. L. Dodgson, Ch. Ch.”) in black ink, a habit he abandoned in October 1870, when he began to use violet ink in his book inscriptions.²⁵ After all, as Edward Wakeling writes, it is at that time that Carroll’s library began “to assume considerable proportions as he added new and secondhand books to his collection.”²⁶

The presence of Benjamin Collins Brodie’s *Psychological Inquiries*, a book that “was widely read” in the mid-century,²⁷ is fascinating because it ties to Carroll’s personal life at the time of writing *Alice’s Adventures*. Brodie was a surgeon to Queen Victoria and president of the Royal Society (1858–61) as well as of the General Medical Council (1858–60). He was also the father of Benjamin Collins Brodie, a professor of chemistry at the University of Oxford who was Carroll’s colleague and, as revealed by Carroll himself in 1868, one of his “friends.”²⁸ Carroll and Brodie had known each other since at least 1860. As Wakeling notes, Brodie and his family were photographed by Carroll on many occasions between 1860 and 1863.²⁹ It is in these years, of course, that Carroll famously conceived the tale of *Alice’s Adventures Under Ground*. It was first told to Alice Liddell and two of her sisters on July 4, 1862, and completed by February 10, 1863,³⁰ not including, however, the chapter of the Mad Tea-Party, which would be added to the story only around 1864–65 for the publication of the tale as *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Given the close relationship between Brodie and Carroll, and the latter’s interest in psychology, it is probable that Brodie introduced Carroll to the medical work of his father—including perhaps *Psychological Inquiries*, of which Carroll owned a third edition, published in 1856.

DREAMING INSANITY: ALICE’S DREAM AND THE MAD TEA-PARTY

That is also the year in which Carroll wrote an entry in his diary that reveals his fascination for the subjects of dreaming and insanity, commenting on the similarities of their psychological mechanisms. On February 9, 1856, he asks:

When we are dreaming and, as often happens, have a dim consciousness of the fact and try to wake, do we not say and do things which in waking life would be insane? May we not then sometimes define insanity as an inability to distinguish which is the waking and which the sleeping life? We often dream

without the least suspicion of unreality: “sleep hath its own world,” and it is often as lifelike as the other.³¹

In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, these themes intersect as part of Carroll's fictional dreamscape of Wonderland, shaped by the bizarre assortment of characters populating Alice's dream, their apparently nonsensical reasoning and behavior, and Alice's own experience and interpretation of this world. The link between Alice's acts of sleeping and dreaming and madness is explicitly stated by the Cheshire Cat in chapter 6 while presenting the characters of the Hatter and the March Hare, defined by the Cat as “both mad” (65). When Alice replies to the Cat's invitation to visit either of them with the remark, “But I don't want to go among mad people,” the Cat describes Alice as mad as himself and the other inhabitants of Wonderland: “‘Oh, you ca'n't help that,’ said the Cat: ‘we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad.’ ‘How do you know I'm mad?’ said Alice. ‘You must be,’ said the Cat, ‘or you wouldn't have come here’” (66). With the preposition “here,” the Cat means Wonderland: the place visited by Alice in her dream is thus depicted by the Cat as a madhouse, suggesting that only people as mad—or as asleep—as Alice can find their way to it. Carroll's implicit comparison between states of dreaming/sleeping and madness serves as introduction to the events that occur in chapter 7, “A Mad Tea-Party.” Since only the Hatter and the March Hare are explicitly described as mad by the Cheshire Cat, it may come as a surprise that there is a third character who participates in the Mad Tea-Party: a Dormouse. The Dormouse is “fast asleep” at the table where he is sitting with the Hatter and the March Hare (69). Significantly, in his sleep he behaves in a similar manner to these last two characters. His comportment is as deranged and illogical—he resorts to the same meaningless remarks and ambiguous use and combinations of phrases. The Dormouse contributes to the Hatter's parodic song “*Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!*” by singing and repeating, while asleep, “*Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle*” for a long time (73–74). He also participates in the Hatter and the March Hare's nonsensical wordplays, which are articulated matter-of-factly and, as a result, heighten Alice's (and the reader's) sense of misunderstanding, such as in the following instance: “‘You might just as well say,’ added the Dormouse, which seemed to be talking in its sleep, ‘that “I breathe when I sleep” is the same thing as “I sleep when I breathe!”’” (71). This remark follows the insoluble riddle that the Hatter famously asks Alice: “Why is a raven like a writing-desk?” (70). At first, Alice is confident that she can guess the answer to the riddle, but

excitement quickly turns to puzzlement and frustration at the Hatter's behavior of pointlessly asking unsolvable riddles: "wasting [time] in asking riddles that have no answers" (72). In his representation of the three characters of "A Mad Tea-Party," Carroll's deliberate portrayal of the analogously illogical behaviors of a sleeping (and dreaming?) Dormouse and of an insane Hatter and March Hare draws attention to the likenesses between the psychological workings of these two mental states.

Descriptions of odd situations and experiences very much like those represented in "A Mad Tea-Party" abound in the medical works owned by Carroll. In his *Psychological Inquiries*, Benjamin Collins Brodie argues that, during sleep, dreaming almost always occurs, mentioning as evidence the "common" practice of talking in sleep: "Nothing is more common for persons to moan, and even talk in their sleep without awaking from it."³² Not only do people talk while sleeping—and therefore dreaming—Brodie continues, but they also do not have "the smallest recollection of their having dreamed afterwards" (150). As we will see in more detail later, Brodie maintains that memory and time perception are unnaturally affected in dreams, to the extent that upon waking a person can remember "the beginning of one sentence" he heard before falling asleep "while he actually heard the latter part of the sentence immediately following it, so that probably the whole time during which he had slept did not occupy more than a few seconds" (146). This is a similar situation in which the Dormouse finds himself in "A Mad Tea-Party." He talks continuously in his sleep, "without opening its eyes" (72), and when he wakes up, he has no memory of having slept or dreamt, instead claiming to remember all the words the others have been uttering: "I wasn't asleep,' it said in a hoarse, feeble voice, 'I heard every word you fellows were saying'" (74–75). Brodie discusses at length the bizarre psychology of memory and reasoning in dreams, in which thoughts may seem at first to be coherent and logical and yet, given the "suspension of volition" (152), they result in nonsensical associations of images and ideas. One of the examples that Brodie makes is that of a riddle asked by someone in a dream, to which both the person who is dreaming and the other people populating the dream are unable to find an answer: "Sometimes we dream that another proposes an enigma, that we cannot solve it, and that others are equally incapable of doing so, but that the person who proposed it himself gives the explanation" (154). The topic of enigma proposition in dreams, involving the inability of the dreaming person—like Alice—to find a solution, is analogously portrayed in *Psychological*

Inquiries and *Alice's Adventures*, although unlike the riddler in Brodie's example, the Hatter does not know the answer to his own verbal puzzle. Brodie goes on to explain in detail the "nonsense" of the psychological dynamics of riddle proposal and answering in dreams. He juxtaposes the reasoning for a solution to an enigma during sleep and wakefulness, arguing that dreams possess their own logic, which appears to be coherent to the dreamer, so that when we "reflect on this proposition of an enigma in our dream, and on its apparent solution, we think it wonderful." But as we wake up "and are able to compare the answer with the question, we find that it was mere nonsense" (154). These two opposing logics, the apparent coherence of dreams and their concurrently nonsensical aspects, cause a sense of confusion in the dreamer. Brodie describes a feeling of loss of both control and identity in dreams, a sort of fragmented personality, as if while dreaming people create a fictional world with its various characters disconnected from their own consciousness, with whom they converse, reason, even disagree:

There is often a remarkable degree of coherence in our dreams. [...] There are other actors in [them], who seem to speak and act independently of ourselves, as if influenced by other motives, and aiming at other objects, with regard to which we do not concur, or to which we may be actually opposed. Scenes are presented to us, in which it seems that an intelligence is exercised, although we do not understand how that intelligence can be our own. How is it that these things happen? (155)

Alice is constantly met with opposition and disagreement by the residents of Wonderland. As a result, she is perplexed about the extraordinary events that she experiences and the conversations that she has throughout the novel, including in "A Mad Tea-Party," where she feels "dreadfully puzzled" (72). She shows her confusion by alternately adhering to the dream-logic prevalent in Wonderland and put forth as perfectly reasonable by its characters or, contrarily, by rejecting this very same (un)reasoning as mere nonsense. Alice frequently responds to Wonderland's absurdities with the rational logic of the waking world, reproaching other characters for talking nonsense. When the Queen of Hearts, who likes to randomly dispense death sentences for no discernible (legal) reason, in chapter 8 angrily screams, "Off with her head!" referring to Alice, the latter in turn shouts, "'Nonsense!' [...] very loudly and decidedly" (82). Similarly, in chapter 12, as the Queen states her intention to sentence the Knave of Hearts to death—for stealing the tarts—before hearing the verdict of the jury with the expression

“Sentence first—verdict afterwards,” Alice’s sense of bewilderment is evident: “Stuff and nonsense! [. . .] The idea of having the sentence first!” (124). But Alice is reproached for nonsensical reasoning, too, actively contributing to Wonderland’s dream-logic. When she misunderstands the Mouse’s words in chapter 3, an offended Mouse rebukes Alice by telling her, “You insult me by talking such nonsense!” (35). As we shall see more closely below, Alice’s confusion also translates verbally into an incorrect rendition of poems well known in Victorian times such as, in chapter 10, “*Tis the voice of the sluggard*,” which the Gryphon claims to be “different from what *I* used to say when I was a child” and the Mock Turtle describes as “uncommon nonsense [. . .] by far the most confusing thing *I* ever heard!” (106–8).

The opposition between the logic of dreams, in which strange occurrences and incongruities are readily accepted, and the rationality of the waking mind described above by Brodie, is also displayed in the opening of *Alice’s Adventures*. When Alice sees the White Rabbit for the first time, having just fallen asleep and already dreaming, she is not surprised by the fact that it can talk: “There was nothing so *very* remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself ‘Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!’” (11). But “when she thought it over afterwards,” which is to say, once she wakes up and realizes that it was indeed bizarre to see a talking rabbit, “it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at that time it all seemed quite natural” (11–12). This does not mean that Alice is never surprised at her odd experiences in Wonderland, natural though they may seem; on the contrary, she expresses different degrees of surprise as the dream continues, none of which, however, affects her willingness to accept and go along with even the most surreal developments of her dream. In chapter 2, at the beginning of the novel, although Alice is “so much surprised” at her body unnaturally extending to more than nine feet in height, she nonchalantly embraces the dream-logic of Wonderland by remarking: “Good-bye, feet! [. . .] how funny it’ll seem, sending presents to one’s own feet!” (20). By chapter 6, midway through the novel (and her dream), however, Alice “was not much surprised” at the Cheshire Cat suddenly vanishing in front of her, as “she was getting so well used to queer things happening” (66). Carroll’s depiction of Alice’s feelings of surprise in Wonderland, and the sudden alteration in the appearance of the Cheshire Cat, are reminiscent of the way in which surprise is described by G. H. Lewes in the second volume (1860) of *The Physiology of Common Life*. Following Brodie, Lewes first points out the

contradictory aspects of dreams, “both the incoherence and the coherence of dreams—the perfect congruity of certain trains of thought amid the most absurd incongruities.”³³ Discussing how a dream is not interrupted by the weird happenings and sudden changes occurring in it, Lewes then underscores the psychological role of surprise, which serves the dreamer to register the strange and unexpected transformations in the physical appearance of people and places without being awakened, thus allowing the dream to continue. “It is constantly said that in dreams nothing surprises us,” Lewes writes:

I think this is a mistake. Nothing *arrests* us; but every incongruity surprises us [. . .]. If when I dream that I am in a certain place, conversing with a certain person, I am also aware that the place suddenly becomes another place, and the person has a very different appearance, a slight surprise is felt as the difference is noted, but my dream is not arrested; I accept the new facts, and go on quite content with them.³⁴

In the novel, Alice questions her own identity multiple times. The first time occurs in chapter 2 when, astonished by the “queer” things happening in Wonderland—and especially to her own body and cognitive reasoning—she wonders: “Who in the world am I? Ah, *that’s* the great puzzle! [. . .] oh dear, how puzzling it all is!” (22–23). Likewise, in chapter 5 Alice is not able to answer the Caterpillar’s question about her identity (“Who are *you?*”), replying with a confusing, “I—I hardly know, Sir, just at present [. . .] I ca’n’t explain *myself*, I’m afraid, Sir, [. . .] because I’m not myself, you see” (47). In *Chapters on Mental Physiology*, Henry Holland describes a similar feeling of depersonalization when dreaming, a psychological state in which “consciousness and sense of identity are scarcely maintained; where memory and reason are equally disturbed.”³⁵ Holland points out the sensations of puzzlement and unreality that are associated with depersonalization, the “strange incongruities of thought” as well as “the confusion as to personal identity which so often occurs in dreams, producing some of their strangest anomalies and aberrations.”³⁶ Holland sees dreaming as an abnormal mental state that is closely related to insanity, to the extent that he devotes a chapter to examining “the Relations of Dreaming, Insanity, etc.” Of the many examples of the correlation of dreaming and insanity proposed by Holland, noteworthy is his analysis of the psychological mechanisms of nonsensical thinking. According to Holland, nonsensical thoughts in insanity and dreams are based on an analogous incapacity to accurately remember and put together known concepts and memories:

[The changes in mental functioning] which impair the power of distinguishing between deceptive images and the realities of sense, do also impair that faculty of rightly combining and recalling ideas [...] upon which the condition of man, as a rational being, depends. Here, as I have before observed, the relation to the state of sleep and dreaming is most distinctly marked.³⁷

As Bourne Taylor and Shuttleworth write, “Victorian psychologists acknowledged that the sense of a continuous self depends on the awareness of the connections [...] between the past and the present: that when memory breaks down, so does a coherent, directed identity.”³⁸ From the multiplication table to geographical facts and poetry, Alice is incapable of rightly combining ideas and recalling things that she used to know before entering the dreamworld of Wonderland, unintentionally changing the words of popular poems such as “*You are old, Father William,*” on which the Caterpillar matter-of-factly remarks: “That is not said right” (52). Commenting on her own anomalous versions of those poems, Alice sorrowfully confesses: “I ca’n’t remember things as I used” (49). Alice is not the only person in Wonderland who modifies the words and meanings of existing poems and songs. Other characters include the Hatter who, as seen previously, is deemed “mad.” In “A Mad Tea-Party,” the Hatter sings the following first quatrain of a nonsensical song:

*“Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you’re at!”
[...]
“Up above the world you fly
Like a tea-tray in the sky.” (73–74)*

As Martin Gardner, among others, has noted, the Hatter’s song is a parodic version of the first verse of Jane Taylor’s poem “The Star”:

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky. (74n8)*

It could be argued that, like Alice, the Hatter misremembers a poem that was well known in Victorian England, replacing the “*little star*” of the original composition with a “*little bat*” and similarly turning the phrases “*you are*” into “*you’re at*” and “*so high*” into “*you fly*,” and the noun “*diamond*” into a “*tea-tray*.” The Hatter’s behavior is consistent with the memory issues he later displays during the trial for “Who Stole the Tarts?”

in chapter 11, when he cannot recall the exact day he began to have his tea—“Fourteenth of March, I *think* it was,” but both the March Hare and the Dormouse disagree—nor what the Dormouse said on that occasion: “That I ca’n’t remember” (113–15). Drawing on Holland’s theories, Carroll shows how dreaming and madness have comparable effects on memory and reasoning.

The parallels between sleeping and madness are also extensively discussed in Forbes Winslow’s *On Obscure Diseases of the Brain, and Disorders of the Mind*, which focuses, among other subjects, on memory impairment and unnatural perceptions of time. Winslow illustrates how dreams appear to last much longer than the actual sleep time—the example that he makes is that of a person dreaming for what he resolutely believes to be five hours, while his sleep lasted, in fact, only ten minutes.³⁹ Winslow builds on theories about the subjective and relative perception of time—based on the state of mind of the individual—described in previous studies such as *Psychological Inquiries*, where Brodie notes that “Perhaps, you have slept only one or two minutes, but you have had a long dream” (145). Winslow, however, goes a step further, equating the loss of the ordinary sense of time in dreamers with the inability to perceive or even conceive time of insane people. He writes:

How often (as is established by the illustrations to be found in this work) all idea of *duration* appears to be obliterated from the mind of the insane, during the continuance of the disease, the patient appearing, after many months, and sometimes years [...] to awaken, as it were, out of a fanciful and troubled dream. (43–44)

His view of the obliteration of the sense of duration in insane people is discussed more thoroughly in chapter 17, “Psychology and Pathology of Memory,” where Winslow employs the more violent term “annihilated” to describe the impairment of time perception: “All notion of *duration* being annihilated, the interval between the first moment of seizure and the restoration of reason appearing like a blank, or analogous to a troubled and distressing dream” (460). Some of the case studies that he discusses as examples of this psychological condition are noteworthy. He mentions the case of a ninety-year-old man who had been suffering from insanity since he was eighteen, believing all his life to be young and juvenile (461). Winslow argues that, in these mentally deranged people, the capacity to perceive time suddenly stops at a very specific moment concurrent with their loss of reason. As a result, they perform the same action over and over again: a woman who, after losing her husband in a stagecoach

accident, returns to the same spot every day, expecting his arrival; a clergyman who, for fifty years, only talks about his forthcoming wedding that, however, never occurred after he became insane, “being, ideally, still a young, active, expecting, and happy bridegroom, chiding the tardiness of time” (465–66). These mental states in which “all notion of *duration* [is] annihilated” and actions are constantly repeated, especially this last personification of time scolded because of its lateness, cannot but recall the situation of the Hatter in “A Mad Tea-Party,” when he tells Alice that he was accused of “murdering the time” while singing “*Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!*” at the concert of the Queen of Hearts (73–74). Having quarreled with time “last March—just before *he* [the March Hare] went mad,” an expression which explicitly correlates going mad with a loss of time perception, the insane Hatter and March Hare live in a timeless dimension where “It’s always six o’clock [...] it’s always tea-time” (73–74). They are reduced to having tea repetitively while moving around the table, as they have “no time to wash the things between whiles” (74). The Dormouse, too, participates in this endless tea-party, suggesting a similar *annihilation* or *obliteration* of the sense of duration in states of sleep and dreaming. In the chapter “Who Stole the Tarts?” the Hatter, March Hare, and Dormouse all misremember the date in which the tea-party supposedly started, each saying a different day,⁴⁰ thus showing an analogous incapacity to perceive time and remember events happened since the Hatter’s argument with time. Alice and the members of the Mad Tea-Party, however, are not the only characters in Wonderland who display forgetfulness and seem to have memory—as well as identity—problems. As shown in the trial for “Who Stole the Tarts?” the twelve jurors write down their names “for fear they should forget them before the end of the trial” (111).

The fact that the participants in the Mad Tea-Party are (insane) products of Alice’s dream and that Alice herself also briefly takes part in it—only temporarily, as part of her dream of Wonderland—further demonstrates the similar properties of time, but also of memory, in madness and dreaming as depicted by Carroll. Francesca Arnavas writes that “the tea-time of the Mad Hatter and the March Hare serves Carroll’s interest in the working of mad or hallucinating minds.”⁴¹ As demonstrated in this article, Carroll’s literary representations of abnormal perceptions of time in *Alice’s Adventures* bear a distinct resemblance to Winslow’s medical investigations of time and memory deficiencies in states of insanity and dreaming. The short and transient nature of a dream (including Alice’s), however, entails that its madness is also

transitory, lasting for the duration of the dream itself. Consequently, as opposed to the long-lasting insanity and nonsense of the Mad Tea-Party—and of its never-ending time loop, also affecting the Dormouse, who is constantly asleep—Alice’s issues with illogical reasoning, depersonalization, memory impairment, and altered time perception are temporary and only experienced in the dreamworld of Wonderland.

There are other ways to reach the land of wonder besides sleeping and madness, however. The conclusion to the story describes one of Alice’s sisters also dreaming of Wonderland, imagining the very same “strange creatures” and bizarre situations just narrated to her by Alice (126). But the dream experienced by Alice’s sister is of a different nature. Unlike Alice, who has had “a long sleep” with no conscious insight into her own dreaming self, her sister is daydreaming: “she sat on, with closed eyes, and half believed herself in Wonderland, though she knew she had but to open them again, and all would change to dull reality” (126). As Schatz explains, in the reverie of Alice’s sister, “imagination, dreams, and waking consciousness [...] graduate into each other.”⁴² Indeed, daydreaming and imagination may provide a pathway to explore Wonderland during wakefulness. But the kind of exploration of Alice’s sister, who only “half believed herself in Wonderland” and is consciously aware of the fanciful and ephemeral nature of her daydream, is not as immersive and escapist as Alice’s own dream, running the risk of a sudden return to boring, ordinary life. This inclusion of conscious awareness, a lucid understanding of the imaginary essence of Wonderland, into the act of dreaming marks the difference between Alice’s dream and her sister’s daydream, allowing for the threatening possibility of a return to “dull reality,” which is intrinsically more menacing than violent scenes from Alice’s fantastical dream such as “the Queen ordering off her unfortunate guests to execution” (126). On the contrary, compared to her sister, the conscious idea of a return to reality never crosses Alice’s mind, as she hopelessly wonders “if anything would *ever* happen in a natural way again” (107). The ending to the story makes it clear that, in a world where wonder is synonymous with dream-state and insanity, only by surrendering completely to dreaming consciousness and to the madness of Wonderland is it possible to descend deep into the rabbit-hole and escape “dull reality.”

The introduction of waking consciousness also marks Alice’s transition from childhood dream to her adult narration of it in the last paragraph of the novel. Alice’s sister describes how Alice

would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman; and how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood; and how she would gather about her other little children, and make *their eyes* bright and eager with many a strange tale, perhaps even with the dream of Wonderland of long ago; and how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days. (126–27)

Behaving as madly as the characters with whom she interacts, in her dream Alice participates actively in the strangeness of Wonderland, a site where the child's experience of dreaming and the adult's experience of insanity come together as a result of the similarities of their psychological features. As a grown woman, however, although she will maintain some emotional aspects of childhood, Alice will be able to relive the oddities of her "dream of Wonderland" only indirectly, through the "bright and eager" eyes of her little children, which signals the inevitable distance between childhood and adulthood, unconscious experience and conscious narration, the dream and its recollection. For the adults who maintain the ability to appreciate Wonderland not just at nighttime or in madness, but also in the waking state, the only way to do so is through the recollection of childhood dreams and their narration, in the form of "many a strange tale," to a young and eager audience.

In *Alice's Adventures*, Alice's temporary displays of waking logic—alternated with episodes of absurd reasoning, forgetfulness, and confusion—are a narrative strategy used by Carroll to highlight, by contrast, the nonsense of Wonderland. They are, as Charles Taliaferro and Elizabeth Olson have argued, "essential to keeping the story going and having adventures."⁴³ And yet, as demonstrated numerous times in this essay, it is not only "Carroll's application of logical principles [that] has produced a seemingly illogical world."⁴⁴ An analysis of *Alice's Adventures'* dream structure and insane characters through the lens of Victorian psychology has revealed another layer of meaning about the "illogical world" of Wonderland, one tied to the mid-nineteenth-century debate on dreaming and insanity. In other words, the misremembering, identity problems, time distortions, and cognitive incongruities of both Alice and the residents of Wonderland can be interpreted as symptoms of Victorian psychological issues. From this point of view, Carroll's is one of the many novels that, "between the years 1850 and 1870, [. . .] made tacit correspondences between the particular puzzles and paradoxes in medical and lay theories of delirium and more general anxieties about identity and self-control."⁴⁵ Unlike novels written for an adult readership,

however, in *Alice's Adventures* the interdisciplinary transfer from psychological theory to children's story necessitated a creative repurposing of these mental peculiarities. Being a condition experienced by every character, dreaming child and "mad" adult alike, insanity is normalized in the novel and adopted as Wonderland's psychological norm. Moreover, occurring in the dreaming mind of a little girl, it is emptied of (most of) its distressing and frightening qualities. Surely, Alice is often uncomfortable with the illogical behavior of Wonderland's inhabitants. In "A Mad Tea-Party," she alternately feels angry, puzzled, offended. When the Hatter tells her how the Queen of Hearts sentenced him to death for singing the parodic song "*Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!*", Alice is disconcerted, exclaiming: "How dreadfully savage!" (74). But in Wonderland, even in its most aggressive forms, insanity is devoid of any threatening connotations, becoming a source of amusement. As the Gryphon says about the Queen's delusions of beheading people in chapter 9: "'What fun!' said the Gryphon, half to itself, half to Alice. 'What *is* the fun?' said Alice. 'Why, *she*,' said the Gryphon. 'It's all her fancy, that: they never executes nobody, you know'" (95). To put this another way, in the many forms seen in this essay, psychological issues are transformed, through parody and humor, into literary nonsense. Carroll's creative treatment of insanity entails a particular focus on the comic nonsense of madness, where absurd situations generate humor and "unintelligible insanity also becomes amusing."⁴⁶ Tellingly, this kind of humor not only derives from the disparity between Alice's apparent sanity and the unreasoning of the insane characters, but also from Alice's own nonsensical thinking, which upsets the logic of the sane, waking world. In the following passage taken from chapter 4, for instance, the humor is created by Alice imagining herself taking orders from her cat Dinah:

"How queer it seems," Alice said to herself, "to be going messages for a rabbit! I suppose Dinah'll be sending me on messages next!" And she began fancying the sort of thing that would happen: "'Miss Alice! Come here directly, and get ready for your walk!' 'Coming in a minute, nurse! But I've got to watch this mouse-hole till Dinah comes back, and see that the mouse doesn't get out.' Only I don't think," Alice went on, "that they'd let Dinah stop in the house if it began ordering people about like that!" (38)

Considering what we have discussed thus far, it should come as no surprise that *Alice's Adventures* supplied Victorian writers of psychology with a means of illustrating their ideas. Within a few years of its initial release, the novel began to be used as a reference in psychological

discussions of literary texts that supposedly reproduced the mechanisms of such mental states as dreaming and insanity through their surreal imagery and language. In a similar manner to the review of *Mopsa* discussed at the beginning of this article, Victorian psychological essays considered *Alice's Adventures* as a novel capable of replicating the absurd features of sleeping and madness, as we shall see in the pages that follow.

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN VICTORIAN PSYCHOLOGY

In the Victorian period, psychology was a different discipline compared to what it is today. It could be argued that Victorian psychology was a less empirical and specialized field of study, and more theoretical and speculative. Crossing different branches of knowledge and encompassing intellectuals from a variety of disciplines (including literary studies), Victorian psychology was a heterogenous amalgamation of ideas, issues, and concerns publicly debated by a broad range of scholars from various perspectives. As Rick Rylance argues in his mapping of the formation of British psychology as a freestanding discipline in the years 1850–80, the loose and unregulated aspects of the Victorian psychological debate guaranteed an open circulation of ideas crucial to its development. Rylance writes:

The high-Victorian psychology of the years 1850–80 was a more open discourse, more spaciouly framed in its address to common issues, and with an audience crossing wide disciplinary interests. Economists, imaginative writers, philosophers, clerics, literary critics, policy-makers, as well as biomedical scientists contributed to its formation. It was an unshapely, accommodating, contested, emergent, energetic discipline, filled with dispute and without settled lines of theory or protocol for investigation. The role played by the great generalist periodicals of the Victorian period is crucial in this, and the broad audience for psychology perceived the issues it raised as matters of common, not specialized, intellectual and cultural concern.⁴⁷

Among all the Victorian periodicals that in those years hosted debates on psychological issues, the London-based *Fortnightly Review* was one of the most prominent. In 1879 the *Fortnightly Review* published a psychological essay written by the poet and politician Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton, on “Certain Present Phenomena of the Imagination,” presented in December of the previous year at the Leeds Philosophical Society. Like many of his contemporaries, Milnes was involved in various intellectual endeavors. These included presenting on psychological issues

at scholarly gatherings and participating, in the early 1880s, in the parapsychological work of the newly formed Society for Psychical Research (SPR) alongside other initial members such as Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, better known by his pen name, Lewis Carroll. The SPR considered itself a “scientific society” and was concerned with serious investigation of extrasensory phenomena.⁴⁸ Milnes’s literary and intellectual accomplishments, together with his broad interests in scientific issues of the time, resulted in his election, in 1868, as a Fellow of the Royal Society, Britain’s prestigious academy of sciences.⁴⁹ In “On Certain Present Phenomena of the Imagination,” Milnes analyzes the mental mechanisms of imagination within a discourse on the necessity to balance creative imagination with reason and logic, both on a societal level, that of the governance of society, and on the individual level of scientific inquiry and artistic creation.⁵⁰ Milnes also discusses instances in which the imagination prevails over the rational qualities of the mind and, as a result, disorder and confusion ensue. He critiques the caricatural aspects of contemporaneous art and literature where “absurdity is not only permitted, but prized for its own sake; and extravagant oddity is commended and admired,” placing them in the same context as “morbid conditions” of the mind such as insanity, sleeping and dreaming, hallucination, and somnambulism (79, 63–65). And it is not by chance that the first example that Milnes makes of the supposed connection between literature and these aberrant mental states is Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures*. In outlining his methodology for the psychological examination of imagination, Milnes writes: “I have to deal with the images as I find them received by the mind through the senses, and retained by that process of connection which we call Memory. The cessation of that connection is the most ordinary form of the condition which we designate as Insanity” (63). Insanity is thus characterized as an impairment of the faculty of memory, entailing the interruption of the collaborative work between the senses, the mind, and memory in the process of creation and retention of a mental image. According to Milnes, imagination in states of insanity cannot be considered as a constructive force, since it only generates linguistic or artistic products that reflect the incongruities of an unbalanced mind: “Even when preserving a relation to the faculties of intelligence and for the forms of art, it [insanity] seldom produces anything admirable in itself, or beyond the effects of singularity and oddity of construction” (63). Immediately afterward, Milnes introduces the subject of dreaming, both in regular sleep and in cases of hallucination and somnambulism, equating the strangeness that results

when the imagination is exercised in those mental states with that of insane people: “Much the same may be said of the act of dreaming” (63). As part of this association of sleeping with insanity, Milnes illustrates the odd workings of the imagination in dreams by referring to *Alice’s Adventures*:

An ingenious writer has lately had great success in literally translating into language the grotesque contradictions and extravagant combinations of this mental state, and *Alice in Wonderland* has been not only the delight of childhood, which recognised in it its own modes of unreason, but the amusement of maturer minds. [...] There seems no doubt that in sleep the imagination acts independently of the will and the conscience and the reason. (63)

Within a discourse on the similar mechanisms of dreaming and delirium that is as literary as it is psychological, Milnes describes *Alice’s Adventures* as an effort to capture dream logic faithfully, in which the imagination is not governed by reason and creates, as a result, paradoxical and incongruous images. This is why, according to Milnes, Carroll’s novel is widely enjoyed by children, whose illogical imagination is analogous to that found in states of dreaming and madness, but also by adults, who enter the land of wonder every time they fall asleep. In a dream, Milnes continues, the sense of absurdity also causes an abnormal perception and conception of time, which shatters any possible linearity of events commonly experienced in the waking state: “The confused multitude of images destroy the orderly succession which constitutes the category of time” (64). Milnes concludes his section on sleeping by reiterating the psychological similarities between dreaming and insanity, claiming that “there is meaning in the expression of a noted physiologist, that sleep is a short insanity” (64).

Interpretations of *Alice’s Adventures* as a literary rendition of the oddities of the dreaming state continued to be featured in psychological studies at the close of the Victorian era. In 1908 the prominent Canadian scholar and critic Archibald MacMechan devoted a section of his essay on the long-lasting popularity of Carroll’s novel, published in the *University Magazine*, to an analysis of Alice’s dream of Wonderland from a psychological point of view. Taking up the role of a fictional German psychologist, MacMechan underscores the relevance of *Alice’s Adventures* to the psychological understanding of dreams, arguing that the novel should be studied as a scientific treatise that can provide insights into the process of dreaming:

This child's story-book has what may be called, without exaggeration, a scientific importance. A German psychologist might call it "Ein Beitrag zur Psychologie des Träumens," or a contribution to our knowledge of the phenomena of dreaming. Perhaps the most widely observed and most puzzling of all mental phenomena are the phenomena of dreaming. All peoples have noted and all literatures recorded them. Except in rare instances they are the most difficult to record or to fix. [...] Yet this most difficult literary feat is accomplished by this child's story-book. The child does not perceive this, is not in fact meant to perceive this; but even a hasty analysis will make the author's intention clear.⁵¹

In a similar manner to Milnes, MacMechan believes that with the novel Carroll aimed not simply to write a children's story but to accurately set down in writing the psychological experience of dreaming. MacMechan is positing that *Alice's Adventures* can be interpreted from two different perspectives: that of the child reader who, like Alice herself, enjoys and accepts the strange atmosphere and happenings of Wonderland at face value; and that of the adult reader who, like the author himself, interprets the absurdities as the written transcription of the various mental stages of the dreaming state. According to MacMechan, there are therefore two levels of interpretation of the novel depending on the age of the reader, one literary, as a children's fantasy novel, and the other psychological-scientific, as a representation of dream phenomena.

MacMechan goes on to describe in detail the mental phenomena of dreaming that Carroll supposedly strove to depict in his novel. Among others, he mentions the transition from waking to dreaming consciousness as represented by the opening scene of *Alice's Adventures*, when Alice falls asleep and sees the anthropomorphic White Rabbit, and the sensation of falling that she experiences while descending into the rabbit-hole, which is also deemed typical of dreams (478). MacMechan then discusses the sudden and unexplained disappearance of images that often occurs while dreaming, interpreting the bizarre vanishings of the Cheshire Cat as such an instance (479). The last example that he makes is that of Alice's awakening at the end of the story, when Alice, who is gradually shifting back from dream to reality, perceives the dead leaves falling on her face while asleep on the bank of the river as the fantastic assault of a pack of cards. This scene, according to MacMechan, accurately describes how external sensory perceptions can influence the subject matter of dreams (480).

Like Milnes, MacMechan also links the theme of dreaming as portrayed in the novel to psychiatric theory, understanding the madness of the members of the "Mad Tea-Party" as pathological "insanity." He

states the following of Tenniel's original illustrations of the Hatter and the March Hare: "The wild light in their eyes tells the tale of their insanity" (482). MacMechan concludes his psychological analysis by comparing what he considers Carroll's realistic depiction of dreaming to the methodical work of photographers who attempt to capture the reality of a scene. He claims that *Alice's Adventures* has "this solid frame-work of sound observation [which] is impossible to deny," finally describing the novel as a photographic composite of the different phases of the dream-state:

He [Carroll] has made words, simple words that children understand and delight in, do the work of the sensitive plates. They have caught and they hold in cold print those fleeting impressions of an experience which, though universal, is the hardest to make comprehensible. The process of dreaming is as it were, arrested at various stages, and we have to examine each of them as clearly as we care to. (481)

Psychological discussions on the oddities of *Alice's Adventures*, and related juxtapositions of literary and medical discourses, would become customary starting from the 1930s. As a result of Sigmund Freud's growing international reputation, the 1930s witnessed the first psychoanalytic readings of Carroll's novel. Psychoanalysis has since offered an abundance of literary, psychological, and pathological interpretations of *Alice's Adventures*, including psychoanalytic studies of Carroll and his supposed neuroses diagnosed through an analysis of the nonsensical language of the book.⁵² As the Dutch psychiatrist Jan Dirk Blom has recently argued in his summary of the existing clinical literature on "Alice in Wonderland syndrome" (AIWS), "With Alice in Wonderland, Dodgson created a character that appealed as much to physicians as it did to the book's intended audience."⁵³ In present-day neurology, AIWS is usually considered a rare syndrome characterized by perceptual distortions, which can be visual, such as seeing objects as larger or smaller than they actually are, and/or nonvisual, including altered perceptions of time and sensations of unreality about one's surroundings or one's own identity.⁵⁴ As Blom observes, however, especially in its milder symptoms AIWS may be much more prevalent in the general population than commonly assumed; given that perceptual distortions are different from hallucinations and illusions, but they are often misdiagnosed as the latter, AIWS "needs to be distinguished from schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders."⁵⁵ Alice in Wonderland syndrome was named thus in 1955 by the British psychiatrist John Todd, who drew parallels between a cluster of

symptoms including feelings of “depersonalization,” “illusory alterations in the sense of the passage of time,” “distortions of the body image,” and Alice’s bizarre experiences in Wonderland, such as scenes in the book where Alice “became remarkably tall or remarkably short [...] and others when she puzzled over her own identity.”⁵⁶ It was in the 1930s, however, that *Alice’s Adventures* was first linked to some of the psychological symptoms later to be gathered under the label of “Alice in Wonderland syndrome.” In a 1933 article published in *Journal of Mental Science*, the precursor to the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, Stanley M. Coleman associated, in a clinical framework, a “sense of depersonalization” affecting one of his patients with Alice’s feelings in Wonderland.⁵⁷ Similarly, in a 1936 article that investigates the correspondences between mental disorder and consumption of mescaline, a hallucinogenic drug, Eric Guttman and Walter S. Maclay described several cases of depersonalization. These include the instance of a woman who kept on asking herself such questions as “who am I?” and felt “just like Alice in Wonderland,” and another of a female patient who “complained of having lost her sense of time and of a marked feeling of unreality.”⁵⁸

With its creative representation of feelings of loss of personal identity, strangeness, and altered time perception rooted in mid-nineteenth-century psychological ideas, *Alice’s Adventures* builds a bridge between Victorian psychology and the neurological condition termed “Alice in Wonderland syndrome,” first described in the 1930s and characterized by sensations of “depersonalization,” “unreality,” and “illusory alterations in the sense of the passage of time.” This article has established the extent of Carroll’s literary reworking of Victorian psychological theories, attesting to the strong influence of the medical books that Carroll owned on *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, and particularly on “A Mad Tea-Party.” This examination of Carroll’s novel through the looking-glass of nineteenth-century psychology has also demonstrated the impact of *Alice’s Adventures* on Victorian psychological descriptions of sleeping and insanity, which employed *Alice’s Adventures* as the literary reference for an illustration of these mental states, thus anticipating the later interest of psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, and neurologists in the novel. Given the dialogue that has been maintained between *Alice’s Adventures* and the field of psychology since the mid-nineteenth century, it is only to be expected that Carroll’s novel is still as relevant in today’s psychological discourse as it was in that of the Victorian period.

NOTES

1. Review of *Mopsa the Fairy*, 129.
2. Review of *Mopsa the Fairy*, 129.
3. Review of *Mopsa the Fairy*, 129.
4. See Thomas, *Lewis Carroll*, 124–28; Groth, *Moving Images*, 126–51; Kohlt, “The Stupidest Tea-Party,” 147–67; Beer, *Alice in Space*, 173–208.
5. Schatz, “Lewis Carroll’s Dream-child,” 94–95.
6. Schatz, “Lewis Carroll’s Dream-child,” 96.
7. Schatz, “Lewis Carroll’s Dream-child,” 100.
8. Beer, *Alice in Space*, 182.
9. Carroll, *The Annotated Alice*, 11. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
10. Carroll, *Selected Letters*, 29.
11. See the chapters “Waking” and “Which Dreamed It?” in Carroll, *The Annotated Alice*, 268–71.
12. Kohlt, “*More than a figment*,” 140.
13. Kohlt, “*More than a figment*,” 146.
14. Lovett, *Lewis Carroll*.
15. Bourne Taylor and Shuttleworth, *Embodied Selves*, 69.
16. See Wood, *Passion and Pathology*, 111 and note 3.
17. Bourne Taylor and Shuttleworth, *Embodied Selves*, 68.
18. For a discussion on Carpenter as a leading figure of a group of materialist psychologists that included Holland and Brodie, and more marginally Lewes, see Rylance, *Victorian Psychology*, 128.
19. See Groth, *Moving Images*, 128, 140–41.
20. See Lovett, *Lewis Carroll*, respectively, at 154, 55–56, 192, 345.
21. Bourne Taylor and Shuttleworth, *Embodied Selves*, 106.
22. See Lovett, *Lewis Carroll*, 192.
23. Shepherd, *Conceptual Issues*, 92.
24. Shepherd, *Conceptual Issues*, 93.
25. See Wakeling, “Take Pen & Ink & Write It Down.” Carroll’s copy of *On Obscure Diseases of the Brain* is now at the University of Southern California’s Cassady Lewis Carroll Collection. See University of Southern California, “Cassady Lewis Carroll Bibliography,” 133.
26. Wakeling in Carroll, *Lewis Carroll’s Diaries*, 4:24.
27. Rylance, *Victorian Psychology*, 128n51.
28. Carroll, *Lewis Carroll’s Diaries*, 6:46. Lovett mistakenly claims that the author of *Psychological Inquiries* was Brodie the “Professor of Chemistry

- at Oxford,” while in fact it was Brodie’s father, a renowned physician, who wrote it. Lovett, *Lewis Carroll*, 55–56.
29. Wakeling in Carroll, *Lewis Carroll’s Diaries*, 4:112n80.
 30. Carroll, *Lewis Carroll’s Diaries*, 4:95.
 31. Carroll, *Lewis Carroll’s Diaries*, 2:38.
 32. Brodie, *Psychological Inquiries*, 149. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
 33. Lewes, *Physiology*, 370
 34. Lewes, *Physiology*, 370–71.
 35. Holland, *Chapters on Mental Physiology*, 78.
 36. Holland, *Chapters on Mental Physiology*, 123–24.
 37. Holland, *Chapters on Mental Physiology*, 123.
 38. Bourne Taylor and Shuttleworth, *Embodied Selves*, 71.
 39. Winslow, *On Obscure Diseases*, 41–42. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
 40. “‘Fourteenth of March, I *think* it was,’ he [the Hatter] said. ‘Fifteenth,’ said the March Hare. ‘Sixteenth,’ said the Dormouse.” Carroll, *The Annotated Alice*, 113.
 41. Arnavas, *Lewis Carroll’s “Alice,”* 166.
 42. Schatz, “Lewis Carroll’s Dream-child,” 107.
 43. Taliaferro and Olson, “Serious Nonsense,” 193.
 44. Webb, “Alice as Subject,” 69.
 45. Wood, *Passion and Pathology*, 114.
 46. Taliaferro and Olson, “Serious Nonsense,” 189.
 47. Rylance, *Victorian Psychology*, 7.
 48. Oppenheim, *The Other World*, 135–36.
 49. See Reid, *Life, Letters, and Friendships*, 195.
 50. Milnes, “On Certain Present Phenomena.” All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
 51. MacMechan, “Alice in Wonderland,” 477–78. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
 52. See for instance Schilder, “Psychoanalytic Remarks.” This essay would later be included, together with other “Freudian Interpretations” of the novel, in Phillips, *Aspects of Alice*, 283–92. As Peter Hunt has written, from the 1930s onward “Dodgson’s psyche, and his relationship with the real Alice, became happy hunting grounds for psychologists and psychological critics.” Hunt, “Introduction,” xx.
 53. Blom, “Alice in Wonderland Syndrome,” 263.
 54. Blom, “Alice in Wonderland Syndrome.” See also Blom, *Alice in Wonderland Syndrome*, 1–14.

55. Blom, “Alice in Wonderland Syndrome,” 268.
 56. Todd, “The Syndrome of Alice in Wonderland.”
 57. Coleman, “Misidentification and Non-Recognition,” 48.
 58. Guttman and Maclay, “Mescaline and Depersonalization,” 206, 210.

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