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"Alice was not surprised": (Un)Surprises in Lewis Carroll's *Alice*-Books

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Surprises are connected with the idea of the unexpected.[1] Yet, even at the very beginning of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, we find that Alice often is not surprised although things happen that might be regarded as 'unexpected.' It is, for example, not surprising to Alice "when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes [runs] close by her" (16) and when he speaks.[2] Only after further reflection "it occur[s] to her that she ought to have wondered at this," and she is surprised that then she was not surprised, yet, "at the time it all seemed quite natural" (10) to her. Her *spontaneous* reaction to the talking rabbit is that of a child in whose imagination speaking animals exist and to whom they are familiar from the world of fairy tales and beast fables. Accordingly, the rabbit who says to himself "I shall be too late!" (9), to her understanding, is quite 'natural': the imagined world of stories is a natural one for the child. It is only when a new and unknown element in this world crops up, e.g. when "[…] the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*, and looked at it, and then hurried on […]" (10), that Alice becomes curious and follows him for she has "never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it" (10).

Hence, the question whether something is surprising or 'unsurprising' in the *Alice*-books seems to depend on whether it is natural or not.[3] However, as is already obvious in the first lines of *Wonderland*, Alice's understanding of what is natural seems to be peculiar, for most of us would most probably wonder at a talking rabbit. The question therefore is what is surprising to her and what is not.

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The Confusion of Expectations

Alice's being surprised and her being unsurprised may well go together. Even in the first chapter this is the case. She is not so very much surprised at falling down the rabbit-hole, and even while falling, she tries to be as rational as possible and reflects upon all kinds of questions, e.g. "what Latitude or Longitude" she has "got to" (11), whether "cats eat bats" (11) and so forth; nor is she surprised at "suddenly" (12) finding a little table in the hall, which has not been there before; then "on the second time round, she [comes] upon a low curtain she [has] not noticed before" (12). The adverb "suddenly" and the 'sudden' discovery of things do not lead to Alice's surprise, for she is simply "delight[ed]" (12) at finding the table and the key. Their sudden appearance presumably does not surprise her as she knows that fairy tales, as a rule, deal with "events that would be impossible in the real world" and that "[t]hey often include magical happenings."[4] The sudden appearance of a table belongs to the realm of "magical happenings" and is a quality inherent in the genre of fairy tales; hence it is not surprising, even more so as she very soon realizes that she is "in the middle of one!" (33). Although she realizes that, when she "used to read fairy tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened" (33), she also states that it was only her fancy that made her think so. Events in Wonderland thus confirm her innate tendency to accept spontaneously the most unexpected things.

Consequently, it does not surprise Alice to find a bottle with the label "Drink Me." She follows the instruction, and, after having drunk from the bottle and shrunk in size, she finds some cake, labelled "Eat Me":

> She ate a little bit, and said anxiously to herself "Which way? Which way?", holding her hand on the top of her head to feel which way it was growing; and she was quite surprised to find that she remained the same size. To be sure, this is what generally happens when one eats cake; but Alice had got so much into the way of expecting nothing but out-of-the-way things to happen, that it seemed quite dull and stupid for life to go on in the common way. (15)

The corresponding labels—"Drink me" and "Eat me"—make her think that a change in her bodily size will occur after drinking or eating. She obviously follows the rules of analogy, and of cause and effect which, at first, do not seem to work in the underground world. The nature of surprises is inverted: as she turns the enigmatic order into a systematic one, she is surprised that nothing happens.[5]

That her life seems to go on in a "dull and stupid" manner is a disappointment. Alice thus "set[s] to work" and eats the whole cake.[6] She is all the more surprised when eventually something happens. The whole situation has a paradoxical note: first, Alice starts to eat, thinking that something will happen, according to the rules of analogy. Then, as nothing happens, she nonetheless eats the cake but is then surprised that something happens, which implies that meanwhile she must have expected nothing to happen. Yet if this is the case, why bother to eat the cake? If this is not the case, i.e. she was sure something would happen, why is she surprised? It seems as if the very notion of surprise becomes a rather doubtful one.

Having finished the cake, she "open[s] out like the largest telescope that ever was!" (16). Her being overwhelmed is expressed by her exclamation and the subsequent comment: "'Curiouser and curiouser!' cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English)" (16). Thus, she is now surprised at what happens although she had earlier anticipated exactly this would occur. She expected—and moreover wanted—to grow, but, as it now happens, she is surprised at it; she is actually so much surprised that she forgets "how to speak good English." Yet, what happens, after all, follows a relation of condition, or of laws: without first shutting up like a telescope, she would not be able to open out like one; if she does not shrink first, there is no need to grow. Hence, she no longer knows what to expect, as the events do not in the first place follow rules she knows or is able to infer. Her surprise stems from Carroll's adding a note of unexpectedness to the expected—or yet a note of expectedness to the unexpected.

As has been stated by John Fisher, "'curious' is Alice's repeated response to the endless successions of weird escapades and eccentrics

[sic] he [Carroll] produces on her behalf" (12). Moreover, she is surprised at her own reaction, i.e. at her being surprised—"'Oh dear, what nonsense I'm talking!'" (17)—and even aware of her surprise as she finds that she is being nonsensical.

Knowledge and Surprise

The change in size and her awareness that she talks nonsense make Alice think she has been changed into someone else, and consequently she wants to find out who she is.[7] In this situation, she tries to rely on her knowledge in order to reassure herself—she fears she has been changed for Mabel who "knows such a very little" (18) while Alice knows "all sorts of things" (18). She therefore tries to think of the things she once learnt and used to know—most probably learnt by heart, which is why they actually should come quite 'naturally' when being recalled—and starts with the multiplication table. Yet, as it turns out, she cannot rely on this knowledge as her skills, both mathematical, "[…] four times five is twelve," and geographical, "London is the capital of Paris" (19), seem to have left her.

Her last recourse is poetry, which is why she tries to repeat "How doth the little—" but "the words did not come the same as they used to" (19), 'used to' indicating a sense of habit and routine. Whenever she tries this during the course of her adventure, she forgets the 'correct' texts and modifies the poems by turning them into parodies that are both unexpected and surprising.

Watts's "How doth the little—", i.e. "Against Idleness and Mischief" from his *Divine Songs for Children* (1715), thus becomes:

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower!

How skilfully she builds her cell!
How neat she spreads the wax!
And labours hard to store it well
With the sweet food she makes.[8]

How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,
How neatly spreads his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in,
With gently smiling jaws!

We can see that Carroll keeps the syntactic structure and even many of the words, at least nearly all the verse beginnings, but then uses these words in new contexts: in "improve his shining tail," the verb 'to improve' implies that the pouring of water on the crocodile's scales serves an aesthetic end, namely to enhance the crocodile's beauty; conversely, "Improve each shining hour" means being profitable and avoiding any waste of time, as the gathering of honey means hard work and not the satisfaction of one's own (physical) needs.[9] Moreover, the highly didactic content of Watts's poem is turned into a parody by transforming the image of the busy bee into that of a (lazy and hungry) crocodile.[10] The pattern of rational moralism with a *causa finalis*, namely moral improvement, on which Watts's poems are based, is changed here. Thus, the image of the busy bee, a faded metaphor of diligence and industriousness, is turned into the quite unusual image of a crocodile that minds his own looks. In the *Wonderland* world that is suffused with the child's imagination, moral principles are replaced with aesthetic values, which is why Alice can no longer remember the didactic poem.[11] She can no longer be sure of her 'rational' knowledge and abilities as her spontaneity has come to the fore. At the same time, the crocodile's natural behaviour is stressed, for crocodiles *are* ravenous and like to eat "little fishes."

Codes of Interaction

After her encounter with the White Rabbit, Alice expects him to be surprised. "'He took me for his housemaid,' she said to herself as she ran. 'How surprised he'll be when he finds out who I am!'" (31). However, he does not find out who she is and, consequently, is not surprised.[12] What is more, even Alice does not any longer act as she initially thinks she will; she at first emphasises that she does not "go […] messages for a rabbit" (31), but then she enters his house, and when she finds a bottle there, she drinks from it. The difference from the earlier finding of a bottle is that this one is not labelled. Maybe this is the reason for her growing instead of shrinking as in the previous

case. From her earlier experience, she "know[s] something interesting is sure to happen" (32)—which, in this case, is her filling the whole house.

When the Rabbit finds her arm in the window, his first reaction is to shriek, but very soon he composes himself. Although he is surprised at finding an arm in his window, he is determined not to show his astonishment and simply says: "An arm, you goose! Who ever saw one that size? […] go and take it away!" (35). This behaviour stems from his aristocratic background; he is called "yer honour" (34) by Pat, the gardener, which is the denomination given to an "'honourable personality': Formerly (and still in rustic speech) given to any person of rank or quality."[13] He is—or plays the role of—a gentleman who, as such, is not surprised and shocked but tries to stay cool no matter what happens. This code of behaviour is very much in line with the Horacian thought of *nil admirari*—which is applied to the English gentleman.[14] Accordingly, the White Rabbit does not run away or is scared but just tries to get rid of whatever there is, namely of Alice.

In the end, the Rabbit and his friends produce some pebbles, and then it is Alice who is surprised "that the pebbles were all turning into little cakes as they lay on the floor, and a bright idea came into her head" (37). Again she proceeds to think in analogies. When she first drank from the labelled bottle in the hall, she shrank, and then she ate the (likewise labelled) cake to grow again. Now she first drank something (from an unlabelled bottle!), and, in conclusion, the "bright idea" which comes to her mind is that the result of eating the cakes this time must be her shrinking. The rabbit, for his part, plays the role of the perfect aristocrat and gentleman who acts most discreetly in order to solve the problem without giving it too much further attention.

When Alice leaves the house, the animals waiting outside make "a rush" (37) at her, and she runs away as quickly as she can. This shows that the interaction with the creatures she meets is almost always rather strange to Alice. One reason is that she expects to be treated amiably and politely but very soon learns that this is not necessarily

the case. One need only think of the Mad Tea-Party or when she is threatened with being beheaded in the queen's croquet-ground.

The "Garden of Live Flowers" is one further instance of Alice's being treated unkindly; the Rose, for example, remarks: "Said I to myself, 'Her face has got *some* sense in it, though it's not a clever one!'" (139). The speaking rose evokes and pokes fun at the Victorian idea of the language or even 'poetry' of flowers, "where every flower, herb, and tree had a distinct 'sentiment' or 'emblematic meaning' attached to it," i.e. flowers were "associated with human feelings or properties."[15] Alice meets flowers that usually have attributes ascribed to them which differ utterly from their actual behaviour; and although she tries to react to this behaviour with politeness—she speaks in "a soothing tone" (140) and "choos[es] [not] to notice" (140) some of the remarks—Alice is particularly surprised at the violet's behaviour, for the violet usually counts as a symbol of humility and modesty.[16] Carroll seems to take the notion of a language of flowers quite literally here, as the violet proves to be neither modest nor shy but violent—and what else can she do, for she only needs an 'n' to be so. He parodies the idea that flowers "convey hidden meanings and secret messages";[17] the flowers Alice encounters are mostly blunt and very direct in what they say.

This also goes for the daisies. They make fun of Alice when she does not know the 'meaning' of the tree's boughs, and "[w]hen one speaks, they all begin together" (139) and produce a terrible noise. Their behaviour even makes Alice say, though in a whisper that is opposed to their "shouting together": "If you don't hold your tongues, I'll pick you!" (139). This refers to the proverb "Fresh as a daisy":[18] fresh flowers are those that have been picked. However, Alice finds herself in *Looking-Glass* country, which means behind a mirror where everything is reversed;[19] therefore, the daisies run the risk of being picked because they are literally fresh, namely cheeky.[20]

The (Playful) Treatment of Language: Taking Things Literally

It is this playing with language that is noteworthy when it comes to surprises in the *Alice*-books:

> […] Alice carefully released the brush, and did her best to get the hair into order. "Come, you look rather better now!" she said, after altering most of the pins. "But really you should have a lady's maid!"
>
> "I'm sure I'll take you with pleasure!" the Queen said. "Two pence a week, and jam every other day."
>
> Alice couldn't help laughing, as she said "I don't want you to hire me—and I don't care for jam."
>
> "It's very good jam," said the Queen.
>
> "Well, I don't want any to-day, at any rate."
>
> "You couldn't have it if you did want it," the Queen said. "The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday—but never jam to-day."
>
> "It *must* come sometimes to 'jam to-day,'" Alice objected.
>
> "No, it ca'n't," said the Queen. "It's jam every other day: to-day isn't any other day, you know."
>
> "I don't understand you," said Alice. "It's dreadfully confusing!"
>
> "That's the effect of living backwards," the Queen said kindly: "it always makes one a little giddy at first—"
>
> "Living backwards!" Alice repeated *in great astonishment*. "I never heard of such a thing!"
>
> "—but there's one great advantage in it, that one's memory works both ways."
>
> "I'm sure mine only works one way," Alice remarked. "I ca'n't remember things before they happen."
>
> "It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards," the Queen remarked.
>
> (174-75; my emphasis)

The dialogue starts off quite normally, with Alice suggesting that the Queen have a maid help her. But it very soon turns out to be more or less nonsensical, when the Queen offers Alice the job in question and, as a salary, "Two pence a week, and jam every other day." What we understand here is: One day she will get jam, the next day she will not, the day after that, jam again, and so forth. By the redefinition of quite conventional phrases and remarks the conversation is given a "sudden and unexpected direction."[21] Carroll may even refer to working conditions of servants in questioning the conventional sense of,

e.g., "giv[ing] them an afternoon out every other Sunday"[22] and allowing them "every Monday morning a certain amount of sugar, tea, and butter for their private use."[23]

"Jam every other day" unexpectedly means "jam to-morrow and jam yesterday—but never to-day." Alice objects to this—"It *must* come sometimes to 'jam to-day'" (175)—yet the Queen has, from her perspective, a very logical answer to offer: "It's jam every other day: to-day isn't any *other* day." By taking the meaning of a conventional phrase literally,[24] she turns Alice's understanding of a world based on fixed definitions as well as logical connections and causalities upside down, and leaves her puzzled.

The—linguistically—familiar thereby becomes surprising. The Queen, furthermore, being unable or unwilling to give up her own kind of logic, offers an explanation that is actually not enlightening at all; there is no connection between the jam offer and the notion of living backwards, as "jam every other day" works in both directions, forwards and backwards. But she gives Alice the feeling that she simply lacks the understanding of "living backwards" and therefore cannot really judge.[25] What adds even more to the apparent nonsense here is that the Queen tries to convince Alice, who does not "care for jam," of its quality, and then tells her that she cannot get it anyway.

This scene has been called "one of the famous paradoxes connected with time"[26] in *Through the Looking-Glass*. Yet, as Gardner notes in his revised edition of *The Annotated Alice*, there proves to be sense behind the apparent nonsense, namely a rule from Latin grammar:

> […] I completely missed the way Carroll plays on the Latin word *iam* (*i* and *j* are interchangeable in classical Latin), which means "now." The word *iam* is used in the past and future tenses, but in the present tense the word for "now" is *nunc*. I received more letters about this than about any other oversight, mostly from Latin teachers. They tell me that the Queen's remark is often used in class as a mnemonic for recalling the proper usage of the word.[27]

Carroll introduces a rule of Latin grammar in disguise, which suddenly and surprisingly fills the apparent nonsense in this dialogue with sense.

Nonsense based on rules or particular 'laws' can also be detected in the notion of "living backwards," which refers to Looking-Glass-logic where everything is turned around and inverted. Alice, very shortly after the quoted dialogue, faces a surprising situation when the White Queen shouts that her finger is bleeding although she hasn't "pricked it *yet* […] but […] soon shall" (176). However, the Queen cannot be surprised as she experiences everything in a reversed order.[28] This means that living backwards is connected with being unsurprised, an experience that even Alice, though unconsciously, has already had in the Tweedledum and Tweedledee chapter, only that she cannot transfer it to this new situation.

The (Playful) Treatment of Language: Nursery Rhymes

When she meets the Tweedle-brothers, Alice at first is surprised—"she came upon two fat little men, so suddenly that she could not help starting back" (158)—but very soon recognizes them. By recognising them, their appearance becomes somewhat 'natural' to her, which is furthermore indicated by the transition from the preceding chapter to the Tweedle-chapter, for Alice is feeling sure that "the two little fat men [she meets] must be [/] […] Tweedledum and Tweedledee" (158-59). In *The Annotated Alice*, Martin Gardner points out that "Carroll clearly intended this last clause and title of the next chapter to be a rhymed couplet" (188). Alice can recognize and, in a way, also 'remember' them because of her knowledge of the nursery rhyme, which can likewise be seen as a form of 'living backwards,' as she knows the outcome of the interaction between them even before it starts. Thus, surprise is impossible in this case, or it is a surprise of the kind which, as a child's fascination with nursery rhymes shows, goes together with what is reassuringly familiar. Alice anticipates and foresees what is to come and can "hardly help saying" (160) the nursery rhyme out loud:

Tweedledum and Tweedledee
Agreed to have a battle;
For Tweedledum said Tweedledee
Had spoiled his nice new rattle.

Just then flew down a monstrous crow,
As black as a tar-barrel;
Which frightened both the heroes so,
They quite forgot their quarrel. (160)

The nursery rhyme is used as a surprising unsurprise, as it predicts the further action in this chapter. This implies that the action is not based on causal principles or chance, as we generally know it from the world we live in, but on a new set of rules which relies on the (il)logic of a nursery rhyme. Before things follow their given course, i.e. before the Tweedles agree "to have a battle,"[29] the action is put off by the initial conversation between Alice and the Tweedle-brothers, and by the insertion of the "The Walrus and the Carpenter" poem. But that the course of events will turn out to be just like we expect it to be is already alluded to at the beginning when Alice introduces herself to the Tweedles:

> Alice did not like shaking hands with either of them first, for fear of hurting the other one's feelings; so, as the best way out of the difficulty, she took hold of both hands at once: the next moment they were dancing round in a ring. This seemed quite natural (she remembered afterwards), and *she was not even surprised* to hear music playing: it seemed to come from the tree under which they were dancing, and it was done (as well as she could make it out) by the branches rubbing one across the other, like fiddles and fiddlesticks. (160-61; my emphasis)

"She was not even surprised to hear music playing" because everything which happens seems natural to her. The connection between something that appears natural and the fact that she is not surprised could not be more direct. This scene can be interpreted as an allusion to the origin of this nursery rhyme, as, according to *The Oxford Book of Nursery Rhymes*, it goes back to a rivalry between Haendel and Bononcini.[30] Alice's not being surprised here is certainly linked to her not

being surprised in general, as so many "queer things [are] happening" (58).[31] Even that the music is "done" by a tree does not seem to surprise her at all.[32]

A few lines further down, we learn that it is "Here we go round the mulberry bush" (161) that they are singing.[33] Their dancing round in a ring "seemed quite natural," as there are three of them dancing and singing, making up a trio, a [tri:-ou] that is a "tree"-"o" (Note the 'O' standing for the "ring" in which they are dancing), for the music is done by the tree. "Here we go round the mulberry bush" furthermore is a ring-dance composed in six-eight time, which means arithmetically, not rhythmically speaking, three-four time. Each stanza of the song has 16 bars;[34] Tweedledum and Tweedledee are "very soon out of breath. 'Four times round is enough for one dance,'" (161) they say and stop dancing. So their dance is arithmetically correct: they stop it after the first stanza, as three people are dancing four rounds of a six-eight time, i.e. it seems to take them four bars to get round once. This calculation is a further explanation of Alice's not being surprised by the dance, as everything is actually quite natural.

Alice's generally being "unsurprised" furthermore explains her not being afraid of the brothers' battle after the rattle has been broken. She is not afraid of "the most serious thing that can possibly happen to one in a battle—to get one's head cut off" (170) because she knows that there is no danger. After she has helped them to get dressed, she only hopes for the crow to come, "I wish the monstrous crow would come!" (171), and shortly afterwards it actually comes and more or less ends the chapter. It is, in this context, all the more striking that even Tweedledee and Tweedledum seem to expect it, as they shout "It's the crow!" (171). The use of the definite article not only indicates that they know they are living (in) a nursery rhyme but is also due to the notion of repetition, which is inherent in nursery rhymes: they are always the same, and the same events are repeated again and again, just as the rhymes are repeated for, and by, children and learned by heart,[35] which is why for Alice, the child, they are something that comes naturally.

The notion of surprise hence has very much to do with the mind of the child and the child's perception of the world. Things that, to an adult, may seem very surprising—e.g. a rabbit that runs by and talks—are familiar to a child and therefore unsurprising. Alice is mostly surprised at herself when she does not recall things or when something does not seem natural, i.e. when something occurs that is not part of the world she is accustomed to, including the world of fairy tales, nursery rhymes and beast fables. In *Alice*, Carroll shows that being surprised and not being surprised are not mutually exclusive states but easily go together. Maybe this is, at least partly, an explanation for the ongoing popularity of the *Alice*-books: they enable us to perceive these fantastic worlds through the eyes of the child and allow us to react with both surprise and unsurprise at the most fantastic things and occurrences.

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NOTES

[1]Cf. *OED*, "surprise" 2.a.: "The (or an) act of coming upon one unexpectedly"; 2.b.: "to astonish by unexpectedness"; 3.a. "an unexpected occurrence or event; anything unexpected or astonishing."

[2]All references are to the edition of the *Alice* books by Roger Lancelyn Green.

[3]In his *Symbolic Logic*, Carroll himself defines a surprise as something that does not come as a matter of course, i.e. is not natural (xv).

[4]*The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* 177. What is more, things such as magical rings, tables, carpets etc. are requisites that belong to the world of fairy tales; cf. Lüthi 429. Todorov also states that fairy tales usually do not lead to surprise: "[…] en fait, le conte de fées n'est qu'une des variétés du merveilleux et les événements surnaturels n'y provoquent aucune surprise: ni le sommeil de cent ans, ni le loup qui parle, ni les dons magiques des fées […]. Ce qui distingue le conte de fées est une certaine écriture, non le statut du surnaturel"; Todorov 59.—That Carroll made use of the genre has, e.g., been stated by Michael Irwin: "Another kind of twentieth-century reading […] would see the *Alice* books as deriving from a variety of external influences and pressures. Two such influences might be the fairy-tale tradition […] or nursery-rhymes […]" (123). Besides, in

1867, George MacDonald wrote the fairy tale "The Golden Key"; not to mention the fairy tale by Grimm with the same title ("The Golden Key"—"Der goldene Schlüssel," 629-30).—The adverb 'suddenly' is rather frequently used in fairy tales, especially when something new is introduced (mostly something that has a sort of magical quality); cf. Andersen, "The Nightingale": "*Suddenly* the loveliest song could be heard" (129; my emphasis); and also Grimm, e.g. "Der Räuberbräutigam" ["The Robber-Bridegroom"]: "*Plötzlich* rief eine Stimme […] die […] von einem Vogel kam" (191; my emphasis), and "Märchen von einem, der auszog, das Fürchten zu lernen" ["The Story of a Boy Who Went Forth to Learn Fear"]: "[…] da schrie's *plötzlich* aus der Ecke" (38; my emphasis). The link particularly to the latter seems interesting as Alice is decidedly different from the hero of this fairy tale. It is chiefly her curiosity that distinguishes her from him: he leaves his home to "learn fear" whereas she is lead by her curiosity and by the wish to overcome the boredom inspired by her sister's book that has "no pictures or conversations" (9).

[5]I want to thank Matthias Bauer for this and many other most helpful suggestions.

[6]It seems interesting—or even astonishing?—that she regards eating the cake as "work," which implies that to her understanding she follows a certain task she has to fulfil.

[7]"[…] I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think: *was* I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is 'Who in the world am I?'" (18).

[8]Quoted from *Annotated Alice* 24.

[9]"Improve" is here used in the sense of "to employ to advantage, […] to make use of, use, employ"; cf. *OED*, "improve" II.2.

[10]Carroll seems to follow Harold Skimpole here, who in Dickens' *Bleak House* does not "at all see why the busy Bee should be proposed as a model to him" (106).—To emphasise the contrast between the original and Alice's version, "Carroll has chosen the lazy, slow-moving crocodile as a creature far removed from the rapid-flying, ever-busy bee," as Gardner points out (24).

[11]A similar thing happens when, in "Advice from a Caterpillar," she wants to repeat Southey's "You are old, Father William." While the original is highly didactic and about an "Old Man's Comforts and How He Gained Them," the version in *Alice* is turned into a highly derogative parody which ridicules Southey's didacticism and contains elements of cruelty and insult. It is no longer the gentle old man who gives good advice to his son, but rather a vicious old man who mocks everything that is of value. Besides, Carroll shows once more that we find ourselves in a different world: the old man is standing on his head. Lothar Černy interprets this as symbolic of the whole circumstances in *Wonderland* (and in *Looking-Glass*-country): "Das Präfix ‚anti' kennzeichnet in der Tat die Verhältnisse im Wunderland. Es herrscht das Gegenteil von Sympathie und beinahe das Gegenteil jeder Erwartung"; Černy 300.

[12]It is interesting to compare this scene with its original version, *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*. There, Alice does not expect the Rabbit to be or do anything, as she is frightened of him and "[runs] off at once, without saying a word, in the direction which the Rabbit had pointed out" and soon arrives at his house; *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* n.p.—That the Rabbit should choose the name Mary-Ann for Alice may well serve as a hint that Carroll was interested in the conditions of servants, as the "Christian names of these girls [maids] are of the order considered suitable to their station in life; Ann, Emma, […], *Mary Anne*"; C. S. Peel 148 (my emphasis). Cf. note 22.

[13]*OED*, "honour" 4.b.—Pat must be a servant; note also his pronunciation of 'arm': "He pronounced it 'arrum'" (35) which is an indication of his lower social status.

[14]This is, for example, expressed in Charles Reade's novel *Peg Woffington* (later transformed into the comedy *Masks and Faces* by Reade and Tom Taylor): "The *nil admirari* of the fine gentlemen deserted him, and he gazed open-mouthed, like the veriest chaw-bacon" (Ch. VII, n.p.).

[15]Haass 241.—The connection of flowers with "human properties and feelings" (Haass 248) seems to have been a common view in the nineteenth century (Haass in this context refers to Ruskin, who associated flowers with girls or women, as well as to the German painter Runge, who thought that every flower had a "human character"; 244 and 248). The flowers in *Through the Looking-Glass* are not only given human attributes or patterns of behaviour but they actually treat Alice like little girls tend to treat a new girl that enters their group: they are mistrustful, wary, and cautious. "Flowers, first of all, are girls. Their beauty, their beauty's brevity, their vulnerability to males who wish to pluck them—these features and others have made flowers, in many cultures, symbolic of maidens […]" (Ferber, "Flower" 74-77, 74). Hence, the perspective is turned around, and everything is described from the flowers' point of view, which is why the Red Queen is called "another flower" (140).

[16]Ferber, "Violet": "[…] the timidity, humility, and neglect of the violet […] because 'it is so shy.' *Humble* and *timide* are frequent epithets of the violet in French poetry" (223-25, 224); see also Seaton "violet—humility" (47); and Todd who, even in the heading to the entry "Violet," refers to the notions of "Faithfulness" and "Modesty" and goes on: "Timorous or retiring girls are frequently called 'shrinking violets'" (71).

[17]Haass 242.

[18]*ODEP* "Fresh as a daisy": "1857 G. Eliot, Scenes of Clerical Life 'Janet's Repentance' ch. 7" (287).

[19]For reversals in *Through the Looking-Glass* see *The Annotated Alice* 147-51n5.

[20]I want to thank Inge Leimberg for pointing out this surprising interpretation of the passage as well as for other most helpful suggestions.

[21]Strong 306.

[22]Boucherett n.p.—Unfortunately, it was apparently not common to have contracts with servants during Carroll's lifetime (at least not at Christ Church, which would have been the nearest source of inspiration for him in this matter), but there existed certain written guides as to the remuneration of domestic servants, their duties and their treatment in general, for example *Cassells Household Guide* (c. 1880s), or *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management* (1861). *Cassells Household Guide*, e.g., meticulously describes the duties of a lady's maid; 1: 363-64, and 2: 13-14.

[23]*Cassells Household Guide* 1: 135.—Even if Alice was given something extra—e.g. jam—the payment for a lady's maid would have been ridiculously low. Two pence a week would amount to around nine shillings a year, which would not even be half a pound. Yet, a lady's maid in the 1850s to 1870s, depending on the family she was employed with, would earn between sixteen and twenty pounds a year; cf. Horn, Appendix A, 184-85. However, it was usual to give maids something extra, e.g. tea or sugar, for good conduct; cf. Horn 128.

[24]It is here the Queen and not Alice, in fact it is hardly ever Alice, who is being literal, and therefore I tend to disagree with the opinion expressed in Virginia Woolf's essay on "Lewis Carroll": "To become a child is to be very literal; to find everything so strange that nothing is surprising. […] It is to see the world upside down […]. Only Lewis Carroll has shown us the world upside down as a child sees it, and has made us laugh as children laugh, irresponsibly"; Woolf 255. It is not the child who is literal here; Alice is only being literal at the end of *Wonderland*, when she exclaims "You're nothing but a pack of cards!" (109).

[25]This "living backwards" might be understood as an allusion to the concept of anamnesis, i.e. to remember things before they actually happen.—It is interesting that the strange definition of "Jam every other day" does not seem to surprise but only confuse Alice, while she is 'astonished' at the notion of "living backwards," i.e. that an element of surprise is apparently introduced here. For the link between astonishment and surprise see note 1.

[26]Holmes 148.

[27]*The Annotated Alice* 206n3. As a matter of fact, 'nunc' in the sense of the English 'now' cannot be used with reference to the past or the future but, in these cases, has to be replaced by 'iam'; yet this does not explicitly mean that the use of 'iam' is wrong when referring to the present: "Now. Nunc is 'at the present moment,' or 'as things are now.' It cannot be used of the past. 'Caesar was now tired of war' is: iam Caesarem belli taedebat. […] Iam can be used also of the future: quid hoc rei sit. Iam inteleges, 'you will soon be aware of the meaning of this.'" (*Bradley's Arnold: Latin Prose Companion* 184). Considering this, namely that 'nunc' refers only to the present, "jam every other day" would work as a mnemonic. I would like to thank Prof. Jürgen Leonhardt and his team for their help in this matter.—We remember Alice's reference to her brother's Latin grammar in *Wonderland*, where she starts to decline 'mouse': "A mouse—of a mouse—to a mouse—a mouse—O mouse!" (21). In the article "In Search of Alice's Brother's Latin Grammer," Selwyn Goodacre states that this must have been *The Comic*

Latin Grammer, published in 1840, and where only one noun is declined in full, namely 'musa.' Goodacre thinks that Alice may have mistaken this as the Latin word for 'mouse." See *The Comic Latin Grammar: A New and Facetious Introduction to the Latin Tongue*: "Musa musæ, / The Gods were at tea, / Musæ musam, / Eating raspberry jam, / […]" (29). Carroll owned a first edition.

[28]In *Wonderland* a comparable logic can be detected in the court scene: "Sentence first—verdict afterwards" (108).

[29]Actually, this is also an example of "living backwards," and, at the same time, a parody of Romantic poetics. The notion of verse resulting from experience is reversed. In the case of all the nursery rhymes in the *Alice* books, poetry comes first, experience follows. A similar thought can be found in Oscar Wilde's "The Decay of Lying," where life imitates art: "Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates life" (982).

[30]Opie 501-02. The original verse goes back to John Byrom, who published it in his *Poems* in 1773. The last line goes as follows: "Strange all this Difference should be/ 'Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee."—"The words seem originally to have signified a contrast between low and high pitched musical sounds, but Byrom uses them to indicate that, in the view of many, there was no discernible difference in talent or achievement between the composers"; Lockwood 56.

[31]Cf. Batchelor (189) on the nature of this "out of the wayness," i.e. things and events that are "queer" and "out-of-the-way" as Alice puts it.

[32]The image of the tree that is able to 'do' music hints at the expressed wish by trees to do music in George Herbert's poem "Providence": "Trees would be tuning on their native lute / To thy renown" (ll. 10-11); *The Temple* 228. —Thanks to the complete edition of Carroll's diaries we know that Carroll possessed an edition of and read Herbert's poems: "Sent *Tasso*, *Herbert* etc. to be bound" (January 26, 1856); *Diaries* 2: 28. With the image of the "fiddle," i.e. the violin, Carroll even alludes to a string instrument (cf. Herbert's "lute").

[33]Carroll seems to have known this song from J. O. Halliwell's *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales*, published 1849 and in a reversed edition in 1860. It actually is an old children's Game Rhyme for a ring-dance; cf. Green, "Explanatory Notes" 271.

[34]Cf. "Here we go round the mulberry-bush"; Woodgate 76-77.

[35]We find a similar use and function of nursery rhymes in *Through the Looking-Glass* in the case of "Humpty-Dumpty" and of "The Lion and the Unicorn," namely to anticipate the further course of action.

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