V. The Philosophers' Alice

I.

Among the strangest and most disagreeable situations experienced by Alice in Wonderland are the moments in which she suddenly becomes unable to recite correctly the poems that in her normal life she knew perfectly well, e.g. in Chapter II „The Pool of Tears" when she has to admit to herself that the words do not come „the same way as they used to do"[1] and refer to a strange lazy crocodile and not, as they would be expected, to the busy bee from one of the poems she once learned. Unable to explain, what is happening to her, Alice's first idea is that she may have changed into somebody else, since being herself she could never have *meant* anything similar to what she has just *said*. The conceptual relationship between *meaning* and *saying* belongs to the recurrent motives of Carroll's book and one of the related episodes from Chapter VII contains a passage, which has proven especially attractive for philosophers. Before turning to discuss the reasons why this particular passage has inspired a great number of scholars to the compilation of philosophical commentaries, it should be remembered that the above mentioned situation, in which Alice is going through a kind of self-estrangement is anything but usual for her. Although this experience confronts her with one of the most fundamental questions of philosophy – „Who am I?" – and the strange unexplainable words she has just produced may be interpreted as originating from a source of profound wisdom, she usually feels completely at home in her language. This is demonstrated by her even in those rare cases, in which she intentionally tries to conceal what she means, for example, in an episode from Chapter VIII when she evades giving an honest answer to the Cat's question how she likes the Queen and says: „Not at all," said Alice: „she's so extremely – " Just then she noticed that the Queen was close behind her, listening: so, she went on "likely to win, that it's hardly worth while finishing the game."[2] As in situations, in which Alice instinctively relies on her language to help other figures, e.g the baby in Chapter VI („Oh, *please* mind what you're doing!"[3]) or the Cat in Chapter VIII („A cat may look at a king."[4]), here, the language again appears as a means of protection: having quickly changed her mind and decided not to say what she actually thinks about the Queen, Alice escapes the danger of offending the Queen, who is standing behind and listening to the conversation. Yet there can be no doubt that in spite of her cautious reply nothing has changed about her real attitude to the Queen, i.e. about the way to *think* about her which this time Alice decides not to unveil by her words. This is an example of rather rare situations in which Alice has to say something different to what she really means. By contrast, much more often are the cases in which she appears too rash with her words, as, e.g. in an episode from Chapter V, in which she does not hesitate to openly admit to the Pigeon that like any other little girl she has already tasted eggs: „„I *have* tasted eggs certainly," said Alice who was a very truthful child…"[5] Even though in this case it may have been not particularly clever to make this confession, which causes the communication to fail, the most prominent feature emphasized here by the author is Alice's truthfulness. This predicate explicitly refers to Alice's language behavior and it seems to be one of the general ideas of the *Alice*-books that in itself language is never reflected in them as something misleading, repellent, deceptive, or illogical. Similar qualities are never presented as pertaining to language itself, but rather to the language behavior of the respective figures, e.g. the hysterical language of the Queen, the twisted language of the Duchess, the verbal arbitrariness of the Mock Turtle, the arrogant way to speak characteristic of the Caterpillar, etc. That language does not appear as an abstract subject either of a criticism or of a defense may also be demonstrated on the example of the above mentioned passage from Chapter VII:

„Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?" said the March Hare.
"Exactly so," said Alice.
"Then you should say what you mean," the March Hare went on.
"I do," Alice hastily replied; "at least – at least I mean what I say – that's the same thing, you know."

[1] *Alice*, p. 23.
[2] *Alice*, p. 90.
[3] *Alice*, p. 63.
[4] *Alice*, p. 91.
[5] *Alice*, p. 57.

"Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter. "Why, you might just as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'!"
"You might just as well say," added the March Hare, "that 'I like what I get' is the same thing as 'I get what I like'!"
"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'!"
"It *is* the same thing with you," said the Hatter, and here the conversation dropped…"[6]

The interpretation which I would like to propose for this conversation is based on the pragmatics of the figurative and the literal as well as on the psychology of the respective figures. I believe that Alice's statement does not contain any logical mistake. Except for the rare cases like the one mentioned above in which she is not the master of her own words or whenever she resorts to language as a means of self-protection, she normally says what she means and means what she says. As is remarked by the author, truthfulness is one of characteristic features of Alice's language, and the above conversation at the Mad Tea party is but a new demonstration of this particular quality: the words „I mean what I say" express the same idea as „I say what I mean" when taken literally to mean no more or no less than „I am honest." By contrast, the Hatter and the March Hare confront her with two statements that may be interpreted as figurative ones, i.e. as forms of expression with which Alice shows the greatest difficulties of understanding throughout the story. The phrase „I eat what I see" can by all means express the same idea as „I see what I eat", when it is understood metaphorically as referring to someone who is voracious (ravenous, greedy, insatiable.) Similarly, the phrase produced by the March Hare may also be understood in the figurative sense: referring to a possessive person, „I get what I like" would mean roughly the same as „I like what I get." On the contrary, the concluding proposition produced by the Dormouse does not contain any transfer of meaning and its validity is not accepted by the Hatter exactly for this reason, i.e. for being literal: referring to the Dormouse, „breathing when sleeping" does literally mean the same as „sleeping when breathing." Although the story does not provide details concerning the Hatter's voraciousness and the March Hare's possessiveness[7], the propositions made by them in order to confound Alice are argumentatively not strong enough to prove that her own statement is logically incorrect. They only attest to a discontinuity between the literal and the figurative, which is used as an effective rhetorical means. Thus, in terms of the relation between the literal and the metaphorical, the conversation may be regarded as perfectly symmetrical and as fitting the formula A (the literal) is to B (the figurative) as D (the literal) is to C (the figurative.)

The only problematic thing about Alice's words which is quickly recognized by her interlocutors as an opportunity to confound her is the conclusion of her thought: „that's the same thing you know." By saying this, she does not seem to take into account that truthfulness, which she herself so often displays throughout the story does not belong among universal human qualities. Neither truthfulness nor greed nor possessiveness is universal and for this reason the conclusion (and only the conclusion), at which she arrives in the end may be seen as deserving criticism. However, not even this point of critique would completely be justified, for it is not at all clear that by these words Alice intends a generalizing statement. And if she did, her attitude should not necessarily be met with criticism, since learning that honesty and humanity cannot be expected of everyone usually results from some of the most dramatic experiences in man's life[8] and it is only towards the end of her journey through

[6] *Alice*, pp. 73-74.
[7] A fitting illustration of the possibility to read the utterance of the Hatter as a metaphorical one is provided by Francis Huxley in his *The Raven and the Writing Desk*, London: Thames and Hudson (1976) in which this reading becomes part of a minute reconstruction of a possible answer to the riddle posed by the Hatter („Why is a raven like a writing-desk?", p. 73.) Huxley, *op. cit.*, p. 41: „…as the Trial scene has to do with Who Stole the Tarts, we shall permit ourselves to extend the meaning of *raven* into *ravenous*, which the Hatter must have been if tea was his only meal. Having done so, the meaning of 'I eat what I see' must be looked for on the writing-desk, where it might well appear as the old adage that to study is to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest."
[8] With great mastery, this idea is centrally displayed in one of the most dramatic stories by Anton Chekhov *Quite an Everyday Trifle* (*Житейская мелочь*, 1886), in which an eight-year-old boy Aljosha confesses in secret to an old friend of his divorced mother that he occasionally meets his father without his mother knowing. The adult friend swears not to tell a word about it to the boy's mother and breaks his word without any remorse – as if it were quite an everyday trifle – as soon as he sees her again. The boy's reaction to this first encounter with treachery is rendered as follows: „Aljosha sat down in a corner and, filled with terror, reported to his sister how he had just been cheated. He was trembling, stuttering, weeping; for the first time in his life, he was brutally confronted with a lie. He had not known before that apart from sweet pears, delicious

Wonderland that Alice becomes fully conscious of this as well. However, as already mentioned, it is not evident that Alice intends to produce a statement which would have universal validity. I believe, her words refer rather personally to herself and, if this is the case, they deserve neither critique nor justification.

Yet this is exactly the point which inspired a number of philosophically minded readers to comment on Alice's faultiness and to seek remedies by which her errors could be corrected. Consider the following reflections on the passage produced by Roger W. Holmes in his essay „The Philosopher's *Alice in Wonderland*" (1959): „Sometimes Carroll finds an unforgettable illustration of a major principle. We know that if all apples are red, it does not follow that all red things are apples: the logician's technical description of this is the non-convertibility *simpliciter* of universal proportions."[9] The major principle introduced here by Holmes does not really seem to be a fitting interpretation of the above conversation, at least as far as Alice's words are concerned, since it reduces them to an equation between „all that is said is meant" and „all that is meant is said" and thus leaves aside what would seem to be the crucial element in her proposition, i.e. the self and the psychological motivation of what is being said. Another philosophical commentary to the above passage has been produced by Peter Heath in *The Philosopher's Alice* (1974.) It reads as follows:

„In recommending Alice to say what she means, the Hare allies himself with conceptualists, for whom meaning something is one thing, and saying it another. The Hatter, who insists that meaning what you say is distinct from this, implies that it is words that mean, and thereby sides with nominalism (Jourdain, p. 24.) Alice, who amalgamates the two, has a supporter in Wittgenstein, who objected to internal meanings ([49], pp. 34 ff., 145), though it is not likely that he would have approved of her defense of this point of view (cf. Pitcher [in Fann], p. 329, and Shibles, pp. 24-25.) (Holmes, pp. 134-135; Carney and Scheer [11], p. 155; Manicas and Kruger [27], p. 275.)"[10]

It is rather doubtful that the statement „you should say what you mean" should be seen as suggesting conceptualism, nor do the words produced by the Hatter let him automatically appear as a nominalist. Yet the most curious thing about this translation of Carroll's passage into the language of philosophy seems the opinion, according to which Alice is interpreted as an amalgamation of the two. Among the names to which Heath refers his readers, that of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) is the most prominent one. Wittgenstein's philosophy represents also an important point of reference for Pitcher's and Shilbles' readings of Carroll, mentioned by Heath in the above quote. By saying that Alice's words would be likely to find a supporter in Wittgenstein for objecting to internal meanings, Heath may have thought of the following element of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language: Since, according to Wittgenstein, men are „entangled in a net of language, not being conscious of this" („im Netz der Sprache verstrickt und wissen es nicht."[11]), it should be recognized as the primary aim of philosophy to help men's minds awaken and break free from the traps posed by language. Already in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) it is said that philosophy is to be understood as *a critique of language* (*Sprachkritik*) (T 4.0031)[12].

Similarly, in later years, he would speak about philosophy as a *battle*, e.g. in the *Philosophical Investigations* (1953): „Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language."[13] A philosopher is understood as a liberation fighter or as a doctor, since he examines his questions as if they were *diseases* („wie eine Krankheit."[14]) One of these philosophical diseases investigated by Wittgenstein was the idea according to which meaning and saying could represent two

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cakes and expensive watches, there were also many other things in this world for which no names existed in the language of a child." (Anton Checkov, *Sobranije sočinenij*, Vol. IV, Moskva: Hud. Literature 1962, p. 356.)

[9] Roger W. Holmes, „The Philosopher's *Alice in Wonderland*" (1959), in: Phillips, Robert (Ed.), *Aspects of Alice*, New York: Vintage Books 1971, pp. 159-174, here p. 161.

[10] P. Heath, *The Philosopher's Alice*, New York: St. Martin's Press 1974, pp. 67-68.

[11] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Grammatik*, in: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Schriften*, Vol. 4, Rush Rhees (Ed.), Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1969, p. 462.

[12] L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London: Routledge 1955, 62.

[13] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Tr. by G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1953, p. 47e. Cf. *The Blue Book*: „Philosophy, as we use the word, is a fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert upon us." (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations" Generally Known as The Blue and Brown Books*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1969, p. 27.)

[14] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 92e.

different things. *The Blue Book* (his lecture notes from 1933-1934) contains the following reflections on this subject:

„the forms of expression: "to say something" // "to mean something", which seem to refer to two parallel processes. A process accompanying our words which one might call the "process of meaning them" is the modulation of the voice in which we speak the words; or one of the processes similar to this, like the play of facial expression. These accompany the spoken words not in the way a German sentence might accompany an English sentence, or writing a sentence accompany speaking a sentence; but in the sense in which the tune of a song accompanies its words. This tune corresponds to the 'feeling' with which we say the sentence. And I wish to point out that this feeling is the expression with which this sentence is said, or something similar to this expression."[15]

In this quotation, Wittgenstein focuses on the linear course of mental processes which cannot be manifested other than in words. Among inevitable philosophical implications of this is the conviction that no mental process (like thinking, hoping, believing) can proceed independently from the verbal medium[16]. By pointing this out, Wittgenstein wishes to expose the fallacy of the idea that it is possible to say something, simultaneously meaning it in a different way. The word „meaning" belongs for him to the particularly resistant diseases that should be cured by philosophers: „„Meaning" is one of the words of which one may say that they have odd jobs in our language. It is these words which cause most philosophical troubles."[17] Yet even though it would indeed be difficult to think of a mental process designated by the verb *to mean* other than as one consisting of words, Wittgenstein's criticism could hardly question all the semantical properties pertaining to this verb, as, e.g. *to intend to say*, *to signify*, *to convey*, etc. Whenever emphasis is laid on the fact that one means what one says, it directly conveys the speaker's intention, i.e. his/her assurance that he/she does not conceal anything by his/her words and wishes them to be taken seriously. And this seems also to be the case with the above episode from Chapter VII. Carroll, as has been remarked, suggests a variety of different ways to approach the conceptual relation of *saying* to *meaning* and all of them are psychologically motivated, as, for example, in situations in which Alice recites poems without understanding their meaning (and therefore obviously not meaning the words produced by her) or, vice versa, whenever she does not dare to say something the way she means it, since she knows that otherwise she would appear impolite, as, e.g. in Chapter IX, reflecting about the Duchess' permission to regard everything she says as a kind of present: „A cheap sort of present!" thought Alice. "I'm glad people don't give birthday-presents like that!" But she did not venture to say it out loud."[18] This is a kind of internal meaning which, as Carroll explicitly states, remains unpronounced. Yet all psychological facets of meaning would appear redundant if Alice's assertion, according to which she says what she means (and vice versa), were interpreted à la Wittgenstein, i.e. as „it is impossible to say something without simultaneously meaning it."

The question which arises in light of studies that – similarly to *The Philosopher's Alice* – are explicitly conceived as philosophical approaches to Carroll's book is why they so persistently steer clear of psychology. Hypothetically, this attitude could be interpreted as due to the conviction that psychology bars the way to philosophical abstractions. A philosophical reading may be understood as one which would make the mathematician and logician Carroll reconcile with his original field of

[15] L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue Book*, p. 35.
[16] L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue Book*, p. 41.
[17] L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue Book*, pp. 43-44. The word „meaning" is addressed here primarily as internal meaning, i.e. it corresponds to the verb „to mean" (to be earnest about what one says, to intend smth. by one's words). Much more prominent in Wittgenstein's philosophy is the criticism of semantic meaning in general, which he tries to substitute by the notion of *use*, thus reducing semantics to pragmatics, as, for example, in *Philosophical Investigations* 120, p. 49e: „You say: the point isn't the word, but its meaning, and you think of the meaning as a thing of the same kind as the word, though also different from the word. Here the word, there the meaning. The money, and the cow that you can buy with it. (By contrast: money, and its use..)" I agree with Marcelo Dascal that the notion of „use" does not make much sense when it is applied to substitute meaning and to make the context dominate linguistic expressions entirely: „On this view, communication becomes a guessing game, where the context not only provides the clues to disambiguate or otherwise interpret the expression uttered, but must also provide, regardless of *which* expression is uttered, the initial (as well as final) clue as to what it means." (Marcelo Dascal, „The Language of Thought and the Games of Language", in: Michael Astroh, D. Gerhardus, and G. Heinzma (Eds.), *Dialogisches Handeln: Eine Festschrift für Kuno Lorenz*. Heildeberg: Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, pp. 183-191, here p. 186.)
[18] *Alice*, p. 97.

interests, from which, as it would seem, he distances himself in his *Alice*-books. Thus, the principal aim of a philosophical approach to his literary work would be to make it as accessible to philosophers as his studies on mathematics are to mathematicians. Peter Heath's above quoted monograph contains only short personal commentaries to Carroll's work and seeks to provide an accurate collection of thoughts concerning Carroll that have previously been produced by other philosophers. By contrast, studies by George Pitcher, Warren Shibles and Jean-Jacques Lecercle are much more detailed and may serve as better illustrations of how exactly *Alice* is approached by philosophers and how profitable this reading proves for them in the end.

In George Pitcher's essay „Wittgenstein, Nonsense, and Lewis Carroll" (1965), Wittgenstein and Carroll are said to represent not merely two congenial authors, but ones who are „truly spiritual twins."[19] According to him, it is only to the superficial eye that they might appear as worlds apart[20], since the primary task pursued by both of them is a fierce and uncompromising exposition of nonsense, i.e. of logically erroneous statements that have to be exorcized from philosophy once and for all:

„…the respect in which Wittgenstein and Carroll are most deeply "at one", in which they become true spiritual twins. If any thesis can be said to lie at the heart of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, one of the plausible candidates would certainly be the doctrine that much of the nonsense and puzzlement to be found in philosophy is the direct result of one fundamental kind of mistake – namely, that of wrongly treating a word or phrase as having exactly the same kind of function as another word or phrase, solely on the basis of the fact that they exhibit superficial grammatical similarities."[21]

One of the key-words in this characterization is „mistake": both philosophers are believed to be equally engaged in correcting mistakes, either in the language and thought of their colleagues or, in Carroll's case, in the language of his figures. To back up this idea, Pitcher draws a parallel between Wittgenstein's observation that a transition from some to all is not always meaningful (PI 344, 345) and a scene from *Alice* (Chapter V) in which the Caterpillar asks Alice to recite the poem „You're old, Father William" in order to ascertain what exactly is the trouble with her memory. This poem by Robert Southey with the full title *The Old Man's Comforts and how he gained them* is a highly didactic piece of Victorian literature and represents a dialogue in which an old gentleman instructs a young man how to become virtuous without wasting time. Yet in the version of the poem recited by Alice, there is no trace of the virtues that are praised in the original. Instead of referring to a wise old gentleman, her words suddenly introduce an eccentric, brainless and gluttonous old misfit who, standing on his head, promises his young interlocutor to kick him downstairs for his annoying questions.[22] Alice's poem is thus a parody which is completely stripped off any didacticism and represents an exact opposite of the original. Yet the parody would not make much sense if it did not contain some clearly recognizable allusions to the original. In order to realize that this is a parody, the reader should be provided with connections between both texts and therefore it is by no means strange that Alice's version of the poem retains some of the central motives of the original, e.g. young man's addressing the old one by „You're old, Father William." By producing this parody, Alice proves to the Caterpillar exactly what she wishes to prove, i.e. that her memory is playing tricks on her in Wonderland and the words won't come the way they used to in her normal life. Even though some words in her recitation truly reproduce passages from Southey's poem, the parody may be regarded as a complete reversal of the original, which is pointed out by the Caterpillar immediately after hearing the poem:

„That's not said right," said the Caterpillar.
„Not quite right, I'm afraid," said Alice timidly; „some of the words have got altered."
„It's wrong from beginning to end," said Caterpillar decidedly…"[23]

It seems rather doubtful that in the above passage Carroll intended to expose logical mistakes, either of

[19] G.Pitcher, „Wittgenstein, Nonsense, and Lewis Carroll", in: The Massachusetts Review 1965, pp. 591-611, here pp. 606-607.
[20] *Ibid*., p. 611.
[21] *Ibid*., pp. 606-607.
[22] *Alice*, p. 54.
[23] *Alice*, p. 54.

Alice or of the Caterpillar. Both judgments rest on logical reasoning, only that, as it so often happens throughout the story, the difference between them is psychologically motivated, which is suggested by the use of the respective adverbs „timidly" und „decidedly." Whereas Alice is too much confused to admit that the old man of whom she has just been talking is completely unfamiliar to her and tries to hide her embarrassment behind the fact that some of her words have reproduced the original exactly, the Caterpillar sticks to its direct ways to confront Alice with facts and insists that her poem was completely different to the original, in spite of some words shared by both texts. Pitcher refers to this controversial point, taking the Caterpillar to task for the following logical error:

„…the charge was much too harsh to be intelligible: for although it is quite possible to recite a poem and get some of the words wrong, it is not possible to recite a given poem and get *all* of the words wrong – for then one is not reciting *that poem* at all."[24]

Following Pitcher's argumentation, any poem sharing at least one or a few words (pronouns, conjunctions, particles, etc.) with any other poem should then be understood as a copy (a recitation) of this poem, which does not seem really convincing. I believe that a parallel between the above episode from *Alice* and Wittgenstein's dictum concerning occasional conceptual discontinuities between parts and wholes would rather make sense if the parody pronounced by Alice is understood as completely different to Southey's didactic poem. However, this kind of interpretation would make the Caterpillar appear as logically superior to Alice, which, in turn, would imply yet another psychological contradiction, since the author's sympathy is with Alice rather than with the Caterpillar. The problem with Pitcher's critique of the Caterpillar (as with his various further corrections of Alice and other figures in Carroll's text) is that, in order to underpin his claims concerning spiritual affinities between Wittgenstein and Carroll, he is searching for instances of nonsense even in cases where Carroll would have hardly intended it to be found. In the above episode from Chapter V, it is rather the parody itself, i.e. Alice's sudden and totally unexplainable anti-didacticism which causes a nonsensical effect, and not her or the Caterpillar's reaction to this parody. On the other hand, it would seem to be the most significant difference to Wittgenstein that in his book Carroll never tries to be didactic: he does not aim at instructing, healing and correcting the illogicality of his heroine but sympathetically observes her, as she is going through all the metamorphoses in Wonderland, even if in some grotesque situations, as in the above recitation scene, he cannot help but smile at Alice's embarrassment. Yet the comic effect pertaining to this scene was hardly intended by him as a means of correction or as a critique against nonsense produced by his figures.

The comic element in the *Alice*-books does not escape Pitcher's attention, yet, since he approaches Carroll as Wittgenstein's „true spiritual twin", it defies easy categorization, e.g. in his following commentary to a conversation from Chapter VII („I mean what I say, etc."), in which a new parallel is drawn between Carroll and Wittgenstein's above mentioned theory of internal meanings:

„Wittgenstein regards the picture with suspicion, since it is dangerously apt to mislead the philosopher; Carroll, on the other hand, simply has fun with it. We sometimes – and mothers of young children, quite often – speak of saying something and meaning it ("I told you to put on your overshoes and I *meant* it!"). This form of expression inevitably gives rise to the idea that the *saying* is one thing and the *meaning* it another – a mental act or private feeling or whatever, that accompanies the saying. Wittgenstein argues against this idea: in doing so, he is defending Alice – at least up to a point – against the March Hare and the Mad Hatter…"[25]

Unsurprisingly, the word „fun" refers here to a situation, which is anything but funny for Alice herself and the only plausible explanation of this word usage would be the perception of Alice as one of whom other figures make fun. Pitcher does not display much interest in the reasons why no understanding is reached between the figures in this episode (a failure of communication like in Alice's conversation with the Pigeon in Chapter V) and adjusts the conversation between Alice, the Hatter and the March Hare to Wittgenstein's theory. In doing so, he proceeds similarly to Heath and leaves aside the subject, i.e. the „I" in „I mean what I say." Consequently, the phrase again appears as a generalizing statement which aims at articulating an exact relationship between saying and meaning, so that in the end Alice comes to be seen as a true spiritual twin of the Duchess, i.e. a through and

[24] G. Pitcher, *op. cit.*, p. 600.
[25] G. Pitcher, *op. cit.*, p. 605.

through didactic person who is passionately searching for a moral in everything she sees and who is the accomplished master of generalizations.

In spite of his overall approach to the spiritual affinities between Carroll and Wittgenstein, he observes one following essential difference between them: „it (nonsense – V. V.) tortured Wittgenstein and delighted Carroll. Carroll turned his back on reality and let us happily into his (wonderful) world of myth and fantasy. Wittgenstein, being a philosopher, exerted all his efforts to drag us back to reality from the (horrible) world of myth and fantasy."[26] To sum up, Pitcher's philosophical essay approaches Carroll as an author who, delightedly playing a game of nonsense and turning his back on reality, is fully committed to the same task as Wittgenstein, i.e. to expose and to correct errors and cofusions in his figures' language. Didacticism is thus perceived as the key idea of the *Alice*-books and it is thanks to this particular quality that they would be likely to stir the interest of philosophers.

A further philosophical abstraction of Alice has been produced by Warren Shibles in the chapter „A Philosophical Commentary on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*" of his monograph *Wittgenstein, Language and Philosophy* (1970.) His general approach to the book is similar to that of Pitcher, yet he arrives at far more radical conclusions than his predecessor. Shibles also regards the book as a sum of linguistic errors and the whole journey through Wonderland is seen as one through endless violations of logic: „when ordinary language goes on holiday people get misled. It is seen that this is exactly what happens to Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* and it happens as she continually bumps her head against the limits of language."[27] His commentary to the book is preceded by some of the major ideas of Wittgenstein's philosophy, e.g. that a meaning of a word is its use, and that metaphors should generally be viewed by philosophers with particular skepticism[28]. In essence, being quite similar to Pitcher's essay, the work produced by Shibles is intended to help its readers penetrate into the very depth of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and internalize his great aversion towards metaphysical speculations. The following passage from his commentary to the beginning of Chapter VI „Pig and Pepper" may illustrate Shilbles' congeniality with Wittgenstein concerning metaphysics:

„Alice's question "How am I to get in (the door)?" assumes that she is to get in at all. This reminds us of such questions we ask as "Who created the world?" which assumes that somebody did create it. But possibly no one created the world and we don't know what it would be like for a person to create it."[29]

In Shibles' work, the space of Wonderland is being transformed into a kind of Purgatory in which mental confusions as reflected in questions like who created the world have to be effectively eliminated. Among other things, he considers *Alice* to be a practicable manual against literalness. The same Chapter VI in which Alice expresses her hope that the March Hare will not be raving mad, as this is May, „at least not so mad as it was in March"[30], inspires Shibles to the following idea:

"But certainly, "mad as a March hare" and "mad as a Hatter" are loose expressions not to be taken too literally. Do not ask if a hare is literally mad in March but not in May. One is reminded of Brueghel's painting of Netherland proverbs which renders various sayings literally."[31]

In these reflections, he seems to overlook that literalness represents one of the most fundamental plot constituting categories in the book. In general, not being really interested in its textual organization, he rather seeks to figure out what can be gained from reading *Alice* in order to conjure up the spirit of Wittgenstein. One of his remarkable findings referring again to the episode from Chapter VII („I mean what I say", etc.) and linking it, as was the case with the readings by Heath and Pitcher, with

[26] G. Pitcher, *op. cit*., p. 611.
[27] Warren A. Shibles *Wittgenstein, Language and Philosophy*, Dubuque: Kendall Hunt 1970, p. v.
[28] W. Shibles, *op. cit*., p. 5. The actually highly ambivalent attitude of Wittgenstein towards metaphor has attracted lots of scholarly attention. See, for example, Jerry H. Gill (Ed.), *Wittgenstein and Metaphor*, Washington D. C.: Univ. Pr. of America (1981) as well as Ulrich Arnswald, Jens Kertscher, Matthias Kroß (Eds.), *Wittgenstein und die Metapher*, Berlin: Parerga (2004).
[29] W. Shibles, *op. cit*., p. 22.
[30] *Alice*, p. 69.
[31] W. Shibles, *op. cit*., p. 23.

Wittgenstein's critique of internal meanings[32], interprets it as a confirmation of Carroll's extremely cautious attitude to literalness:

"Less theoretically we do differentiate between "I mean what I say" and "I say what I mean." That is, we use them in different contexts. They only cause problems if we begin to look into them or try to take them literally and ask, for instance, "How do I mean what I say or say what I mean?""[33]

The interpretation that I proposed above for the conversation from Chapter VII, in which the statements produced by Alice and the Dormouse were understood as literal ones and therefore conceptually different to those of the Hatter and the March Hare, can certainly not be corroborated by Shibles' analysis, since he dismisses literalness in general as a confusing category. And again similarly to Pitcher, by justifying Alice's statement as being quite in line with Wittgenstein's critique of internal meanings, he neutralizes any subjectivity pertaining to her words and makes them appear as a general judgment about language. The final result of his philosophical abstraction is also highly didactic, more specifically it is again a critique of language, in which language is stripped off any connections with the psychology of the related figures and appears as an abstraction used as a measure of correct thinking. Thus, the primary practical task of Shibles is to point out and to correct the manifold errors in the language and thought of Carroll's figures and in his compulsion to correct he proves absolutely merciless, so that among all the inhabitants of Wonderland there is hardly anyone who is permitted to continue speaking the way designed for them by Carroll. For example, while reflecting upon the conversation between Alice and the Cheshire-Cat from Chapter VI, in which Alice asks the Cat which way she ought to go and is assured that she will get somewhere if only she walks long enough[34], Shibles kills two birds with one stone by correcting both Alice's question and the Cat's answer, for: „Of couse, walking „long enough" has nothing to do with getting „somewhere"[35]. It is not quite clear to what authority the „of course" is supposed to refer here, since in the given context, the meaning of *somewhere* is close to *everywhere* and, at least retrospectively, after having arrived *somewhere*, Alice is sure to see that she has been walking *long enough* to reach this point. Or, to give one more example of the language critique by Shibles, in his comment to the question of the Dormouse if Alice has ever seen such a thing as a drawing of a muchness[36], he elaborates on what would seem to be among the greatest blunders of humans in general:

"Muchness is obviously incorrectly regarded here as a thing instead of a modifier… Not being a thing "much" cannot be drawn (much less drawn from a well). Neither can we draw memory. To this we may add that neither our internal states nor objects such as invisible ghosts or God can be drawn. But why would one want to draw them? …Carroll seems to suggest that what thought is and, if it is anything, how it relates to language is not at all clear. The problem may be so deep because we are misled into looking for entities where there are none, and asking improper or meaningless questions."[37]

It can hardly be conclusively answered if the philosopher seriously intended to determine in this passage what exactly has driven, e.g. Dürer to produce his *Melancholie* or Michelangelo to paint the *Creazione di Adamo*. Shibles may have meant it rather as a rhetorical figure that would provide his analysis with more persuasive power. However that may be, it is remarkable how much is negated by these words: not merely the visual arts which are automatically made inexistent, but at the same time also the actual source of arts, the spirit (the invisible), the imagination as well as the possibilities of a medium in which the spiritual can manifest itself, - the language. This kind of philosophy of language does not only attest to a deep aversion towards metaphysics as well as to serious doubts about spiritual matters: these doubts primarily concern the language itself, its capacity not merely to provide means to

[32] Among further investigations on Lewis Carroll in the context of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, the most detailed are the essays by David Wagner „The uses of nonsense: Ludwig Wittgenstein reads Lewis Carroll", in: *Wittgenstein-Studien*, Vol. 3, No.1, pp. 202-216 (2012) and by Leila S. May, „Wittgenstein's Reflection in Lewis Carroll's *Looking Glass*", in: *Philosophy and Literature*, Vol 31, pp. 79-94 (2007), both focusing on the issue of nonsense and the concept of language games.
[33] W. Shibles, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[34] *Alice*, p. 67.
[35] W. Shibles, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[36] *Alice*, p. 80.
[37] W. Shibles, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

refer to the visible reality, but also to extend this reality and to make man gain access to what is invisible.

The episode from the *Alice*-book which has given rise to so much skepticism in Shibles' essay might primarily be seen as an act of fantasy and as an appeal to Alice's and the reader's ability to imagine the picture of the „much of a muchness", i.e. of an expression that people normally use without noticing the peculiarity of its form and idea. The same holds good for a great number of further episodes in the book, in which Carroll appeals to the readers' linguistic fantasy and tries to make them rediscover images even behind idioms that normally might appear quite inconspicuous as, e.g. *falling asleep, killing the time, mad as a March hare*, etc.. Expressions like these may equally be reproached for referring to entities „where there are none", yet, stirring the associative thinking, they enable man to recognize connections between phenomena that are seemingly unrelated. Following this way of thinking, sooner or later, one is probably likely to get back to metaphysics, which is so severely negated by Shibles. Yet the point here is not to correct Shibles, i.e. not to provide a negation of another negation, but rather the question concerning possibilities to interpret what in the philosophers' criticism appears as a source of errors and as in need of correction, on the contrary, as a promising chance for cognition and communication.

The keen interest with which Carroll's work is usually met among philosophers has already been discussed in various studies. In his monograph *Philosophy of Nonsense: The Intuitions of Victorian Nonsense Literature* (1994), Jean-Jacques Lecercle makes the following enthusiastic observation concerning this particular fascination: „we understand why Carroll is the philosopher's favourite teller of tales, why he provides an inexhaustible fund of quotations and episodes for illustration and analysis…"[38] According to Lecercle, it is all too easy to understand the philosophers' fascination with the *Alice*-books, since nonsense alone implies a good deal of language philosophy[39]. Joining the philosophical discussions of *Alice*, he provides in his book his personal theory of nonsense as well as of its significance for Carroll's aesthetics. The following passage from his interpretation of the conversation from Chapter VII („at least I mean what I say, etc.") may illustrate that he also regards the book primarily as one that needs to be thoroughly checked for mistakes and Carroll – as an author who virtually insists that the mistakes of his figures should be carefully collected and corrected by logicians:

„Alice has become seriously muddled. She has made a gross mistake. Linguistic inversion does not preserve meaning, as the Hatter, soon followed by the March Hare and the Dormouse, tells her in no uncertain terms…In spite of our natural antipathy for the Hatter, we must confess he is right. 'I say what I mean' is not the same thing as 'I mean what I say'. But on the other hand, we may also understand Alice. She is speaking a natural, not a logical, language, where the situation is not clear cut…In fact, in a natural language, rather than a straightforward logical opposition we will have a gradation of semantic differences. 'I eat what I see' is clearly different from 'I see what I eat.' What about 'I eat what I chew' and 'I chew what I eat'?"[40]

In my above interpretation of the conversation, I suggested that linguistic inversion is not necessarily accompanied by changes in semantics, neither in literal statements (Alice; the Dormouse) nor in the figurative ones (the Hatter; the March Hare.) Therefore I do not think that it is mandatory to discuss the episode as one that is marked by logical errors. In essence, Lecercle follows his philosophical predecessors, even though he does not explicitly mention Wittgenstein. What is striking is that while discussing the changes caused by the linguistic inversion, he mentions the words produced by the Dormouse alongside those of the Hatter and the March Hare, although the proposition made by the Dormouse reproduces the same semantical pattern as that of Alice, which is why it is turned down by the Hatter and the matter is dropped in the end.

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[38] J.-J. Lecercle, *op. cit*., p. 115.

[39] *Ibid*., p. 115.

[40] *Ibid*., p. 121. Cf. another critical interpretation of the passage provided by Robert D. Sutherland, *Language and Lewis Carroll*, The Hague/Paris – Mouton 1970, p. 193: "But she (Alice) makes the error of assuming that the converse, 'I mean what I say', has the same import as her original statement, 'I say what I mean'. The Hatter and Hare are quick to point out that technical converses do not necessarily have the same meaning: 'I see what I eat' is not equivalent in import to 'I eat what I see'. A further complexity is introduced by Carroll when the Hatter declares that the Dormouse's pair of converses, 'I breathe when I sleep' and 'I sleep when I breathe', are, when predicated of the Dormouse, "the same thing". Both statements may indeed be true when predicated of the Dormouse; but their being able to be applied to him with equal validity does not signify that the meanings of the two expressions are the same. Each has its own logical import."

On the other hand, it is also remarkable how uneven Lecercle's critical judgment is pronounced: he begins it by discussing „a gross mistake" committed by Alice and some lines later produces a much more moderate correction, full with sympathy with Alice's language, which is said to be not logical but natural. Defending this approach, Lecercle provides a list of further examples of „natural" statements that are intended to illustrate „a gradation of semantic differences" rather than „a logical opposition." The above comparison of 'I eat what I chew' and 'I chew what I eat' is followed by 'I breathe when I'm alive' vs. 'I'm alive when I breathe'[41] and 'I espy what I catch sight of' vs. 'I catch sight of what I espy.'[42] The conclusion at which Lecerlce arrives in the end is quite optimistic: „we must admit that inversion does preserve meaning, unless we deny the possibility of synonyms."[43] Yet however abundant the examples of semantical gradations in natural languages may be, the whole list might appear redundant considering the fact that Carroll's text in itself is clear enough to interpret the statements of the parties to the dispute (e.g. „I see what I eat" and „I eat what I see") as synonymous and not necessarily as mutually contradicting in terms of logic.

What in Lecercle's opinion may be opposed to Alice's language is a „careful" language of philosophers[44]. By „careful" he might have meant a well-considered, cautious, moderate way of using words, which would seem certainly correct, since all the above mentioned authors of philosophical commentaries to Carroll display a detached, cautious and markedly didactic style of writing. Even though not all of their points and corrections may appear convincing, the way of their argumentation can definitely be opposed to the „natural" language of Alice, which, so far my impression, is one of the main reasons for the great irritations produced by the language of Carroll's figures on philosophical critics, for writing the *Alice*-books, Carroll essentially performs an act of self-estrangement, distancing himself from logic as the necessary measure of correct language and thought. When, for example, he makes the Caterpillar advise that Alice should break off two pieces from different sides of a perfectly round mushroom, eating which she would become able to control her growing taller and smaller, there is no way to determine at which point each of these different sides begins. From the purely mathematical (and logical) perspective, the situation is extremely dangerous for Alice since one of the two theoretically possible mistakes would make her disappear completely, i.e. reduce her size to zero. Yet neither the Caterpillar nor Alice wastes any time thinking about mathematics and the possibilities to master the puzzle, e.g. by drawing a straight line through the middle of the circle, which does not appear as a logical error, since in the end it proves enough for Alice simply to stretch her arms round it „as far as they would go"[45] in order to get hold of two different pieces. This is not to say that the episode would not be interesting for logicians. Yet logic does not play in it the role of the only dependable criterion of judgement and for this reason it would seem that in all the philosophical essays mentioned above it is not only the language of various figures in the *Alice*-books which is exposed to criticism and corrections, but also one of the fundamental features of Carroll, i.e. the ability to take a step back and to reflect upon himself with irony, not performing the role of a logician who is neutrally observing and commenting on what is happening in his story, but making logic, mathematics and language appear as major sources of wit and humor.

II.

A significant difference in the approach to Carroll's text between philosophical critics and translators is, of course, that the translators have to accept all the linguistic and logical challenges which – in spite of the great fascination the *Alice*-books exert on the philosophers - are met with criticism and exposed to corrections in the above mentioned philosophical commentaries. I have never come across any translations in which the language of Carroll's figures would be polished according to the laws of logic and the probably most felicitous renditions are exactly those whose authors seek to be congenial with Carroll and employ their language imagination even in the most desperate situations, in which language, at first sight, does not provide any solutions for an adequate rendition, as, e.g. in the story told by the Dormouse about three sisters who were living at the bottom of a well:

[41] *Ibid*., p. 122.
[42] *Ibid*., p. 122.
[43] *Ibid*., p. 122.
[44] *Ibid*., p. 120.
[45] *Alice*, p. 55.

„and they drew all manner of things – everything that begins with an M – “ “Why with an M?” said Alice. “Why not?” said the March Hare…(The Dormouse went on:) ”- that begins with an M, such as mouse-traps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness – you know they say things are ‘much of a muchness’ – did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness!” “Really, now you ask me,” said Alice very much confused, “I don’t think– “ “Then you shouldn’t talk,” said the Hatter.[46]

Consider the following version of this passage provided by Zhao Yuanren (p. 97):

她们吸许多样东西——样样东西只要是‘呣’字声音的——” 阿丽思道，“为什么要‘呣’字声音呢？” 那三月兔道，“为什么不要？” …“样样东西只要是呣字声音的，譬如猫儿，明 月，梦，满满儿——你不是常说满满儿的吗——你可曾看见过满满儿的儿子是什么样子？”阿丽思更被它说糊涂了，她道，“老实话，你问起我来，我倒没想到——” 那帽匠插嘴道，“既然没想到，就不该说话。
(„They drew all kinds of things, everything that begins with the sound of the character 呣 (m).” Alice said: „Why with the sound of the character 呣 (m)?” The March Hare said: „Why not?” … (The Dormouse continued:) „All kinds of things that begin with the sound of the character 呣 (m), such as a cat (mao‘er), the bright moon (ming yue), dreams (meng), plentifulness (manmanerde). Don’t you often say that „things are plentiful“. Have you ever seen what the ‘ful’ of plentiful looks like?” Alice was still more confused and said: „To be honest, as you ask me now, I would never have thought –“ The Hatter interrupted her and said: “In this case you should not talk.”)

A careful back-translation of the passage also requires much linguistic imagination since the wonderful invention of the Chinese translator for „a drawing of muchness” has the literal meaning of „What does the son of plentifulness look like?” The word „plentiful“ (*manmanerde*) contains in the Beijing dialect the suffix „儿 er“, just like the suffix „ful” is part of the word „plentiful“ in English. Zhao separates this suffix from the stem of the Chinese word and puts it together with a new suffix „子 zi”. This new combination means „son” (*erzi* 儿子) and simultaneously sounds similar to the „*character er*” (*erzi* 儿字.) Thus, an English rendition of Zhao’s word-play, which sounds so natural and witty in Chinese, would hardly be possible without a long commentary. Among other possibilities of translating it would be, e.g. „What do the knees of muchness look like?” (However, the obvious problem with this last version is that the noun „knees” ends with a voiced consonant, whereas the [s] in „muchness” is voiceless.) Both of the non-literal renditions would aim at paying tribute to Zhao’s inventiveness, just as his version does to Carroll’s wit. Of course, Zhao’s linguistic finding has been produced by his imagination and does not aim at a literal rendition of the original. All the other translators who chose the same strategy of rendering this passage have provided their own individual inventions for „a drawing of muchness“, e.g. Zhu Jie 朱洁 (p. 102) makes the sisters in the well draw objects that begin with a [č] *changge* 唱歌 (*singing*), 差不多 *chabuduo* (*quite similar*); in Ma Teng’s (p.67) rendition the corresponding objects begin – graphically – with the character *lao* 老 (*old*) and the last unit in his series is *laoduo* 老多 (*a great many*.) The arguably most mysterious Chinese translation of this passage has been provided by Chen Fuan (p. 117): here, it is impossible to understand, in what way things begin with an “M” – as Chen translates it – since the series of things which are enumerated by the Dormouse does not contain any single one with an [m] as its initial sound. His series is: *haozijia* (*mouse-trap*), *yueliang* (*moon*), *jiyi* (*memory*), *duobanxiangtong* (*much of a muchness*.) It is only by means of a back-translation that the reader can guess the idea behind Chen’s strategy: he translates Carroll’s series directly and does not bother to seek for a series of objects which would correspond to Carroll’s idea, thus providing a completely incomprehensible Chinese version of this passage.

By comparing all these back-translations of the passage, one is confronted with a vast variety of quite different readings, which is similar to the situation with Warren Weaver, who, being impressed by great differences between some Japanese versions of Carroll’s work, reached the conclusion that Japanese suffered from being substantially different from English. [47] However, as the above Chinese versions reveal, the problem in similar cases does not arise from the structure and the semantics of languages into which Carroll (or anyone else) is translated, but rather from the translation strategy.

[46] *Alice*, p. 80.
[47] Warren Weaver, *Alice in Many Tongues: The Translations of Alice in Wonderland*, Madison: The Univ. of Wisconsin Press 1964, p. 108: „(Japanese) seems to suffer from the fact that this language communicates in a way which is really substantially different from English.”

The most infelicitous among the four Chinese versions quoted above is, in my view, the one produced by a translator who did not feel free to let his imagination work and confronted the Chinese readers with a totally incomprehensible set of words. By contrast, the other three versions display much more freedom: their authors followed Carroll's technique and, having found suiting semantical equivalents for the word-play, produced texts that are perfectly understandable for any reader of Chinese.

Among the translations of the passage into other languages, the closest to the original are the French ones produced by Jean-Pierre Berman and Laurent Paul Sueur, as both of them have found the way to reproduce both the initial sound of the series in the original and the semantics of its units, cf. Berman (p. 169): „machines-attrape souris, et morceau de lune, et mémoire, et du „même““ („mouse-traps, and a piece of the moon, and memory, and muchness") and Suer (a freer rendition of semantics): „maison, Mars, mémoire ou multitude" („a house, Mars, memory or muchness.")

The original passage is peculiar insofar as – similarly to the episode with the Mouse's tail in Chapter III – its meaning relies on the graphical design of the text and, because of this, translating it requires an exact interpretation of the capital „M" with which „all manner of things" begins in the story told by the Dormouse, i.e. whether it is to be understood as a sound, a letter, a letter name or (for Chinese) as a character. In the original, as in most renditions of the *Alice*, the „M" stands for a letter, but not for a letter name. Even though some translators chose a different letter by which to begin their respective series, e.g. the „S" in the German version by Enzensberger which refers to the *Schnapphase*, i.e. the March Hare, most of them are not concerned with the name of this letter. The only exception which I have been able to find in European languages is the Russian version prepared by Ščerbakov (p. 98), in which the series is rendered as follows: „**эм**блемы, **эм**али, **эм**иров, **эм**оции".[48] Here, the initial sound is an open [ɛ] and not an [m] and the translation rests on interpreting the „M" as the name of a letter which in Russian is called „em", exactly like in English. All the examples taken by Ščerbakov are semantic loans from Latin, so that by retranslating the whole sequence from Russian we get a perfectly neat set of English correspondences: *emblems*, *email*, *emirs*, and *emotions*. This rendition also results from the translator's imagination and represents an individual and original way of reading and reproducing the story[49].

The question which the Dormouse asks Alice (whether she has ever seen something like a drawing of a muchness) puzzles her, so that she, as so often within this chapter, does not know how to react to it. Similar puzzlements resulting from language surprises are in every particular case intended rather than incidental and every time they pose significant difficulties for translators since their task is not merely to show that Alice is puzzled and that words fail her but to make it comprehensible for the reader why exactly she is confused, which again requires much creative imagination. One of the probably simplest cases of this kind is the riddle posed by the Hatter: „Why is a raven like a writing-desk?"[50]

The Chinese and Japanese renditions of this phrase do not show significant variations of meaning. For example, Tada Kōzō's version (p. 88) 黒鴉が書きもの机に似てるのはなぜだい？, being a literal rendition of the riddle, contains the particle *dai* which makes it sound somewhat less direct than Seriu Hajime's (p. 128) カラスとつくえと似ているの、なあぜだ。 In the versions produced by Zhao Yuanren (p. 85, 为什么一个老鸦象一张书桌子?) and by Ma Teng (p. 60, 一只乌鸦为什么会像一张写字台呢?), the singular semantics of the *raven* and the *writing-desk* is made explicit, whereas Chen Fuan (p. 103) does not use any indications of number semantics and his version (为什么乌鸦象书桌？) may equally well be back-translated either in singular or in plural („Why are ravens like writing-desks?")

By contrast, the renditions into Western languages that I have consulted display more differences and in every particular case it is crucial, how exactly the translators conceive of the possible solution to the riddle. Whenever the solution is seen in the initial consonant of both nouns, the translators search for some fitting combinations of words, e.g. A. Zimmermann (p. 46): „Warum ist ein Rabe wie

[48] Bold italics are mine.

[49] By contrast, quite a natural approach to the „M" as a letter name is displayed by the translators into Japanese, in which a syllabic writing system is used, so that the respective linguistic objects in the Japanese versions automatically begin with a name of a letter, e.g. in Shōno Kōkichi (p. 113): *ne de hajimaru mono* ネではじまるもの „things that begin with the letter *ne*", Seriu Hajime (p. 143, the same rendition), Waki Akiko (p. 103): *sa de hajimaru mono* さではじまるもの „things that begin with the letter *sa*", etc.

[50] *Alice*, p. 73.

ein Reitersmann?“ („Why is a raven like a horseman?”) and Henry Bué (p. 100): “Pourquoi une pie ressemble-t-elle à un pupitre?” („Why is a magpie like a writing-desk?”) Quite a special case is represented, on the other hand, by the versions, which make the riddle refer to differences between two objects, as, e.g. in C. Enzensberger’s (p. 70): „Was ist der Unterschied zwischen einem Raben und einem Schreibtisch?“ („What is the difference between a raven and a writing-desk?”) as well as in B. Zachoder’s (p. 77): „Какая разница между пуганой вороной и письменным столом?“ („What is the difference between a scared crow and a writing-desk?”) Finally, in extremely rare cases, the objects referred to in the original have been substituted by the translators for completely different ones, as, e.g. in Ščerbakov’s (p. 89): "Что общего между скамейкой и торговым заведением?” („Why is a bench like a commercial institution?”)

The conversation that has been in the focus of the first part of this chapter also belongs to the puzzling situations, in which Alice is completely confused by the statements produced by her new acquaintances, among other things, by the Hatter’s and the March Hare’s attempts to convince her that saying „I mean what I say” is different to „I say what I mean.” Although, this particular passage does not confront translators with great challenges, some of them have produced versions, which have little in common with the original, e.g. Zachoder (p. 77) makes the Hare pronounce the following correction: „You might just as well say that ‘I learn what I do not know’ is the same thing as ‘I do not know what I do not learn’.” («Я учу то, чего не знаю.» // «Я не знаю того, чего не учу.») This would seem to be one of the frequently recurring cases, in which Zachoder seeks to adapt the text to children’s understanding, as, for example, he also does in another episode from Chapter VII, in which the March Hare encourages Alice to „have some wine.”[51] In Zachoder’s text (p. 76) *wine* has been replaced with *a piece of cake*. Similarly, much freedom in the reproduction of the conversation is displayed by Nabokov who simply cuts out the March Hare’s statement („You might just as well say that ‚I like what I get‘ is the same thing as ‚I get what I like‘.“) The issue of the relationship between *saying* and *meaning* is given by Nabokov (p. 60) also a completely new rendition, which is not motivated linguistically, i.e. by the power of the Russian picture of the world, but rather by his individual interpretation of the passage:

„А Вы знаете, что говорите?“ спросил Мартовский заяц.
„Конечно“, поспешно ответила Аня. „По крайней мере, я говорю, что знаю. Ведь это то же самое.“
„И совсем не то же самое“, воскликнул Шляпник. „Разве можно сказать „Я вижу, что ем“ вместо „я ем, что вижу“?“
„Разве можно сказать“, пробормотал Соня, словно разговаривая во сне, „Я дышу, пока сплю“ вместо „я сплю, пока дышу“?“
(„And do you know what you are talking about?”- said the March Hare.
„I do,” Ann hastily replied. „At least I say what I know. It’s the same thing, isn’t it?”
„Not the same thing a bit!” said the Hatter. “Would it be possible to say “I see what I eat” for “I eat what I see”?)
“Would it be possible to say,” muttered the Dormouse, which seemed to be talking in its sleep, „I breathe when I sleep” for “I sleep when I breathe?”)

Nabokov not merely cuts one of the statements of the March Hare, but also changes the semantics of the verb in its first question: instead of „to mean“ (думать), Nabokov takes here the verb „to know“ (знать), which underscores Alice’s perseverance and self-assurance, that is, qualities that are quite different to the honesty suggested by her words in the original. The symmetry of the form, peculiar to the whole conversation, i.e. the possibility to interpret it as a parallel sequence of literal and figurative statements, as has been discussed in the introductory part, has also been abandoned in this Russian version. It cannot conclusively be answered what exactly caused Nabokov to come up with such an unusual reading, yet whatever it may have been, it was certainly not the influence of semantic im/possibilities of Russian or the complexity of the original. By contrast, the following episode from Chapter VII generally proves as a real challenge for translators due to its complexity:

““What a funny watch!” she remarked. “It tells the day of the month and doesn’t tell what o’clock it is!” “Why should it?” muttered the Hatter. “Does *your* watch tell you what year it is?” „Of course not,” Alice replied very readily: „but that’s because it stays the same year for such a long time together.” “Which is just the case with

[51] *Alice*, p. 72.

mine," said the Hatter. Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter's remark seemed to her to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English."[52]

The above episode shortly precedes the Hatter's story about a court concert two months before: at the concert, he was singing a song (*Twinkle, twinkle, little bat, etc*.) that was met with great dissatisfaction by the Queen and interpreted by her – literally – as a gross insult of time. Following the Queen's judgment („He's murdering the time!"[53]), time becomes personified, i.e. it turns into one of the most important figures of the story that have actually been insulted and reacts to it accordingly: *he*[54] won't move on any longer, so that it is always six o'clock at the Mad Tea party. Whereas in Alice's perception of the world, time is an objective category, moving at an equal pace for everybody, the Hatter's personal experience with it is completely different. However, in the above quote, Alice has more than one reason for being puzzled: first, she has not yet learned anything about the concert given by the Queen or about its consequences, and, second, due to the author's play with pronominal semantics – the possibility to interpret the respective pronouns either as referential or as expletive ("dummy pronouns") ones – the formulation of the Hatter's speech is anything but unambiguous. „Your" in his question to Alice is referential, yet „it" is expletive; in Alice's reply („it stays the same year for such a long time"), „it" is also used expletively, i.e. it is taken to fulfil syntactical requirements only. However, this pronoun is the subject in Alice's phrase and the problem in Hatter's reply to it ("Which is just the case with *mine*.") is that *mine* – which is never expletive - cannot be definitely related either to the "it" or to the nouns "year" // "time" in Alice's sentence. The equivocal use of the pronoun *mine* by the Hatter can be associated either with his watch, or with time, but in both of these instances the relation is not a definite one, which fully accounts for Alice's confusion.

Rendering this episode, translators are therefore required to reproduce a dialogue that is obviously marked by ambiguity and to make it plausible for readers why Alice cannot follow the words produced by the Hatter. In effect, this time, Alice's confusion has proved to be quite an uphill task for a number of translators. Consider the following Chinese rendition of the passage by Zhao Yuanren (p.89):

"你的表会告诉你什么年吗？"阿丽思很容易地答道，"自然不会，那可是因为我们能够许许多多时候在同一个年里不换年的缘故。"那帽匠道，"就跟我的情形简直—样。"阿丽思觉得这话很不明白。她觉得那帽匠那句话一点什么意思都没有，可是听又象好好的一句话。
(„Can your watch tell you what year it is?" Alice replied promptly: "Of course not, because we can stay within the same year for a very long time." The Hatter said: "That's exactly the case with me." Alice could not understand these words. To her, the Hatter's phrase did not have any sense at all, and yet it sounded quite correct.")

In Zhao's version, there is nothing ambiguous about the Hatter's words: he actually agrees with Alice's statement and admits that his situation is exactly the same as with everyone else. Since the pronoun *wo* 我 (*me*) in the Hatter's reply is perfectly in accord with Alice's *women* 我们 (*we*, referring to all people, people in general), Alice does not have any reason to be puzzled. Another Chinese rendition, prepared by Chen Fuan (p. 105) reads as follows:

"当然不，"阿丽思立即回答道，"可这是因为一年的时间是那么长呀。""我的表也正是这样，"帽匠说。阿丽思觉得非常不明白。她觉得帽匠的这句话似乎没有什么意思，可又确实是英国话。
(„Of course not", Alice replied hastily, „but it's because a year lasts for such a long time." The Hatter said: "That's exactly the case with my watch." Alice could not understand it at all. To her, there was no sense in the Hatter's words and yet it was certainly English.")

In this rendition, Alice again should not be irritated by the Hatter, since he makes it quite explicit that his watch is no exception to what she has just said: as any other watch, his is one for which a year lasts too long to be told extra, in addition to hours and minutes. By contrast, Alice's confusion seems plausible enough in the following translation by Ma Teng (p. 61-63):

[52] *Alice*, p. 73.
[53] *Alice*, p. 77.
[54] *Alice*, p. 75: „If you knew Time as well as I do," said the Hatter, "you wouldn't talk about wasting it. It's *him*."

“你的表告诉你今年是哪一年吗？”“当然不会阿，”爱丽丝马上回答道，“可是很长一段时间里，年份是同一个年份呢。”“这个情况和我的表不报时间是同一个原因。”帽匠说。爱丽丝被帽匠的话弄得莫名其妙，这句话听起来很难和之前的话联系起来，然而这句话是地地道道的英语。
(„Does your watch tell you what year it is now?” “Of course not,” Alice replied promptly. “It stays the same year for a very long time.” “That’s exactly the reason why my watch does not tell what o’clock it is,” said the Hatter. Alice was very puzzled by this, as it was absolutely difficult to link it to what he had previously said, and yet it was obviously English.)

The logical inconsistency, which has intentionally been added by the translator to the Hatter’s statement, is the following: his watch is said not to tell the time for exactly the same reason why, in the eyes of Alice, watches usually do not tell what year it is. The fact that, by saying this, the Hatter is only seemingly inconsistent is explained by him to Alice shortly afterwards in his story about the concert given by the Queen. In Ma’s rendition, close attention is paid to Alice’s reactions to the language and logic of other figures: it is made quite comprehensible what exactly Alice cannot understand, and for this reason Ma’s version of this particular passage may be regarded as by far more reader-friendly than the ones by Zhao and Chen. Yet different to the original, the confusing effect is achieved in Ma’s text not by the use of pronouns and thus represents a purely individual creation. Actually, it would seem that in this particular episode Chinese and Japanese are better suited for reproducing the original confusion of pronominal semantics than, say, Italian, French or Russian since in Chinese and Japanese the gender of objects, to which possessive pronouns refer, is not indicated. However, as illustrated above by some examples in Chinese, translators prove not always conscious of this formal affinity with English. The easiness, with which they may come really very near to the demands of the original, can be demonstrated by Tada Kōzō’s (p. 90) Japanese rendition:

「だけど、それは長いこと年が変わらないからよ」「わしのがちょうどそんな具合さ」と帽子屋が言いました。アリスはおそろしくまごついてしまいました。帽子屋のことばはなんの意味もないように思われたけれど、たしかに英語ではあるのです。
(„But this is because years do not change for such a long time!” “That’s exactly the case with mine,” said the Hatter. Alice was terribly confused. There seemed to be absolutely no meaning in the words of the Hatter, and yet it was certainly English.”)

Here, the pronoun *washi no* わしの produces the same effect as *mine* in the original, so that the translator does not need any additional inventions in order to reproduce an exact copy of the original. By contrast, in languages, in which the gender of objects is automatically formally marked in the pronominal inflections, it is much more complicated to achieve a similar closeness. Consider the following French version by Laurent Paul Sueur:

““Est-ce que ta montre à toi t’indique l’année?” “Bien sûr que non”, répondit Alice sans hésiter; “mais c’est parce qu’elle reste dans la même année pendant très longtemps”. “Ce qui est exactement le cas de ma montre”, affirma le chapelier.”
(“Does your watch tell you the year?” “Of course not,” Alice replied without hesitation. “But that’s because it (=the watch-V. V.) remains in (sic) the same year for so long.” “That’s exactly the case with my watch,” maintained the Hatter.”)

It may easily be seen, that in this version nothing is reminiscent of the original play with pronominal semantics, since it is quite clear to what objects all the pronouns refer: in the phrase pronounced by Alice, *elle* (*it*) refers to *the watch* (*montre*), and in the Hatter’s words, *ma* (*my*) refers also as clearly to his *watch*. Thus, the idea of the original gets lost and the one who would surely have all the reasons to be confused by the dialogue’s progress is not Alice but rather the French reader, being unable to understand what has caused Alice’s irritation about the Hatter’s remark. It would be redundant to produce further illustrations of formal categories that in languages like French impede a true reproduction of the ambiguity in this passage. Yet it should be pointed out that in spite of all the existing formal difficulties, it is still possible to find a logical solution to the problem, as is shown in the following translation by Nabokov (p. 61) into Russian where the gender of objects in singular, to which possessive pronouns refer, is also always made explicit in the pronominal inflexions:

“Ну и что же,“ пробормотал Шляпник. „Или по Вашим часам можно узнать время года?“ „Разумеется, нет,“ бойко ответила Аня. „Ведь один и тот же год держится так долго.“ „В том–то и штука,“ проговорил Шляпник. Аня была ужасно озадачена. Объяснение Шляпника не имело, казалось, никакого смысла, а вместе с тем слова были самые простые. ”
(““Now what?” muttered the Hatter. “Does your watch tell you what season it is?” “Of course, not,” Anja replied promptly, “It’s because one year lasts for a very long time.” - “And that’s exactly where the trouble begins,”- said the Hatter. Anja was terribly puzzled. The explanation given by the Hatter did not make any sense, and yet the words in it sounded quite simple.”)

Nabokov resorts here to an unexpected twist, the idea of which has little to do with the pronominal forms: by making the Hatter complain about the course of time *before* Alice learns how he once „murdered the time” at the Queen’s concert, the translator creates a context in which Alice’s confusion would appear quite conceivable.

The insult of Time is an episode which provides particularly ample food for linguistic imagination. On the one hand, it refers to the complex semantic field of „time” and requires an intensive search for metaphors, which would match the ones used in the original; on the other hand, it is the issue of the male gender attributed by the Hatter to the time/Time in his story that makes it difficult to maintain closeness to the original. The episode reads as follows:

„I think you might do something better with the time,” she said, „than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers.”
“If you knew Time as well as I do,” said the Hatter, “you wouldn’t talk about wasting *it*. It’s *him*.”
“I don’t know what you mean,” said Alice.
“Of course you don’t!” the Hatter said, tossing his head contemptuously. “I dare say you never spoke to Time!”
“Perhaps not,” Alice cautiously replied: “But I know how to beat time when I learn music.”
“Ah that accounts for it,” said the Hatter. “He wo’n’t stand beating.”[55]

Shortly afterwards, the Hatter tells about his bad luck at the Queen’s concert and about the Queen having blamed him for murdering the time[56]. Thus, on the whole, the episode contains three expressions that suggest a rather unfriendly management of time: *wasting time*, *beating time*, and *murdering* (or *killing*) *the time*. Of course, the second expression (*beating time*) does not have any negative connotations in the normal usage, yet the Hatter is playing with the polysemy of the verb *to beat*. He takes it to mean *to hit* (instead of *to mark the rhythm*) and insists that Time – Father Time – is a living being which would surely not like being beaten.

Every language possesses a set number of semantic possibilities to express unkindness towards time: e.g. in Japanese, *time* can be *squandered* (*tsubusu* 潰す), it can be *lost* (*ushinau* 失う), but it cannot be *killed* like a person (*korosu* 殺す.) The verb *tsubusu*, in turn, can be associated with smashing potatoes, with slaughtering livestock, with squandering talents or whiling away the time, but not with killing or murdering a person. In Tada Kōzō’s version, the play with polysemy of the verb *to beat* is entirely levelled by means of an explicit indication that *time* in *to beat time* is to be understood as *musical time* (拍子を打つ *hyōshi wo utsu*, p. 94) and not as *toki* 時 or as *jikan* 時間, that are the general nouns for *time* in Japanese. For *wasting time*, he takes the quite conventional verb *tsubusu* 潰す(p. 91), yet *murdering the time* is rendered by him – contrary to all semantical conventions in Japanese – by *korosu* (p.94): あれは時を殺しているぞよ！(„He is murdering the time!”) This last choice may have been motivated by the Hatter’s logic, according to which time is *him* (this is rendered by Tada Kōzō (p. 91) as 時ってあの人だよ („By the way, Time is a person.”)) By contrast, a much more cautious Japanese version of the passage has been provided by Shōno Kōkichi who uses *tsubusu* for both *wasting* (p. 106) and *murdering* (p. 109) the time and makes Time appear not as *a man* (*him*) but as *a living being* (いきもの *ikimono*, p. 106), without any further specification. The semantics of *beating time* is in this version (p. 107), similarly to that by Tada Kōzō, rendered by a conventional expression which is free of any ambiguity as *toki wo hakaru* 時を計る (*to measure time*.) An equally cautious management of time is represented in the Chinese translations by Zhuao Yuanren (pp. 89, 91) and Ma Teng (pp. 63, 64), who do not allow (the) time to be *murdered*: whereas they use the same

[55] *Alice*, p. 75.
[56] *Alice*, p. 77.

verb *zaota* 糟蹋 (lit.: *to squander*) for both *to waist* and *to murder, beating time* is rendered by them by a term that literally refers to music *dapaizi* 打拍子.[57]

The insults, to which Time/time is being exposed in the above mentioned Japanese and Chinese renditions, would seem quite harmless if compared with some of the Western versions of *Alice*. For example, to Pietrocòla-Rossetti (p. 102) the verb *uccidere* (*to murder, to kill*) must have appeared not strong enough, which is why in his text, the time is (lit.) *being assassinated* („Egli sta assassinando il tempo!"), and Nabokov's imagination was inspired to produce the following interpretation of the passage (Nabokov, p. 62):

„Аня устало вздохнула:
- Как скучно так проводить время!
- Если бы вы знали Время так, как я его знаю, - заметил Шляпник, - вы бы не посмели сказать, что его провожать скучно. Оно самолюбиво.
- Я вас не понимаю, - сказала Аня.
- Конечно, нет! - воскликнул Шляпник, презрительно мотнув головой. - Иначе вы бы так не расселись.
- Я только села на время, - коротко ответила Аня.
- То-то и есть, - продолжал Шляпник. - Время не любит, чтобы на него садились."
(„Anya sighed in exhaustion:
-It's so boring to pass the time like that!
- If you knew Time as well as I do - remarked the Hatter, - you wouldn't dare say that it's boring to pass it. It has a high self-esteem.
- I don't understand, - said Anja.
- Of course, you don't, - the Hatter said, tossing his head contemptuously. – Otherwise you wouldn't sit here for so long.
- I only sat down a minute, - Anja replied timidly.
- That's it, - said the Hatter. – Time doesn't like that (lit.: doesn't like people to sit on it.")

The first word-play created here by Nabokov rests on the polysemy of the verb *проводить* (*to pass*): whereas in Alice's use, it has the meaning of *to spend* (*time*), the Hatter takes it to mean *taking leave of* (*time.*) In the second case, the translator introduces the set expression „сесть на время" (*to sit down for a short while, for a minute*) in which „на время" (literally: *on the time*) means „for a while", but can and is interpreted by the Hatter as „sitting down on the time", thus heavily offending its self-esteem. A. Ščerbakov (p. 91) uses the same word as V. Nabokov for *wasting time*: *проводить*, but with a completely different meaning: „Кому понравится, что его хотят провести? Он вас и сторонится." („Nobody likes being cheated. That's the reason why he avoids you.") And in Z. Solovjova's version (p. 109), time highly dislikes people, who try *to get to grips with it* (*справляться со временем*), which is also quite an original way of rendering the English idea of *wasting time*. Of all the Russian versions that I have studied, the arguably most dramatic variety of time-management has been discovered by the imagination of Nina Demurova (p. 176). who rendered the episode as follows:

„- Если вам нечего делать, - сказала она с досадой, - придумали бы что-нибудь получше загадок без ответа. А так только попусту теряете время!
- Если бы ты знала Время так же хорошо, как я, - сказал Болванщик, - ты бы этого не сказала. Его не потеряешь! Не на такого напали!
- Не понимаю, - сказала Алиса.
- Еще бы! - презрительно встряхнул головой Болванщик. - Ты с ним небось никогда и не разговаривала!
- Может, и не разговаривала, - осторожно отвечала Алиса. - Зато не раз думала о том, как бы убить время!
- А-а! тогда все понятно, - сказал Болванщик. - Убить Время! Разве такое ему может понравиться!"

[57] Ma Teng, p. 63; Zhao Yuanren pp. 89-91: In his translation, Zhao chooses first the expression *da shihou* 打时候 (lit. *beat time*), but fearing that his readers might not understand the expression, it is explained in a foot-note as „beating musical time" (*dapaizi*), p. 91.

(„If you don't have anything to do," Alice said indignantly, „you should have thought of something better than asking riddles without answers. Doing this, you are simply wasting (losing) time!"
"If you knew time as well as I do," said the Hatter, "you would not be talking like that. It cannot be lost. It's not of that kind of things!"
"I don't understand," said Alice.
"Of course not," the Hatter tossed his head contemptuously. "I bet you've never talked to it!"
"Perhaps not," Alice answered cautiously, "but I often thought of how to kill time."
"I see, now everything is clear," said the Hatter: "To kill time! It would not like such an idea for sure!")

Although in Russian there is an expression which corresponds exactly to *beating time* ("отстукивать/отбивать время"), for some reason, Demurova – like Nebokov before her – did not use it and preferred to render it rather by *убить время* (*to kill/to murder the time*.) Moreover, the same verb was used by her several times in the rendition of the episode, in which the Queen accuses the Hatter of murdering the time:

„Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse," said the Hatter, "when the Queen bawled out, "He's murdering the time! Off with his head!"[58]

Consider the following rendition of the passage by Demurova (p. 178):

„- Только я кончил первый куплет, как кто-то сказал: "Конечно, лучше б он помолчал, но надо же как-то убить время"! Королева как закричит: "Убить Время! Он хочет убить Время! Рубите ему голову!"
(„As soon as I finished the first verse, somebody said: „Sure, he'd better keep silent, but time should be killed anyway." The Queen, (hearing this), bawled out: "To kill Time! He wants to kill Time! Off with his head!")

Thus, murdering of the time appears in this text with a much higher frequency than in the original, which again does not result from some semantic peculiarities of Russian but rests entirely on the strategy of the translator, who feels free to reorganize the text according to her vision of the story. One more thing that is striking about Demurova's version is that, although she makes time appear as an actually or potentially insulted being, the personification of the time ("you wouldn't talk about wasting *it*. It's *him*."[59]) remains untranslated. Since this phrase, pronounced by the Hatter, is particularly challenging in terms of the language picture of the world, i.e. from both the point of view of semantics and that of formal grammatical categories, it is worth demonstrating what felicitous solutions some translators have found for its rendition.

Of course, the biggest challenge lies in the category of gender (*it's him.*) For languages that have grammatical gender, translators have to choose between two basic options: whereas in languages in which time is a masculine noun (like in Italian and in French), translators are required to resort to other categories in order to recreate the personification of the time, in languages in which time is a feminine (like in German) or a neuter (like in Russian) noun, the personification act is automatically accompanied by a change of gender, which, in turn, requires a plausible interpretation. Consider the following example of the first of these options, which has been provided in Italian by Pietrocòla-Rossetti (p. 99):

"Ma credo che sarebbe bene di passar meglio il tempo, che perderne, proponendo indovinelli che non hanno senso." "Se lei conoscesse il Tempo come lo conosco io," rispose il Cappellaio, "non direbbe che noi ne perdiamo. Non si tratta di me, ma di lui."
("I believe, it would be much better to do something else than wasting time and asking riddles without meaning." "If you knew Time as I do," said the Hatter, "you would not say that *we* are wasting it. It's not about me, it's about him.")

Other than in the original, the emphasis is first laid here not on the pronoun *ne* referring to *time* but on the verb *perdiamo* (*lose*) and its implied subject (*we*.) In the concluding words, the Hatter sets himself in opposition to time putting stress on two pronouns, *me* (*me*) and *lui* (*him*.) A different solution has been found by Bruno Oddera (p. 66) whose version reads as follows:

[58] *Alice*, p. 77.
[59] *Alice*, p. 75.

„Se tu conoscessi il Tempo bene quanto me – disse il Cappellaio – non parleresti di sprecarlo come se fosse una cosa. È una persona."
(„If you knew Time as well ass I do," said the Hatter, „you would not talk about wasting it, as if it were a thing. It is a person.)

Here, the translator resorts to the semantics of the verb *sprecare*, which usually refers to things and not to people (except when it is used reflexively as *sprecarsi*, i.e. *to waste oneself*.) Oddera makes the Hatter correct what, in his eyes, is an obvious mistake, since Alice's use of words suggests that time is inanimate.

As for the second option, the following original interpretation of the phrase has been provided by Barbara Teutsch (pp. 76-77):

„Wenn du so vernünftig wärst, dann würdest du nicht von ‚die' Zeit, sondern von ‚der' Zeit sprechen!" sagte der Hutmacher.
„Ich verstehe nicht, was Sie meinen", sagte Alice.
„Du natürlich nicht!" meinte der Hutmacher verächtlich. „Ich nehme an, du hast noch nie mit ‚der' Zeit gesprochen!"
„Kann sein", sagte Alice vorsichtig. „Aber ich weiß, was das ist, wenn man Zeit totschlägt!"
„Na, das erklärt alles!" rief der Hutmacher. „So etwas behagt der Zeit ganz und gar nicht – merkst du den feinen Unterschied – ‚der' Zeit! Du mußt ihn freundlich behandeln…"
(„If you were reasonable enough, you would not be talking about Time in the accusative, but in the dative case!" said the Hatter.
"I don't understand what you mean," said Alice.
"Of course not!" the hatter said contemptuously. "I suppose, you have never talked with Time in the dative case!"
"Maybe not," Alice said cautiously. "But I know what it means to kill time!"
"Well, that explains a lot," the Hatter exclaimed. "Time greatly dislikes such treatment, note – time in the dative case – this makes quite a difference! You have to treat him kindly.")

It is only in the last phrase that the pronoun *ihn* (*him*) is used here. Throughout the episode, Alice is being encouraged by the Hatter to think that *time* which in German is a feminine noun (*die Zeit*) is a masculine being. This is suggested grammatically by pointing out that it is a mistake to use the feminine article ‚die' when speaking about time (*von der Zeit*) since the preposition *von* requires the use of the dative case, which formally is identical with the masculine article in the nominative case. This is the only German rendition among all that I have studied, in which the personification of the time and the change of its gender semantics has been achieved purely by means of grammar, which again demonstrates the impressive power of language imagination in overcoming the limits of its fixed grammatical patterns in order to come as near as possible to the demands of the original.

Conclusion

Philosophical critiques of Carroll have often aimed at making him reconcile with logic, i.e. with a field from which he would seem to move away in his *Alice*-books. For the careful correction of logical errors that have been collected in these readings, they may be regarded as peculiar manifestos of language critique imbued with didacticism and antimetaphysical vigour. By contrast, the most felicitous renditions of *Alice* display a completely different approach to the language of its figures: instead of correcting what might appear as logically incorrect, they attempt to reproduce the original language patterns as exactly as possible. Even though by doing so translators often reach the limits of their languages, in the end they provide their readers with texts that are by no means less inspiring the thought than the corrections to which Carroll has been exposed by philosophers.

Abstract: Whatever theoretical perspective one adopts for interpreting *Alice* (mathematics, physics, psychoanalysis etc.), reading it unfailingly turns into a series of unexpected discoveries. Yet probably no other readings prove to be as adventurous as the philosophical ones. Philosophers are inspired by the book to address a vast variety of issues, from the problem of internal meanings, i.e. the relation of *saying* to *meaning*, up to the existence of God and the creation of the world. In this chapter, I have tried to trace some of the most impressive philosophical adventures in Wonderland that might give birth to still more stirring new ideas and discoveries in future.