

Marius Conkan

## Dystopian Structures in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

### ABSTRACT

This essay analyses the structures of space in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a novel which alongside George MacDonald's stories, constitutes one of the cornerstones of this genre of literature. Despite the fact that the two volumes on Alice have been extensively commented on from the linguistic problematic of the nonsense, studies treating the imaginary and narrative structure of space in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* are fewer in number and belong mainly to the researchers who for years on end had tried to define fantasy literature, contributing to its coming out of the area of theoretical anonymity in which it laid.

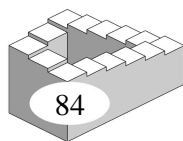
### KEYWORDS

Lewis Carroll; Wonderland; Space; Fractal; Schizophrenia; Dystopia.

### MARIUS CONKAN

Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca,  
Romania  
mariusconkan@yahoo.com.sg

Every fantasy fiction is a fiction of space. Whether it projects monstrous spaces or, on the contrary, utopian ones, fantasy fiction is closely connected to the revaluation of space and even to its sacralisation. Either way we might call it (secondary world, alternative or compensatory universe), fantasy fiction's space-time is a trademark of this type of stories that recount the travels of some characters beyond the frontiers of the known world. Wonderland, the land of Oz, Neverland, Narnia, Middle Earth, Fantasia, the imaginary places of the Harry Potter series are only some of the spaces that are even more famous than the stories they comprise. They form an extremely vast, often controversial and insufficiently problematized domain of fantasy literature. In this essay, I shall analyse the structures of space in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a novel which alongside George MacDonald's stories, constitutes one of the cornerstones of this genre of literature. Despite the fact that the two volumes on Alice have been extensively commented on from the linguistic problematic of the nonsense (Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Jacques Lecercle and more recently, Alan Lopez), studies treating the imaginary and narrative structure of space in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* are fewer in number and belong mainly to the researchers who for years on end had tried to define fantasy literature, contributing to

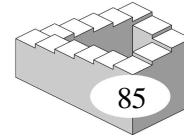


its coming out of the area of theoretical anonymity in which it laid. As I shall show in this essay, it is precisely a detailed analysis of space that can reveal and add new meanings to Lewis Carroll's story. Furthermore, such an investigation can bring about considerable clarifications regarding the nature of space in other narratives of this type and can expand the conceptual and theoretical instruments used in interpreting fantasy literature.

The main thesis of this essay is that space in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is what determines Alice to perceive her body and identity in a distorted manner. In other words, Alice's body does not increase and decrease, does not chaotically alter its dimension in contact with Wonderland, but space itself repeatedly contracts and expands, intending on transforming Alice into a schizoid creature. Wonderland contains in this respect a fractal space or, to be more precise, it is comprised of several spatial plans that have the structure and the function of fractals. If we define the fractal<sup>1</sup> as an imaginary dimension of a Russian-nesting-doll type, a dimension that projects towards itself its reflections, its double or parallel constructions (like a depth-first search based on the zoom in and zoom out movements, of emptying and filling of space) – then, most definitely, Wonderland is a territory comprised of fractals. Through a close-reading analysis I shall prove how these spatial closings and openings mark the ruptures in Alice's identity, which will be contaminated and de-structuralised by the schizophrenia and the entropy of space<sup>2</sup>. For Wonderland, schizophrenia is a symbolic stench, the Anima Mundi that causes dwarfism and gigantism of space, its movements in between the extremes. On the other hand, the entropy of space, its targeting disorder and even disappearance, is that which, by analogy, damages and degenerates the self-

consciousness and the identity of Alice. It is thus possible to talk about Wonderland as if it were a metaphorical dystopia, ingeniously built on three levels of production of space: *fractal*, *entropic* and *schizophrenic*. The first level, the fractal one, is structural and manifests itself by enlarging and shrinking the same surfaces, by repeatedly closing and opening them, by the hallucinating oscillation between inside and outside. The entropic level is also a structural one, adding to the first level the progressive movement from spatial order to disorder. Space entropy grows with the enlarging and shrinking of the surfaces, with enclosing them in one plane and releasing them in another. It is dependent on the manner in which the fractals are organised and put in motion to produce space. The schizophrenic level is equally a structural and material one, summing up the fractal functions and the entropy of space. From a structural point of view, the schizophrenic level unifies the growth and reduction of surfaces, of their closing and opening with the accumulation of spatial disorder. It is at this level that the schizophrenic matter of space is produced, which fills the surfaces and decentres Alice's identity. The pathology of the language and of the characters living in Wonderland is contained in this third level which, in relation to the other two constitutes the area of space depth, the nucleus from which schizophrenia irradiates as the Anima Mundi.

Places of passage are of great importance in portal-quest fantasy fictions<sup>3</sup>, which presuppose a crossing from a primary to a secondary world. These places of passage are intermediary spaces, spaces where the two worlds are interwoven, the places where one space ends and another begins, where the significances of the two spaces collide. Thus, they do not fulfil merely the role of an area of transit, but are the places in which two times conflict, where the



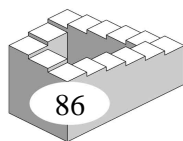
function of one space-time ceases, while another's is activated. That is why the places of passage do not have the shape and consistency of a clearly specified space-time since they overlap, combine and generate spaces and times that differ from one another. Starting from these observations, we can ask ourselves what is the importance of the place of passage and how it could be linked to the three levels of production of space in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

From the beginning of the novel we learn that chasing a rabbit that "took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket"<sup>4</sup>, Alice falls down this rabbit's hole. The entire scene is depicted by Lewis Carroll as follows:

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down a very deep well. Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her and to wonder what was going to happen next. [...] Down, down, down. Would the fall *never* come to an end! 'I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time?' she said aloud. 'I must be getting somewhere near the centre of the earth. Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think—' [...] 'I wonder if I shall fall right *through* the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downward! The Antipathies, I think—'.<sup>5</sup>

The place of passage to Wonderland contains an infinite space-time, textually marked by the never-ending fall through a tunnel or a very deep well. In this first journey, Alice has the feeling that she will

reach the centre of the Earth or even its other side, where the antipodes dwell. All these indications are relevant for the manner in which the place of passage connects the primary world to the secondary one, but they are particularly relevant for the style in which the secondary world is built. The place of passage is perceived as infinite in space and time precisely because it lacks space and time, being the point of collision for two different space-times. In other words, the infiniteness of the place of passage to Wonderland is rather a metaphor of the compression of two worlds with divergent spaces and times. Alice's journey through the rabbit-hole is one towards the antipode, towards a world that inverts and undermines the laws of the primary space-time. This is why this journey must be accomplished in an environment that neutralises the characteristics of the two conflicting worlds. The place of passage is not an area of an initial's world continuity (in this case, Wonderland), nor is it a frontier between the two worlds that function distinctly, since it does not delimit, but marks the intersection of the two opposing manners of configuring space and time. As long as in the place of passage the primary space-time collapses, another space-time is on the brink of being born. As Alice falls through the rabbit-hole, all the three levels of the production of space (fractal, entropic, schizophrenic) are activated. Thus, the place of passage could be seen as a neutral structure where one world's collapse determines the construction of another, where matter and laws of a space-time end or are transformed in anti-matter and anti-laws. So, Alice's fall in the rabbit-hole, as a symbolic *descensus ad inferos* is the process through which the three levels of producing space in Wonderland are put into motion. Thus, the place of passage is the vertical structure, that once travelled across, connects the fractal level to the entropic and



schizophrenic one, the latter encompassing the other two's characteristics.

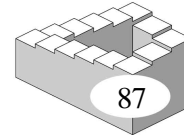
Once in Wonderland, Alice enters a space previously built through the three levels that will continue to function and to (re)generate, in a hallucinating manner, space matter up to the complete dispersion of the character's self-perception. But what happens to time in Wonderland? How is the time of the primary world linked, through the place of passage, to that of the secondary one? Are there specific ways of producing time in Wonderland? Let us remember that prior to falling through the rabbit-hole, Alice was chasing a rabbit which was going to Wonderland and which, surprisingly, is humanised and has a watch. And yet, Alice arrives in the world of the antipode only after the rabbit, with which the girl will meet again in Wonderland, had descended through the hole. After this scene, there is no further reference to the rabbit having a watch, which may lead to the following speculation. The watch is the image of time in the primary world, as perceived in its natural flow, from the beginning towards the end, from birth towards death. When the rabbit goes through the place of passage, the time of the initial world (i.e. the watch) is destroyed, alongside the extinction of the primary space. Even if it would have been normal for time to be (re)created and to function, like space, according to other laws than the common ones, Wonderland perpetuates these metaphors of the temporal collapse, so that time is either inexistent or stopped. As a matter of fact, this is only a seeming disappearance of time, of its hiding underneath the sensitive coating of the secondary world, since the functions of time are assumed and analysed by the three levels of production of space, as follows. At a fractal level, time is fragmented by the movements of closing and opening of the surfaces, of filling and emptying them. It

contracts and expands from going from one fractal point to another, being – like space – an elastic polyform matter that swallows and digests structures to produce new ones in a systematic manner. At an entropic level, time quantifies the disarray of the fractal movements and the destructive force of space, due to the continuous exiting and returning of the space plans from within and towards themselves. Time offers coherence and density to the entropy, coagulating the set of significations which it manifests on Alice's identity. At a schizophrenic level, time is the red line that ties together the fractal movements of space to their entropic function, the dispersion of space from that of the protagonist's identity. Finally, space and time become inseparable, and their manifestations coincide completely. Since the schizophrenic level sums up the other two levels, being the nucleus from which schizophrenia is emanated as the Anima Mundi, it unifies the significations of time from those of space in a compact dimension, which is that of a dystopian space-time, in which Alice's self-perception and identity are shattered. The purpose of this progressive deconstruction lies in Alice's transformation in a creature akin to all the characters from Wonderland.

Michel de Certeau and Louis Marin's visions on space are edifying in regards to the manner in which space in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* works as an agent of the loss of self in the case of Alice. Seen in relation to the three levels of the production of space that I have detailed beforehand, de Certeau and Marin's approaches can be viewed in a new light and can add unprecedented meanings to the infernal journey that Alice undertakes in Wonderland.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau states the following:

In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called metaphorai.



To go to work or come home, one takes a “metaphor”—a bus or a train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day, they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories. In this respect, narrative structures have the status of spatial syntaxes. [...] Every story is a travel story—a spatial practice.<sup>6</sup>

As a vehicle and spatial syntax through which Alice's journey is projected, the narration goes through, organises and links the places that subject the character to mutations of identity. Each of these places (the home of the March Hare, the home of the Duchess, the forest where the girl meets the Caterpillar etc.) make Alice's loss of self more acute, it being more intensified by the characters with which she comes in contact and that have their own place of manifestation in Wonderland.

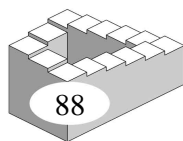
Michel de Certeau clearly distinguishes between place and space. The place is a stable structure that “excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location”<sup>7</sup> since “the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its own ‘proper’ and distinct location, a location it defines”<sup>8</sup>. The place implies a system of positions with a precise order that makes any transformation or venture outside of a coherent or pre-established frame impossible. On the other hand, space:

exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it.<sup>9</sup>

In accordance to this distinction between place and space that contains a set of implicit oppositions (immobility *versus* movement, stagnation *versus* transformation), the three levels of production of space in Wonderland organise and integrate (through the narration and the journey of Alice) the places that are disparate in a fractal and entropic dimension, from the depths of which the characters' schizophrenia emanates. In other words, having an order which immobilises them, the system of autonomous places is transformed into space through the movements of opening and closing the surfaces, of transforming matter and returning it to its initial forms. Thus, going across the places in Wonderland and their fractal structure give birth to space, they fragment and reformulate, in a schizoid manner, Alice's identity.

In “The Frontiers of Utopia”, Louis Marin glosses on the around the spatial practice described by de Certeau, using the metaphor of the horizon as a sensor of the utopian imagination. Throughout the history of culture, the horizon marked either a limit of the sky and the Earth, a limit of the human gaze or, as was the case in the Romantic paradigm, the horizon was “the opening of vision to the ‘extreme’ of the gaze”<sup>10</sup>, marking the infinity of space. “Beyond the horizon, in the Imagination, appears Utopias”<sup>11</sup>, so that:

all travel consists in going from a place to a no-place, a route to Utopia, from a starting point which, in a narrative, always describes a peaceful order of things [...] Narrative proceeds from a place and a moment that narratologists call the “schema of incidence”, that is, the trespassing of a limit, the crossing of a frame, of a threshold. This is the way in which narratives demarcate space; travels, as departures and passages,



beginnings and crossings in the narrative they produce – and by which they are produced as well – determine frontiers which they trace upon encountering them in order to cross them in some of their parts. [...] Travel would be the “work” of the horizon, the neutral space, the space of limits and frontiers they trace or demarcate while crossing them.<sup>12</sup>

In this respect, Alice’s journey through Wonderland represents the encounter with the frontiers that space produces through its fractal transformation. The filling and emptying of the surfaces, their enlarging and shrinking, the character’s movement from one place to another (some of which are built in a mirrored fashion) – all these movements create limits through which Alice’s identity is voided of sense. The three levels of the production of space establish, to an equal extent, the frontiers contained by space and which distort Alice’s psychic body, while the girl’s physical body maintains its same dimension from one end of the narration to the next. Alice continuously searches for Wonderland, the utopia beyond the horizon, beyond the unstable places, that do not offer a security of the self. But her journey through the fractal space actually meets and traces the dystopian limits through the exceeding of which the character will not become totalised, but will carry the whole schizophrenic content of space.

I suggest we turn back to the story of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and see the manner in which the narration and the text answer to these speculations regarding the nature and ways of production of space. Is space truly the one to fragment the main character’s identity? What do the characters living in Wonderland signify and where does their pathology come from? How is the

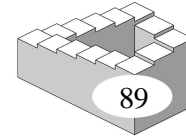
schizophrenia of the world created and emanated in Wonderland?

Through the rabbit-hole, the place of passage with the function of activating the levels of production of space (process detailed when I described these levels), Alice arrives

in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof. There were doors all around the hall, but they were all locked; There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked; and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.<sup>13</sup>

This closed-doors hall is the first place in Wonderland that supports the definition given by de Certeau. It implies a cloistering order, being a symbolic asylum room, where Alice’s mental resilience is being tested. Oriented towards the elements that imprint the vectors of stagnation and isolation (the closed doors, the one table of the room), this first place is symptomatic for the coercive frames of Wonderland. On the glass table, the girl finds a key that does not open even one of the closed doors of the room. Then, Alice spots

a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high: she tried the little golden key in the lock, and to her great delight it fitted! Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains.<sup>14</sup>

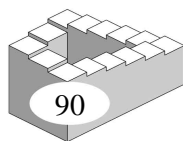


This garden is, in Louis Marin's words, the utopia beyond the horizon, the true Wonderland, while in the search of which Alice will go across negative places and will be touched by the malady of space. To find this garden, this Wonderland as an extremity of the gaze, Alice overcomes the frontiers imposed by space, especially since "the travel narrative authorizes frontiers to be established and displaced, founded and trespassed over"<sup>15</sup>. We shall see that in the end, Alice will never find the wondrous garden, since her journey legitimises, in fact the dystopian significations of space.

While looking for an access to the garden beyond the minute door of the room (beyond the horizon), Alice finds on the table a small bottle with a fragrant liquid. After drinking the liquid, we learn that the girl shrinks to about ten inches. And yet, this is the first instance when the three levels (fractal, entropic and schizophrenic) reveal their force of producing space, transforming the place in a spatial structure. Through the narrator's voice, which can be discredited since he enters Wonderland alongside Alice, we are told that the girl has become a minuscule being. In fact, the hall is the one to enlarge while Alice maintains her normal proportions. Since she is not aware of this transformation of the place she is in, of the enlarging of the surfaces and their organising in a polymorphous space, the girl's self-perception (and with it, the narrator's) is from here forth, confuse, being gradually distorted. Immediately after the space becomes immense, Alice has the false sensation that she shrank, so she begins to cry "and once she remembered trying to box her own ears for having cheated herself in a game of croquet she was playing against herself, for this curious child was very fond of pretending to be two people"<sup>16</sup>. Alice has reached an area favourable to the worsening of her proneness to schizotypal disorder. The growth of space, its voiding of matter

(through a perfectly directed zoom in) having as consequence the doubling or even the fragmentation of the psychic body, with which the girl will never identify herself hence forth. On the other hand, the gigantism of space makes Alice's encounter with her monstrous alter-ego possible. A conflict mediated by the psychic body as an expression of monstrosity is born between the character and her identity when she is under the impression that her body has become minuscule, a body of a midget. Realising she had forgotten, on the table, the key to the garden door, Alice eats a cake she finds in a glass box lying under the table. Instantaneously, the space shrinks, becomes minute and the girl has the once more false feeling that she has grown to nine feet. What actually happens is proof of the perfect functionality of the fractal level of production of space in Wonderland. While Alice's physical body remains equal to itself, the space's dimension oscillates between the extremes, from gigantism to dwarfism, swallowing matter and expelling it. Space is thusly created by its passing from one of its forms to another identical one, smaller or larger in comparison to the point of reference (which, in this case is Alice's physical body). Wonderland is a sum of fractals that, starting from the same structure, continuously transforms its matter in identical, but apparently different and chaotic spatial forms. The movements and the irregular dimensions of space restrain on the character's self-perception. So, Alice's psychic body will take over the schizoid content of the movement from one fractal to another and will modify itself according to the fragmentation of space in shapes identical to itself, but of different dimensions.

Another important element of this process is the food that Alice eats (some cakes, pieces of a mushroom), but also the



fluids she drinks in order to cause her false body changes and thusly, to cross the boundaries put up by space. In fact, the narration is scattered with such metaphors of ingurgitation and digestion, created through the image of Dinah, the cat, gulping down mice, through that of the Mad Hatter and of the March Hare who permanently drink tea, but particularly through Alice herself, “who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking”<sup>17</sup>. These metaphors point out and, in fact, clear the manner in which space works when it damages the self-conscience and disperses the character’s identity. That is why one must find the sense of these images by referring to the fractal level of production of space. To be more precise, space provides Alice with the food necessary for its transformation, being a trickster space that gives the girl the illusion that the things she eats make her grow and shrink. In fact, ingurgitation and digestion are symbolic mechanisms through which space opens and closes its surfaces, fills and voids itself of matter through successive fractal movements that are transferred in the character’s psychic body. Alice is repeatedly swallowed and expelled by the space enlarging and shrinking its dimensions and this zoom in – zoom out game empowers both the entropy of space as well as the progressive disorder of the character’s identity.

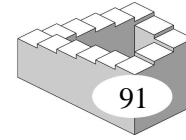
Once the space contracts and becomes minute, Alice is under the impression that she reached a height of nine feet and asks herself if she had not, by any chance, turned into Ada or Mabel. She also converses with part of her body perceived as gigantic, she loses her memory and mixes up the lyrics of a poem she once knew by heart. The fact that she feels alienated from her body, that she projects and searches in others the meaning of her identity, that her memory becomes tabula rasa are symptoms of the

interiorising of the fractal movements. Alice’s psychic body is conditioned by the sudden shift from one spatial structure to another, so that it itself will be a gathering of fractals that coagulate schizophrenic significations.

In Wonderland, nothing should be eaten or touched since all things pertain to the space that permanently regenerates its matter. That is why Alice “was now about two feet high, and was going on shrinking rapidly: she soon found out that the cause of this was the fan she was holding, and she dropped it hastily, just in time to avoid shrinking away altogether”<sup>18</sup>. When she touches the fan of the rabbit that had hypnotically lured her to Wonderland, space dilates once more and with it the pool of tears (as an image of the schizoid hysteria) which Alice made when she thought herself a giant. The girl dives in this pool of tears like in a scatological environment, where space had defecated that which nourished the traumatic content of its fractal manifestations. The zoomorphic characters met by the girl in the pool of tears are the expression of the instinctiveness of a space that is irrationally digesting its matter and form. Yet, they also reflect the dehumanisation that Alice experiences as a consequence of the fact that the insecurity and the instability of space void the character’s identity of meaning and essence. Perceived as bestial and monstrous, Alice’s physical body will transfer the entire schizophrenic content of this dehumanisation to the mental structures.

Throughout the narration, the fractal level produces spatial plans in the same manner. Before the girl enters the garden she had been looking for and where the croquet match organised by the Queen of Hearts takes place, space enlarges and shrinks several times. During her journey in Wonderland, Alice meets several schizoid characters, of which the Caterpillar, the

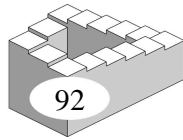




Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter and the March Hare are essential. What do these characters represent and what is it that connects them to the fractal space at an umbilical level? I mentioned in the beginning of the essay that schizophrenia is the space's soul in Wonderland. It is emanated by the level that encompasses the fractal and entropic significations of the production of space. If the fractals, through convulsive movements of closing and opening the surfaces, make Alice's identity diminish to the absurd, entropy marks and measures the accelerated degradation of the character's psychic structure. To this respect, the characters native to Wonderland are materialisations of the schizophrenia of space, living, yet dysfunctional bodies, in which space had stored its schizophrenia. They are the instrument that deepens Alice's loss of self, triggered and iterated by the insecurity and imbalance of space. The Caterpillar is the wise, old man of Wonderland, he who knows and understands the fractal behaviour of space, but who cannot oppose its destructive force. He is only able to offer first-aid solutions, to alleviate the effects of the impact with space and that is why he suggests Alice to eat from the mushroom. After encountering the Caterpillar, the girl who by that point had been disoriented and alienated by the transformations of space, manoeuvres for herself the enlarging and shrinking of the same surfaces, even though the sense of alienation is kept intact and the entropic accumulation follows its natural course. The Cheshire Cat is the schizophrenic genie, gliding over the cloistering places of Wonderland. She is the only character that, through instantaneous disappearances and reappearances can evade the fractal movements of space, because she has already inferred the mechanisms through which it causes dementia and changes the human being in a carrier of its sickling content. That is why the Cheshire Cat states, in her dialogue with Alice, that

all are mad in Wonderland, even she is mad and this madness must be understood as a constant emanation of the schizophrenic level of the production of space. The Mad Hatter and the March Hare illustrate the manner in which the functions of the massacred time were assumed by the three levels of the production of space. The classical time, symbolised by the watch of the rabbit that showed Alice the path to Wonderland, was destroyed in the place of passage that marked the collapse of the primary world and the birth of an alternative, secondary space-time. The Mad Hatter and the March Hare believe that time can be stopped or slowed down, so they live in a permanent tea-time. Time in Wonderland is in fact, like space, a gathering of fractals which manifests itself identically, through the same forms endlessly regenerated. It quantifies the entropy of space, being a mirror of its fractal transformations. The alternative space-time is created in Lewis Carroll's novel by reflecting and continuously reproducing this morphology. And this is, in fact, the sense of schizophrenia in Wonderland: multiplying, in a hallucinating manner, the identity of spatio-temporal structures, with the sole purpose of pulverising human identity.

What do the Queen of Hearts and the terror she instates in Wonderland signify? Louis Marin, in a previously referred to essay, defines the relation between utopia and dystopia as follows: "Utopia as ideology is a totality; and when political powers seizes it, it becomes a totalitarian whole. [...] Utopia as representation defines a totalitarian power, an absolute, formal and abstract power"<sup>19</sup>. That is why utopia must be continuously brought up-to-date beyond the horizon, by surpassing the spatial frontiers and by tracing new ones since putting utopia into practice and forcing the horizon could attract a dystopian order. In this



respect, “every utopia always comes with its implied dystopia – whether the dystopia of the status quo, which the utopia is engineered to address, or a dystopia found in the way this specific utopia corrupts itself in practice”<sup>20</sup>. After encountering the Mad Hatter and the March Hare, Alice:

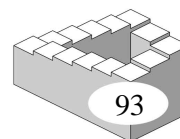
found herself in the long hall, and close to the little glass table. “Now, I’ll manage better this time,” she said to herself, and began by taking the little golden key, and unlocking the door that led into the garden. Then she went to work nibbling at the mushroom (she had kept a piece of it in her pocket) till she was about a foot high: then she walked down the little passage: and *then*—she found herself at last in the beautiful garden, among the bright flowerbeds and the cool fountains.<sup>21</sup>

The garden Alice searches for during her journey is a metaphoric utopia, a terrestrial paradise, without any Christian connotations, where the character is convinced she will escape the monstrous space and will become a complete human being. The access path to this garden is the closed-doors hall, the enclosing place that in Wonderland is a fractal-matrix of the distortion of space. Once in the garden, Alice finds out that the symbolic paradise she was searching for is the area where the three levels of the production of space have accumulated their schizophrenic force up to the point of climax. The garden is not the Wonderland beyond the horizon, but, ironically, a sum of the negative places that Alice had been through. Except for the Caterpillar, all the pathological characters with which the girl had interacted during her journey gathered together, being invited to a croquet match, like to a banquet in the asylum’s garden. Thus, the place where the croquet match

unfolds is the terminus point that sums up all the forms and the entire matter of the space-emanated schizophrenia. To this respect, the Queen of Hearts is the hysterically-compulsive expression of the said schizophrenia, the mad tyrant that, through the executions with which she terrorises her subjects transforms the Wonderland dreamt of by Alice in a dystopian territory.

During the trial in which the Knave of Hearts is absurdly investigated for stealing the Queen’s tarts (again, an image of food that, at this time is no longer delivered to the space in order for it to regenerate), the fractal movements reach a maximum entropy so that they are no longer able to oscillate between the extremes. Through the schizophrenic climax from the scene of the croquet match, space has exhausted the strength that supplied its gigantism and microsomia. This is why it is forced to gradually eject Alice out of Wonderland, acquiring a dimension that coincides with the girl’s usual height. She thusly reclaims her self-consciousness and a coherent perception of reality. So, Alice states: “You’re nothing but a pack of cards!”<sup>22</sup>. The three levels of the production of space cease to function and to emanate schizophrenic substance so that Alice, expelled from Wonderland, will wake up from her nightmare and will be reintegrated to the security and stability of the primary world. Utopia, on the other hand, continues to be projected through the voice of Alice’s sister who finds, in the world beyond the oneiric horizon, the seedlings of an alternative paradise.

The manner in which space is produced in Lewis Carroll’s novel can be a metaphor for the fractal dimensions that multiply human identity in virtual environments. The obsession for space and for the conquering of other spaces was and still is a constant concern of the all-time man. What are we to do when space builds an obsession



out of man and its fragmentations and reflections in the same infinitely repeated structures disorient us to such an extent that we no longer know who we are? Here and now, we are all Alices who, at the impact with the real and alternative spaces, search for their path beyond the frontiers.

### Bibliography

Mandelbrot, Benoît, *Obiectele fractale: formă, hazard, dimensiune* (București: Nemira, 1998).

Greene, Brian, *The Hidden Reality*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).

Mendlesohn, Farah, *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008).

Carroll, Lewis, *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Marin, Louis, "The Frontiers of Utopia", in *Utopia and the Millennium*, eds. Krishan Kumar and Stephen Bann (London: Reaktion Book, 1993).

Michael D. Gordin, Helen Tilley, and Gyan Prakash (eds.) *Utopia/ Dystopia. Conditions of Historical Possibility* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Armitt, Lucie, *Fantasy Fiction: An Introduction* (New York: Continuum, 2005).

Lopez, Alan, "Deleuze with Carroll", in *Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 9, 3 (2004): 101-120.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See also Benoît Mandelbrot, *Obiectele fractale: formă, hazard, dimensiune*, București, Nemira, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> See also Brian Greene, *The Hidden Reality*, New York, Vintage Books, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> See Farah Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis Carroll, *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll*, New York, Vintage Books, 1976, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984, p. 116.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> Louis Marin, "The Frontiers of Utopia", in Krishan Kumar and Stephen Bann (eds.), *Utopia and the Millennium*, London, Reaktion Book, 1993, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13-14.

<sup>13</sup> Lewis Carroll, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

<sup>15</sup> Louis Marin, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Lewis Carroll, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Louis Marin, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Michael D. Gordin, Helen Tilley, and Gyan Prakash (eds.), *Utopia/ Dystopia. Conditions of Historical Possibility*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Lewis Carroll, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 129.

*This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0061.*