

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: Rewriting Alice: Victorian Women's Responses to Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

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Within a few years of Lewis Carroll's publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), other authors tried to replicate aspects of the *Alice* books. In fact, Carroll states that he even started a collection of "books of the Alice type" (quoted in Sigler "Authorizing" 351). According to Carolyn Sigler and Sanjay Sircar, between 150 and 200 texts were written imitating, responding to, and/or parodying Carroll's *Alice* (xi and 45). Furthermore, many of the 150 to 200 imitations were written by Victorian women, some of whom were well-known authors. Also during this period, what Anna Krugovoy Silver now calls a "culture of anorexia" was developing in Britain (27). Femininity was closely aligned with anorexia since "proper" women were supposed to exhibit behaviors, including food restriction, which were signs of anorexia. Furthermore, anorexia and its denial of hunger were related to the purity and asexuality of Victorian women. The anorexic became the image of the ideal Victorian woman. This paper will explore *Alice* imitations written by three female authors: Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy* (1869), Juliana Horatia Ewing's "Amelia and the Dwarfs" (1870), and Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1874). I argue that *Alice* exhibits several features of a culture of anorexia, and in their responses to Carroll, particularly through depictions of eating and growth, Ingelow, Ewing, and Rossetti sometimes uphold and sometimes challenge this Victorian culture of anorexia. All three critique the preference for the childlike female body, which is clearly present in *Alice*, while they present a range of responses to food restriction and controlling the appetite.