The Fantastic in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

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Mentorica doc. dr. sc. Biljana Oklopčić

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Humanističke znanosti, filologija, teorija i povijest književnosti

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Abstract

Lewis Carroll's world of nonsense, Wonderland, is undoubtedly filled with otherworldly creatures, symbols, and scenarios, all experienced by its main character Alice. From falling down the rabbit-hole to playing an unusual version of croquet with the Queen, Alice is faced with a series of challenges that require her to let go of her common sense and the known facts about the outside world while accepting the lawless, illogical, and mad reality as her new "normal." While being aware of the existence of the outside world, Alice is wandering the newly discovered world on her own. Much to her frustrations, Wonderland's inhabitants that she meets prove to be more of a nuisance and a problem than helpful. Most of the challenges prove to be overwhelming for a child and cause her to push herself harder in order to survive. It is everything but a coincidence that these characters and extraordinary events are the cause of Alice's self-doubt and required change. Seemingly meaningless conversations and situations turn out to be the needed ingredient for her personal growth and can be interpreted as victory against her inner demons and fears that she has been battling with in reality, but was too afraid to face in the lucid state.

Key words: Alice, Wonderland, nonsense, Victorian era, Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Introduction

The paper focuses on the examination of the fantastic elements and their effects on the main character in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. It is divided into three chapters. The first chapter's main focus is on the fantastic elements themselves, namely the analysis of the setting, the main and minor characters, the linguistic confusion that adds to the madness in Wonderland, life in a lawless, structureless place, the use of symbols and their connection to the time period. The second chapter explores manipulation and the effects of being exposed to something for a longer period of time, characterized by questioning of one's identity, indisputable personal growth and character development, and learning to accept one's reality. The final, third, chapter deals with the influence of one's subconscious part of the brain on the outcome of one's dreams, representing the main character's deepest desires, biggest concerns, and proving it all to be connected to reality. The paper is concluded with personal thoughts and observations drawn from reading the novel and analyzing additional literature.

1. Fantastic Elements of Wonderland

It is a well-known fact that children have wild imagination and often see the world through different eyes than adults. Alice is no exception. Even though most characters she meets on her journey are either humans or animals, they exhibit certain attributes (either physical or behavioral) that make them everything but normal. Her first encounter with such a character is with the White Rabbit. Although she sees him for the first time in "her world," she does not find it odd for a rabbit to be able to talk, but rather that he carries a watch:

> There was nothing so *very* remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!" … but when the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*… (Carroll 38)

As she is falling down the rabbit-hole, she realizes how strange a place it is and that (most) rules from the outside world cannot be applied here: "Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went to look about her" (Carroll 38). Although it is certain that laws of gravity cannot be applied to Wonderland, the reader must constantly question validity of Alice's observations and descriptions since she herself is fighting a battle between common sense and emotions and makes a lot of simple mistakes throughout the novel: "I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time?" (Carroll 39).

A combination of rules from both the real world and Wonderland can be seen when she needs a key to unlock the door, but in order to get through she has to shrink in size (which is impossible in reality). Since Wonderland is an unstable place of constant change, the setting is altered in a nonsensical way much like in dreams: "The second time round, she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before" (Carroll 41) even though she says she had tried every door beforehand. The position of the golden key and the little bottle labeled with the words "DRINK ME" constantly shifts from being in her hand to appearing back on the glass table: " This time she found a little bottle on it ('which certainly was not here before,' said Alice)" (Carroll 41). The lack of certainty frustrates her because she is not able to control her destiny nor predict the outcome of her actions in this world. The difficulties she faces by not being able to unlock the door represent her struggle with achieving her dreams. Given that the table is made of glass, she

can clearly see the key on it at all times, which only increases her frustrations. The shifting of the key makes her question her own sanity. A similar explanation can be applied to her chasing the White Rabbit. She is desperately chasing him, but, on the other hand, she does not know why or what she will accomplish by doing so. At the end of the novel, even when she finally manages to be in the same room as he, she does absolutely nothing nor shows what her initial objective was for following him. Another example of doing something "meaningless" is the Caucus-race. The character named Dodo suggests joining the Caucus-race in order to get dry, yet there are no rules and no winners:

> However, when they had been running half an hour or so, and were quite dry again, the Dodo suddenly called out, "The race is over!" and they all crowded round it, panting, and asking, "But who has won?" This question the Dodo could not answer without a great deal of thought… At last the Dodo said, "*Everybody* has won, and all must have prizes." (Carroll 54)

Common sense and one's knowledge of language suggest that whenever there is a "race," there is supposed to be a winner. Otherwise, it cannot be called a "race" since no one is competing, or rather racing to get somewhere first. In addition, the winner usually gets a prize. Since this is Wonderland where nothing is "common," Alice is asked to give out prizes to other "runners" despite her being one herself. Not only that, but even her own prize is given to her from her own pocket making it meaningless and absurd.

Given that she is a child, everything that happens to her is an exaggeration and her small problems appear bigger: "She was in the pool of tears which she had wept when she was nine feet high" (Carroll 48-49). This is a metaphor for being overwhelmed with your own problems and not being in control of your emotions. It reminds the reader that the main character is a child and justifies her immature way of dealing with problems. She always ends up in some kind of trouble and is faced with a problem she cannot solve easily. As much as Wonderland is the cause of her problems, it is usually the solution as well. When she could not fit through the small door, escape from the White Rabbit's house, or get down from a tree, she always somehow came across the little bottle labeled with the words "DRINK ME" or something to eat in order to grow or shrink in size. Eventually, she grows accustomed to solving her problems in this way as it proves to be effective each time.

Alice soon realizes she cannot rely on her linguistic knowledge along with the former laws of nature. When she asks the Mouse to share his story of the origin of his hatred towards cats and dogs, they have a misunderstanding. The Mouse uses the word "tale," referring to the long story he wanted to share with her. Alice mistakes the word for its homophone "tail," referring to an anatomical part of the Mouse's body. She agrees that it is a long "tail," but wonders why the Mouse would call it sad. She perceives language and its expressions literally and soon starts talking nonsensically: "'Oh, you foolish Alice!' she answered herself. 'How can you learn lessons in here? Why, there's hardly room for you, and no room at all for any lesson-books!'" (Carroll 62) taking the expression "make room for" literally. Lewis Carroll fancied using puns and changing commonly known facts to comment on different aspects of society. In this way, he came up with the character Mock Turtle: "The Mock Turtle is Carroll's creation and is derived from mock turtle soup which was made from calf left overs and a substitute for the more expensive green turtle soup" (Newey). In the scene where Alice is talking with the Mock Turtle, the reader is given one more example of Carroll's play on words:

> "And how many hours a day did you do lessons?" said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.
>
> "Ten hours the first day," said the Mock Turtle; "nine the next, and so on."
>
> "What a curious plan!" exclaimed Alice.
>
> "That's the reason they're called lessons," the Gryphon remarked: "because they lessen from day to day." (Carroll 117)

An extraordinary place such as Wonderland and events that follow can only be described with the use of similarly odd, nonconventional words such as "curiouser and curiouser" (Carroll 44). The peak of madness is introduced with the Cheshire Cat and the Mad Hatter. The Cheshire Cat adds to Alice's confusion:

> "But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.
>
> "Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."
>
> "How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.
>
> "You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here." (Carroll 87)

The Cheshire Cat explains its madness by saying: "You see a dog growls when it's angry, and wags its tail when it's pleased. Now *I* growl when I'm pleased, and wag my tail when I'm angry. Therefore I'm mad" (Carroll 88). It can disappear and reappear wherever and whenever it wants

to. The irony is that the Cheshire Cat, an animal, is one of the few inhabitants of Wonderland that offers a bit of relief and comfort to Alice, despite there being other human-like characters that are expected to act more humane than an animal: "It's the Cheshire Cat: now I shall have somebody to talk to" (Carroll 105). The reason is most likely the resemblance to her own cat Dinah whom she misses and constantly thinks about. Another irony lies in the fact that Gryphon, the least human-looking creature, is also one of the few characters that listens to Alice.

The irrationality and absurdity can also be seen in severity of the Queen's actions. She represents "the adult" of Wonderland because everyone is supposed to accept and respect her decisions, yet at the same time she is the most irrational character in the book. She acts like a child when things do not go her way and "solves" her problems by saying "off with his/her head!" Her body is disproportionate and her features are exaggerated. At this point, Alice is no longer surprised by the fact that even inanimate objects have to ability to talk, walk, and behave like human beings. The Playing Cards are the King and Queen's soldiers and both their appearance and behavior comment on the absurdity of the Victorian era. In his paper "Making Sense of Nonsense: A Literary Analysis of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* (2004), Brady Bush claims:

> Carroll couldn't help but comment on his own frustrations in dealing with the overbearing rationality of Victorian society, or perhaps his aggravation at the irrationality of the pagan world outside the Church, and uses Alice to express the mad nature of it all. (8)

Since they are depicted as a pack of cards, it means that they are all the same in the eyes of the ruler. Their only function is to do as they are told, no matter how absurd or demanding it sounds. The game of croquet that is played in the Queen's garden includes a flamingo as a golf club and a hedgehog as the ball, which also comments on the social hierarchy of the time. The Queen is quick to use her soldiers and underlings to get what she wants and essentially treats them either as objects (cards) or animals (flamingos, hedgehogs, the Gryphon). The garden that Alice is desperately trying to get to can be interpreted as the Garden of Eden because in Alice's mind it is an ideal place until she finds out its true colors. Everything is fake, from the painted roses to the idyllic and peaceful atmosphere she was looking forward to. The game of croquet is directly connected to Lewis Carroll's personal life: "Carroll was a fan of croquet because it was an outdoor game that allowed adults and children and men and women to play together" (Cohen quoted in Susina 422).

Another display of Wonderland's irregularity is connected to time (or rather Time, being that the Mad Hatter regards it as a "him"). At the tea party, Alice finds out that along with gravity and language, she can no longer depend on time as well in this world. The Mad Hatter tells her a story of how the Queen did not let him finish the poem he was reciting and accused him of murdering time. "And ever since that… It's always six o'clock now" which is the reason why they are always drinking tea (Carroll 94). Alice finds the Mad Hatter's watch to be "funny" because instead of telling time in hours and minutes, it tells the day of the month. As much as it seems nonsensical at first, after the Mad Hatter's explanation that the time has "forever stopped" at six o'clock, it is completely justified and the watch would be useless otherwise. This proves that some things in Wonderland do make sense in their own unusual way, but that is a rather rare occasion and it is usually the opposite of logical. For example, while the Dormouse was telling one of his stories, the March Hare explained the main reason why things in Wonderland happen the way they do:

> "They were learning to draw," the Dormouse went on, yawning and rubbing its eyes, for it was getting very sleepy, "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. Alice was silent. (Carroll 97)

It is the first time an inhabitant of Wonderland straightforwardly admitted that not everything has to have a deeper meaning nor does it have to make sense to other people. It is a world where everyone and anyone can act freely without suffering the consequences of their actions. Even the Gryphon explains that the Queen's threats are not to be taken seriously because she never applies them in practice. Alice is shocked that social rules do not matter in this world:

> "I don't think they play at all fairly," Alice began, in rather a complaining tone, "and they all quarrel so dreadfully one can't hear oneself speak – and they don't seem to have any rules in particular; at least, if there are, nobody attends to them – and you've no idea how confusing it is all the things being alive…" (Carroll 105)

Alice also knows a child would be punished for acting like the Mad Hatter did during the tea party. The conversation between the Mad Hatter, the March Hare, and the Dormouse is pointless, followed by the famous "why is a raven like a writing-desk" riddle. Despite the fact that the riddle has no solution in the book, the Mad Hatter still urges Alice to give him an answer and

jumps from one subject to another. This is another example of the lack of order in Wonderland and the impossibility to fully analyze its patterns, since the only pattern is that there is no pattern at all. Its inhabitants do not find it even a bit odd to live in a world characterized by constant change and disorder, but ironically find Alice to be the odd one and they become confused when she starts doubting illogical series of events that happen to her. Márcia Lemos (2009) thus asserts that "Alice is usually the one who stares and gapes while all the other creatures seem perfectly at ease in that linguistic nonsensical wonderland" (26). It seems that no matter what she does, she always stands out. Even when she grows taller by eating something created in Wonderland, she is still a freak, as seen in the scenes with the Pigeon, the White Rabbit, and lastly in the Courtroom: "All persons more than a mile high to leave the court" (Carroll 137). Martin Gardner (1996) claims that Lewis Carroll later on came up with the solution to the riddle: "because it can produce a few notes, tho they are very flat; and it is nevar put with the wrong end in front" adding that "Carroll deliberately misspelled 'never' to make it 'raven' backward" (2).

There have been many speculations that Lewis Carroll was under the influence or that he used such elements as an inspiration throughout the book. Mike Jay (2012) researched the topic of hallucinogenic mushrooms and asserted:

> Over the nineteenth century, a vast body of art and literature would connect mushrooms and toadstools with elves, pixies, hollow hills and the unwitting transport of subjects to fairyland, a world of shifting perspectives and dimensions seething with elemental spirits. (11)

Upon meeting the Caterpillar, Alice finds him sitting on a big mushroom, smoking a hookah. It is clear that this is not an ordinary caterpillar one might see in nature. The Caterpillar is talking in a "languid, sleepy voice" which may be Alice's subconscious hinting to her that she is asleep, or it may be something more. He tells her that one side of the mushroom will make her taller, possibly using it in a metaphorical way to say "it will make you higher" as one would be while under the influence of drugs. Mike Jay (2012) further claims that the influence of such symbols on the novel is caused by Lewis Carroll's personal health: "His interest was spurred by his own delicate health – insomnia and frequent migraines – which he treated with homeopathic remedies, including many derived from psychoactive plants like aconite and belladonna" (20).

The most normal and stable inhabitant of Wonderland is an enormous puppy that acts the same way any other dog would, although it is still not the usual size it would be in the outside

world. Oddly enough, its name is not written with a capital letter, which says a lot about its significance for both the story and Wonderland itself. Alice soon loses interest in the puppy since she has already grown accustomed to a new definition of the word “normal” and does not find the puppy interesting enough to waste her time on it. There is a likely possibility that Lewis Carroll was more affectionate towards cats than dogs based on the characters and their roles in the book. All the characters might seem harmless at first, but soon the reader realizes that they are abusive, stubborn, selfish, and utterly mad. Their repetitive debunking of Alice’s beliefs, commenting on her appearance and how and what she should change, inquiring about her identity when she clearly states she is unsure of it herself, and treating her as a clueless little girl all add up to her insecurities about her own sanity. In this world, “people” are rude to her for no apparent reason, adults act irresponsibly and immaturely, and animal-like creatures have the ability to talk and understand English, but often use confusing words and expressions that make sense only to them. As much as it might seem that Wonderland and the outside world are complete opposites, it is not so. Both worlds criticize the mindset of people of the Victorian era. It does not matter that most inhabitants of Wonderland are animal-like in form because they exhibit the same unethical and downright cruel and disgraceful human characteristics as humans do.

2. Wonderland's Influence on Alice's Perception

Being exposed to a world where nothing seems to make sense changes Alice's state of mind and forces her to slowly adapt to her "new normal." She makes up an idiom "to shut up like a telescope," referring to shrinking in size. At this point, she does not find it impossible to happen because "so many out-of-the-way things had happened lately" (Carroll 41). She knows that she can expect odd things from now on. She is no longer afraid of the abnormal, but rather excited for new, unexplainable adventures that surely await her around the corner. Much like the little bottle labeled with the words "DRINK ME," she finds a box with a small cake in it that says "EAT ME." Based on the previous experience with the drink, she now expects "nothing but out-of-the-way things to happen" and if things happen the common way, she gets disappointed because that is "quite dull and stupid" (Carroll 43). She lets her guard down because she believes that if the first drink and cake are not poisoned, then everything else that follows is edible and safe as well.

Wonderland makes her question her own identity and makes her think she can apply this world's rules to the outside world: "Who am I then? Tell me that first, and then, if I like being that person, I'll come up: if not, I'll stay down here till I'm somebody else" (Carroll 48). The Pigeon calls her a serpent, but she cannot argue with him because she realizes his points are valid. Much like serpents, Alice admits she has tasted eggs before. Based on this fact, the Pigeon concludes that little girls like her must be a kind of serpent as well. A simple statement like the Pigeon's has the power to make her question something that should be apparent at all time. Each of the characters metaphorically represents her struggles and insecurities. Probably the most frustrating character she meets is the Caterpillar due to his constant repetition of the "who are *you*" question and angry reactions that follow afterwards, no matter which answer she gives him (Carroll 69). He continues this psychological abuse by stressing her inability to recite the "Father William" song correctly.

At the point of meeting the Duchess, Alice is already starting to mature. At first, she sees the Duchess holding a "dreadfully ugly" human child in her arms. As soon as the Duchess calls the baby by the name "Pig," Alice's perception of the child changes and now she sees it as an animal,

a pig. It is interesting to note that initially the word "pig" was spelt with a capital letter, suggesting it is the child's name. Later on, because the Duchess treats the child cruelly (like a mere animal), it completely looks like a pig. Alice no longer feels obliged to carry the child in her arms because it lost its human features and she can no longer connect with it. Now she disregards the child (much like the Duchess does) and shows the point at which her morals start to change. When the Cheshire Cat inquires about the child, Alice replies with "it turned into a pig" as if it were an everyday occurrence.

The longer she stays in Wonderland, the more demanding her challenges become. She takes the Cheshire Cat's advice and changes her normal behavior to a more suitable one for Wonderland. She knows she has to do this in order to blend in with all the nonsense and to survive. From a frightened, sensitive little girl at the beginning of her adventures in Wonderland, she grows (both literally and figuratively) up to be a confident person, ready to confront her bullies. She feels confident enough to oppose the "main bully" of the novel, the Queen. Based on the information Alice acquired from the Gryphon, she knows the Queen's threats are nothing but mere words and realizes her soldiers are simply a pack of cards.

During Alice's stay in the Queen's castle, she meets the Duchess again. This time, the Duchess keeps pestering and interrupting her game of croquet. It is quite possible that the Duchess is in dire need of someone to talk to and is using Alice as a replacement for her child. Alice is passive-aggressive towards her by saying "somebody said… that it's done by everybody minding their own business" and even adds "how fond she is of finding morals in things" (Carroll 110). Alice is now confident to say how she truly feels and is not afraid to judge the Duchess for abandoning her own child. This subconsciously affects Alice because she herself is a child as well and does not like being all alone in Wonderland. As the novel is coming to an end, the reader fully experiences Alice's drastic character development that might seem even cruel at times:

> One of the jurors had a pencil that squeaked. This, of course, Alice could *not* stand, and she went round the court and got behind him, and very soon found an opportunity of taking it away. She did it so quickly that the poor little juror (it was Bill, the Lizard) could not make out at all what had become of it so, after hunting all about for it, he was obliged to write with one finger for the rest of the day. (Carroll 129)

She is no longer running away from her problems nor is she getting distracted by random occurrences in Wonderland. At first, she gets easily distracted from her goal by each new character that appears: “Oh dear! I’d nearly forgotten that I’ve got to grow up again” (Carroll 67). The same principle can be applied to amusement parks. Upon entering, there is a sensory overload of unknown and untested rollercoaster rides and attractions. The person does not know where to begin and what to focus on first. This state of mind lasts for a certain period of time, but after being exposed to such visual stimulations for so long, the person soon becomes desensitized and the initial thrill slowly starts to wear off. Alice is a typical example of this principle. She learns many important lessons during her adventures in Wonderland and now has a full grasp of the situation. She is aware of the cruel reality where nothing is as perfect and serene as it may seem at first glance.

3. Wonderland – the Product of Alice's Mind

Living in the conservative Victorian era, Alice needs sensory stimulation appropriate for her age since she finds her world to be quite dull. The first idea of her being asleep is introduced at the very beginning. She is extremely bored while her sister is reading her a book because "what is the use of a book without pictures or conversation?" (Carroll 37). This sends a message that she will do something to occupy her mind according to her own interests. Despite this fact, throughout the novel the reader can see that Alice is well aware of the existence of both worlds: "How brave they'll all think me at home!" (Carroll 38). This makes it hard to determine whether she is truly asleep or not because everything that happens is contradictory. Nevertheless, her falling down the rabbit-hole shows the first stage of falling asleep since it progresses slowly and calmly. During her first encounter with the little bottle, she says:

> "No, I'll look first and see whether it's marked *poison* or not," for she had read several nice little histories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and many other unpleasant things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them… (Carroll 42).

The little cake she eats afterwards tastes like a mixture of cherry-tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffee, and hot buttered toast, which are most likely her favorite dishes in the real world mashed together. She recalls her friends from the outside world and tries to deduce whether she had gone insane and become one of them. Alice concludes she did not become Ada (one of her classmates) because their hairstyles are different. She also eliminates the possibility of being Mabel (another classmate) because "she knows such a very little" (Carroll 47).

Lewis Carroll incorporated original songs into the novel and altered them in a way that would be most suitable for the scene:

> "Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
>
> How I wonder what you're at!
>
> You know the song perhaps?"
>
> "I've heard something like it," said Alice.

"It goes on, you know," the Hatter continued, "in this way-

Up above the world you fly,

Like a tea-tray in the sky." (94)

It shows that Alice remembers the original song she most likely learnt in school. It may be assumed that she has troubles with her studies because this theme is present while she is on her adventures in Wonderland: "Let's try Geography. London is the capital of Paris, and Paris is the capital of Rome, and Rome – no, *that's* all wrong" (Carroll 47). She is struggling with remembering facts that she finds boring and whenever she is supposed to showcase her knowledge, she fails at it: "'You don't know much,' said the Duchess; 'and that's a fact'" (Carroll 83). Since dreams are the results of our subconscious, this tells the reader that Alice is somewhat self-conscious about her knowledge. This is most likely the result of frequently being criticized by adults in the outside world because she had to uphold a certain image as someone living in the Victorian era. Adult inhabitants of Wonderland, mostly the Queen, the Duchess, and the King, are the ones who are targeting Alice and commenting on her knowledge, making her feel insecure. The only option she has is to either run away from these problems or face them.

She admits to "being two people" since she has inner monologues and gives advice to herself. She is all alone in an unknown world. Her only connection to the outside world is her cat Dinah, which she is eager to talk about with other characters she meets: "I wish I could show you our cat Dinah" (Carroll 50). Every time she gets lonely, a new character appears. It is as if her mind is trying to entertain and protect her from boredom she faces in everyday life by creating new challenges. Upon meeting one of those new characters, the Mouse, "she remembered having seen in her brother's Latin Grammar" (Carroll 49) how to properly address a mouse, which is another proof of her awareness of the outside world.

The fact that there are many cases of Alice mentioning the outside world gives the reader the idea that she is somewhat in a lucid state. On the one hand, Alice appears to be lacking general knowledge when it comes to geography, literature, math and such, but on the other, the very existence and complexity of Wonderland suggests otherwise. Most people, when they are asleep, are not able to control their dreams and remember them when they wake up. Alice is not only able to come up with an entire new world with its own hierarchy, linguistic features, characters, and their backstories, but she is also aware of the reality that awaits her in the outside world, she

is able to talk to the inhabitants of Wonderland, to taste food, smell the cloud of smoke from the Caterpillar's hookah, and on top of all that she is able to remember it all when she wakes up and describes the dream to her sister: "'Oh, I've had such a curious dream!' said Alice, and she told her sister, as well as she could remember them, all these strange Adventures of hers" (Carroll 141).

The most obvious clue of Wonderland being the product of Alice's mind is when she says: "When I used to read fairytales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one" (Carroll 61). She is a creative, curious person who gets her inspirations directly from the fantasy books she reads, the books that invite children into otherworldly, magical places that cannot be found anywhere in the boring reality of the Victorian era. When she wakes up from her curious dream at the end of the novel, her sister tells her to run back into the house in order not to be late for her tea (Carroll 141). By doing so, the reader gets to see a "real life" influence on the creation of Wonderland's tea party and its importance for the society in the outside world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is inspired by the author's personal life as well as his issues with the society of the Victorian era. Because Wonderland is the product of Alice's mind, it subjectively portrays her everyday worries and thoughts on certain people, moral values, and life condition in general. Alice's experiences in Wonderland might seem nonsensical at first, yet they force her to adapt to a new reality and grow and mature as a person. She meets creatures that are the cause of her confusion and self-doubt of her own identity. She soon realizes that everything she has learned in the outside world cannot be applied to Wonderland. It forces her to essentially start from scratch by observing the characters, the setting, and what they have to offer. Being alone in a completely new world forces her to become independent. If she lets other people's criticism break her apart, she will not survive the harsh reality of both Wonderland and the outside world. Alice's mind creates various challenges for her characterized by the lack of structure, rules, and logic. She learns that the most efficient way to solve problems is to acknowledge them before doing anything else rather than questioning the logic behind them. Through the (questionable) guidance of inhabitants of Wonderland, Alice learns to let go of her fears and misconceptions and shows a dramatic change in her character. The journey to adulthood is complex and demanding, especially for a little girl such as Alice. Unlike her peers, she is forced to go through all the stages of physical, psychological, and emotional growth at once. She enters Wonderland as a self-conscious, lost little girl and exits as a brave, confident individual.

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