

Adult Realm v. Childhood: A Critical Examination of the Victorian Realm's Ideal Young Adult

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Adult Realm v. Childhood: A Critical Examination of the Victorian Realm's Ideal Young Adult

Abstract

Alice in Wonderland is a story that represents the cultural shift in Victorian ideas and its vision of childhood. The character of Alice represents an ideal Victorian youth, but her inabilities, confinement, and limitations in Wonderland suggest a culture clash and changing times. The story of Alice, through its puns, miscommunication, confusing mannerisms, and cultural disconnection between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland, preach a rejection of the Victorian adult realm. The novel itself provides an alternative for children to be children rather than obedient little adults.

*Adult Realm v. Childhood:**A Critical Examination of the Victorian Realm's Ideal Young Adult**Jewels White*

Alice begins her adventure down the rabbit hole with a gesture of boredom. She has lost all interest in whatever her older sister is reading and begins her pursuit of the white rabbit into her adventure in Wonderland. Alice's adventure represents the foreshadowing of something new, a rejection of the adult Victorian realm. Instead of sitting leisurely studying a book with her sister, Alice has decided to take a break away from her expectations and let curiosity be her guide. *Alice in Wonderland* is a story that represents the cultural shift in Victorian ideas and its vision of childhood. The character of Alice represents an (almost) ideal Victorian youth, but her inabilities, confinement, and limitations in Wonderland suggest a culture clash and foreshadow changing times. The story of Alice, through its puns, parodies, miscommunication, confusing mannerisms, and cultural disconnection between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland, advocates a rejection of the Victorian adult realm. The novel itself provides an alternative for children to be children rather than merely obedient little adults.

Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* is best known for its eccentric and odd characters, peculiar adventure, and female protagonist; however, what is least known about the novel is its revolutionary beginnings. In today's society, bedtime stories and fairy tales depict magical lands that take children on imaginary adventures where anything can come true, but this was not the case during Alice's time. During the nineteenth century and before, the typical

construction of a child's bedtime story involved grotesque and scary images with devastating ends for the younger character. The purpose of these bedtime stories was to scare children into behaving appropriately. According to Charmette Kendrick, "in nineteenth century England and America, most scary stories were written and published for the young with two purposes—to indoctrinate youngsters with the morals of the day and to expose superstition as a false belief system perpetuated by the foolish and the wicked" (20). Alice represents a cultural shift away from these kinds of Victorian values and a departure from bedtime stories that had a purpose of mainly scaring children into being obedient little adults rather than fueling imagination. The Victorian era stressed proper etiquette and social discipline, while rejecting curiosity and independent action (especially from young girls). Some critics argue that the novel of *Alice in Wonderland* "was a call to arms urging children and adults to turn the staid Victorian world of strict morals and manners on its head" (Kendrick 22). Alice represents a need for children to delight in their own imaginations and experience the thrill of adventure without moralistic evil breathing down their necks.

Despite this need, an evil was always breathing down the necks of children during the nineteenth century and this led to Carroll's declaration for the respect of childhood. This evil being discussed is high child mortality. During this era, "infant mortality was high [1700-1900] and the

number of children surviving in any one family was usually small, [with] many infants dying before they were even five years old” (Whalley and Chester 15). This caused parents to remain slightly detached from their children and to push them into being little adults as fast as they could. Families needed children to support incomes and to do other tasks in order to help out; therefore the pressure to grow-up was constant. Lindsay Smith, in her article “Picturing the Child in the Nineteenth Century: The Artist, the Child, and a Changing Society,” reasons that disease, poor nutrition, and work hazards all played an integral part in this epidemic (41). This was a reality for most families and thus led to even the most gentle and nurturing parent to act differently towards their children due to this personal vulnerability. The loss of a child can be devastating, but certain social practices helped as a coping mechanism for many parents.

Alice in Wonderland advocates imagination, curiosity, and other child-like attitudes, but this is not all done through the simplicity of allowing a young child to wander aimlessly throughout a random land. This vulnerability of a parent losing their child caused parents during the time period “to accelerate their child to adulthood, beyond the deathly pitfalls of youth, even if it was only in a superficial fashion. The child had no childhood [during]... that period of development” (Smith 42). Carroll recognizes this issue and in order to further his avocation for childhood, he utilizes the literary convention of parody in order to help further display the ideals and values that are wrong within his society (in terms of people’s mindsets towards children). David Bates (1848) wrote a typical lullaby for infants during this time. The lyrics are as follows:

Speak gently to the little child!
Its love be sure to gain;

Teach it in accents soft and mild;
It may not long remain.¹

This poem expresses a need for the gentle treatment and love for infants. One would assume it is because an infant is only that little for a short period, but in terms of this time period, it actually is because the child will probably die. This poem does not represent what actually went on within families during the nineteenth century. This poem represents a glorified version of how parents should treat their infants, but in actuality, parents generally ignored or neglected their infants as a form of emotional protection. The first time Alice meets the Duchess, she is walking down a random path and witnesses her singing to her infant in a pepper-filled house. The Duchess is singing her baby a lullaby, but this lullaby is not what Alice expected:

Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes:
He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases. (71)

While the Duchess sings this to her baby, she is constantly shaking and throwing her child around her pepper-filled house. This cruel treatment is rather shocking, but Carroll is using hyperbole to criticize parents and their detachment. Parents did not literally throw their infants around and beat them, but it did happen to children. With the onset of the Industrial Revolution, children were forcibly placed in factories and other unsafe working areas in order to help the family. This would never have happened to upper-middle-class Alice, but poor working conditions were becoming a

¹ This poem is available in footnote number one on page 49 of: Carroll, Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland*. Ed. Donald J. Gray. New York: Norton & Company Inc., 1971. Print.

prominent issue creeping into Victorian society. Smith asks her audience to “consider the popular depictions of the child as a small adult. Even as late as the first quarter of the nineteenth century, children wore scaled-down versions of the clothes worn by elders” (Rogers 41). This helped parents cope because an adult’s death is less devastating than an innocent child’s is.

Alice represents how Victorian society viewed children through their consistent morals, values, and social customs that stress obedience and strict manners. This mindset is apparent from Alice’s interactions with the various inhabitants of Wonderland such as the Duchess, Mock Turtle, the March Hare, and the Cheshire Cat. Theodore Dalrymple, in his article, “Down the Rabbit Hole” explains that many of Alice’s interactions with natives “do not follow any moral or even causative, logic. Carroll clearly makes mock of Victorian moralism and highmindness, which must have come as a relief to children and their parents, like shedding a heavy load after a long walk” (48). As it has been pointed out, this novel was revolutionary for the time period in terms of its absence of aggressive moralistic themes. Until publication of this novel, children’s books were heavily moralistic. Using the character of the Duchess, Carroll mocks these Victorian conventions of morals (Dalrymple 48). This lack of moralism in *Alice in Wonderland* is most apparent in the following passage from Alice’s second meeting with the Duchess:

Alice had quite forgotten about the Duchess by this time, and was a little startled when she heard her voice close to her ear. “You’re thinking about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to talk. I ca’n’t tell you just now what the moral of that is, but I shall remember it in a bit.”

“Perhaps it hasn’t one,” Alice ventured to remark.

“Tut, tut, child!” said the Duchess. “Everything’s got a moral, if only you can find it.” And she squeezed herself closer to Alice’s side as she spoke. (70).

As one can recall from earlier, the Duchess was throwing her child around the room and speaking roughly to it. It is apparent that she clearly is not a good moralistic example. However, she thinks she is and that is exactly how she represents a mockery towards the Victorian society’s literature conventions.

The Duchess scolds Alice for not realizing there is a moral in everything. Even Alice, who comes from a very moralistic society, is confused by this woman and how she finds enjoyment in discovering morals in random life. Another example of her nonsensical morals appears when they are discussing flamingo tempers. Alice warns the Duchess that the flamingo might bite. The Duchess replies, “very true...flamingos and mustard both bite. And that moral of that is—‘Birds of a feather flock together’”(71). Alice follows by telling the Duchess that mustard is not a bird and the discussion of mustard continues. This moral the Duchess states has no relevance to their discussion of flamingo biting (at least as far as Alice is concerned), which represents how other general morals were ridiculous for children during this time period. When Carroll “makes a ridiculous character like the Duchess praise and practice moralizing in this manner, he clearly indicates his attitude towards didacticism directed against children” (Leach 92). Typically in other child stories, these heavily moralistic themed fairy tales would result in a lying child freezing to death in the snow and having his eyes picked out by ravens (Kendrick 21). Carroll

disagreed with these types of children stories and utilized the Duchess to display the absurdity of malicious morals in fairy tales.

Alice represents her own culture (Victorian society), while the inhabitants of Wonderland represent a clashing culture, which is dramatically different from Alice's. At times this causes a cultural disconnect, which chain reacts with anger, hostility, and severe misunderstandings from both participating parties. Alice retains a very ethnocentric viewpoint within her exploration of Wonderland, which displays the Victorian's sense of authority in proper values and sense of cultural superiority. Wonderland is full of rules, regulations, manners and morals, but none of these are accessible to Alice, who is trapped within her own mindset. Alice's struggles throughout Wonderland and this demonstrates her problems with growing-up. In the viewpoint of the Victorians', imagination, curiosity, and explorative interest are child-like traits, whereas adult traits include logic, literalness, and attention to rules. Everything Alice sees and does, she judges based upon her, own, adult enforced, learned experiences, and knowledge that she considers as "normal."

The concept of "normal" changes depending on what cultural lens an individual is looking through. The cultural lens that Alice uses is based on Victorian values and social customs. It is through her personal perspective that one can see that there is a dramatic culture clash to be witnessed within Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. What Alice deems as normal social interaction is not the same as what a Wonderland inhabitant would deem as normal. This is apparent in how Alice constantly is either insulting an inhabitant, passing judgment on their habits, or being observed rude or stupid herself. An example of Alice being rude to a Wonderland inhabitant takes place during the Mad Tea

Party chapter. As the chapter starts, Alice has just sat down at the table and the March Hare states to her:

"Have some wine," the March Hare said in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. "I don't see any wine," she remarked.

"There isn't any," said the March Hare.

"Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it," said Alice angrily.

"It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited," said the March Hare.

"I didn't know it was *your* table," said Alice: "it's laid out for a great many more than three."

"Your hair wants cutting," said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.

"You should learn not to make personal remarks," Alice said with some severity: "it's very rude."

(55)

Both parties in this situation are impolite and missing appropriate manners within the contexts of their own cultures. The March Hare considers Alice bad-mannered for sitting down uninvited and Alice considers the March Hare impolite for offering her wine when there was none. Alice is the first offender in this case, but she maintains the impression that she does not need permission to sit down at the table because she did not realize it was the March Hare's table. Alice always sees herself as superior to Wonderland's inhabitants. She also

always sees herself as the most sensible and logical being. Alice is not a guest at the March Hare's tea party, but she sits down and starts to talk to the March Hare like a little brat. She also notices that there are a great number of chairs and few people sitting down, so she does not understand why she would be the one considered rude. She even turns towards the March Hare and says to him "I didn't know it was *your* table... it's laid out for a great many more than three" (55). She insults the March Hare's intelligence and sees his social mannerisms as improper and discourteous. Linda Shires in her article, in her article, "Nonsense Parody, and the Status of the Real: The Example of Carroll," she explains that "because the March Hare and the Mad Hatter contradict what Alice thinks is the normal ritual of a tea-party and also the natural relationship between words and things, she must conclude: it was 'the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life!' (p 60)" (Shires 272). Instead of Alice assessing herself and seeing her flaws, she maintains a belief of cultural superiority and dismisses them as just strange. This cultural disconnect is passed off as their fault and not all Alice's, yet undoubtedly in this state of affairs, the March Hare and the Hatter maintain control over Alice.

Another example of cultural disconnect happens when Alice goes to hear the story of the Mock Turtle. When first meeting the Mock Turtle, Alice asks him about his past and after waiting for a long time, he explains to her that his master was an old turtle that they used to call Tortoise. Alice, in this situation, laughs because she is thinking about the conventional distinction between tortoises and turtles. Tortoises generally are described as land-bound unlike turtles that can swim in the sea. This moment in Wonderland represents another instance of cultural disconnect for Alice because she could not understand why the

Mock Turtle would call his master a Tortoise is he was not, in fact, a tortoise. The Mock Turtle angrily replies to Alice that "we called him Tortoise because he taught us" (Carroll 109). Here Carroll is using linguistic conventions, once again, in order to create confusion for Alice within Wonderland. Alice is accustomed to her own dialect, language, and meanings. Wonderland, however, seems to provide a wide variety of interpretation.

At times, it seems like Wonderland's inhabitants purposely twist meanings and ideas in order to further Alice's confusion and questioning her own personal identification. Jan B. Gordon, in her article "The Alice Books and Metaphors of Victorian Childhood," states that "language and dialects belong to an adult communication circuit, whereas the realm of childhood has its own internal form of communication, less dependent upon linguistic translation" (94). This shows how Alice is limited within Wonderland. Alice has been taught her whole life how to think and act a certain way. These thoughts and actions were depicted by the Victorian society that tells her to be more literal and use logic over imagination.

It is difficult for Alice to think less literally and more figuratively in Wonderland because logic is what she would be taught to rely on as an obedient, little, Victorian child. Curiosity and imagination are child-like traits, which are also seen as weak personality traits and strongly denied. When the Mock Turtle is talking with young Alice, their conversation is full of puns and double meanings. Through Carroll's mastery with the English language, it all makes perfect sense, but it is never what Alice is expecting. The Mock Turtle constantly remains linguistic control over Alice due to her limitations generated by Victorian customs. Beatrice Turner discusses this topic of linguistic control in

her article “Which is to be the Master?’ Language as Power in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*.” Turner explains that “whatever rules are being adhered to her, they are the ones to which Alice is denied access, and as such she almost always comes out second best in the debates in which she is engaged in” (247). This is apparent in her conversation with the Mock Turtle. Alice is always one-step behind these inhabitants in Wonderland and it is through her learned knowledge of the adult realm and the Victorian concepts that dictate her lady-like properties that cause Alice’s confusion. Alice attempts to utilize logic several times through the text, in situations like this one, in order to display her superiority and awareness of adult concepts and rules. The problem with this is her logic is based upon Victorian knowledge and beliefs, which do nothing to aid her or explain her encounters in Wonderland.

Alice’s expectations are what continually cause her the most difficulty in her adventure through Wonderland. What means one thing in her culture could mean something completely different in another, but Alice cannot seem to grasp the reality of this. In order to function correctly in Wonderland, Alice must relearn and reevaluate the way in which she thinks about life in response to her surroundings. This concept is apparent in the discussion of “lessons” between the Mock Turtle, Alice and the Gryphon. In this particular scene, Alice is once again attempting to sound more knowledgeable and authoritative than another Wonderland inhabitant, by asking the Mock Turtle how many hours a day he studied his lessons. She sees this as a competition. She thinks she will beat him by having more hours of studying a day and she believes this will show her superiority because in her society, the more an individual studies and learns, the more distinguished he is considered. Education is

a very important aspect of the upper-class Victorian adult realm. The Mock Turtle explains that it was “ten hours the first day... nine the next, and so on” (Carroll 77). This was not the answer Alice was expecting, but this concept excites and bewilders her at the same time. The Gryphon notices this and explains the reasoning to Alice. He says, “They’re called lessons... because they lessen from day to day” (77). This idea interests Alice because it actually makes perfect sense, but Victorian society would find the concept ridiculous. It is moments like this that make Alice start to wonder who exactly she is and how she fits into the world around her. Her beliefs and understanding of her own world are constantly being tested and questioned throughout her journey.

Alice must try to be like a child in order to get anywhere in Wonderland, but she struggles to remove herself from the adult realm’s specialized thought patterns involving being literal and this inability produces a lot of complications and cultural tension for Alice. Beatrice Turner explains further that, “the child only exists in an intelligible way through language, which is rule-bound and, above all, the province of the adult” (244). When looking at the inhabitants of Wonderland, Turner argues that this linguistic control defines them as adults and the way in which they use this linguistic control with Alice is in a very adult way (244). Throughout the novel, there are a number of instances where the inhabitants exercise the adult’s right to tell a child “what” she is or what she should do. Elsie Leach, in her article, “*Alice in Wonderland* in Perspective,” discusses the lesson in which Alice tries to repeat throughout the novel and how “some of the characters Alice meets order her to ‘stand up and repeat’ [her lessons] as a test of memory, and in other ways they display the usual adult preachy officiousness” (91).

Carroll sees this as a major flaw and problem dictated by the adult realm and it is clearly displayed. This is why Carroll parodies the instructive verses that children were forced to recite and memorize. A child has a unique and special mind that needs to be nurtured and developed. By suppressing individuality and imagination, one is suppressing personal identity—something that Carroll struggled with a lot himself (Smith 370). This necessity to “be” something causes Alice to constantly question herself and become something concrete, when it is unnecessary.

Nothing is what it seems and everything in this new world confuses Alice: the cruelty, the manners, the use of language, the inhabitants’ perception of time. This all makes Alice start to question her previous identity outside and within Wonderland because she seems convinced that she cannot be herself. This clash of cultures is generating an identity crisis for Alice. She continues to misspeak her lessons and cannot recall geography or math. The cultural disconnect she has with the natives in Wonderland starts to make Alice very uncomfortable. She becomes uncomfortable with her surroundings and therefore herself as well. Even in the very beginning, Alice starts to question herself in relation to this new culture she has literally fallen into. After her initial inability to say her lessons correctly, Alice states:

“I must be Mabel after all, and I shall have to go and live in that poky little house, and have next to no toys to play with, and oh, ever so many lessons to learn! No, I’ve made up my mind about it: if I’m Mabel, I’ll stay down here. It’ll be no use their putting their heads down and saying, ‘Come up again, dear!’ I shall only look up

and say ‘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 til I’m somebody else” (Carroll 26).

Alice’s previous identity in her world is meaningless in Wonderland. Therefore things that mattered to her, like toys and a nice house, really do not matter; however, Alice is using quite a condescending tone when discussing this Mabel. She describes Mabel’s house as “poky” and “little.” She also points out that as Mabel she will “have next to no toys to play with.” Alice is very much trapped with her upper-middle-class Victorian upbringing. She connect say her lessons properly and things are not going her way, so therefore she believes that she must be some lower-class girl that she seems to not like very much. This is apparent through her personal statements reflecting upon her own identity as a little girl and the fact that permanent identity is non-existent within Wonderland. Alice obviously realizes this when she states that she could “stay down here til I’m somebody else” (26). An example of identity crisis is after Alice’s meeting with the caterpillar.

After Alice takes a bite from one-side of the mushroom, as the caterpillar instructed her to do (because she did not want to be only three inches tall anymore), her neck immediately grows long and tall, resembling a snake’s body. A Pigeon that is flying nearby sees Alice and starts to attack her head because the bird believes Alice to be a serpent after her eggs. Alice attempts to convince the Pigeon that she is a little girl and not a serpent, but the constant changes Alice has gone through, both physically and mentally, has rendered her unsure to her own identity. Veronica Schanoes, in her article, “Fearless Children and Fabulous Monsters,” explains that in this episode, “the distinction between little girl and ravenous

monster, between eater and eaten, is blurred and dissolved. Is Alice a little girl or a serpent, innocence or temptation, or are they both the same thing after all?" (40). Alice has been taught by society to "be" something and cannot just exist, as Alice seems to do in Wonderland. Her personal and physical identity is constantly questioned because she does not seem to know who or what she exactly is either, especially when her physical identity keeps shifting forms. This world is very strange and different to her. Alice is unable to grasp the changing social concepts and values in Wonderland that mirror the changing social concepts and values happening in Carroll's real world. The Victorian era's morals, values, and social customs were becoming outdated and change was on the way. Alice represents her cultures' residue convictions and difficulties with change through her identity crisis.

Identity is a complex concept in Wonderland. In this world, one can be all kinds of things and no one ever knows what will happen next. Depending on what she eats or drink, Alice's body grows dramatically bigger or smaller. Here in Wonderland, a pack of cards can be a group of soldiers and a child can transform into a pig due to poor treatment. As Linda Shires explains, "what Alice knows is not of much use in Wonderland. Her logic and her language system fail in this most fluid of worlds, where she changes her size regularly and nearly drowns in her own tears" (272). In the real world, there are limitations. Wonderland has no limitations, which symbolizes childhood. Curiosity and imagination are the two things that do not hinder Alice's journey, which are characteristically connected to children. Wonderland is full of impossibilities. For example, if Alice eats a cake, she grows or shrinks immediately, instead of over the course of time of eating it, as it would

happen in the real world. When Alice is trapped in the White Rabbit's house, his neighbors all start to throw rocks at her because they think she is giant and scary. These stones then transform into little cakes while they rain down on Alice's giant body that is stuck in the Rabbit's house. After a while, Alice starts to notice the stones changing into little cakes, and begins to wonder "if I eat one of those cakes... it's sure to make *some* change in my size; and as it can't possibly make me larger, it must make me smaller, I suppose" (Carroll 49). Alice is starting to understand Wonderland's cause-and-effect ordination, but she still cannot seem to forget about her real world obligations directed by the adult realm.

One of the most important real world obligations, for Alice, is her schooling and her lessons. Victorian society dictates education as extremely important and therefore as Alice journeys through Wonderland, she can never get away from or forget her lessons. In every encounter, she has, she thinks about them. She continuously is concerned with learning more and being a proper young lady, as directed by Victorian culture. The difficulty with this is that Alice must try to be like a child in order to get anywhere in Wonderland. Despite this, Alice tries to preserve the proper lady-like values she was raised on throughout her expedition; however, this struggle to let imagination and curiosity fuel her adventure represents her society's struggle for its own change.

Proper values and rules for young ladies were important aspects of Victorian society. Every young upper-class girl should follow the right kinds of etiquette and manners. Books like the *Etiquette for the Ladies: Eighty Maxims on Dress, Manners, and Accomplishments* were written to appeal to the upper-class women living in the 1800s and provide advice on the ways in which they should interact with society. This

particular artifact provides a clue to understanding what was considered as the proper conduct for young women during the Victorian era. Both of these books were written around the same time. Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* was written in 1865 and this particular etiquette book was on its fourth edition in 1837. Therefore, most of these social concepts would still have been taught to the young Alice through her tutoring; however, many of these conducts probably were becoming old and outdated.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice follows many of the Victorian era's mannerisms and social morals in order to further herself in her adventure, but usually this only creates more complications and difficulties for her. Alice can never seem to grasp the way Wonderland's inhabitants think or how their society seems to work. By looking at this artifact in juxtaposition with *Alice in Wonderland*, it is apparent that Carroll's story represents the beginning of a shift in the vision of childhood. These mannerisms and customs were soon going to fade away and child rendering was going to change. Carroll stressed for the respect of childhood and allowance of child-like innocence. Children did not need to be little adults. Through her societal enforced education of becoming a proper young lady, Alice is confined, limited and confused within the world of Wonderland. Therefore, it can be interpreted based on this artifact and cultural tendencies that *Wonderland* foreshadows a dying era of extreme proper mannerisms and social constructs.

Throughout this etiquette book, there are many pieces of advice on the way in which a lady should interact with her guests and the proper way in which she acts with her servants in front of them. Etiquette pointer number XXXVI states "there is nothing so vulgar as the paltry fear of its being known that you interest yourself in

your household affairs" (30). A lady should not be directly concerned with her servants, but she should make sure that they are doing their job correctly. This can relate directly to the text of *Alice in Wonderland* due to Alice's obvious upper-class education and use of servants.

When the Mock Turtle and Alice continue their conversation, they begin to talk about lessons (as mentioned earlier). The Mock Turtle talks about how "he had the best of educations" and Alice cuts him off to discuss how she went to school too and that "he needn't be so proud as all that" (Carroll 76). Alice's upper-middle-class raising has made Alice assume that proper education is completely normal and nothing special to obtain. All children like Alice would receive a prodigious education, probably with tutors; however, Alice has yet to realize that not all children have this luxury. When the Mock Turtle attempts to gain an advantage over Alice, he adds quickly, "with extras?" (76). Alice interprets this "extras" as additional classes that cost more than the basic education package. Alice interprets this based on her learned knowledge from her society. She explains to the Turtle, rather smugly, then that she had also learned French and music. The Mock Turtle, however, did not mean "extras" as in extra classes for additional costs, but instead, he meant "extras" as in extra services that cost an additional amount to perform. This is why when the Turtle says to Alice, "and washing," she replies by saying "Certainly not!" (Carroll 76). The primary text also explains that she did this indignantly. This along with the exclamation mark shows Alice's distaste and distance to household chores. As a girl brought up in an upper-middle-class world, she is appalled at the suggestion of doing servants-like tasks. This same mentality was displayed as proper for a "lady" of her stature according to this etiquette book. Therefore, it is apparent that

Alice does represent a young woman's Victorian values and is being used by Carroll, in juxtaposition with the inhabitants of Wonderland, to display the absurdities and problems within Victorian society.

This etiquette book shows what kinds of conventions Alice is working with and against while wandering around in Wonderland. Alice must attempt to be more child-like. The more child-like she acts and the less literal she is, the farther she gets. This is how the novel stresses an alternative for children to be children rather than obedient little adults. Alice is an independent female child, who must deviate from typical expectations and morals for the purpose of continuing her journey through Wonderland. Throughout the novel, her limitations and struggles display how she is immune to typical horror story endings that were archetypal of the time. Alice displays independent thought and action despite the fact she frequently resists it. Even when she tries to have someone tell her where to go, she is forced to make her own decisions, which is proven to be quite challenging. For example, after leaving the Duchess' house, Alice stops at a fork in the road. She is not sure where she should go. Suddenly the Chester Cat appears and Alice decides to ask him for advice:

"Cheshire-Puss," she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name: however, it only grinned a little wider.

"Come, it's pleased so far," thought Alice, and she went on. "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where—" said Alice.

Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"—so long as I get *somewhere*," Alice added as an explanation. (Carroll 51)
"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

Alice felt that this could not be denied. (Carroll 51)

Alice asks the Chester Cat "timidly," where she should go. This shows she remains in a submissive social position, to this older and male Cat. The Chester Cat wants Alice to make a decision based on her own desires, but Alice feels like she needs guidance. In the eyes of the Cat, it does not matter which path she takes and she should make her own choices. Alice actually has no objective in Wonderland, which makes her wandering predominantly fueled by curiosity—which is frowned upon by the Victorian adult realm. Alice continues to try to get directions by inquiring about the people that live down each of the forks. The Chester Cat, here, continues to fuel her imagination and independent decision-making. He will not give her a definite answer of where to go. The Cat even cuts her off when she says, "I don't much care where—" Alice does not care where she is going, so why should she be told which way she ought to go. There is a clear absence of forced child obedience in this novel and this absence confuses Alice. Wonderland repetitively tests Alice in a different ways compared to her world. Her world makes her repeat lessons and practice proper manners for watching and criticizing adults; whereas, Wonderland only tests Alice's ability for self-assessment and independence (and maybe her patience).

Wonderland is full of its own rules, regulation, manners, and morals (much like any other culture), but none of these things are accessible to Alice who is trapped within her Victorian mindset. She is constantly

confused and bewildered by the ways in which inhabitants of Wonderland understand time, morals, education, and much more. Everything she sees and does with Wonderland is judged and understood based upon her own learned knowledge. Alice's difficulties, inabilities, confinement, and limitations in Wonderland create a culture clash that displays the troubles society faces when two cultures' values and morals, conflict and collide with each other. Alice represents Victorian society, while the inhabitants of Wonderland represent a new culture that will replace the old. This novel foreshadows the coming of changing times where children are allowed to be children.

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