

Alternative world of Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in wonderland*

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Abstract

Children's literature is a late arrival in the history of literature. It has sprouted from the west particularly in England in the eighteenth century. The growth of children's literature in traditional societies is reflected in two aspects. First, it exploited the old folklores and in another aspect it created some new literatures such as comics, picture books and fiction. It also stimulates the advancement of science and technology through story telling. Here the text *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll can be considered as one of the fantasy novels which take us to the world of quest and mystery. The portrayal of the protagonist Alice by Lewis Carroll seems powerful and it breaks the stereotype of the Victorian image of the female gender. Thus, Alice's adventures suggest the intellectual curiosity and competency in discovering the meaning of her life. The aim of the paper is to bring out the experience of Alice in the alternative world from the text *Alice in wonderland*.

Keywords: mystery, adventure, traumatic, imagination, dream, inanimate

Introduction

The tradition of storytelling is developed into a fine art. "The mother was considered to be the cradle for the child's learning" (Menon, 13). The ancient people attached a good deal of importance to the mother's thoughts and feelings. The mother's relationship with the child was considered deeply internal. During the different stages of childhood, this is complemented by picture books, comics, fairy tales and adventure stories for children.

Picture books play a significant role in the children world. They beautify their response to the text through making their perception and reading much better than the past. The ideas and visions through the picture books progressed slowly and created a lasting effect with children.

The genre which evoked maximum reading interest with children is the mystery and adventure novels. An adventure story is based on the problems faced by the protagonist. It inspires the feeling of courage, endurance, initiative and valor in the minds of the reader. A mystery on the other hand centers on some quest. It makes the readers to turn over the pages to unravel the mystery. One such story which comes under this category is Lewis Carroll's *Alice's in wonderland*.

Some works remains to be the master pieces of children's literature. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travel*, *Cinderella* is considered to be a story of tenderness and beauty of all time and Mark Twain's *The adventures of Huckleberry Finn* paints the vivid picture of the Mississippi frontier life.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is the masterpiece of Lewis Carroll. He was born on January 27, 1832 at Daresbury Cheshire, England. He was an English logician, Mathematician, Photographer and a Novelist. He wrote a series of family magazines throughout his childhood which includes poetry, drawing and prose.

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson wrote under the pen name Lewis Carroll. In 1856, the poem *Solitude* was published. *Alice's adventures in Wonderland* was published in 1856. *Through the Looking-glass* was published in 1872. *Sylvie and Bruno* were

published in 1889, and its sequel was published in 1893. Carroll's poem were collected as *Phantasmagoria* and published in 1896. *Three Sunsets* and *posthumously* were published in 1889.

Carroll was affectionate towards little girls. The fictional character of Alice is based on Alice Liddell who is the daughter of Carroll's Professor George Liddell. When Carroll was young, he took the three little girls to boating on the river Thames. As they grow along in the boat, Carroll began to tell extemporaneous stories Alice adventures in underground. Alice liked the story and asked him to write out further adventures for her. Thus, Carroll wrote *Alice's in Wonderland*.

The story is about a little girl Alice. As she sits on the riverbank of Thames, She happens to see a white rabbit. The symmetrical nature of the rabbit makes her to follow it. The result of this has brought Alice to fall into a rabbit hole. After that, she finds herself in a zany world, where no rules appear as in the real world. It is a weird world where flowers talk and chess pieces come alive. It also has fantastical characters like the Queen of hearts, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, Cheshire cat, Mock Turtle and Mad hatter. Each character plays a significant role conversing with Alice.

After entering the wonderland, Alice turns traumatic as she did not have a consistent physical appearance. As the world is new to her, she tries to come out of it but fails as her appearance changes frequently. So she becomes a courageous girl to overcome the problems in wonderland like the Caucus race, The Mad hatter's riddle, and the Queen's croquet game.

This novel is written from the little girl's point of view. In the effect of Carroll, transvestite his voice into that of the young girl who is in the verge of the adolescence. The coalescence between the adult male and the role of the little girl creates uneasy tension about identity and sexuality primarily through the systems of apparent non – logic. In the beginning, Alice is seen to represent the iconic image of the Victorian middle class girlhood. "Alice's identity in the story becomes focused in her search for validity, which also becomes the search for Carroll's own sense of integrated self, rather than the affirmation of an inherent or

exclusive female nature. The focus on a pre-adolescent child marks nostalgia for a golden past” (Jayaraj 105).

The first part of the story begins with the embodiment of a female function. Alice falls down the rabbit hole, “a long, dark tunnel which parallels the journey of a baby from foetal symbolic state of plentitude with the mother’s body, to isolated individualism in the external world” (Jayaraj 105-106).

The description of labor process is similar to Alice’s concern with getting her head and shoulders through the doorway which leads to a beautiful garden. Alice is depicted as an intelligent girl too. After seeing the magical cake she prepares herself to be strong both mentally and physically and decides to eat it and thinks that if it makes her larger she can reach the key and if it makes her small she can creep under the door so in any way she could reach the garden.

Alice tests her sense of identity to the full. Here the fictional Alice measures herself by her superior knowledge and social status. This is shown in the following lines:

I’m sure I can’t be Mabel, for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh! She knows such a very little! Besides, she’s she, and I’m I, and- oh dear, how puzzling it all is! I’ll try if I know all the things I used to know. Let me see: four times five are twelve, and four times six is thirteen, and four times seven is – oh dear! . . . (AAW 34)

These lines clearly depict that Alice is not only a very well brought up girl but a very well – to- do little girl who has a good knowledge on everything. Little girls will have strong role model in Alice and learn to be brave and intelligent to make decisions and act wisely.

Thus in the real world, Alice couldn’t find the animals and the inanimate characters talk but in the dream world, she find the animals and the other characters talk in various situations. In both the places anything could happen without notice. The entire story is based on the imagination of Carroll. Alice’s conversation with inanimate characters makes the story lively and interesting. It offers alternative spaces for a little girl to assert herself and her identity. It also provides a gynocentric view in narrative fiction for children.

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