



**DIFFERENT AND IDENTICAL WORLDS:
ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND
AND *THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS***

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ABSTRACT

When one thinks about the concept of children's literature, many ideas will probably come to mind related to the topic. The literary genre of children's literature, despite seeming simple from the outside, is more complex than many think. Being a genre that was established a long time ago, it has gone through many different periods in which standards and patterns were changing. But, it was in the Victorian era when children's literature enjoyed its so-called "Golden Age". It is called that way because it was at that time precisely when there was a great abundance in the works that were written. And, many of them are still popular today. The British author Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, was one of the most recognized authors of that time. This essay will be devoted to two of the best-known works written by him: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*. The purpose is to show as well as to understand how the two worlds, Wonderland and the Looking-Glass, that Carroll created in the books are constructed. To this end, certain aspects of both novels will be analyzed, specifically the different behaviours of the main character in one book and the other, the relationship of the main character with the inhabitants of both worlds, the language used in each book, and the two worlds themselves. Previous research done on this area has centered on the aspects dealt with in this essay in an independent manner, that is, no scholar talks about Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world at the same time comparing the character of Alice, her relationship with the inhabitants of each world, the language and the worlds themselves in one book and the other. Nonetheless, all the issues have been discussed separately by many different authors. The observations done to the previously mentioned sections indicate that *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* portray a fictitious world while *Through the Looking-Glass* resembles the real world.

Key words: Alice, Wonderland, Looking-Glass, fantasy world, real world.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although both works belong to a time which is now very far away from the present, the Victorian period indeed, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871) written by the British author Lewis Carroll are still read by many children and adults nowadays. The reason is that Carroll wrote those books in a way that the stories are not the typical children's stories and that is a fact which attracts a lot of readers and also scholars. As they are quite antique works many academics have already analyzed the books in many ways. However, this essay will focus on showing what Paul H. Grawe has previously stated, that Wonderland is a fantasy world while the Looking-Glass world resembles the real world (9).

To this end, information about children's literature will first be presented taking as the basis the book *Children's Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (2011), where the most relevant aspects of children's literature will be explained. From children's literature special attention will be paid to Victorian children's literature, since the analyzed works, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), belong to the Victorian era, and the information will be supported by the book *Victorian Children's Literature: Experiencing Abjection, Empathy, and the Power of Love* (2016), *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature* (2009) and *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980). After that, there will be a section devoted to the author, Lewis Carroll, based on the introduction from the book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Other Stories*.

The paper will then focus on the works *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, followed by *Through the Looking-Glass*. The aspects to consider in each book will be the same so that a comparison can easily be made between both. Those aspects will be the character of Alice; who is the protagonist of the book, the relation Alice has with the inhabitants of each different world she enters in; which are Wonderland and the Looking-Glass, the language used in both books; and, finally the worlds themselves. To analyze each section the papers of many authors have been used.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872) are part of the children's literature genre, it is important to begin the essay by illustrating what children's literature is. Afterward, the genre will be focused on the period to which the books belong, the Victorian era. The section will end by mentioning the most relevant aspects of the author of the books.

2.1. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Childhood is a stage that we have all passed, and it is precisely there that children are forming their adult person. Children's literature is the first contact every child has with stories, novels or any kind of text and that is why Kimberley Reynolds considers that stories play a fundamental role in the future formation of the children's ideas (4).

It is worth mentioning that, as Reynolds points out; the authors who focused most on writing and publishing literature aimed at a child audience were mostly those from western countries (3). This means that, since most of the content in relation to this topic was produced by these authors, it was them who first attempted to define the term (Reynolds, 3).

According to Reynolds, there has been, and still there is, a strong debate among scholars regarding the concept of "children's literature" (1). This happens because sometimes it is difficult to classify works in children's category or in young adults' category, as Reynolds explains (1). Doubts usually arise due to the content of the works, but, as Reynolds claims "for the most part, however, what children's literature is, is taken for granted" (1).

When analyzing a children's book, the most relevant aspect that must be taken into account is that, as children are still learning, the books addressed to them may help them to set and bend rules. Reynolds explains that the language used in books acts as a medium for the children to acquire new words and concepts, which later on will be used to think about their own ideas (34). So, Reynolds believes that writing for the youngest ones can be a tool to be able to establish from a very early age what should and should not be done, what is right, and what is wrong (34).

It was precisely in the 18th century when some Victorian writers, the ones who were not in favour of the social conventions of that time, took children's literature as a

way of making changes in society by establishing progressive views in their works (Reynolds, 35). The following section will be dedicated to explaining this last remark.

2.2. VICTORIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

According to Susie Steinbach, the Victorian era (1820-1914), which was named after Queen Victoria who reigned at that period, was a time of progress in some aspects but at the same time very conservative regarding social issues (Steinbach). That is why, as mentioned in the previous section, literature, and especially children's literature, was used as a medium to change society from the bottom, that is, from the youngest ones (Reynolds, 35).

It must be mentioned that this period has been called the "Golden Age" of children's literature, as Marah Gubar explained, because of the numerous works that were published for children in that time (7). The reason for this is that during this period, writers gave great importance to children and their childhood (Gubar, 7). These writers did not accept the image of the children that had been constructed in their time, so Gubar stated that they took the Romantic image of them (7).

An important characteristic of these authors of children's literature, as Ruth Y. Jenkins explains, is that in their works it was remarkable the presence of what was socially accepted, the social norms (2). But, at the same time, in the works of these authors also appeared the transfer of these norms, the breaking of them, or the "abject" as Julia Kristeva defines this process (4). The contrast between these two concepts in literature was, as Kristeva claims, to try to change the already settled social and moral values (178).

One of the most recognized authors who dealt with this opposition was Lewis Carroll. In his works, as Jenkins explains, he projected the limits of the socially accepted in order to test the social rules (22). As his style of writing was particularly interesting as well as his life, the section which is below will discuss his persona.

2.3. LEWIS CARROLL

His real name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898), as Leonard S. Marcus explains, and he had worked as a professor of Mathematics at Oxford (1). As Marcus explains, his father was a cleric of the High Church so he followed his steps and became a Church Deacon himself too (6). It was in the time when he used to be the private lecturer of a little girl called Alice Liddle that he decided to write her a story as a present (Marcus, 2). Later, as Marcus recounts, he decided to publish the stories he wrote under a

pseudonym, Lewis Carroll, the first one *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* published in 1865 and the second one *Through the Looking-Glass* published several years later, in 1872 (2).

Carroll, as Jenkins declares, has been one of the most recognized authors of the mentioned Golden Age of children's literature, as he changed the perspective in the field (33). This happens because, in both books, the social norms are always threatened by the breaking of them without crossing what was not accepted by society (Jenkins, 33). In other words, as Jenkins states "(...) Carroll's companion stories of Alice's adventures reveal extreme anxieties of the Victorian era's efforts to secure its cultural boundaries" (34). What Carroll did was to provide his readers a way of wondering, questioning, and experiencing through his works (Jenkins, 39). Therefore, Carroll's Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds challenged the social standards that people, or children, in this case, were considered to follow (Jenkins, 39).

3. ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

This section is divided into several categories which discuss different aspects treated in the book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). The purpose of showing the various sides of the book is to evidence the world of Wonderland resembles a fantasy world.

3.1. THE CHARACTER OF ALICE

Alice, the protagonist of the book, is presented as a middle-class Victorian child who is dumped into a different world from the one she knows. She is described as a curious girl, and it is her curiosity that leads her to Wonderland indeed. It is worth mentioning that the protagonist has a double personality of which the narrator speaks at the beginning of the book "(...) for this curious child was very fond of pretending to be two people" (Carroll, 21). These two people that are mentioned are Alice the child and Alice the adult. The adult side of Alice is the one that castigates her as it can be seen in "(...) sometimes she scolded herself so severely as to bring tears into her eyes (...)" (Carroll, 21). The reason for Alice pretending to be an adult according to Mark Gabriele is that the child has established the image of authority in her mind, so she tries to imitate it (377). Of course, this severe authority that Alice is imitating is the one she has been raised with: the Victorian one.

As has been mentioned, the Victorian era is known for its social norms. Alice, who has been educated in the Victorian times, is used to this set of norms, and, what is more, thanks to these norms she knows how to behave. But, when she enters Wonderland she discovers that all the social norms and conventions that she knew are useless there, so she feels puzzled. In Gabriele's words, Alice knows how to behave when she finds a familiar context, and that is also linked with her identity (383).

Therefore, Alice encounters two main problems in Wonderland: the disappearance of her previously known rules, and her loss of identity. The first problem leads to the second one because knowing how to behave lets Alice know how to be (Gabriele, 383).

To find a solution to the first problem, Alice tries to apply her knowledge to the situations she encounters. That is, whenever she has to deal with a position that is new to her, she tries to think of a similar situation that has happened to her in her world and acts the same way she would do there. For example, when Alice finds herself in a room with doors, she visualizes a little bottle that says "drink me" (Carroll, 19). Yet she does not trust the message and investigates in search of some signal that can tell her whether that liquid is safe, as her experience has told her "(...) for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, (...) all because they would not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them" (Carroll, 19-20). In the end, her experience is not very useful because, even though it was not marked as poison, she shrinks until being a few inches high. Another example of this is the moment when Alice falls into the pool of her own tears but she is not aware of that detail. She believes that she is in the sea and thus she will be able to return home by train, her logic stands in "Alice had been to the seaside once in her life and had come to the general conclusion that, wherever you go to on the English coast, you find a number of bathing-machines (...), then a row of lodging-houses, and behind them a railway station" (Carroll, 27). As Alice is not in England but Wonderland, there is not any railway station there and neither was she in the sea. So, once again, her experience is worthless in Wonderland. The way she acts is ineffective because, as Gabriele explains, the conventions that Alice knows are senseless in Wonderland (382).

Because of all the formalities and rules that Alice has taken for granted in her own world; when she is in Wonderland and discovers the absurdity of all the conventions, she has a feeling of not knowing her identity. Her feeling of the loss of identity is also linked to her failure of memory and changes of sizes she has to face throughout her stay in

Wonderland. For instance, in her encounter with the Caterpillar, Alice tells him her trouble with identifying herself as a response to the Caterpillar's question "Who are you?" (Carroll, 48). Alice answered that she did not know it because she has changed "(...) at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then" (Carroll, 48). When the Caterpillar inquires her why she believed she has changed, Alice's response was "I can't remember things as I used- and I don't keep the same size for ten minutes together!" (Carroll, 50). Hence, Alice's only explanation for not being herself is that maybe she is another person now. As Gabriele expounds, Alice concludes that as she is not the same person that she knew, she must be someone else (378). This declaration is also illustrated in the book when Alice believes she has been interchanged by one of her classmates "And she began thinking over all the children she knew (...), to see if she could have been changed for any of them" (Carroll, 24). Gabriele interprets this issue by stressing the point that Alice relies her identity on external factors such as her size or her memory (381).

Carroll parodied the social formalities to the point of bewildering Alice for a reason: to reflect a fantasy world that is different from the known one in the Victorian times she knows. If Alice would have been in the real world, she would have never had to face the situations she faced in Wonderland because her known rules would have been applicable there. The fact that Alice cannot apply her known experience in Wonderland and feels that loss of identity serves as evidence that Wonderland is a fantasy world.

3.2. THE RELATION ALICE HAS WITH THE INHABITANTS OF WONDERLAND

When Alice arrives in Wonderland, and during her sojourn there, she meets different people who belong to that place. The most important point that must be taken into account is that the relevant characters with whom Alice interacts are adults. In Aihong Ren's words, Carroll did so to expound on the power relationship that exists between children and adults (1659). The aim is clear: Carroll wanted to illustrate the authority that adults show when they are with children, he wanted to report the inferiority with which grown-ups treat youngsters (Ren, 1660).

In the book, Alice is treated with inferiority by the different adult figures because, in their eyes, she is ignorant. According to Ren, being an adult implicates necessarily acquiring experience and knowledge (1660). So, Alice's lack of knowledge is what marks the distinction between her, a child, and the rest of the characters being adults. This is

evident in various conversations that Alice has with different characters. For example, in her encounter with the Caterpillar, it is very clear how he displays his expertise to Alice so far as to make her feel irritated “(...) she had never been so much contradicted in all her life before, and she felt that she was losing her temper” (Carroll, 52-53). As Ren explains, this happens because children do not understand the behaviour of adults and they see them as irrational beings (1661). But, although Alice does not understand the Caterpillar and his attitude makes her feel angry, in the end, she just has to cease and do what the Caterpillar says. It is also notable the authorial tone that the Caterpillar uses when he directs himself to Alice “Come back!” or “Keep your temper” (Carroll, 49). This is just a way of subjugating Alice and showing that he is the one in power (Ren, 1661).

Another good example of this situation in which Alice is treated with inferiority for being a child is the Queen of Hearts. Of all the characters of Wonderland, she is the most abusive of them all. Not only because she is very authoritative and everyone must obey her demands as in “Turn them over” or “Leave off that” (Carroll, 80), but also because she uses fear to govern all the people. That is, she threatens them with death “Off with his head!” (Carroll, 84). The Queen marks the different status she has with Alice from the very beginning “What’s your name, child?” (Carroll, 79). And, as in her encounter with the Caterpillar, she just accepts her inferior status. Alice answers the Queen’s questions and succumbs to her wishes of playing cricket with her. Soon she realizes that the Queen does not play fairly but she is afraid of saying something because she is aware of her tyranny. However, Alice knows the absolutist behaviour of the Queen and she fears for her life “(...) she had not as yet had any dispute with the Queen, but she knew that it might happen any minute (...)” (Carroll, 83). As Ren points out, the Queen of Hearts is the best example of the repression made up by adults, because she uses threats and violence for people to fear her and so obey her (1661).

But, at the end of the book, there is a detail that is very important: the fact that Alice changes her size while she is on the jury. She becomes much bigger than the rest of the people in the place. The result is that they fear her, so Alice understands that if she is bigger than the rest she will have more power than them, she associates the size with power (Ren, 1662). This can be seen in Alice’s attitude towards the situation “ (...) she had grown so large in the last few minutes that she wasn’t a bit afraid of interrupting him (...)” (Carroll, 115). As she becomes bigger now she feels more confident because she knows that nobody will harm her now. She even dares to reply to the Queen “I wo’n’t!” (Carroll, 117) when she tells her “Hold your tongue!” (Carroll, 117). Ren exposes the

situation by assuring that Alice becomes more powerful as well as aggressive when she changes her size (1662).

By the changes of roles that Carroll did at the end of the book, making Alice the one in power and the adults fearing her, he wanted to alter the already stipulated hierarchy that exists in our world. Therefore, this remark corroborates that Wonderland resembles a fantasy world because in the real world it would never happen that a child is above adults or that the adults are afraid of the child.

3.3. THE LANGUAGE USED

A considerable obstacle Alice has to face when she interacts with the inhabitants of Wonderland is language. There is a struggle in communication between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland according to Linda M. Shires (272). This happens because the logic and language system that Alice has is not applicable in this new world (Shires, 272).

The most remarkable example of this issue is the Mad Tea-Party which Alice attends. There she meets the Mad Hatter and the March Hare. These two characters contradict everything that Alice has taken for granted until that moment, from social matters to the use of language (Shires, 272). For instance, when they are all gathered at the table and asking for riddles, Alice says “I’m glad they’ve begun asking riddles- I believe I can guess that” (Carroll, 69). The March Hare corrects Alice’s statement by replying “Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?” (Carroll, 69). Alice rushes to answer him and tells him that she means so, so the March Hare simply declares “Then you should say what you mean” (Carroll, 69). Next Alice feels confused because she never reflected on this subject before, so she says “at least- at least I mean what I say- that’s the same thing, you know” (Carroll, 69). After her declaration, both the Mad Hatter and the March Hare tell Alice very sure that it is not the same to think what you say that to say what you think, and for better understanding, they illustrate their allegation with an example: “Why, you might just as well say that ‘I see what I eat’ is the same thing as ‘I eat what I see’!” (Carroll, 69). After this proclamation, Alice stays silent because she does not know what to answer; she never thought about that in the sense the Mad Hatter and the March Hare have explained. Shires reports that as the inhabitants of Wonderland question what Alice takes for normal, she loses the sense of the meaning of things (272).

At the Tea-Party there is another event that is worth mentioning which is related to the use of language. The incident occurs when Alice, after observing the behaviour

they have and how they spend time, tells the people of the Tea-Party but especially the Mad Hatter and the March Hare that they should take more advantage of time and not waste it (Carroll, 71). The Mad Hatter answers “If you knew Time as well as I do (...) you wouldn’t talk about wasting it. It’s him” (Carroll, 71). With this answer Alice receives, she feels very confused because she does not understand what he is saying. What happened is that they are both talking about different figurative expressions of time, so they do not comprehend what the other says (Shires, 273). The latter statement gets more clear as the reading goes on, notably when Alice says “but I know I have to beat time when I learn music” (Carroll, 71); and, the Mad Hatter responds “He wo’n’t stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he’d do almost anything you liked with the clock (...) you’d only have to whisper a hint to Time (...)” (Carroll, 71). The problem that is happening in this episode is, as Shires declares, while Alice refers to time as a concept, the Mad Hatter refers to it as if it were a person (273). For emphasizing that time is a person for the Mad Hatter, Carroll wrote Time with capital letters as it were a proper name every time the Mad Hatter speaks.

The same situation is repeated several times throughout the book, and the encounter of Alice with the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon is a demonstration of that. When the three of them start a conversation about school and what they learn there, the Gryphon tells them that he has a lack of knowledge in some aspects because he went to the “Classical master” (Carroll, 95). Alice feels very curious about that and asks him how many hours a day did he attend school (Carroll, 95). So, the Gryphons reply was “Ten hours the first day (...) nine the next, and so on” (Carroll, 95), and he expands his explanation by adding “That’s the reason they’re called lessons (...) because they lessen from day to day” (Carroll, 95). After this declaration, Alice needs time to reflect on this “This was quite a new idea to Alice, and she thought it over a little before she made her next remark” (Carroll, 95). Moreover, Alice has to face the same trouble when the Mock Turtle tells her which subjects he took, and mentions her “Uglification” (Carroll, 94). Alice, ignorant of this concept, asks him about it and he tries to explain it by explaining to her the opposite and messing up her more “You know what to beautify is, I suppose?” (Carroll, 94). They do not reach any point and the conversation ends up by the Mock Turtle’s statement “if you don’t know what to uglify is, you are a simpleton” (Carroll, 94). The confusion Alice has in Shire’s words is due to the use of the words the inhabitants made, they mingle them so much that many times they seem senseless (272).

The fact that Carroll made the interaction between Alice and the inhabitants of Wonderland pointless and many times absurd, serves as evidence to reinforce the statement that Wonderland is a fantasy world. Since language is a way of communication and using it meaninglessly and confusingly is not a reflection of the real world. Furthermore, the meaning that Alice has in her own world related to words and concepts is useless in Wonderland, and that matter also verifies the evidence that Wonderland is a fantasy world.

3.4. WONDERLAND

Wonderland is presented to the readers as an underground world to which Alice reaches by entering down a rabbit hole. Although in that new place the land seems similar to the one up above at first sight to Alice, soon it is evident that Wonderland differs from the real world in some aspects.

The most notable distinction from the up world is that, as Rose Lovell-Smith confirms, the vast majority of the creatures that Alice finds in Wonderland are animals (29). This latter statement is not arbitrary since by doing so Carroll wanted to approach Alice to the natural world. From the very beginning Alice has contact with these creatures; in this case the White Rabbit, thanks to whom she ends up in the rabbit hole that leads her to Wonderland. What jolts Alice about these individuals is that not only they can talk like humans, but also that they have human-like behaviours and habits, such as wearing clothes. For example, when Alice first sees the White Rabbit her thinking was the following “ (...) it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it (...)” (Carroll, 16). This new situation makes Alice feel puzzled but curious at the same time, for she never had met such creatures before. Later she finds the White Rabbit’s house and once she is there, the rabbit asks her to bring him his gloves, on which Alice reflected “How queer it seems (...) to be going messages for a rabbit! (...)” (Carroll, 38). So, by introducing Alice into a world in which she interacts with animals that act similar to humans, Carroll wanted to take Alice into nature and to blend her with it (Lovell-Smith, 28).

It is also important to take into account that the land of Wonderland itself is a very natural place, that is, that it has not been manipulated by humans. This is a fact that can be seen many times in the book, for example, at the beginning of it, when Alice arrives in the hall full of doors and sees through one of the doors a beautiful garden, as she describes it “How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those

beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains (...)” (Carroll, 19). Another illustration of the nature that embraces Wonderland, is when Alice escapes from the White Rabbit’s house and suddenly appears in open nature “ (...) and soon found herself safe in a thick wood” (Carroll, 44). Again, it is visible that wherever Alice moves, she is in nature. One more case of this is the moment that Alice is with the Caterpillar, and the place is described so that the reader can note that they are in nature “Then it got down off the mushroom, and crawled away into the grass (...)” (Carroll, 53). This situation, as Lovell-Smith announces, is due to the idea Victorian writers had about the Romantic perception of childhood, in which the child should grow up in a natural environment and learn from nature (28).

Carroll made up a new world, Wonderland, in which nature is notable in some aspects. The most remarkable ones are the presence of talking animals with human-like manners and the fact that Wonderland is a place in which nature still perdures untouched by humans. Thus, that evidence corroborates that Wonderland is a fantasy world, because the idyllic natural place that Carroll created for Alice, is more a utopia than a reality. The reason for the latter statement is that it is very difficult for a child to be educated in such a natural place.

4. THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

This section will be devoted to the book *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872) and to maintaining the reasons why it describes a world that resembles the real one. For doing so, the passage is organized in such a way that each subcategory serves as evidence to justify that The Looking-Glass is a real world.

4.1. THE CHARACTER OF ALICE

The Alice that is presented in *Through the Looking-Glass*, although it is the same Alice who travelled to Wonderland, has some differences in her persona. It is important to mention that this story is set some time after Alice’s first voyage to Wonderland, so it is taken for granted that Alice is older. From the very beginning of the book it is noticeable the change she has in some aspects, and, as the story goes on, it is evident she has transitioned, from Alice the child to Alice the adult. And, indeed this is the main issue in

the book, according to Veronica Schanoes, her transition to adulthood, which is portrayed as her ascension to queendom in the Looking-Glass world (2).

To begin with, there is the matter of the behaviour Alice has, which is very different from the one she had in Wonderland. Now, she has acquired a more mature and adult-like behaviour. This is evident for instance in the very first chapter when Alice is playing with her kitten, and she takes a mother-like role with it, scolding it for its misbehave: “when I saw all the mischief you had been doing, I was very nearly opening the window, and putting you out into the snow! And you’d have deserved it, you little mischievous darling! (...)” (Carroll, 131). As Schanoes notes, Alice uses the word “darling” many times when talking with her kitten, a word that is used by adults usually (7). This is due to the new role she has adopted. Now she is an adult, and she feels the obligation of scolding the little ones when she considers that they are doing something wrong as well as using this affectionate word that is characteristic of adults.

Moreover, this is not the unique adult-like attitude she has because, when she encounters the White Queen, who is devastated and in a very baggy appearance, she starts helping her to primp. This time, Alice has a caretaker role, she sees herself in the necessity of helping the White Queen, who is impotent, to feel better by taking care of her “and she’s all over pins! - May I put your shawl straight for you” (Carroll, 179) or “Alice carefully released the brush, and did her best to get the hair into order” (Carroll, 180). In this scene the roles have been inverted, while the Queen is like a child, Alice is like an adult. So, as an adult, Alice does her best to be kind to the Queen to make her feel better (Schanoes, 8).

As previously mentioned, Alice’s transition to adulthood is the main point of the book, and Carroll illustrated that by doing the comparison between adulthood and queendom. So, the moment Alice gets her crown and becomes a queen, can be understood as the moment she reaches adulthood. But, as Schanoes argues, Alice already had the desire of becoming an adult before, and she shows this desire many times before being an adult (14). For example when she is with her sister and she suggests playing to be kings and queens and when her sister says that she cannot be all of them Alice replies “Well, you can be one of them, then, and I’ll be all the rest” (Carroll, 133) or when she is with the Red Queen and she explains to her how the Looking-Glass world works, Alice says “(...) How I wish I was one of them! I wouldn’t mind being a Pawn, if only I might join- though of course I should like to be a Queen, best” (Carroll, 150).

After getting her crown, Alice attends her own coronation party, and it is there where she demonstrates that she is in control of everything, that she has the power. Alice, fed up with all the situation of the party, converts the Red Queen into a kitten “I’ll shake you into a kitten, that I will!” (Carroll. 245), and makes the Looking-Glass world disappear. This event is considered the point when Alice gets the whole power as an adult (Schanoes, 13). This is because the scene shows her capacity of taking control over the situation, something that in Wonderland did not happen; now she is the real queen.

The fact that Carroll wanted to show an Alice that not only becomes an adult, or a queen in the book, but also had the desire of being an adult, evidences that the Looking-Glass world resembles the real one. Since, it is inevitable that children grow up and become adults, Carroll abandoned the Romantic ideals of children and childhood this time to let Alice grow up, as in reality would happen.

4.2. THE RELATION ALICE HAS WITH THE INHABITANTS OF THE LOOKING-GLASS

As has been mentioned, Alice in *Through the Looking-Glass* is defined by her ascension to queendom, which is understood as her transition from child to adult. So, as she is changing her persona, her relationship with the inhabitants of the Looking-Glass is slightly different from her relationship with the ones in Wonderland. The reason for that difference is that in the Looking-Glass world she is gaining maturity, and the inhabitants of that world, as adults are, instead of ridiculing her they teach her and help her understand how the Looking-Glass world works and to prepare her for her adulthood.

As Beatrice Turner explains in her work, there is a difference between the inhabitants of the Looking-Glass and Alice marked in the book, since the inhabitants own knowledge, because they are already adults (246). This inequality that Turner mentioned is visible on many occasions throughout the story, for example when Alice first encounters the White Queen, she offers Alice some jam and Alice answers that she does not want any jam “to-day” (Carroll, 180); so the Queen explains Alice “The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday- but never jam to-day” (Carroll, 181). In this passage the Queen is above Alice due to her knowledge of the rules that govern the Looking-Glass, but, when she is aware that Alice is ignorant of these rules, she simply explains them to her so that they can be equals.

Another example of Alice being instructed by the inhabitants of the Looking-Glass is the moment when Alice meets Humpty Dumpty. The passage with Humpty

Dumpty is characterized by his mastery of language, and, when the confrontation between him and Alice starts, he shows his knowledge as Turner indicated. But, in addition to just showing his superiority, he also shares with Alice his knowledge, the same that the White Queen did before. For instance, the moment when he uses a meaning for the word “glory” (Carroll, 196) that is not the same that Alice knows, she claims “I don’t know what you mean by ‘glory’” (Carroll, 196). Humpty Dumpty’s answer for her is “Of course you don’t-till I tell you. (...)” (Carroll, 196). Or when he uses the word “impenetrability” (Carroll, 197) and Alice asks him “Would you tell me please (...) what that means?” (Carroll, 197). After this sequence, he proceeds to explain to her the meaning of that word.

So, although Turner’s statement about the display of the superiority of the inhabitants of the Looking-Glass is true, as can be seen in the fragments of the book, it has to be taken into account that these inhabitants not only show superiority towards Alice but also try to instruct her so that she obtains the same knowledge as them. This last fact is the evidence to prove that the Looking-Glass world mirrors the real world. The reason for this statement is that the inhabitants see Alice differently now, they see her as an adult, so instead of infantilizing her as happened in Wonderland, they share their knowledge with her so that they can be at the same level.

4.3. THE LANGUAGE USED

Once in the Looking-Glass world, Alice has to communicate with the people who live there. This time, unlike in Wonderland, she can communicate without difficulties with the inhabitants in the Looking-Glass. Moreover, not only can she communicate with people, but also discovers that the language she knows from her world, is much wider than she knew. This fact is explained by Patricia M. Spacks, who states that *Through the Looking-Glass* establishes a different point of view towards language (91).

The first example to illustrate the previous allegation is the beginning of the book when Alice enters the garden of living flowers. She starts a conversation with the flowers that live in the garden, and at some point, she asks them “Aren’t you frightened at being planted out here, with nobody to take care of you?” (Carroll, 145). As an answer to Alice’s question one of the flowers, the Rose, says “There’s the tree in the middle” (Carroll, 145). Alice after hearing the Rose’s answer feels confused and asks the Rose about that “But what could it do, if any danger came?” (Carroll, 145). The Rose simply says “It could bark” (Carroll, 145). To support the Rose’s statement, a Daisy says “It says ‘Boughwough’! (...) That’s why its branches are called boughs!” (Carroll, 145). Spacks,

about the previous sequence, comments that they are “Perfectly simple puns, these, but puns with a purpose, puns which immediately establish a context” (93). This is since in our world there is no link between the bark of a tree and the bark of a dog, but yet this event leaves insight into the construction of words and the importance of it (Spacks, 93). Furthermore, Spacks assures that “our everyday use of language is largely arbitrary and unaccountable” (93). She believes so because, even though in our world nobody would establish a connection like that between those two concepts, the bark of the tree and the bark of a dog, anyone who has never heard it would understand it. And, Alice is the proof of it: she never heard such a connection, but still, she can comprehend the concept. Not only that, but she also is able to broaden her concept of the use of language by seeing the possibilities in which she had never meditated.

Another example of the use of language in the book is the scene where Alice meets the White King, and they begin a conversation about the soldiers and the horses the King sent to the road, and he asks Alice whether she can see any of them. Alice says to the King “I see nobody on the road” (Carroll, 205). The King immediately replies to Alice, feeling very surprised “I only wish I had such eyes (...) To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too! Why, it’s as much as I can do to see real people, by this light!” (Carroll, 205). The King can only see somebody because he is used to living in a more logical world than Alice (Spacks, 94). This episode leads Alice, and the reader, to think about the significance of words. Spacks believes that the several incidents that happen to Alice related to language throughout the book enhance—the idea of the power words and language have (96).

The idea that Carroll wanted to transmit by playing in such a way with the language in the book is that on the one hand, how we use language ordinarily can go far beyond our thoughts, that is, that language is very loose and has many meanings that we do not use but they are still there (Spacks, 98). And, on the other hand, that sometimes the meaning relation that we already have about something can establish the way we perceive the world (Spacks, 98). The accuracy of language in *Through the Looking-Glass* serves as evidence to claim that the Looking-Glass world simulates the reality of our world. This is because Carroll wanted to show that human language is logical and accurate at the same time and that we do not reflect on that many times, just the same as Alice.

4.4. THE LOOKING-GLASS

Alice discovers the Looking-Glass world by crossing the mirror that is above the chimney-piece inside her house. The very first thing she realizes when she takes a glimpse to that new world in which she is that the Looking-Glass land is a huge living chess game “It’s a great huge game of chess that’s being played- all over the world- if this is the world at all, you know” (Carroll, 150).

The idea of using the chess game as the land of the Looking-Glass and the inhabitants of the land as the players, as Mary Liston explains, is to prepare the readers, which are mostly children, for the reality of life by instructing them how the society works (43). The reason is the following: to be part of the game Alice needs to know the rules which include norms and hierarchies, just the same as in her Victorian society. But, in this place, Alice recognizes the rules because she knows playing chess, and thanks to those rules she can be guided easily through the place where she is (Liston, 49). Moreover, Liston stated that the fact that Alice knows the rules of chess also implies knowing what her place or her status is (51). This is seen at the moment after Alice is aware that the Looking-Glass is a living chess game “(...) Alice began to remember that she was a Pawn, and that it would soon be time for her to move” (Carroll, 153). Carroll’s choice of using the chess game was not random, because it is precisely in a chess game where hierarchies are more visible. And, in addition to the hierarchies being visible, it is important to mention that all the participants of the game, in this case, the inhabitants of the Looking-Glass, are aware of the position each member has and know they must obey the rules of the game (Liston, 52). This last fact is crucial because, in the real world it happens exactly as in the Looking-Glass world, each person knows their status and additionally knows the others’ status too, and everyone must obey the rules of the society and the legal ones.

In a chess game, there is the possibility of changing the status, and Alice experienced that because she was a pawn at the beginning of the story and ends up being the queen “I never expected I should be a Queen so soon (...)” (Carroll, 229), as Liston claimed (53). This is another reflection of the real world because in a real society everyone has the possibility of going up or down in social status.

One last observation concerning the Looking-Glass world is the one explained by Hélène Cixous that, like a chess game, the movement of one character affects the rest of them; in consequence, none of the inhabitants can autonomously undergo the land, because all of them work as a community (242). For instance, when Alice encounters the White Knight, he mentions that Alice is his prisoner, and Alice answers by saying “I don’t

want to be anybody's prisoner. I want to be a Queen" (Carroll, 216). So, the White Knight replies "So you will, when you've crossed the next brook (...) I'll see you safe to the end of the wood- and then I must go back, you know. That's the end of my move" (Carroll, 216-217). In this scene it can be seen how important the movement of one single character is for the development of the story, since, the movement of the White Knight is to take Alice to the place where she will become the Queen, a movement which will affect all the participants of the game; or, in this case, the inhabitants of the Looking-Glass.

So, Carroll's election of using a chess game as his imaginary land is in fact, a symbolization of the real world that he wanted to portray. Because to play chess one must know the rules of the game, just as one needs to know the rules of society to live in one. Moreover, in chess there are hierarchies, and it is possible to change these hierarchies as the game goes on. In a real society, there are social status too, and it is also possible to go up or down in society indeed. It must not be forgotten that the movement of one single character can change the whole game, so they all work as a unitary community rather than individuals. All these statements serve as evidence to prove that the Looking-Glass world is the reflection of the real world.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as it has been seen throughout the essay, the author, Lewis Carroll, portrayed two different realities in each of his Alice books.

Carroll used *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to illustrate a fantasy world. He did so by establishing several devices by which the reader can understand that Wonderland is not the reality. Those devices, as shown above, are the following: the inability of Alice to apply the rules of her Victorian society to Wonderland, this makes a difference between both worlds. Likewise, the treatment Alice receives from the inhabitants of Wonderland is one that tries to infantilize her. And the fact that in the end, Carroll swiped the roles by making Alice in control of the situation is understood as an event that would not be possible in reality, so it is also a mockery. It is also important to consider that the communication between the inhabitants of Wonderland and Alice is not an effective language, so it does not resemble reality because language should be a tool for communication. The final point to take into consideration about Wonderland is that it is described as an idyllic natural place where Alice can learn only from nature, which is

something that although theoretically could be good, in practice it is not possible, so it does not portray the real world.

On the contrary, when Carroll wrote *Through the Looking-Glass*, he aimed to depict the real world. To do so he put some key elements in the book, which have been previously mentioned. To begin with, the character of Alice is not the child that once was in Wonderland, because in this book she becomes a queen, which is a metaphor for adulthood. It is something visible also in her behaviour because now she acts like an adult. Besides, the inhabitants of the Looking-Glass try to instruct Alice in her ascension to queendom, or maturity, so she is not a child anymore and the rest of the characters realize that she is already an adult. The language that Carroll shows in the book goes far beyond the everyday language we use. As a result, it is presented in a way that leads the readers to realize that many times we are conditioned by the already established meaning relations and, once we realize there is more that we do not know, we discover that language is looser than we think, and that is precisely what happens to Alice in the Looking-Glass. This issue is a reflection of reality because it is what happens with language.

Finally, the Looking-Glass world itself mirrors a sense of community and a ruled-governed world with social hierarchies employing a living chess game. Just exactly as in Alice's Victorian society, which is rule-governed, the Looking-Glass has social hierarchies and one can go up or down in the scale depending on the circumstances. Besides, the movement of one character affects the rest, and that is also a reflection of the real world.

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