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Alice's shadow: childhood and agency in Lewis Carroll's photography, illustrations, and Alice texts

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ALICE’S SHADOW: CHILDHOOD AND AGENCY IN LEWIS CARROLL’S PHOTOGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND ALICE TEXTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by
R. Nichole Rougeau
B.A., University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1997
M.A., University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1999
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Dedication

I dedicate this project to all who have supported my research academically, financially, and emotionally.
Acknowledgements

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# Table of Contents

Dedication ............................................................................................................... iii

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................ iv

List of Figures .......................................................................................................... vii

Abstract ................................................................................................................... ix

Chapter 1. Introduction: Shadows, Agency, and Childhood in the Works of Lewis Carroll ................................................................................. 1

Chapter 2. In the Shadows of Adults: Lewis Carroll and the Lineage of the Nineteenth Century Child ........................................................... 10

Chapter 3. Capturing Childhood: Lewis Carroll’s Fictionalized Child in Nineteenth Century Photography ....................................................... 44

Chapter 4. The Agency of Illustrating Childhood: John Tenniel and Lewis Carroll’s Illustrations of the *Alice* Texts ............................................ 89

Chapter 5. Deciphering Shadows: Language and Childhood in the *Alice* Texts ......................................................................................... 134

Afterword. Following Alice’s Shadow: Child Identity in *Peter Pan, Harry Potter, and Series of Unfortunate Events* .......................................... 178

Bibliography ............................................................................................................ 186

Appendix: Letters of Permission to Reproduce Images ......................................................................................................................... 191

Vita .......................................................................................................................... 195
List of Figures

3.1 Coates photographed by Lewis Carroll  
Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center  
The University of Texas at Austin.................................................................57

3.2 *Iphegenia, or Evening Sun* photographed by O.G. Rejlander  
Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center  
The University of Texas at Austin.................................................................63

3.3 Beatrice Hatch photographed by Lewis Carroll  
Rosenbach Museum and Library.................................................................74

3.4 Evelyn Hatch as gipsy photographed by Lewis Carroll  
Rosenbach Museum and Library.................................................................77

3.5 Evelyn Hatch reclining nude photography by Lewis Carroll  
Rosenbach Museum and Library.................................................................79

3.6 Xie Kitchin as a Chinaman photographed by Lewis Carroll  
Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center  
The University of Texas at Austin.................................................................84

3.7 Ethel Hatch in Turkish dress photographed by Lewis Carroll  
Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center  
The University of Texas at Austin.................................................................84

3.8 Xie Kitchin as Chinaman watercolor over albumen print  
Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center  
The University of Texas at Austin.................................................................85

3.9 Irene MacDonald photographed by Lewis Carroll  
Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center  
The University of Texas at Austin.................................................................85

4.1 “Alice was beginning to get very tired” Lewis Carroll..............................98

4.2 “Alice led the way” Lewis Carroll............................................................98

4.3 “She had quite a long argument with the Lory” Lewis Carroll.....................102

4.4 “An enormous puppy was looking down at her” Lewis Carroll.....................102

4.5 Drawing of Alice Liddell by Lewis Carroll................................................103

4.6 Alice and the mouse by Lewis Carroll.......................................................107
4.7 “Serpent Alice” by Lewis Carroll.................................................................108
4.8 Alice grows after eating the cake by Lewis Carroll........................................108
4.9 Alice finds the door behind the curtain by Lewis Carroll..............................110
4.10 Alice talks to the White Rabbit by Lewis Carroll........................................111
4.11 Alice listens to the Lory by Lewis Carroll....................................................111
4.12 Alice in the pool of tears by John Tenniel.....................................................123
4.13 Alice finds the hidden door by John Tenniel................................................123
4.14 Alice and the White Rabbit by John Tenniel................................................124
4.15 Alice grows tall by John Tenniel.................................................................127
4.16 “Why there they are!” John Tenniel.............................................................127
4.17 “Then the words don’t fit you” John Tenniel................................................131
Abstract

The nineteenth century marks the emergence of a new literary market directed at the entertainment of children. However, a dichotomy exists concerning the image of childhood. Adults tended to idolize childhood in literature to reflect on their own lives ignoring the needs of children to possess an identity of their own. Essentially children are shadows of adults. Examinations of the shadows of childhood—children as shadows of adults, children shadowed by adults, the shadows as identifying children, and the shadows children themselves cast—lead to a discussion of agency over childhood. Lewis Carroll, entering this new literary market with his Alice series, identifies the misconceptions of childhood calling attention to the shadowed truth in his photography, illustrations and literature.

This dissertation integrates psychological, cultural, visual and linguistic analysis in an effort to create a lens through which we can expand our understanding of children and literature written for and about children. Specifically, Lewis Carroll’s Alice series serves as an exemplary text on which to base discussions of childhood and the child-literary audience in relation to children as muses for poetry, photographic subjects, illustrated figures, and literary characters. Examining eighteenth- and nineteenth-century education manuals as well as the romantic works of William Blake and William Wordsworth, I trace the various forms of shadows used to discuss childhood. I call on the theories of Perry Nodelman, Lev Vygotsky, Benjamin Lee Whorf, and Sigmund Freud to conclude that Carroll uses these shadows to dispel previous notions of children but also to empower the nineteenth-century child in his photography, illustrations, and Alice books. Furthermore, I extend this lens to discuss images of children in the twentieth and twenty-first century texts of J. M. Barrie’s Peter Pan, J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter books, and Lemony Snicket’s Series of Unfortunate Events series to argue that contemporary literature for
children maintains these shadows which cast darkness on harsher realities from which children need to escape.
Chapter 1. Introduction: Shadows, Agency, and Childhood in the Works of Lewis Carroll

During the summer of 2003, I traveled to England to explore the history of British Literature. As my party visited literary and historical sites each day, I grew excited by the sheer enjoyment of being so near to literary greatness, be it standing besides Shakespeare’s tomb in the small church of Stratford-upon-Avon or walking down the same street Jane Austin traversed in Bath or even eating mulberries from the tree outside the home where Keats wrote “Ode to a Nightingale.” However, the defining moment that led to the topic of this dissertation occurred in the British Library. Reeling from seeing an edition of the Gutenberg Bible, I followed the display cases to a darkened corner of the room containing a glass cabinet recessed into the wall. Upon closer inspection, I realized the treasure it held: the original hand-drawn Alice’s Adventures Underground by Lewis Carroll, a.k.a. Charles Dodgson.

Carroll had become the center of my studies the previous year when I wrote a seminar paper on Through the Looking-glass. I had read Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland years before and of course was familiar with Disney’s version of the tale. However, the seminar paper provided a forum to analyze Alice’s dream in terms of her sexual repression and gender identity. Yet, my research did not prepare me for the shock at viewing the document on which both of Carroll’s books were based. The draft that sat in the case in front of me was crude, written by the legible hand of a mathematician. Its drawings appeared childlike and one dimensional; but the story was captivating, in the few pages I could read.

Yet, the manuscript was hidden in shadows to protect it from the harsh lights that could damage the fragile century-old document. My own shadow was no help in easing the readability since the dim lights above me cast a fuzzy shadow over the already dark case. But it was in that moment that I noticed the child figure within my adult shadow. Alice’s identity was concealed;
her lines blurred and indistinguishable. I would not have recognized the heroine of the famous
tale if it had not been for the sign below that read “the original manuscript of Alice’s Adventures
Underground.” Her identity obscured, Alice became a shadow of childhood within the shadow
of an adult.

The Victorian period marks the birth of a literary market, which I argue in this
dissertation, whose sole intent is to entertain children. However, in order to market books as
“entertaining to children” one must first discern the defining characteristics of childhood in the
nineteenth century. What my studies conclude is that discussions of children existed in literary
form, but were rather fictional since few writers considered real children. The child, as
addressed in the writings of eighteenth-century authors who influenced the nineteenth century’s
conception of childhood, is actually a shadow of the adult, that is, how adults wanted children to
be portrayed instead of how children actually existed. Lewis Carroll embraces this shadow
theme in his photography, illustrations, and writings to call attention to the misconceptions of
childhood and to give a voice to the real children he encountered in his own life. Thus, this
dissertation is about shadows: children as shadows of adults, children shadowed by adults,
shadows as an identity, and shadows children themselves cast.

Shadows, like children, seem to be a very simplistic concept. The child is a stage of
human development and a shadow is the absence of light. However, there are no shadows
without the presence of light, just as there is no child without the procreation of adults. The two
dynamics coexist on a spectrum with one factor in dominance over the other’s existence. For
example, light determines the intensity of the shadow. Greg Lewis, in his discussion of
photography lighting, explains the influence of light variables on shadows:

Hard light comes from compact, point-light sources such as the sun, a light bulb,
or even headlights on a car. It creates a sharp line between highlights and
shadows, and emphasizes texture and specular reflections. On the other hand, soft light comes from broad sources such as the sky on a foggy day, skylight (not sunshine) coming in a window, or the fluorescent light panels in an office ceiling. It creates a broad, soft line between highlights and shadows, and it tends to diminish texture, creating a smooth, even look. (98)

The intensity of the light defines the characteristics of the shadow making it either a distinct dark outline of the object being highlighted or a blurred line between dark and light. Light, Lewis maintains, is darkness; it gives birth to shadows and “isolates, blends, emphasizes, de-emphasizes, reveals or deuces shape, enhances or hides texture, creates atmosphere and mood, and can direct or distract the viewer” (97). Shadows, then, become a language.

As a language, shadows define the objects they modify. Shadows create texture and shape which designate detail. In addition, the blurred shadows caused by soft light suggest feelings of “calm, dullness, peacefulness, blandness, boredom, sensuousness, and warmth,” while strong shadows create “firmness, strength, power, tension, shock, drama, excitement, and extreme cold or heat” (Lewis 98). Shadows, in photography, are created to produce a certain effect, to communicate an idea or mood. It is a language and the person who controls the light to produce the shadows holds the power over the meaning the object has for others.

The alteration of meaning through a “shadowing process” occurs in the nineteenth century as well. Children, the product of adult sexuality, undergo a major makeover as the character of the child is defined by adults in order to become a consumer of a literary market. Ironically, this child becomes consumed as her character is defined and marketed in education and literary texts. In the next chapter, I use Plato’s allegory of the cave to explain misconceptions about childhood, examining the education manuals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to determine this definition calling into question the creator of “childhood.”

There is a struggle in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature to determine consistent
characteristics of children. While religious educators tend to view children as beings who need to be nurtured, protected, and directed, radical theorists argue a natural aura of childhood defined by freedom and independence. Yet, I establish that adults only see children as shadows of themselves rather than as separate entities. And those children who do attempt to redirect adult attention away from this manufactured shadow and back to the actual object, the child in front of the light source, are dismissed just as the inhabitants of the cave dismiss the returning philosopher’s truths. Lewis Carroll recognizes these misconceptions of childhood, as he notes in his diaries and letters, and creates a lens through which adults can view true childhood. Using photography and literature, Carroll applies shadows to discuss children, but he uses a harsher “light” to create harder outlines that more closely resemble children rather than soft shadows created by adults and eventually aids children to create their own shadows.

In his photography, which I address in Chapter 3, Carroll further exemplifies the misconceptions of children by dressing or undressing his child subjects by creating his own shadows of childhood. Known as one of the leading child and amateur photographers of the Victorian period, Carroll used his craft to displace reality. A relatively new artistic venue in the nineteenth century, photography is simply writing with light (Lewis 96). The image embedded on the negative is constructed of shadows and light which are reversed during the developing process. Following his contemporary artistic photographers O.G. Rejlander and Julia Margaret Cameron, Carroll’s photographic subject is the figure of the child. Within the realm of photography, believed at the time of its conception to be the only true recorder of reality, Carroll creates a reversed text to discuss children that falsifies the reality of the photograph. In some of his photographs, instead of presenting his view of childhood, Carroll constructs the adult’s composition of children. Carroll’s child subjects are costumed in foreign clothing and set in
foreign lands. In other photographs, Carroll strips all social conventions from the child and photographs her nude blurring the genitalia. By altering his photographs through blurring techniques or by painting over them, a practice new to the nineteenth century, Carroll exerts his agency of this craft by literally rewriting the text created by the image to produce a new dialogue about childhood. Furthermore, he draws attention to the real child who poses for him by having her sign his prints. Her autograph blends the shadowed ideal with the light of reality prompting social reconsideration of the child. Photography becomes Carroll’s method of writing a commentary on the shadowed image of childhood.

If Carroll’s photography is a representation of a fictionalized reality of childhood, then the illustrations for Carroll’s *Alice* texts are images of a realistic fiction. In Chapter 4, I argue the need for shadows to define images of children in the illustrations of *Alice’s Adventures Underground* and *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Writing *Alice’s Adventures Underground* and its revision *Wonderland*, Carroll created a fantasy world first for the Liddell girls to whom he told the original tale, and second for an emerging child audience who read the revised text. The illustrations for the text had to be realistic so that children reading or hearing the story could associate with familiar issues the central child character faces and thus could believe the possibility of the events actually taking place. Using Perry Nodelman’s analysis of the partnership between illustrations and text to create meaning for the child reader, I draw a comparison between artistic photographers and illustrators who both create images that reflect their imaginative vision. At the same time, these illustrations reflect the text—just as the photograph reflects the camera’s subject—and the drawings become a representation of reality even though the text depicts a fantasy realm.
J. Hillis Miller argues that the meaning of an illustrated text intended for children depends on the relationship between the written word and the visual depictions. Working together, the text and illustration elicit an interpretation of the entire work. However, this relationship is co-dependent as Miller explains. The illustration fills in the descriptive gaps that the textual narrative fails to explain to the readers. At the same time, the audience needs the text to explain the central action in each picture. Carroll, unfortunately, did not possess the necessary talents needed for successful book illustration and his pictured child character comes across as a flat image. When his illustrations of *Alice’s Adventures Underground* were not entirely successful as realistic interpretations, Carroll turned to John Tenniel, the famous *Punch* cartoonist, to illustrate *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-glass*. Tenniel is able to fill in the missing shadows to give dimension and contour to Carroll’s literary child. The Carroll-Tenniel partnership, however, raises questions about agency and the text. I examine the pictorial representations of the *Alice* texts as envisioned by both Carroll and Tenniel arguing that while Carroll’s depictions are not entirely successful realistic illustrations of the text, his images, sketches, and direction dictated Tenniel’s vision of Alice, demonstrating that agency over the image of the child lies with Carroll. In *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-glass and What Alice Found There*, Lewis Carroll simplifies his complex text by relying on the images he dictated to John Tenniel to include the descriptive details of his fantasy worlds that he purposely neglects to include in the text. From these images modern critics can create arguments about plot advancement based on details in and the arrangements of the illustrations. While Tenniel’s illustrations provide clues about nineteenth-century dress and spatial illustration techniques, Carroll establishes in his story an insight into the minds of both Victorian children and the adults who perceive them as Romantic shadows, that is, an image of
childhood that Romantic writers cast to create an ideal human being that could lead adults to spiritual and emotional salvation.

Carroll’s textual child character is also a shadow, as I argue in Chapter 5. Alice is a shadow not only of Alice Liddell for whom the story was told and by whom the story was possibly created, but also is a shadow of every child. His method of storytelling involves the child audience who, in essence, becomes the storytellers. Thus, the tale becomes an extension of the child. In writing down the stories told on that fateful boat ride, Carroll provides an insight into the child mind. Recognizing the gross misinterpretation of childhood by adults and the child’s inability to communicate effectively with adults these misinterpretations, Carroll creates a fantasy world in which to portray the shadow of the child created by a child. Thus, his shadows are clearly defined because they are not entirely from his own imagination. Using the linguistic theories of Benjamin Lee Whorf—specifically his assertions that speakers of different languages cannot understand one another and therefore cannot communicate—as well as Lev Vygotsky’s sociocultural theories on language development, I maintain that adults cannot understand children and therefore “misread” them. Hence, Carroll’s fantasy worlds in Wonderland and Looking-glass Land become shadows which serve as a language to communicate ideas between children and adults. Thus, Carroll provides a forum to discuss the needs of real children as envisioned by nineteenth-century children.

Yet, these discussions of the shadows of childhood do not end with Carroll’s Alice texts. Lewis Carroll asks adults to look at the children in front of them without the interposition of clothing, religion, reformation, or desire. He creates a lens through which others can view childhood as he does “sans habille.” Children are neither saintly good nor horribly evil. My intent with this dissertation, then, is to create a lens through which others view children in
literary texts. Thus, in my last chapter, I extend this discussion of shadowed twentieth century children in British children’s book. Addressing the question “have books gotten more liberal in producing reality or do they still serve as shadows for their audience” I argue that characters like Wendy in *Peter Pan*, Harry of the *Harry Potter* series, and even American characters like the Baudelaires in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* exhibit growing struggles with shadows.

The children in these texts are more introspective concerning their status as good or evil, as lights and shadows than Alice is in Wonderland or Looking-glass Land. *Peter Pan* centers on Wendy who is torn between being an evil pirate—the adult figure—or a lost boy, the perpetual child. Peter’s shadow symbolizes childhood and by sewing it onto the independent child, Wendy attaches an identity to childhood. In Neverland, she is able to try on both roles eventually realizing she wants neither to be the evil adult nor a child forever, and she returns home to grow at her own pace. Harry Potter is a shadow in the sense of Carroll’s use of shadows. While he is a more realistic character—he is orphaned and abused and forced to live in a closet—, he has his fair share of shadows. But Hogwarts is just a shadow of the truth, and the more Harry realizes that Hogwarts cannot protect him—in each book he is drawn into more danger than he would find living with the Dursleys—the darker the magic world becomes and the more the shadows take over. The Baudelaires like Harry examine the dark shadows within as they run from the physical threat of Count Olaf. In the most recently published book of the series, *The Grim Grotto*, the children even enter an underwater cave where they define themselves by the shadows of the past. Wendy, Harry, and the Baudelaires provide a commentary on the growing darkness surrounding childhood in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and aid in defining contemporary children. The text itself serves as a cave on which to view shadows of children. The physical book is the wall on which the words become shadows of childhood. In writing
these shadows, Carroll, Barrie, Rowling, and Snicket have power over their reader’s concepts of truth.

In these modern stories, however, the child characters are not weak figures. Unlike Alice, they do not cry nor lament their situations. They are orphaned, Harry and the Baudelaires literally and Wendy metaphorically, and must do what they can to survive on their own. They are independent of adult supervision and that position gives them power often over the adult figures of the book, but only the evil ones. Thus, I argue that these strong characters are exhibited as role models for a child audience, but at the same time are reflections of real children for adults.

I do not advocate that children are objects to be exhibited in cases for study as the books in the British Library were displayed when I visited it years ago. However, childhood has been the center of examination for centuries as scholars and theorists seek for a consistent definition of “child.” While I cannot offer a definitive explication of the term, I can provide a lens through which all can distinguish the nineteenth century child as a separate entity from adults. I hold up a camera to other texts as I have looked at Carroll and his *Alice* books to cast a new shadow of childhood. However, my attempt is not to blur the lines of the child’s identity with my shadow, but to cast a light on children and to define their character through the shadows they cast themselves.
Chapter 2. In the Shadows of Adults: Lewis Carroll and the Lineage of the Nineteenth-Century Child

As early as the Middle ages, controversy sparked over the definition of childhood. In their text *History of Early Childhood Education*, V. Celia Lascarides and Blythe F. Hintz present Philip Ariès’s observation that “in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist ... which is why, as soon as the child could live without the constant solicitude of his mother, his nanny or his cradle-rocker, he belonged to society” (29). Ariès asserts that the society expected the child to become a contributing member as soon as he or she was weaned from the support of his or her primary caregiver. Yet, in the next sentence, Lascarides and Hintz offer Shulamith Shahar’s contradictive study which reports that as early as the central and late Middle Ages childhood was recognized as a separate state from adulthood and required “material and emotional investment” on the part of the parents (30). The child was a fragile individual naïve and vulnerable, needing protection from the elements of society.

The contradictions that exist over the definition of childhood extend throughout the nineteenth century as well. The year 1832 not only marks the beginning of the Victorian period, but it also serves as a starting point to examine entertaining literature written for children. Though numerous texts existed prior to this period written specifically for children, many were written through a didactic lens geared towards creating a child through education that reflected the desires of adults. Focus on the child in nineteenth century society draws attention to the adult and lost youth as the poetry of William Wordsworth and William Blake reveal. Thus, “childhood” as defined by these romantic poets is simply a shadow of adulthood. Such an explication ignores the needs of real children for whom a literary market was focusing. However, by first determining the marketed image of childhood based on an examination of education manuals and letters of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries I will argue that
Lewis Carroll, an active contributor to a growing literary market for children, roots his conceptualization of childhood in a romantic tradition that identifies children as shadows of adults. Furthermore, I interject that Carroll recognizes this misconception and attempts to present a new image of childhood based on the needs of real children. He uses his literature for children to progress social doctrines away from Romantic ideals by serving as the Platonic philosopher for the Victorian circles in which he traveled.

**The Platonic Rabbit Hole**

Lewis Carroll begins Alice’s adventures with the curious girl chasing a rabbit into a hole in the ground. Alice does not pursue the rabbit because he can talk; in retelling the story to her sister she recalls that “at the time it all seemed quite natural.” What feeds Alice’s curiosity is the White Rabbit’s attention to his pocket watch and to the time. She follows the rabbit because she had “never before seen a rabbit with either a waist-coat pocket, or a watch to take out of it.” Thus, her adventure in Wonderland occurs because Alice pursues an image with which she is not familiar. Her adventure takes her into the depths of a hole in the ground to a place where she can learn.

In Book VII of Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates, in creating the infamous allegory of the cave, originally explains this method of learning underground. He explains the faulty education of the philosophers who are expected to run the city, likening education to the study of shadows on cave walls:

> See human beings as though they were in an underground cave-like dwelling with its entrance, a long one, open to the light across the whole width of the cave. They are in it from childhood with their legs and necks in bonds so that they are fixed, seeing only in front of them, unable because of the bond to turn their heads all the way around. Their light is from a fire burning far above and behind them. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a road above, along which see a wall, built like the partitions puppet-handlers set in front of the human beings and over which they show the puppets. . . . Then also see along this wall, and statues of
men and other animals wrought from stone, wood, and every kind of material; as is to be expected. (193)

In this allegory, humans, physically restrained, learn by way of shadows. They never see the true object of study and, therefore, base their knowledge on a pictured reality.

Socrates argues the only way for the philosopher to be free from the cave is to be forcibly removed. Everything becomes harsh for the human who enters the light for the first time; he has to accept “the shadows; and after that the phantoms of the human beings and other things in water; and, later, the things themselves” (195). Slowly, the philosopher must acclimate himself to sources of light to make the connection between the shadows and the real images. He learns about his own false realities by turning away from the darkness of the cave and embracing first the light of the stars and moon and finally the light of the sun, which he understands to be the controlling force of the day and seasons.

Socrates calls this philosopher of the cave a prisoner because the allegorical figure is limited in his knowledge. Even after man escapes from the cave and from his forced education, and after his reeducation in the light, upon returning to the cave, he is still limited in the good he can do for those individuals still strapped to their chairs trapped in their education. However, returning to the darkness of the cave, the philosopher’s vision is affected after being in the sunlight. His fellow prisoners continue to form judgments about the shadows while he struggles to see. His facial expressions influence how the others see him. They are unable to take him seriously when he begins to speak of his adventures, and they shut out his wisdom. Thus, the philosopher is silenced in the cave, but must remember that of the two inflections of vision, he must honor the movement from dark to light and pity the reversal. Only those who learn in the light are “adequate stewards” of the city. While the philosopher can insure a harmoniously working city, he also has the added duty of caring and protecting the prisoners in the cave. In
Plato’s allegory of the cave is comparable to pre-Carroll attitudes and theories about children. Because a controversy existed questioning the existence of childhood as a separate stage from adulthood, adults tended to silence the actual child, by only viewing childhood in terms of their own experiences rather than acknowledging that the children who were currently participating in society would one day become adults. The neglect of real children led to a study of their “shadows” which consisted of a nonrealistic image of childhood, a time proceeding adulthood. Like the humans in the cave, adults and children are tethered to an education based on fallacies.

Educating Alice

Childhood, then, in the 1600s and 1700s, is a distortion of the shadow on the wall. Instead of being a reflection of actual children, childhood is a shadow of adulthood. It is what the adult once was. Education manuals of seventeenth century encouraged such an interpretation of childhood, by both enforcing religious and moral teachings since, as Lascarides and Hinitz characterize, society was dependent on strong religious beliefs based on biblical readings and family prayer (46). In his essay *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), John Locke thought children were blank slates on which knowledge was to be inscribed. Because members of the evangelical movement took Locke’s ideas as motivation to protect adults from themselves, these religious adults educated children from the bible enforcing moral living as a way to prepare for the afterlife. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the child mortality rate was so very high only one in five children survived to adulthood.\(^1\) Religious educators feared the damnation...
of the child’s soul if he or she did not purify the soul through religious education. However, this fear is based not on a pure intent to save children but as an effort to save the adult. By safeguarding an individual in childhood, the adult can ensure a spiritual and moral path in life. Children are ignored so education can serve a selfish purpose for adults.

While Locke describes childhood as a tabula rosa in Some Thoughts, he never advocates teaching for the sake of salvation. In fact, he advocates methods geared towards the natural inclination of the child. Thus, he emphasizes the child’s need for freedom “to grow, play, experiment, and make mistakes” (Lascarides 48). Furthermore, Locke suggests that education should be entertaining rather than wearisome. In other words, the child Locke targets with his theories differs greatly from those targeted by religious leaders. Unfortunately, it is the latter that is exemplified in popular education manuals of the period.

Both William Lily (The Fairest Fairing For a Schoole-bred Sonne, 1630) and Marquis George Saville Halifax (The Lady’s New-Years Gift, or, Advice to a Daughter, 1608) encourage religious teaching well before the evangelical movement’s misinterpretation of Locke’s published Some Thoughts. Their education manuals contributed to the enforcement of a spiritual education as a preexisting condition of society’s fear of a child’s afterlife and an adult’s future. Halifax goes so far as to state “Religion eases us of our passions and mistakes and slavery from ourselves” (15). The “us” and “our” suggests he addresses his fellow adults, thereby encouraging them to find salvation and perhaps education in the light of religion. He views man not as a divine entity, but more as a danger to humanity and as needing protection against an inherent inclination to jeopardize his moral standing. This moral standing is the individual’s ability to recognize shadows as such, trying to make the connection between the object of study and the shadow it casts. However, Halifax argues the need to embrace religion and make it a
daily part of life (15). If one is immersed each day in a religious regiment, then he or she will constantly be reminded of duties to be followed scrupulously and will not succumb to immoral practices. Halifax’s message is fine for the adult who seeks knowledge in the light. But, Halifax speaks over children by addressing adults who have “passions” and “mistakes.” For him, childhood is but a stepping stone to adulthood. By teaching a child in this manner, Halifax himself succumbs to the error of treating shadows as real.

Lily, and Halifax focus on preserving or building a purist vision of childhood without considering real children at all. They are concerned only with saving souls and preserving a moral order in society. Lily’s conduct instructions included diligence through hard work, not allowing others to deter the child from learning by giving answers to lessons, defusing ignorance, and not mocking others. He rejects Locke’s notion of learning through questioning. Lily adequately sums up how a child needed to behave:

Nothing but what is chaste becomes a child,  
Doe not lye, steal, scoft, brabble, fight or tarre,  
Ill noyse and scornefull laughter banish farre.  
To no dishonest words ensure thy breath. (5)

Almost a century later, Elisha Babcock in *The Child’s Spelling Book* (1818) goes even further to instruct children to be humble, submissive, and obedient to “those whose authority by nature or providence hath a just claim to your subjection” (109). Be respectful, never bold, insolent, or saucy; have a pliable and ready body; be kind, pleasant and loving; be meek, courteous, and affable (109-10). Essentially, kids were to be seen and not heard, and held ready to comply to any requests made of them. They become prisoners of the cave.
This confinement continued into the 1800’s even after the nineteenth-century scientist William Acton’s published discoveries. The notion of childhood was not a recognized term in social interactions in England until Acton published *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Childhood, in Youth, in Adult Age, and in Advanced Life* (1857). As James Kincaid notes, “It wasn’t that Acton had discovered with further study that children also had functioning and disorderly reproductive organs; he had discovered a new entry in the stages of man, a new category he called the child” (69). For the first time, someone scientifically recognized childhood as a separate stage from adulthood in terms of puberty rather than that time in which an individual could be socially independent. By publishing his studies, Acton becomes one of the first to attempt to leave Socrates’s dark cave.

Unfortunately, even with this discovery, at the turn of the nineteenth century, emphasis upon religious and moral education still predominated, but the prevention of eternal damnation of children’s immortal souls shifted to become the responsibility of adults. In his *School of Good Manners* (1814), Eleazer Moody wishes children to reflect their parents. Therefore, it was important for parents to take part in instruction to ensure the fear of God, the belief of Christ, the attention to instruction, and the study and adoption of virtue. Anyone who was literate read the Bible and adapted Sunday school lessons from Orthodox bible teachings. In Elisha Babcock’s education manuals, her lessons reflected the importance of religion by infusing phonetic drills with biblical readings as illustrations:

Come hith-er, Charles, come, tell me your let-ters, do you know how ma-ny there are? Yes sir, twen-ty.  
Where is the pin to point with? Here is the pin. Now read your books.  
Do not tear the book, on-ly naugh-ty boys tear books.

...  
The child who does what good she can  
Will gain the love of God and man.
Basic language tools were applied by a copy of bible verse at the end of each section. As the writings of Moody and Babcock suggest, adults continued to educate children in the same manner in which they were educated. Thus, even in the nineteenth century, man continued to learn from shadows despite the efforts to move education from the darkness to the light.

In *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood*, Judith Plotz deciphers the child’s position in nineteenth-century society. The child becomes seen as a separate species of mankind which needs to be developed through an education designed to prompt amiable behavior and spiritual preservation. Plotz charges period literature and its writers for creating this image of child as a different species. Nineteenth century authors refer to children, as “school going people of the dawn,” “pigmy people,” or “the noble savage.” The idea of childhood develops into an imaginary kingdom to which adults belonged as citizens in their youth. Returning to what I discussed earlier, childhood was unattainable because of its existence in a timed cycle making it even more attractive to adults.

Adults, then, enforce a false image of children not only by educating them to be something they naturally are not, but also by insisting on isolating them by depicting them as an other in the context of literary writings. Early nineteenth century adults do not identify children as children, that is as pre-pubescent humans who have specific needs to foster their maturation into adulthood. Children learn through play how to function in social situations and through games how to overcome daily obstacles. Instead, adults compare children to uncivilized beings because they must learn manners. Children physically do not become a part of society until they have done so. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Jane Austin illustrates this thought. Her comments on children are not kindly. Lady Middleton’s children are violently loud and mischievous, screaming continuously and throwing the sisters’ handkerchiefs out of the window. They do not
sit quietly nor wait until they are spoken to. Instead, Lady Middleton refuses to a see this display of inappropriate behavior and makes excuses for their actions: “John is in such spirits today . . . . And here is my sweet little Annamaria . . . And she is always so gentle and quiet—Never was there such a quiet little thing.” In her excuses, Lady Middleton suggests how her children should act in society. Austin in turn reveals why children are not a regular part of the social scene: they are unpredictable until they have learned the laws/manners of society. However, both character and writer again focus only on “shadows” rather than real images. Concerned with manners and social functions, these figures see something wrong with children who want to cry and run about. Imprisoned themselves, they cannot see in the light of reality. More so, Lady Middleton, by insisting that her children are normally well behaved, refuses to look away from the dark form of Plato’s cave.

In 1832, Lewis Carroll was born to the Anglican minister of Daresbury and entered into a world that characterized children as shadows. During his childhood, he was taught from education manuals similar to Moody’s and Babcock’s, and, fortunately for his future literary work, read any piece of writing that he could obtain. His father took an active part in his education, emphasizing those Anglican morals that he himself upheld, specifically notions of piety and good manners. When the family moved to Croft, the Rev. Dodgson’s appointment first to a Crown living and later as examining chaplain to the Bishop of Ripon, the author’s father created a library fostered his son’s literary interests. After reading the works of Shakespeare, Carroll wrote an extended dialogue from *Henry IV, Part 2*. When his father could no longer tutor him, Carroll attended Mr. Tate’s Richmond school and later Rugby where he excelled at academics. Environments like Croft, Richmond, Rugby, and later Oxford provided the facilities
which introduced the writer to circumscribed notions of children and theories on childhood education which do not stand the light of reality.

While he had been educated in manners and morals, Carroll also was the oldest boy of a family of seven girls and four boys. He saw as his duty, to not only impart these same Anglican lessons he had received from their father, but also to entertain the other children by creating the family magazine *Misch-Masch*, theatricals, and numerous games. Such an active role immersed the writer into all aspects of childhood, not only as child but also as educator. This role then allowed him to see the needs of children as wanting to be both educated and entertained. Because he recognized the needs of children, Carroll escaped from the confines of orthodox educational caves and pursued literary interests concerning childhood or featuring children as its subject.

**William Blake and the Visual Songs of Childhood**

In 1863, a few years before publishing *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, Carroll commissioned a copy of William Black’s *Songs of Innocence* to be printed. In addition, he owned Gilchrist’s *The Life of William Blake*. Though not much is written about Carroll’s interest in Blake’s works, Carroll would have been drawn to Blake’s narrative voice and image of childhood in the *Songs*. Within those lyrics, William Blake presents the child as a spiritual entity capable of immense influence on adults. As Morten Cohen notes in Carroll’s biography, Blake’s attitude towards children was that those who sought Heaven need only to “become like little children” (107). In his letters, Blake wrote “I am happy to find a Great Majority of Fellow Mortals who can Elucidate My Visions, an Particularly they have been Elucidated by Children, who have taken a greater delight in contemplating my pictures than I ever hoped. Neither Youth nor Childhood is Folly or Incapacity”(9). For this poet, children have the power to not only see
the celestial light, but also to explain it to grownups: “The child is the measure of all good, and the child’s intrinsic qualities show how mankind has moved away from eternal values. . . . the child points up the man-made evils in the world and beckons the worn and tarnished sinner to repent and worship at the shrine of child innocence” (Cohen 111). Cohen simplifies Blakes text by arguing through the child, adults repent their sins and can possibly find salvation from the man-made evils of society. Again, just as in Lily’s manual, the child is a shadow of adulthood rather than a real entity. He is an image whose purpose is to motivate adults to develop a closer relationship with God instead of remembering their own childhood.

Blake addresses repentance and salvation through the image of the child in *Songs of Innocence* by appealing to a dual audience through word and picture. The title page of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789-1803) pictures Adam and Eve in Eden. Immediately, Blake attempts a spiritual connection between reader and text by referring to Genesis and the birth of mankind. Such a reference would be familiar to the child to whom the poems are being read, so Gilchrist and Carroll thought, and to the adult who is reading to the child. Both as early nineteenth-century figures would have encountered biblical lessons as part of their education. The connection, then, is that the child in *Songs of Innocence* is a member of Eden before the fall. In the Frontispiece, Blake draws this child, naked, soaring on a cloud above a piper. The child is a part of nature, not the real child Wordsworth describes in *The Prelude*, but a spirit. His genitalia are blurred with the only hint of gender defined in the masculine muscle tone of the human form. Floating freely above the piper, the child is an image of inspiration, not a representation of the real child. David Erdman argues “the child is divine, celestial, a human form of the bird of innocence; the realm opened is that of imagination” (43). In Blake’s introductory poem, the child calls, in a sequence, for the piper to play, sing, and write. The
musician does so willingly for “every child.” That the sheep follow the piper in the frontispiece suggests that Blake alludes to God’s children—adults and child alike. By using the voice of the child, Blake creates his book not just for children but also for an adult audience who is reading and hears what they read to children.

The *Songs of Innocence* title page illustrates Blake’s dual audience of God’s children. The reader finds a nurse or mother figure seated beneath an apple tree reading to two children. As the reader knows, the apple tree signifies the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden. Both the nurse and children are shaded by the tree suggesting both adult and child are learning, not just the children. And within the letters of the title, Blake inscribes a Piper playing in the “I” of “Innocence,” perhaps playing the song of innocence; a girl leaning against the “G” of “song”; a winged scribe in the “n” of “song”; and a child in the “o” of “song.” The images infer the divinity of childhood and writing. They are not placed on earth with the readers, nor in the branches of the fruit tree. Rather, they appear as a part of the title in the upper regions of the picture. Flames sprout from the words implying the celestial lights of heaven. From Heaven, the child in “O” with outstretched arms looks down at the piper and the nurse, and Erdman names the child the conductor of the song (44) which by inspiring the piper, he truly is.

In the plate “The Lamb,” Blake reinforces the idea of all humans as being children. Again the poet-artist frames the picture with saplings growing up on opposite sides of the page. The treetops meet and intertwine at the top of the page so that one tree branch is indistinguishable from the other. One sapling grows apparent from the herd of sheep while the second from behind the child. The intermingling of the branches stemming from sheep and child establishes a relationship between the divine child and the metaphoric sheep-child. Just like the inspirational child of the “Frontispiece,” this figure is also naked and seemingly genderless,
though close magnification indistinctly reveals the possible outline of male genitalia. Because the engraver’s carving is imprecise, a case can be made for non-sexuality. As he reaches to touch the lamb, the child not only completes the circle made by the intertwining sapling, but also mimics the touch of God to Adam (see Blake’s illustration of “Divine Image”). Thus, this lamb is not merely an animal, but is man himself being directed by the divine light of God. All aspects of the picture are connected.

In the text of the poem, the child inquires into the creation of the lamb several times and in different formats. In “The Politics of Childhood,” Alan Richardson states Blake is parodying the catechistic method. By answering those questions he poses to the lamb, the child resists the pedagogical strategies enforced by his elders. He asserts an answer that connects himself to the lamb (“I a child & thou a lamb”) and both of them to God:

Little lamb I’ll tell thee;
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb;
He is meek & he is mild;
He became a little child:
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name. (li 12-18).

While the young speaker associates “lamb” and “child” with the name of the Heavenly father, these names also refer to mankind. By saying that he is an image of God, the child announces to the adult reader that mankind possesses a spiritual connection. At the same time, the child avoids the pedagogical strategy of questioning and answering. He makes up his own reply rather than waiting for a response. As Richardson asserts, “‘The Lamb’ offers its child reader a model
for evading adult coercion by means of parody” (865). Blake creates this evasion tactic to raise awareness in his adult readers that adults cannot play the role of spiritual teachers. Furthermore, they cannot act as Philosophers nor image bearers because they have never escaped their tethers in the cave. Only children have that right because they possess the vision that innocence affords them.

Yet, Robert Gleckner argues in The Piper and the Bard that in Songs of Innocence Blake is outlining the steps man must take from the first light of this earthly world to the eternal light after death: “The path so delineated does not necessarily lead from life to death, it is to be remembered, but rather from ‘infant joy’ through ‘infant sorrow’ to a state Blake might have written of as ‘infant love’” (86). Therefore, the adult readers, in order to see this light, must travel as the child does from innocence, to experience, and then to a higher innocence associated with divine love. Furthermore, the final outcome can only be achieved by “means of mature conceptual creation in which both joy and sorrow are present, yet do not exist independently” (Gleckner 88). Man can achieve a higher innocence but only after experiencing the good and bad in life. And he can only do so by leaving the cave and seeking sunlight. Such experiences produce a greater appreciation of God’s love and light and thus, it is easier for man to see it.

The working class child in “The Chimney Sweep” exemplifies at once the good and bad of life. A child covered in soot wishes for a life that allows him to be more like the child of nature in “The Lamb” and the frontispiece. Unlike the inspirational child or the naked sheepherder, Blake’s chimneysweeper is male and clothed. He also exhibits an additional layer of dirt. The plate itself, however, focuses on the text. The reader learns that this child’s father has sold him into apprenticeship after the death of the child’s mother. Unlike the shepherd, the chimneysweeper has no natural connection. In fact, any connection to the lamb, his hair that
“curled like a lamb’s back,” is cut to prevent embers from burning the sweeper. This child is a product of society. He has been ripped from his natural world and placed in a fabricated surrounding, much like that of a cave. Blake divides the figure of the chimney sweep with that of the naked dancing child with the text. In the “C” stroke and above the “eep” of the title, Blake illuminates the sweepers as dark, obscure beings. One slings a bag of soot over his shoulder while the others carry sweeps. No vine or tree connects these black silhouettes to the children at the bottom of the page. Indescribable, the small, black figures truly are the dregs of society, not worth seeing. There is no divinity about them. Only in his dream does Tom Dacre dare yearn for a life as a spiritual being. Unfortunately as Tom’s dream indicates such an existence is possible only after death. He watches passively as an angel opens the coffins of sweepers who had died and takes them to a green, plain, natural world, where they are able to laugh, wash, and shine. Above the word “angel” in line 13, Blake draws the key, which unlocks this paradise for the boys. At the bottom of the page, this angel pulls a child from the grave transforming him into one of the genderless children dancing across the bottom of the plate. Naked and white, the direct opposite of the living sweepers, the children take their places in this Garden of Eden. The Angel then promises Tom that if he is good, he too can have God as his Father and live forever with joy as these children do.

The celestial light manifests into an eternal flame that extends from the Garden of Eden in “The Divine Image.” At the bottom right of the plate, Blake engraves an image of Adam and Eve naked. Because they are unclothed, Blake sets the time as before the fall of man. To the right of Adam, God stands with right arm outstretched forward touching the finger of Adam. Eve lies beneath Adam, separated by a flame extending from God’s foot. She looks up at the two in adoration. The flames from God’s feet meander through the text, curving between the
third and fourth stanzas and above the title. It comes to rest as a curling wave above the female figures in the top left corner. Two children kneel in prayer on top of the flame above the title. A vine grows from the feet of God intertwining with the flames along the left margin and arching over the kneeling children. It ends behind the two women. Vine and flame serve as a link between the children and the state of man before the fall. The children are not only protected by the two women who follow them, but also by the hand of God manifested in the arching foliage. Blake suggests in this poem that while man prays to “Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,” they are actually worshipping the divine image whose heart is mercy, face pity, form love, and dress peace. Essentially, man worships that divine image God created—man himself before the Fall. However, here, children serve as that image. The figures following, while protecting as images of Mother Earth, also worship with arms reaching toward the divine image. As the text reveals all must love this image no matter from what walks of life the worship comes.

Adults recognize children as reflections of the divine image in “Holy Thursday.” Two horizontal panels frame the plate at the top and bottom margins. Nine pairs of boys follow two beadles walking towards the right margin. One beadle carries a staff suggesting he is herding the boys. At the bottom, a similar scene ensues. Seven pairs of schoolgirls follow one matron to the left. However, the matron carries no staff indicating the girls follow at free will. The divine flames from the previous poem explode from the title’s “L” of “Holy” and “Y” of “Thursday.” Because it flows from words signifying a spiritual day, the flames are divine. An eagle above the third set of girls and a stork above “what a multitude” in the second stanza lead us again to decipher the scene as not children following adults, but as adults seeking child companionship. A further indication of this notion is the dancing child above the word “voice” in the last stanza. This child links the text to the pictures. In “Holy Thursday,” Beadles and matrons lead what we
can assume are charity school students to Saint Paul’s Cathedral. As the children sing during
mass, they raise their “innocent hands” to Heaven in praise transforming their environment into a
Heaven on Earth. They are not only the lambs of God, but are connected to the Lamb of God.
Children are divine according to the adult speaker in this poem. Blake, then, implies children
inspire man to harmony and divine innocence. In using the charity school imagery, Blake is
warning London society not to dismiss charity especially that which is associated with children,
because one might just as easily dismiss a venue to the vision of celestial light. Describing
children as possible angels, Blake, then, establishes their divine status and utility in the spiritual
reform of humanity.

This spiritual reformation tool emerges as “Infant Joy.” The infant who names himself is
genderless and represents the highest state of innocence. As Gleckner argues, Joy is thoughtless
innocence (98). In the illustration, mother and newborn child sit within the bud of a flower.
Adored by an angel, the nude infant is the divine light established by the flaming petals and the
flower’s physical connection to the earth. This infant as part of the flower is also part of the
natural order. The flower opens its contents protectively towards the blue skies of Heaven only
allowing one angel entrance into its inner sanctuary. From this sanctuary, the child exchanges
dialogue with the speaker. During the course of their conversation, the child names himself and
allows the speaker to praise him. In the penultimate line of the poem, the speaker offers to sing
for the infant revealing his identity as the piper of the introduction. Even though the poem is
seemingly simple, it provides a complex discussion of the Blakean child. First, though only two
days old, Infant Joy possesses a clear grasp of language unlike the chimney sweep whose
guttural utterances are mistaken for cries. Joy distinctly enunciates his name, a task most
individuals have not the privilege to perform since they are assigned a name by others at birth.
In naming himself, the child denies others the authority to exert any identity other than that which he has chosen. Blake rightly demonstrates this notion by having the piper repeat the child’s name: “Pretty joy! / Sweet joy but two days old./ Sweet joy I call thee:” (li 7-9). In addition, the name the child gives to himself becomes representative of his nature—joyous—and how the piper regards the child, “sweet joy.” Conversing with the child motivates the piper to produce a song in the infant’s honour wishing “sweet joy” to befall on the child. No darkness emanates from this poem, only the illumination of the emotions associated with the child’s name and the flaming petals framing the divine child in his mother’s arms.

Many of Carroll’s poetic images mimic those in Blake’s Songs of Innocence. Simply examine the song in Carroll’s “Stolen Waters”:

“A rosy child,

    Sitting and singing, in a garden fair,

        The joy of hearing, seeing

        The simple joy of being—

    Or twining rosebuds in the golden hair

        That ripples free and wild. . .

“An angel-child—

    Gazing with living eyes on a dead face:

        The mortal form forsaken,

        That none may now awaken,

    That lieth painless, moveless in her place,

        As though in death she smiled!

“Be as a child—
So shalt thou sing for very joy of breath—

So shalt thou wait thy dying,

In holy transport lying—

So pass rejoicing through the gate of death,

In garment undefiled. (li 90-113)

Carroll presents the piper’s song of innocence within this poem. The song depicts the divine child as saving man from himself. The “rosy child” is both the child in “Little Lamb” and “Infant Joy” as well as the angel who promises the chimney sweep an eternity with God as his father. Carroll tells his readers to be “as a child” and sing much as Blake has illustrated the singing children in “Holy Thursday.”

Also like Blake, Carroll illustrates his works. He was the original artist of Alice’s Adventures Underground, but reluctantly declined to reprint his pictures for Macmillan claiming, as Sally Brown suggests (38), they were not professional enough for a larger project. Instead, he worked closely with John Tenniel on the Alice texts and later with Harry Furniss on the Sylvie texts. Such an intense hands-on approach insured that the illustrations do in fact reflect Carroll’s ideas he asserts in the verbal text. Thus, similar to Blake, Carroll was able to infuse meaning in both words and images. For example, in Through the Looking-glass, Alice searches for an identity and is torn between the feminine ideal represented by the White Queen and the masculine image depicted by the Red Queen. In each illustration in which Alice confronts the two queens, the Red Queen is positioned to Alice’s left while the White Queen to her right. Alice is caught in the middle of these two identities physically and psychologically. Furthermore, in psychological analysis, right apparently delineates all that is positive and good; the left all that is negative and bad. Thus, Carroll hints at the choice that Alice has already made:
the White Queen to her right. Alice later confirms this notion at the banquet when she physically assaults the Red Queen who is again seated to her left while, in the same scene, shows concern for the White Queen on her right. Carroll marries text and image just as he witnesses Blake’s method *Songs of Innocence* to create specific identities for his characters.

The marriage of image and text plays an important role in the establishing the character of the child. While Blake’s child is mostly a divine being, often displayed unclothed and genderless, Carroll’s Alice, Sylvie and Bruno portray figures more similar to William Wordsworth’s real child. Alice wears a mid-calf dress and an apron in which she keeps objects she collects throughout the day. Sylvie and Bruno are likewise dressed in middleclass fashions suitable for play. Such differences influence the reader’s acceptance of a particular image of childhood. Blake’s cherubic children are reflected in the round rosy faces of Kate Greenaway’s illustrations. Thus, it is easy to understand adult’s misconception of childhood. When Carroll published his books in the latter half of the nineteenth century, he had to overcome preconceptions such as these to portray the real. He becomes a platonic philosopher who reenters the cave to bring enlightenment to those imprisoned. Carroll attempts to bring nineteenth-century society to a new understanding of children.

While Blake’s influences on Carroll’s poetry are somewhat apparent, Carroll does not intend the literary children in his children books to represent adult ideals. These literary children simply exist as children whose biggest concerns are to develop linguistically, recite their lessons correctly, and to behave. Alice engages in conversations, recites those lessons she learns to entities like the caterpillar, and tries to adapt her behavior to her royal company. Sylvie simply wants to be reunited with her father, but also maintains Bruno—and her own—routines by insisting on completing lessons, practicing correct pronunciations and behaviors. Alice, Sylvie,
and Bruno, while wanting to please their adult counterparts, resemble the real child rather than
the moral figure. They commune with nature—Alice with the Caterpillar and Looking-glass
insects, and Sylvie and Bruno with the Frog audience—often blending completely with the
landscape. They provide a real form to entertain and with which to associate.

**William Wordsworth and the Mother Child**

Blake’s contemporary, Wordsworth, an essential figure in establishing the “cult of
childhood,” also impacted Carroll’s writing. Wordsworth establishes specific notions of
childhood in Book V of *The Prelude*. While he acknowledges the existence of real children, his
depiction of childhood in other poetical works indicates a celebration of a shadow of the real
child. His child like Blake’s is a metaphorical being who serves a specific purpose for the poet.
Wordsworth intends to lead his readers to a deeper understanding of nature by using the image of
the child as a vehicle of reform. Blake’s child guides adults to a moral life. Wordworth’s child,
on the other hand, conducts adults towards finding inspiration in nature. At the end of *The
Prelude*, Wordsworth claims that Nature holds the bases of all emotion. If one can feel, then one
is alive. Yet, such an approach only strengthens the contextualization of the shadow of the child.

Most readers readily recognize Wordsworth’s matter of fact conclusion that “The Child is
father of the man” as the first lines of his “Ode: Intimations of Immortality.” In truth, the notion
of children spawning man originally appears at the end of Wordsworth’s considerably shorter
poem “My Heart Leaps Up” a poem in which Wordsworth celebrates the ultimate connections
between the stages of life. A simple natural occurrence, seeing a rainbow, brings joy to the
speaker as it did when he was a child experiencing the phenomenon for the first time and, as it
will do when he is older. Should the speaker lose this ability to find joy in nature, he would find
himself spiritually dead. Wordsworth’s simple line “The Child is Father of the Man,” then,
carries a heavy message to all readers: when one is a child, he can appreciate nature more
truthfully, a perceptive ability he too easily loses. What one learns in childhood influences the
individual as an adult. Blake looks to the divine child to correct the corrupted and blinded adult.
Wordsworth, too, looks not only at children, but specifically at his own childhood and idealizes
the simplicity of those concepts, like rainbows, that bring joy or pleasant contemplation.
Childhood is recorded as a memory whose access is triggered by associations with Nature or
images of childhood.

In “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” Wordsworth clarifies exactly what he thinks is the
importance of childhood:

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; --
Turn wheresoe’er I may,
By night or day,
The things when I have seen I now can see no more. (li 1-9)

In this first stanza, he finds childhood as a stage in which an adult sees commons sights,
specifically those found in nature—meadow and stream—, with a “celestial light.” Accordingly,
prior to birth, one lives completely submerged in nature. Man is a heavenly being. His arrival on
earth signifies his departure from this divine state. Thus, “Our birth is but a sleep and a
forgetting” (li 58). Yet, from “trailing clouds of glory do we come / From God” (li 64-5). Man
does not completely lose all of his divinity. It clings to children who are able to see the celestial light and its path. In this light, the child sees joy and exhibits true affiliates that cause it to be “Nature’s Priest.”

Wordsworth’s vision of the child, then, provides one of the driving forces of a new society, a natural environment conducive to emotional connections. “The Child is Father of the Man” is a prophetic view that the future shapes the past and present. Wordsworth’s child as “Nature’s Priest” is the teacher and perhaps the philosopher who is able to successfully acclimate his sight for the individuals in Plato’s cave. This child is not a construct of religious education and moral teaching as Lily and Halifax would have their contemporaries believe. Instead, Wordsworth’s child is born with knowledge; as described in The Prelude, both the model of child and the real child possess wisdom. He is not a Lockean blank slate needing to be written on, nor is he in danger of Halifax’s eternal damnation. In “Ode: Intimations,” Wordsworth consistently calls him a philosopher, seer, prophet, Nature’s priest, and turns the child’s divinity to nature. Like Blake’s “Infant Joy,” Wordsworth’s child reflects what he is, a part of the natural world. And because he is a part of nature, he does not have difficulty in re-entering the Socratic cave. In fact, as “Nature’s Priest,” “prophet,” and “seer” he can fruitfully educate the remaining philosophers who can then make a smooth transition into the light of the real world.

In “My Heart Leaps Up,” Wordsworth infers the child’s days are bound by natural piety. Rather than establishing a religious reverence with the scripture, Wordsworth combines the child’s piety with the natural world. This child’s reverence comes from his responding to ordinary things. For Wordsworth, these “things” are part of the natural world—for example, the rainbow in “My Heart”—and are those objects and phenomenon not created by man. The rainbow could represent God’s covenant with Noah; however, in “Ode: Intimations” the natural
world consists of the rose, the water, the moon, the winds, land and sea. The child is part of natural order, and piety is part of the circle of life. Children possess the celestial light which allows them to distinguish the difference between shadows and images. When adult educate children, they block out the light.

Wordsworth recognized a connection between adults and children and the damaging effects of the standard education on both. Religious and moral education was a process that created the a-natural state of adulthood. Wordsworth establishes this notion as a truth when he describes the Nursemaid’s lessons diminishing the child’s piety. Instead of existing within his natural domain as the philosopher, the child must memorize lessons on manners, manners that force the youngster to conform to social doctrines. Instead of enjoying the naked splendor of Eden, children are forced to wear binding clothing and sit quietly. Such a childhood, for Wordsworth, generated the unnatural and reduced the adult’s ability to possess the prophetic nature of children in adulthood.

Plotz identifies two products of the child as part of nature, which characterizes those elements of childhood Wordsworth writes about in his poetry. The first is childhood’s identity as existing outside of social restrictions. Using Friedrich von Shiller’s definition of “nature,” Plotz finds the “natural world” unconflicted, unselfconscious, spontaneous, and existing according to its own laws (7), and the real child fits this definition. He/She lives within his/her own set of rules, free of cultural influences, continuously living in the margins but doing so happily. Relate this idea with the allegory of the cave, and this image of the child translates into the philosopher who is able to exist outside of the cave. This child/philosopher influences adults/prisoners of the cave to de-center social constructs in order to take part in this happy marginalization. When Wordsworth pulls a rigid culture to the margins, he suggests the celestial light exists not in
religious teachings, but in recognizing piety as a stem of natural appreciation. In Socrates’ allegory, the celestial light is a part of nature. For Wordsworth, nature is a creation of God, not man; therefore, the divine exists in nature.

As Plotz outlines, childhood surges with the energies of the natural process, growing to become an evolutionary representative of the human race (11). The child grows into an adult. Not only is the child a biological symbol for evolution, but he also becomes a cultural one as well. The child possesses the possibility to develop into an adult who can change social doctrines, hopefully for the better, just as the philosopher is an “adequate steward” of the city. As a student of the light, Socrates’ philosopher teaches those who only know the cave as their center how to live in the margins and by the rules that govern the margins. In “Growing Up: Childhood,” Claudia Nelson, like Plotz, observes that children become a symbol of hope and to a certain extent, a symbol of reformation. Thus, the second product of child as Nature is childhood containing an autonomous, unitary conscious (Plotz 5). As a unifier, the child/philosopher bring together all of society through a single thought, thereby enabling a brighter future.

Wordsworth distinctly details children as the possessors and symbols of hope. So, in stanza nine of the “Intimations Ode,” the child “with new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast” move in “worlds not realized,” that is worlds not acknowledged by adults. The unrealized world is that of childhood, a time which is the “fountain light of all our day,” “a master light of all our seeing” (li 151-2). Wordsworth’s children are liberated, existing outside of society’s boundaries, living by their own creeds within time. The young girl in “We Are Seven” is a “simple child” with thick curly hair “clustered round her head.” In the third stanza, the poet places her in a natural surrounding—“She had a rustic, woodland air, / And [was] wildly clad”—that establishes her identity as a real child. Her appearance, though wild, puts the
speaker at ease in attempting a conversation with her. Immediately, the speaker begins a question-and-answer conversation in an attempt to catechize the child.

Richardson claims educators utilized catechism to “manage” a “new literacy.” With the establishment of charity and Sunday schools in the early part of the eighteenth century, literacy was no longer a characteristic by which the upper classes established social position. While the nobility accepted educating the lower classes, it did not tolerate upward mobility which literacy aided. Catechistic methods deterred dreams of class movement. Adults forced children to memorize lessons concerning both religion and manners reinforcing these teachings through commanded recall. Richardson writes about the efforts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) to curtail any egalitarian desires of the lower classes, especially of lower class children who were being taught to read at charity schools: “That however these Children are disposed of, it will be very necessary before-hand to teach them that great Lesson of true humility. . .list the Advantages they receive from a pious Education should incline them to put too great a Value upon themselves” (qtd in Richardson 855). The S.P.C.K. goes so far as to empower masters with the task of guarding the children in their care by “instructing them very carefully in the Duties of servants, and Submission to Superiors” (qtd in Richardson 855). At will, masters could question their young charges and appropriately punish if they did not offer acceptable answers. Richardson notes that such a catechistic education took away from the child’s nature. Children were not allowed the liberty to follow natural inclinations and curiosities by asking their own questions. Instead, they had to be subjected to adult persecution and the threat of physical punishment if responses were not exact.

Wordsworth presents an image of catechism in “We Are Seven,” but his child is non-compliant with the “master’s” questions. When Wordsworth’s speaker greets the little maid and
asks a simple question, “Sisters and Brothers, little Maid, / How many may you be?” (li 13-5), she answers “seven.” While this simple exchange is a perfect illustration of catechistic conversation, analysis of the next interchange demonstrates Wordsworth’s rejection of adult domination of the child. The speaker asks the girl where her siblings are to be located. She replies two are in Wales, two at sea, and two in the churchyard. The speaker, then, cannot accept the answer “seven,” because two of the children are dead and, therefore, should not be counted. He tells the child the deceased are not alive and corrects her initial answer saying they are only five. Were this a true catechism, the girl would accept the narrator’s rebuttal, but she does not simply, as I will argue in Chapter 5, because she does not speak the same language as the adult. She, instead, counters with a natural image because that is how she defines “death.” Her siblings’ graves are green with natural growth and she sees them from the door of her home. Because she can perform her daily chores and communicate to the dead children through song, the siblings are alive. They are a part of her life and her natural “green” surrounding and thereby emit the celestial light of the Intimations Ode. The graves are also located “twelve steps” from her home, placing them in the margins, yet free from social constructs such as non-existence. The speaker argues with the child because he has lost his ability to think outside the boundaries of a constrictive culture to bother to learn her language and cannot accept her answers.

Wordsworth, in his satire rebels against the often one-sided dialogues between adults and children found in books meant for children. Eleanor Fenn’s Cobwebs to Catch Flies illustrates such dialogues: “Good children ask no reasons—a wise child knows that his parents can best judge what is proper; and unless they choose to explain the reasons of their orders, he trusts that they have a good one; and he obeys without inquiry” (qtd in Richardson 859). Not only does the little girl of “We are Seven” not accept the speaker’s explanation of death, but she in turn
provides her own justification. She attempts to teach the prisoners of the cave. She is mother to the Man.

Even though Morton Cohen argues in Carroll’s biography that Wordsworth’s children are predominately male, Wordsworth flip-flops between masculine and feminine identities, just as he alternates between celebrating the model child and real child. His male children are a retrospect of his own childhood, while his feminine child serves as companion and teacher to the narrator. Like Blake’s images of children, though Wordsworth claims to base his real child on those who dance and play at the feet of the throned lady, the Wordsworthian child is a simple metaphorical device in poetry meant to reflect the childhood of every adult.

**Alice is Mother to the Man**

Lewis Carroll, even in his early years, immersed himself in all facets of childhood. His first audience was his siblings for whom he provided entertainment and taught behavior. He enjoyed entertaining children and throughout his lifetime made numerous child friends. Children were the driving force behind his children’s books. But, he was a successful children’s writer because he could provide heroes and heroines who closely resembled the children he encountered on a daily basis. His diary entries, his correspondence with children, and his nephew’s observations reveal that Carroll’s personal views of childhood and children are closely linked to those characteristics derived by Romantic writers and education theorists. Yet, Carroll depicts the naturalness of childhood, without using the image of the child in literature solely as a reformation tactic.

In his biography of his uncle, Stuart Collingwood defines “childhood” as a time in which an individual is free from social consciousness a concept similar to the one Locke advocates in
Some Thoughts.. Yet, in his preface to Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Carroll establishes children in terms of audience:

I have reason to believe that Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland has been read by some hundreds of English Children, aged from Five to Fifteen; also by Children aged from Fifteen to Twenty-five. Yet again by Children aged from Twenty-five to Thirty-five; and even by Children—for there are such—children in whom no waning of health and strength, no weariness of the solemn mockery, and the gaudy glitter, and the hopeless misery, of life has availed to parch the pure fountain of joy that wells up in the child-like hearts—Children of a ‘certain’ age, whose tale of years must be left untold, and buried in respectful silenced. (qtd in Collingwood 469)

Anyone who read Alice was a child in Carroll’s eyes because he saw everyone as a potential child. Gertrude Chataway met Carroll at the sea-side when she was a little girl and began a correspondence with him. Years later when she was a young woman, Miss Chataway visited Carrol at Eastbourne and reported: “I don’t think that he ever really understood that we, whom he had known as children, could not always remain such. . . . He never appeared to realize that I had grown up, except when I reminded him of the fact, and then he only said, ‘Never mind: you will always be a child to me, even when your hair is grey’” (qtd in Collingwood 380). Carroll had a nostalgia for the perpetual child, but understood that natural childhood exists for a short time. Even though Miss Chataway’s account makes it seem like Carroll was oblivious to the maturation of children, he often discontinued relationships with his child acquaintances at that point “where the stream and river mix.” While Carroll never elaborates on his metaphor, one can conclude that the stream signifies childhood and the river womanhood. Thus, childhood is simply defined by puberty.

However, Carroll did not often linger on maturation when he referred to children. His entries and letters reveal that Carroll commented on the appearance, behavior and innocence of his little friends. Beauty or lack of captured Carroll’s attention. He found that beautiful children
appealed to his aesthetic faculties. Nature held the beautiful because it was life as God made it. Nothing was more beautiful than a country nude child because the small being was in its most innocent and simplest form. The natural child appealed, as Collingwood argues, to the simplicity of Carroll’s own nature.

Beauty for Carroll was more than aesthetic pleasure; he was also attracted to the way a child behaved. He often described children he met in terms of their manners and behavior: wild, well-behaved, modest, nervous, imaginative, in good humor. Yet, no child was safe from his criticism. After meeting Princess Alice, Carroll declared her too high spirited and unruly while her brother exhibited humor. A gentle demure denoted innocence. Sweet manners were often rewarded with puzzles, acrostics, or autographed books.

Many of Carroll’s actions suggest he expected society to protect children and rather than for the child to follow Victorian social constructs. In his entry for January 14th 1881, Carroll writes: “Went to ‘Children’s Pinafore’ which was pretty as a whole though it grieved one to see the sweet bevy of little girls taught to say ‘He said damme.’” He, in turn, served as an advocate of childhood innocence in society. When shown the proofs of *Through the Looking-glass*, the writer sent the Jabborwocky illustration to several of his child friend’s mothers to decide if the picture would be appropriate for “nervous and imaginative children.” In addition, he often wrote letters protesting the insensitivity or the profanity of any theatrical production that a child might go to. Everywhere Carroll traveled he thought of protecting and entertaining children. His diary entry for May 7th 1896 is exemplary of the many similar entries revealing his constant attention to this subject: “Went at night, with Bayne, to see the operatic extravaganza *The Water Babes*, in which Nellie and Maggie Bowman are playing as girl and boy. I had an idea of taking Violet, and perhaps Beatrice, if it proved to be a fit piece; but it proved to be too vulgar and coarse.”
Other entries show that Carroll both generously doted while advocated morals and innocence. Thus, children or their parents received literary works that upheld social doctrine, yet invited a celebration of childhood. Carroll often provided copies of Wordsworth and Blake’s works along with other texts he deemed suitable for his child friends.

Even his initial approach to children met societal standards. Carroll followed a protocol when inviting children to become his friends. After several chance meetings with a child, the writer applied to the parents, specifically the mother, through a letter. The following letter written in 1896 demonstrates the context in which Carroll approached the subject:

You and your children seem so well disposed to regard me as a friend (though a little too much inclined to treat me as a ‘lion’—a position I cordially detest) that I should like to try, if I may, to know them better. Child-friends will grow up so quick! And most of mine are now grown up, though by no means ceasing to be ‘child friends.’ But my life is very busy, and is nearing its end, and I have very little time to give to the sweet relief of girl-society. So I have to limit myself to those whose society can be had in the only way in which such society is worth having, viz., one by one.

Would you kindly tell me if I may reckon your girls as inevitable (not ‘inevitable’!), to tea, or dinner, singly. . . . I don’t think anyone knows what girl-nature is, who has only seen them in the presence of their mothers or sisters. Also, are they kissable? . . . . With girls under fourteen, I don’t think it necessary to ask the question: But I guess Margery to be over fourteen, and, in such cases, with new friends, I usually ask the mother’s leave. When my girl-friends get engaged (as they are always doing) I always decline to go on with the practice, unless the ‘fiance’ gives his permission; and sometimes he gives it—which is rather a wonder to me, as I feel sure that, if I were in his case, I should not give it! Believe me, sincerely yours, C.L. Dodgson

Carroll’s letter demonstrates the formality of English society, the need to keep the child’s integrity intact. Thus, his formal letters serve as a method of contextualizing his friendship with children. His mode of communication is the letter format, a permanent reminder of childhood language. However, like Wordsworth indicates in *The Prelude*, such a method of recording language is ineffective because social doctrines govern letter writing forcing Carroll to address his child friends in a restrictive manner. He must play the part of child conservatist in a social
context or else be deemed a social outcast. Because Carroll was granted access to England’s highest ranking children, the offspring of Queen Victorian and future rulers of the word, he played the part well. He was a don at Oxford University and maintained an appropriate appearance for society by abstaining from all vices.

Carroll performed so well in this role, and was granted luxuries that no other man could have. Here, I refer to his photographic hobby. In 1855, Carroll became entranced by amateur photography. One of his favorite subjects became children, specifically nude children. Parents relinquished power over to Carroll in exchange for an image of their child. His protocol was indeed acceptable allowing Carroll to pose children in different dresses or completely unclothed if the parent agreed. As I will explain later on in this project, within his photographs, Carroll experimented with conceptions of childhood, using this medium as a context to inscribe commentary of this issue.

When it came to child clothing, Carroll put aside his conventional ideas. When children stayed with Carroll, he did not allow certain clothes to be worn because he believed them to constrict a child’s natural inclination for play. Adelaide Paine recalled how Carroll advised her parents not to force the child to wear gloves at the seaside. Collingwood also details Carroll’s aversion for tight boots: “One little girl who was staying with him at Eastbourne had occasion to buy a new pair of boots. Lewis Carroll gave instructions to the boot maker as to how they were to be made, so as to be thoroughly comfortable, with the result that when they came home they were more useful than ornamental, being very nearly as broad as they were long!” (374). Carroll’s aversion to fashion also prohibited little girls from wearing red dresses in his company, deeming red an unsuitable color for a child’s character. However, Carroll was not appalled by the form of the nude child thinking it to be the most natural form of childhood.
In his own writing for children, Carroll creates a picture of childhood similar to his ideas on child dress. His characters do not serve as models of children nor as divine inspiration. Instead they resemble closely that natural child. Alice, Sylvie and Bruno exist in a worlds governed by time. The literary realm in which they exist and the fantasy worlds they travel to symbolize the realm of childhood. Carroll’s child characters like real children have limited access to childhood. They will eventually grow up and no longer be members of this magical world. What they do provide is a link for adults. Carroll does not promise perpetual childhood to all who read his books. He just advocates living in the moment, listening to the stories of children as Alice’s sister and Sylvie’s narrator do. He echoes Wordsworth’s observation that the language of a child is a pure form of natural poetry. Carroll even somewhat successfully records this natural poetry in the *Alice* texts by writing down stories told by children. They are somewhat successful because Carroll must still interject his own vision by embellishing the story of the child with details needed for further explanation of concepts, an issue I will address in Chapter 5. Lewis Carroll attempts to keep his child friends as children for as long as he can by treating them, as Miss Chataway reveals, as children even when they are adults.

For Carroll childhood may physically end when the “stream and river mix,” but adults possess the memories of their own childhood even if they cannot physically return to it. Thus, Carroll, in his literature for and about children attempts to displace Romantic notions concerning child conduct and education. He becomes the true Platonic philosopher by reeducating his peers’ inadequate perceptions through his writing, his daily interactions with children, and his photography, thereby making Alice the Mother to the Man.

Notes

1 In “Publishing for Children,” Margaret Kinnell quotes the figures of pauper children born in 1763: “at the end of 1765, there were living at most, not about 7 in 100; in many parishes, as
you have seen not one remained alive” (30).

2 In *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, Morton Cohen writes that Carroll commissioned Thomas Combe to print some of Blake’s *Songs of Innocence* (108). A catalogue of Carroll’s library collection at the time of his death records *Songs of Innocence* though there is no indication if this is a completed copy or the partial copy he commissioned from Combe. Thus, I’ve based my discussion on those poems in this chapter on the selections from Blake’s work Cohen connects to Carroll’s poetry.

3 The comments on Blake’s illustrations of *Songs of Innocence* are based on those found in David Erdman’s *The Illuminated Blake* published by Anchor Press in 1974.

4 I examine only *Songs of Innocence* here because Carroll may not have had access to *Songs of Experience*. As stated before, there is only evidence that he commissioned *Innocence* to be printed. There are no clues as to whether or not he read the second book.

5 Deviations of the plate have Eve looking away or shielding her face from the light.

6 The throned lady appears in Book V of *The Prelude* as the “wiser spirit” who chooses to observe the “gladsome sounds” of the school children playing about her rather than dwell on the death of the Boy of Winander who lies buried at her feet. In this passage, Wordsworth identifies a race of real children as “not too wise,” “wanton, fresh” “not resentful,” “fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy.” These children exist outside of the schoolroom, outside of books and education, outside of rules of society. They play at the feet of the throned lady.
Chapter 3. Capturing Childhood: Lewis Carroll’s Fictionalized Child in Nineteenth-Century Photography

In the last chapter, I argued that Carroll displaces Romantic notions about children and childhood in his literature, an issue I will investigate later in this project. In displacing Romantic child ideals, Carroll clearly develops his own perceptions of children from the romanticism of nature. Children should not be bound by social constraints such as adult clothing and cultural rules. In children’s literature, a genre directed towards children, the child character should represent one the child reader would encounter in reality, a figure to which Carroll’s child audience could relate, and not a creation of the adult mind that represents how an adult wishes children to behave. Thus, as I will consequently show in my discussions of Alice, Carroll gives voice to real children by creating a realistic fantasy character.

Carroll’s photography, however, performs the opposite function. Known as one of the leading child and amateur photographers of the Victorian period, Carroll used his craft to displace reality. A relatively new artistic venue in the 19th century, photography raised questions for critics: Who owned the photograph? The photographer? The subject? The audience? With whom did the agency lie? In examining these questions, I will argue that the photograph is an extension of the photographer’s artistic vision of reality and as such is a product of the photographer. Within the realm of photography, believed at the time of its conception to be the only true recorder of reality, Carroll creates a text to discuss children that falsifies the reality of the photograph. Following the contemporary artistic photographers O.G. Rejlander and Julia Margaret Cameron, Carroll uses the figure of the child as a photographic subject. Yet, by altering his photographs, a practice new to the nineteenth century, Carroll exerts his agency of this craft by literally rewriting the text created by the image to produce a new dialogue about
childhood. Furthermore, he uses this new dialogue to prompt social reconsideration of the child. Thus, as I will argue, the photograph becomes Carroll’s venue for idealizing the child.

**Ancestors of Photographic Art**

The invention of photography stemmed from interests in and the recording of nature and its image. Ancient Phoenicians observed that the slime of the purpura snail turned purple in sunlight marking the invention of light sensitive materials, the essential element of photography. Two thousand years later, in 1665, Robert Boyle constructed the first *camera obscura*, as John Hannavy defines it, a box with a pinhole made in one wall of the box. The hole projected an image from the other side of the pinhole wall onto the opposite wall of the box (Hannavy 7). Light entered through the pinhole to project a traceable image. Boyle’s construction allowed artists a simpler method of tracing natural images onto the wall, a glass plate, or a piece of paper.

The *camera obscura* was a popular method of tracing images of nature onto a media surface for artists, becoming a useful tool in the ceramic industry. In 1802, to simplify the task of producing a large dinner service for the Czar of Russia, Thomas Wedgewood and Humphrey Davis used their knowledge of chemistry to experiment with fastening a light image to leather. Using the *camera obscura* to produce an image of a leaf, Wedgewood and Davis coated a piece of leather with silver nitrate, a light sensitive material similar to the slime of the purpura snail. The coated leather held the image of the leaf but only for a short time. The experiment failed because the two chemists could not stop the reaction time and the image would darken beyond recognition in a matter of minutes. In *Masters of Victorian Photography*, John Hannavy observes that even if the duo had succeeded, the photograph’s light and shade would be reversed (8-9). Nonetheless, this first photographic experiment demonstrates man’s attempt to control nature by capturing a realistic image and commercializing it.
Photography did not advance until twenty years later by the headway of two French men, Joseph Nicephore Niepce and Louis Jacques Daguerre. In 1826, Niepce accomplished what Wedgewood and Davis could not. He produced the first photograph, a view of his courtyard at Chalon-sur-Saone taken from the window of his attic. Niepce coated a pewter plate with bitumen of Judea and exposed the plate to light. To stop the reaction, Niepce washed the plate in lavender oil and white spirit. The solution unhardened the coating leaving a positive image in the bitumen. The drawback to this process, however, was that the images could not be duplicated. Thus, each plate was unique in capturing an aspect of reality.

In 1837, Jacques Daguerre, the inventor of the popular Diorama, worked on the continuing problem of fixing an exposed image. Developed by accident, the Daguerre photographic developing process consisted of sensitizing a silvered and polished copper plate. In trying to solve the problems Wedgewood and Davis faced, Daguerre placed what he thought were blank plates in a cabinet in his lab. Hannavy relates that the next day Daguerre was surprised to find clear images on the plates (12). Mercury vapors had “developed” a direct image characterized by a fine grain, a sharpness, an excellent contrast, and an exposure time of five to thirty minutes. The process allowed photography to become commercial, though like Niepce’s process, the image could not be easily reproduced (Hannavy 13). Yet, like his Diorama, Daguerre’s process, known as Daguerrotype, became popular when the inventor revealed his photographic process to the Academe des Sciences in Paris on August 19, 1839. Daguerre patented the process five days before its introduction, being the first to claim ownership of photography. Though Daguerre provided the process free to all who wanted to use it, the materials needed for the process were expensive.
Independently, in England, Henry Fox Talbot, a wealthy squire, community leader, politician, and overall Renaissance man worked at “fixing the image in the *camera obscura*” (Hannavy 14) for his personal and financial gain. In 1840, Talbot developed the calotype process which used silver salts to hold the image and common household salt to fix the negative image. To create a positive image, Talbot re-sensitized the negative to convert it to a positive image. The entire process had both advantages and disadvantages. The calotype produced a coarser picture, but countless copies could be made from one negative. It also had a shorter exposure time. Mass production and shorter exposure further added to photography’s commercial abilities.

The commercial attributes for photography were numerous though commercialization led to legal issues over ownership. To mass produce the famous Wedgwood china for the Russian Czar, Wedgwood used photography to reproduce representations of nature. Henry Talbot’s original motivation, according to Helmut Gernsheim,² was to aid in recording images for botanical and microscopic study (2). The Daguerreotype was the first method accessible and publicized to the public though it was a patented and expensive process. In February 1841, Talbot patented the calotype process. In the patent, Talbot presented a step-by-step description of the process and required the user to buy a license from him.³ The license, a symbol of Talbot’s ownership of the process, allowed the holder to make photographs using the calotype process, but the photographer could not give prints to friends and family members nor could the photographer sell prints without Talbot’s permission and was usually charged a fee. Only a few people used the calotype process—even though the process was inexpensive—for fear of the threat of injunctions, as Helmut Gernsheim indicates in *Lewis Carroll--Photographer* (2).
Talbot was not afraid of exerting and maintaining sole agency over his process. When Gustave LeGray discovered that wax paper could be sensitized to make it transparent so that the texture of the negative’s paper did not transfer to the positive photograph, Talbot sued, won, and modified his patent to include LeGray’s process. In 1851, however, Frederick Scott Archer challenged Talbot’s attempt to claim his collodion/wet plate process under the calotype patent. Archer, who was also dissatisfied with texture transfer, used collodion which formed a clear film that served better than paper. He coated a glass plate with the emulsion in collodion and exposed the wet plate to light. Archer published his findings in March 1851 and made the process free to all, finally allowing agency to fall on the public. Talbot who saw a loss in profits claimed the wet plate process fell under his patent, but Archer challenged the claim and won. The legal loss in 1854 led Talbot to not renew his patent the following year, paving the way for a photographic boom since there were no restrictions on the developing process.

**Writer as Photographer: Photography in Carroll’s Written Works**

Lewis Carroll entered the photographic field at the beginning of this boom. As Morten Cohen observes in his biography of the writer, Carroll always had an interest in art and beauty. His diaries are filled with notations concerning visits to galleries and appreciation of artistic works depicting nature. Though, as Cohen notes, Carroll sought instruction in drawing, he could “never achieve the professional quality” (*Lewis Carroll: A Biography* 148). Because he was not confident about his own artistic abilities, Carroll surrounded himself with the company of great artists of the nineteenth century including John Ruskin, John Everett Millais, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Carroll, however, found a suitable medium in photography.

In 1855, the beginning of the photographic boom, Carroll had his photograph taken which he deemed a “tolerably good likeness.” Just two months later, Carroll had his photo
taken again as a present for his aunt. Using the term “likeness” again, Carroll saw photography as a way to capture a representation of life. Photographs are “likenesses” for Carroll, images of nature as he observed in the pictures taken by his Uncle Skeffington. On September 8, 1855, Skeffington introduced his nephew to this mechanical art. While the event is marked by a few lines in Carroll’s diary simply describing attempts to photograph the church, bridge, and landscapes in Richmond, Carroll’s new found interest in photography motivated his “Photography Extraordinary” and later inspired fictional works about photography.

In “Photography Extraordinary,” Carrol compared the “extraordinary discovery in Photography” to the artistic form of novel writing. The narrator witnesses the mechanical labour of “the artist,” the photographer, during a photographic “experiment.” The subject of the photograph is a man who “seemed incapable of anything but sleep” and when given the chance to speak says “Nothing.” As the photographer manipulates the camera and chemicals to enhance the image of the photograph, this passive subject transforms from a “milk-and-water School of Novels” to a passionate love story. Through a comic depiction of the photographic process, Carroll places photography in the same category as the art of writing, thereby assigning an artistic value to this mechanical process.

Shortly after publishing “Photography Extraordinary,” Carroll found a new passion in photography. In 1856, Carroll attended the Photographic Exhibition where he admired “The Scene in the Tower “ by Lake Price. He comments in his diary, “It [photography] is a capital idea for making up pictures . . . . Some of the coloured portraits are exquisite, equal to the best enamel.”6 Photography, which had previously been categorized with writing, was now being compared to Carroll’s long-time love, art.
The 1856 Photographic Exhibition inspired Carroll to organize a photographic outing with friend Reginald Southey who dabbled in photography and owned a camera and developing supplies. Southey essentially taught his Oxford friend the art when Carroll accompanied him on photographic outings. Carroll often offered a critical perspective to Southey’s photographs recording his thoughts in his diary. In his journal entry for March 1, 1855, Carroll writes “He has done a very successful one of the Broad Walk from his window, about the best amateur attempt I have seen.”

Just six days after the Photographic Exhibition, Carroll wrote to his uncle inquiring into buying a photographic apparatus: “as [he] wanted some other occupation here, than mere writing.” He bought his first camera from Ottiwell in March but did not begin photographing until his Easter break from Oxford at which time he was able to purchase the necessary chemicals for the collodion process. On May 5, 1856, Carroll’s first photographic subjects were John Collins, a friend from Oxford, and Reginald Southey. Though these photographs no longer exist, they mark the beginning of Carroll’s photographic hobby.

The collodion process, in addition to opening up photography to the public, was the most advanced photographic process at the time. Carroll captures the vision of this process in his poem “Hiawatha’s Photographing” which first appeared in the December 1857 issue of The Train. Hiawatha carries a compact rosewood camera, tripod, and case of chemicals to photograph an disagreeable family who must endure the “mystic and awful” collodion process:

First, a piece of glass he coated
With collodion, and plunged it
In a bath of lunar caustic
Carefully dissolved in water—
There he left it certain minutes.

Secondly, my Hiawatha

Made with cunning hand a mixture

Of the acid pyro-gallic,

And of alcohol and water—

This developed the picture

Finally he fixed each picture

With a saturate solution

Which was made of Hyposulphite

Which, again, was made of soda.\(^8\)

Cohen explains that this collodion process was labor intensive, and even the smallest errors caused an unsatisfactory print. Carroll when using the collodion method had to prepare a glass plate by evenly coating it with the gummy collodion and then polishing it in the darkroom, taking care not to allow other objects to touch the coated plate or bump it while carrying the plate from the darkroom to the camera (Cohen 148). Any disruption to the coating caused the print to be disfigured. Time was of the essence because the image had to be captured on the plate before the collodion dried (Cohen 148). The same precaution had to be carried out when bringing the plate back to the darkroom for processing. Producing a negative included developing the picture in one solution and fixing it with another. Carroll, after achieving the desired negative, would then varnish the negative to construct a positive print.\(^9\) With knowledge of this complicated process, Carroll realistically depicts Hiawatha as being able to attain only two successful pictures, a group shot of which all disapproved and one of the family’s youngest son. Only able
Challenging though, photography often became the center for debate about its artistic merit. To take a photograph in the field required not only a camera and tripod but also the photographic outfit: lens; wet-plate; chest of chemicals for coating, developing, fixing, and varnishing plates; bottles of stock solution; several dishes; glass plates; scales; weights; glass measures; funnels; and most important, a portable darkroom. Although technical progress led to pre-prepared plates and portable darkrooms, the initial equipment needed to create a photographic image resembled that of a chemist’s laboratory. Because it was such a tedious and mechanical process, photography found itself at the center of a heated debate of its merit as a fine art. Hannavy comments that photography was not accepted as fine art because it was based on chemicals, light, and boxes (46). In Camera Lucida, Roland Barthes attributes the invention of photography to chemists simply because photography is the reaction of silver halogens to light: “The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent” (80). Photography is a natural, mechanical process, developed to capture images of nature, the embodiment of the real, on paper.

Yet, simply thumbing through issues of The Yearbook of Photography from the mid-nineteenth century, one can see that photographers did not agree with assessing photography as a mechanical process. Essays range in subject from the comparisons between photography and art to capturing a photographic image on a painter’s canvas. In his 1861 editorial, G. Wharton Simpson claims that the pictures he viewed demonstrated “a beauty, truth, and picturesque relation, which the pencil of could neither surpass nor rival” (30). As essay contributors O.G. Rejlander and Adam Salomon considered, photographers could be deemed artists because they
could control not only the content of the photograph, but also the final result of the negative. In his 1870 essay “Remarks on Art Photography,” R. Slingsby posits that artistic photography is an imitation of reality yet remains an expression of the photographer’s thought (64). When the photographer considers composition and context, and arranges the content to suggest an idea of the photographer’s imagination, the photograph is no longer simply a reflection of the real, but an artistic interpretation of the photographer. At the same time, Rejlander acknowledges in “Desultory Reflections on Photography and Art” that the one fault of artistic photography was its inability to capture color (45). While Rejlander advocates monochromatic pictures were more beautiful than colored paintings, Simpson reveals in the 1867 issue that Joseph Niepce’s process of producing black color in the photograph was exceeded by a Mr. Poitevin who was able to create tints of red, green, violet, and bronze in his pictures. In addition, other advertisements in *The Yearbook of Photography* reveal photographers practiced painting over their photographs to produce color. This act of altering the print makes the photographic media equivalent to the canvas of the painter. The coloring is a subtext of the black and white text of the photograph, which itself serves as the foundation of an artistic work, just as the artist’s canvas is improved by the paints which create a masterpiece.

Carroll defines his position in this artistic debate and presents his thoughts on the general subject of photography in his many humorous essays on the subject and in his diary entries. As I’ve already touched on, in “Photography Extraordinary,” Carroll likens photography to the art of writing. And in “Hiawatha Photographing,” Hiawatha encounters within the family he is photographing members who seek to infuse symbiotic meaning in their portraits. The father gives suggestions as to how he should be photographed:

He suggested velvet curtains
Looped about a massy pillar
And the corner of a table,
Of a rosewood dining-table.

He would hold a scroll of something,
Hold it firmly in his left-hand;
He would keep his right-hand buried
(Like Napoleon) in his waistcoat;
He would contemplate the distance
With a look of pensive meaning,

As of ducks that die in tempests. (769)

The father fancies to pose as a heroic image and tries to accomplish this look by adding more to the context of the photography, creating an artistic vision for the sitter. Such an artistic vision raises questions once again about agency. Carroll presents in these lines the agency the sitter has over the photographer and the photograph. The father dictates what will be included in the background, his stance, and his gaze. Each of the elements lends to the composition of the photograph and later to the interpretation of the subject. Yet, Carroll does not truly accept the artistic vision of the sitter. Each sitter in the family moves ruining the photograph. They are not the artist; Hiawatha is because he is the one who manipulates the chemicals to produce the image. The family gives him agency over the art by asking his opinions as demonstrated by the mother who asks “Am I sitting still?,” “Is my face enough in profile?,” “Shall I hold the bouquet higher?,” and “Will it come into the picture?” The family also suggests he has power over the photograph when they accuse Hiawatha of “giving” them “strange expressions” when the group shot does not produce the likeness they expect, even though Hiawatha believes it to be an
accurate portrayal. In this satirical poem, Carroll further defines photography as an art and the photographer as the artist, the person all photographic subjects view as being able to manipulate the negative to achieve an artistic vision.

For Carroll photography instigates situations that inspire the artistic vision. Due to the trouble required by the photographic outfit, Carroll often burdened friends by storing his materials and taking over basements and guest rooms to develop his photographs. In becoming a visiting part of the household, Carroll was able to create new friendships which led to photographing famous subjects. In a chance meeting, Carroll was introduced to the sister-in-law of Alfred Lord Tennyson who later presented the photographer to the poet and his family. In sharing an interest in photography, the two became friends leading to the poet sitting for one of Carroll’s most famous photographs.

In his comical essay “A Photographer’s Day Out,” Carroll relates a similar instance in which Harry Glover invites his friend Mr. Tubbs to photograph his family. Mr. Tubbs, the dreamy artist, undertakes the job simply because he wishes to photograph an “Amelia.” “Amelia,” in Tubbs’s opinion, is the only name that could belong to a lady who embodies his “ideal of beauty.” Glover’s cousin happened to possess such a name and the qualities of Tubbs’ ideal:

But how shall I describe the daughter? Words are powerless; nothing but a Tablotype could do it. Her nose was in beautiful perspective—her mouth wanting perhaps the least possible foreshortening—but the exquisite half-tints on the cheek would have blinded one to any defects, and as to the high light on her chin, it was (photographically speaking) perfection. Oh! what a picture she would have made . . . . (Complete Works of Lewis Carroll 980)

Tubbs seeks an artistic subject that reflects the ideal of beauty which Carroll defines in this piece as symmetry. Especially, Carroll attributes beauty solely to the female form, which he finds more symmetrical than the male body. Thus, when Tubbs becomes obsessed with Amelia, the
reader understands that his love is provoked by ideal beauty and the desire to capture that image on film, rather than by the woman herself.

Carroll has Tubbs acknowledge his “blindness” as a photographer to further examine the debate of the artistic value of photography. Tubbs writes, “They say that we Photographers are a blind race at best; that we learn to look at even the prettiest face as so much light and shade; that we seldom admire, and never love” (Carroll 979). Such statements situate photography’s artistic merit in terms of the composition of the work. Artistic photographers consider lighting, position, and frame to create a particular effect in the photograph. Yet at what price? Carroll suggests that in seeking the ideal of beauty as Tubbs does, the photographer cannot recognize the beauty of love or even beauty of the average. And like Tubbs, Carroll falls into the same trap of unrecognizing beauty of the average. His diaries reveal that Carroll saw life often only in terms of what composed the best picture. In his many notes on introductions to people he met for the first time, Carroll’s comments regularly center on whether the person was photogenic rather than on the individual’s personality.

Carroll takes into account his photographic subject’s personality when positioning his photographic subjects. Gernsheim relates Carroll’s very focused interest in composition. First, Carroll took photographs of subjects to create an adequate representation of the person, what Gernsheim calls “attractive design.” Carroll’s “design” simply consisted of full length shots to capture expression (Gernsheim, Lewis Carroll—Photographer 29), attention to lighting to separate the subject from the background, and strategic placement of the subject and accessories within the frame of the photograph to create an impression (Gernsheim, Lewis Carroll—Photographer 32). To illustrate the natural placement of the sitter, Gernsheim calls attention but does not delve into Carroll’s photograph of Coates (1854), the daughter of a Croft
Figure 3.1 Coates photographed by Lewis Carroll [1854]
Rectory employee. In this photo (Figure 3.1), Coates sits on the stone steps beside a brick building. She leans an elbow on the sill of a window caged by chicken wire. Behind her, a vine creeps down the steps and weeds spring from cracks in the stone. The young subject, dressed in plaid dress with fringed or fraying short sleeves leans her head upon her small hand on the sill. Her other hand lays comfortably in her lap. Coates wears a dreamy but serious expression, as she gazes off to the photographer’s right. Her exposed worn working boots denotes her class. Coates is working-class child.

This photograph is an excellent example of Carroll’s technique. He balances light and dark shades, which almost perfectly divide the photo in half. The dark steps contrast evenly with the light brick wall and the window, suspending the subject in the middle of the frame of the photograph. Such a framing forces the attention on Coates, whose full-length stature naturally reveals her clean but worn clothes and boots. Carroll’s photographs like this one seem effortless even though Carroll was a perfectionist when he focused on composition.

Although a perfectionist, Carroll did recognize the subjectivity of the photograph. He understood that his artistic vision was not shared by his audience. Barthes, in stating that photography is an emanation of the referent, an image of light reflected from a subject, suggests that the way that light is interpreted depends on culture, history, and emotion. How the audience chooses to interpret the picture does not always agree with the methods on which the photographer chooses to focus. In “Hiawatha’s Photographing,” the photographer must endure not only suggestions for poses and backdrops, but also criticisms of the only two photographs that succeed. Hiawatha feels he has obtained “a picture where the faces succeeded,” “a perfect likeness.” Unfortunately, his subjects do not share Hiawatha’s verdict: “they joined and all abused it, / Unrestrainedly abused it, / As the worst and ugliest picture / They could possibly
dream of.” The collective further argues that anyone who sees the picture will believe them to be unpleasant people from the “sullen, stupid, pert expressions” the photographer has “given” them. Hiawatha, on the other hand considers the photograph to be an accurate representation of the real especially when the family’s dissatisfaction transforms into a chorus of wails and howls.

Carroll argues for a power struggle between the photographer’s and the audience’s view of the photograph. Yet, by using the term “given,” Carroll hints that primary agency lies in the photographer’s vision. At the same time, Carroll questions how much control the photographer may actually have over the photograph. The family Hiawatha photographs believes the photographer has the power to alter the photograph. Though photography initially was developed to capture real images in nature, by the mid-nineteenth century, photographers had learned to employ techniques that alter the photographic image furthering the debates was photography an art. Did photographers have the right to alter the negative? Carroll generally disapproved of altering the negative or final print to flatter the sitter because it violated the truth of the realistic the camera captured. Yet, Carroll retouched for technical quality. Gernsheim has drawn attention to Carroll’s portraits of William Michael Rossetti, Tom Taylor and Lily MacDonald (Lewis Carroll—Photographer 31-2), pictures in which Carroll has outlined Rossetti’s coat, the flowers to Taylor’s left, and Lily’s straw hat to add clarity to the otherwise blurry items. His retouching never altered the subject’s physical characteristics and were always performed for technical sake (Gernsheim Lewis Carrol—Photographer 32). Yet, as I will discuss later, he allowed other technicians to paint over his pictures creating a new context in which to interpret them.

Photography developed from a method of recording the real into Carroll’s art. Though he was an exceptional artist, he lacked confidence in his abilities. Instead, photography became his
artistic outlet because he could accurately record his perception of the real. Such records could be used to capture “dying” moments for studying purposes. In his diary, Carroll briefly reports his introduction to photography as an archival tool: “Called on Jacobsen who showed me a facsimile, taken by Fenton in a series of fourteen photographs, of a unique manuscript in the British museum, parts of the works of St. Cyril.”¹² Later that same year, Dr. Henry Acland, a medical professor and physician to the Prince of Wales, called on Carroll to photograph the skeleton of his tunny-fish. Other photographs of human skeletons in Carroll’s albums exist signifying Carroll’s services were called on to reproduce the real for academic study and multiple distribution.

Even though academic and preservation interests motivated the pursuits of these photographic subjects, Carroll occasionally viewed them as works of art that could bring in a profit. In June 1857, Carroll left copies of anatomical photographs in the “Harmonic,” noting that: “copies may be had at Ryman’s.” After learning of interest in his photographs, Carroll sold copies to Ryman, a picture dealer. Though no mention is made of the degree of profit, Carroll became widely known as an amateur photographer.

Nevertheless, Carroll’s true motivation for his photographic pursuits was to capture the beauty of nature. For this photographer, childhood embodied all that was natural. And because he had an easy demeanor with children and could keep them entertained during the lengthy photographic process, Carroll’s pictures of children demonstrate an exceptional skill unequalled by any other photographer who attempted to photograph children during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Interested in capturing the real, the natural, Carroll replaced his drawings with his photographs. The original final medallion of Alice’s Adventures Underground included an
excellent likeness Carroll had sketched of Alice Liddell. However, after capturing a clear head shot of the young girl with his camera, Carroll swapped the initial illustration for the picture, and made them an extension of the text, an idea I will address in later chapters. Carroll even used his photographs to clarify the artistic vision he intended for the illustrations of the literary works. In his letters, Harry Furniss, the illustrator of the *Sylvie and Bruno* series, relates receiving random photographs Carroll had either collected or taken of children he wished Furniss to use as a basis for his Sylvie and Bruno illustrations. Such solicitations on Carroll’s part indicate how closely he associated art with reality.

**The Photographic Art: O.G. Rejlander and Julia Margaret Cameron**

Carroll’s fellow photographers also equated capturing reality to fine art. Two names that often surface when researching Carroll’s photographic career are O.G. Rejlander and Julia Margaret Cameron. Both Rejlander and Cameron marketed their photographs as fine art and prospered financially from their efforts. Carroll had made the acquaintance of both photographers, idolizing Rejlander and allowing him to capture one of the few images of the elusive writer. Cameron, on the other hand, was not one of Carroll’s favorite photographers, though she often shares the title of leading child photographer of the nineteenth century with Carroll. Despite Carroll’s different opinion of each photographer, Rejlander and Cameron define the artistic photographic venue in which Carroll photographed children, and they present photographers clearly as artists.

In “O.G. Rejlander: Art Studies,” Stephanie Spencer names Rejlander “the father of art photography” (121). Rejlander considered photography as art if “photographers absorbed and applied lessons learned from the great masters of the fine arts” (Spencer 121). One can definitely classify Rejlander as an artistic photographer because of his education. Octave
Gustave Rejlander trained as an artist studying anatomy, the antiquities, and the Old Masters of painting. Initially, he made a living painting and making lithographs. Then, as a painter and artist, Rejlander did not originally care for photography, defining a few he saw in 1857 as “forgettable” (Spencer 121). A year later he changed when the artist realized the usefulness of photography to art, that photography could captured the image of a dying moment that an artist could later duplicate in oils. The process also allowed for the duplication of a painting in a matter of minutes. Following these realizations, in 1853, Rejlander learned the wet collodion process and began his photographic career (Spencer 121).

In his essay “What Photography Can Do in Art” published in The Yearbook of Photography in 1867, Rejlander wrote “it is the mind of the artist, and not the nature of his materials, which makes his production a work of art” (50). As long as one works in terms of artistic technique, the product is art whatever the medium used. Rejlander outlines two factors to be followed when examining a work as art. One is that the photographer uses the techniques of the Old Masters of painting. The second factor is that the compositional techniques can be studied (Rejlander 50-1). Rejlander, in his concentration on content and form, created photographs that were worthy of artistic study. In Iphigenia, Evening Sun (Figure 3.2), Rejlander poses his model standing in the center of the frame. Dressed in a toga, the subject shields her eyes from the “evening sun,” the light source. The photographer depicts movement in the folds of the material which Rejlander dampened to cling to the model’s body to show her shape and the sweep of her long hair over her right shoulder creating a classic line tracing the left side of her bare neck. This photograph is much more than a traditional portrait for a carte-de-visite. It, like most artistic photographs, bears a name: Iphigenia.
3.2 *Iphegenia, or Evening Sun* photographed by O. G. Rejlander [c. 1800s]
The artist’s titling suggests an allegory of classical art that often pulled subject matter from Greek and Roman mythology. In the original Greek myth, Agamemnon sacrifices his only daughter, Iphigenia, to appease Artemis whose beloved animals had been slain by the Greeks. However, Edith Hamilton reveals that Euripides, humoring the Athenians who believed Artemis could never demand so horrible a retribution, changed the Iphigenia myth through *a deus ex machina* (248). Instead of dying, Iphigenia is rescued by Artemis who carries the young woman away to serve as priestess of her Taurian temple.

Knowing that readers can apply two myths to Rejlander’s photograph affects how the work is interpreted and the agency shared by the photographer and viewer. If using the original myth, the audience interprets the light from which Iphigenia shields her eyes as death. Euripides’s version of the myth, on the other hand, leads to reading the light as Artemis’s saving grace. The meaning of the photograph then depends on the viewer’s knowledge and is subjective, giving power of the photograph to the viewer since the viewer’s knowledge determines how he/she interprets the photograph. Yet, because the subtitle of the photograph is *Evening Sun*, Rejlander, using the image of the setting sun as a symbol of death, suggests he is illustrating the original myth. Thus, Rejlander creates a reference to the photograph in the title marrying image with text to paint an artistic photograph characterized by conscious artistic techniques grounded in classical art. His naming further establishes his agency over the photograph by dictating how the viewer should interpret the picture demonstrating the photographer’s agency over the photograph.

In his photograph *Infant Photography Gives the Painter an Additional Brush* (1856), Oscar Rejlander illustrates his essay “What Photography Can Do in Art” by using a photograph of a nude toddler. At first glance, the albumen print looks like a painting. Rejlander carefully
constructs the composition to highlight the reaching nude child and the extended hand of the artist in the upper left of the frame. The mirror behind the child captures the child’s reflection both reinforcing his identity as the subject of the photograph and creating a doubling effect of the child as subject and as sitter. The picture also reveals an image of the photographer taking the picture. That the photographer appears confirms that the work is indeed a photograph, which he has infused with meaning. Clearly, for Rejlander, photography was a new birthed process, a child in the world of art. The nude child, a pure form, represents nature, the real, because it is free from social identity markers. Since there are no clothes, the child’s gender or social position cannot be determined in the picture. Also, its position within the context hides its genitalia, perhaps suggesting this child can be a representative of all children. By portraying photography as a genderless, positionless child, Rejlander indicates photography’s usefulness in capturing the real, a truth that is not influenced by societal mores. Photography, then, as Spencer states, “renders lofty ideals visible” (129).

Yet, the mirror places the photographer’s image to the right of the child parallel with the placement of the painter’s hands and brushes at the left, setting the connection between art and photography, and the photographer’s title advocates the usefulness of photography in art. Spencer writes photography was able to capture “fleeting feelings, emotions, and passions” that a painter’s brush could not do (Spencer 124), especially if the subject is an uncooperative child. After all, a child could not possibly sit still long enough for a painter to capture the image that Rejlander imprisons within a few seconds with the camera. At the same time, by paralleling the painter and photographer within the frame of the photograph, Rejlander states both exist on an equal artistic plane. He builds this point so well in the composition of the image that it is indistinguishable from a painting.
Unlike O.G. Rejlander, Julia Margaret Cameron did not receive formal training in painting, while forming a basis for her photographic style. However, with mentors like Rejlander and Sir John Herschel, Cameron developed a style, though often criticized for sloppy technique that produced, as Hannavy relates, “as spiritual quality.” Her style involved accelerated lighting methods that helped to define the artistic genre of photography.

Born in Calcutta, India in 1815, Julia married Charles Hay Cameron, a student of John Stuart Mill. An intellectual man, Charles often trusted his educated wife to fill the absence created by his business duties in India. Left to her own devices, Cameron created gift books for her female friends which married her love of the literary and visual arts. Mike Weaver reveals that some of her commonplace books contained Lewis Carroll’s and Rejlander’s photographs (“Julia Margaret Cameron” 158). A close acquaintance of the latter, Julia soon developed an appreciation of photography, an appreciation that led Rejlander to teach and guide Cameron through the wet-collodion process in 1864. Sir John Herschel, another family friend and a dabbler in photography, also critiqued Cameron’s work, and served as subject for one of her famous photographs.

Although Cameron received training from two of the greatest photographers of the time, she had minimal technical knowledge of the craft. As Gernsheim observes, her photographs often appeared grainy and unclear (30), a technical grievance with Carroll who met the woman when he photographed her with two of her sons in 1858. Carroll, as Anne Higgonet relates, was not impressed with Cameron’s photography, criticizing her refusal to treat the camera as a mechanical instrument (111). While Cameron’s technique was later celebrated for its spiritual quality and likeness to the paintings of the eighteenth-century artist Sir Joshua Reynolds.
(Higgonet 112), Cameron paid no attention to cracked varnish on the negative, dust on the
collodion, and uneven coating on the plate. Such sloppy technique led to blurred images.

Despite the blurred quality of her photographic images, Cameron excelled in lighting
techniques that later influenced Carroll’s own photographic technique. Using a glasshouse, a
popular photographic tool, Cameron created a good clear light by which she could control the
highlights of her subjects, a skill similar to Reynold’s artistic technique. Her 1867 photograph of
Sir John Herschel illustrates this now popular technique.\(^{18}\) All of the light in the Herschel
photograph diffuses into the frame from the right highlighting the left side of Herschel’s face
detailing the deep wrinkles in his brow and under his right eye. The left side of Herschel’s face
slowly fades into the blackness of the background creating a soft sincerity of the overall subject.
The shadows extended the depth perception of the subject as well as clearly defining his
character. She captured each wrinkle, drawing attention to his eyes as the rest of his face blends
into the shadows. None of Carroll’s photographs depict such depth as Cameron’s photograph of
Herschel does. However, as discussed in the Coates photograph, Carroll composes his pictures
to include lighting that draws attention to character details.

While lighting was often a consideration for photographers, Cameron was also able to
position her light source to fall directly on her subjects to set them apart from the backdrop. In
her photographs of Henry Longfellow (1893)\(^ {19}\) and Robert Browning (1893)\(^ {20}\), Cameron
arranged the light to fall directly in front of the subjects to emphasize their figures, using the
light to pick up distinct lines of men’s faces to produce a deceptively sharp image. Because she
quickly gained recognition for her innovative lighting techniques, Cameron, like Carroll and
Rejlander, was able to photograph many 19\(^ {th} \) century figures famous today such as Browning and
Longfellow, but also Alfred Lord Tennyson and his sons, Thomas Carlyle, Charles Darwin, and even Carroll’s inspirational Alice Liddell.

“When I have had such men before my camera, my whole soul has endeavored to do its duty towards them in recording faithfully the greatness of inner as well as the features of the outer man. The photograph thus taken has been almost the embodiment of a prayer” (qtd. in Hannavy 70). Photography, as indicated by Cameron in this quote, is a spiritual process. To capture the inner spirit of man, she must use her soul. Gernsheim claims that photography became an “divine art” for Cameron because she put so much of herself, her creativity in creating a picture (29). Hannavy asserts that Cameron claimed that she tried to capture the essence or soul of her sitters rather than a likeness (49). Though Cameron professed an artistic purpose for her photography, what she attempted, and often succeeded, to do was to capture an image of the spiritual. Just as Rejlander captured the fleeting moment of the child in “Infant Photography,” Cameron imprisons the essence of man, his identity, his spirituality.

In trying to capture the spirituality of her subjects, Cameron used the “tableau vivant.” In a “tableau vivant” the subject wore costumes which disguised the individual so that the photographic viewer could identify with the theme rather than the individual. However, it was the individual’s spirituality that made the photograph striking. An excellent example of Cameron’s “tableau vivant” is “Cupid Reposing” (1872). In this photograph, young Rachel Gurney lies naked on a velvet couch. Wings extending from her shoulders which frame the body anchoring the attention to the nude child whose buttocks are exposed to the camera as she grasps her knees drawing them slightly towards the back of the couch. Rachel gazes to the left as if she were just awakened for the photograph. Cameron poses Rachel, in a resting position, as the
mythological god Cupid so that the subject is not merely a little girl but instead love, a theme common in Cameron’s photographs.

Love as a dominant theme suggests an iconographic quality in Cameron’s photographs. She entitles a 1864 print of Mary Hillier, Elizabeth and Kate Huhn as “Love.”22 The girls, Mary and Kate, are topless at Elizabeth’s sides. Mary, hands clasped in prayer, looks directly at the camera. Kate sits on Elizabeth’s lap with her hands crossed flat over her chest. She rests her head against Elizabeth’s shoulder as she gazes shyly at the photographer. Elizabeth, wrapped in material contemplates a scene to her left. The triad appears serene but further meaning is infused by the title “Love.” Cameron sets up two identities in this picture: one of love and one of lover. The unclothed children looking into the camera embody love surrounding Elizabeth who then must be the lover. The viewer does not know what type of love Cameron intends to depict, but knowing that Elizabeth and Kate share the same last name, the audience can deduce the subject is love depicted between relatives. Within this simple photograph, Cameron—through costume design, placement of the sitters, and naming of the photograph—creates an artistic vision.

Cameron captures most of her child subjects in the nude. The nude child form in Victorian culture, as Higgonet explains, was an intensification of the Romantic ideal of childhood. The child, stripped of all social constructs—clothing that marked social and economic status—was a “vision of innocence heightened by parental and naturist fervor” (Higgonet 126). This naked figure represented the natural man in all his truth and served to remind all who viewed the naked child, the form in which all humans enter civilization at birth, of their own biological beginnings and ties to the natural world, a world in which social laws succumb to natural ones. To remind oneself of the natural laws meant one could recognize and appreciate the simple things in life and therefore one could be more understanding of one’s
fellow man. And who could better serve as this sentimental reminder, but the nude child, the being who was viewed to be closest in relationship to nature and uncorrupted by social negative influences. Thus, a common trend for parents who could afford photographs was to have nude images taken of their children to be displayed in the family home for visitors to admire.

Cameron’s existing albums show evidence that she used her “tableau vivant” approach to capture nude images of children for parents. Her child subjects are not situated in a natural setting as I will later explain Carroll’s nude studies are. Instead, like Rejlander’s “Infant photography,” Cameron’s nudes exist only within the artist’s studio. The child is not a part of nature despite the natural being Cameron envisions the child to be. She literally captures the child and fabricates a naturalness that deludes society into thinking that “this pure form” is the real child, an accurate reflection of the subject seated in front of the camera. Because the child is posed and costumed, though barely, and sits upon furniture in a setting completely controlled by the photographer, the nude form cannot represent reality because it is manufactured by man, or woman in this case. Also, Cameron transforms her child subjects into spiritual and mythological beings like cupids and cherubs and in doing so, elicits a context for viewing childhood. Not only are children a reminder of nature, but like Blake’s Romantic child who can live in the glory of God’s light, Cameron’s nude children are depicted as inhabitants of Heaven when her adults are often citizens of Camelot who illustrate scenes of death, lust, and love. Cameron’s child subjects must appear to be innocent rather than sexual in order to be reminders of a spiritual nature and images that adults can accept.

As Carol Christ and John Jordan explain, nineteenth-century England was a visual culture and as such developed realistic modes of representation. Photography as one of these modes constructed a “social mythology”: “Because it claimed documentary power, photography could
construct, classify, and build a relationship to images from erotic social worlds whether those of the urban poor, foreigners, or even criminals” (Christ et al. xxvi). In Cameron’s case, her nude photographs not only create icons of natural admiration but also document the foreign world of childhood for adults who no longer have access. This documentation composes a link between the exotic child and the adults who construct society. In purchasing the photographs from Cameron, the viewer can once again physically own and recapture childhood. The nude photograph of the child serves a commercial purpose for adults. Like literature, the photograph makes childhood accessible to the masses.

Cameron’s nude child photographs present a dual nature: the real and the iconographic. Because of their dual nature, the photographs portray multiple interpretations just as Rejlander’s artistic photographs do. Higgonet suggests Cameron’s photographs are art when she accuses Cameron of seeking recognition for “her art” (110). While Cameron exhibited her works to others and sold some through Messrs. Colnaghi, she simply exposed her works to the criticism of friends, many who were active artists and photographers in the Victorian period. Modern critics while disclosing nineteenth-century critiques of Cameron’s “sloppy” techniques also list her among the leading British photographers of the nineteenth century recognizing her as a major figure in the field of photographic history. Furthermore, her excellent depictions of children earned her the shared title of successful child photographer.

**Undressing Alice: Lewis Carroll’s Artistic Photographs**

Like O.G. Rejlander and Julia Margaret Cameron, Lewis Carroll constructs the context of the photograph to reflect an artistic vision. In creating this vision, Carroll demonstrates his control, as the photographer, over the photograph as he defines childhood in sexual terms and attempts to persuade his nineteenth century audience to view the real child rather than the image.
To accomplish this artistic feat, Carroll has his child sitters sign their photographs to provide a text in which to understand the subject and to reinforce the notion that the child within the artistic work really does exist beyond the picture frame, even though Carroll portrays her in a fictional framework.

In discussing Carroll’s photography, Higgonet recalls Gernsheim’s praise of Carroll’s child photos for “a natural insight into childhood that dispelled the stiff studio conventions” (110). The insight that Carroll provides derives from his personal relationships and encounters with children. As I discussed in Chapter 1, Carroll filled his diaries with notes and references to the children he met daily. While most of his comments focus on the behavior and beauty of children, Carroll was enamored by their vigor of life. In his letter on stage children to the editor of the *St. James Gazette* Carroll observes the vivacity with which even working children could enjoy life:

> I think that anyone who could have seen the vigour of life in those three children—the intensity with which they enjoyed everything, great or small, which came their way—who could have watched the younger two running races on the Pier, or could have heard the fervent exclamation of the eldest at the end of the afternoon, ‘We have enjoyed ourselves!’

What attracted Carroll to children was their ability to forego all social conventions for the sake of experiencing and learning about life. Thus, his observations about children center on how different they are from adults. He mentally sets them apart from grown ups. To do so in photography, Carroll follows Cameron and Rejlander in photographing children nude. However, unlike his predecessors, Carroll does not portray his images in the studio; he modifies the print to create a natural setting.

Carroll’s nude studies begin as drawings of the nude child body. He found more beauty
in the undeveloped body of the child than in the mature form. Paired with his fondness of the child spirit, Carroll defends his admiration of the nude child in his diary entry for January 28, 1888:

It was quite a new experience—the only [two] studies of naked children I have ever had opportunities for having been each at about 5 years old. Ada has sat as a model ever since she was 5, and it was very comfortable to see how entirely a matter of business it was to her, and also what a quiet, dignified manner she had. I think a spectator would have to be really in search of evil thought to have any other feeling about her than simply a sense of beauty, as in looking at a statue. She has a fairly pretty face, and a quite lovely figure, and kept almost perfectly still for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time: it was a real enjoyment to have so beautiful an object to copy. (emphasis and additions Green’s)

Carroll compares the nude child form to the simplicity of the classical form of sculptures. His ideal beauty is the nude figure. By challenging others who might view his nude images as anything other than inspirational, Carroll confronts Romantic idealization of children. Blake, Rejlander, and Cameron display the nude form of children and receive little criticism. However, Carroll’s photographs are significantly different because he presents his nude child in a natural and often sensual context.

In his early nude photograph of Beatrice Hatch (1873), Carroll captures the child seated between childhood and adulthood. Beatrice exposes the right side of her body to the camera (Figure 3.3). Her hair, held from her face by a head band, tumbles down her back while parts fall in front of her shoulders shielding her upper body from view. With an elbow slightly resting on the raised right knee, Beatrice stares fixedly to a scene at her left. Placing Beatrice sans habille in a seascape reflects one of Carroll’s fondest memories of children. During his many summer vacations from Oxford, the writer often visited the seaside where he found solace and comfort in the calming landscape. He also notes in his diary the children he encountered and later who occupied his thoughts. Through letters, Carroll began many friendships with the
3.3 Beatrice Hatch [1873]
children he met during his travels. These same children exhibited those characteristics Carroll admired in children. Children romped and played next to the waters edge, often bathing without clothes. The seaside was one place where parents abandoned social rules of conduct by allowing their children to strip away class marker—clothing—and play with one another regardless of station in life. As a naked being, children truly became a part of a natural world free from the rules of man.

Originally a photograph, the existing image of nude Beatrice has been painted to include this beach scene. In *Lewis Carroll's Photographs of Nude Children*, Cohen states that Carroll carefully crafted the photograph in his studio and then sent a positive image to a colorist, most probably Anne Lydia Bond, along with a sketch of his vision of the altered photograph. Such a technique blended classical art with modern photographic methods to create a true piece of art in Carroll’s vision. Passively, he is the artist, the person who contrives the overall image. Bond’s role is small. She serves only as a colorist, adding only those details Carroll instructs her to paint. He has control over the photograph and how others interpret it.

In his construction of the photograph, Carroll carefully crafts an image of childhood different from the Romantic idealization of Rejlander and Cameron. Beatrice follows Carroll’s instruction and stares contemplatively to the side. In recreating this image with paint, Carroll directs Beatrice’s gaze over the water as she sits on a rock half submerged in the ocean’s wake. Behind her the solid mass of the white limestone cliffs provide a contrast to the brilliant blue hue of the sea. While the contrast serves a technical purpose to create lines for the composition of the image, it also represents the inner struggle of the child: the natural freedom to travel with the waves of childhood or the strict existence in a society governed by unnatural solidity. Beatrice looks fixedly at the sea revealing her view on the issue.
The water also resembles the sexuality of the child. Carroll once wrote that once a little girl reached that stage in which “the stream and river mix,” he could no longer be her friend because of the social inappropriateness of the relationship between an older man and a young lady who he is not courting. In this metaphor, water indicates puberty. However, Carroll’s comparison runs deeper than simple physical maturation. In Freudian analysis, water also symbolizes sexuality. Yet, in his metaphor, Carroll uses two sources of water to indicate the feminine. The first, the stream, signifies the young girl while the river is the mature woman. In both, sexuality is a characteristic. Carroll, predating Freud’s theories of child sexuality, suggests the child is a sexual being. By hiding his nude figure’s genitalia, Carroll indicates the child does not take part in the act itself, but is aware of sexuality. The child is concerned with the maturation process and therefore has thoughts about intercourse. It is her curious nature to want to answer questions about her body. Unfortunately, in Victorian society, such questions appalled adults who refused to see the child as anything other than the sexless, Romantic idea which is to serve as a reminder of the adult’s lost innocence. Carroll’s portrayal of Beatrice Hatch contemplating the sea, her sexuality, not only robs the adult of his only outlet to innocence and Eden, but also forces him to see his own sexuality and to remind him he can never return to childhood. Only in childhood does sex exist in innocent play. Carroll’s nude is a celebration of this sexual innocence.

A few years after capturing Beatrice nude, Carroll photographed her sister Evelyn naked (1879). Cohen notes that the photographer entitles this image “E. as gipsy sitting by brook” (13). Following predecessors like Rejlander, Carroll marries image and text to create meaning. Evelyn’s nude is an albumen print painted over in oil (Figure 3.4). His instructions to paint over the photograph again include creating a natural landscape to replace the unnaturalness of the
3.4 Evelyn Hatch as a gipsy [1879]
studio environment. Evelyn symbolizes a form of the Blakean child, not really existing in the society depicted by the gypsy camp in the upper right of the photograph. Instead she is a part of the landscape, leaning against what could be interpreted as the tree of knowledge. She seeks knowledge about her sexuality and her eventual move away from the water of her youth to the society of the camp behind her. In calling her a “gipsy” Carroll infers the child is in a perpetual state of movement, belonging neither to society nor completely to nature. He blurs her nipples and has her cross her legs again to hide genitalia and to suggest he is not commenting on the child’s reproductive ability, but her innocent sexuality. In picturing her this way, he strips her of her naturalness. She is not a true child, but a fictional one, Carroll’s ideal, the woman child who will never have sex. The only way for her to take part in sex is to wear clothes to take on her role as woman in society at which point she can no longer be Carroll’s friend.

Perhaps Carroll’s most sensual image of the child is Carroll’s 1879 reclining nude of Evelyn. (Figure 3.5) This photograph exudes a more realistic quality than the other two because of the painting technique involved. The negative is an emulsion on a curved piece of glass. Oil highlights were painted on the back of the glass while another painted glass backed the first. Cohen explains that Carroll had a professional print made from this negative to produce a colored image (Lewis Carroll, Photographer 32). The painted child is not only captured in a photograph, but also between two piece of glass. Furthermore, the surviving print shares a reproduction number with the gipsy print indicating Carroll made multiple copies of these nude photos to be sold. Carol Mavor argues in “Dream Rushes: Lewis Carroll’s Photographs of the Little Girl,” that the numbers on the prints indicate Carroll’s sexual child cannot reproduce but can be reproduced (170). The image of this sexualized, but genderless child becomes a commodity though Carroll did not take pictures for commercial reasons. He notes in his diaries
3.5 Evelyn Hatch (reclining, nude) [1879]
and letters that once he photographed by request, his photography ceased to exist as a hobby. Instead of actively pursuing recognition for his artistic vision of the child as Cameron did for profit, Carroll passively exhibits his carefully constructed albums to friends often noting in his journals long discussion over its content and meanings. The photograph develops into a vehicle for discussing Carroll’s vision of childhood and dispelling myths about Romantic ideals.

Mavor proposes the image of Evelyn Hatch reclining nude displays the animalistic nature of the child which “not only gives the image power but also plays into the Victorian fear of the animal in woman” (167). Evelyn lays on her back, her left knee bent over her extended right leg. Her hands rest behind her head, her left elbow extended and visible to the audience. She arches her back as she stares into the camera as if to say “come hither.” While Mavor advocates such a pose exhibits the primitive sexual desire, Carroll as the perfectionist, would have gone through great lengths to replicate all details of the young girl’s form to support such a claim. In this sensual image, there is no desire because there is no genitalia. He has created an “other”: not a true child and not a romanticized one.

Carroll, instead, orientalizes little girls, Mavor states by making them “othered others” (162). Evelyn as a gipsy does not belong to the gipsy camp or to nature, as is the case with the reclining nude. Beatrice sits between childhood and womanhood but belongs to neither. These figures exist in the median. Mavor argues here what Abdul JanMohamed terms a “binary construction.”26 In post colonial studies, a binary construction exists between the native and the civilized, self and others. Mavor’s construction is innocence and knowledge (165). Beatrice and Evelyn the gipsy know that one day they will need to move from the water’s edge and get dressed to join society. Yet, all have the luxury to linger in these innocent nude states for the time being. Carroll’s sitters understand it is innocent play to pose sans habille for the
photographer and listen to his stories. But, they must eventually face a time when such behavior will be inappropriate and the stories will come to an end. Carroll’s photography then becomes a portmanteau of art object and reality (Mavor 174).

One method of blending art object and reality is Carroll’s depiction of the child in foreign costume. Images of Xie Kitchin and Ethel Hatch in Chinese and Turkish dress relate this notion of “othered others” and of the colonization of childhood. Taking advantage of the playful nature of children to dress up or “dress down,” Carroll photographs “tableau vivants” not of children as angels, but of children as foreigners. England treated the orient the same way as society treated children. Like many of his countryman, Carroll’s information about the orient stems from literature that fictionalizes the Western world. Orientalism diffused English society as the country’s empire expanded. Between 1815 and 1914, 35 to 85% of the earth’s surface belonged to England according to Edward Said (41). And as Britain grew, so did interest in its “colonized children.” Said points out that every nineteenth century writer was aware of the empire (14), and scholars made the orient speak through their description and language (21) though they had never visited. Depicted as a mysterious, inviting world, the Occident became as Said argues “an Old World to which one returned, an Eden or Paradise, there to set up a new version of the Old” (58). However, once scholars traveled to the colonies to seek this “new version of the old” they were bitterly disappointed.

Carroll’s concept of the “Orient” came from his readings of such books as *Wuthering Heights*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *The Arabian Nights*, all containing Western characters and customs. Before meeting any such person face-to-face, Carroll had created a fictionalized perception. During his Russian tour of the continent in 1867, Carroll reveals his admiration for a
culture he had never personally experienced. Charles Collingwood, Carroll’s nephew, recalls the “oriental splendors” of Moscow his uncle described to him and in his journal:

We gave five or six hours to stroll through this wonderful city, a city of white houses and green roofs, of conical towers that rise one out of another like a foreshortened telescope; of bulging guilded domes, in which you see, as in a looking-glass, distorted pictures of the city; of churches which look, outside like bunches of variegated cactus (some branches crowned with green prickly buds, others with blue, and others with red and white) and which inside, are hung all around with eikons and lamps, and lined with illuminated pictures up to the very roof; and finally of pavement that goes up and down like a ploughed field. (qtd. in Collingwood 118)

Carroll describes the Moscow landscape as one unlike any he has ever seen. His awe indicates a reaction to the unknown, similar to the reaction of Anna Leonowens upon her arrival in Bangkok.

Yet, when he actually met an oriental, Carroll’s awe was shattered. Upon encountering oriental merchants at the Ninji Novgorad fair, Carroll reflected negatively on the figures who shattered his mystical admiration of the Occident: “Besides there being distinct quarters for Persians, Chinese and others, we were constantly meeting strange beings with unwholesome complexions and unheard of costumes” (qtd in Collingwood 120). Carroll exhibits his own bitterness when his false reality is shattered. Immediately, he creates a classification of himself, as a civilized British native, and the foreigner who dresses strangely and has bad skin. He specifically calls them “others” because they are not like him nor do they compare to the fictionalized image he had of them.

Even the Russian children fall victim to his binary construction: “After the Russian children, whose type of face is ugly as a rule, and plain as an exception, it is quite a relief to get back among the Germans and their large eyes and delicate features” (qtd in Cohen Biography 271). Carroll’s idea of the orient then is Asia while his civilized world is Europe. Yet, by
comparing Asian and European children in terms of orientalism, Carroll then understands a similar binary construction exists between adults and children. Childhood, like the orient, was a fictionalized conception of Romantic writers as examined in Chapter 1, and for similar purposes. Adults wanted to believe they could return to Eden by admiring and sentimentalizing children. Yet, they did not take into account that these sentimental figures did not truly exist. Thus, his figures of Xie and Ethel in oriental dress do not simply suggest a playful nature of children but are intended as a metaphor for adult perception of childhood and the child’s reaction to such a perception.

Both the 1873 picture of Xie as a “Chinaman” (Figure 3.6) and the 1877 image of Ethel as a Turk (Figure 3.7) are just two of the existing pictures of children as foreigners. However, what is unique about these pictures are the positions of the girls within the photograph. These girls are confrontational with the camera. Bodies are squared, faces front, eyes fixed before them. They suggest, like the conquered native, an opposition to their fictionalized characters. Carroll furthers his message by painting over one of his prints of Xie as Chinaman.

In the water colored picture of Xie (Figure 3.8), Carroll directed his painter to add a sea dock setting, perhaps to bring in the water element of sensuality and childhood. The barefooted Xie stands on a mauve brick path, with a marina of merchant boats serving as a backdrop. The presence of the merchant boats insinuates a commercialism of both the orient and the child image. This particular picture exists in a leather photograph frame with interlocking flaps. Carroll can and did forever lock in this innocent sensual image of Xie Kitchin to remind him of the child who eventually had to mature. Xie leans against stacked boxes of red, black, and tan, colors mirrored in the Chinese costume she dons. To suggest her sensuality, Carroll lets her hair flow onto her shoulders, placing a hat, a potential bond of society, on top of the boxes.
3.6 Xie Kitchin as a Chinaman photographed by Lewis Carroll [1873]

3.7 Ethel Hatch in Turkish dress photographed by Lewis Carroll [1877]
3.8 Xie Kitchin as Chinaman watercolor over albumen print [c. 1870s]

3.9 Irene MacDonald photographed by Lewis Carroll [1863]
a sensual insinuation in Xie’s confrontational pose which combines the oriental theme of the photograph with the artistic details painted in to create a true representation of Carroll’s intentional portrayal of children as “othered others.”

Unpainted, Carroll’s photograph of Irene MacDonald (1863) (Figure 3.9) combines all of his themes concerning childhood. Irene lies on animal pelts, again confronting the camera. An oriental rug covers her partially nude body as her white cotton skirt, white socks, and black Mary Janes are exposed to the camera. Her genitalia are covered, so she is not a sexual being, but her bare shoulders reveal she is partially nude, characterizing her as Carroll’s sensual child. She exists as an “othered other” lying in an orientalized context, but undressed. Yet, Carroll blends the art object with reality here when he allows her to autograph the print. An autograph collector, Carroll often had his subjects scribble their names under their images. In this case, Irene spells her name with backward “N”’s and an “E” that should be an “L.” Her simple misspelled name gives a context to the photograph of the innocence of childhood. While Carroll altered the photographs to create meaning, Irene alters his meaning for modern audiences with her signature. The image, overwritten by text, now depicts a real child conforming to a photographer’s vision, rather than a fictional child created by the man behind the camera. But, agency does not lie with the child. In allowing her to sign the photograph, Carroll understood the relationship the text would have with the image, an understanding he will demonstrate years later when coordinating his *Alice* text with John Tenniel’s illustrations.

Thus, in inviting the child to sign, Carroll grants her a voice to coexist with his vision constructing a blend of reality and ideal. In taking pictures, Carroll creates hard shadows of childhood. On the negative, the shadows define the white spaces of the black and white photograph. Only when the photographer pushes light through the shadowed negative during the
development process do the scales of color, here the various shades of gray, and imagery appear. Without light, there is no color. Shadow is the absence of light and only when light is cast on the shadow is the image revealed. The nineteenth-century child is this shadowed image, and she is only developed when the photographer casts light upon her image. Yet, Carroll further comments on this realistic shadow of the child through costuming, lighting, and manipulation of both the negative and the print. Ultimate power over the photograph lies with the photographer as Carroll demonstrates through his technique of constructing and altering the truth of the photograph to create a shadowed ideal of the child.

Notes

1 Hannavy provides this date, though the photograph was taken after the Wedgewood experiment and before the Daguerrotype was developed.
2 *Lewis Carroll: Photographer*
3 See Hannavy pp. 15-19 for an edited copy of Talbot’s patent.
4 Cohen also reveals John Ruskin, the famous artistic critic and friend to the writer, shared a similar opinion of Carroll’s drawing ability: “he would never command artistic authority and polish” (148).
5 See Carroll’s diary entry for January 10, 1855
6 Diary entry for January 16, 1856.
7 Diary entry for January 22, 1856.
8 These lines were left out of the version printed in *Rhyme and Reason* and *The Nonesuch Omnibus*, but are printed in Green’s notes in Carroll’s diary. See page 83.
9 While Carroll knew how to develop a positive image, he usually sent his negatives to one of the professional photographers for developing.
10 In the 1862 edition of *The Photographic Yearbook and Almanac* one advertisement read: A MANUAL OF ARTISTIC COLOURING, as applied to PHOTOGRAPHS: a Practical Guide to Artists and Photographers. Containing clear, simple and complete Instructions for Colouring Photographs on Glass, Paper, Ivory, and Canvas, with Crayon, Powder, Oil, or Water Colours; with Chapters on the proper Lighting, Posing, and Artistic Treatment generally of Photographic Portraits, and on Colouring Photographic Landscapes. By A.H. Wall.
11 Gernsheim discusses cases in which Carroll outlined the subject with a pen when the subject blended with the background.
12 Diary entry for February 21, 1857.
13 Spencer, 123
14 A carte-de-visit was a card that was presented to the lady of the house by a visitor. As photography became commercial, these cards included a photograph of the visitor.
To view this picture, go to www.getty.edu/art/collections/objects/o46276.html
See Hannavy p. 68-70
Weaver provides the date, but Gernsheim indicates the two met in August of 1864. The dates are not important to my argument, because Cameron’s 1872 photograph of a naked Rachel Gurney could have been an influence on Carroll’s nude photographs of the Hatch children in the 1880’s. What is important is that the two met making Cameron a link to Carroll’s photographic history.

To view this picture go to www.geh.org/ne/mismi3/m196700880009_ful.html#topoimage
To view this picture go to www.geh.org/ne/mismi3/m196700880001_ful.html#topoimage
To view this picture go to www.geh.org/ne/mismi3/m196700880002_ful.html#topoimage
To view this picture go to www.geh.org/ne/mismi3/m198111210006_ful.html
To view this picture go to www.geh.org/ne/mismi3/m197101090029_ful.html
Cameron’s circle included members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, in addition to other amateur photographers like Tennyson or professional photographs like Rejlander and Herschel.

See Green’s excerpt of the letter in Carroll’s July 16, 1887 diary entry.
To see the original colors of the print, see Cohen Lewis Carroll, Photographer of Children: Four Nude Studies page 11.
For a discussion of binary construction see JanMohamed’s essay “The Economy of Manichean Allegory”
Chapter 4. The Agency of Illustrating Childhood: John Tenniel and Lewis Carroll’s Illustrations of the Alice Texts

In its December 2003 issue, the editors of Vogue called on the artistic photographic tradition, as set by Carroll and his contemporaries, by publishing photographs depicting scenes from Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland stating, “Lewis Carroll dressed her as an innocent in satin ribbons . . . . In the pages of Vogue the land of merry unbirthday and late running rabbits shimmers to life again—as the world’s most influential designers dress the original little-girl-lost in their visions”(30). The Vogue version of this “original little-girl-lost,” as seen through Annie Leibovitz’s lens, is of an older Alice, portrayed by 21-year-old model Natalia Vodianova, sporting the sexy and short silk, chiffon, or satin creations of today’s top designers like Donatello Versace and Karl Legerfeld. Leibovitz’s photographs bring Carroll’s story, written over one hundred years ago, to life. The editors at Vogue no doubt expected its readers to be familiar with Carroll’s text, especially with the popularity of Disney’s animated version released in 1951 and re-released on DVD in July 2000. The Vogue photographs become an extension of Carroll’s Alice books by recalling the story through pictorial images without the accompaniment of the written tale. The simple partnership of these images and the title “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” recall the fantastic adventures of the child character. While the purpose of Vogue’s layout is to showcase designer clothing, Leibovitz’s pictures establish the complexity of Carroll’s Alice books to remain forever embedded in its reader’s imagination so that popular culture can reference the text without the intense effort of reminding the audience of its story line. Lewis Carroll achieved this feat initially through his careful attention to the visual designs for Wonderland.

Writing Alice’s Adventures Underground (1863) and its revision Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865), Carroll created a fantasy world first for the Liddell girls and second for an
growing number of children in a definite audience. These fantasy tales involved a real girl, Alice, who ventured into imaginary realms where adult figures instruct the child character on codes of fantasy society. Carroll’s text, while primarily a fantasy, is based on the real situations the Liddell girls faced on a daily basis. Alice learns the proper conduct needed to interact with others, just as the Liddell girls were no doubt instructed on the appropriate manners and behavior of their social position. The illustrations for the text—Carroll always intended to create pictures to bring his story to life—had to be realistic so that children reading or hearing the story could associate with familiar issues the central child character faces and thus could believe the possibility of the events actually taking place. If Carroll’s photography represents a fictionalized reality as I argued in the last chapter, then the illustrations for Carroll’s Alice texts are images of a realistic fiction.

In Words About Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children’s Picture Books, Perry Nodelman analyzes the partnership of illustrations and text to create meaning for the child reader. Examining picture books spanning the years, Nodelman argues that while illustrations and text influence each other’s interpretations, their partnership constructs an overall meaning of the body of work to which they both belong. Like artistic photographers, illustrators create images that reflect their imaginative vision. At the same time, these illustrations reflect the text—just as the photograph reflects the camera’s subject—and the drawings represent reality even though the text depicts a fantasy realm. The reality of the pictures, though, stands firmly rooted in the mechanical structure of the text. Michael Hancher elaborates J. Hillis Miller’s assertion of this relationship:

The text and picture reflect the same reality. . . so that the partial information supplied by the text can be filled out with complementary information supplied by the pictures. In the picture we are commonly suppose to be able to “see more exactly what a character or scene ‘really looked like.’” On this assumption the
criterion for good illustration is that the pictures give a faithful rendition of the world that the text mirrors also. (113)

While the picture explains missing textual evidence, the text, Miller argues, is often needed to explain the picture.¹ The meaning of each depends on the interpretation of the other. Miller’s criterion for a “good illustration” is that it provides an exact representation of the world the author depicts in his text.

When his illustrations of Alice’s Adventures Underground were not entirely successful as realistic interpretations, as I will argue, Carroll turned to John Tenniel, the famous Punch cartoonist, to illustrate Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-glass. The Carroll-Tenniel partnership, however, raises questions about agency and the text. If meaning of the entire book lies in the collaboration of the author and the illustrator, with whom does agency truly lie? By noting “Carroll dressed her [Alice] as an innocent in ribbons,” Vogue identifies Carroll as creator of text and image. Yet, Nodelman and Hancher argue that a partnership exists between Tenniel and the writer. When constructing the literary work who has control over the final project? In this portion of the dissertation project, I will examine the pictorial representations of the Alice texts as envisioned by both Carroll and Tenniel, arguing that while Carroll’s depictions are not entirely successful realistic illustrations of the text, his images, sketches, and direction dictated Tenniel’s vision of Alice, demonstrating that agency lies with Carroll.

The Purpose of Illustrations and Carroll’s Original Alice

In Words About Pictures, Nodelman examines the workings of text illustrations as he traces the history and examines the function of book illustration. Nodelman attributes Johannes Comenius’s Orbis sensualism Pictus (c. 1658),² a picture dictionary for children, as the first published illustrated text specifically intended for children. However, alphabet books produced
before the eighteenth century, like John Hart’s *A Methode, or Comfortable Beginning for all Unlearned* (1570), suggest a history of pairing illustration with text. Hart’s *Methode*, geared towards both adults and children, contained a full-page composition divided into blocks. In each block, Hart inscribed a letter, an image of an object whose verbal representation began with the featured letter, and the verbal representation. Thus, for the letter “b,” the block contained a lower case “b,” a shaded depiction of a ball, and the words “A Ball.” At the bottom of the page Hart wrote, “Now you may teach your Scholler, to remember the letters by the names of the portraitures, first the five vowels, forth and backe, which when he thinketh to know, you may doe the like with the rest.”

The primary purpose of these first illustrations is to teach phonetic and reading skills.

Comenius also used illustrations as a learning tool in *Orbis Pictus* by pairing pictures with words and definitions as a reference guide for children learning to read. Gillian Avery explains that Comenius, having been subjected to religious persecution, set out to explain how universal peace could be achieved through “pansophic” education, that is the learning of universal wisdom. However, he found children could not understand the concepts presented in his *Janua linguarum reserta*. Thus, he created *Orbis sensualism pictus* as an “encyclopedic assemblage of labeled pictures designed to give a logical and pansophical view not only of the world and human life displayed between them” (Avery 7). Comenius recognized that part of learning was being able to recognize reality and that children gravitate and are pleased with pictures: “For it is apparent that Children (even from their Infancy almost) are delighted with Pictures, and willingly please their eyes with these sights.” (qtd in Avery 7). To draw in this visually oriented child, Comenius created two-page spreads in the dictionary. On the left side, the child encounters a large illustration of an object. The word depicting the object labels the
illustration at the top of the page and the definition lies below the image. On page 262, for example, the reader finds the word “Sepultura” above a wood engraving of a burial service with mourners grouped to the right and left of the tomb. Numbers label specific images within the illustration to refer the reader to the text on the opposite page. Below the image is the definition “a burial.” On the opposite page, Comenius provided two columns of text to describe the numbered parts of the image. The first column is in modern English while the second supplies a Latin translation. The illustrations in *Orbis Pictus* aid not only in primary reading, but also in learning a secondary written language.

Early texts for children, as the works of Hart and Comenius demonstrate, were purely didactic until the boom in the children’s book industry in the nineteenth century. Authors made a conscious effort to include pictures in their works to capture the child’s attention by providing a natural stimulus to interest the child in learning. Pulling the child’s interest into the text, visual images have two purposes: to be pleasurable and to be informative. Nodelman argues that pictures offer pleasure because “they are concentrated versions of aspects of physical reality color, texture, and line—that tend to provide pleasure in and for themselves, even in the world outside of pictorial depiction” (4). Pleasure from the visual derives, then, from its ability to mimic reality and the reader’s ability to recognize that reality. In Hart’s *Methode*, though the reader is not necessarily literate, he can recognize an image of the ball as being similar to a ball that he may own and can immediately associate the verbal utterance “ball” with the picture. This recognition of reality in the illustration arouses the child’s interest in learning and in assimilating meaning.

When reading the text, the child also relies on visual images for information which then allows the child to assimilate meaning. The pictures, Nodelman explains, “are a visual aid, a
means of transmitting information to inexperienced listeners and readers that cannot be conveyed by words alone” (4). A child who has not heard the world “ball” can associate the sound of the word with the picture provided as Hart notes. A similar association occurs for beginning readers who do not know the words. Comenius presents words to describe a sepultura, but the reader can learn by looking at the actions and objects presented in the picture. The illustration administers to unfamiliar aspects of text.

Because pictures clarify, they allow the child who reads the text to experience little stress when struggling with words to determine meaning. Nodelman defines “meaning” as “that which can be put into words and thus can be thought or spoken” (8). Obviously, the words of the text force thoughts or can be vocally emitted. Yet, it is a process difficult for the child who does not have a grasp of the written word. Reading is laborious as the child pronounces every syllable. Such a focus on reading correctly can prevent the comprehension of meaning. Pictures allow the child to capture meaning missed by words. But, even pictures become verbal, Nodelman expostulates: “Reading a picture for narrative meaning is a matter of applying our understanding of words—words like mine throughout this book; in applying such words to pictures, we are engaged in the act of turning visual information into verbal, even if we do not actually speak words aloud (211).” While both text and illustration are capable of producing meaning, the reader alone maintains the agency of interpreting that meaning.

Meaning in this case is influenced by several factors and while Nodelman contends three specifically—the reader’s experience, the reader’s culture, and the reader’s interpretation of the picture’s purpose—the last factor is essential to the argument surrounding images of realistic fiction. Nodelman argues that people in general are more perceptive to meaning if the picture is “real,” that is if it contains “those visual depictions that suggest density, texture, and coloring of
objects to exist in a three dimensional space on the other side of the picture plane” (Nodelman 15). Children work psychologically on a schema principle. They hold an idea as a truth and through assimilation and association the child modifies that truth to reflect new information with which he comes in contact in reality. The artist, too, works on a similar principle, beginning with a schema and adjusting that image until it represents the real object (Nodelman 11). Such a comment denotes the basics of drawing. To draw a face, the illustrator starts with basic shapes: an oval for the face, circles for the eyes and mouth, a triangle for the nose. He then inserts shadows in a series of straight lines to mould the features into a recognizable face or image. If the reader can associate this realistic image to a preconceived schema, then he can assimilate a new truth and meaning. The realistic aspects of the image overtly affect the reader’s ability to interpret the image’s meaning.

Lewis Carroll reflects aspects of his relationship with real children, especially Alice Liddel, to draw his readers into the images and text of *Alice’s Adventures Underground*. On July 4, 1862, Lewis Carroll with friend Robinson Duckworth, and Lorina, Alice, and Edith Liddell rowed to Godstow. In her interview with *Cornhill* thirty-four years later, Alice Liddell Hargreaves related that the entire *Alice’s Adventures Underground* was told to the girls to entertain the party as it made its way to and from Godstow. The story became the embodiment of meaning, as Nodelman defines the term, because of its ability to be conveyed orally. Carroll’s style of storytelling in which the plot moves along through a question and answer exchange between Carroll and the girls further created meaning not only for the author but also for the girls. Alice liked the story Carroll orally controlled so much that she pushed Carroll to write it down for her. Understanding the difference between storytelling in which the teller verbally interacts with the audience to fill in details missing from the text and writing a tale for a child
audience in which the text alone supplied the meaning, Carroll agreed to write the text but recognized the importance of providing pictures for his text.

Richard Kelly argues, in “‘If you don’t know what a Gryphon is’: Text and Illustration in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland,” several factors for Carroll’s insistence on illustrations in his text. The first echoes Nodelman’s claim that children enjoy pictures in books. Kelly insists that publishers demanded illustrations be included to increase sales (72). While this assumption can be applied to Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, selling over 100,000 copies during Carroll’s life, one copy of Alice’s Adventures Underground was produced initially for a single child. Instead, Kelly cites Phyllis Greenacre’s argument of Carroll’s “scopophillic interest” expressed in his photography and writing. His writing, like his photography, allows the reader to become a spectator (Kelly 72). In Alice’s Adventures Underground, the audience watches/reads as Alice tumbles down the rabbit hole, changes sizes, and meets fantastic figures. Carroll uses visual imagery to allow his audience to “watch” his character’s actions better. Thus, Kelly argues “the illustrations [stand] like photographs of Carroll’s mental picture of characters and scenes” (72). This argument suggests that Carroll not only provides a voyeuristic view of the characters and scenes but also of his own thoughts.

His focus for the text was the nonsense games that required logical thought. Therefore, Kelly establishes, the illustrations allow Carroll to provide texts in the picture without having to write that text which would inhibit the nonsense of the story. The illustrations provide details of the characters so that the audience does not expend energy imagining their appearances. Kelly explains “We ‘know’ them in one glance and, with exception of the Cheshire Cat, they hold little depth and mystery” (72). From their appearances in the illustrations, the reader can deduce class, gender, and physical attributes without having to think excessively about them. Appearance is
not what is completely important in Carroll’s *Alice* text. The language defines the character’s importance to the story (Kelly 73). The audience does not need to know what a gryphon or mockturtle look like only that they “play with language in a very sophisticated manner” (Kelly 74), to teach Alice, and the child reader, how to use language.

Although Kelly insists Carroll’s words do not “derive power from creating the illusion of reality and believable characters who interact with one another” (73), that is exactly what Carroll does by creating illustrations for his readers. Kelly’s point that the illustrations “unhinder” the nonsensical aspects of the text negates his claim that the pictures do not denote illusions of reality and believable characters. For readers to accept the picture, they must possess realistic qualities. Familiar lines, textures, and color fixed these characters in time and space to allow for a quick dissection of the characters. Because the illustrations can be interpreted quickly due to their realism, the audience can focus on the language games Alice encounters with these fixed characters.

The illustrations of *Alice’s Adventures Underground* demonstrate Carroll’s attempts at realistically visually depicting his characters in a way that provides information absent from the text. Carroll never had formal art lessons though he did have a great eye for the artistic, as I’ve addressed in my discussions of his photographic composition. He also moved in artistic circles, with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Ruskin as close friends, and made several attempts to sketch. In an interview with *Westminster Budget*, Lewis Carroll’s nephew and biographer, Stuart Dodgson Collingwood stated, “Ah, but [Carroll] intended to be a serious artist. He had, competent critics tell me, a fine felling for line, but an imperfect idea even as a critic of the more delicate tones of colour. It was Mr. John Ruskin who dissuaded him from an artistic career, for which he was not fitted (23).” Ruskin in fact told Carroll he “had not enough talent to make it
4.1 “Alice was beginning to get very tired” (from the manuscript of Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures Underground*)

4.2 “Alice led the way” (from Carroll’s manuscript of *Alice’s Adventures Underground*)
worth his while to devote much time to sketching” (qtd in Hearn 12). Despite attempts to
dissuade the author from drawing, Carroll labored over the 38 illustrations of Alice’s Adventures
Underground to create pictures that captured his audience’s attention through pleasurable,
realistic, and informative drawings.

Carroll’s initial illustration of Alice’s Adventure’s Underground at the beginning of the
first chapter possesses Blakean characteristics that establish pleasure, realism, and information in
the illustrations. Carroll literally draws a connection between the words of the text and his image
similar to the technique Blake uses in Songs of Innocence. Here Alice sits at her sister’s feet
while her sister reads a book that “had no pictures or conversations” (Figure 4.1). While his
lines convey texture and color—here shading—Carroll has no control over the proportion, as I
will soon explain. An interesting feature, however, is his connection of the young girl to the
chapter title. A vine extends from the “1” to Alice, visually connecting her to the text. This
story is hers, immediately making Alice the dominant image of the text.

Other striking characteristics of this primary illustration are its placement in the text and
the action depicted. Nodelman explains the placement of the pictures is strategic to reading
skills. Illustrations typically appear on the left side of the page because English readers are
taught to read left to right. By placing the pictures to the left of the text, the image precedes the
words that describe it, providing clues to the reader of what is to come next in the story
(Nodelamn 22). Such an approach allows potentially anxious situations in the plot to be revealed
before they are read in the text. Disarming stressful situations provides a more receptive reader
who is better capable of perceiving the intended meaning. The framing of the illustration also
serves as a disarming mechanism. White voids, decorative frames, or even surrounding text
restrict the movement of the picture, containing the image within the book (Nodelman 27). This
restriction of movement reinforces the object as being non-threatening to the reader, again putting the reader at ease to continue reading the story.

In this initial illustration, Carroll positions the drawing in a key location to set the mood of Alice’s adventure. Besides the chapter design, it is the first image the audience “reads” since it is placed to the left of the text. Carroll also frames the image on two sides by text, on one side by the edge of the page, and on the top partially by the title design. This partial framing links the central character, a child, to a child reader. Basically, the action of the image, the relationship of a fictional adult reading to a fictional child, reflects the actual action of the adult and child reading the text of *Alice’s Adventures*. The partial framing of the illustration also allows the child’s eye to wander from the text to the adult reading the book and back to the text. An association can then be made between the audience and the character. Alice becomes a realistic figure with whom the audience can share the adventure as she experiences it. Although there is no evidence to suggest that this partial framing was deliberate, Carroll’s picture does serve to delight an audience who realizes the story could involve them.

Realism is an important aspect of illustrations when the story is designed to allow the audience a voyeuristic participation in the text. The last image of the initial chapter illustrates this point. A full page drawing framed by a thin dark line, Alice swims to the shore with the animals (Figure 4.2). This framing does not relate the image to the text that appears on the previous page. Instead, it serves to establish itself as the final image of Chapter 1, keeping the action of swimming as part of this chapter, since the next chapter commences with the party on the shore deciding how to dry off. Also, the image provides a clarification of the text to continue the movement of the plot. The last paragraph of the text reads: “It was high time to go, for the pool was getting quite full of birds and animals that had fallen into it. There was a Duck and a
Dodo, a Lory and an Eaglet, and several other curious creatures. Alice led the way, and the whole party swam to the shore (23).” Carroll’s phrase “and several other creatures” disrupts the natural flow of the story, because it lends to spending time imagining to what sorts of creatures Carroll could possible refer. Since the next episode of the story is the drying of the party and the mouse’s history, the swimming actions serve only as a space for the reader to turn the page, not to contemplate the images of minor figures of the text. To move his readers along, Carroll provides this full-page detailed illustration.

While discussing Tenniel’s drawings of the Alice books, Rodney Engen reveals Carroll’s commitment to detail. Because he had a crude artistic talent, Carroll had difficulty drawing animals (Engen 68). To help create the animals in the ending illustration of Chapter 1, Carroll patterned images on drawings in natural history books, specifically those of Thomas Bewick’s General History of Quadrepeds (1790). Through line definition, the animals presented are defined clearly and realistically as various birds, monkeys, and rodents, leaving little imagination for the reader to speculate and instead forcing the reader to turn the page to read about the mouse’s history.

At the beginning of the second and third chapters, Carroll again creates compositions similar to that of Chapter 1 (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). Text and white margins frame three sides of the illustration while a vine connects the image to the text of the story. The vine splits above the depiction of Alice in Chapter 2 revealing she is still the focus of the tale. Here, Carroll provides a reflection of the action of the first image, reader and audience. Alice listens to the Lory’s suggestions for drying off. The precise lines add depth and texture to the detailed feathers of the Lory and to Alice’s hair and rumpled clothing bring them into the three dimensional plane of reality.
4.3 “She had quite a long argument with the Lory” (from the manuscript of Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventure Underground*)

4.4 “An enormous puppy was looking down at her” (from the manuscript of Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures Underground*)
4.5 Drawing of Alice Liddell (from the manuscript of Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures Underground*)
Carroll maintains this three-dimensional plane in the first image of Chapter 3 with his depiction of the dog Alice encounters. Individual pen strokes denote wispy strands of fur as shading reinforces the body shape and movement of the dog’s right paw. The puppy’s face and muzzle is proportioned, despite Carroll’s artistic inexperience, as are the ears and legs. A vague white collar adds further detail to present this dog as someone’s pet or property, possibly even the reader’s loving companion. Again, the realistic qualities make this image stand out from the text while at the same time drawing attention to the text.

To further cement the reality he had created in the illustrations of Alice’s Adventures Underground, Carroll ends his tale with a drawing of Alice Liddell (Figure 4.5). Set within an ornamental framing of intertwined lines, the image bears a striking resemblance to the photograph on which Carroll based the drawing. While the text depicts a fictional child, by including this image of the real Alice, Carroll admits that his representation of his fictional “Alice” is based on a real child. The child reader, especially Alice Liddell, then finds pleasure in the text because the story presents realistic characteristics. The images, then, are realistic fictions. Fixing this realistic quality, Carroll later pasted the photograph of Alice Liddell over his drawing, merging reality with fiction, both fictionalizing childhood and bringing fiction to life.

Despite the appeal of his images to present a realistic fiction, Carroll’s illustrations are not entirely successful realistic illustrations of the text. As Nodelman establishes, visual images serve a pleasurable and informative purpose. Carroll’s illustrations bring pleasure through compositions that allow the reader to associate with the text. In addition, several of Carroll’s drawings mirror the events of the text. In examining the pictures, the reader understands what Alice looks like when she changes sizes, plays croquet with the ostrich as her mallet and
hedgehog as her ball, and understands how a gryphon and mock turtle should be envisioned. In fact, Michael Hancher praises Carroll’s use of space to add to the illusion of Alice’s expansive growth in the White Rabbit’s house (Figure 4.6) in comparison to Tenniel’s version:

By placing Alice’s foot and head in opposite corners of the picture frame, Carroll suggests that she has completely exhausted the space—a suggestion absent from the Tenniel illustration, which does not show her feet. Tenniel shows the actual location of walls, floor and ceiling; that is a more realistic but less effective approach than Carroll’s “naive” substitution of the picture frame for the physical structure of the room. (31)

Each of the images that mirror the events of the text provides effective description to maintain the integrity of narrative flow.

Unfortunately, Carroll could not maintain the realism and textual accuracy so precisely executed in many parts of his illustrations. His main artistic fault is his inability to sustain the image of the human form. The opening image of chapter one, while an excellent specimen of composition and framing, sports two-dimensional figures. Alice’s sister alone throws the balance of the image with her disproportioned head. The faces of the two girls own no shadows, binding these images to the page rather than allowing them to come to life for the reader. This same disproportioned figure appears at the beginning of Chapter 3 in the company of Carroll’s realistically portrayed puppy. The carefully drawn dog overpowers the misshapen dimensions of Alice. The text does not support the asymmetry of Alice’s head, arms, and legs, making a case for Carroll’s illustration disabilities.

Carroll also demonstrates his lack of artistic ability in those images depicting movement. In the last image of chapter one, as Alice and the Wonderland creatures swim to shore, Carroll awkwardly draws the young girl’s motions so that instead of the reaching motion of a swimming stroke, Carroll’s Alice is almost upright with the upper portion of her body above the water line. She seemingly wades through the water rather than swims. Later in the white rabbit’s house,
Alice discovers the “drink me” bottle. Carroll chooses to illustrate Alice uncorking the bottle, yet again does so without taking into consideration the laws of gravity. In this image, Alice tilts her head back as if to drink from the bottle, which she holds up at eye level. With her left hand she attempts to uncork the bottle while holding the bottle tilted towards her mouth with her right hand. Should she accomplish opening the bottle in such a position, the liquid would pour uncontrollably onto Alice’s face, a motion quite different than that revealed in the text: “nevertheless she uncorked it and put it to her lips.” Not only do Carroll’s deficiencies unrealistically capture movement, but they also do not accurately depict the plot line of the text, disrupting the pleasurable aspect of text illustration.

In addition to his inability to capture realistic movement, Carroll also has difficulty composing the layout of his images, hindering the natural left to right movement of the reading narrative. After Alice falls into the pool of her own tears, she meets a mouse and attempts to talk to it. Carroll provides a full-page illustration of this scene, but on the left side of a two-page spread (Figure 4.6). Thus, the reader upon turning to this layout will look first to the picture, Nodelman would argue, then to the text. The movement would be from right to left rather than the natural left to right reading direction. If the reader could resist examining the image first, he would read about the scene first, then look at the drawing and would return to the opposite page for textual clarification. In this scene a fish appears that is not mentioned in the text. The back and forth movement inhibits the natural flow of reading, prohibiting the reader from simply turning the page to read on.

A similar disruption occurs in Chapter 3 when Alice grows tall after eating the mushroom (Figure 4.7). The text and image are contained within one page with the illustration spanning the
4.6 Alice and the mouse (from Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures Underground*)
4.7 “Serpent Alice” (from Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures Underground*)

4.8 Alice grows after eating the cake (from Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures Underground*)
right margin. Carroll uses a comparable layout in Chapter 1 to depict an elongated Alice (Figure 4.8), but places the image in the left margin. The text follows to describe her unexpected growth: “for when she looked down at her feet, they seemed almost out of sight, they were getting so far off” (12). But the layout is reversed in Chapter 3. Alice’s head soaring above the trees follows the text describing the scene: “she found that her shoulders were no where to be seen; she looked down upon the immense length of her neck, which seemed to rise like a stalk out of a sea of green leaves that lay far below” (63). The illustration here has no purpose; it does not anticipate the action nor contribute to the narrative flow. It may reinforce the description, but its placement in relation to the text again forces a back-and-forth reading motion. Furthermore, the illustration itself creates a visual barrier between the text that precedes it and the text that follows.

Yet, obstructive illustrations are only part of Carroll’s illustration problems. Many of his images do not correctly represent his story. Beginning in Chapter 1, Alice finds the key to the garden door located behind a “low curtain.” The illustration, perfectly formatted with the text, shows Alice with her left hand holding back a curtain that hangs above her head (Figure 4.9). Her right arm extends forward and up as she attempts to unlock the door. But, the text reveals that the door is only eighteen inches high, which means Alice should be looking down and should be holding the key considerably lower. As drawn, the image confuses the reader who would think there are no problems with Alice passing through the garden door. Later on in this same chapter, Alice cries after shrinking and forgetting the key on the table. Carroll, again perfectly coordinating text and image, adds a rodent figure that hovers in curiosity or concern over the crying child. This addition alters the mood established by the text. Alice cries not only because she has forgotten the key but because she is alone, hopeless, and without direction. By
how she was ever to get out again: suddenly she came upon a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass; there was nothing lying upon it, but a tiny golden key, and Alice's first idea was that it might belong to one of the doors of the hall, but alas! either the locks were too large, or the key too small, but at any rate it would open none of them. However, on the second time round, she came to a low curtain, behind which was a door about eighteen inches high: she tried the little key in the keyhole, and it fitted! Alice opened the door and looked down a small passage, not larger than a rat-hole, into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that
4.10 Alice talks to the White Rabbit (from *Alice’s Adventures Underground*)

4.11 Alice listens to the Lory (from *Alice’s Adventures Underground*)
adding the rodent, Carroll establishes Alice is not alone and therefore negates her crying. But the
text does not correspond to the story told by the image and confuses the reader who “reads” the
image first and expects to be introduced to this rodent in the following text.

Other illustrations provide concise evidence of misleading images. Later in Chapter 1,
Alice approaches the white rabbit for help in the hallway. The text reads:

It was the white rabbit coming back again. . . . Alice was ready to ask help of
anyone, she felt so desperate, and as the rabbit passed her, she said, in a low,
timid voice, “If you please, Sir—” the rabbit started violently, looked up once into
the roof of the hall, from which the voice seemed to come, and then dropped the
nosegay and the white kid gloves, and scurried away into the darkness as hard as
it could go. (14)

Alice’s “telescoped”\textsuperscript{11} figure scares the poor creature. However, Carroll’s image does not
support this text (Figure 4.10). Alice, instead of being elongated as Carroll previously draws her,
is now well proportioned for a young girl. In fact, she leans calmly on her left elbow as if
listening to the white rabbit talk. The white rabbit, which is actually brown in this image, does
not seem frightened by the slightly larger child but instead appears engaged in a peaceful
conversation. This misleading “conversation” echoes in Chapter 2 where Alice strikes the same
leaning pose (Figure 4.11). Her audience is the Lory who also “converses” with the young girl.
But, once again, the text demonstrates an opposite sentiment: “Indeed, she had quite a long
argument with the Lory, who turned sulky, and would only say ‘I am older than you, and must
know best’”(25). Rather than placid as the illustration seems to suggest, this scene is a heated
argument with no resolution. Such inconsistencies with the text confuse the narrative order
taking away from the pleasure the audience could derive from the text.

**Entering Wonderland: John Tenniel’s Illustrative History**

Because Lewis Carroll’s illustrations detracted from the text, Carroll turned to a
professional draughtsman when preparing his manuscript for publication. Through a series of
inquests and recommendations, Carroll finally approached *Punch* cartoonist John Tenniel to bring *Alice* to life. After much urging, Tenniel consented to draw the pictures for *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Coming from a similar education and religious background to Carroll, Tenniel was influenced by the many artists and editors who sculpted and shaped his artistic talent. A classically trained artist, Tenniel is most recognized for his cartoonist career at *Punch*; however, it was a combination of artistic triumphs, defeats, and personal loss that prepared Tenniel to draw Carroll’s *Alice*.

Like Carroll, Tenniel’s life spanned the Victorian period (1820-1914) and was influenced by an education prepared by his father. John Tenniel, Sr. moved the family to London, shortly after John, Jr. was born, where he taught aristocratic children dance and gentlemanly sport. After Victoria’s succession to the throne, Tenniel, Sr. modified his pedagogy to reflect “the strong moral overtones” that came to characterize Victoria’s reign and that “superseded dancing, fencing, boxing, rowing and cricket, and the natural impulse of youth to activity” (Engen 2). Tenniel, Sr. published “On the Importance of Including Personal Education in the Scheme of General Education” in 1845 which asked for an education based on instilling “high minded Victorian virtues” in children, nurturing morality over physicality.

John Tenniel, Jr. was more receptive to his father’s teachings than his other siblings but maintained an independent nature that allowed for intense study and private sketching (Engen 3). Educated to be a gentleman, Tenniel was a favorite among family friends for his gentle nature and sincerity. Yet, his interests in sketching overshadowed his daily athletic activities. Classical literature and painting fed his dry intellectual sense of humor and his admiration for the fine arts. But it was John Martin, the popular biblical painter and close Tenniel family friend, who encouraged John’s artistic talent. Serving as Tenniel’s mentor, Martin introduced the young man
to many political, literary, and artistic figures. Joined by Martin’s son Leopold, John pursued an artistic career first by sketching classical statues at the Townley gallery and copying pictures from books at the British Museum.

When he was sixteen, John attended the Royal Academy School to study historical painting where instructors emphasized the thorough knowledge of the human body and costuming. While Tenniel enjoyed his studies, he was taught by copying other works. Preferring to draw from memory, Tenniel returned to private study focusing on medieval and Tudor details. His talent shone especially in narrative painting. Tenniel painted scenes from Sir Walter Scott’s *The Fortunes of Nigel* which earned him a space in the Royal Academy Exhibitions regularly from 1837 to 1848. Engen argues “Tenniel’s *Nigel* series brought in strong, clear outline, the elements of costume study and illustrative detail which had preoccupied him for so long” (10). His classical training allowed him to bring to life a character popular with his audience.

Tenniel’s first illustrative project, however, was for his personal entertainment. Collecting favorite poems, which he referred to as “bout-rimes,” he copied the best into a book and illustrated it with medieval scenes of round-faced armored knights or clown-like sailors. Engen claims this early work as evidence of the seeds of Tenniel’s *Punch* cartoons (11), but the “bout-rime” collection foreshadows his profitable career as an illustrator. It was his collaboration with Thomas Barrett and Charles Keene to produce the illustrated parody of *The Keepsake* books, *The Book of Beauty*, that best foreshadow his *Alice* illustrations. *The Book of Beauty* made fun of the Victorian gift books that contained romantic poems and engravings of Shakespeare scenes and portraits of feminine ideals (Engen 12). Keene ridiculed Zodiac signs while Tenniel drew in chalk scenes from Shakespeare, history, and opera.
In his illustration of the final banquet scene in *Hamlet*, Tenniel interpreted the lines “give me the cups, / And let the kettle to the Trumpet speak, / The trumpet to the cannoner without” (Act V, scene 2) literally. He personifies the kettle that appears as a human figure with a black kettle head standing in amazement as the trumpet, also a human form with trumpet head, leans through the doorway to speak to the soldier manning the cannon. The treacherous Claudius, with his back to the kettle and trumpet, holds a cup up in toast to his shadowy company. This drawing not only demonstrates Tenniel’s attention to literal literary detail but also testifies to Tenniel’s ability to create fantastic figures drawn in realistic proportion, characters Carroll failed to portray in *Underground*. *The Book of Beauty* originally was meant as private fun but was later exhibited and eventually broken up and sold, becoming Tenniel’s first commercial illustrative project.

Dissatisfied with the Royal Academy’s strict rules on education, Tenniel joined the Artist’s Society—or Clipstone Street Life Academy, as the group liked to refer to themselves—a community of professional artists and illustrators who worked together in a studio on Clipstone Street to prepare entries for London exhibitions. Drawing from live models, Tenniel continued his artistic studies in a more relaxed atmosphere where he could learn not only form but also the aspects of the artistic business. He was introduced to the Dalziel brothers who would later become his engravers, and Keene taught him about the illustration industry.

In the 1840s, Prince Albert introduced Germanic influences to British art. Tenniel fell in love with the “crisp, hard edged classicism, heavy woodcut medievalism, and religious preoccupation” (Engen 15). He combined his admiration of the Germanic history of borrowing from the past with his ornate style. His Germanic influences aided him in creating drawings for his first commissioned illustrations for Samuel Carter Hall’s *The Book of British Ballads* issued
in two parts in 1842 and 1844. Hall employed twenty-seven illustrators and engravers to create an uneveness of style to “emphasize the diversity of English talent” and “to rival the very best German (and French) illustrations” (Engen 15). In his preface, Hall explains he selected each artist by how they “apply the great and admitted capabilities of British Art, as to prove that the embellished volumes of Germany and France were not of unapproachable excellence, in reference either to design or execution” (qtd in Engen 15). Despite the numerous illustrators working on the project, Hall kept a tight reign over his diverse team. His relationship with the artists set the standards for Tenniel’s future illustration projects. Hall assigned each artist illustrative duties, held regular editorial meetings, and dictated design restrictions. In turn, Tenniel provided ten drawings on wood characterized by broad borders and detailed costuming. His bordering and attention to detail surfaced later in his *Alice* illustrations.

In 1845, Tenniel gained more artistic experience by entering a government sponsored competition to provide sketched designs for frescoes intended for the main hall of the new houses of parliament. Choosing the “Spirit of Justice” as his theme, Tenniel entered a colored sketch of the female Justice framed by the wings of two angels as she judged the good on her right and the evil on her left. Though the guidelines stipulated an additional full sized cartoon to fit a sixteen foot three inch arch and a specimen fresco both of which Tenniel did not complete in time for the competition, the judges were impressed with his sketch which was characterized by a classical design similar to Raphael’s frescoes in the Vatican (Engen 18). The judges awarded the talented artist a £400 premium and asked Tenniel to design a smaller fresco to fill the Upper Waiting Wall of the House of Lords. Tenniel used the money to visit the continent especially Germany where he studied the works of the Nazarenes who, Engen notes, tried to revive the elemental romantic medievalism of the classic Italian painters and the hard-edged wood cut lines
of Dürer (19). Tenniel applied his new found knowledge to create a “St. Cecilia” fresco that withstood English dampness.

His German studies also honed his illustration skills. His drawings for Friedrich Baron de la Motte Fouque’s *Undine* consisted of rustic dense intertwined branched borders. His courtiers appeared in colored tunics but stiffly posed, though the flow of their costumes were realistic. The horses, Engen observes, are the strongest features, drawn “bold and powerful” (21). Tenniel provided eleven drawings for *Undine* but the project was dismissed by the public as a period piece. Even so, Engen states the work “pointed Tenniel in the right direction . . . and gave him an encouraging outlet for his growing illustrator’s skills” (21).

In the following years, Tenniel became a respected and much demanded illustrator. In 1846, he was asked to illustrate “The Children in the Wood,” the popular Hansel and Gretel tale, for *Poems and Pictures*. Two years later he worked on Milton’s *L’Allegro and Il Pensorosa*; “The Death of King Henry III” and “The Price and the Outlaw” for *The Juvenile Verse and Picture Book*; *Aesop’s Fables*; Dicken’s *The Haunted an and the Ghost’s Bargain*; and many more. Each project introduced him to new opportunities for improvement. The 106 drawings for *Aesop’s Fables* allowed him to perfect his page design (Engen 24), the planning of the illustrations to run alongside of, yet separate from the text it depicts. But perhaps the best lesson he learned was how to work with demanding authors. While working on *The Haunted Man*, Tenniel found Dickens to be “a hard task master with artists and a serious judge of illustration as well as a man who demanded complete obedience to his dictates” (Engen 24). Like Hall’s directions, Dickens’s demands would prepare Tenniel for his future partnership with Carroll who would be just as demanding.
Tenniel’s Aesop’s work, however, gained him recognition by key figures at Punch magazine and boosted his career as an illustrator. In 1850, in protest over Punch’s attack on the Catholic Church, Richard “Dicky” Doyle, Punch’s leading cartoonist, resigned, leaving his work for the Punch annual almanac incomplete and the paper in a bind. Impressed by Tenniel’s Aesop’s illustrations, Mark Lemon invited the artist to finish Doyle’s assignment. Afraid he would be sacrificing his painting ambitions but facing financial difficulties, Tenniel agreed and soon became a permanent member of the Punch staff moving from simple initial letter design to full and double-paged cartoons that latter mirrored the designs he provided for Alice. At the same time he was able to maintain his private art by exhibiting “Sketch for a Large Picture in Progress, Representing Allegorically the Great Industrial Meeting of All Nations in 1851” at the Royal Academy.

In 1854, John Tenniel completed his successful life by marrying Julia Giani, an Italian who was five years younger. Tenniel, Engen applies, was attracted to Julia’s poor health and spinsterhood (she was twenty-nine)(33). He loved his new wife and doted on her with a lavishly decorated large home on Maida Hill.13 Unfortunately, Tenniel’s happiness did not last long. After two years of marriage, Julia developed tuberculosis, and she died on January 23, 1856. Tenniel was devastated, and death consumed his art. Mourning for a month, Tenniel returned to Punch. His cartoons depicted “prophetic, doom ridden images” like Romeo contemplating buying poison (Engen 34). Once he started illustrating again, Tenniel chose projects like Poe’s Raven which centered on the grotesque, gothic horror, or supernatural forces, and rejected projects focusing on love, especially Felicia Heman’s “The Coronation of Inside Castro” whose subject was a painful reminder of the death and mourning of a loved one. Yet, those works he did illustrate, no matter how dark, caught critical attention. His sixty-nine illustrations for
Thomas Moore’s *Lalla Rookh* (1860) were “derivative drawings indifferently engraved” and surpassed a similar edition illustrated by G. H. Thomas (Engen 44). The success of these dark drawings fostered by the emptiness Tenniel felt by his wife’s death marked an upward movement in his career and captured the attention of Lewis Carroll who sought an artist who could reflect the shadows of childhood and the macabre of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.

Familiar with Tenniel’s illustrations for *Aesop’s Fables* and *Punch* cartoons and attracted to his grotesque scenes,14 Lewis Carroll approached his friend and *Punch* editor, Tom Taylor asking for an introduction:

> Do you know Mr. Tenniel well enough to say whether he could undertake such a thing as drawing a dozen wood-cuts to illustrate a child’s book, and if so, could you put me in communication with him? The reasons for which I ask (which however can be of little interest if your answer be in the negative) are that I have written such a tale for a young friend, and illustrated it in pen and ink. It has been read and liked by so many children,15 and I have been so often asked to publish it, that I have decided on doing so. I have tried my hand at drawing on the wood, and come to the conclusion that it would not be satisfactory after all. I want some figure-pictures done in pure outline, or nearly so, and of all artists on wood, I should prefer Mr. Tenniel. If he should be willing to undertake them, I would send him the book to look over, not that he should at all follow my pictures, but simply to give him an idea of the sort of thing I want. I should be much obliged if you would find out for me what he thinks about it and remain, Very truly yours, C.L. Dodgson (qtd in Engen 67)

In this letter, Carroll acknowledges several things. He first recognizes Tenniel is not an illustrator of children’s books. But, Carroll did own a copy of the *Aesop’s Fables* that contained Tenniel’s illustrations and knew what he was capable of achieving in text illustration. Carroll also addresses his own failures as an illustrator. Not only do his illustrations fail within the text, but he was also incapable of drawing on the woodblocks, which would be engraved and used to print the pictures in publishing. Yet, the most significant portion of this letter is Carroll’s intent for his potential illustrator. He requests “figure-pictures done in pure outline” and intends for his artist to work from *his* text. Not expecting the artist to copy his own illustrations, Carroll wants
to provide a guideline of “the sort of thing” he wants. His language here asserts control. He “wants” and “will send,” asserting control by establishing he has a guide he has produced himself but knows that his illustrations need to be improved by a professional illustrator. Thus, he is offering to buy a service, recruiting Tenniel purely for commercial reasons. Hancher states that Tenniel’s popularity was a driving force for Carroll who knew people would buy this book for Tenniel’s illustrations, making the artist a marketing tool not a partner.

On January 25, 1864 Tom Taylor gave Carroll a note of introduction which Carroll promptly used. He describes in his diary his first impression of the artist: “He was very friendly, and seemed to think favorably of undertaking the pictures but must see the book before deciding.” Tenniel was engaged at the moment with drawings for *Ingoldsby Legend*, which he had neglected, as well as for his greatly grotesque cartoons for *Punch*. He had also recently committed to the Dalziels to illustrate an edition of *Arabian Nights*. Yet, Carroll pressed the overworked illustrator who finally agreed to illustrate *Alice* on April 5, 1864.

With Tenniel on board, Carroll worked for two months to lengthen the manuscript by 17,000 words to include the scenes with the Duchess and to elaborate details and conversations in other sections like those with the Griffon and Mock Turtle. While Hancher speculates Tenniel saw a preliminary illustrated version, possibly an expanded *Alice’s Adventures Underground* (Tenniel 27), Carroll noted in his diary that he regularly sent set up sheets for *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. However, when Carroll visited the artist in May 1864, Tenniel had not yet started the pictures. Tenniel was preoccupied with his mother’s illness and death and the death of his friend John Leech. The proximity of these two passings sent the artist into a darker depression and served as mournful reminders of his beloved Julia. Explaining the circumstances to Carroll, Tenniel could not complete the *Alice* project for the projected Christmas release.
Carroll recognized Tenniel’s importance to the book’s success and had no choice but to comply. The postponement did, however, permit Carroll to complete his presentation copy of *Underground* for Alice Liddell giving him the chance, as Engen notes, “to synthesize his original ideas” to present to Tenniel (72).

By October 12, 1864, Carroll and Tenniel were able to begin the illustrations for *Wonderland* agreeing on 34 pictures for the book. The new schedule set the publishing release for the Easter holiday, which promised high sales. Unfortunately, Tenniel could not make this deadline and completed forty-two illustrations for the text in June 1865. Since the book was being published at his expense, Carroll remained in control through the durations of the construction of the book. Carroll sent his text and drawings to Tenniel who followed the same work ethic he followed at *Punch*. He would receive Carroll’s instructions, draw a preliminary sketch for composition and ink for engraver lines. He then traced the outline to the woodblock where he added the shading. The Dalziels carved the wood and printed a test sheet.

Carroll often surprised Tenniel with his ability to criticize and suggest alterations (Engen 73), reminders of Hall and Dickens’s criticisms. Yet, Carroll’s persistent instructions, especially the insistence to use models for the Alice figure, irked the artist who resented his early artistic education of learning through copying. In addition, Carroll ordered changes with the engravers behind Tenniel’s back, which the artist saw only as undermining his artistic ability.

**Agency and Illustration in *Wonderland*: John Tenniel and Lewis Carroll’s Partnership**

The partnership between the artist and the author was lucrative to the success of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, and later *Through the Looking-Glass*, but the constant riffs between the two men also raise questions about agency. Who has power over the final project? While it is true that Carroll’s talent prevented a successful illustrated text, the ideas from which Tenniel
worked are Carroll’s. An examination of Tenniel’s drawings for *Wonderland* and the power
struggles that arose over these creations and the publication of the book establish that though
Tenniel was essential to bringing Carroll’s literary child to life through the use of shadows, the
text and image belong to the author.

Tenniel redrew and added to Carroll’s *Underground* illustrations, using correct
proportion and shadows, reconfiguring the composition and layout to create a better relationship
between the text and image. Tenniel’s first improvement was to the central character. Through a
pattern of crossed and darkened pen strokes, the illustrator defines Alice’s round cherub face and
wide innocent eyes. Even in dark compositions, Tenniel’s shading sets the child as the central
figure of each illustrated panel and the artist maintains the character’s shape throughout the text.
Even as Alice changes sizes during her adventure, her image from the “Down the Rabbit Hole”
chapter looks the same as the Alice figure surrounded by flying cards, the last image of the book.
Alice appears as a child of at least seven years of age.\(^{18}\) Her clothing denotes a middle class
standing since she wears Mary Jane’s rather than practical working boots. The ruffled arms and
crinoline skirt of her dress are protected by a functional apron\(^ {19}\) (the apron has pockets for Alice
to store items) confirming Alice has time for leisure play but must perform some chores at home.
Her hair is long, blond, and unbound, evidence that Tenniel did not pattern her after Alice
Liddell for whom the book was initially written. Tenniel replicated this image of the middle
class child throughout the text, stabilizing the humanistic characteristics of the central figure.

Tenniel’s added shading and light places Alice’s form on a three-dimensional plane in
comparison to the flat image Carroll initially drew. In this new plane, Alice’s movements mimic
the natural range of the human form. Now the reader clearly sees Alice’s concern and struggle
after falling into the pool of tears (Figure 4.12). She is up to her chin just as the text describes,
4.12 Alice in the pool of tears (from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland)

down the doors of the hall; but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small, but at any rate it would not open any of them. However, on the second time round, she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high: she tried the little golden key in the lock, and to her great delight it fitted!

Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright

4.13 Alice finds the hidden door (a copy of the first edition of Alice’s Adventure in Wonderland)
4.14 Alice and the White Rabbit (from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland)
her hair floating on the water rather than clinging unnaturally to her back as she bobs up and down in the tears. Her left arm is stretched forward in an attempt to reach out for support as she floats backwards into the unknown. Her eyes are wide with alarm and her mouth, slightly ajar, motions a small gasp of surprise. The criss-crossing of the pen strokes behind her add shadow to the image and intensifies the darkness of the scene and the despair felt by the young girl who believes she will drown in her own tears.

Tenniel’s drawings not only intensify the mood of the text but also accurately reflect the story Carroll has written. When Alice finds the little door to the Queen of Hearts’ garden (Figure 4.13), Tenniel draws the girl bending down to pull the curtain away from the small door. The door reaches Alice’s knees providing the necessary details to explain Alice’s dilemma. At her current size she will not be able to fit through the door. Carroll’s original illustration for the scene suggests Alice could simply walk through the door. Tenniel also corrects Carroll’s faulty textual details in his illustrations. For example, Carroll draws Alice’s initial interaction with the white rabbit as a friendly moment between a young girl and a brown rabbit. In the story, Alice timidly asks the rabbit for help, but he is so afraid of the large girl (remember Alice has just eaten the cake to grow bigger) that he scurries away “as hard as he could go.” Tenniel’s illustration of the scene (Figure 4.14) reflects a white rabbit running away from a larger version of Alice into the darkness leaving behind his fan and gloves on the floor at Alice’s knees. Alice leans her shoulders against the wall with one hand at her mouth and the other extended to the side. Her posture denotes astonishment and fear. By pressing against the wall, Alice puts as much space between herself and the fleeing rabbit in preparation for quick retreat should the animal attack. Tenniel’s scene counters Carroll’s friendly interpretation in which Alice actually
leans closer to the “white” rabbit and emulates the desperation the textual evidence reveals Alice really anxiety and fear in this scene.

The illustrator further improved Carroll’s original partnership between the illustration and the text by calling on his artistic skills to create expressive compositions. While Carroll’s placement of his visual interpretations forced the audience to read the text and then look at the image, Tenniel composed the page to fit the natural left to right reading movement. Thus, his illustrations appeared on the left side of the page with the corresponding text to its right. Using let-in or cucumber frames, Tenniel was better able to pair the action of the image to the action of the text. So, as Alice lifts the curtain to find the garden door, the words explaining the scene—“she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high”—are immediately on the right of the illustration. Such a textual-visual relationship makes the reading pleasurable, according to Nodelman’s standards, by permitting the reader to exert as little energy as is needed to connect the words to the pictures.

The illustration of Alice growing tall further celebrates Tenniel’s composition genius (Figure 4.15). This image is one of fourteen full page illustrations drawn for the original manuscript of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and serves mainly as frontispieces or transitional moments, Hancher explains (127). Tenniel begins Chapter 2 with a full length image of the disproportionately tall Alice. Like its counterpart in *Alice’s Adventures Underground*, this illustration serves as a barrier between the first chapter and the rest of the book. In the first chapter, Alice falls down the rabbit hole and remains the size of a little girl signifying that she has the opportunity to stop the adventure by calling out to her sister and crawling out of the rabbit hole. However, once Alice eats the cake that initiates her alternation between shrinking and growing throughout the text, she has consumed the proverbial pomegranate that forces her
4.15 Alice grows tall (a copy of the first edition of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*)

CHAPERN II.

THE POOL OF TEARS.

"Curiouser and curiouser!" cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English); "now I’m opening out like the largest telescope that ever was! Good-bye, feet!" (for when she looked down at her feet, they seemed to be almost out of sight, they were getting so far off) "Oh, my poor little feet! I wonder...

4.16 Why there they are! (a copy of the first edition of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*)
to complete her time in Wonderland, if only to find the antidote to make her the “right size” again. Tenniel’s full-page image, then, visually forces the reader to continue with the story as well. He further entices the audience by linking the image to the text so that when Alice exclaims “Oh, my poor little feet” the words literally reflect the feet to its left.

Using L-shaped let-ins, Tenniel composes a better text-image relationship. With the L-shape let-in, “the top or base of the illustration runs the full width of the page, but the other end leaves room on one side for a quadrant of the text” (Hancher 127). In “Alice’s Evidence,” Tenniel uses the L structure to bracket the King’s reading of the verses concerning the crime (Figure 4.16). The King assumes the Knave gave away the tarts he stole, but sees them on the table and exclaims, “Why there they are!” Tenniel has him point to the lower right quadrant to the tarts. The bracket, however, separates the text, hindering the natural flow of the narrative. Yet, this blockade divides the negative actions that happen after the King realizes the “fit” does not describe his wife: the Queen denies having fits and throws an inkstand at Bill the Lizard, the King becomes enraged when no one laughs at his pun, and Alice loudly objects to the nonsense of sentencing the defendant before announcing the verdict. She grows to her original size as the pack of cards encircles her. Although this illustration adds little to understanding the text, Tenniel sets up a barrier that mirrors the visual barrier of the tall Alice at the beginning of Chapter II. The King of Hearts courtroom image leads to Alice’s exit from Wonderland and the end of Carroll’s story.

Hancher asserts that the term “illustrate” originally meant to explain. When it is used as a “pictorial representation,” the term suggests a secondary importance to the text (113). Yet, Carroll gives priority to the illustration by referring his readers to the pictures for an explanation (Hancher 113): “If you don’t know what a Gryphon is, look at the picture.” At the same time, he
closely directed Tenniel’s work as he requested proofs of all illustrations and made, sometimes expensive, changes to the illustrations. Tenniel viewed this interference as a challenge to his abilities as an artist to make the necessary revisions needed to perfect the image before printing (Engen 75). To re-exert his artistic authority over the text, Tenniel began to use shorthand when making notes on the images. Only he knew his shorthand symbols to instruct the engraver’s work (Engen 76). Tenniel also resisted Carroll’s attempts to force models on the illustrator. Carroll wanted Tenniel to model “Alice” on his photographs of Edith Liddell and Mary Hinton Badcock. But Tenniel’s Alice possesses more adult characteristics (Engen 76), evidence that he created his own image for the central character rather than basing her on a real child.

Perhaps Tenniel’s most apparent exertion of authority over the Wonderland project was his refusal to release the first 2000 printed copies to be sold saying in a letter to Carroll that eighteen images had been misprinted. Critics argue that Tenniel’s objections were unfounded and were most likely payback for Carroll’s tedious dictation of the project. Carroll, obviously upset with Tenniel’s refusal to release the first printing, sold the copies for a small profit to the American market. Approving the second printing, Tenniel kept a close eye on subsequent reprints long after his partnership with Carroll dissolved.

As much as Tenniel’s illustrations may add to the final product of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Tenniel was nothing more than a tool Carroll needed in order to produce a commercially attractive children’s book. Carroll simply hired an artist to reproduce and embellish artistically illustrations he conceived for his Alice texts. Tenniel’s illustrations did not go to the engravers until Carroll approved of the print. Furthermore, Carroll provided detailed notes on how the Alice images should be composed and where detail needed to be added. While
Tenniel resented the writer’s notes and comments, the artist nonetheless followed Carroll’s direction to create an appealing illustrated text for children.

In addition, Carroll viewed the *Alice* books as his property taking a stand, as Collingwood explains, against others taking credit for or sharing in the profits of books published at his expense. In 1883, Carroll began to include the following notice in all of his books: “In selling Mr. Lewis Carroll’s books to the Trade Messrs. MacMillan and Co. will abate 2d. in the shilling (no odd copies), and allow 5 per cent. discount within six months, and 10 per cent. for cash. In selling them to the public (for cash only) they will allow 10 per cent discount.”22 While a bold move, Carroll sought to protect and to claim his investment. In his pamphlet “The Profits of Authorship,” he defends his inclusion of directions for the disbursement of discounts between the publisher and booksellers and the booksellers and the public. Such discounts ate away at Carroll’s profits, though Carroll does acknowledge that his publishers deserve to profit from his texts because Macmillan worked closely with the author throughout the entire process. No evidence exists to suggest the illustrator deserved equal claim to the text.23 While he admits to tormenting MacMillan every step of the way with “directions and questions on every conceivable detail” Carroll does not give credit to the illustrator since Tenniel has no monetary claim on the final project. Carroll paid Tenniel for his artistic services regardless of the success of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Because he has no stake in the success of the project, Tenniel loses total agency over the text and images.

To further discredit Tenniel’s authority over the book, Carroll allowed subsequent editions and translations to be printed without concern for the visual-text relationship. Both the 1887 “People’s Edition” and the 1898 “Six Penny Series” reset the type to keep the book short. Unfortunately, the resetting moves the text away from the relating image (Figure 4.17). In the
using the ink, that was trickling down his face, as long as it lasted.)

"Then the words don't fit you," said the King, looking round the court with a smile. There was a dead silence.

"It's a pun!" the King added in an offended tone, and everybody laughed.

"Let the jury consider their verdict," the King said, for about the twentieth time that day.
case of the King and courtroom scene, the image no longer relates to the location of the tarts, but instead to the Queen, since the text to the right is now “Then the words don’t fit you.” Carroll’s careless permission to reprint the book throws off the carefully balanced relationship Tenniel created between his illustrations and Carroll’s words. Yet, his actions demonstrate that he controls the final product.

The relationship that Tenniel created between image and text no longer exists in today’s reprints of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Like Carroll, modern publishers are concerned with producing a shorter edition at a cheaper cost. Because Tenniel’s illustrative balance is no longer evident, modern readers attribute the text solely to Carroll. The author’s decisions are what have made *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* a timeless classic, while Tenniel’s images just give the text a face to be photographed.

**Notes**

1. Miller argues that there is a reciprocity between the text and illustration. However, his argument does not take into account picture books in which the text is the illustration; that is, there are no words, only pictures. In this project, for the sake of the argument, I am applying the illustrations to Carroll’s text to examine the relationship between author and illustrator as well as picture and text.
2. Gillian Avery and Nodelman differ on the dates of *Orbis Pictus*. Nodelman marks its publication as 1657, while Avery notes it was first published in Nuremberg in 1658 and was translated into English the next year. The date difference bears no impact on this argument since Carroll did not read the text until the mid 1800s.
3. Avery 6. Avery provides an image of a page from Hart’s *Methode*, though she references it rather than discusses it.
4. See Avery p.8 for the image of Orbis Pictus.
5. Piaget ?
7. Originally created for Alice Liddell, *Alice’s Adventures Underground* was published in facsimile in 1886.
8. See my discussion of Blake’s illustration for *Songs of Innocence* in Chapter 1.
9. See Hancher’s argument concerning Alice’s initial fall into the pool of tears and Carroll’s inability to draw movement.
This rodent could be a mongoose or a mire cat or even the mouse Alice later encounters, but its long tail and legs prevent it from being classified. It is simply a looking glass creature Alice encounters later in the text.

Previously Alice ate the cake and opened “out like the largest telescope that ever was” (12).

Now Vale, north of London.

Both Engen (p. 69) and Hearn (p. 12) discuss Carroll’s admiration of Tenniel’s “mastery of the grotesque” though there is no evidence in his diaries.

He tested the manuscript with the children of George MacDonald and of course with the Liddell girls. Mac Donald urged Carroll to publish the tale.

See Carroll’s diary entry for January 25, 1864. Engen relates that Carroll received this letter a month before. The diary provides no evidence to support this claim.

See Carroll’s diary entry for October 12, 1864.

Though there is no mention of Alice’s age in Wonderland, Alice does reveal in Through the Looking-glass that she is 7½ years old when she meets Humpty Dumpty.

Tenniel replaces this practical apron with a more frilly design in Through the Looking-glass to further solidify Alice’s place in a middle class family.

The “proverbial pomegranate” to which I am referring is the fruit Persephone eats in the mythological tale. Persephone is taken to the underworld by Hades who wants her as his wife. He forces Persephone to stay with him. Demeter, Persephone’s mother tells her not to eat anything in the underworld or else she shall be bound to the underworld forever. Facing hunger and unable to avoid temptation, Persephone eats a pomegranate and seals her doom to spend eternity as Hades’ wife. Hades, in love with Persephone, allows her to visit her mother six months out of the year. For the six months mother and daughter are separated, Demeter, goddess of the earth, kills the earth but renews life each spring when she is reunited with her daughter.

Hancher and Engen address Tenniel’s assertion of agency over the project using Tenniel’s rejection of the first printing to illustrate his aggravation with Carroll’s disregard for their partnership. Both critics find the objections to the printing unfounded since he had released other projects with worse printing issues than those supposedly found in the Alice printing.

Collingwood quotes the only surviving excerpt of “The Profits of Authorship.” The entire pamphlet has been lost and thus we only know how Carroll feels about his partnership with his publishers.
Chapter 5. Deciphering Shadows: Language and Childhood in the Alice Texts

J. Hillis Miller argues that the meaning of an illustrated text intended for children depends on the relationship between the written word and the visual depictions. Working together, the text and illustration elicit an interpretation of the entire work. However, this relationship is co-dependent as Miller explains. The illustration fills in the descriptive gaps that the textual narrative fails to explain to the readers. At the same time, the audience needs the text to explain the central action in each picture. In Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-glass and What Alice Found There, Lewis Carroll simplifies his complex text by relying on the images he dictated to his illustrator, John Tenniel, to include the descriptive details of his fantasy worlds, details that he purposely omits from the text. From these images modern critics can create arguments about plot advancement based on details in and the arrangements of the illustrations. While Tenniel’s illustrations provide clues about nineteenth-century dress and spatial illustration techniques, Carroll establishes in his story an insight into the minds of both Victorian children and the adults who perceive them as Romantic shadows, that is, an image of childhood that Romantic writers cast to create an ideal human being that could lead adults to spiritual and emotional cleansing.

But Carroll’s child character is also a shadow, as I will argue in this chapter. Alice is a shadow not only of Alice Liddell for whom the story was told and by whom the story was possibly created, but also of every child. On a boating trip in the summer of 1862, Carroll orally told a story to the Liddell girls as the party rowed along the river. His method of storytelling, I will argue, involves the child audience who, in essence, become the story tellers. Thus, the tale becomes an extension of the child. In writing down the stories told on that boat ride, Carroll provides an insight into the child mind. Recognizing the gross misinterpretation of childhood by
adults, as I’ve addressed in the first chapter, and the child’s inability to communicate effectively to adults these misinterpretations, Carroll creates a fantasy world in which to portray the shadow of the child created by a child. Thus, his shadows are clearly defined because they are not entirely from his own imagination. Using the linguistic theories of Benjamin Lee Whorf—specifically his assertions that speakers of different languages cannot understand one another and therefore cannot communicate—as well as Lev Vygotsky’s sociocultural theories on language development, I maintain that adults cannot understand children and therefore “misread” them. Hence, Carroll’s fantasy worlds in Wonderland and Looking-glass Land become shadows which serve as a language to communicate ideas between children and adults. Thus, Carroll provides a forum to discuss the needs of real children as seen by nineteenth-century children.

**Speaking Two Languages: Whorf, Vygotsky, and Conversations with Alice**

A myriad of adjectives accompany the image of the child during this time frame. Writers and educators refer to children as “monsters,” “noble savages,” and “natural beings.” But as I observed in my discussions of his photography, Carroll views children through the lens of his camera as inhabitants of foreign lands. He dresses Xie Kitchin in oriental clothing and has an artist paint an Asian fleet of merchant boats behind her. Carroll literally inserts the child in a foreign setting. The same concept can be observed in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-glass and What Alice Found There*. Carroll again displaces the child in foreign world. In Wonderland and Looking-Glass Land, Alice is the outsider and as such the inhabitants of these fantasy/foreign realms dismiss her as a non-speaker. While Alice has difficulty communicating with the adults she encounters in her dream, her problems with language stem from two roots. The first is her misunderstanding of language codes, while the second is her own linguistic development as a child. However, the theories of Whorf and...
Vygotsky allow an interpretation of Alice’s adventures as a journey toward language acquisition as a child linguistically developing within a culture rather than as a non speaker learning a new language.

Born in Winthrop, Massachusetts towards the end of the Victorian period—April 24, 1897—, Benjamin Lee Whorf developed one of the most recognized theories concerning comparative linguistics. According to John Carroll, editor of Whorf’s essays on language, in 1924, Whorf followed a hypothesis that the “key to apparent discrepancy between the biblical and the scientific accounts of cosmogony and evolution might lie in a penetrating linguistic exegesis of the Old Testament” (6). In researching this theory, Whorf studied Hebrew which led him to Antoine Fabre d’Olivet’s 19th century linguistic work *La langue hébraïque restituée* in which d’Olivet argued hidden meanings in the Book of Genesis could be found by studying the structure of the triliteral Hebrew root. Whorf equated d’Olivet’s root-sign hypothesis with the modern term “phoneme.” Using d’Olivet’s methods of deciphering, Whorf continued his linguistic hobby and received critical attention for his published paper on translating a photographic reproduction of a Mexican Aztec manuscript. Critics claimed Whorf was able to “unlock mysteries’ which had ‘baffled’ other scholars” (Carroll, John 11). Basically, Whorf argued that the Aztec language consisted of 50 basic monosyllabic roots and, in a second project, compared similarities between the Aztec, Tepican, and Piman language.

Interested in oligosynthesis and binary grouping, Whorf’s talents matured when he began working with Yale Anthropology professor Edward Sapir in 1931. An authority on American Indian linguistics and the general science of language, Sapir guided his pupil’s interests towards the Uto-Aztecan languages, specifically the Hopi language. Whorf published articles on the superfamily language he called Macro-Penutian—Penutian, Uto-Aztecan, Mayan, and Mixe-
Zoque-Huave—and developed a grammar and dictionary of the Hopi language. His studies bridged the gap between the English language and his Macro-Penutian language allowing for a foundation of comparative linguistic studies. Yet, it was the publication of three articles in MIT’s *Technology Review* written for the layman that popularized modern linguistic science. The simple message produced in these three articles defined Whorf’s theory that “linguistics has much to say about how we think.” (Carroll, John 18).

Whorf’s hypothesis works on a few basic principles. The first, language determinism, states that language determines the way humans see and think about the world around them. In his essay “Language and Logic,” first published in 1941 in *Technology Review*, Whorf writes:

> language... is in some sense a superficial embroidery upon deeper processes of consciousness, which are necessary before any communications, signaling, or symbolism whatsoever can occur, and which also can, at a pinch, effect communication (though not true AGREEMENT) without language’s and symbolism’s aide. (emphasis his 239)

Language equates thought, though linguistics holds an advantage. As defined in “Science and Linguistics,” “linguistics” refers to the systematic process and structure of language (Whorf 211). This process is ingrained and automatic. An English-speaking child, like Alice, does not actively learn language, Whorf’s argues, but rather learns a structural formula that applies to monosyllabic words and learns patterns expressed by this formula.3 What Whorf’s structural formula illustrates is the spelling/symbolizing of English words according to standard phonemic spelling. For example in a simplistic version of the Whorf’s structural formula, O + V + C – h, a word can begin without a consonant, with one vowel, followed by any one consonant but not an “h”. Thus, the word combinations are “at,” “or,” or “if” (“Language, Mind, & Reality” 255). Unconsciously learning the perimeters of the formula, an English-speaking child conforms his/her language to the formula, and anything that contradicts the mold becomes nonsense.
Alice, as she travels through Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world, constantly makes connections between the language she encounters and the language formula she knows. When reading the portmanteau words of the Jabberwocky poem, she declares it to be unintelligible because the words do not make sense to her though they fit into a sentence structure. The words themselves are nonsense. What is thought to be nonsense, then, is controlled by what one perceives as fitting into the linguistic structure, thereby illustrating linguistic determinism.

Language relativity, a second principle of Whorf’s hypothesis, focuses on the differences between two languages and the inability to translate certain codes from one language to another. In “Science and Linguistics” Whorf explains that each language possesses certain linguistic codes that make that language unique while at the same time make the code virtually impossible to render into another language:

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our own minds—and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way—an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, BUT ITS TERMS ARE ABSOLUTELY OBLIGATORY; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees. (emphasis his 214)

What Whorf describes here is similar to the Piagetian theory of association and assimilation. To comprehend a concept, one must break it apart, study the components, derive meaning by assimilating and associating the unknown with previously established truths or knowledge, and then give each part a significance in the working of the larger whole. Whorf further explains though a person may believe he is thinking freely, he is trapped within constraints that affect the ability to interpret. An example Whorf provides is a race of people who physically can only see
the color blue. A people who can see only blue will not say they see only blue because they have no other words for color in their language, nor can they compare blue to any other color to say all they see is blue. Also they may not have “blue” as a word in their vocabulary because they encounter various hues of blue, much like the Inuit’s varying words for “snow”; thus, “blue” would become “light,” “dark,” “white,” or “black” (“Science and Linguistics” 209).

Because each language contains elements that are unique to its structure, Whorf suggests that two people speaking different languages cannot understand one another due to problems with codability and translatability. Similar principles, codability refers to the ease in which one concept can be identified in all languages, while translatability is the ease in which one word or term can be rendered into another language. With codability, one is looking at the object and how it is referred within two different languages. For example, frozen precipitation that settles on the ground is referred to as “snow” in Standard English while the Eskimo language has several words for this precipitation depending on the consistency of the frozen precipitation. Translatability, on the other hand, examines the word referent. In the “snow” example, American English does not quite translate into the Eskimo language without further description. Arthur Thibert defines the Eskimo word “apingaut” as the “first snow fall” (52). What is contained in one word in the Inuit language requires three words in the English language.

Whorf’s theory then explains the difficulties that lie in the path of communication between two speakers: “All observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated” (“Science and Linguistics” 214). Though Whorf does not exactly enlighten his readers on the methods of calibration in “Science and Linguistics,” he does state in “Language and Logic” that though two ideas—“apingaut” and “first snow to fall,” for example—are
different, the systematic synthetic use of pattern is common to all languages, thus the ability to sense these patterns in other languages provides the calibration one needs to communicate and to think. Returning to the Inuit “snow” example, an English speaker could determine the meaning of “apingaut” once he learned the basic lexemes of the Inuit language. While the Eskimo language possesses several lexeme inflections referring to snow and its different forms, only the lexeme “apingaut” translates into “first snow fall.”

The numerous words for “snow” that exist in the Eskimo language reflect the culture that surrounds the language. Snow is an everyday occurrence for the Eskimo and thus is defined by the way it impacts daily activities. Thus, there is a need to distinguish the difference between fallen snow, fresh snow, and soft snow. Whorf acknowledges the technical sublanguage of any language—that is the cultural and linguistic components that construct the meaning inside of the text and influence the codability and translation of a certain language—and incorporates it into his language relativity principle. These sublanguages become fused with the patterns of the language making it unique from all others.

Whorf’s theories, then, provide an explanation of the adult’s misrepresentation of British children in the nineteenth century when they recognize children as inhabitants of a foreign world rather than as humans in a developmental stage. Alice who is recognized as a foreigner to Wonderland is treated as such. When Alice does not respond properly to the Queen during the croquet match, the King dismisses her as not knowing the language. But why does Carroll choose to portray Alice as a stranger in a foreign land? Carroll is actually calling attention to Alice’s linguistic development over the two books. As Alice moves through the fantasy worlds, she also moves from what Lev Vygotsky calls prelinguistic communication to conversation.
acquisition. As Wordsworth presents in his famous poem “We Are Seven,” children speak a different language than adults as they develop linguistically.

Russian psychologist, Lev S. Vygotsky seemingly corroborates Whorf’s linguistic theories as he explains in his sociocultural study of the development of language that language involves communication which is dependent on an arbitrary system of symbols, rules, and creativity. Language in children begins with prelinguistic communication. The baby makes sounds, facial expressions, and imitations to elicit a response from the adult. This prelinguistic communication serves as symbols for the child who believes the rules are “If I make a sound then Mom will do something for me.” Thus, the response from the adult falls into a turn-taking pattern in which the child will respond to the adult’s reactions to the sounds. Creativity comes into play when child repeats certain sounds to create a specific response.

As the child develops she moves from cooing and babbling to pointing out objects for adult response. Yet, two problems arise at this point of development as Stephen White explains in Early Childhood Education. The child begins either using words too narrowly—underextension—or two broadly—overextension (White 136). In Vygotsky’s theory, a child underextends when she uses the word “ball” to refer to one red ball that she plays with everyday rather than using this general word to refer to all round, bouncing toys. Overextension, on the other hand, is illustrated by the child who alludes to all flying objects as “birds.” While a bird does fit in the category of “flying object,” the word “bird” is not an appropriate category for all flying objects since some flying objects are not animals.

As the child expands her vocabulary over the next eight years, the episodes of overextension and underextension decrease as children learn the appropriate words to reference objects. The child undergoes “fast mapping” around the age of two or three which contributes to
this correction of word extension. In fast mapping, “the child relates a new word to a general domain of meaning immediately after hearing the word for the first time” (White 141). For example, upon seeing a squirrel for the first time, a child can differentiate it from a dog but categorize both as “animal.” This example also demonstrates another characteristic of language development that emerges at this time in a child’s development, the principle of mutual exclusivity. The principle of mutual exclusivity, as White defines Vygotsky’s principle, is learning the meaning of words by assuming “that words can refer to only one object” (141). If an adult points to a light switch and says “light switch” the child learns that the name of the object on the wall that controls the light is “light switch.” Using cues from an adult’s speech or behavior, the child can assume there is only one name for the object.

Between the ages of three and five, a child continues to learn the symbols, rules, and creativity of language though with a few minor faults. During this frame, the child will learn words that express relationship such as prepositions and comparative adjectives and learn grammar by building on basic structures. The child uses private speech to develop these structures, talking to herself to help her think about her own actions and behaviors. Carroll exhibits Alice’s private speech through her thoughts and her conversations with herself when she tries to resolve some course of action through her adventures. As Alice falls down the rabbit hole, she talks to herself to determine where she will fall and to examine her identity:

“I wonder how many miles I’ve fallen by this time?” she said aloud. “I must be getting somewhere near the centre of the earth. Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think—” . . . “Who in the world am I” . . . And she began thinking over all the children she knew, that were of the same age as herself, to see if she could have changed for any of them. “I’m sure I’m not Ada,” she said, “for her hair goes in such long ringlets, and mine doesn’t go in ringlets at all” (28).

In this scene, Alice mixes thought with private speech to determine who she is not, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the basic structures of language to thought.
Experience plays an important role in the acquisition of language in children. White calls attention to J. Bohannon and L. Stanowicz’s studies in their publication, *The Issue of Negative Evidence: Adult Responses to Children’s Language Errors*. Bohannon and Stanowicz argue that “parents who regularly repeat a child’s ungrammatical statements and fill in missing words to make the statements grammatical have children who display more complex grammar at an earlier age than children whose parents ignore grammatical mistakes” (White 143). What these studies conclude is that adults play an important role in the language development of children. It is through adult interactions that children are able to assimilate correct grammar into their growing linguistic skills.

Adults, besides reinforcing standard grammar, also aid in the development of the child’s conversation skills. As early as the prelinguistic stage, adults engage the child in turn-taking conversation introducing children to the art of conversation. At the age of four, children have built a vocabulary large enough to take part in dialogues with others. Children use language successfully in conversation by taking turns, staying on topic, clearly stating a message, and conforming to cultural rules, all of which is termed “pragmatics” (White 143). In addition, four year olds know how to adjust speech to fit the age, sex, and social status of their discursive partners. Evidence of this ability to adjust their conversational language is seen in the way a child speaks to a younger toddler. She uses “motherese,” a “language made up of short sentences and slow, high-pitched speech with exaggerated expression” (White 141) while at the same time using faster, low-pitched speech often with a questioning tone to address the toddler’s mother. The ability to change tone from one audience to the other demonstrates the child’s growing language.
By the time the child reaches the age of eight, her vocabulary will expand by twenty new words a day which is accomplished by analyzing the structure of complex words, deriving meaning from context, and recognizing that words have multiple meanings. By learning more complex grammar, the child is able to adapt to the needs of her listeners and to pick up on inferred meaning and subtle inferences (White 144). Once the child has mastered these intricacies of language especially language whose meaning exists on several levels, she can converse on the same level as adults. She is able to communicate complex concepts and to explain the ongoings of her mind. Until then, the mind of the child is a mystery to the adult who, by not being able to converse logically with the child, views her as a speaker of a different language.

The subject of Wordsworth’s “We Are Seven” is the miscommunication between speakers of different languages. A little girl frustrates the narrator by not conceding to the narrator’s argument that when her two siblings died, they could no longer be counted among the living. When examining the linguistic differences between the adult and child characters, the subject of the poem is an issue of misinterpretation and language education. Wordsworth introduces his subject by describing the cottage girl as a simple child drawing the reader’s attention to her “wild” appearance:

Her hair was thick with many a curl
That cluster’d round her head.
She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad; (v 7-10)

He does not describe the young girl as wearing a country dress as this child should be described, but instead, presents her as an “other.” He begins his poem not even acknowledging her as a
person. The child is an “it” rather than a “she,” as indicated in the lines quoted below. She is not
an inhabitant of the city and even plays on the boundaries of her own home in the country. Because she lives in another realm of society, she is a foreigner to the narrator.

But by recognizing the child as an other, the narrator does not see the child as a human
learning language. Wordsworth begins the poem with the following notation:

A simple child, dear brother Jim
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death? (v1-4)

The child exists in a different culture than the adult simply because she lacks linguistic skills. She does not possess the language, the knowledge, or the understanding needed to communicate effectively with the adult as is demonstrated by her inability to explain her meaning of “death.” Yet, both characters engage in language development process.

In Wordsworth’s poem, the narrator acknowledges how experience influences one’s language when he says the child feels life in everything that she does and therefore cannot know the meaning of death. Even though the child has experienced the death of a loved one, no adult has explained nor inferred the meaning of “death” as envisioned by the narrator. The child’s meaning of “death” is an overextension of life. The woodland girl includes death in her category of “life,” since she bases her definition of “life” on her daily activities. Since her sewing, eating, and singing activities (“My stockings there I often hem,” “I take my little porringer,/ And eat my supper there,” “I sit and sing to them”) include her dead siblings, in the child’s reasoning, they are still “alive.”

The narrator, in the role of the adult, tries to explain to the child her grammatical error,
“You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five.” (v 33-6)

but the little girl counters with her own explanation. Each exchange constitutes a link in a conversation that the child evolves with the modifications she makes to try to explain her term. Because “death” is not an object an adult can point out to a child so that she can determine meaning through mutual exclusivity and because the little girl does not recognize the adult’s attempts to correct her language usage, the conversation becomes troublesome with both parties giving up on communicating. Though both speak English, lack of linguistic knowledge prevents the child from fully explaining her meaning. Rather than recognizing the woodland girl’s limitations in language, the narrator simply attributes misunderstanding to differing codes of different languages. Therefore, the adult lives in the belief that the child speaks a different language.

The word “death” becomes a problematic concept when translating between the language of the child and the language of the narrator, illustrating Whorf’s language relativity principle. Because the child and adult do not share the same reference to the concept of death, the perception of the end of life is different. For the adult, the moment the children were buried, their lives no longer counted among the living. And, death simply means a different kind of life for the woodland girl. The narrator cannot code her reference to death in his language, and, therefore, cannot translate his meaning into terms she can understand.

Because he cannot understand her language, the narrator becomes frustrated with the little cottage girl as evidenced by his exclamation: “But they are dead; those two are dead! /
Their spirits are in heaven!" He finally admits he is just “throwing words away” on someone who cannot find meaning in them. The woodland girl does not understand him though she tries on several occasions to answer his questions and to explain her answers, but he does not have the ability to convey coherently his meaning without knowing the code to translate the his term “death” and vice versa.

Like Wordsworth, Lewis Carroll, in his Alice books, illuminates children as speakers of another language by translocating his central character in a foreign environment and presenting one child’s path of maturation both linguistically and physically. In Wonderland, Alice, only seven years old, has learned the basic structures of language, but not the code of the adult language and cannot converse effectively with the inhabitants of the fantasy world to ask for help leaving Wonderland. The Wonderland and Looking-glass citizens parallel the nineteenth century child’s struggle with adults. By shrinking adult figures to Alice’s size and often smaller, Carroll creates a counterpart of childhood in which the child must relate to the inhabitants of the fantasy world who cannot linguistically relate to her. Though both speak English, Alice is seen as an outsider as she learns, through conversations with her adult foils, how to verbalize her thoughts.

In Chapter V of Wonderland, Carroll illustrates the problem that exists in the conversations between children and adults:

“Who are you?” said the Caterpillar.
This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, “I-I hardly know, Sir, just at present—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.”
“What do you mean by that?” said the Caterpillar, sternly. “Explain yourself!”
“I ca’n’t explain myself, I’m afraid, Sir,” said Alice, “because I’m not myself, you see.”
“I don’t see,” said the Caterpillar.
“I’m afraid I ca’n’t put it more clearly,” Alice replied, very politely, “for I ca’n’t understand it myself.” (41)
This scene echoes Wordsworth’s “We Are Seven.” Like the woodland girl, through a turn-taking exchange, Alice enters into a learning conversation. The Caterpillar begins with a question directed at the child. Intimidated by the opening, the child calculates an answer based on her audience. Alice is polite, addressing the insect as “Sir.” When asked to explain her meaning of “change” Alice cannot because she doesn’t possess the vocabulary to express her thoughts and reveals her inability to do so. She simply cannot “understand” the language because she is still developing linguistically.

Remember that Alice is only seven. She does not master the pragmatics of conversation until she meets the Caterpillar and only is successful for a moment. In fact, she offends most of the animals she meets before her encounter with the insect. In the “Caucus-Race and a Long Tale” chapter, Alice confuses “tale” with “tail,” commenting on the mouse’s long appendage rather than on his story: “‘Mine is a long and sad tale!’ said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing. ‘It is a long tail, certainly,’ said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse’s tail” (25). She does not conquer the complex meaning of homonyms nor does she know how to address her audience of birds, mice, and seafood. In fact, she clears the storyteller’s audience when she talks about her cat, Dinah, eating birds and mice. As an afterthought, in private language, she reconsiders her subject of conversation. After beginning a somewhat agreeable conversation with the Caterpillar, Alice manages to offend him as well when she suggests three inches is a “wretched height to be,” never thinking for a moment that the Caterpillar is three inches tall. Furthermore, after offending him, she realizes that she has not correctly explained that three inches is a wretched height because she is not accustomed to being three inches tall.

The Caterpillar, however, forgives Alice’s linguistic faux-pas because he has an advantage over the average adult. He has an insight into Alice’s thoughts:
“But I’m not used to it!” pleaded poor Alice in a piteous tone. And she thought to herself “I wish the creatures wouldn’t be so easily offended!”
“You’ll get used to it in time,” said the Caterpillar...

“One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter.”
“Of the mushroom,” said the Caterpillar, just as if she had asked it aloud. (bold is mine, italics his 41).

The Caterpillar can read Alice’s mind because he too is a child, the larva of a butterfly. Carroll subtly constructs this seemingly adult character of Alice’s dream world to illustrate a point. All of the characters are children, though they pose as adults. They possess the ability to understand Alice, though many choose not to in order to fill their roles as “adults.” Alice does not understand why the animals in Wonderland are offended nor does she understand the Caterpillar’s reference to the mushroom. Nor can Alice verbalize her questions perhaps because she has not learned this questioning yet. However, Carroll alleviates her frustration by creating a character who can understand her frustration and to answer her questions before she has learned to articulate them. The Caterpillar understands Alice because he is going through the same linguistic journey that she is though he is further along in his development.

Alice’s journey in Wonderland is to learn how to express her thoughts verbally on her own. Confusion reigns as she mixes up meanings and recites her lessons incorrectly. But, the true test of her linguistic abilities appears when she holds court with the Queen of Hearts. A menacing creature, the ruler of Wonderland threatens death to all who oppose her. Alice, Carroll reveals through her thought processes, deliberates lying on the ground in submission to the Queen. When approached by the royal procession, Alice enters into a conversation with the Queen when she identifies herself by her name, her linguistic symbol. The audience gets the first glimpse of Alice verbalizing her thoughts when she adds to herself “Why, they’re only a pack of
cards, after all. I needn’t be afraid of them!” This utterance, again private language, is
nevertheless Alice’s own thoughts. The Queen intimidates Alice until she realizes that the
Queen herself is nothing but a piece of paper. Though articulated, she shares her thoughts with
no one. In fact, she forgets her conversation skills and indignantly responds to the queen’s
inquiries about the gardeners and demands for execution:

“And who are these?” said the Queen
“How should I know?” said Alice, surprised at her own courage. “It’s no
business of mine.”

The Queen turned crimson with fury, and, after glaring at her for a moment like
a wild beast, began screaming “Off with her head! Off with—”
“Nonsense!” said Alice, very loudly and decidedly, and the Queen was silent.

As she starts to assimilate language into a preconceived language structure—she is able to
determine the Queen’s linguistic demands as nonsense—Alice becomes empowered by her
linguistic skills which allows her to stand up to an authority that does not care for her welfare. In
fact, Alice is able to silence the Queen into submission forcing the ruler to turn away from the
child.

Yet, if this scene were indicative of Alice’s complete articulation of her thoughts, then
Alice would have awakened from her dream at this moment. Instead, she continues her
adventure to endure other linguistic challenges to prepare her for a final meeting with the Royal
Hearts who speak nonsense. The Mock Turtle and the Griffon, both who enjoy lording over the
young girl, force her to endure their lessons. Asking her to recite lessons she cannot remember,
they inadvertently teach her how to hold her tongue in conversation, how to tell a story, and how
to be humble. She is berated and belittled but she endures it all simply because she still can not
fully understand them and is still having difficulties with language puns that do not translate for
her. When the Mock Turtle tells about his education, he is appalled that Alice questions the
Mock Turtle’s addressing his turtle teacher as a tortoise: “‘Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn’t one?’ Alice asked. ‘We called him Tortoise because he taught us,’ said the Mock Turtle angrily. ‘Really you are very dull!’” (75). She does not even comprehend the word play between “tortoise” and “taught us.”

Alice is able to suppress her frustration with not understanding the creatures of Wonderland until the final courtroom scene of the text. In this scene, Alice realizes the Knave is being sentenced before he is found guilty. Again, her role as an outsider conflicts with Wonderland’s sense of justice. She first challenges the king’s ruling that all persons a mile high should leave the courtroom (Alice grows considerably larger while watching the trial). Then, she confronts the Queen when the dictator pronounces the Knave guilty before reviewing all of the evidence. Again, these instances show Alice can point out faulty logic but not articulate her thoughts. Even though she defies the cards, she cannot verbalize her feelings about the injustice of the trial. However, she finally has enough of Wonderland’s nonsense when the Queen insists on sentencing before hearing the verdict. Carroll has Alice loudly declare to all present that the trial is “stuff and nonsense.” She no longer is speaking to herself or submissively or moderately. She pronounces to everyone in the courtroom, “The idea of having the sentence first!” When immediately reprimanded by the Queen, Alice defies her and rebukes the “Off with her head.” Her sudden linguistic growth stems from her comprehension of her own words, not just those words of others. As White notes, “the most significant moment in cognitive development occurs when [the child] begins to use language not only for communication with others but also as a tool for thought” (133).

Once she can verbalize her thoughts and understand the meaning of her words, Alice can leave Wonderland: “Who cares for you?” said Alice (she had grown to her full size by this time).
“You’re nothing but a pack of cards!” (97). Alice can finally understand that all of the adult figures are also learning the rules of language. The characters are just cards and later pawns, players of the linguistic game. They are children with puffed up attitudes, bullies of the streets, but children nonetheless. Her declaration indicates a superior attitude towards and a dismissal of her Wonderland counterparts. Carroll echoes Wordsworth’s narrator; though children, the characters can’t understand Alice, and she is tired of trying to explain her language codes to them. Alice’s physical growth symbolizes her linguistic development of articulating her own thoughts, though she fails at explaining them to others.

Despite Alice’s sudden linguistic growth, she still has problems with language relativity. Alice does not speak the same language as the Wonderland characters, and few make the attempt to learn the necessary codes of her language to understand Alice. In fact, the King of Hearts makes excuses when Alice insults the Queen at the croquet match saying: “Consider, my dear: she is only a child!” (64). Only the Caterpillar translates her language but only by telepathic means. Though Alice learns how to express her thoughts, Carroll does not provide further dialogue with the Wonderland creatures to suggest that they understand Alice’s outburst.

Translating Alice’s Shadow *Through the Looking-Glass*

It is not clear whether or not the inhabitants of Wonderland understand Alice’s final outburst. Yet, Alice is able to communicate the adventure set in her dream to her sister. Since the vehicle for the story is a dream, a component of the child’s introspection, Alice’s storytelling, a trait she learned from the Mock Turtle, serves as a method of communicating her thoughts. Carroll indicates that Alice still has much to learn language-wise when he writes, “And she told her sister, as well as she could remember them, all these strange Adventures of hers that you have just been reading about” (98). Alice leaves out parts of her adventure because she forgets
them. She has not learned how to explain every aspect or may still not have acquired the
necessary vocabulary. However, the reader has an insight much like the Caterpillar has into the
mind of the child having experienced the adventure with Alice.

Such a comparison between Carroll’s audience and the Caterpillar raises questions
concerning the purpose of the author’s text. Is this merely a story about a little girl learning
language and how to tell stories? The final story telling scene seems to suggest this possibility.
But Alice’s story is unique in that her adventures allow her to defy adults and to communicate
her inability to verbalize her needs. She is able within her own story to tell adults that their
conceptions about her are wrong. Carroll, through Alice’s adventures in Wonderland, creates a
shadow of the struggle of real nineteenth century children to communicate with adults.
Furthermore, Carroll constructs the Alice texts not from his imagination but from that of the
children in his life. Carroll allows the child to tell her own story so that there is no confusion in
language. He cannot interpret her tale because he is an adult who cannot understand children.9
Instead, he develops the tale through Alice Liddell and others through a turn-taking exchange.
This question and answer went something like this: Alice followed the White Rabbit down the
rabbit hole. Then, what do you think happened to her? His child audience would answer.

In her account to Carroll’s nephew, Gertrude Chataway explains this storytelling
exchange: “One thing that made his stories particularly charming to a child was that he often
took his cue from her remarks—a question would set him off on quite a new trail of ideas, so that
one felt that one had somehow helped to make the story, and it seemed a personal possession”
(380). Carroll empowers the child in a way that is not possible in reality, simply because she
does not possess the language to communicate with her adult counterparts. He records her
language while at the same time translating it into a form that is codable for adults, a fantasy
book. His rendition is not a literal decoding into another language but rather a translation of an oral tale to a written one. Carroll uses the child’s own voice which by forcing explanation of details through constant questioning.

The text then is a shadow of the verbalization of a child emerging from the shadow of the adult conception of childhood. Not only does writing down the child’s story cement the tale from changing as it does when Alice retells her adventures to her sister at the end of *Adventures in Wonderland*, but it illuminates the child’s needs as she sees them in her mind. As such the text becomes a common code between the language of the adults and the developing language of children. In reading these shadows or codes, the adult audience can read the thoughts of children as children themselves reveal their thoughts. In essence, Carroll sheds light on the child, allowing her to emerge from the shadows by giving a voice to the voice of the child.

While the theme of *Wonderland* is language acquisition, what then do the shadows represent in the *Looking-glass*? Alice is still learning how to speak though her pragmatics of conversation are much better, and she eagerly seeks education on language from the female chess figures. Unfortunately, she still does not have the developed vocabulary to express what she is thinking. Here, Carroll accommodates an interpretation of the shadow of childhood by using the dream as a vehicle for Alice’s adventures. The full title *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* indicates Alice is searching for something. The exploration of Alice’s dream in *Through the Looking-Glass* in psychoanalytical terms aids the reader in understanding what exactly Alice seeks and what she can’t articulate in words.

A look at Carroll’s library reveals his interest in psychology and dream theory. At the time of his death in 1898, Carroll owned the 11 volumes of *Psychical Research Proceedings*, H.L. Mansel’s *Prolegomena Logica, an Inquiry into the Psychological Character of Logical*
Processes (1860), Clod’s Myth and Dreams\textsuperscript{10}, and Frank Leafield’s two volume work The Literature and Curiosity of Dreams: A Common-place Book (1865). Using the references available at the time he wrote the Alice stories, Carroll infuses Alice Liddell’s story with psychological elements\textsuperscript{11} to better portray the internal struggle of the child and her inability to relate this struggle. By intertwining the fantasy Looking-Glass world and the dream vehicle, Carroll utilizes the unconscious, as portrayed by the mind of the sleeping child, to portray those desires the child cannot articulate, especially the girl child Alice.

As Morton Cohen points out in “Lewis Carroll and Victorian Morality,” psychoanalysis of the Alice texts is not a new approach to Carrollian studies (4-5). Much has been written on Wonderland\textsuperscript{12} while the latter is widely overlooked for the commentary Carroll makes concerning children and a struggle for control over their identity and impending sexuality. Carroll was extremely interested in the sexual maturity of children and defines “childhood” as that time before “stream and river mix.” Once one of his child friends began menstruating he no longer considered her a child and often discontinued the friendship due to appropriateness. The complete title, then, implies that Alice struggles with a frightening budding sexuality that engulfs her identity and finally discovers, or more exactly, finds a method of controlling it through language.

According to Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams, the mind creates dreams as a release of psychological tension from the unconscious. In other words, the sleeper utilizes the dream to work out or to express emotions or concerns, which are uncomfortable issues if examined in the light of reality. The dream becomes a vehicle for expressing and coping with crisis. Since the primary action of Through the Looking-Glass occurs in Alice’s dream, the reader can observe that Alice is attempting to express and to cope with aspects of her life that she cannot seem to
verbalize or even address outside of her dreams.

My analysis of Alice’s dream begins with an examination of the opening scene in which certain elements will manifest into characters in Alice’s dream. Whorf explains that thoughts are influenced by language. In this case, the dream as a reflection of Alice’s thoughts is filled with objects she can readily identify verbally and does identify before she falls asleep. The reader finds Alice “half asleep” in an overstuffed armchair “mothering” the offspring of her cat, Dinah. She takes what she has recently learned in Wonderland and reinforces those linguistic lessons in her “children”: “And you’d deserve it, you little mischievous darling! What have you got to say for yourself? Now don’t interrupt me! . . . Now you can’t deny it, Kitty: I heard you! What’s that you say? . . . “I’ll put you through into the Looking-glass House. How would you like that? Now, if you’ll only attend, Kitty, and not talk so much, I’ll tell you my ideas about Looking-glass House” (128-131). Not only does she suggest turn-taking, but she shadows Carroll’s technique of asking the child to explain herself. Alice is now the adult who reinforces linguistic grammar and behavior, setting up the white kitten as a good child for obeying Dinah during its tongue bath and the black kitten as a bad child for unraveling her ball of worsted. The white kitten, then, becomes the child-like White Queen while the black kitten, both in play (Alice pretends they are “kings and queens”) and in the dream, becomes the overbearing Red Queen.

While Alice is playing with the kittens before she falls asleep, Carroll introduces Alice’s linguistic voyage:

She had had quite a long argument with her sister only the day before--all because Alice had begun with “Let’s pretend we’re kings and queens”; and her sister, who liked being very exact, had argued that they couldn’t, because there were only two of them, and Alice had been reduced at last to say “Well, you can be one of them, then, and I’ll be all the rest.” (Carroll 130)

She does not understand why her sister, an adult, is exact with words and thus, finds herself
attempting the same game with non-verbal companions the next day, Dinah’s kittens. Alice will continue to learn linguistic lessons in her dream in the Looking-Glass world as she searches for her identity.

The Looking-Glass is a symbolic representation of Alice’s psychological identity. To explain a child’s psychological stages, Robert Samuel presents Lacan’s tertiary structure in his book *Between Philosophy and Psycho-analysis*. Where Freud’s structure is the id (instinctual sensation), ego (individual consciousness), and super ego (social law), Lacan’s structure is existential (sensual experience), phenomenology (individual consciousness), and structural (social relation)(Samuel 3). Lacan’s tertiary structure goes hand in hand with his stages of development: Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic. The Real accounts for the infancy stage. The child is involved only in satisfying her needs, a sensual experience. She associates satisfaction with individual parts rather than the whole entity. For example, the child sees the breast that satisfies her hunger rather than the mother to which the breast is connected. There are only “needs” and “things that satisfy those needs.” Because there is no recognition of beings with which to communicate, there is no need for language in the Real. When the child develops an individual consciousness by recognizing herself and her mother as being separate individuals, she can then feel loss when her mother is not in sight. This juncture begins the Mirror Stage. The child can then imagine herself as a self-sufficient being by perceiving others as whole rather than as parts that satisfy a need. The mirror becomes a tool for the child to see herself as complete. In *Literary Theory*, Terry Eagleton argues that in Lacan’s theory, the image the child creates is a misrepresentation because the reflection in the glass is just that—an image, not the actual child (150). The child is not defining herself with an internal sense of identity. Instead, she is associating her identity with an “other,” her reflection. Thus, the Mirror Stage is also
referred to as the Fantasy Stage or the Imaginary. Only when the child understands the image is “not me” and is an “other” can she move into the Symbolic realm.

The Symbolic realm contains language, the unconscious, the parents, and the symbolic order. Eagleton explains:

They are sometimes spoken of by [Lacan] as the ‘Other’—as that which like language is always anterior to us and will always escape us, that which brought us into being as subjects in the first place but which always outruns our grasp . . . our unconscious desire is directed towards this Other, in the shape of some ultimately gratifying reality which we can never have; but it is also true for Lacan that our desire is in some way always received for the Other too. We desire what others—our parents, for instance—unconsciously desire for us; and desire can only happen because we are caught up in linguistic, sexual and social relations--the whole field of the ‘Other’—which generate it. (151)

A person enters the social world “as an object amongst other objects” becoming a “knowing subject” through language. (Samuel 4). Carroll’s Alice is neither in the Real nor the Mirror Stage though others in the novel are. She can recognize the image in the mirror as a reflection—an “other” world different from her own. When the glass melts away at her touch, the demarginalizing allows her not only to enter the Looking-Glass world, but also to leave behind symbolically the Mirror Stage and access the Symbolic realm.

Alice’s journey in the Symbolic stage occurs in her dream, as the search for her identity generates in the social world a very complex construct. Lacan states that the Symbolic other—the socio-psychological law of the father, castration, and the desire of the Other—is often rejected and shows up in dreams. “Through the castration complex each subject must accept the intervention of law and desire of the Other, by either affirming or denying the role of the phallus in the determination of sexual identity”(Samuel 27). For Lacan, the Phallus does not represent the penis, but instead the center of the structure of language that governs the entire structure. Everyone wishes for the Phallus, but never reaches the center of language. Most only acquire
some respect of language to aid in the struggles of the world. Only a child, Alice wishes for the Phallus and encounters its skin in association with her sexuality identity in her Looking-Glass dream.

Freud believes dreams to be the manifestation of wish-fulfillment. Although the idea of wish-fulfillment establishes happiness, Freud also indicates that 57.2% of wish-fulfillment dreams are actually disagreeable and refers to these disagreeable dreams as anxiety dreams. He further observes that children are the most susceptible to these anxiety dreams (Freud 134-5).

Alice’s dream in *Through the Looking-Glass* can be classified as an anxiety dream because she is a seven-and-a-half year old girl, “an uncomfortable sort of age,” as Humpty Dumpty comments.

Her age places her in the age category of children susceptible to unpleasant dreaming which is outlined by psychologists in “Sleep and Dreams in Childhood” by Louise Bates Ames:

> 7 years: Less dreaming; fewer unpleasant dreams; may be last nightmare age.  
> Dreams chiefly about daily events.  
> Dreams of elements, especially water, swimming, drowning, boating.  
> Being chased or threatened; cannot move or speak . . .  
> Ghosts or supernatural.  
> Flying, floating, driving in a car, walking just above ground. Child more likely to be central figure, not just the recipient of some activity. (14)

Ames calls attention to childhood sleep patterns to diagnose sleep disorders in children. While I am not arguing that Alice has a sleep disorder, her dreams do exhibit all of these elements to suggest that her dreams serve a larger purpose than just to expose her difficulties with language. Because Alice is still at the age where nightmarish qualities are a possibility in sleep visions, her dreams are nonsensical, distorted, and frightening. They do not fit the linguistic structure, and she cannot understand the ever-changing rules and language of the chess game in which she is forced to participate the moment she enters Looking-Glass Land. Her adventure is frightening since she is bullied by talking flowers and chess pieces. In Chapter Three, Alice finds herself on
and becomes frightened first when she discovers that she does not have a ticket and then later when the train leaps into the air. The scene melts away when the train’s leaps scare Alice who searches for stability by taking a hold of the goat's beard. In a distorted second, Carroll transports his heroine to a forest setting accompanied by a gnat without explaining how Alice arrives there. This scene is just one example of distortion. Others surface in the later chapters. At times she is confused and frightened. Violence overwhelms the novel--the war between the chess pieces, the fight between the lion and the unicorn, the fight between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the thought that she is the dream of the Red King, the eating of the child oysters by the Walrus and the Carpenter. Alice is exposed to it all and at times is appalled by it. Her dream is hardly a pleasant one, and therefore, must be an anxiety dream.

Even though Alice does experience the unpleasant dream as Ames suggests, other elements of a typical seven-year-old child's dreams are also obvious. The daily event that Alice exhibits in the dream is the chess game she must take part in since the last event Alice observes before falling asleep was the kitten playing with the chessboard. The Red Queen manifests the threatening aspect of the Ames’ sleeping vision. She dictates Alice's actions while intimidating the little girl into submission by using Alice’s ignorance of linguistic structure against her. The war image is demonstrated by the actual war ensuing between the red and white chess pieces. The figures and creatures of the Looking-Glass world represent the supernatural elements in that their personified existence is not an occurrence outside of the dream. Prior to the dream, the chess pieces do not move around by themselves, Humpty-Dumpty and the Lion and the Unicorn are simply figments of children verses, and talking flowers do not live in the garden. In Looking-Glass land, their personification is supernatural. An additional element of an unpleasant dream—flying or floating—surfaces as Alice floats down the stairs of her home in the
first chapter and seemingly flies with the Red Queen in the second chapter. ["And they went so fast that at last they seemed to skim through the air" (Carroll 146).] Finally, Alice is the central constant throughout her dream. This evidence makes it possible to conclude that Alice's dream is normal for a child of her age while at the same time revealing that Alice’s thoughts are filled with anxiety and unpleasantness.

As psychologists observe, children repress disturbing ideas of the external world. These repressed ideas resurface in children’s dreams, often through distortions. These distortions can be a deliberate effort by the dreamer if she feels the repressed idea is too harsh to handle in a dream. It is a way to say something bad without actually saying it (Freud 141). Real events which children are uncomfortable dealing with in the external world are handled in the dream; however, for a small child, these events may be too difficult to comprehend even in the safety of a fantasy realm. Thus, distortions act as a defense mechanism by aiding in lessening the blow of harsh reality by making the disturbing concept easier for the child to handle.

Distortions are a part of Alice's dream and lead to the questions “against what in Alice's life is she defending her unconscious mind?” and “what concept is she trying to deal with in the Looking-Glass world?” Freud states that dreams are a manifestation of wish-fulfillment and that children have a strong sense of wish-fulfillment (551-4). The surface theme of *Through the Looking-Glass* is Alice's move from pawn to queen in the chess game. The progression of the plot has her becoming a queen, symbolizing perhaps Alice's wish to become an adult and to understand adults. Yet, if this were the simple theme, then Alice should have awakened at the moment in which she was crowned "Queen Alice,” a symbol of adulthood. The only move that will release Alice from this dream is to conquer the Red Queen. The Red Queen is symbolic of both adulthood, the stage at which language is mastered, and womanhood, specifically
maturation. Alice, in her dream, delves into a deeper region of her subconscious or else the distortions would not be present. The little girl wants to confront a hidden concept but is too afraid and does not have the linguistic and physical equipment to do so. When Alice can find the necessary words in the Looking-glass world, she can name her problem with wish-fulfillment and can then awaken.

Ann Faraday argues in *The Dream Game* shadows, like distortions, in the dream portray that part of the child self, which is considered unacceptable to the dreamer (234). The suppression of issues increases the energy of the haunting aspect allowing it to hound the dreamer at night. "The shadow becomes threatening and dangerous when oppressed, its violence stemming from impotence in the face of insuperable odds" (Faraday 240). These images of darkness can be located in the woods where Alice loses her memory ["It looked very cool and shady" (Carroll 156)], in the goat's shop ["she was in a little dark shop" (Carroll 178)], and at the banquet in which the candles indicate the need for light in a dark room. Yet, the central character and the story itself are shadows of reality. As it actually exists in society, the child does not fit the mold of the idolized spiritual child discussed in the first chapter of this project. Carroll then uses shadows not only to mask the reality he presents in his story, that is the voice of the real child expressing a problem she is having with social constructs, but also as language to discuss these previously muted images.

Freudian symbols in the *Looking-Glass* dream are the keys to uncovering the muted issue Alice suppresses in the shadows of her dream. Males or male genitalia are represented in dreams by hats (Freud 360) and by elongated objects like long, sharp weapons, knives, daggers, pikes, and tools (Freud 364-5). Rooms, tables, and tables laid for a meal symbolize women (Freud 354). Boxes, cases, chests, cupboards, ovens, and ships illustrate the female reproductive organ,
the uterus (Freud 354). Steps, ladders, or staircases, and walking up and down them depict the sexual act (Freud 355). Smooth walls or the façade of houses represent the erect human bodies (Freud 354). Baldness, haircutting, falling out of teeth, and decapitation are symbols of castration (Freud 357). Small animals and vermin are images of small children (Freud 357). Finally, in a dream the word "right" indicates righteousness and marriage while the word "left" implies crime, homosexuality, incest, or perversion (Freud 357-8). *Looking-Glass* and the Tenniel illustrations reveal these Freudian symbols, thus allowing for an explanation of Alice's anxiety to the adult reader.¹⁴

Masculine and feminine images struggle over control of Alice’s dream. Masculine images are prevalent in the first chapter, "The Looking-Glass House." The chess pieces are depicted in Tenniel's drawings as wearing large, hat-like crowns. The White King and White Queen are sitting on the edge of a shovel, a type of tool. The White Knight slides down the fire poker. In "Tweedledum and Tweedledee," the brothers fight with a sword and an umbrella. The illustrations of the war scene in "The Lion and the Unicorn" chapter reveal weapons of all kinds. The hat associated with the Mad Hatter, also known as Hatta in this book, surfaces in this chapter as well as a knife to cut the Looking-Glass cake. The female symbols dominate the first and the last scenes of the dream. Alice steps into a room on the other side of the Looking-Glass. She also arrives at a table laid out with food prepared for a banquet in her honor at the end of the dream sequence. In between these two events, the uterus icons surface in "Wool and Water" as boxes on the shelves in the goat's store and as the boat in which Alice and the storekeeper travel. The wall on which Humpty Dumpty is sitting reveals the erect body symbolism, and Humpty Dumpty, an egg figure, is a symbol for the female reproductive cell. Tenniel's illustration of the White Knight in "It's My Own Invention" portrays the knight as a balding man. Thus, he
becomes the castration icon.

The idea of "right" and "left" leads the reader to an interpretation of Alice’s anxiety over identity. Referring once again to John Tenniel's drawings (Figures 4.1 and 4.2), in "Queen Alice," the White Queen is always seated on Alice's right, while the Red Queen is always seated to her left. This arrangement indicates that the White Queen may represent an idea of righteousness and marriage, the Red Queen, an image of crime, homosexuality, incest, or perversion. But before limiting these figures to mean these concepts, examination of the other symbols in Alice's *Looking-Glass* dream is needed to uncover Alice’s thoughts.

*Through the Looking-Glass* was published in 1872 at the height of emerging children’s literary market in the nineteenth century. Robert Polhemus states that the rise of the child figure in literature did not create separate gender spheres, but literature reflected, defined, and redefined important images of gender (595). The public sphere or working world belonged to men. The private sphere or home was assigned to women. Victorian women were worshipped for innocence and goodness, a state close to angels. They were models of virtue and regarded in the same manner as children. Like children, they were thought to have no sexual appetite (Cohen 12). Often written by men, studies of female education manuals reveal the woman’s duty was to help men reach salvation by symbolizing and enforcing a moral home life. In return they were nurtured, admired, and shielded from the “cruel” public world.

Victorian feminist literature paints a different picture. The bird and flower imagery in the verse of female poets portray women as melancholy and suppressed, yearning to break free from their domestic lives. Breaking the traditional female mold became an underlying concept in novels and poetry alike. Women who wanted to abandon the home ventured into the male dominated world. Unfortunately, by crossing the boundaries of the gender spheres and
attempting to gain equal footing with men, these ambitious females often were shunned by Victorian society. Lewis Carroll utilizes this concept of venturing into the male sphere in *Through the Looking-Glass*. At the beginning of the novel, Alice is in a home environment. She takes on a feminine role by scolding the kitten for its bad manners and behavior. Alice is in her female place. As a punishment to the wicked kitten, Alice brings it to the looking-glass threatening to “put [it] through into the Looking-Glass House” (Carroll 130). The kitten is in the Real stage for it depends on its mother to satisfy its needs. Alice’s threat is real because she is forcing the kitten to separate itself from her--its caretaker--to move to the realm of desire. Yet, she also sees her image in the looking-glass and is able to identify her reflection and the environment in which she exists. In this case, Alice sees herself in the feminine sphere taking on the traditional feminine role of enforcing virtue, manners, and language in a child--Dinah’s kitten.

As she moves from her traditional role to the mirror, Alice is intrigued by the reversal of objects in the Looking-Glass house. The masculine symbols in this reflected room--the hats, the shovels, and the poker--depict the masculine sphere. The Looking-Glass world is the masculine social world. Venturing through the mirror, Alice is curious to discover her role in this sphere. Unfortunately, in this world Alice, as a child and foreign speaker, has no identity. None of the chess pieces can see her. She cannot comprehend the Jabberwocky poem, yet "somehow it seems to fill [her] head with ideas - only [she does not] exactly know what they are!" (Carroll 138), only proving that Alice is not prepared to enter the masculine world because she cannot understand the language of this sphere and can not effectively communicate her wishful thoughts.

Beginning an exploration of the masculine Looking-Glass world, Alice encounters her
first sexual experience when she “floats”—a Freudian symbol of sexual acts—down the staircase. Alice’s flying episode, while Freudian analysis suggests a sexual encounter, can also be interpreted as a liberating event. Bird imagery or flying, a prominent theme in the poetry of Victorian women, signifies freedom. Just as these poets wrote about a desire to escape men and the domestic sphere, Alice, as a child, longs to escape the confines of adults. Thus, in floating down the stairs, not only is Alice freeing herself from the Looking-Glass house, an emblem of the domestic sphere, but she is also freeing herself to pursue her identity. By admitting that she is “walking in a natural way” (Carroll 138), Carroll reinforces that this is not a case of sexual intercourse, but instead gender discovery and exploration. This small episode is important because it is the first time that the audience can interpret Alice, who is but a child, as a sensual being rather than a genderless entity. Although the girl thinks nothing of her incident, the reader begins to observe her discovery of her impending womanhood as she journeys through the Looking-Glass society and that she already has been unconsciously struggling with this matter in reality.

The flowers in the Looking-Glass garden that Alice immediately encounters after her floating episode represent Victorian women. They are confined to one space. Like ideal Victorian women, the flowers act as policing agents for the patriarchal control. As a feminine society, the flowers judge Alice based on her resemblance to them:

“‘It isn’t manners for us to begin, you know,’” said the Rose, “‘and I really was wondering when you’d speak! Said I to myself, ‘Her face has got some sense in it, though it’s not a clever one!’ Still, you’re the right colour, and that goes a long way.’”

“I don’t care about the colour,” the Tiger-Lily remarked. “If only her petals curled up a little more, she’d be all right.” (Carroll 141)

Alice looks feminine to them and has the potential to fall into the pattern of a stereotypical Victorian woman; she is the “right colour.” Yet, when they begin to criticize her intelligence,
their comments become unbearable, and Alice verbally lashes out, threatening to pick them. Alice demonstrates her masculinity and her movement toward the Phallus through her growing command of language. Since their masculine protector, the dogwood tree, is just as rooted as they are and can provide no assistance in danger, the flowers are susceptible to Alice’s threats. The same held true for Victorian women. Those who were defiled by men were accused of inviting such actions. Masculine intents to protect women came in the form of laws, yet most of these acts like the Married Women’s Property Acts of the 1800s only protected those women in marriages. If a man defiled a single woman, the law prosecuted her as a prostitute. The mere action of walking alone at night unchaperoned sullied a woman’s reputation. Society considered support of any woman of “questionable character” as grounds for the same charges; thus, women did not always stick together in times of crisis. The flowers in the garden represent this delicate life, one with which Alice is not comfortable, and she is quick to follow the company of the Red Queen who comes into the garden.

Carroll establishes Alice’s role in this world even before describing her introduction to the Red Queen. Alice is unwilling to return through the mirror to go home because she does not want to regress in her psychological and linguistic development. She is ready to learn the structure of language to become a part of society. The Red Queen further indicates that to learn the language, Alice must replace the white Pawn, Lily, in the chess game and become queen. Her first instruction in language is given:

“Where do you come from?” said the Red Queen. “And where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don’t twiddle your fingers all the time.” Alice attended to all these directions, and explained, as well as she could, that she had lost her way.

“I don’t know what you mean by your way,” said the Queen: “all the ways about here belong to me— but why did you come out here at all?” she added in a kinder tone. “Curtsey while you’re thinking what to say. It saves time.” Alice wondered a little at this, but she was too much in awe of the Queen to
disbelieve it. “I’ll try it when I go home,” she thought to herself, “the next time I’m a little late for dinner.”

“It’s time for you to answer now,” the Queen said, looking at her watch: “open your mouth a little wider when you speak, and always say ‘your Majesty.’”

(Carroll 144)

The Red Queen, like the Queen of Hearts, is the dominating authoritarian of this realm, and contrasts with the Looking-Glass flowers by proving that a woman can successfully exist in this world. All of the roads are hers, and she has the authority to instruct Alice to succeed in the game and in life as well. For Alice to succeed, she must discover her own sexuality and be able to express it through language. She agrees to replace Lily, the White Queen's infant daughter, who represents naivety, purity, and virginity. Alice must begin her journey in the purest form possible in order to be accepted by this society. And, Alice will win the game when she can verbally claim her gender role.

The remainder of the dream is an exploration of Alice's gender roles in a male-dominated society and her ability to express her desire through language. But, Alice is frightened of her journey as is demonstrated in the train scene. The gnat eases her fright by symbolizing other children who, like Alice, have embarked on this same journey of self-discovery, and by identifying with others, she overcomes her fear. To further aid Alice on her journey, Carroll has her lose all sense of self by entering the “woods where things have no name.” This loss is an important step in her sexual development because Alice must embody the child-virgin figure Lily represented. She needs to remove all preconceived notions of her gender assignment in order to discover the gender role she is most comfortable portraying. The woods, which are also very shady, imply that Alice already knows her sexuality but is afraid to face it.

In addition to purifying her sexuality, Alice must also relearn language in order to enter the social realm. Coming out of the woods Alice remembers her name, her sign, which is "some
comfort.” This comfort gives her the strength to continue her journey. The journey takes her into the male society of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. In “Through the Looking-Glass: Alice Becomes an ‘I,’” Donald Rackin argues the two mirroring signposts TO TWEEDLEDUM’S HOUSE and TO THE HOUSE OF TWEEDLE DEE mean, “Wise now to the ways of signs, mirrors and narcissistic self deception, Alice declares, ‘I do believe . . . that they live in the same house!’” This hints at the measure of her matured understanding about identity” (7). Reading the signs and noticing the mirroring structure owned by the Looking-Glass/male sphere, Alice is able to conclude the signs refer to the same place whereas before language abnormalities like puns and homonyms confused the young child. She is growing linguistically.

As much as Alice wants to enter the male world and the linguistic center, she only finds the society nonsensical and confusing. But, she has gained some knowledge of the language and can recognize its nonsense. The Tweedle brothers continue Alice’s instruction by lecturing on the proper use of language in introductions. Witness to male testosterone as the two brothers fight, possibly to the death, over a rattle, the darkness that concludes this chapter once again indicates Alice is not ready to face her sexuality though her linguistic development brings her closer to the final resolution of the dream. It is becoming clearer as to what Alice is avoiding in this scene: confounded by the silly fight between the Tweedles, Alice is facing the possibility that she does not fit into the male sphere and cannot attain the phallus as she hopes.

After exiting the male society of the Tweedles, Alice encounters its opposite. The White Queen, who seems as infantile as her daughter, depicts purity and virginity. In reality, she would not be a virgin because she has a daughter. But because the Looking-Glass World works in the reverse, the White Queen would have a daughter first and then would be a virgin. Being poked by her pin, the Queen’s bleeding, a symbol of both menstruation and the loss of virginity,
demonstrates this regression. The Queen is quite distressed because she cannot verbalize the cause of her bleeding until she pricks herself on the brooch pin—a masculine icon. When the Queen does make the connection she smiles; it is a part of womanhood. Alice, being exposed to this episode, should now "understand the way things happen." That is, Alice should realize that menstruation and the loss of virginity during marriage are parts of womanhood. But Alice is just a seven-year-old girl and cannot quite understand the biological functions of a body that has not matured. She does, however, seem to comprehend that to be a woman is very lonely, a thought which makes her cry. The White Queen is able to make her laugh suggesting it is not bad to take on a feminine identity and continues Alice’s instruction on proper language etiquette. Alice even asks to be instructed by this feminine icon: “If your majesty will only tell me the right way to begin, I’ll do it as well as I can” (Carroll 172). This is the first time Alice invites instruction suggesting she wants a feminine teacher because she desires a feminine sexuality.

From this point on, Alice explores the feminine aspects of gender roles first in the goat's shop and then on the river. Yet, here too, because of her age, shadows appear. Alice confines her desires to darkness because she is still not comfortable deciding her sexual role, but she is attracted more to the feminine as is evident when she pursues the egg in the shop. The egg, the female reproductive cell, becomes Humpty Dumpty who then is discovered sitting on a wall, an icon of erect bodies. Alice’s awareness of her gender desires as a female increases. It is also interesting that Humpty is able to explain successfully to Alice the meaning of the Jabberwocky poem as well as his interpretation of linguistics. He believes himself to be a master of words, yet he does not realize that he is trapped by an unchanging text, “a nursery rhyme which comprises his only identity, his sole claim on existence” (Rackin 9). Like the Caterpillar, Humpty too is a child figure, the egg of a bird. Trapped in the early stages of the Mirror phase, Humpty ignores
the “other” which imprisons him in the looking-glass (Rackin 11). He is infantile in his argument though he wants to be philosophical like an adult. Rackin justifies:

With a much more sophisticated concept of language, Alice responds to Humpty Dumpty’s outrageous insults by saying “nothing”; for she doesn’t, as the narrator tells us, “want to begin another argument” (162). And in the verbal exchange with Humpty Dumpty about the meaning of the word “glory,” Alice demonstrates another aspect of her budding maturity. Humpty asserts that “glory” means “there’s a nice knock-down argument for you!” Alice politely objects, and Humpty declares that when he uses a word it means, as he says, “just what I choose it to mean--neither more nor less” (163). This extreme linguistic narcissism, this childish and unfounded sense of control over the world and its meanings, is so shocking to Alice that she wisely refrains from debating the question any longer. (11)

Again, she asks for the meaning of words though is not satisfied with the answers she receives because they are explained by someone who is just as young and inexperienced linguistically as she is. Yet, as Carroll describes her linguistic adventures, he pulls her further out of the shadows of social conventions concerning sexuality and childhood.

In the next two sequences of her dream, Alice again explores the masculine realm only to find the same confusion as before, but this time Carroll’s definition of the male character is clearer. The knights are clumsy. The White King disrespects Alice. The Lion and the Unicorn fight. The male figures see Alice as a monster not only for being a child, but also for venturing into this world. They force her into the female role of preparing food and serving it, then ridicule her for not knowing the rules of serving Looking-Glass cake. Alice does not know the rules of the male sphere and cannot understand them because she is a female and a child who has not yet mastered the language of the masculine Looking-Glass world to help her to understand.

Alice must claim a masculine or a feminine gender role. But since she does not know the language of the masculine realm, she must resign to possessing the female position. The White Knight further helps acclimate her to this position. The balding White Knight is the castration
According to Freudian theory, the girl's castration complex centers on her imagination that originally all children had penises and that girls somehow lost theirs... and on the consequent hope that it may grow back... The girl subject to castration anxiety uses many and varied defenses to protect her self-esteem from such imagined deficiency; among these are unconscious fantasies that she, too, has similar equipment. (Bettelheim 266)

Alice's fantasy up to the Lion and Unicorn fight has been her gaining acceptance into a male-dominated world and the learning of the language of this society. As a castration figure, the balding White Knight cuts off Alice’s psychological penis, re-instilling in Alice her feminine role. Although he is to escort Alice to the Eighth Square where she will become Queen and a masculine figure, the White Knight enforces her femininity by insuring her safety, establishing Alice as a female who must be protected by a male. Furthermore, he asks her to wave a handkerchief as a farewell, just as the maidens in the fairy tales waved hankerchiefs at their lovers. He puts her in a feminine role, one Alice accepts.

In the last sequence of her dream, Alice succeeds in becoming a queen. The crown, a Freudian mark of masculinity, is heavy for the young girl, heavier than she expected. Thus Alice is not quite prepared for a masculine role. She is still combating her masculine and feminine auras and must decide on one. The Red Queen and the White Queen represent her struggle between the two. The Red Queen is questioning, demanding, and confusing, while the White Queen is gentle, polite, and submissive. Despite these differences, the two complement one another. In fact, the Red Queen demonstrates sensitivity towards the White Queen by fanning her when she appears feverish, gently stroking her hand, complimenting her upbringing, and directing Alice in putting her to sleep. The White Queen plays the Victorian woman well while the Red Queen exemplifies the dominant male.
Alice begins to portray traits of the dominant male by taking the initiative to walk into her own banquet. But this masculine demonstration is short-lived. She walks into the hall to find a table (a feminine indicator) laid for a feast in her honor. Since it is set in Alice's honor, the table indicates Alice's true gender identity as feminine. The candles in the hall suggest darkness, depicting that Alice is not ready to accept this orientation. Again seated between the two queens, the White on her right and the Red on her left, Alice struggles with her sexual identity. She submits to the Red Queen, then takes charge of the meal by expressing her desire of wanting a dish returned to the table, then submits again. The pressure manifests itself into the two queens squeezing against her. The White Queen who represents righteousness and femininity warns her of the disruption that is to come when Alice is forced to face her identity. Queer things begin to happen as Alice's anxiety over choosing between the two identities swells. The candles grow up to the ceiling. Inanimate objects sprout wings. All occurrences are symbolic of Alice's decision and her journey into womanhood. She shows concern for the feminine ideal--the White Queen--and extreme dislike for the masculine image--the Red Queen.

In this concluding banquet scene, Alice finally verbalizes her desire. “I can’t take this any longer!” Alice screams, meaning she is tired of the struggle and has recognized the Red Queen as the cause of her distress:

“And as for you,” she went on, turning fiercely upon the Red Queen, whom she considered as the cause of all this mischief. . . . “As for you,” she repeated, catching hold of the little creature in the very act of jumping over a bottle which had just lighted upon the table, “I’ll shake you into a kitten that I will!” (Carroll 233-4)

Alice is now able to articulate her fear of the Red Queen. Throughout her adventure in the Looking-Glass realm, Alice has been pursuing a position of power closest to the Red Queen’s, mistaking that power to be the Phallus of linguistics. In actuality, the Red Queen signifies the
Phallus/penis as the symbol of masculinity. Once Alice understands her mistake and identifies the queen as the cause of her struggle, Alice is able to do something about her anxiety. She shakes the queen into a non-threatening form, a kitten. By facing and conquering her fear of being assigned a feminine identity and by vocalizing her discontent with the Red Queen, Alice wins the chess match and can now awaken from her dream.

In the external world, Alice cannot voice the desire to enter the masculine sphere because such a wish was not acceptable for a Victorian female, particularly a female child. Children were the icons of all that was pure and non-sexual. Alice, therefore, has to explore her desire to be an adult in a male-dominated society in her dream. The hidden issue that Alice cannot seem to face even in the security of her dream is her fear of taking part in the maturation process of womanhood. For her, it is much easier to be a man and avoid this process altogether. In the dream, Alice is able to don a male identity only to find that it is confusing and nonsensical and that she really wants the feminine identity. In reality, Alice is able to talk about her dream. Though she is still not able to talk about her sexuality, she is content in her role in the feminine sphere.

Alice’s journey beyond the looking-glass is much more than a search for her sexual identity. In order to identify her gender role, she must be aware of the language of the society in which she is attempting to enter. Thus, she struggles not only in a patriarchal sphere, but also with the language that encumbers it. Lewis Carroll adequately manipulates this search for sexuality and the linguistic structure in *Through the Looking-Glass* to portray the Victorian child as a sexual being despite the nineteenth-century objection to such a notion. His child icon is still “sentimental, escapist, and the repository of all that was good and pure” as Polhemus suggests the image to which the child should adhere. Carroll creates through Alice’s dream a fantasy for
her to explore, in acceptable terms, a taboo subject. Furthermore, Carroll’s texts reflect the desires of real children who communicate their own stories. Alice is not necessarily all that is good but she is definitely a pure child whom the adult can recognize as learning a language rather than as a speaker of another language.

Carroll’s Alice books become the possessions of the children who created them. Alice signifies both the child who created the story with Carroll, but also every child who is on the linguistic journey. The child can literally own the story when she buys a copy of Carroll’s books but can also own the story by defining her identity through Alice’s linguistic adventures. Carroll relinquishes part of his agency as author by providing a tale as told by the children in his life. This loss of power, however, is necessary for Carroll to shed light on the existing shadows of childhood. Through his child character, Carroll explains to adults that children are not nonsensical beings and do not speak another language. Children are like the Caterpillar and Humpty, beings in a developmental stage of adulthood. Although he cannot present a real child since as an adult Carroll cannot adequately understand children, the writer must resign to the fact that his child figure is also a clearly defined shadow of every child, though a shadow nonetheless. Yet, it is the purity and innocence of Alice’s search for language that makes her a realistic shadow of childhood.

Notes

1 See my discussion on p. 3 of Chapter 4 for a concise breakdown of this argument.
2 See Mary Cadogan’s “Feminine Images in the Alice Books” in the Autumn 2003 Issue of The Carrollian: The Lewis Carroll Journal pages 45-58. Cadogan observes Alice’s changing dress from Wonderland to Looking-glass and argues that it signifies a maturing Alice. For a discussion of critical interpretations of the arrangements of the illustrations, see Michael Hancher’s The Tenniel Illustrations to the “Alice” Books.  
3 For a complete graph of this formula, see Whorf’s essay “Linguistics As An Exact Science” p.223 in John Carroll’s edition.
In defining “reality” in “Language, Mind, & Reality” Whorf establishes the cosmic universe is made of patterns which form wholes which form larger wholes. Linguistic study forces an investigation of these patterns and their planes where as different sciences cannot recognize these patterns often distorting nature by studying only sections (248).

See Steven Jacobson’s discussion of the Inuit phonemes for “snow” in his *Yub’ik Eskimo Dictionary*.

See Vygotsky’s *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (1930) and *Thought and Language* (1934).

More precisely, Alice is exactly seven in the first book since the text is set on Alice Liddell’s birthday, May 4. In the second book, set on November 4th, Alice is only six months older.

Private language is that speech a child addresses to herself. Its intent is to help the child think about her behavior and to select courses of action (Morrison 408). Vygotsky believed private speech helped in cognitive development by serving as a “foundation for higher cognitive processes” (White 132) like sustained attention and deliberate memorization. While it is not meant for others, it does give an insight into the thought processes of a child.

While it is true that Carroll is an adult and my argument is that adults don’t understand children, Carroll is often noted as being able to converse with children. Green quotes Enid Stevens Shawyer, a child friend of the author, who said: “he had the heart of a child himself, so when he spoke to a child she understood—even about the deeper things of life—because he spoke her language”(xxv). Shawyer’s statement indicates Carroll was able to translate adult language by bringing himself to the child’s level. Yet, there is no evidence he actually understood children. He could just speak their language.

Jeffrey Stern’s collection of the facsimiles of the auction catalogue of Carroll’s estate lists this book but provides no publication date nor reference information.

Alice Liddell begged Carroll to write down the tale constructed on the boat ride in the summer of 1862. *Alice’s Adventures Underground* is a transcription of that tale while *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* contains more focus on the purpose of the story, here language acquisition. *Through the Looking-Glass* has no surviving transcription though the adult testimony of Carroll’s child friends indicate *Looking-Glass* was initially constructed through the same manner of story telling where the child provided the backbone of the story and Carroll provided the textual meat.

Nadine Schoenburg’s “A Look at How Alice’s Playing in the Looking Glass Reflects Back on Her” (1993) takes a Lacanian approach to trace in the *Alice* books Alice’s development away from the Narcistic stage. Schoenburg is interested in the ideas of play and rules in Alice’s growth. In “Alice Through the ‘Looking Glass Book’: Carroll’s Use of Children’s Literature as a Ground for Reversal in *Through the Looking Glass* and What Alice Found There” (1992), Ronald Reichertz examines the *Alice* books as traditional looking glass books and suggests reversal is the unity throughout the books held by the tradition of rhymes, didactic poetry, and riddles. Ronald Thomas uses marxist and psychoanalytical concepts to exert Alice and Scrooge’s dreams present power struggles solved by a mastery of language in his “Profitable Dreams in the Marketplace of Desire: *Alice in Wonderland, A Christmas Carol, and The Interpretation of Dreams*.”

I say that “Alice finds herself on the train” because she does not know how she appeared in the carriage.
The Tenniel images, as I argued in the last chapter are extensions of Carroll’s imagination. Thus, the images coincide with the text to support psychological interpretations.

Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Ruth* (1853) became the center of controversy because of its radical ideas about women, marriage, and motherhood. Gaskell allowed her central figure to have complete control over her body and defy male institutions trying to suppress women. Other women novelists like George Eliot followed with the creation of powerful female characters who attempted to break the bonds society’s power institutions placed on all women.

The bird or flying theme reverberates in poetry written by women during the Victorian period. For direct references to birds and themes of freedom in Victorian women’s poetry see Caroline Norton’s “Sonnet VII: Like an enfranchised bird,” Eliza Cook’s “Song of the Imprisoned Bird,” and Matilda Blind’s “On a Forsaken Lark’s Nest.”

My accounts of laws and social constructs are summarized from Mary Shanley’s *Feminism, Marriage, and the Law in Victorian England* (1989).
Afterword. Following Alice’s Shadow: Child Identity in *Peter Pan, Harry Potter, and Series of Unfortunate Events*

Lewis Carroll manages to create a shadow of the nineteenth century child while at the same time allowing the child to create her own shadow through language and the written word. Children pose for the camera and then sign their pictures establishing a link between the shadow and reality. In literature, Carroll expands on stories initially told by children, giving power to the child to define herself through the tale. My exploration of shadows to discuss images of childhood in Lewis Carroll’s photography, illustrations, and literary works is not meant as a definitive explanation of childhood. Instead it is an explanation of how one might examine through this lens images of children produced by society. I have provided my own examination of Lewis Carroll and his own commentary on childhood as an example for others to follow. Thus, the theory of shadows in relation to children extends well beyond the nineteenth century to show other authors casting far darker shadows than those cast by Carroll. In this conclusion, I would like to briefly apply this lens to explain the shadows children and authors continue to cast in modern British children’s literature, focusing my discussion solely on Wendy of James Barrie’s *Peter Pan* and Harry of J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. In addition, I will show through my analysis of Lemony Snicket’s *Series of Unfortunate Events* that shadows appear in modern American books for children as well.

In her article “The *Alice* Books and the Metaphors of Victorian Childhood,” Jan B. Gordon explores the image of the orphaned child in Victorian society. Her orphaned child is a metaphorical being since the child in her opinion could not exist without some type of adult support. With no family ties, Gordon argues, many characters in nineteenth-century British novels seek origins, “trying to locate a point from which they can date their existence” (18). While on this journey to validate their historical identity, children in particular must also define
their character as well by creating their own shadows. Being orphaned has an advantage, in this case. Children can cast shadows without adult involvement.

This orphaning continues in the twentieth century as indicated by the titles authors choose for books. The title of the book using the child’s name isolates the identity of the child and alerts the reader that the story he/she is about to read concerns this child or children. Thus, titles include *Alice’s Adventures*, *Peter Pan*, and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*. In each case, the author draws attention to the struggle of the title character to identify herself or himself. In Alice’s case, the struggle is first with language in *Wonderland* and then with gender identity in *Through the Looking-Glass*. But by the twentieth century, the struggle with identity becomes darker, as the demand to create a more realistic child pressures adult writers to do just that. Thus, the conflicts the central characters of *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter* face force harsher shadows of childhood.

Originally called *Peter and Wendy*, *Peter Pan*, it can be argued, has two central characters: the perpetual child who seeks his origins and the girl torn between leaving the nursery to become an adult or remaining forever a child. Barrie opens his book with the following line: “All children, except one, grow up.” Immediately Barrie sets to argue one child in his original title must grow up. Wendy learns at the early age of two that she is expected to grow up, and it is this realization that Barrie relates is “the beginning of the end.” All beings are in a continual stage of growing up producing death only at the end. A bleak notion, Barrie establishes it nonetheless.

Furthermore, the author explains that Wendy was always in peril of being orphaned. Two pages into the text, Barrie explains:

"For a week or two after Wendy came it was doubtful whether they would be able to keep her, as she was another mouth to fee. Mr. Darling was frightfully proud"
of her, but he was very honorable, and he sat on the edge of Mrs. Darling’s bed, holding her hand and calculating expenses, while she looked at him imploringly. She wanted to risk it, but that was not his way. (8-9)

Mr. Darling calculates the costs of having a child as well as the material sacrifices he would have to make to support Wendy, finally conceding to his wife to try “it” for a year. Parenthood is reduced to an “it” and the child to a commodity, and as such Wendy and her brothers are kept in the nursery to protect Mr. Darling’s investment.

On the night that Mr. and Mrs. Darling go out to their dinner party, Mr. Darling expels Nana, their faithful watchdog, from the nursery. First he collides with the canine getting hairs all over his trousers. Then, in an attempt to avoid taking medicine with his children, Mr. Darling puts his tonic in Nana’s bowl claiming he is playing a practical joke. The children are not amused and coddle their nanny. Mr. Darling sees this affection for the dog rather than for himself as the last straw. His investments do not respect him and therefore are no longer given the status of children. By banishing Nana from the nursery on the night he and his wife are also leaving, Mr. Darling is orphanning his own children. With Nana gone, Wendy understands she is the next to leave the nursery. However, before she is ready, Barrie has her explore the world of being a perpetual child and the world of pirates, Neverland.

Peter Pan, the title character, is a symbol of every child. He orphans himself intentionally the day he was born because he “heard father and mother talking about what I was to become when I became a man” (41). While Wendy is first introduced to the concept of growing up when she was two, Peter is forced into an acknowledgement of adulthood when he was only a few hours old. Such an early introduction stunted Peter’s natural childhood, and he had to escape to a place where he could be a child as long as he wanted.
Barrie never reveals Peter’s true age but does hint that he is possibly as old as Wendy’s mother. Even though Peter proclaims that he never wants to be a man, something draws him from Neverland and into Wendy’s nursery, her stories of children. Because he has no shadow, Peter has no identity, and views Wendy as the person who can define his missing childhood. The first feat Wendy accomplishes is sewing on Peter’s elusive shadow. First, she verbally identifies him as a boy: “she could not help by smiling when she saw that he had been trying to stick [the shadow] on with soap. How exactly like a boy!” (39). She empowers him by sewing on his shadow. By reconnecting his shadow to an actual child, Wendy reconfirms Peter’s identity as a child. The second method Wendy has of defining Peter is to tell stories of him to others: “‘Don’t go, Peter,’ she entreated, ‘I know such lots of stories’” (47). As Barrie points out in his narrative, Wendy inadvertently tempts Peter into taking her to Neverland. Although Wendy’s purpose is to entertain other children who are also orphaned, Peter wants her to tell stories to define childhood.

Facing expulsion from the nursery, Wendy accepts Peter’s proposal to fly to Neverland. Yet, her journey is more than an entertaining one. Neverland presents two identities from which Wendy can chose. She can be the perpetual child casting shadows of childhood for other children, or she can become an adult. Unfortunately, the roles afforded her are not delightful. While acting as a child, she is mistaken as a bird and is shot down. As a female, Wendy is an outsider to the other female figures in Neverland and is seen as a competitor for Peter’s affections. Furthermore, the only adult roles allowed in Neverland are the noble Indian savage or evil, blood-thirsty pirate. It is Captain Hook who makes her finally choose between these roles. She must pledge to become an evil adult or else die in the sea. Facing death, Wendy seeks to return home and face growing up into a respectable woman. Not only does she return home,
but she brings with her the lost boys whom the Darlings adopt. Her role is now mother to these orphans, and she in turn is mothered by Mrs. Darling. Wendy is able to convince children through the shadows of her stories that growing up is a natural process that should not be stunted. However, she is never able to convince Peter who chooses to remain outside of the nursery window forever seeking shadows to define his own identity.

In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* and well as throughout the entire *Harry Potter* series, J.K. Rowling also defines children as shadows. Harry, too, is orphaned though not by his own choosing. His parents are killed, Harry learns at the age of eleven, by the evil wizard Lord Voldemort. While this notion of wizardry and magic might seem to negate any argument of reality in children’s literature, Rowling creates Harry as a real child. From the time of his parents’ death to the point in which he discovers he is a wizard, Harry is abused and forced to live in the shadows of the Dursley household. Though the Dursleys are blood relation to Harry, he still yearns for the truth concerning his parents and his origins. Hogwarts provides a realm for Harry to define his character, to discover his origins, and to defend himself against the evils of the world be it abusive relatives or evil wizards.

Yet, even Hogwarts is a shadow. It holds mysteries, and the landscape is ever changing. With each turn of a staircase, Harry is introduced to new situations that afford Harry the opportunity to feel like a normal child. For example, in the *Sorcerer’s Stone*, Harry discovers the Mirror of Erised, which allows him to see himself for the first time in a loving family. As he stands in front of the mirror, Harry is no longer an orphan but the image of a child with two parents beside him. Again, this image is but a shadow, a reflection of what Harry wants. What he actually has is a non-traditional family composed of mentoring teachers and dedicated friends who help Harry as he uncovers the truth of his parents and his own beginnings. Like Neverland
and Wonderland, Hogwarts becomes a landscape in which Harry can explore identity issues that include overpowering the abusive Durselys. He seeks the literal power to prevent his relatives from hurting him.

But again, Hogwarts is just a shadow of the truth as the Harry realizes that Hogwarts cannot protect him from danger. In The Goblet of Fire, Harry is lured into a wizard tournament as a ploy to resurrect the body of Lord Voldemort. Voldemort’s henchman needs Harry’s blood in the spell since Harry caused Lord Voldemort’s demise. During the resurrection a fellow classmate is killed. Harry blames himself and begins a journey into self-retrospection. In the following book, The Order of the Phoenix, Harry’s demeanor becomes darker as he feels he can no longer depend on the family system he has created in earlier books. The setting also becomes darker with Harry living in his wizard godfather’s ancestral home. The magic Harry is exposed to is stronger and more evil, and Harry is seduced by its power. Ultimately, Harry learns there is no safe haven in the world, fictional or real.

Rowling defines Harry by these evil shadows. He is the child who defeated He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. The source of Harry’s own power comes from that absorbed when Voldemort attempted to kill the child years ago. The author extends a connection between childhood and adulthood, not arguing the child is father to the man, but that the man is father to the evilness in the child. Harry examines whether or not he can become a Lord Voldemort, who like Harry, is half witch, half muggle. Rowling presents a character who is not evil but also not entirely good, examining that the shadows children face are those they create themselves. Children begin to recognize the evil of which they are capable.

As we turn to the twenty-first century, are these shadows of childhood still present in literature? The answer is simple. Yes. However, this shadowy lens can extend to American
children’s literature, specifically Lemony Snicket’s *Series of Unfortunate Events*. In this series, the author warns the audience in each installment of the series, that the story he is about to relate is not a happy one. The children do not seek adventure only to return to a safe haven as Alice and Wendy do. Instead the Baudelaire children, the child characters of the series, must endure untold horrors only to find themselves in unresolved situations at the end of each book.

The Baudelaires are also orphaned when their parents die in a fire that destroys their home or so the audience thinks (Snicket gives hope that one of the parent may have survived in the tenth book). The initial danger for the children, however, is their cousin Count Olaf who wants their fortune. The further Snicket takes us into the lives of the Baudelaires, the darker Olaf’s character becomes. He kills the children’s guardians and friends, ultimately wanting to kill all but one of the children. His quest becomes more than acquiring money: Olaf wants to wipe out the entire VFD organization, an organization that contains answers to the Baudelaire’s shadowed lives. In wiping out the VFD, Olaf will destroy the Baudelaire’s identity and then can consume them for his personal gain.

Trying to avoid Olaf devilish plot, the children are pushed, through out the series towards their own Platonic cave where they must examine shadows of themselves. Are they the heroes or the villains? They lie, steal, and start fires to get away from Olaf and thus they come down hard on themselves and examine their demons. In the most recently published book in the series, *The Grim Grotto* the children travel by submarine to the depths of the sea where they come to an underwater cave that leads to a grotto. With nowhere to go—deadly mushrooms have sprung up and the children cannot return to the submarine until the mushrooms become dormant again—, the Baudelaires reflect on their adventures. While they are in the cave, their current guardian disappears so they are orphaned. However, the artifacts found in the grotto help to fill in some
missing pieces to the puzzle of their parents, VFD, and their past. So, the cave becomes a place of truth through reflections/shadows. It is an extension of the platonic cave and its inhabitants are willing to see the harsh reality through the shadowed reflections, thus, proving that shadows are a continuing part of children’s literature.

My analysis of these stories is brief because my intent is only to point out that the shadows of childhood are evident in contemporary children’s literature. Yet, there exists a shift from Carroll’s attempts to simply define the misconception of childhood to Rowling and Snicket’s explication of the potential evil children harbor within themselves. I can simply explain this shift as a changing of times, both in social values and family dynamics. However, by examining the shadows that accompany childhood, be they literal, metaphorical, real or imaginary, one can attempt an understanding of children as they wish to be identified.
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R. Nichole Rougeau was born in Lafayette, Louisiana, in July of 1975. She graduated from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now known as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette) in 1997 with a Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in French. Immediately following her undergraduate studies, Ms. Rougeau enrolled in graduate courses at USL in the fall of 1997 and began teaching in the English Department in 1998, receiving a Master of Arts degree in Literature from that institution in the spring of 1999. She entered the doctoral program at Louisiana State University in the fall of 1999 where she served as a classroom assistant, a teaching assistant, and a part-time instructor for six years.