

# Alice's adventure of self discovery in wonderland

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The bildungsroman novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll elucidates the idea of humans needing to be faced with a drastic situation, in order to grow and develop their own identity. Alice begins in the novel as a respectful and naive child, one typical of the Victorian Era. She struggles with adjusting to the new situations, as well as the growth and changes of her body. Alice's escapades in Wonderland allow her to change her views with regard to authority as well as to understand different life situations.

Alice's time in Wonderland compels her to become more independent as well as to stand up for herself, ergo becoming a mature, self-reliant young woman. Alice's adventures in Wonderland permit her to understand and accept her body's baffling changes. As Alice enters Wonderland, a world where nothing is the same, her body changes sizes eleven times, something that is drastic for anyone, not only a young girl. When " she sat down and began to cry again" (Carroll 17), this was in regard to her body's rapid and confusing changes.

Alice's body changed, she was completely hopeless as well had no idea on how to deal with the situation, much like a child entering puberty. When a child first enters puberty, they are extremely uncomfortable, but eventually they become more and more comfortable with the changes and in their own skin. Alice proves that she is becoming more comfortable with herself and her identity when she declares, " Oh dear! I'd nearly forgotten that I've got to grow up again! Let me see-how is it to be managed" (39).

Alice's body no longer has control over her, but instead she has control over her own body. Throughout *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice continues

to become more comfortable with her body as well as in foreign and unfamiliar situations. Alice's adventure allows her not only to become more comfortable with her body, but also more comfortable in regard to understanding the role that authority plays in society. When Alice first enters Wonderland, she is a confused, helpless child, who does not understand how to stand up for herself.

In the beginning of the novel, Alice is thrown into a world where the strict rules she lives by no longer apply, and as a result does not understand how to act, especially in regard to authority. When the Rabbit makes a mistake of calling to Alice saying, " Why Mary Ann, what are you doing here? ... Alice was so frightened she ran off at once without saying a word" (10), Alice clearly acknowledges and understands the mistake. Due to her strict, traditional Victorian upbringing, she was taught to obey authority at all costs and never to contradict someone who was in a position of power.

In Wonderland however, all that Alice thought she knew about authority is tossed aside, as those rules no longer apply. Although Alice indubitably knows she is not Mary Ann, the Rabbit's maid, she is too afraid to disobey authority and point out the error of his ways. However, further on in the novel, as well as further on in Alice's growth as a human, she becomes more comfortable with speaking up to authority. When Alice contradicts the Queen and her poor decisions when the Queen exclaims, " Off with her head!

Off with her.. " but Alice barges in and declares that it is " nonsense. " (72). Alice not only becomes more comfortable as herself, but more comfortable speaking up and against authority, an important aspect of maturing. Alice's

growth and maturing not only depends on her physical size, but it also depends on her ability to adapt to new situations. In Wonderland, all of the new rules that come with these strange games, from the caucus race to the croquet game are metaphors to social situations.

At the beginning of Alice's adventure, Alice is confused by these new social situations, and does not quite know how to react to them. During the croquet game, Alice is unsure and "rather doubtful whether she ought not to lie down on her face like the three gardeners." (35). Alice had never been in a situation like this, and she clearly did not know how to react, something that is learned over time as a person matures. Another example further along in the novel is when Alice is thrown into a new situation, where a baby is in danger, irrefutably a situation she had never been in before.

Although Alice was unfamiliar with the social protocol, or what one would typically do in such a situation, she was mature enough to trust her instincts and stand up for the child by exclaiming at the Duchess, "Oh please mind what you're doing! You nearly took his nose off!" (39). As Alice continues to mature and emerge as a young adult, she begins to trust her intuitions as well as defends her thoughts and ideas. Through Alice's journey, she becomes more mature and as a result, adapts to new situations more easily.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a fantasy, bildungsroman novel that explores coming of age, in regard to puberty as well as social maturity.

Although within the novel, it is Alice's physical size that changes quite often, she matures throughout the novel while in Wonderland, adapting more easily to new, frightening situations as well as developing her moral courage. Alice

begins her adventure as a frightened young girl, one who can barely cope in a situation, and she ends her journey being a strong, fearless and independent young woman.