

Alice's journey to find her identity



**ASSIGN
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Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is a story of a young girl's Journey down the rabbit hole into a fantasy world where there seems to be no logic. Throughout *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice experiences a variety of bizarre physical changes, causing her to realize she is not only trying to figure out Wonderland but also trying to determine her own identity. After Alice arrives in Wonderland the narrator states, " For this curious child was very fond of pretending to be two people" (Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* 12). This quotation is the first instance that shows Alice is unsure of her identity.

The changes in size that take place when she eats or drinks are the physical signs of her loss of identity. The question of why Alice is unsure of her identity relates to Alice's developing stage from childhood to adulthood. Carroll explains Alice's confusion about her own identity and her position between childhood and adulthood by contrasting her logical with the inhabitants of Wonderland. After Alice had drunk from the bottle, causing her to shrink to only ten inches tall, and eaten the cake, causing her to grow to more than nine feet tall she said to herself, " Dear, dear!

How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? Ah, That's the greatest puzzle! " (Alice 14). It is at this point that Alice realizes it is not just Wonderland that she is trying to figure out but also her identity in a world that challenges her perspective of herself.

As she continues on her Journey through Wonderland she has several encounters with characters that question her identity such as, the White Rabbit, who mistakes her for his servant Mary Ann, the Caterpillar, who asks her the question Who are you? , the Pigeon, who calls her a serpent, and the Gryphon, in which she tells him " I could tell you my adventures -beginning from this morning but it's no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then" (Alice 76). However, as she progress through Wonderland she slowly gains a reater sense of herself and eventually overthrows the Queen of Heart's cruel court.

Alice's confusion about her identity is related to her developing sense of the difference between childhood and adulthood. In Wonderland she is surrounded by adult figures that have authority such as the Duchess, the Queen, and the King. Even the animals she meets treat her like an adult might treat a small child. For instances, the White Rabbit and the Caterpillar order her around and the Mad Hatter, the March Hare, and the Dormouse are all rude to her. They break the rules of politeness and logic that adults have taught Alice.

In order to understand the adult world, Alice has to overcome the open-mindedness that is characteristic for children. It is not until Alice stops trying to logically understand the characters in Wonderland and rejects their world that she comes of age. In the end Alice has adapted and lost her imagination that comes with childhood. She realizes the characters in Wonderland are 'nothing but a pack of cards' (Alice 91). At this point, she has matured too much to tay in Wonderland, the world of the children, and wakes up into the real world, the world of adults. etween childhood and adulthood is explained

by contrasting her logic with the characters in Wonderland. According to Alice everything about Wonderland is absurd. From the moment she sees the White Rabbit taking his watch from his waistcoat pocket, Alice tries to understand the logic of Wonderland. None of the rules that she has been taught seem to apply in Wonderland. The characters in Wonderland have no sense of manners and respond to her questions with answers that make no sense. For example, the Mad Hatter asks the questions, " Why is a raven like a writing desk? (Alice 51). Alice assumes he is asking a riddle and she begins to try to answer it, thinking the Hatter would not ask a riddle without knowing the answer. When Alice is unable to figure out the riddle, the Hatter explains that there is no answer. He does not explain why he asked the riddle, he simply says, " I haven't the slightest idea" (Alice 53). In which Alice replies, " I think you might do something better with the time, than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers" (Alice 53). The Hatter then responds with a lecture on Time, which he depicts as a person.

Time being depicted as a person makes no logical sense to Alice. In the end, Alice rebels during the trial scene when the King said " Rule Forty-two. All persons more than a mile high to leave the court" (Alice 88). Alice objects to the absurd nature of the trial saying, " Who cares for you? You're nothing but a pack of cards! " (Alice 91). This final scene is the end of her dream, and she wakes up with her head in her sister's lap. During Alice's Journey through Wonderland she matured from childhood to adulthood while also finding her true identity.

The physical changes that she experienced show both her struggle with figuring out her who she is and her developing stage from childhood to

adulthood. Her encounters with the characters of Wonderland frustrated her in the moment but in the end it is what she learned from them that caused her to mature to an adult. Many people might believe Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a children's story, but in fact it is much more than a children's story. It has many morals and lessons within it.