

Parody covers Wonderland

A Carrollian representation of Victorian England

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Lewis Carroll, the pseudonym of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, wrote in 1865 the children's book everybody has heard about at least once: *Alice in Wonderland*. *Alice in Wonderland* all started with Charles Dodgson¹ and Alice Liddle² “(pronounced as middle)” (Meyers, 227) and her sisters, the daughters of the Dean, a good friend of Dodgson's. In many papers and biographies it shows that Dodgson fancied Alice Liddle and that his interest always was with younger girls. According to Jeffrey Meyers, writer of an *Afterword* of *Alice in Wonderland*, he photographed naked girls, but “abhorred brutish little boys.”(227) Apparently, he once “told a friend, ‘I confess I do *not* admire naked *boys* in a picture. They always seem to need *clothes*: whereas one hardly sees why the lovely forms of girls should *ever* be covered up!’”(227) Meyer also adds that he “lost interest in them as soon as they reached puberty.” (227) Alice Liddle was Dodgson's favourite. According to an *Introduction* in one of the editions of the *Alice* books³, by Peter Hunt⁴, *Alice in Wonderland* is based on Alice Liddle and her sisters, all starting with a cancelled trip to the river: Dodgson intended to take the girls to the river, but because of a rainy day, they did not go. Instead Dodgson made up a story about them and the river and six months later the idea of *Alice in Wonderland* was born. The stories based on Alice Liddle and her sisters were a hit and this is also because of the mocking attitude towards the Victorian Ages. (1837 – 1901) It is said that Lewis Carroll commenced a new epoch with the *Alice* books in the Victorian era, because of its anti-

¹ I will speak of Dodgson when I am writing about Charles' real life and I will use the name Carroll to describe Charles as a writer.

² Her full name Alice Liddle will be used, when I am talking about the real Alice; the character in the book will be the first name Alice only.

³ I will use the italicised *Alice* to indicate the book and the non-italicised first name Alice to indicate the character.

⁴ Hunt, Peter. “Introduction.” *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass*. (2009): ix – xliii. Web.

morality, or the nonsense culture. The anti-morality, which is found to be in strong contrast towards the moralising mentality of the Victorian Ages, has made its way to the people:

Some reviewers praised the parodies and, even more, Carroll's original gift for talented nonsense writing, seen not just as trivial material to amuse the young but as a distinct branch of humor. (Cripps, 37)

Moral reading was no longer needed. However, to state that the Alice books are mere amusing, is in my opinion, rather concise; a book that ignores the didactics and moral and parodies the society, cannot only be amusing, it seems. It is the parody that deserves the attention. First of all, what is the definition of parody? Gerard Genette commences on the subject with the explanation of hypertexts in his book *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*: a hypertext is defined as “any text derived from a previous text.”(17) Genette also makes clear distinctions between various genres that use the hypertext, such as the parody and the pastiche. Genette specifies the definition of parody by adopting the definition of Dumarsais; Dumarsais writes that parody is an imitation of previous work with the intention to mock this work and show a different mindset. (16) According to Genette the difference between parody and pastiche is that parody includes caricature, while the pastiche does not.⁵ The parody should stay close to the work it is imitating, so that the audience can make the connection. Parody is often used as a literary device, because of “its high potential as a vehicle for social and literary criticism.” (Goetsch, 41) Because of the resemblance with the previous work and the added humour, the audience is likely to find the parody funny and this will (most of the time) protect the writer from harm for actually criticising a part of these texts. Cripps writes in her article that Carroll is known for the parody in *Alice in Wonderland*

⁵ For more extensive information and differences among adjacent genres , see the rest of Genette’s *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*.

and according to her article it is well received by the audience, including literary critics and reviewing children. Carroll however, parodies a society and the popular books based on morality, instead of one text. The parody of the society leads towards the questions “To what extent is *Alice* a vehicle for criticism and does Carroll consistently use parody to express this criticism?”

In the next paragraph I will show how I will approach this work and set up my analysis. The book *Alice in Wonderland* had a sequel in 1871, called *Through the Looking Glass*. According to Cripps man expected it to be a great hit, for everybody knew Alice’s adventures, and a 16.000 copies were made. *Through the Looking Glass* was just like its forerunner a book against the moralising era. My analysis, however, will concentrate on the *Alice in Wonderland* book only instead of analysing them both. Despite the same anti-morality, I am to believe that there does not seem to be a significant additional benefit in the communication or the critique towards the Victorian era in *Through the Looking Glass*, probably because Alice’s story carries on as before. This paper will focus on parody and will pursue the value of parody in the story. I will compare the characters and their communication based on the traits of the creatures, the illustrations that accompany the story and the conversation itself; I try will to place them in the social context and discuss how parody functions. Hence, first it is necessary to portray the Victorian society, its values and its norms. Then after the portrait of society it is significant to discuss the book’s position in Victorian England and what the effect is the children’s genre instead of the adult’s genre. After these acknowledgements, the analysis of the book will begin, which will shed a light on the use of parody and the representation of society via the qualities of children’s literature and the features of the Victorian society. In the conclusion, there will be a coherent summary and a discussion.

Chapter 2: The Victorian society

To understand the parodic intentions of Carroll, the portrait of Victorian England is necessary. A common fact of the Victorian age is that this era is well known for its dictated manners and class system. The Victorian period is named after the queen of England in the 19th century, Victoria. Victoria was known for her kindness and care, which reflected in her ruling concerning women, children and animals. (Swain, 27) Poor children in the beginning of Victorian England did not have as many opportunities in life as richer children, because of the lack of money, and thus education. Many “children rescue movements” (Swain, 28) were inspired by the queen and their mission was to save the poor children on the street; the queen was not only known for her kindness and care, but also for her pious behaviour and good morals; Swain writes in her article that the characterising morals of the Victorian era were based on the queen and her husband.

Although moral and care for one another were considered necessary in the Victorian age, there still was a segregation in society. The Victorian’s society was based on a class system, divided into five classes, with at the top the aristocracy and at the bottom the working class.⁶ Because of the division, it is plausible to suspect a difference in education and in language. In 1870, however, the Education act entered the Victorian period:

The 1870 Education Act stands as the very first piece of legislation to deal specifically with the provision of education in Britain. (..) The issue of making education compulsory for children had not been settled by the Act. The 1876 Royal Commission

⁶See “Neale, Ronald S. "Class and Class-Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Three Classes or Five?." *Victorian Studies* 12.1 (1968) pp 5-32. PDF.” for a more detailed class description.

on the Factory Acts recommended that education be made compulsory in order to stop child labour. In 1880 a further Education Act finally made school attendance compulsory between the ages of five and ten, though by the early 1890s attendance within this age group was falling short at 82 per cent. (UK parliament)

The Education Act is a perfect fit in Queen Victoria's England, because it offered an opportunity for children to get an education. The law had of course its beneficial results, but the change was in comparison minimal, because there still was a division in the standards of education: before the educational law, poor children, from the working classes, had to work to enlarge the income, which meant that there was not enough money and time for education; after the educational law, the children were obligated to work after school time, else it would harm the family income. The age of compulsory education lasted until the age of ten and took five years of their lives, which still created a division between classes⁷ regarding education.

Since I will discuss the characters and their communication in *Alice in Wonderland*, it is significant to know that because the education level was divergent, the communication among the classes must have been different as well. Linguist Manfred Görlach discusses why there are certain language differences in the same place and one of these reasons⁸ is “the avoidance of extreme forms of pronunciation because these would be difficult to understand, or stigmatized, or both.” (23) Since the lower classes were not as educated as the higher classes, they were not always able to understand every linguistic aspect. This leads to a division concerning language and communication. Even after the compulsory act of education in 1880, the children of various classes were living in different milieus; the language of the

⁷ For clarification: in this paper, when I talk about classes, I am referring to the five-pieced class system in Victorian England; I am not talking about the lectures or the groups in school, which can normally be referred to as “classes” as well.

⁸ There are two other reasons, yet these seem to be irrelevant for this paper; they can be found on page 23 in Görlach's article.

parents must have been copied by children. It is hard to assume every child was capable of speaking English correctly. The communication skills in the Victorian era are thus class related.

Chapter 3: The form and audience

The illustrations

Now back to *Alice in Wonderland* and its position in the Victorian era. Author Gerard P. Muldering says that because of its nonsensical humour and its anti-didactics, *Alice in Wonderland* stood out against the rest of the juvenile Victorian literature.⁽¹⁾ The parody in the book was unique, especially because of its anti-morality, while moral was an important subject in children's literature to preserve the correct behaviour. *Alice in Wonderland* is according to Elizabeth Cripps often referred to as "a new epoch in children's literature."⁽⁴³⁾ The book distanced itself from the moral characteristics of the Victorian period. Muldering adds that the girl-protagonist stories were popular children's books, but that *Alice in Wonderland* presents itself as the "antithesis" (322) of this genre, because of its lack of moral. To illustrate this Muldering continues in his article with the story of the good natured little boy, where a boy gets rewarded for his good deeds, and the ill natured boy, who gets punished for his misbehaviour.⁹ These stories set the moral standards in the Victorian era and Muldering uses these stories to show the contrast with *Alice*.¹⁰

Peter Hunt wrote about the status of the Alice books in their period as well. Hunt also mentions the anti-morality and he writes that "from the 1830s the evangelic grip on children's education and books was gradually eroded." (21) Hunt continues that Carroll was part of a radical culture change. Moral would no longer be the main doctrine of children's literature, but amusement and nonsense were the new essence. So Carroll may not be a pioneer, but his

⁹ The stories were set as an example for good behaviour. Good behaviour was also a necessary element in the girl-protagonist stories. See (Muldering, 324) for the complete stories.

¹⁰ It is important to know that despite *Alice's* anti-morality, it does contain an overall message/moral still: Alice was scared in the beginning of the story, but was not afraid anymore in the end of the book; it teaches children to not be afraid of exploring the world, especially young girls.

story is exceptional, because it combines all the rebellious elements the writers used since the 1830s, like the absence of moralistic didactics; Carroll transferred these elements into a beautiful story.

Alice attracted a lot of attention, because of its form and content, but also because of its dialogue between the story and the illustrations. Illustrations are nowadays an important element of children's books. Joyce Whally describes in the *International Companion Encyclopaedia of Children's Literature: Volume I* the development of the pictured books and she writes that in the 17th century "Comenius, an educationalist from Moravia, was among the first to realise that children best remember things they have seen rather than merely read about." (318) From the 17th century until the 19th century the quality of the illustrations increased and pictures in children's books had become essential. Focussing again on *Alice in Wonderland*, Whally writes that "perhaps for the first time an artist and a writer" are "working together to produce a definitive form of an illustrated story." (323) The illustrations by Sir John Tenniel were special, because for the first time images added more meaning to the story. The illustrations in schoolbooks added meaning to the text as well, but Carroll and Tenniel were an exception, because they made an amusing story, not a scholarly text. Plus, the influence of Tenniel was so big that Carroll even deleted a chapter, called "The Wig and the Wasp", due to personal reasons.¹¹ The illustrations in schoolbooks did not have this power.

Since, the collaboration between the author and the illustrator is so important, I will take the illustrations into consideration in my analysis, because I suspect that the illustrations are an extension of the parodical approach. I will pursue the illustration's relevance in the parodical elements of the book, but first I will try to analyse and justify the use of the genre "the children's book."

¹¹ According to Martin Gardner, *The Annotated Alice*, Tenniel did not want the chapter in the Alice books, because of the eyes of the wasp, which are bulbous; Tenniel lost sight of his eye at the age of 20 and the pain he felt was comparable to a wasp sting. "One can understand why Tenniel might have been offended by the Wasp's remark." (note 18)

Why the children's genre?

So the first question that comes in mind is “why does Carroll use children’s literature to make a point towards adults?” Adult literature would be more logical, because children would probably not understand the parodical aspects. As mentioned earlier, in 1880 the Educational Act was constituted, which meant that every child should be educated, until the age of ten. Now there is a distinction between school books and entertaining books: the schools books were informative and they had pictures for didactical reasons; the pictures in spare time books were for fun, and in Carroll’s and Tenniel’s case, could add meaning to the story. Carroll could have made a children’s book to respond to the growing attention of children’s education, or perhaps the reason Carroll chose the children’s genre is to reach a greater audience. Another reason to chose a children’s genre could be that Carroll wanted to prove to the Victorian society that the overall representation of children in the Victorian era was disrupted, which means that *Alice in Wonderland* is put in a parodical genre as well. Jessica Straley points out in her article that children were seen as the closest to the primitive; she writes that the embryos of a chimp and a child were alike based upon Darwin’s theory. Darwin’s theory had a dominant position in the Victorian era and which resulted into Darwinian theories about Victorians: the evolution idea was transferred to a child growing up to be an adult. (Straley, 7) Straley also writes that Carroll plays with this theory by playing with many different sizes and changes of Alice during the story. (8) Carroll plays with the Darwinian theory and it results into irony and a parodical point of view towards the children’s representation.

Carroll also plays with the reputation of girls and women being inferior to boys and men. Muldering writes that Alice was independent compared to the other literary Victorian heroines. (322) Darwin’s theory also mentioned women’s inferiority to men (Bergman, 1),

which is proven wrong in *Alice*, because Alice seems to be capable to strive around alone, without getting hurt.

Chapter 4: The analysis

Since we have looked at the book's context, I can start the analysis, concentrating on parody, the relevance of the illustrations and the representation of the characters.

Pat

The first character I will discuss is Pat. Pat only appears, when Alice gets stuck in the chimney of the White Rabbit. At first the White Rabbit wants Pat to climb up the chimney, but Pat refuses, so they ask Bill to go up instead. The appearance of Pat in the story seems to be peculiar, for the reader does not know who or what Pat is, because Pat is not described, nor illustrated. Douglas A. Kibbee writes about the difficulties of translating Alice in Wonderland, because every parodical element must be translated correctly (308) and the connotations of certain words should not be altered in the translated text. The incompleteness of the character Pat should normally thus be a problem, because the reader does not know anything about this character. Kibbee writes, however, that:

For "Pat" the connotation is more obvious. This is the stereotypical first name for Irish men, and this connotation is clearly Carroll's intention, as Pat uses many stereotypical features of Irish dialect ("sure" at the beginning of a statement, "yer" for "your," the pronunciation "arrum" for "arm," etc.).(Kibbee, 311)

That Pat's nationality must be Irish is also confirmed by Martin Gardner in *The Annotated Alice*, where he explains that Pat is an apple digger and that the phrase "Irish apples" was a

nineteenth-century slang referring to Irish potatoes.¹² In addition, the White Rabbit corrects Pat in his language use: “An arm, you goose!”(31) So the representation of Pat is not only stereotypical and simple, he is also portrayed as a coward, because he does not want to go up the chimney, so Bill the Lizard has to go up the chimney instead; Bill represents the English working class and he is therefore more courageous.¹³

What is, however, the foundation of Carroll’s stereotypical Irish representation? He was at the age of thirteen that the Irish immigrated to Britain and to America due to the Great Famine. The Great Famine was a period of starvation in Ireland between 1845 until 1849, also called the Irish Potato Famine. People died because of the lack of food or moved away to prevent death. The only places they could go to were America and Britain, both English speaking countries. The Irish inhabited the English countries, but since Irish was their language and English was not, the Irish kept their language or at least a strong accent, which did not impress the English inhabitants. Author Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost explains the contemporary status of the Irish language:

The Great Famine undermined the vitality of the Irish language through the death and emigration of Irish-speakers. It also confirmed a relationship between the Irish language and poverty, in all its meanings. The English language was a fateful necessity for progress in Ireland and in all likely destinations of emigration. (101)

The association of poverty and the Irish language characterises this period of time. According to professor Anthony S. Wohl the English felt superior to the Irish and the Irish were, just like the children, compared to primitive beings. (1) There seems to be a reappearance of the

¹² Gardner, 126, note 8.

Also, the Irish potatoes are a reference to the Irish Potato Famine, also known as the Great Famine, which represent the status of the Irish in England. I will explain this in the next paragraph.

¹³ A more thorough analysis of Bill will be in the second chapter of *The Analysis*. (*Bill the Lizard*)

Darwinian elements of the Victorian society. The disliking by the Victorians and the status of inferiority could be caused by the Irish immigration to England, because of the Great Famine. The association with the Irish was therefore not pleasant and not entirely well grounded.

Gwen Sharp mentions that according to the English the problem in the 1800s also lied in the assimilation of the Irish: “(..) other immigrant groups (including Blacks) settle in and don’t cause problems, while the Irish don’t know how to assimilate or stay in their place.” (1) The poor rural areas of Ireland still spoke Irish and since the farmers were the ones that had to immigrate to survive the Great Famine, the farmers took the Irish language with them; their use of English was therefore not good. Carroll reflects upon society by mocking the Irish English and by letting the White Rabbit correct Pat in his language. Another critical reflection of the Victorian society is that it is not even necessary to describe Pat as a creature, because it is obvious who he represents. Tenniel seems to support Carroll’s stereotypical representation, because he did not draw Pat in his pictures; or did he? Gardner writes that Denis Crutch and E. B. Shaberman suspect, in their article *Under the Quizzing Glass*, that Pat is one of the two guinea pigs, appearing in the court, later on in the story.¹⁴ If Pat is a guinea pig, what does a guinea pig stand for in this context? The definition Gary Martin provides, is rather interesting: “A person or animal who is used as the subject of an experiment.”(1) The Irish immigrated to England and positioned the dirty and demeaning jobs in the English society. If Pat is guinea pig, Carroll is definitely criticising the English society for using the Irish as some sort of guinea pig workmen. Of course, it is difficult to tell what Dodgson’s real thought about the Irish was, but Carroll’s piece of text shows critical reflection towards the English rather than criticising the Irish.

Bill the Lizard

¹⁴ Gardner (126, note 8)

The second critical creature in this book is Bill the Lizard. The first appearance Bill makes in the book is also when Alice is stuck in the chimney. Whereas Pat is described as a coward, Bill has to solve the problem of Alice being stuck in the chimney, which he attempts to do so. The preference of Bill as opposed to Pat, the Irish workman, is visible here, because as seen earlier the White Rabbit does correct Pat for his speech, while Bill also makes mistakes in his English and is not corrected at all: “(..)up I goes like a skyrocket.” (Carroll, 33)

While there seems to be a preference in ethnicity, there appears to be class defying criticism underneath as well, which is represented by Bill the Lizard. The name Bill, nickname emanated from William, shows us how regular this lizard is, dime a dozen. Kibbee comments that Bill’s language could be recognised as working class language. (310-311) Not only is Bill’s name simple, also his accent is stereotypical for the working class. On top of these critical aspects, Bill is described in the book as a clumsy and unintelligent creature; that Bill is a unhandy lizard is proved by the following passage, where Bill needs to get a ladder to climb up the chimney: “Bill’s got the other – Bill! Fetch it here, lad!- Here, put ‘em up at this corner – No tie ‘em together first – they don’t reach half high enough yet(..)”(Carroll, 32) Apparently, Bill is not able to logically connect the height of the roof and the height of the ladders, so that he must be corrected, which undermines his intelligence.

The second appearance Bill makes is in the courtroom, where Alice stands trial: the tarts of the queen are stolen and Alice is accused of the theft. In this part of the story it becomes clear that Carroll does not agree with the Victorian law-system, because Alice has to stand trial for stealing tarts, which is in the first place ridiculous (and parodic) and secondly has no grounds, because there is no proof. Now according to author Martin J. Wiener, the law system in the Victorian Ages experienced a strict change, namely that the technicality of the

system increased and the judiciary became more conservative. (472) The Victorian ages were focussed on moral and this likely resulted into conservatism and a tight law system. This moral court system existed of judges and juries. In Carroll's story the jurors are not the brightest creatures. When the Gryphon explains Alice why the jurors are already writing, even though the trial has not even begun, the criticism towards the juries becomes clear: "'They are putting down their names,' the Gryphon whispered in reply, 'for fear they should forget them before the end of the trial.' 'Stupid things!'" (Carroll, 92) After Alice's outrage, the jurors write down what she said and she gets even more frustrated when she finds out that some of jurors are not even capable of writing the word "stupid" correctly. The juries are thus associated with unintelligent or perhaps uneducated people. Carroll's jury is representing the Victorian juries, because, according to J.E.R. Stephens, in 1896,

the jury consists of a body of men taken from the community (..)who are quite distinct from the judges or the court. Twelve men of ordinary ability are just as capable of deciding today on the effect of evidence as they were in the infancy of the institution. Although the technicality of the law has increased, yet in no way it interferes with their fitness to decide on the effect of proofs. (152)

Carroll seems to criticise the jury system and their low social status, by writing in *Alice* that the juries are not even capable of writing well, so how can they judge properly? This could be Carroll's critical approach to the jury system, because as commented earlier, the educational law makes children go to school until the age of ten, which still is relatively short, even though the Education law is an improvement.¹⁵ Carroll's main concern is that the jury

¹⁵ Before the education law, school was not obligated, so a lot of children did not go.

consists of uneducated people who have to decide the faith of another man, which makes the uneducated incompetent for the task.

There also is an interesting aspect regarding the illustrated representation of the court: the jurors in court, who are made fun of, are not dressed in the illustrations, and neither is Bill the Lizard; the characters that belong to a higher class are drawn with clothes on, which emphasises a certain segregation of classes. It is commonly known that the judges are highly educated, and thus belong to a higher class, and wear a so called court dress and wig in court, which might explain the segregation between the naked characters and the clothed characters in the story; Carroll and Tenniel make a clear distinction between the classes.

Bill is one of the jurors, which is an extension of the criticism towards the jury system. An interesting event occurs in *Alice* that shows another critical aspect towards the Victorian law system: Alice takes away Bill's pencil, because it "squeaked" (92) and because he had no pencil he had "to write with one finger the rest of the day; and this was of very little use, as it left no mark on the slate." (92) This sentence could have two possible meanings: it could mean that Bill is stupid for trying to write something down without any effect, or this is critique towards the law system, where the working class is part of, but has a limited voice. These aspects combined, could result into critique addressed to the work people about the law system; that they should do something about the fact that their pencil is taken away; that they should have a voice in the law system on their own. That Bill's voice is also controlled by the Queen can be found in the last part of the book, because later, in court, the Queen throws an inkstand towards Bill, so that he is able to write again: "(.) but he now hastily began again, using the ink, that was trickling down his face, as long as it lasted." (103) As opposed to earlier, this quote shows that workmen are only capable of using their voice, if a higher ranked person offers them a voice. Carroll encourages the lower class to actually stand up for themselves.

The Gryphon

The last creature I will discuss, the Gryphon, does not use correct English as well:

“(..)she wants for to know your history, she do.”(79) The Gryphon composes illogical sentences and also makes use of the double negative: “they never executes nobody, you know,” (78) which is also observed by Peter Rickard. However, the Gryphon also speaks correct English in a lot of passages, so one should wonder why the Gryphon switches from correct to incorrect English. First of all, it is important to determine what a Gryphon is. Carroll helps his young, and perhaps ignorant, reader to understand what a Gryphon is by directing the reader towards the illustration of the Gryphon: “(..) if you don’t know what a Gryphon is, look at the picture).” (79) It becomes clear to the reader that the Gryphon has different kinds of body parts, like lion paws and a beak, so the reader knows this is a special creature, aware of the Gryphon’s mythical background or not. The Gryphon, however, is the ruler of the two realms air and earth: “In medieval Christianity, the Griffin’s combination of an earthly beast and a bird of the air led to its use as a symbol for Christ’s human and divine qualities combined.”(Rosen, 119) Hunt mentioned that the evangelic touch of education disappeared in the 1830s, which resulted into an article in 1862 about how a Gryphon could never be divine, nor exist.¹⁶ The Gryphon did not take in the rank and position in the Victorian Ages, as it did before. What is Carroll’s perspective of the Gryphon? Focussing on the Gryphon’s speech, it is peculiar that the creature switches between correct English and incorrect. I am to believe that Carroll was well aware of the beast’s background and that Carroll restored the Gryphon’s reputation, the symbol of two realms, and modified it to his own society, namely the symbol of the upper classes and the lower classes.

¹⁶ <http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/Hippogriff>

The Gryphon's use of language is also reflected in the relation he has with the Queen and the Mock Turtle: whereas the Queen represents the upperclass and the Mock Turtle the lower class. The Mock Turtle is, as described by the Queen, "the thing Mock Turtle Soup is made from (...)"(77) and Mock Turtle Soup is a cheaper replacement of turtle soup: "Mock turtle soup is an imitation of green turtle soup, usually made from veal. This explains why Tenniel drew his Mock Turtle with the head, hind hoofs, and tail of a calf."(Gardner, note 10, 140) The Mock Turtle thus represents the classes without money. The ruler of two realms, the Gryphon, serves his purpose as a messenger between the two classes and it is implicitly written that the upper class does not want to associate with the lower class, because the Queen does not take Alice to the Mock Turtle herself: she orders the Gryphon to take Alice to the Mock Turtle instead. The opinion of the higher class, the Queen, regarding the lower class, the Mock Turtle, is transparent, because the Queen calls the Mock Turtle a "thing," which has definitely a demeaning connotation.

So what could be another reason Carroll make use of a Gryphon? The rest of the creatures in the book are cards, animals and human, of some sort. Gardner comes with two explanations:

(..) In the Purgatorio, Canto 29, of Dante's Divine Comedy (that lesser-known tour of Wonderland by way of a hole in the ground), the chariot of the Church is pulled by a gryphon. The beast was a common medieval symbol for the union of God and man in Christ. Here both the Gryphon and Mock Turtle are obvious satires on the sentimental college alumnus, of which Oxford has always had an unusually large share. I am indebted to Vivien Greene for informing me that the gryphon is the emblem of Oxford's Trinity College. It appears on Trinity's main gate; a fact surely familiar to Carroll and the Liddell sisters. (note 11, 141)

The Gryphon is a familiar element in Carroll's environment and it represents Oxford's university. Based upon the illustration of the Gryphon and the creature's background, one could say that Carroll is accusing the university for its focus on the elite. In the picture the Gryphon is sleeping (Carroll, 78), which means it cannot fulfil its duty as ruler of two realms at that moment; if we connect this sleeping detail to the fact that the university was not meant for poor, low class, children, the Gryphon as the symbol of the university, is indeed misplaced; there is only the elite that can study at the university, so what is the point of the Gryphon as a symbol, if there is not a various group of people present? The sleeping Gryphon is thus the parodical approach of Carroll, complemented by Tenniel's illustration of the Gryphon, to criticise the university for its misuse of the Gryphon's symbol: the Gryphon is ruler of two realms, classes, namely the lower and the higher classes, which means that the university should not use the Gryphon, if the university is only accessible to the higher classes, the elite.

Chapter 5: Conclusion/discussion

My analysis of *Alice in Wonderland* shows the criticism towards the society and the segregation of classes. To what extent is *Alice* a vehicle for criticism and does Carroll consistently use parody to express this criticism? The parody in *Alice* is indeed his vehicle for criticism and it is well executed. By using stereotypes and comical situations, Carroll is able to express his opinion without angering his audience. Whether his criticism is always parodical or not, is rather hard to decide. Most discussed elements in this paper are indeed imitations of society, ridiculed by Carroll and Tenniel. The reputation of the Irish in England is imported in the characters the English White Rabbit and the Irish Pat; the inferior position of the workman opposed to the higher classes is applied in court, where Bill the Lizard is the victim of unfortunate events, defining the workman's position; the Gryphon's original reputation as the ruler of two realms is restored in the story, representing the lower classes and higher classes, which results into Carroll's criticism towards the university: the Gryphon cannot be the ruler of two classes, if only the elite has access to the university, which leads to misuse of the Gryphon as a symbol for the university.

Alice in Wonderland made a difference in Victorian England by rejecting society's values and by mitigating the criticism with caricatures, and thus parody, the book still is famous; the moral standards that ought to be in children's literature are ignored by Carroll and he made his audience laugh. The choice of an illustrated children's book was extraordinary, because cooperation between an illustrator and a writer were a new concept. Carroll was able to magically create a representation of his society and its classes, which did not only result into amusement, but also in identification by the reader.

To answer the question, “does Carroll use parody to express his criticism all the time,” I have to carefully agree: I only discussed three parts, based on their incorrect language and illustrations. To fully agree more research is needed and one could look at different aspects of the work, like the correct language and their communication amongst each other.

More research is also needed regarding the ethnicity in the story. If Carroll were to criticise the Victorian society for its unethical issues towards the Irish, the critique is in my opinion too implicit. The connection between Pat and the guinea pig is a theory, which it needs more investigation; after all, another character that is drawn and not named in the story is the ape in the caucus-race. (Carroll, 24) There also a possibility Pat could be the ape. The interpretation of Pat would be more critical towards the Irish if Pat were an ape, because it would be a more negative representation of the Irish position. If Pat would be an ape, Sharps’ theory about the Victorians placing the Irish on the same level as primitives would be applicable.

There is another aspect concerning Alice and the possible feministic point of view by Carroll, that raises questions: what is the position Carroll takes in regarding feminism and is Alice truly independent? Wonderland is first of all full with male characters, which could refer to the male dominance in the Victorian society. Carroll seems to claim that girls and women do not have a place in the Victorian society: Alice is lost and does not know where to go, which may represent the inferior position of the female in Victorian England. As mentioned earlier, the feministic point of view made the work different than other Victorian girl protagonist stories; Muldering says that Alice is the first literary Victorian heroine that is independent, which would be an empowering feministic approach. Comparing this with the overall moral of the story,¹⁷ namely that Alice is no longer afraid and that she does not have to be afraid anymore, results into empowering girls and women to be brave. However, I am not

¹⁷ See note 10

sure about the independence of Alice. Alice may indeed strive around alone, but she is seeking help constantly: she is not portrayed intentionally independent, she is forced to be, because she has nowhere to go and no one to help her. Nonetheless, if we were to ignore the search for help and Alice indeed is independent, it bothers me that the story turns out to be a dream. Because of the dream elements, it does not empower women's rights, but rather creates the illusion that nothing can be done to avoid the inferiority to men. Thorough research could provide more clarity.

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