



"I can't remember things as I used--and I don't keep the same size for ten minutes together!"

"Can't remember *what* things?" said the Caterpillar.

"Well, I've tried to say '*How doth the little busy bee,*' but it all came different!" Alice replied in a very melancholy voice (Carroll, 69).

Alice's nearly constant state of confusion, and the confused, often parodic, language of the nonsense poems recited by her and the other creatures encountered in this wonderland seem to be classic representations of childhood. Confusion in a grown-up world that makes no sense and lessons that seem to mean little are everyday occurrences for many children, but the nonsense that Carroll describes is overturned so that even the logic of a little girl is more structured than the world in which she lives, and this structure only serves to hinder her.



The constant confusion and Carroll's playful imagery reflect the values of surrealism as described by Gauss. "Its truth, beauty, and goodness have the qualities of utter confusion, unmotivated action, and disjunct relationships" (44). This description perfectly describes Alice's experiences in Wonderland and the characters she meets along the way. As *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has so many of the qualities of surrealism, it lends itself to being illustrated in the style of the surrealists. However, because it was written well before surrealism was developed as an artistic philosophy, John Tenniel's illustrations for the original edition are done as an interpretation of the text in a realistic style. The images provided by Tenniel are as surreal as the text, if only through their loyalty to Carroll's words.

At Carroll's request, in 1864 John Tenniel agreed to illustrate the story titled "Alice's Adventures Underground" (Morris 139). Tenniel's illustrations, in their realistic style, complement Carroll's fantastical story. Because of Carroll's disruption of reality in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Tenniel's realistic illustrations extend the illusion of reality. "Tenniel's realism is crucial in preserving the flavor of the texts and in conveying the sensation that the ground beneath our feet has imperceptibly shifted" (Morris 189). This slight shifting of the realistic world is something that children can create in their imaginations at any time. The concept that this wonderland is so closely tied to, yet so far removed from children's everyday experiences is one that catches the imagination and allows the story to enter the world beyond the book.



The difference between realism and naturalism is an important one. Tenniel's illustrations are not naturalistic because they are not truly based in reality; however, his representation of Carroll's ideas are worked in a realistic style. The images, although not true to life in many ways, are not fantastic. They show a young girl and her surroundings as realistic, although not naturalistic as photographic renderings would be. In Tenniel's woodcut titled "Effect of Drink Me," when Alice drinks the bottle marked "Drink Me" and at once begins to grow taller, the result is a grotesque (Morris 191). She is distorted in such a way as to make the whole situation seem comical rather than threatening. She does not grow in a proportional way that would be expected of real people. "And still more disquieting, to accommodate her growth Tenniel has caused the bit of dress above her pinafore to likewise stretch in a most elastic matter" (Morris 191).

Grotesquerie is not limited to this exaggerated illustration; Morris also points out that the standard Alice Tenniel illustrates is a grotesque of a little girl. Her hands and feet are far too small, and her head is enlarged (218). If she were drawn in a more naturalistic way, she would not fit into the environment that Tenniel created through his other illustrations (219). Tenniel's illustrations of Alice and her Wonderland stay true to the story that Carroll created. Their realism adds to the waking-

dream qualities of Carroll's narrative. Tenniel's illustrations could almost be deemed analytical for their fairly strict interpretation of the text. They are black and white, and do not convey dramatic emotion as do the illustrations of Salvador Dalí.





While Tenniel's illustrations do not present the same expressive style that Dalí's do, they are more appropriate for the child audience. Dalí's illustrations are more mature, and are understood fully only by an adult audience. Child viewers would be able to interpret the feelings behind the illustrations, but the more symbolic imagery might be beyond their comprehension. There is a frightening quality to many of Dalí's illustrations that build upon Alice's confusion as written by Carroll, and interpret it as fear, or mystery of the unknown. In Dalí's illustrations, there appears to be a dichotomy between realistic figures and dream-like images that mirror the more realistic figures. "Surrealist art had never pursued irrationality as an end; rather it attempted to synthesize the opposing but interacting states of objective fact and subjective fantasy in a didactic of reason and unreason" (Chadwick 7). The dream-like images contribute to the idea of the surrealist self, which is parallel to the actual self, but without the constraints of logic and rules confining it.

Dalí's history in the Surrealist movement is fairly well known. Throughout his career he created worlds which did not conform to the rules of reality by distorting well-known objects, often items such as clocks which mark the passage of time in a logical and constant manner, the opposite of the surrealist ideals of confusion and disjunction. His distortion of the way humans have dominated something as ethereal as time, releases time and allows him to move freely through it in his works. Carroll created a world in which time was individual and dependent upon the relationship that one had with Time. The idea that Time is something that can make its own decisions is an interesting one, and Dalí represents the time warp in which the Mad Hatter and his friends exist by inserting one of his misshapen timepieces into the illustration of "A Mad Tea Party" (Carroll 86).



His use of washes color and bleeding lines imply dreaminess just as Tenniel's strong use of line suggested an alternate reality that is just as plausible as our own. Dalí has the ability to create ultra-realistic figures, and uses them to contrast with the dreamy quality of his other images. In accordance with the Surrealists adoption of Freud's ideas of "dreams as the residues of daily activity," Dalí interprets Carroll's text as a mish-mash of banality and fantasy. His realistic figures act as something of a response to Tenniel's illustrations, contrasting them to his more emotionally-charged imagery rendered with painterly lines and organic forms as well as extreme color choices.

Although their illustrations are very different in style, there are some striking similarities in how Dalí and Tenniel both sought to interpret Carroll's text. They were working in different eras, but both were commenting in their respective works on the state of their society. Dalí sought to fight against reality at some points during his career, and to create images of confusion that would interrupt the notions that viewers may have of that reality (Fanés 182). Tenniel, in comparison, had a career as an illustrator for *Punch Magazine* commenting directly on reality by creating political cartoons, and other satirical images (Hancher). Michael Hancher discusses the similarities and possible inspirations drawn from Tenniel's earlier drawings, and present in the Alice illustrations. Their tendencies to take reality and twist it into something else, is a characteristic that was shared with Carroll's writing. In Alice's story, she is taken from her normal life, and dropped into a world which is similar in many ways, but impossible to navigate using the logic of adults and authority figures she has been taught to accept. The illustrations of Tenniel and Dalí interpret this transformed world by incorporating realism and nonsensical imagery in very different ways. Both illustrators, however, show the dichotomy between the two realms.

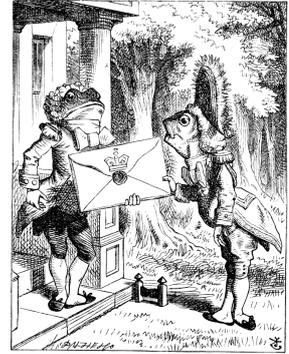


Dalí's treatment of the chapter "Advice from a caterpillar", in which Alice meets the caterpillar, is an example of this contrast between reality and fantasy (Carroll 63). Dalí creates a scene with only a wash of color and a few black land formations for a background, and places on top of it a very detailed and realistic caterpillar sitting atop a mushroom which looks more like an atomic explosion. The image that has represented Alice throughout his illustrations -- a simple black silhouette of a girl jumping rope and casting a shadow of herself-- floats in the background beside the expressionistic rendering of the caterpillar emerging from a pipe that the more realistic caterpillar is smoking. The fact that Dalí portrays Alice as a solid being who can cast a shadow implies the groundedness of her character, but the presence of the shadow itself as a rather ethereal, and even sinister, detail as shadows tend to change and sometimes disappear. His integration of the two different realms of reality and fantasy or dream is impressive because even those



things that would be characterized as realistic are unnatural such as a caterpillar smoking a pipe, and a stick-like little girl, reminiscent of an Aubrey Beardsley drawing, jumping rope. Tenniel, as mentioned above, utilizes the difference between realism and naturalism to intertwine Carroll's world with that of reality. In his drawing of the frog-footman and fish-footman (Carroll 80) in the chapter "Pig and Pepper," Tenniel manages to create very realistic depictions of a frog as a footman and a fish as a footman, although it can be said with some authority that creatures such as these do not exist in the natural world.

Integrating a sense of reality with fantasy is precisely what Carroll's book requires of the illustrator. His words describe a world that is closely linked with Alice's reality, but slightly altered so that everything she knows to be true must be reevaluated. Although these two artists are vastly different, and their interpretations of the story dramatically contrasted, the underlying surrealist themes of Carroll's text are beautifully realized in the art. Only Dalí had an official background in the surrealist movement, but Carroll's text in its inherent surrealism is able to evoke this style from Tenniel's more descriptive illustrations. Carroll harnessed the imagination and illogical beauty and confusion of the child's world, and out of that beauty created his own world wherein the rules of adults were just as silly as children often see them to be. The world of the child is much like the world of the Surrealists. Children are constantly integrating the rules and logic of the adult world with their own imaginative and fantastical thoughts and dreams. The imaginations of children not yet hindered by societal norms are what the surrealists were attempting to free through psychic automatism. Dalí and Tenniel created Carroll's world visually, enabling everyone to experience his fantastic creation.



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