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The *Wonderland* of Ecology

Natalia Bulask¹

This paper argues for a reinterpretation of canonical school texts, in this case *Alice in Wonderland*, in search for an ecopedagogical reading that enables to construe empathy with other-than-human beings. By analyzing the shift in power structures of the relations between Alice and the beings of *Wonderland*, a path of empathy can be traced towards a biocentric perspective both of language construction, and real-life activism.

KEY WORDS: Children's literature, ecopedagogy, empathetic imagination, root metaphors

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We are situated in a post-modern culture, alienated from nature, where ever-growing consumerism appears as an immediate source for the current ecological crisis. Since the first United Nations conference on the Human Environment at Stockholm in 1972, scientists have slowly agreed and the public has gradually come to understand that climate change is the ultimate consequence of this global crisis that has multiple local manifestations. From this point of problematization onwards, education systems seek to overcome the syndrome of nature deficit disorder, as thoroughly explained by Richard Louv in his book *Last Child of the Woods*, where he relates children's connection with nature to healthy psycho and physiological development. Therefore, as outlined in the last 40 years of environmental concern, it has become imperative to reconnect with nature, challenge the existing hierarchies among the education systems and co-create knowledge to ingrain a feeling of participation in the construction of the world. This will make children realize that their reactions and actions taken in relation to nature are a matter of responsibility and of their decision, which are highly influenced by sympathy and previously conceived emotions. Within this frame, literature offers the grounds onto which language can be analysed and used as a tool both to show anthropocentric ideas and how they can shift into biocentric, ecological ones. For this purpose, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which has been an important influence during the last 150 years, both for children's literature and culture media, can be used to create a biocentric awareness and also as an ecopedagogical resource. In order to do so, emphasis will be given to its sympathetic potential to children, thus proving that evolution in the interactions between Alice and the more-than-human world in Wonderland advocates for a reconnection with nature. From re-writings, alternate universes and movies, the Alice books have shaped our childhoods, especially as it has become a canonical modern text and read in elementary schools worldwide. To comprehend the relationship between the ecological crises, language,

and how we are affected by our experience with literature, a discussion of pertinent theories is important.

Ecocriticism, the basis onto which this analysis is constructed, was born embedded in the context of the environmental crisis. In 1978 Professor Rueckert was the first literary academic to articulate concern for the treatment and relation of humans and nature in his essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism”. However, the term did not become popular until Glotfelty’s collection *The Ecocritical Reader* appeared in 1989 where she defines ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty quoted in Bhalla 1). Due to the spread of ecological concerns among younger generations, the possibility and need of teaching through ecocriticism emerges. Ecopedagogy thus appears as the pedagogical use of ecological texts. It is a form of pedagogy that exacerbates the importance of uniting practice and theory in ecocriticism (Gaard 14).

Furthermore, ecopedagogy has been regarded as the next step of ecofeminism due to its cross-species integration and representation. Ecofeminism is based on ecofeminist pedagogy, where “[a]n ecofeminist perspective on children’s environmental literature might look for ways that these narratives provide an antidote to the logic of domination” (Gaard 15) that can act as the basis for a sympathetic cross-species relation beyond the established hierarchies. Therefore, texts that are already canonical children’s literature in the education system can be analyzed in order to define “narratives of connection, community, and interdependence among humans, animals, and the natural world” (Gaard 15). Such is the role that this paper aims to attribute to Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. In order to demonstrate the capability of this text as an ecopedagogical tool, Kahn’s three questions quoted by Gaard will guide the forthcoming analysis.

In order to establish whether the human identity is in opposition or in relation to nature, animals and other identities, the question exposed by Kahn “who am I?” must be addressed (Gaard 15). Alice’s relationship with Caterpillar or the Cheshire Cat could be seen as antidotes to the logic of domination that predominates from Victorian times. The second question goes hand in hand with another type of pedagogy proposed by Lowenstein, Martusewitz and Voelker. They develop a concept of ecoJustice pedagogy where, as firstly proposed by Professor C.A. Bowers, the root metaphors of language are addressed directly in the classroom so as to not perpetuate the ones based on anti-ecological behaviour. Therefore, while Kahn questions how the narrative defines the ecojustice problem and whether the conclusions one can draw from its analysis can be transformed into responses to reject hierarchy and favour participation and community (Gaard 16), Bowers defines the linguistic tools that can be used in the classroom. This question will be understood under the concept of ecoJustice education, which offers teachers, students and alumni a way to respond within their own communities to a domineering, destructive worldview (Ethan Lowenstein, Rebecca Martusewicz, & Lisa Voelker 101). Thus, the question not only seeks to respond to the problems presented in the narrative but also encourages the students to step from literature into their realities, further landing the literary examples into concrete action paths. This is the aim of an ecopedagogical reading and reasoning, where a parallel can be made between Alice’s choices in Wonderland and our own, in order to trace an outline of activism in favour of the more-than-human world.

The third question, then, has to do with the agency that the text recognizes in nature, whether it is saved by a child actor or whether nature has its own subjectivity and agency (Gaard 18). This question will be further detailed with the insights provided by Brady and

Derrida. However, such questions can be taken as the ground onto which a class plan can be constructed and further relate to the position and agency of children beyond the classroom.

At the same time, Gaard points out how one of the aims of developing cultural ecoliteracy is to critique “the anti-ecological effects of industrial capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, and ruling-class culture (which involves defining humanity over and against all that is “other” – lesser humans, animals, and nature)” (Gaard 15). Furthermore, since the aim of ecopedagogy is to emphasize the union of theory and practice, there is a visionary as well as an activist dimension to this critique that mobilizes students to “engage in culturally appropriate forms of ecological politics and . . . movement building” (Kahn in Gaard15). To achieve such activism and link theory and practice, alienation must be overcome as the root of the ecoJustice problem, to change the growing sense of a separate self and separation of emotion (Gaard 20). Within this frame, McAndrew proposes a structure that “do[es] not portray the teacher as the only source of all knowledge and power” (McAndrew 369), empowering children as creators and contributors of knowledge.

Children’s literature is introduced as the means through which ecopedagogy could create a lasting impact. Nonetheless, children’s literature has always been valued for its didactic, moralistic character. However, its importance transcends information books as through stories “children enter a world . . . that differ[s] from the present, they develop their imaginations[sic] and are inspired to overcome obstacles, consider different perspectives, and formulate personal goals. They transform their understandings[sic] of the possibilities for themselves and the world” (Short et al 7). Not only are stories such as *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* a cultural heritage that is passed down from generation to generation, but they offer young readers “alternative pathways for understanding their past or imagining their future” (7). The importance of portraying the different paths available to children, and to encourage them

to think of their role and relations to sentient and non-sentient nature arises from the assertion that “[l]iving someone else’s life through a story can help children develop a sense of social justice and a greater capacity to empathize with others” (8). However, such appeal and capacity of a book must be founded on several factors.

On the one hand, in the case of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, written in England in 1865 by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll, the text was made *for* children, therefore, “the total absence of didacticism – replaced by humour and fantasy- resulted in the book’s lasting appeal and world fame” (126). Subsequently, it has been catalogued as the “first children’s masterpiece of modern fantasy” (127) that would set the trend of books that appeal to children’s imagination and amusement. In this sense, Carroll seems to be the predilected option that follows McAndrew’s proposed structure since Carroll’s writing did not condescend the child reader; rather he evoked irreverence towards the preaching adult (Dushinberre in Natov 51). If the child’s capacity for empathy is taken into account, not only is Alice a relatable character for children around her same age, but her actions and relations to more than human beings open possibilities to teach about the ecoJustice problem from the perspective of animals.

On the other hand, the importance of imagination must not be underestimated, as a child’s mind is more open to new ideas and perspectives than an adult’s. Therefore a story that makes a transition from misconceptions of animals to a concern and understanding should be encouraged by appealing to children’s capacity of imagining such situations (Anno quoted in Johnson and Giorgis 504). This is made easier when the characters use their imagination as it engages readers’ interests while encouraging them to wonder about other possible outcomes. Johnson and Giorgis correlate that because these characters create imaginary worlds, such as the dreamlike Wonderland. Therefore they see themselves in ways that others do not, for

example, Alice's changing perspective of herself due to growing and shrinking several times. These situations appeal to readers that are open "to such "what if" possibilities [thus they] can live vicariously through the imaginative mind of the individuals they discover in books" (Johnson and Giorgis 504). In other words, children will be able to put themselves in the position of other sentient beings by practicing with literary role models and sympathizing with characters who are able to imagine the possibility of being another.

Therefore, ecopedagogy must take into account the role that imagination has in order to develop the children's sense of creativity towards the resolution or ecoJustice problems. As Smith and Mathur emphasize, teachers that focus on analytical, practical and creative components of intelligence including imagination and insight, have better responses and benefits than traditional instruction that relies most heavily on analytical skills (56). Also, as was mentioned before, children are less restricted by social norms that regulate what is appropriate to imagine and thus can accept new ideas more easily. However, this poses the possibility of deviating the imaginative processes towards other conclusions beyond ecoJustice. Hence, the classroom acts as moderator and guidance but does not provide the insight to which children are able to arrive through the imaginative process. To achieve a use of imagination as an ecopedagogical tool, Adam Smith's concept of sympathetic imagination will be taken as the basis.

Smith's theory will be analyzed under Professor Brady's conception, as she seeks to establish a relationship between the subjects that she then uses for aesthetic appreciation to gain a biocentric perspective, which can also be applied to literary analysis for the same purpose. As she elaborates, Smith's "[s]ympathy is a function of projective imagination, of imaginatively putting oneself in the shoes of another" (100). It consists of two movements of imagination, the first one would correspond to what must be mediated through the classroom,

and the second takes place within the child's mind. Firstly, "we must project ourselves into the shoes of an impartial spectator and then, from that position, imaginatively put ourselves into the shoes of the other. This impartial standpoint is not abstract or dispassionate, rather it involves affective engagement" (Brady 100). Therefore, it is the role of the teacher to explain the point of view from which a scene will be analyzed or a character tried to be understood, so as to set the parameters and guide the second step. It is in the latter stage that McAndrew's structure of joint creation of knowledge is emphasized, as the students are the ones to draw conclusions from their vicarious experience. Ergo, the role of the teacher must imitate that of the Caterpillar, who guides Alice's questioning but does not insinuate who she must be or how she must feel.

Nevertheless, as Frierson emphasizes upon Smith's conceptions, such feelings do not aim to be the same ones that the other feels or is able to feel in the case of non-sentient nature. Rather it seeks to put oneself in the other's situation where there is a gap in the correlation of both feelings so as to comprehend what would one feel, based on our personal experience and perception, in such situation (Brady 101). Thus, when children put themselves in the shoes of a Victorian child, they are not expected to feel the same as Victorian Alice would have done, but rather, to understand their own feelings when finding themselves in such a situation.

Furthermore, the gap does not increase the alienation between both subjects; it serves to allow differences between one and the other, recognizing "the limitations of our imaginative abilities and the fact that we are who we are. That is, we do not fully abstract from our own feelings and position in the world" (Frierson quoted in Brady 101). Such is the case of chapter 1 when Mouse asks Alice "Would *you* like cats, if you were me?" (Carroll 26). Alice is able to sympathize with Mouse and agree that she should not mention them anymore, however, she is overcome by her experiences with Dinah and what she has been taught about the division of

animals between pets and pests. Scenes that demonstrate metaphors with anti-ecological thought for their anthropocentric bias are crucial to comprehend the domination patterns that have persisted in society because this way we can overcome them, since “without understanding how we have sympathy with nature, we cannot make sense of benevolence or our responsibilities towards nature” (Brady 101). Thus, not only the moments in which Alice is able to overcome her mind-set must be analyzed, but also the scenes that portray the hierarchy in which she is situated by the patterns of domination and from there experience the changes she undergoes.

Thereafter, the feelings evoked will act as a basis to promote responses to the logic of domination. The importance of alluding to feelings and emotions during class and as a tool to achieve activism has been strongly emphasized and developed by Jerome Bump under what he names “emotional literacy”. He addresses the increasing difficulty that society has to acknowledge what they are feeling and how to express it. Furthermore, he alludes to literature as being appealing in a first stance due to the emotional impact that it has on the reader. But the experience of reading has grown apart towards abstracted thought, following a Cartesian objectivity in the academic realm. Which results in further disconnecting critics and teachers from that first and lasting emotional axis (Bump “Emotional Literacy” 1). He then advocates for courses that treat the ever-growing emotional illiteracy and pursues the benefits that such practices may have beyond the psychological realm and into the ecocritical concern.

Thereafter, in his essay “Biophilia and Emotive Ethics: Derrida, Animals and Alice” Bump focuses on the role of animals as metaphors and figures. He advocates for “[t]he ideal for environmental and animal ethics, if not all ethics, may well be an emotion, the feeling that we are deeply, instinctively connected to all living beings” (Bump “Biophilia and Emotive Ethics” 58). In his analysis, he focuses on Alice as a Victorian sadistic figure rather than as a

child who is learning to cope with the hierarchy she has been taught and what she is learning through sympathetic imagination. However, Bump recognizes the visibility that animals gain through literature and how ecopedagogy can lead to activism. Such activism arises from what Ulrich has observed, where “the public’s emotion-laden attitudes toward different natural environments play a role in motivating political and other support” (quoted in Bump, “Biophilia and Emotive Ethics” 59); that is Bump’s focus, although it leans towards an adult centred reading of Alice, he recognizes the value of literature for its capacity to transcend “the barrier between us and another living being and, by actually entering into the other, so to speak, to secure a momentary but complete identification with the other being” (Bate in Bump 59). In spite of the use that Bump gives to identification and sympathy to emphasize the subjugation of animals, this paper aims to focalize in the change in the relations that Alice undergoes along her journey through the same tools.

Therefore, in order to learn the emotional literacy, Bump encourages and overcome the subjugation pattern he notes, the more than human beings from Wonderland will prove to act as teachers and consequently gain visibility on two levels. First, as subjects situated in the same power status as Alice and young readers; animals acting as teachers of Alice and thus part of the ecopedagogical structure proposed by McAndrew, where the academic hierarchy with professors at the top of the pyramid and children at the bottom is overruled. Furthermore, taking into consideration how “[c]hildren easily identify with animals, themselves being “lesser than,” in so many respects, the adult humans that dominate their world, and therefore learn many moral lessons from animal characters” (Swallow 1) and thus allows such ecopedagogical approach to be on equal to equal terms rather than a dogmatic lecture. Due to the incorporation of children, in this case Alice as part of the process of knowledge construction, they “must gain a sense of their own place in a multispecies world” (Melson quoted in Bone 7)

by contrasting their positions and comparing their responses when imagining themselves in the more than human being's position.

Secondly, how animals are understood as animal figures under Derrida's conception of 'animots' will be analyzed. This can serve to create an animal archetype and further be used to teach about the place of animals in the world while taking into consideration the continuous abstraction they have undergone in human language and literature. For this Derrida mingles the French for "animals" /animaux/ and "word" /mot/ to create "animots", which refer to all the animal references used in everyday language. The use of animal figures, Derrida pursues, will "multiply, gain in insistence and *visibility*, become active, swarm, mobilize and get motivated" (35 my italics added). Which increases the more autobiographical the work becomes, due to the correlation that Derrida points between the use of animots and the self-reference of the writer. Thus, not only have animals been transversal to all uses of language, although this relationship has commonly been one of animal subjugation, Derrida elaborates on how it has "[a]lways [been] a discourse *of* man, on man, indeed on the animality of man, but for and in man" (37). However, such discourse does bring animals into view and the agency they have in literature is put into question. Therefore, the understanding of animals in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as standing merely for humans will be overcome by relying on the conceptions of Professor Bowers, whose root metaphors enhance the ecoJustice roles of more-than-human characters. In the set of interviews titled "Linguistic Roots of the Ecological Crisis," he intertwines animots from human-centered figures to a step in the construction of internalized ecoJustice.

This construction is based on the premise that the beliefs that arise from subjugation narratives "are passed down through language, specifically through participation in and passing on of the centuries-old symbolic systems structuring modern industrial cultures [shape the

mind-set of their listeners and thus, he states how] words have a history” (Bowers in Lowenstein, Martusewicz and Voelker 101). Thus the importance of animots arises as mind shapeshifters, since how people use their inherited language determines how their relationships with the world are created, imagined and interpreted and thereafter acted upon (Lowenstein, Martusewicz and Voelker 101). Within this frame, the books that are read for educative or amusement purposes play an essential role in the history of animots and our subsequent treatment of animals. What Bowers defines as “root metaphors” which are sets of “well-established analogs (in the form of words and other signifiers) that are passed down over many generations and become the codes through which we think and see the world and everything in it” (Lowenstein, Rebecca Martusewicz, & Lisa Voelker 101), can also be extended to animots in order to create an animal archetype or animot history. And since such roots become the ideological sources from which culture draws strength to continue intergenerationally such mind-set, they can also become an area of activism in the search of ecoJustice in ecopedagogical terms. Taking into consideration these views and analysis positions, the literary text will be analyzed onwards to portray the line of thought that could underlie an ecopedagogical approach to canonical literature.

The opening lines of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* will set standards of appeal to children in literature as she complains about a book that “had no pictures or conversations in it, “and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations?”” (Carroll 11). In this way the book avoids the didacticism that had predominated in children’s literature and setting a pattern of books, where the relations created through conversation and the pictures accompanying it would be the subject to emphasize in the books to come. However, in the case of this paper, Tenniel’s drawings will not be taken into consideration for analysis due to the political character that his pictures possess. He uses more than human

beings to comment on people, and further animalizes and caricaturizes the characters.

Therefore, it seems counterproductive considering that the aim of this work is to comment on more than human sentient beings for themselves and the influence that they may have upon the mind-set of the reader. All the same, Alice is able, from the very beginning, to establish a direct connection with the more than human beings from Wonderland and empathize with children in order to transcend time and influence them into empathizing themselves with the more than human beings.

Furthermore, on the same opening page, the tone and the hierarchy of relations that will predominate in the book are set, emphasizing Swallow's argument on the appeal of animals to children for their similar situations of lesser power in society. The first more than human being that Alice encounters is the White Rabbit, but instead of being shocked "to hear the Rabbit say to itself "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" . . . at the time it all seemed *quite natural* [my italics added]" (Carroll 11). Therefore the Alice book, even before reaching Wonderland, already offers egalitarian traits between the human and the more than human world. The main breach between 'humanity' and 'animality' that language has presupposed to be overcome by giving the White Rabbit speech and describing it as seeming *quite natural*. Even afterwards as she is surprised "when the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*, and looked at it" (11). It is not the fact that the White Rabbit is dressed that startles Alice, but his watch and the concern with time it entails. Both speech and nudity are overcome and there is no longer any difference between man and animal as per Derrida's limitrophy, in which he points out, the historical division between man and animal have relied upon clothing and language. Rather his fuss over time and being late appear to be out of the norm even for a talking rabbit. The White Rabbit can be argued to be the mirror of the child inserted in traditional Victorian education, subjugated to hierarchy, always late to please others; in the case

of Wonderland, such system is enforced by the Queen of Hearts and her court. However, in order to restrict the analysis for ecopedagogical means, this argument will be left for further projection. However, the White Rabbit as a mirror of a child is relevant, as he seems appealing to Alice for his eager-to-please position in the world. Her adventure begins following an equal, rushed by others, fulfilling expectations of their elders or superiors, as is the case of the White Rabbit with the Duchess and the Queen of Hearts.

From then on, all the changes Alice perceives from the moment she falls into Wonderland seem “[c]urioser and curioser!” (20) and such is the destabilizing experience that “she quite forgot how to speak good English” (20) which already gives a hint at how language and its presupposed rules are not going to provide the solutions in understanding Wonderland while at the same time it brings Alice closer to the animal as per Derrida’s division. Rules of grammar or history cannot aid Alice in her relations with other sentient beings, nor will they position her either geographically or in terms of her identity in the world. Alice’s fall through the rabbit hole can be seen as the fall from traditional education and logos driven decisions. The longer she wonders upon it, the more insecure she is about the certainty of the value of reciting lessons and being mindlessly polite “fancy *curtseying* as you’re falling through the air!” (14); she tries to implement her Victorian knowledge of the world to figure out her situation, but it is portrayed as ridiculous. As Jerome Bump notes, what society lacks is not “academic knowledge”, rather “emotional literacy” to relate, behave and react in the world.

Once the traditional education standards are entirely destabilized, Alice addresses the ecoJustice problem of alienation as discussed by Kahn and emphasized by Gaard. When Alice starts changing sizes and can no longer recognize her self, she asks “I wonder if I’ve been changed in the night?” . . . “Who *in the world* am I?” (22 my emphasis), blind to how her notion of self can be constructed in terms of her relations with others rather than her position and

size in the world. She tries to pin down her identity and behaviour based on her looks and knowledge, but fails miserably when she cannot tell if she has become Mabel or not “for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh, she knows such a very little” (23) and yet she is unable to recite her lessons.

After undergoing several more changes that contribute to making her doubt her position in the world, Alice falls in the pool of tears and fears encountering a hippo, “but then she remembered how small she was now, and she soon made it that it was only a mouse that had slipped in like herself” (25). Such instance allows Alice to move from her anthropocentric status in the world as she shrinks to the size of a mouse and becomes his equal too. The mouse underwent the same circumstances in the pool of tears “like herself” (25). This scene is an opening for sympathy to develop between them. However, she must learn how to develop a sympathetic imagination in order to understand the point of view of Mouse and not offend him. Alice is used to the anthropocentric division of more than human sentient beings between pests and pets, and thus is prone to offend by implicating one when talking about the other.

The Mouse then, presents himself as the first teacher that Alice will encounter- not for his lesson on William the Conqueror, “the driest thing he knows” (30) that proves and jokes to be as dry as traditional education itself as seen by a child- but as ecopedagogy proposes, constructing knowledge together with Alice, with questions such as “[w]ould *you* like cats, if you were me?” (26), inciting her to use sympathetic imagination to feel what it is like to be in his shoes. From there on, the two movements implied in Smith’s use of sympathetic imagination occur. Firstly, Alice is in a position of equals with Mouse, which acts as the neutral ground since there is no power struggle between them. However, she has not realized the implications of having such a size and therefore refers again the dualism between pet and pests

by answering who Dinah is “for she was always ready to talk about her pet: “Dinah’s our cat. And she’s such a capital for catching mice, you ca’n’t [sic] think!” (36). Alice’s mistakes and offenses towards the more than human beings are not to be omitted but rather understood as the gap that exists between sympathetic subject and observer, for Alice cannot altogether escape her Victorian education and such slips are made from the view of a pet owner who has not pondered upon her loving cat behaviour and implications for other beings. She tries, however, to overcome these by proposing “We wo’n’t [sic] talk about her any more, if you’d rather not” (27) mingling her mindless politeness by expressing her offence with an ‘if you’d rather not’; with a concern for the Mouse’s feelings and an encouragement by considering how they are currently sharing positions and therefore become a ‘we’ that can agree on their differences and establish a conversation. This change from using ‘I’ instead of ‘I’ is a further promotion of an ecoJustice pedagogy where, as Bowers states, the pronoun ‘I’ is the expression of the root metaphor of individualism (“Towards an Eco-Justice Pedagogy”, 23), thus the ‘we’ pronoun encourages a sense of community proper to a root metaphor of ecology.

The second movement, however, is achieved in the book literally instead of imaginatively, since literature enables the crossing between barriers of self and other to portray it more explicitly: she finds herself in the shoes of Mouse and shares his reactions immediately after she encounters the Puppy (Carroll 46). Through their interaction that dwindles between threatening and playful, he teaches her the position of the ‘pests’ eaten by cats and dogs. Alice realizes it is a matter of perspective and is still able to wonder how she could play with it if only she had “been the right size to do it” (47). *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* in this case, allows the ‘what if?’ possibilities proposed by Giorgis and Johnson to represent the situation that children should be encouraged to imagine in order to understand and learn from the position of other beings in the world. At the same time, it demonstrates that certain

interactions do not need of language, as Puppy is the only more than human being in Wonderland who does not speak. This correlates with Derrida's view that the lack of speech can be looked as other than a privation, for Puppy is able to act as a teacher through other, more vicarious means.

As she continues her adventure, Kahn's first question is addressed formally by the Caterpillar as he asks Alice "Who are you?" (49) and more important, "What size do you want to be?" (54), that is the idea of a constructed identity is present as malleable and adapting. The implications of this possibility go beyond the following scenes; Alice is discovering that she can decide how to portray herself, how she wants to be, and she is no longer a receptive object of culture and education but rather a co-creator of her sense of self. The empowerment of children in the classroom as proposed by McAndrew challenges the hierarchy under which she has behaved so far. This scene lingers between her encounter with the Mouse and the forthcoming Puppy, acting as the limit between a mindless behaviour towards animals where her questioning stays unanswerable by traditional means; and a more considering and comprehensive disposition towards the more than human world. Alice learns that she cannot judge other beings on the same grounds that she has learned to behave herself, she is induced by the Caterpillar to think outside of herself and her point of view. By asking what size she wants to be, he is calling her to position her own self in the world, to take an active decision instead of merely reacting. Such is the awareness that ecopedagogy seeks to call for, one where the structures are challenged and an active role is encouraged from inside the classroom and into the outside interactions and decisions. The Caterpillar then, acts on two levels, first as a teacher with whom Alice constructs her identity, and second, it appeals to the root metaphor of the caterpillar as the point of metamorphosis for Alice, shifting from an anthropocentric to a biocentric point of view.

The root metaphors then, work as presupposed archetypes, but as the story unfolds, they are not stored in the children's minds unscathed, but rather influenced and constantly constructed by the relations portrayed in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Thus the Caterpillar is not only a spark for the metamorphosis of Alice or merely a symbol in her adventure; rather, the root metaphor of the caterpillar is affected by Carroll's Caterpillar and the other way around will prove to be just as right. Bump's emotional literacy should be added to this conception of construction of archetypes, as an asset to the metaphor because the emotional identification with the beings from Wonderland will affect Alice, and transcend into the children's mind and future associations. From this view, a mouse will no longer be merely a pest under the traditional division, rather, it will be charged with the experience of being equal with Mouse. Mice will be embedded in the possibility of being an individual Mouse with whom a conversation was once held. The associations the child reader makes through the story, if charged with emotional literacy, will be re-enacted in future relations with such more than human beings.

Following Alice's metamorphosis into a being aware of her possibility to exert and change power reflected in her size, she tries to explain her situation to the Pigeon to whom she first apologizes "'I'm very sorry you've been annoyed'" said Alice, who was beginning to see its meaning" (57) and beginning to learn that her size is a sign of power, a source of threat and the connotation it may have for different beings. However, the Pigeon is horrified and remarks how if little girls eat as many eggs as serpents then they must be a kind of serpent too (57). Although Alice can understand her reasoning, she refuses to be called a serpent for it makes all the difference to her whether she is referred to as a little girl or a snake. This scene unfolds in two ways, first with the importance of naming discussed by Derrida and the violence inflicted when the named being is not asked upon their opinion or has the ability to respond to such a

name. Second, the implications of a root metaphor in Alice's comprehension of her self as influenced by the religious discourse of snakes as symbols of evil and deceit. Therefore her rejection against being called a serpent is influenced both by the behaviour for which she is accused and the unconscious connotation she attributes to such a being. The encounter has the capacity of affecting Alice's position upon naming other beings. At the same time, the role that this scene has in the construction of root metaphors is one of enrichment of the serpent. Since it does not stand merely as a symbol of mischief, but the comparison of its behaviour is similar to the behaviour of a little girl. Therefore, Alice is able to see how the snake's hunger for other creature's eggs is not an example of its evil deeds, but rather an exemplification of satisfying its needs, which can be the same as hers.

The impact of such realizations can be appreciated when Alice approaches the March Hare's house and realizes she is considerably bigger in size than them and ponders "it'll never do to come upon them this size: why I should frighten them out of their wits!" (Carroll 58) and decides to shrink to a reasonable height. At this point, she has been able to use sympathetic imagination in order to position herself in the shoes of the Pigeon and understand the motive of her fright and reaction. So while looking forward to establishing new relations with other more than human beings, she takes into consideration her experiences gained so far. In this scene, she eats the mushroom pieces that Caterpillar advised her to use in order to adjust her height, symbol of power, to one that is not threatening to the March Hare. Alice has enlarged her comprehension of relations with the more than human world and tries to act accordingly to each situation in order not to disrupt nor offend anyone. Her politeness then, previously used to conform to social norms established by protocols more than being to establish relations, changes to a compassionate behaviour extended both to beings of the same

kind she has met and others of different nature. Which in turn portrays the adaptability of identifying emotionally with the other in a cross-species understanding.

Her attitude extends towards all beings, and eager to please, the encounter with the Queen of Hearts serves as a reminder of the hierarchical society to which Alice is going to return at the end of her adventures. Within this re-enactment of power struggles between the Queen of Hearts and Four and Seven of Hearts, Alice first acts based on what traditional education has taught her, she must follow royalty's command, even if they imply playing croquet with a live hedgehog and a flamingo. Therefore her reaction to the gaze of the flamingo, which should position her as the other and make her see her position through the gaze of the flamingo as per Derrida's conception of the gaze of the animal; becomes a moment where "she could not help bursting out laughing" (Carroll 88). This scene could be argued to be problematic for the ecoJustice reading of this paper, as it would attempt against the sympathy of Alice and her alignment with more than human sentient beings. However, in the current stance, it will be taken as a shared nonsense moment between Alice and the more than human sentient beings. As it has been mentioned before by Swallow, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is a book *for* children, and therefore, Alice's childishness is taken as the focus point rather than being judged as an adult who creates their sense of self from the gaze of the other. All the more, she is capable of breaking this logic of domination reinforced by the Queen and King of Hearts in the end and further continues the ecopedagogical cycle.

In the final chapter, "Alice's Evidence", Alice finds herself in a court judging a Knave and she realizes they are "nothing but a pack of cards!" (119); more than objectifying them, she recognizes the ridiculousness of their exertion of power over the rest of the sentient beings. In this chapter, humans are not the ruling ones since both the Mad Hatter and Alice are called as witnesses of something that they do not know and treated in a diminishing, threatening

manner. The court acts as a parody of power hierarchies outside of Wonderland, where abstraction and their own upside-down logos act as the sole drivers of action. Alice then moves into position conforming to the activism that Bump establishes as the next step to becoming emotionally literate. When Alice looks at the White Rabbit trying to please the King and Queen by covering their mistakes, she no longer restrains from using her size to the advantage of rebelling against the court's system. The culmination of her journey is crystallized in the transition from dream to reality where Kahn's third question in regards to the agency of nature, in this case in the form of teachers whose lessons Alice will transmit to her sister.

She finally comes full circle in McAndrew's ecopedagogical hierarchy (369) as once she wakes up, she tells her sister about Wonderland and her adventures in there, becoming the teacher and the sister and able to dream the same dream and experience what Alice has told her. The sister, in the same manner, assures that Alice will continue to pass on this dream and relish it with the happiness of childhood summer days.

It can be concluded that *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* brings into awareness the anthropocentric conceptions and individualistic root metaphors that are still ingrained in modern society. This is a crucial part of ecoJustice pedagogy and ecopedagogy because current conceptions of the world must be analyzed critically to ensure that they are not repeated and perpetuated in the future. At the same time, by portraying Alice's change of attitude towards the more than human world, children are demonstrated how to sympathize with other beings with a view entirely different to their own and take considerations based upon such differences. The implications of such a tool; to put themselves in the shoes of another, go beyond the peer socialization level, because these children are more likely to grow up with an ecological root metaphor of more than human beings, added to an emotional reaction to choices where other beings can be affected in any manner. Therefore, these experiences will be

taken into consideration both at conscious and unconscious levels when taking decisions either for direct activism or ones that will entail an environmental change.

The possibilities of this approach towards literature open the academic standards to an emotional, more impacting level. For future projections, a comparison of root metaphors between the Victorian ideology and the Modern conceptions as reflected in the Alice books could help to understand the lasting impact of the books and the transcending sympathy that Alice has with children. Also, a literature program based on the premises proposed by ecopedagogy and ecoJustice pedagogy could be made, where the emphasis of the classes rely on emotional responses guided towards a construction of ecological root metaphors. The possibilities offered by literature to enhance environmental consciousness through language are endless and full of creative paths.

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