Contrasting opposites in the child's world

Nardeen Mohamed Nabil El-Atrouzy

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CONTRASTING OPPOSITES IN THE CHILD’S WORLD

Mardeen Mohamed
Nabil El-Atrouzy
2001
The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities & Social Sciences

CONTRASTING OPPOSITES IN THE CHILD'S WORLD

A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of English and Comparative Literature
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
The degree of Master of Arts

by
Nardeen Mohamed Nabil El-Atrouzy
B.A. Ain Shams University

The American University in Cairo

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has been approved by

Dr. Doris Shoukri
Thesis Committee Chair

Dr. John Henriksen
Thesis Committee Adviser/Examiner

Dr. James Stone
Thesis Committee Reader

Department Chair/Program Director
Date

Dean
Date
Be not in haste
With the Quran before
Its revelation to thee is completed,
But say, “Oh my Lord! Advance me
In Knowledge…”
(Quran:XX.114)
Dedication

To the memory of my Grandfather,
"I hope I made you proud, you will always live in my heart".

To my beloved family; Grandmother, father, mother and little brother,
"your love and support make me stronger and mean the world to me, thank you".

To my loving husband,
"a very warm thank you for understanding and supporting me".

And to my dear Professors,
"thank you for your close attention and guidance".

Nardeen
Abstract

This thesis attempts to show how contrasting opposites play a very important role in children's literature. I have chosen three novels to show how opposites are presented in a very powerful way for children to understand, learn from and enjoy. These three masterpieces are: Exupéry's prize winner The Little Prince, Carroll's ever famous Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Ibn Tufail's spectacular story The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. The reason for choosing these works is that all three contain an enormous bulk of opposites.

With the first two the opposites are contrasting to highlight each other and pave the way for the young protagonists, the little prince and Alice, to make their individual choices in the big circle of life. The third, however, combines the contrasting opposites to form a complementary relationship rather than a contradictory one. The hero, Hayy, is able to reach a certain level of maturity not attained by the other two because he grows to a much more advanced age than the other protagonists. Exupéry's hero and Carroll's heroine are still children facing many contradictions where as Tufail's hero resolves the contrasting opposites that face him as he ages and matures. He blends with nature which encompasses all time and space factors. The contrasting opposites; realism and imagination, child and adult thought and behavior, life and death matters, and happiness and sorrows all construct and complete the life Hayy chooses to lead. However, with the little prince and Alice these same opposites represent individual contrasting factors the protagonists have to choose from. Whether complementary or contrasting, the opposites in the three works are marvelously combined by the authors that the child enjoys reading them and the adult wishes to become a child once again.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Delving into children's literature reveals many contrasting opposites which may contradict or complement each other. Literature for children* includes books written especially for children and other grown-up works appropriated to suit children. Many writers presented books that were directly read by children or simplified first. Of these books I have chosen three of the most influential novels: Saint Exupéry's The Little Prince, Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Ibn Tufail's The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan. The three novels show how contrasting opposites are present everywhere in life and how they greatly affect the growing stages of young readers. The three novelists cleverly construct the plots of their novels basing them on a blend of imaginative and realistic events. Whether these stories are for the child or about a child written initially for the grown-up, they are about childhood.

The Little Prince and Alice's Adventures in Wonderland are about children and are written for children, nevertheless, many grown-ups read them and feel deeply moved by them because they awaken some old nostalgic reminiscence from their childhood period. Besides the fantasy world the two novels take the reader to, there is always a constant reminder of its opposite, the real one. The novelists here brilliantly highlight the contradictions between the two worlds, imaginary and real, favoring one over the other. These opposite worlds include many contradicting yet complementary opposites. They include the child and the adult, fancy and

* It is part of the ongoing stream of literature in general and so deserves the same recognition and study as that given to any other field of literature.
realism, good and bad behavior, meaningful and meaningless concepts etc. They also include plenty of sarcastic and ironical criticism, both social and political, to show how the human misuses the many faculties given to him. In *The Little Prince*, Exupéry shows how a little boy is unable to understand the selfish, greedy and idle adult behavior of the planet’s inhabitants. He leaves his home to go on a quest hoping to find something more fulfilling than his small world. But he clashes with the sterile imagination of the adults he meets and finally concludes that he is much better off on his own planet. Similarly, Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* shows a young girl who cannot trust or comprehend the irresponsible adult world represented by the Duchess and the Queen of Hearts. Like the little prince, Alice resents their behavior and consequently their whole extremely irrational world. This sharp criticism of the adult world is highlighted by the writers to expose the child’s world with all its ideas and potentials.

With the third novel, *The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, there is a plot full of adventures and wild events that are highly appealing to children. But there is also the mature and sophisticated adult Hayy who is presented as leading a mystical life among nature. Thus it is suitable for children to read in terms of its plot after it is simplified from its original text. The child finds the story very hard to understand in terms of the mystical and religious senses. However, Hayy’s quest and later physical journey to the ‘other’ island is easily perceived by the child without including the mystical dimensions in it. He accepts Hayy as a hero who is doing good deeds such as helping animals and later on other human beings without questioning the origin of this goodness. Like the little
prince and Alice, Hayy too goes on a quest to learn more about the secrets of life. His world, first as a child and then as an adult, on the island is contrasted to what lies behind the horizon or to the whole world excluding the island on which he lives. Like the other two he chooses to leave this other world and go back to his beloved island where he feels safe and secure.

The three novels are suitable for children* to read as "the subject of children's literature is a demonstration of life through distinct expressions and pictures" (Al-Haity, p.71). The three writers present 'expressions and pictures' belonging to the imaginative and real worlds showing how "children are fascinated by realistic stories that are mixed with imagination" (Al-Haity, p.29). And in order to communicate this blend of the two worlds, the three novelists use human and animal characters to be able to freely compare and contrast the two worlds together. Therefore, any event is possible in the works as there should not be any boundaries or limitations controlling the logic of events in the stories.**

The different old narratives and mythological stories that are transmitted from one generation to the other represent the origins of children's literature. During the seventeenth century, it was only folk-tales and stories based on fictitious characters that are moved by supernatural powers. With Rousseau in the eighteenth century, and his factual teachings to man of how to live he stresses the importance "of giving the child the chance to develop his natural

* For grown-ups, the three novels can have much deeper interpretations related to politics, psychoanalysis and religious aspects but I shall focus on what is only suitable for the child.

** "Children are part of mankind and children's books are part of literature, and any line drawn to confine children or their books to their own special corner is an artificial one" (Al-Haity, p. 9).
talents based on knowledge and information" (Al-Haity, p. 75) as opposed to imagination, fancy and aesthetic judgements. This led writers to present "a new kind of stories full of facts* and disregarded imagination and feelings" (Al-Haity, p. 75) which drove children to abandon such stories and search for what can satisfy their imagination.

Many works for children like Perrault's *Mother Goose Tales*, and others for adults like *A Thousand and One Nights* and *The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* provided material with very high potential for new stories. They are rich with fairy-tales and imaginative stories where there are no limits to what might happen in the course of the events. They are not based on factual or rational actions in the stories thus they give free vent to the reader's imagination to take him wherever he wishes to go. Later on, this heritage is joined by other works such as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Hais' *Swiss Family Robinson*, Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Exupéry's *The Little Prince* and many other works by Andersen and Cooper. All these works, both ancient and modern, represent the basic foundation and introduction to children's literature. They contain adventures, mystery, humor, fantasy and highly imaginative material for children.

This thesis is about the importance of contrasts and opposites in influencing young children. Their perception and knowledge are touched by the concept of opposites in the sense that they have to see two contrasting concepts to be able to understand the difference between them. This will promote their mental abilities, enhance their imaginative skills and provide interesting literary material. The child's curiosity is aroused as he enters an

* As opposed to fables in which Rousseau found only "lessons of selfishness, personal profit and hypocrisy" (Al-Hadidy, p. 170).
imaginary world very different from his own world because it provides him with new and limitless experiences that provoke his imagination and challenge his perception of reality. What is important for children to develop and know about is described by Scott Fitzgerald as: the test of a first rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still maintain the ability to function (Tucker, p.9). This notion of recognizing two opposites is also applicable for Piaget who would probably agree from his own researches, which suggest that this ability is all together too difficult for children up to the age of seven or so, and after that only in a context of thinking about actual, concrete objects. The next stage, when it is possible to hold two contradictory, abstract ideas together in one concept, such as the notion of a good-bad character, or an act that may be both positive and negative in its implications, will generally have to wait until most children are at least around the age of eleven. Tucker, p. 9

One of the educational methods grownups often use is that of presenting two opposing objects because one of them is bound to be favored and the other rejected. If a child sees a black cat and associates it with evil and dark deeds and then sees a white one, he tends to think of it as the opposite of the black one, that is to say as good and innocent. The black cat is compared to the white one and instantly rejected. The child, thus will be tempted to compare the two cats liking the white one and disliking the black one or vice versa depending on his own interpretation of the colors whether they are arbitrary choices made by the child himself or instructions given to him by society. For example, this is shown in Saint Exupéry’s The Little Prince where the hero is attracted to the bright, shiny and “glittering” (p.45) stars and is explained in
Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as Alice follows a white rabbit* with pink eyes down a hole in the ground. Some children associate dark colors with mystery and so find them appealing like the little prince's fascination with the beauty of sunsets. Others however associate them with negative connotations such as fear, darkness and evil. Similarly light and bright colors can either connote hope, love and peace or the total opposite. This materialization of what is good and what is bad through white and black cats, or other colors, enables the child to start thinking at a very early age, "at least around the age of eleven" as Piaget states, of the two opposites; good and bad. Later on, the same concept will be developed to an abstraction as the child is constantly instructed in his community to act out and obey certain values and rules. I believe that he learns all about shapes, sizes, etc. in terms of opposites like big/small, curly/straight, tall/short, nice/nasty and lazy/active. These opposites will gradually be internalized in his mind and appear in all his actions. He will either follow the good model and become a good citizen as he grows older or he will become a criminal and live as a parasite in his community, depending on the kind of up-bringing he gets. The struggle between these opposites is carried on through the ages ever since man was created and the child will get acquainted with these concepts as the years go by and as his experiences in life increase.

The concept of opposites is employed by many writers. Saint Exupéry,

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* The rabbit described as 'white' has different interpretations. I believe it is the innocent stereotype 'white' we find in other books like "SnowWhite". It is also used by Carroll to signal the pure world Alice expects to find, only to be contrasted to the fiery red color of the cards.
Lewis Carroll and Ibn Tufail are different novelists who use this concept as a base for their novels to show how life is based on contrasting opposites where choices have to be made. The imaginative fantasy world is set in a fairy-tale framework with animals and children and the real world is tied to practicality and adults in the three novels. This opposition teaches the two heroes and heroine many concepts about life in a stage where they are maturing and growing up. The three are eventually able to use the knowledge deduced from these opposites. They make their choices: accept one world and reject the other, adopt one way of thinking and reject the other, and finally achieve an inner satisfaction after long and tiresome journeys.
Chapter Two

The Little Prince

The French writer Saint Exupéry begins his book The Little Prince with a juxtaposition of the mind of a child to that of an adult by giving different opposing views of a child and some adults regarding a drawing. This profound and deeply moving book describes a strange relationship between a little prince, a group of grown-ups and a few animals. I will divide the events of the book into two parts: part one is an encounter with a pilot who has the longest conversation with the prince revealing many events of the story. It contains a narration of the prince's voyage to seven planets and his talks with the grown-ups he meets. Part two is his final visit to Earth, his experience with some animals and finally his departure. The first part represents a child eager to learn more and more about his surroundings concerning the world which is different from his. This world turns out to be the grown-up world exemplified by the adult characters he meets. The second part shows how the little prince matures after going on his quest and how he chooses to go back to his small planet after discovering that the grown-up world does not fulfill his dreams and aspirations. The two parts eventually lead the young hero to the conclusion that good and bad survive together in a world full of choices and it is up to each individual to choose his path in life.

The story is about a little prince who goes on a journey to different planets to learn about life. The way Saint Exupéry narrates the story is like a mystery that gets revealed step by step. In a riddle-like style, the questions: who is the
little prince? What is he doing in the Sahara desert? What does he want?

Strike the reader–whether he is an adult or a child. And as Nicholas Tucker puts it: 'the child will always look for the whys and wherefores of all the fortuitous juxtapositions he meets with in experience” (p.76 note 13). Saint Exupéry’s little hero is continuously asking questions. He is curious to the extent that he is determined to get all the answers he is after by repeating his questions several times. Thus his curiosity enables him to understand how opposites work together. The narrator says:

It took me a long time to discover where he came from. The little prince, who asked me so many questions seemed never to hear the ones I asked him. It was from chance that all was revealed to me. (p.12)

Like all inquisitive children, the little prince asks the geographer about exploration and the knowledge of seas, rivers, towns, mountains and deserts (Exupéry, p.53). He questions their importance and functions with a thirst for learning more about the universe surrounding him. This reflects the children’s quest for learning as these places are stimulating for them because they transcend the boundary of the normal and dull life and they think of travelling to see new places like enormously big oceans or gigantic mountains. The information given to the child or reader is put into a certain logic; one of cause and effect where relativity plays an important role. Shapes, colors and sizes are the questions the little prince repeatedly asks about like the baobabs that are described as very big when compared to “the small bushes” (Exupéry, p.19) the sheep will eat to find suitable food for it. This information is given in small factual hints like a puzzle piling up piece by piece
and laced with philosophical ideas and poetic metaphors to complete the whole picture.

Beside the information given by the author the story is rich with new and strange words for the child to learn. For example, big words such as "Authority", "reason", "Minister", "Ambassador" and "condemning to death" (Exupéry, p.38/39) are generously introduced to the child to grasp as many words as he can from them. Saint Exupéry uses some strange names to attract the child's attention to create humor and to teach him new vocabulary words at the same time as opposed to the familiar and common words they know. Not only are strange words opposed to common ones, but contrast is also found in the sounds of the words themselves as opposed to content. Nicholas Tucker comments on this saying: "Children respond imaginatively to the sound of words, as opposed to the content, (this) is probably the single most unpredictable topic to try to understand in the whole field of children's literature" (p.19). Saint Exupéry agrees with Tucker in presenting strange words that would interest the child phonetically and he supports his written words with pictures as drawings are very appealing to children. For example,
at the beginning of the story there is an artistic drawing of a "Boa - constrictor" followed by a definition of what it is and how it acts. Saint Exupéry names the speaker's "masterpiece": "My Drawing Number One" with a capitalization of the first letter in each word like a child spelling his first vocabulary words and emphasizing their importance to him.

Boa-constrictor from the inside.

This beginning links the child who is "six years old" to the impressive art form of drawing. But Saint Exupéry does not stop at the idea of drawing as an artistic creation. He inserts a further creative form of art which is not only a physical projection of the mind but also an abstract one, namely the imagined elephant assumed to be in the body of the boa-constrictor which is not recognized by the practical adults in the pilot's real world where talks of "bridge and golf", "politics and neckties" (Exupéry, p.7) are appreciated more than aesthetic beauties. The practical man or the "grown-up(s)" to his disappointment, is unable to see this as an artistic creation, and instead interprets the drawing as a "hat." Thus, the exciting and fearful tone of the idea of an animal hunting down its prey and eating it "without chewing," created by the child, is eliminated in favor of the ordinary hat shape recognized by the adults. Thus what a child understands or constructs through his imagination can be something totally different from what an adult
comprehends in reality. Nicholas Tucker comments on drawings and pictures in having double meanings, saying:

The scenes and figures of any picture book can always have a double significance, therefore, both for what such things mean objectively, and also for what they come to signify to the child, in terms - for example - of safe or dangerous, pretty or ugly, nice or nasty, silly or sensible, funny or serious or any other of the host of value judgements with which we monitor the world, but which children have to learn afresh. In fact, the child's early view of things is always an intensely purposeful, even moral one, forever concerned with judgements like good or bad, useful or useless, and this way of perpetually placing objects in the outside world into a personal relationship with the self is as much an effort after meaning as finding out what things are called, what they do, and how they work. (Tucker, p.29)

The young boy has his own definition and idea of the drawing. Objectively, from what appears on the paper, it is a drawing of a hat. This physical interpretation to the child means nothing because the drawing signifies a deeper abstract meaning. It represents a boa-constrictor from the inside not a hat shape from the outside. The young artist is proud of what he draws but unfortunately grown-ups fail to understand him and so he is discouraged to continue drawing. So the same drawing is interpreted differently, almost oppositely; the boy thinks in a highly imaginative mode while the grown-ups take it to be a dull practical shape on paper.* Thus the child is able to see beyond the factual physical shape of the boa-constrictor by using his imaginative sense whereas the grown-up fails to do this and limits himself to the solid boundaries of the hat contours.

*I agree with Fitzgerald when he says that the child holds "two opposed ideas" in his mind, however, I disagree with him that this happens "at the same time" (see p. 5) because the child sees what he finds more interesting. The little prince here dismisses the hat shape, which is the realistic interpretation, and adopts the wild idea of a boa-constrictor instead, which is highly imaginative and what he wants to see.
By beginning the book with an animal and demonstrating the ideas using pictures, Saint Exupéry presents his own logic for the child to understand. Dalglish points out in her book that, "adults sometimes fail to recognize the very important point(s) ...the child draws, or dramatizes what is (presented or) read to him." The adult associates the drawing of a child to the closest realistic and practical object not the imaginative projection of the child's ideas and so misinterprets the child's intended drawing.

Saint Exupéry contrasts the "grown-ups" views with the child's to show their limited practical sense as opposed to his vivid imagination. He says; "Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves and it is exhausting for children always and forever to be giving explanations" (p.6). This shows how a child's perspective is very different from that of an adult who is supposed to know better. However, the situation here is reversed. The child is the one who is explaining the imaginative creativity by using art to the grown up who cannot understand or see the hidden potentials the child finds interesting in the drawing. *

The second encounter with drawing is once again through "a funny little voice" (Exupéry, p.8) asking the pilot to draw him "a sheep" (Exupéry, p.8). Now that the speaker is a grown up himself, and since he was discouraged in the past to pursue his drawing and painting career by developing his artistic skills, he does not understand the little prince's request easily and so draws

* The idea of using an animal such as the boa-constrictor is an interesting one in the first place. The choice of this animal may attract the child and trigger his imaginative skills by arousing his curiosity to start questioning the possibility of how a whole elephant is able to fit into a snake as the drawing shows. Or it may teach the child the new word "boa-constrictor", what it is and what it does.
a picture of an ordinary sheep. This does not satisfy the little prince and it is not until the pilot draws a box leaving him to imagine a sheep within that the little prince feels happy about his new friend. The same idea of the boa-constrictor is rewritten to show the sheep not as a literary picture on a piece of paper, but a sketch of a box with three holes where the sheep lives. Once again one has to think and imagine the sheep in a box instead of simply seeing it on paper. The exciting thing about this imaginary sheep is that the little prince can shape, color and feed it as he likes. He has an unlimited boundary of imagining his sheep and playing with it. This shows the contrasting views of the adult and the child concerning the drawing of the sheep.

Like any other child who reads a book and imagines himself or herself to be its hero or heroine and therefore the sole and most powerful controller of events, the little prince here thinks of his sheep as very "tiny" and eats small quantities of grass because from where he comes, "everything is tiny" (Exupéry, p.11). The little prince forms a "personal relationship" with his sheep to find out the details he himself wants to create. He rejects the common drawings the pilot draws for him because he wants a special sheep which he can befriend, imagine and converse with. By doing this he eliminates all physical boundaries and rules to be able to imagine what he likes without anything hindering him or any obstacles stopping him from communicating with it. Dealing with the physical world in this way is very common to children for they appropriate their own logic to suit their story. Elizabeth Cook calls
this a problem of reality. She explains how any story should not be imposed or forced on the child and she states that his curiosity should be satisfied as it arises. "Stories should be left to make their own imaginative effect with as little interference as possible" (p. 54,55). Most children do not think of any limitations as it is their own private world in which they make-believe events and characters and live with them.

Saint Exupéry gives the first example of the boa-constrictor and later on he mentions the baobabs, a more difficult but interesting word that sounds very funny when pronounced as opposed to other ordinary and familiar words. The two words are long and difficult for young children but the way they are uttered and their phonetic sound make them catchy for children to learn. It is both a humorous and an intellectual way of presenting the ideas Exupéry wishes to communicate to his young readers.*

The baobabs are used by Saint Exupéry for the interpretation of good and bad in terms of plants and seeds. They "are not small bushes but trees the size of churches" (p.19) and before they grow, they "start off small." This very important issue about life and the whole human existence is described using a physical seed which becomes the invisible seed of good and bad within each person. Saint Exupéry says:

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* Thus the author combines mystery, suspense and action with humor and laughter. And at the same time succeeds in giving good information for the child to learn in a simple and delightful manner. This way he creates a triangle where information, language and humor harmoniously constitute its three sides, but where contrasting opposites fill its center.
In effect, there were on the little prince's planet, as on every planet, good and bad plants. And consequently there were good seeds from good plants and bad seeds from bad plants. But the seeds, as everyone knows, are invisible. (p.20)

These few lines explaining the act of planting seeds by burying them and so becoming invisible, along with the analogy of the bad baobab trees which if left to grow in big numbers "will finally make the planet explode" (Exupéry, p.20), is a very good example of explaining the concept of good and bad to children. Since the child can see a good plant, healthy and looking good, and

![The Baobabs](image)

see a bad one, unhealthy and rotten, he can understand the difference because he can actually see the two and compare them together. Thus the seed explains an abstract idea by giving a concrete example of it. And the seed itself when first planted is hidden in earth and so becomes invisible which is what the child learns and later develops as he grows older into
beliefs, concepts and ideas. The little prince thinks that this analogy of seeds is a "question of discipline" (Exupéry, p.20) where such bad plants should be "regularly" (Exupéry, p.20) pulled out to allow the good "rose trees" (Exupéry, p.20) to flourish.

The baobabs' picture is also used to present to the child different information in a very light mannered context full of laughter instead of stating them as dull facts. The pictures and the stories facilitate the author's narration and make the novel interesting as well as beneficial as it becomes easier to remember. Cook believes that too much sentimentality is often rejected by children. She says: 'Sad, tender yearning and sob-stuff of any kind are disgusting to most children, even though they appreciate supernatural mystery and rejoice in it' (p.43). This is why humor is a very important factor in children's books. This humor contrasts the loneliness both the pilot and the little prince feel. Saint Exupéry plays with the words to create an interesting contrast between the humor occasionally aroused and the general sad atmosphere of a lonely child away from home. Humor for example, is introduced when the airplane the pilot mentions is described as signifying for the little prince an act of falling from the sky. He does not understand the concept of having a heavy object made of hard metal flying in the sky or moving around in the air. So he just assumes that the pilot "fell from the sky". He comments on this afterwards saying, "Well! How very funny ." (Exupéry, p.12). This laughter eases the tone the story begins with as we move from the serious and fearful idea of the boa-constrictor to a light and funny note about a huge airplane, from the prince's perspective, falling down from the sky.
Another more sophisticated way of introducing humor into the story to contrast the sad tone of the pilot's reminiscence of his childhood and the prince's solitude, besides the ideas the little prince finds funny, is the way some adult behavior is depicted by Saint Exupéry. The way planets are called such as "Asteroid 3251" (p.14) is mocked by him to create a more sophisticated humor than the simple joke of the little prince. He ridicules the way adults name the exciting explored planets. They become systemized by carrying a number instead of a distinguished name. Saint Exupéry makes fun of the narrow-minded grown-up who lets himself be governed by factual traditions and customs as opposed to the imaginative child. He gives an example of this by mentioning the story of the Turkish scientist who wore a "European dress" (p.16) in order to be heard by the congress. His first attempt to address the same council failed because he was dressed in the "Turkish national custom" (p.14) and so his discovery was delayed for some time because of what he was wearing. This shows how appearances for the child are far less significant than for the adult.

Saint Exupéry describes the action the little prince does in very simple terms that are familiar to children. He blends this common and logical behavior with a wild imagination turning the story into a fantasy world but with very realistic actions. This is shown when the pilot says: "I believe that for his escape he took advantage of a flight of migrating wild birds." (Exupéry, p.32). Yet this touch of fantasy is followed with a narration of an ordinary morning where each child wakes up, has his breakfast and starts doing his chores. The little prince, like any other normal child in the real world, wakes up and eats breakfast, but he is also responsible for taking care of two active volcanoes —
which are useful at times for heating up his food. This strange mix of the possible and the impossible is very challenging for young readers to try linking them together and eventually comprehend the story.

When the little prince begins narrating the events of his journey, we start seeing a more complex world from a grown-up's perspective. A child however, can think of it as a light story involving new ideas that attract his attention for a while but become monotonous after they are repeated over and over. Exupéry introduces the "absolute" or "universal monarch" (p.35/36) for example with his ermine robe which are difficult terms for a child to comprehend. However, on a much higher philosophical level, the story is in the king's words: 'One must require of each what each is able to give ...That (to judge oneself) is the most difficult thing of all' (Exupéry, p.38/39). But with such complex concepts being very hard to understand, we find the little prince yawning a lot and feeling bored. The little prince is interested in the king's practice of ruling over his supposedly existing subjects. He feels that his words, though big and complicated, are empty and meaningless since there are no subjects to rule over. Unlike a child, a grown-up might find such quotes worth thinking of but Exupéry's adult world, unfortunately, thinks in a different way where such meditations about life stand little or no chance at all.

The emphasis on numbers and figures instead of descriptions using adjectives is also a way of showing how adults concentrate on the form of things and neglect their content. This attack against the grown-up world is once again contrasted to the child's world where 'Children have to be very indulgent towards grown-ups' (Exupéry, p.17). The pilot, in spite of being an adult himself, speaks against the red-tape rational world of adults and resents
this world with all its figures and limitations. On the other hand, he embraces the world of children by welcoming the little prince, asking him who he is, where he comes from and what he wants. The pilot starts behaving like a little boy himself by living in the little prince’s world. And as this gap between the two contrasting worlds, of adult and child, is bridged, he begins understanding the world of drawing, colors and dreams, a world where everything can be imagined and lived. This is shown as he is able to understand the imaginary sheep the little prince wants and draws a muzzle for him to encompass his new friend. And it is the little prince who guides him through this world. The qualities* he is after are no longer an active part of his world where practical life takes over all human feelings and emotions.

As the story goes on more and more of the two worlds, that of the little prince and the grown-ups as opposed to each other, is revealed. The visit to the conceited man’s planet and the drawing show him like a clown with a big hat and a red nose making him look funny. The act of clapping he tells the little prince to do while he takes off his hat first amuses the prince but later on becomes monotonous. Like many adult stereotypes, the only thing this man is interested in is for others to admire him and clap for him, the little prince however finds this behavior insignificant and uninteresting. Saint Exupéry here shows a contrast between the little prince’s modest behavior and the conceited man’s way of admiring himself in a very egotistical manner. The little prince’s visit to the planet inhabited by the drinker plunges him into a deep melancholy” (Exupéry, p.42) as he feels sorry for the drinker but is

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* Friendship, a very basic human quality taught to children at an early age, for example has become very rare in a world busy with figures and appearances.
confused because he is not able to understand the shame of drinking the host speaks about. The drinker explains to the little prince that he drinks "to forget" his "shame" of drinking." The prince unlike the drinker has nothing to be ashamed of and this is why he leaves perplexed because his way of living, surrounded by friends even if they are non-human, does not include any shame. He is happy because he has a fulfilling life as opposed to the wasted one the drinker leads. When the little prince visits the businessman on the fourth planet he meets an example of the greedy man who is after possessing more and more assets, like stars in his case, and locking them up in a drawer to feel amused. This is opposed to the idea of the little prince who thinks of owning things and objects in terms of their mutual usefulness. He feels useful to his flower and three volcanoes because he takes good care of them; he watches over his flower and sweeps his volcanoes. The businessman, however, does nothing to his stars, he simply counts and keeps records of them.

For the little prince, it is not a matter of possession but a relation of keeping both sides pleased where each side fulfils and is fulfilled, which contrasts what the businessman does to them. This is why with all the absurdity of lighting and extinguishing a street lamp on the fifth planet, the little prince still finds it appealing to continue his journey. Unlike his previous visits, he feels very sad when he leaves because of the many lovely sunsets it has and because he happens to like the lamplighter to the extent of aspiring to be his friend in spite of knowing that,
This fellow would be laughed at by all the others: by the king, by the conceited man, by the drinker, by the businessman. However, he is the only one who does not seem to me ridiculous. Perhaps that is because he is preoccupied with something other than himself.

(Exupéry, p.51)

The opposition, between the grown-up world and that of the child, becomes very strong when the little prince visits planet Earth. Saint-Exupéry meticulously classifies the inhabitants of Earth into kings - including the "Negro kings" (p.56), geographers, businessmen, drinkers and conceited men. The grown-ups are associated with baobabs in the sense that they spread their practical and dull ways to dominate any imaginative quality a child has. And of all the natural places, Saint-Exupéry chooses the African desert, a vast empty space, as opposed to the tiny planet the little prince comes from, where many exotic things happen, as a setting for the meeting of our little hero and the pilot. And what is more ironical is that of the "two billion inhabitants who populate the Earth" (Exupéry, p.58), the little prince's first encounter with a living being is with a snake and not a human. The wild fox also is another non-human that educates the little prince about facts of life. It speaks to our little hero about taming wild animals to be safe and secure when being around them. Instead of meeting a grown-up who can help the little prince and direct him, planet Earth is unable to provide any human assistance. Saint-Exupéry emphasizes this non-human interference by introducing the cunning fox which is able to educate the little prince and teach him a way of surviving around ferocious animals. While humans fail to help, even the lost pilot-in dire need of help himself- who succeeds in understanding the little prince and communicating with him, cannot be of any use. The snake on the other hand
helps the little prince by sending him back home where he belongs, where there is no conceit, no drinking, no greed and no other destructive grown-up qualities that spoil the beauty of life.

The little prince, alone in this vast desert lives an adventure story with lots of mysteries but he acts as if he is not in any kind of danger. He wonders about the stars and his planet setting a good example of bravery for young children. However, in spite of his self-confidence, the little prince feels lonely on planet Earth. The echo repeating his own words is criticized by him as people having "no imagination" (Exupéry, p.62). For him the people repeat whatever is said without adding or changing anything. He reaches the conclusion that it is good to go back to his own world. To him the flower, volcanoes and stars are better than the empty planets he visits. This is why he chooses the fastest way to leave. For him, it is bad to waste one’s life in this way, to spend it in vain. For the little prince it is good to return home to another totally different world that does not tolerate any confusion aroused by human faults. He says: "It will be rather nice, you know. I too shall look up at the stars. All the stars will be wells with rusty pulleys. All the stars will pour water out for me to drink" (Exupéry, p.87). The stars will provide water for him to drink whereas the desert on Earth is dry and short in water supply. Thus this empty, dry and sterile world has nothing to offer to the little prince and so "he stood still for an instant. He did not cry out. He fell as gently as a tree falls. There was not even any sound, because of the sand" (Exupéry, p.89). His world, simple and pure, deserves resisting the pain of the snake’s poison which is welcomed more than the grown-up’s poison of wasting life and living
in an empty desert, for the little prince his own world is more fulfilling and so his story ends happily.
Chapter Three

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Just as the little prince returns to his imaginary world after passing through an exciting and highly educating journey, Carroll's heroine, Alice, undergoes a similar journey but instead she travels to an imaginary world and then returns to her real one. She shuts her eyes and indulges in a dream world unlike the physical journey the little prince experiences. Many readers think of the little prince as an imaginary being because of the ambiguous explanation of his origin*, Alice on the other hand is clearly portrayed as a real character who has a dream that is dismissed the moment she wakes up. Freud states that, ”The dreams of young children are frequently pure wish fulfilments and are in that case quite uninteresting compared with the dreams of adults" (Freud, p.206). I agree with Freud about dreams being 'wish fulfilments', but I believe that children's dreams are as interesting as adult dreams. Alice's dream is important for her to the extent that, in the span of one hour, she matures a lot and learns many things about life in her real world after comparing it with its opposite, the wonderland world. Alice wishes for complete freedom of imagination and this wish is fully granted in wonderland because there are no rules to prohibit her actions. Unlike many adults who disregard their dreams, Alice meditates about hers and compares the dream world she visits to her real world and at the end she recalls all the events of her dream and narrates them to her sister. She continues telling her sister all about it including the

* Nothing clearly explains the little prince's origins, St. Exupery only mentions his hero's home and the objects and living beings on it. He does not however probe on how he came into existence and who his family members are.
minutest details and by so doing, she is involving another character who is also influenced by the strange events of the dream. Thus what Freud describes as 'uninteresting', becomes very interesting and significant as it affects Alice's judgement of things around her in her real life and it also extends its influence to others, like her sister, who

Sat still just after she (Alice) left her, leaning her head on her hand, watching the setting sun, and thinking of little Alice and all her wonderful adventures, till she too began dreaming after a fashion... she dreamed about Alice herself... and still as she listened, or seemed to listen, the whole place around her became alive with the strange creatures of her little sister's dream
(Carrol, p.239)

Alice will always remember this special dream and her sister believes that it will prove to be very exciting for Alice's future children because it is that sort of material which will "make their eyes bright" (Carroll, p.241). The dream world for Alice is better only at the beginning as her mind pictures it as a place with unlimited imaginative potentials. For "dreams are a product of the dreamer's own mind" (Freud, p.5) and they arise "essentially from mental impulses and represent manifestations of mental forces which have been prevented from expanding" (Freud, p.6). Thus Alice escapes to the dream world leaving behind the real one with all its boundaries and limitations hoping to find complete freedom of imagination.

Alice's adventure commences with the well-known words: "Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and having nothing to do" (Carroll, p.19). She follows a white rabbit with pink eyes into a
narrow hole in the ground. Carroll comments on this in his own words saying: "I had sent my heroine straight down a rabbit hole ... without the least idea what was to happen afterwards" (Pudney, p.7). Woolf describes this fall into a "terrifying, wildly inconsequent, yet perfectly logical world where time races, then stands still; where space stretches, then contracts. It is the world of sleep: it is also the world of dreams" (Woolf, p.79). Time and space in Alice's story are described by Woolf as moving then freezing and stretching then contracting. These contrasting opposites can be traced everywhere in wonderland. The time and space of Alice growing up into an adult are marked with wild events happening to her. And I have to agree with Woolf as she describes these events as 'wildly inconsequent' yet 'perfectly logical'. They give wonderland its special quality of attractive strangeness based on opposite concepts and themes like that of growing and shrinking in size. This shift from the real world to a wonderland world marks a contrast between the real world with all its boredom and monotony and a wild pursuit of a tiny animal in an exciting* fantasy world. Tucker describes Alice as being: "herself ... a spokesman for her young readers, battling her way through a story where the adult world often appears ridiculous" (p.99). Rackin believes that "in most episodes, her refreshing sense of wonder drives the plot, keeping readers racing with her from one adventure to another" (p.14). Thus Carroll emphasizes contrasts such as real and unreal worlds with opposing actions, human and non-human behavior and sudden shifts presenting opposing sizes like big and small sizes.

Like the division of the little prince's journey, Alice's adventure can also be

* Alice cannot stop herself from following the white rabbit down the hole to fantasy world. The excitement arises from her curious mind urging her to find out where the small animal is going.
divided into three parts. It begins with the dive through the rabbit hole and all the action of growing and shrinking in size, followed by the encounter with an amazing selection of animals—some of which are mythical—and finally witnessing a ridiculous trial after playing a very strange croquet game with a Queen. This division shows how Alice begins without the slightest thought of where she is going but with all the action—both physical and mental—happening to her and after meeting the strange characters on her way and passing through wild contradictory events, she changes. This aimless child learns and develops, like the little prince who acquires more knowledge of his surroundings, moving from one stage of growing to the next phase.

The two worlds of reality and imagination are constantly contrasted in Carroll’s novel. At the beginning of her journey, Alice is still thinking in the same practical way she is used to in her real world. She tries to count the many miles she travels down the well and concludes that it “would be four thousand miles down” (Carroll, p.22). This is very close to the numbers and figures and the attack against them the little prince and the pilot make. Alice mentions this figure in relation with the real world, later on however as she indulges in the wonderland world, she hardly mentions any numbers even though her encounter with the Queen and her army of cards is full of numbers. Alice ceases to think in the practical and materialistic way because her visit to wonderland teaches her to use her mind in an imaginative way rather than continuously criticize and calculate things around her in a very practical and realistic manner. By the time Alice hits the bottom of the well, she hears the white rabbit saying: “Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it’s
getting" (Carroll, p.25) instead of: "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late"
(Carroll, p.20) said by it earlier. When Alice first sees the white rabbit, she is
attracted to its funny appearance and later on to its comic comments as 'Oh
my ears and whiskers' more than the idea of being late. Being late does not
strike Alice as the "whiskers" hit her, she begins living through the curious
events of wonderland where everything is different and anything is possible.

Alice had got so much into the way of expecting
nothing but out-of-the-way things to happen, that it
seemed quite dull and stupid for life to go on in the
common way. (Carroll, p.31)

Alice is attracted to what is different as opposed to the ordinary events she is
used to*. She rejects the 'common way(s)' of living and this is what starts her
from the beginning on an unexpected journey. We are all the time reminded of
Alice's real world as contrasted to that imaginative wonderland she enters.
She desperately says:

It was much pleasanter at home ... when one wasn't
always growing larger and smaller, and being ordered
about by mice and rabbits. I almost wish I hadn't gone
down that rabbit-hole -- and yet -- and yet -- it's rather
curious, you know, this sort of life! (Carroll, p.72)

Alice's 'growing larger and smaller' is not something that can happen in real

* Alice is constantly pursuing what is different like the talking white rabbit walking on two feet
she follows into wonderland.
life. In spite of this strange action, she does not regret going down the hole. This 'sort of life' is the opposite of the normal and expected one she has back home. And with all the 'curios' happenings, she is happy to be there to witness them, only as a visitor. For children, it does not matter how Alice gets through the rabbit hole, the small door or into the mysterious garden, what is more important for them is fulfilling their curiosity and knowing what lies behind these strange places of wonder-world even if it involves unbelievable spells and magical enchantments. White comments on the curiosity of children, explaining that when "children saw an animal they wanted to know how it lived, where it had its home, what food it liked, how it treated its babies, and why it had its own particular shape and color" (p.161). Cook describes this acceptance of strange magical spells to make the story more fantastic*.

Magic has a particular attraction ... (children) delight ... in seeing how far they can go. If some people are taller than others, how tall could anyone conceivably be? ... Such speculations carried ad infinitum are given concrete form in giants, and the enchantments of elves and dwarfs, and the magic of runes and spells

(Cook, p.7)

This magic creates the imaginative atmosphere Alice is in. It is the total opposite of what she expects to happen in her normal world, the real one she comes from. White agrees with Cook on how magic is the foundation of

* More fantastic because of the magical events and education as the child is introduced to animals and new information. The opposition between the two worlds, wonderland and reality, helps teaching Alice the difference between the two worlds with all their contrasting views and events.
Alice’s dream world as opposed to the dull real one. As she describes the adventurous story of Alice as:

... though neither fairy nor elf appears ... there is simply Magic and even that is treated as just an extension of the natural- ‘curiouser and curiouser’. The essence of the story is the translation of the ordinary in a plausible way- not as a conjuring trick (a white rabbit out of a madman’s hat, so to speak) but as an almost logical extension of properties inherent in this or that person or animal. (White, p.57)

The white rabbit stereotype trick is reversed in Alice’s story. Instead of a magician popping one out of a hat, it is a character on its own that chooses to dive into a hole moving in a downward motion as opposed to the upward one almost all acts of magic perform. “Burning with curiosity”, Alice runs after this rabbit that is actually wearing a “watch” and a “waistcoat” (Carroll, p.20). This strange combination is what attracts Alice where an ‘ordinary’ rabbit through a ‘logical extension’* becomes ‘in a plausible way’ extra-ordinary.

Carroll’s novel includes nightmare material that is contrasted to humorous actions and Tucker comments on this scary atmosphere saying:

The most famous fantasies ostensibly composed for children are of course Lewis Carroll’s Alice books, which can sometimes rather frighten as well as amuse or intrigue younger readers. (p.98/99)

The frightening but amusing events in Alice’s story according to Tucker

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* Cook does not mean that the rabbit is nearly the same as Alice’s rabbit. She means to say that the rabbit is initially a common animal but the ‘extension’ comes with the additional properties of talking and peculiar action it performs and so it becomes a ‘logical’ extension of any normal rabbit.
'intrigue' the child. There are many frightening incidents where Alice feels at a loss like when she gets repeatedly lost in wonderland. She is very worried during falling into the hole which she thinks is a deep well. Her life before the dive is rich with frightening stories that are recalled on her way to wonderland. She starts thinking of similar events that happen to young children in fairytales but the kind of stories Carroll describes here are very scary. For her, they are only stories she hears of but here she is living through one which makes the situation different and more serious. Freud describes "emotions such as fear, anger and hate ... (as) controlled in the imagined world of fantasy" (Freud, p.17). She remembers "stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and other unpleasant things" (Carroll, p.28). The "red-hot poker" (Carroll, p.29) that burns if touched and the knife that makes the fingers bleed if it cuts through them are different horrific events Carroll describes. The opposite actions of growing and shrinking in size are also sometimes a source of discomfort and trouble. After eating a morsel of the mushroom, Alice "found that her shoulders were nowhere to be found, all she could see when she looked down, was an immense length of neck ... (that) would bend about easily in any direction, like a serpent" (Carroll, p.99). Unlike the little prince who achieves his goal with the help of a snake and who appreciates the drawing of a boa-constrictor, Carroll uses the frightening metaphor of looking like a serpent to create an uneasy atmosphere full of scary details, to contrast the comic situations present throughout the novel, where the snake image here is feared and dealt with in extreme caution. The snake Alice resembles as she grows taller becomes uncomfortable for her
and scary for the creatures around her. Thus the snake figure contrasts the comic incidents experienced elsewhere in the novel*.

In order to break the tension of such horrific images, Carroll depends on the element of humor using funny situations and light diction full of twisted words and puns to oppose the previous seriousness of scary events. Alice is "forever talking to herself as well as to flowers, insects, mythical beasts, and the like; and this perpetual dialogue is the means for frequent puns and verbal jokes" (Kosinski, p.5). This is shown in the way Alice converses with the animals when, for example, she talks with the mouse while swimming in the tear pond she makes in a very funny way.

'Ou est ma chatte?', which was the first sentence in her French lesson-book. The Mouse gave a sudden leap out of the water, and seemed to quiver all over with fright. 'Oh, I beg your pardon' cried Alice hastily, afraid that she had hurt the poor animal's feelings (Carroll, p.45/46)

Not only does Alice speak in French** but she also talks to the mouse about a 'chatté' which makes the poor thing panic and try to run away. Also the hurting of the 'poor animal's feelings' sounds very humanistic, making it an over statement in talking to a tiny mouse. Carroll also plays on some words and creates funny incidents to contrast the previous serious and frightening events. The two words; "tail" and "tale" are played on when the mouse meets Alice and starts narrating a "tale". Not knowing what the mouse is doing, Alice simply looks at its "tail" raising a light childish type of humor. Another incident

* Like the comic conversation with the rat in the tear pond.

** Speaking in French is very odd because it will sound funny in an English context and it requires sophisticated readers who know French.
creating a light diversion form the worries attacking Alice is the mad tea party with its weird characters; the March hare, the hatter and the dormouse. This group tells Alice some humorous riddles and silly jokes to lighten up the atmosphere. The reason for having the tea party in itself is absurd, since it is always tea-time because the hatter’s watch is fixed on six o’clock. It is "not difficult for ...(children) to accept highly imaginative and unusual elements in a story. Furthermore, the fantasy’s improvisations on reality are not a source of confusion" (Kosinski, p.4). Thus the humor aroused by these events is embraced by Alice as she laughs at the jokes made and tries to solve the riddles at the party with the other characters and at the same time sets a contrast with the lonely feelings Alice experiences when left alone or when facing a problem on her journey.

The contrast between big and small sizes is one of the first elements taught to children and Carroll makes use of it in his novel. Unlike the little prince who is very small and delicate, Alice is portrayed as a giant – in many occasions in the book – to be feared by the other animals around her. The idea of having a giant or an elf is very popular in literary works, Gulliver’s Travels for example presents its hero as a giant at times and a dwarf at others. Alice too with the help of magic is able to change in size and influence those around her. The process of getting smaller and bigger at the right moment is like a mystery game where Alice has to keep reading clues to get into a small door and then a beautiful garden. Carroll uses these two contrasting actions where shrinking happens after drinking from a bottle labeled "drink me" (Carroll, p.28) and its contrast, growing occurs after eating a piece of cake at which also a note is found saying "eat me" (Carroll, p.28). Alice “who always took a great interest
in questions of eating and drinking" (Carroll, p.140) first thinks of the food and the drinks whether they are harmful or poisonous and then tries them. This very realistic idea is contrasted to what these enchanting food and drinks do in wonderland. She becomes very big and gets stuck inside a house where many tiny animals outside fear her and throw stones at her. This "sensation of inhibition of movement which is so common in dreams also serves to express a contradiction between two impulses, a conflict of will" (Freud, p.42). Alice is torn in between the two worlds, real and imaginative, and this conflict within is projected in the contrasting opposites such as the big and small theme she dreams herself going through. Later on she becomes very small and plays with a puppy but this time she feels worried should the puppy fall on her or squash her under its paws. All these controversies make Alice understand that "being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing" (Carroll, p.88) and that imagination and magic are not always pleasant thrilling events. They can cause a lot of confusion not present in the real world.

Like the sophisticated fox and snake the little prince meets, the animals Alice keeps bumping into are even stranger. Greenacre describes how

The great charm of the tale lies in the panorama of grotesque caricature expressed in the general mixture and fusion of identities of animals, insects, and strange human beings whom Alice meets.

(p.383)

Like humans, these animals have "powers of thought and speech" that enable them to talk, dance and sing. These characters contrast the characters belonging to the real world Alice knows and speaks about such as her cat,
Dinah, and her sister. For example, the Dodo proposes a “caucus-race” to get dry after soaking in the pond of tears made by Alice, a caterpillar smokes a long hookah, a small pig cries like a human baby and a grinning Cheshire cat keeps appearing and disappearing. But unlike normal humans and animals that belong to Alice’s real world, these animals work with a logic of their own. They follow no exact rule and they keep changing - both in form and mind - just as Alice keeps changing in size. They leave Alice and move along or they change into something different, like the baby that becomes a pig, without any explanations. Tucker describes this rich selection of strange animals,

Where animism is concerned … (with) animals that can speak … sometimes the hero may be able to converse quite freely with (them) … There will also be other stories where animals behave exactly like animals - simply to be sold at market or ridden on a journey. (p.77)

Alice’s animals, like the little prince’s, are of the first kind Tucker describes. They contrast those which are to be used by selling them at a market or being ‘ridden on a journey’. These exotic animals form the wonderland world or the “other world” of the imagination as opposed to the real world where Alice’s real cat Dinah lives. Dinah and the rabbit represent the two contrasting worlds of reality and imagination. They keep popping in and out of the story giving a magnificent blend between the two contrasting worlds, Alice’s real world and wonderland world.

In addition to the simple animals – dog, cat and mouse – Carroll introduces other “curious creatures” such as the “Dodo”, the “Lory”, the “Eaglet” (Carroll,
p.49) and the "Gryphon" with its exciting wings. Like the "baobabs" and the "boa-constrictor", these animals have a magical effect on children. They influence them in knowing exciting animal types other than the ordinary ones they frequently encounter on the street. This way, both their knowledge of new vocabulary words and their interest in the novel increase because of the intriguing words Carroll uses. The Mock Turtle and Gryphon for example explain to Alice the "Reeling and Writhing" they learned at school along with the "different branches of Arithmetic – Ambition, Distraction, Uglification and Derision" (Carroll, p.185) also academically studied. The idea of such big and strange words is very vague yet very humorous since they sound funny for young children. Bratton says that "half the fun is in the parody of... tales, rhymes and children's hymns" (p.70) which the book contains. The initial famous nursery rhyme 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' is changed to "Twinkle, twinkle, little bat".

A bat represents to most readers ugly violent nature – active, changing and predatory; a star, on the other hand, usually connotes beautiful, remote, unthreatening, and static nature. (Bratton, p.163)

This mixing up of animate 'bat' with inanimate 'star' shows how confusing wonderland is. It is a dream world "which seem(s) disconnected, confused, and meaningless" (Freud, p.18). I agree with Freud that it is 'confused' but I find it 'meaningless' and 'disconnected' only seemingly. For Alice is confused but it is this confusion of opposites that teaches and educates her. The dream world here is "particularly fond of representing two contrary ideas by the same composite structure" (Freud, p.31). The 'bat' of wonderland and 'star' of the
real world are held together in Alice’s mind* to show her the difference between the two worlds. The little prince favors stars and he sees the aesthetic beauty in them. His tiny world is based on simplicity and beauty whereas Alice’s visited world sees the bat with all its ugly connotations.

Wonderland** for Alice is a fun place to visit but not a suitable one to live in. She learns that the real world is more peaceful and civilized when compared to the chaotic wonderland. This is because the unnatural atmosphere of wonderland moves in a weird way which is not understood and so not favored by Alice. Robert Phillips comments on this saying:

According to Lewis Carroll, what a child desires before anything else is that the world in which he finds himself should make sense. It is not the commands and prohibitions, as such, which adults impose that the child resents, but rather that he cannot perceive any law linking one command to another in a consistent pattern. (p. 37)

Wonderland world makes no sense to Alice, in spite of all its exciting events, it lacks a consistent path in all the action taking place. Alice is unsure of everything around her including herself, she says: “I’ll stay down here till I’m somebody else” (Carroll, p.41). This confusion is later described by the Cheshire cat to her that wonderland world is a crazy place where “we’re all

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* Where she knows that the original word used in the song is ‘star’ instead of ‘bat’ used in wonderland. Thus, unlike the prince, she can hold the two opposing ideas, as Fitzgerald comments (see p. 5) in her mind at the same time. And this, in my opinion, is what makes her a real character.

** Wonderland for Alice stands as the opposite of her real world, i.e. her common everyday life events.
mad here. I'm mad. You're mad ... You must be or you wouldn't have come" (Carroll, p.121/122). Unlike the little prince who has a certain logic and a consistent way of thinking, Alice is full of contrasting desires. She longs for being back home with her pet cat, Dinah, yet she cannot stop herself from going deeper and deeper into wonderland. Her curiosity to see what is behind the "doors all around the hall ... (that) were all locked" (Carroll, p.25) keeps her going forward to explore more and more of this strange world. Alice faces the problem of discovering her true identity and finding herself in a world of complete anarchy where everybody says and does whatever comes to his head even if it is absurd and ridiculous *. She has to adjust herself to a life without any restricting laws and see whether she can tolerate it or not. But she keeps thinking of herself as different from the characters she meets. She contrasts the laws and rules of behavior she acquired from her world to the lawless and free one she feels trapped in.

Like the little prince's visits to the different planets and his encounter with their adult inhabitants, Alice also meets various characters. But unlike him, she makes no friends the way he makes or tries to make. This is because the characters she meets are of a different nature than the ones the prince meets. The little prince's world enjoys a more imaginative sense as opposed to the dull and monotonous adult world. The adult world Alice is familiar with however contains strict codes of behavior and the one she meets in wonderland is nowhere close to such obligatory rules. The Duchess, Queen

* This understanding of wonderland is opposite to what Alice has wished for. Instead of being able to act freely in Wonderland, She is ordered and bossed around by irresponsible adults like the Queen of hearts.
and King are the characters who break all the rules of logic and good manners. Alice, as a child, stands still not knowing what words to utter in facing such extremely strange society. The child world here fails to understand the adult authority that is magnified to the extent of being absurd. Not only is the Duchess inconsistent, unpleasant and pointlessly didactic, but she is of no help to Alice in her predicament. Elsie Leach sees that none of the other "characters Alice meets, with the exception of the Cheshire cat, the only one to admit he is mad; they snap at her, preach to her, confuse her, or ignore her" (p.125). Leach believes that they "behave to her as adults behave to a child ... only the eccentric cat accepts her as an equal" (p.125). She concludes that, "in the guise of dream fantasy, Alice states the plight of a little girl in an adult world" (p.125).

'I don't think they play at all fairly' Alice began, in rather a complaining tone, 'and they all quarrel so dreadfully one can't hear oneself speak — and they don't seem to have any rules in particular'.

(Carroll, p.161)

The Queen had only one way of settling all difficulties, great and small. "Off with his head!" is what she continuously shouts without even asking for reasons or explanations.

The story deals with Alice's vicissitudes in getting into the beautiful garden and finally with the unexpected events within. But she discovers that this
‘beautiful garden’ is nothing but the Queen’s mad croquet ground. Thus what is expected to be enchanting and beautiful turns out to be ugly and full of disorder or as the Mock Turtle describes it, a place where “curious”, “nonsense” and “confusing” events occur. The act of painting the white roses red explains how the way things are in wonderland is the exact opposite of what Alice sees. The dream world Alice imagines is full of mad rules that make everyone around her insane. Rackin explains that:

In a sense, the Alice books are about revolution in that they present a funny but anxious vision of ... (a) world turned upside down ... where the sensible child of the master class acts as servant, and the crazy servants act as masters; where inanimate, manufactured playing cards ... have seized control, giving rude orders to a real, live ... human. (p.8)

Alice’s world, however, clashes with the over chaotic wonderland world, and eventually Alice has to escape by returning to her initial real world* where adults are more in control of themselves and so can be trusted by children. She feels that wonderland is too chaotic to live in because of the irresponsible characters she meets. This teaches Alice a lesson of accepting her real world since it can be trusted as opposed to wonderland which is highly irresponsible and confusing.

* The child will see Alice and her actions of repelling wonderland in favor of the real world. Thus the lesson of acceptance is communicated to him/her through Alice and her choices.
Alice’s dogged quest for Wonderland’s meaning in terms of her above-ground world of secure assumptions and self-assured regulations is doomed to failure. Her only escape, finally, is in flight from Wonderland’s maddening anarchy—a desperate leap back to the above-ground certainty of social formalities and ordinary logic.

(Rackin, p.36)

Carroll’s novel thus rests on a number of polarities;

Of sense vs. nonsense, consciousness vs. the unconscious, satire vs. sentimentality, waking vs. dreaming, reality vs. fantasy, adult vs. child, narrator vs. protagonist, teller vs. doer, delight vs. fear, pain vs. pleasure, attraction vs. repulsion, order vs. chaos, and laughter vs. tears... these polarities create force fields and tensions immediately disturbing but finally resolved with a dynamically comic solution. (Rackin, p.125)

This ‘comic solution’ is reached as Alice wakes up only to find that all her adventures are but a dream. However, this dream educates Alice about accepting her real life and learning to appreciate it after coming back from a long journey full of crazy events. The real world becomes a better place for Alice because it is ordered and controlled whereas Wonderland is rejected with all its actions and characters,

The Duchess and her baby, the Cheshire Cat, the trio of Hatter/ Hare/ Dormouse, the alteration of pieces such as ‘The Mouse’s Tale’, the expansion of the trial scene, and the revision of ending, (which) bring out more forcefully than before the ambivalence with which Carroll regards Alice’s willed return to a normal world of growth. (Knoepflmacher, p.167)
Thus wonderland world cannot be trusted and so Alice looks, listens and learns about the differences between the two worlds until she finally chooses willingly to go back to her real life. This young heroine, like the little prince, matures and learns about life after spending some time being caught up in the tangled coils of growing up where the dilemma of opposites, real world versus fantasy world, tear her apart until they are finally resolved with her final choice at the end of resenting the imaginative world and willingly accepting its opposite, the real one.
Chapter Four

The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan

Unlike the dream-like world of Alice and the fantasy of the little prince, Ibn Tufail’s hero, Hayy, lives a life full of real hardships and suffering, however, like them he matures after going through and experiencing a whole set of contrasting opposites. Hayy does not wake-up from a dream nor travels to different sublunar planets but is forced into a world where the contrasting opposites imagination and realism combine together to form a complete whole. Like Alice, Hayy depends solely on his imaginative skills at the beginning to discover and learn more about the different forms of existence around him rather than realistic elements where his knowledge of the real world is not yet fully developed. And like Carroll’s heroine, he sinks into a hole but instead of going to a fantasy world, he indulges in a well of knowledge with realistic and serious events like finding ways of survival on the deserted island.

Hayy lives in a world he creates for himself. This world is partly realistic in the sense that it is a materialistic world where he has to fight or he will be killed, live and let live and learn the code of the wilderness to be able to survive. It is also partly imaginative in the sense that with the help of his curious imaginative mind, Hayy is able to educate himself without any human interference. Had he not used this faculty of imagination*, he would never have led such an organized life among wild beasts. Like the little prince, Hayy

* Imagining what is unseen not fantasy or magical events.
has an inquisitive spirit and a powerful urge to explore other bodies and later other places. The little prince travels to learn more about life, Hayy also is after increasing his knowledge of his surroundings and this is why he accompanies Aslan in his visit to the other island where his companion's people live. However, both heroes dislike what they find away from their homes and prefer to return to their initial places, the tiny planet for the little prince and the isolated island for Hayy. These places are places of innocence and purity but they also prove to be places of deep thought and meditation where the two heroes feel extremely happy and fulfilled. The little prince is happy to have his friends and fulfilling meaningful life and Alice is happy to be among loving and caring people and back to a highly organized world. These two places are opposed to the materialistic shallow real worlds the two heroes visit and once they are exposed for what they really are, the little prince and Hayy choose to go back to their homes where imagination and usefulness are the qualities that dominate their enclosed worlds. However, for Hayy, it is more serious since it is a method or way of living not a simple journey for pleasure like the little prince's, he repels the world he visits - exemplified by the island inhabited by Aslan's people - and embraces his original world with all its mystical ways of worship.

Hayy's story is magnified by Ibn Tufail to encompass the whole universe with all its contrasting opposites. It includes; the physical and the spiritual, the living and the dead, the human and the non-human, the natural and the unnatural, and the child and the adult. The writer's genius lies in blending together all these aspects, facts and ideas and presenting them through the eyes of Hayy, first as a young boy who is born into a world he knows nothing
about. And second as a man with a certain philosophy* about life where Ibn Tufail shows how fundamental opposites constitute life with all its controversies in one complete whole. Unlike the contrasting opposites of the other two novels that fight and contradict each other, the opposites here complement each other and Hayy reaches this conclusion after a long and tiresome journey of self-exploration, like Alice, and deep meditation, like the little prince.

The story is divided into two parts, the first is where Hayy is discovered on the island as a new-born struggling to survive and the second is about Hayy reaching manhood and acquiring knowledge of the physical universe around him**. He reaches the highest spiritual level of acknowledging his Creator on the island among Mother Nature. Both parts contribute to show how the young boy learns and increases his knowledge, develops into an adult who uses his mind to judge things around him and finally becomes an old man with a peculiar philosophy about the life he leads. Hayy is able to educate himself*** as his voyage starts as an example of "man's mind picturing his abilities to recognize human existence through the senses, connecting, comparing and concluding" (Ashour, p.214). Thus Ibn Tufail writes about the secrets of "oriental wisdom" (Ashour, p.212) showing how "man alone, without religious guidance, can reach out (discover) to the knowledge of God" (Ashour, p.212).

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* It is a "philosophical story of a child as a hero" (Al-Goueni, Al-Ahram Newspaper 18/8/2000).

** The reason for dividing the novel in this way is that I believe that part one is very interesting for children where as part two is highly philosophical and complex for them to comprehend.

*** I agree with Ashour in describing the message the story conveys as: "Man is able by himself (alone) to reach knowledge with its different kinds" (p. 214).
The two parts include the two contrasting worlds of child, in the first, and adult, in the second, only to complement each other at the end with the old man with his philosophy as a final conclusion to the story. Thus the two contrasting worlds of child and adult discussed in the other two novels as contradicting each other, here blend together to give one final product, that of the old man with all his knowledge. Similarly, the two opposite concepts of imagination and realism complete each other, for Hayy imagines first to find out realistic facts* concerning the life he has like imagining what is inside the animal's body and then by using his mind, discovering the organs inside after cutting it open. Hayy's highly imaginative mind drives him to 'discover his position' in relation to the other animals around him 'in his world'. He begins with his 'senses' like the animals around him that try sniffing the food they eat and later on he starts acknowledging his other skills and faculties like deep thought and intelligence.

The book begins with two contrasting beliefs concerning Hayy's origin, he is thought to be the outcome of mother Earth who came "into the world spontaneously without the help of Father and Mother" (Tufail, p.39). And the other is the belief that he is the son of a princess who is carried by the sea waves far away from her proud mean brother where he will be safe. Both versions can be easily imagined by children who find that the result is a baby among wild beasts, an intriguing plot to follow. Like Alice's unbelievable action, it is not problematic for children what 'physically' happens to the hero or heroine** as much as what is revealed and discovered in the course of

* Hayy the child, like an ordinary child, is "Affected by the elements of his world and responds to its different effects. He tries continuously to discover his position in this world using his senses and makes his main concern the discovery of his immediate environment around him" (AI-Flaify, p. 20).

** How Alice shrinks or grows in size is not as significant as the reason why she changes in size. Hayy's story too results in being a newborn alone on an island which is more significant than the background stories.
action. Hayy, like Alice, faces many difficult situations and his reactions towards these events in an adventure framework is what counts. The idea that the two conflicting stories of Hayy’s origin is introduced at the beginning as a background only to pave the way for a world full of contrasting intriguing actions, a world where the idea of a human and an animal becoming one family is accepted and welcomed.

Fulton describes Hayy’s story as:

It is a tale of two islands. One is uninhabited by man, and on it a child appears, either spontaneously generated or floated thither in a box. The child is Hayy ibn Yaqzan ... He is suckled by a gazelle, and on the death of this foster-mother is left, Crusoe-like, to his own resources.

(Fulton, p.15)

The other is the rest of the world exemplified later on by Aslan’s world. Like Alice and the little prince, Hayy also travels. But since this book is about both a child and a grown-up, it includes a dual journey. Hayy must first learn the ways of survival in a natural atmosphere full of wild beasts, without any adult interference of any sort. He has to teach himself the rules and ways of living to be able to survive. Then, he takes a physical journey with his only human companion, Aslan, outside his secluded world to get educated about other forms of existence where he aspires to learn what he does not know and teach what he knows. These two contrasting journeys, mental and physical, reveal two pairs of opposite yet complementary worlds. The mental and the physical here blend together in a complimentary way rather than in a contradictory one, as in the other two novels. This is because the knowledge
of the physical world Hayy acquires and learns constructs his way of thinking and influences his mental journey of growing up. The first is the imaginative world and the real world where the child, Hayy, tries to imagine what lies beneath the shell-body-of animate and inanimate objects around him. This highly imaginative world is complemented later on with the realistic and scientific facts* he discovers. The second pair is living on the secluded island and travelling away from it to other places. Here Ibn Tufail shows how his hero leads a mystical life, as an adult, and contrasts his methods of worship to the other adults he meets on his journey.**

Hayy's adventure begins with the "Roe which had lost her Fawn" (Tufail, p.44) hearing him cry inside an ark. She feels pity and affection for him and starts nursing him. This strange idea of an animal feeding a human baby contrasts what children know about their mothers. It becomes an uncanny situation where the child has to use his imagination to picture it. This idea of animal-human relation is strange but helps promote the plot of the story. The way this little child is nurtured is incredibly strange. Ibn Tufail describes him as always following the deer the way a toddler follows his mother. The Roe in turn,

Shew'd all the tenderness to him imaginable; and us'd to carry him to places where Fruit Trees grew, and fed him with the ripest and Sweetest Fruits which fell from the Trees; and if they had hard shells, she us'd to break them for him with her teeth; still Suckling him, as often as he pleas'd, and when he was thirsty she shew'd him the way to the water. (p.52)

* Like when he cuts an animal open to explore the entrails he imagines to be there which are real scientific facts.

** Like Aslan's people who have different concepts and ways of worshiping God from Hayy's.
This special care personifies the deer giving it delicate human qualities. Unlike the talking animals Alice and the little prince meet, she is a silent mother doing her best to make sure that Hayy is well taken care of and safe from any harm in a ferocious world. The animals in Hayy's story belong to the real world and not like the animals Alice and the little prince encounter in their wild, imaginative and fantasy worlds. Ibn Tufail shows how the two different worlds, of a child and an animal, can blend together in spite of all the differences* between them.

Like Alice who becomes an active participant in wonderland, Hayy becomes part of the animal world. He learns the deer language and treats the rest of the tribe members, especially the roe, very intimately. However the differences and eventually opposition between Hayy and the deer tribe begin escalating as he starts comparing his body and potentials to theirs. The two different worlds of man and animal clash as Hayy gets older and starts using his human mind instead of the animal instinct implanted in him from the island.

For whenever there happened any Controversy about gathering of Fruits, he always came off by the worst, for they could both keep their own, and take away his, and he could neither beat them off nor run away from them. (Tufail, p.53)

By comparing how he looks to how other creatures around him appear, Hayy starts acknowledging step by step that he is different from them. Physically, he is weaker than his animal companions but mentally

* Both mental and physical differences.
His innate intelligence, feeble at first, develops by degrees, until it enables him to dominate his brute companions. He reaches manhood, and by ceaseless observation and reflection gradually acquires a knowledge of the physical universe.  
(Tufail, p.15)

When comparing and contrasting the bodies around him, Hayy gradually develops his mental skills until he is able to 'dominate his brute companions'. Hayy becomes aware of the differences between him and the animals around him and he uses this knowledge to excel in living a better life over his wild friends.

He looks at the animals and finds them covered with hair and different kinds of feathers. He witnesses their speed of running and their strong power of destruction and their weapons with which they are ready to defend themselves against their enemies like horns, canines, hooves and paws. Then he looks at himself and sees his nakedness, no weapons, weak running pace, feeble strength and when the beasts fight with him over fruits, they overcome him.  
(Ashour, p.212)

All this drives him to use tree leaves to cover his body and branches as sticks to defend himself in this kind of life. His human mind makes him discover that his hands have benefits greater than those of the animals. He is able to use his two hands to make things to protect himself with to make up for the 'horns, canines, hooves and paws' he does not have. Thus Ibn Tufail is able to demonstrate how life on the island can combine both the physical and the mental, and the human and the non-human and change the opposition
between them only to make them complement each other and form a complete whole rather than having them as conflicting contrasting fragments fighting each other, like the opposites encountered in the other two novels.

Hayy’s journey of knowledge is full of contrasting opposites through which he relates himself to the world around him and tries to examine everything to be able to understand more about life and fulfil his curious mind. “Heaviness or lightness; he proceeded to consider the nature of these two properties” (Tufail, p.83). He also “consider’d other bodies, both Animate and Inanimate” (Tufail, p.83) and through considering these opposite bodies, he is able to learn more about what they are composed of. He learns, like any other child, how different forms of existence are divided into separate groups of animals, plants and inanimate objects surrounding him. He also becomes aware of a further distinction within the same group, “he perceiv’d that every particular Species of Animals had some Property which distinguish’d it and made it quite different from the rest ... And the like he saw happen’d to the several kinds of Plants” (Tufail, p.87). By comparing the different living creatures and non-living things, Hayy contrasts what one has to what one lacks and then draws a distinction between them to classify each in a separate group *. Hayy is also after discovering the secret of the two opposing facts life and death, this is why when the deer dies, he dissects her chest to discover the cause of her lack of movement and stillness.

“Heavy” and “light”, “hot” and “cold”, and “moist” and “dry” (Tufail, p.88) are opposite qualities Hayy experiments and concludes later that they are “common” (Tufail, p.88) to all bodies. He reaches all his conclusions and

* This act is the essence of teaching children about other living creatures and keeping track of their species and names.
thoughts through long hours of meditation and experimentation which are both based on imagining what lies behind the shell or crust to reach the internal core of bodies, "for the Imagination does only represent to us the forms of things in their absence" (Tufail, p.102). This hero is after knowing more about different sciences like astronomy and biology and his curious mind makes it feasible for him to imagine what lies beyond the physical body to reach an invisible spiritual world with "Rewards and Punishments" (Tufail, p.168) ruling it. Like Alice's 'closed doors', Hayy also has many 'closed doors' to open and explore and with each one opened, he is a step closer to knowledge and eventually to spiritual mysticism. This of course is very hard for children to apprehend since the tangible flying objects of Alice and the drawings of the little prince are not present or even explained here. Nevertheless, like a child learning its first steps of walking, Hayy also learns both as a child how to live and as an adult how to improve his knowledge. Hayy the adult, has the same zeal of a child to uncover facts of life and uses all his imaginative skills to help him achieve this knowledge.

Sentimentality plays an important role in raising the child's curiosity and imagination. It is shown in the other two stories in the lonely moments both the little prince and Alice go through and keep reminding them of their homes. Here it appears in the child's relation to the mother figure represented by the deer especially when she dies.

When the boy perceiv'd her in this condition, he was ready to dye for grief. He call'd her with the same voice which she us'd to answer to, and made what Noise he could, but there was no Motion*, no Alteration.  

(Tufail, p.57)

* Her death makes Hayy very curious about the body which he learns is but a crust or shell when one dies.
In his many attempts to try and revive his 'mother', Hayy begins his learning journey where serious matters of the two opposites, life and death engage his mind. He dissects the deer trying to find out the cause of death in a search for the key to solving the mystery of life and death. Ibn Tufail "tell(s) anon how he grew up and rose from one state to another, till at last he attain'd the state of highest perfection" (p. 45) as an adult. This is reached after passing through many stages where contrasts construct the core of knowledge obtained such as the opposite scientific facts Hayy learns through experimentation. Thus his complete awareness and knowledge of contrasting opposites made him achieve the 'state of highest perfection' he lives in.

There are no magical events or superhuman actions here, like those in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and The Little Prince, instead, there is a very strange background story*. Alice has a human family, a home and a pet, the little prince also has his flower, volcanoes and tiny planet. Hayy has nothing, he is totally alone on an island. This strange setting has always proved its success in raising interest and excitement among young readers. It is also the seed** for many other literary works like Kipling's Jungle Book, the legendary Tarzan of the Apes and Defoe's ever famous Robinson Crusoe. The theme of the isolated human on an island, a jungle or any other remote place is very intriguing. Questions like where is Hayy really from, how will a baby survive on a vast island all alone and what will become of him are all similar to Saint Exupéry's little hero's origin and strange story. The realistic

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* A story with exiting events starting off the child's imaginative sense from the beginning with the story of Hayy.

** El-Shoura comments saying, "Tufail in his artistic introduction gives a great work of art and an excellent humanistic story that fascinated many writers in the East and the West. It was translated into many languages and affected some writers like English novelists Defoe who wrote his famous novel Robinson Crusoe after its pattern" (p. 10).
and imaginative worlds and the oppositions between them in Hayy’s story are different from those in *Jungle Book* and *Tarzan of the Apes* where animals converse with the young heroes. Unlike Hayy, Tarzan and the jungle boy speak with the animals and play games with them showing how the animal side within their human existence took over the supposedly disciplined mind. Alice, however, shares the fantasy world with these two adventurous books as she also converses and plays games with the animals but for a very short while as she only visits their world briefly. The highly imaginative fantasy world seen earlier with Alice and the little prince’s stories changes here to a mental imaginative world where Hayy imagines things he knows nothing about in his own internal mind like when he puts his hand to feel the beating heart of an animal and imagines how it looks like, works and functions. He then takes physical actions to find out the answers that arise about such life forces by dissecting bodies and closely observing how things work.

The story of Hayy is the story of his recognition and growth of his knowledge. We see him look, observe, compare, conclude and build on his conclusions actions and behavior. The moment the deer gets the child out of the wooden box, this action "represents the first encounter of the child (recognizer) with the world (recognized), of the baby (the taker) and nature (the giver)" (Ashour, p.212). This relationship is complementary and the result is the mystical character of Hayy who grows into an old man where his body and mind contain a grand knowledge of contrasting opposites. He learns about his body and how it is both strong and weak. It can perform actions that need great physical strength yet a small thorn prick can cause him enormous pain. Like the other two novels *The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* contains
many opposites. With the other two novels, these opposites are contrasting to highlight each other and show how the young protagonists, the little prince and Alice, make their choices. Here, however, the novel combines these different opposites to form a complementary relationship rather than present individual contrasts. Hayy is able to reach a certain level of maturity not reached by the other two and this is primarily due to the fact that Hayy reaches a very advanced age. Exupéry's hero and Carroll's heroine are still children facing many contradictions where as Tufail's hero resolves these opposing contrasts with age and so is able to live in a circle of life that encompasses all time and space factors where the contrasts, realism and imagination, child and adult, and life and death complement each other instead of fight one another like what the little prince and Alice suffer from.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

The little prince, Alice and Hayy share the same experience of growing up and maturing as any child in any part of the world. However these three have the very special quality of powerful imagination that is emphasized by the writers of the books. This quality enables each one to imagine and build up sequences of events to construct a whole world to suit their aspirations and dreams. Curiosity is the main factor that drives them to ask questions and imagine unbelievable events while contrasts and opposites make them learn and eventually reach a conclusion about the worlds they live in. Their curiosity urges them to find out certain answers to issues confusing them and this eagerness to discover more and more creates a life force within each one driving them towards their destinations.

To achieve this self-exploration, the three engage themselves in different voyages to discover the world around them. The little prince travels to different planets, Alice sinks into a wild dream and Hayy surprisingly both travels and imagines what lies behind the physical body. However, the characters' persistence reveal the opposite of what they have aspired or hoped to find. The little prince hopes to find a more interesting place than his planet. He is after more meaning and usefulness in life but what he discovers - not only on planet Earth, the most disturbing planet, but with all the other planets he visits - is that the visited planets are all mistaken illusions. They seem big - much bigger than his own planet which is described as very 'tiny' -
but within the boundaries of their vast areas, solitude and emptiness prevail. Their inhabitants lack understanding and internal insight among themselves whereas the little prince can perfectly communicate with his surroundings on his own planet, like understanding the proud flower very well and knowing what to do when she feels upset or embarrassed. The adults he meets, on the other hand, lack the sense of comprehending one another. They also have no imaginative qualities within them and this is why they fail to appreciate aesthetic feelings as they are busy with factual figures. Their children however are still imaginatively uncorrupted but as they grow older - like the pilot - even the most talented ones, continually discouraged, lose interest in imagination and art and become assimilated to the dull practical life where imagination has no place.

Alice, like the little prince, hopes to find excitement and breath-taking events. Her sub-conscience plays with her a game by sending her on a dream that turns to a quest and finally ends with utter confusion and extreme discomfort which is the total opposite of what she expected to find in the other world she imagines. Her journey, unlike the prince's, is an immobile one as she slowly shuts her eyes and joins the curious characters in a wonderland world. But what she finds down the rabbit hole is the complete opposite of what she thought would be. Instead of the white rabbit with pink eyes and soft fairy-tale atmosphere, she finds flying plates, ponds of tears and sudden changes in size preventing her from entering places she wants to go to. These unexpected events that hinder her and create obstacles and so keep changing her way are the opposite of the total freedom she aspired to have in her own dream. The lawless atmosphere turns into a nightmare replacing the
fantasy world where the cute rabbit figure disappears and flying cards are introduced instead. Alice learns that growing-up in an organized world is much better than living in a crazy one full of unstable and chaotic events. Alice keeps comparing her real world with all its events and characters to the far fetched imaginary world of wonderland and its strange happenings and weird characters. She also compares her behavior to that of the characters she meets and the behavior of her real cat, Dinah, to that of the imaginative animals of wonderland, and these comparisons make her realize how her real world is better to live in. It has more rules and orders but it is a world that can be trusted. She enjoys her trip to wonderland and she narrates its details to her sister but she learns that it is not a place where one can escape to permanently and live in.

Like the little prince, Hayy engages himself in a physical journey and like Alice, he sinks within himself on a quest, but more intensely, to find answers to the different questions of life. Thus, he experiences both: the physical journey when he willingly visits Asal’s island and the spiritual as he tries to find out universal issues about himself and other existing forms around him. But unlike the other two, Hayy - as an infant- has no choice to what goes on to him, what he eats, what becomes of him until he starts imitating other animals around him. This unguided boy is described by Ibn Tufail as going through different phases from childhood to old age. Unlike the other two novels, time and space expand here to include many evolutions and developments. Thus the reader lives with Hayy through these different stages more than with the little prince and Alice who have already established their characters and goals. This gives the reader a good chance to question Hayy’s story and learn
from it more. Hayy lives his first years in a process of trial and error to teach himself the ways of survival on the island and through the close examination of opposites, he constructs his own world later on as he matures and grows older. The fundamental opposites like, life and death, darkness and light, day and night and eventually spiritual mysticism and worldly existence crystallize in his mind until he is able to lead a satisfactory life. Just as the little prince and Alice prefer returning to their homes, Hayy too concludes that his seclusion - on his tropical island where worshipping his Creator is his main goal - back home is the best place where he prefers to be. He returns from Asal's island to his own island because he feels that this is the best way he can live his life.

During their quests, the three protagonists meet many character types and experience a lot of pains because of the contrasting opposites they confront until eventually each deduces his/her own concept of life. The three novels come from different countries but nevertheless talk about the world of opposites where real and imaginary worlds contrast and animals and humans are interrelated. Imagination and friendship for the little prince, curious and secret paths for Alice, unlimited knowledge of the natural world and the mystery of the human being for Hayy are what the novels discuss and present. The novelists cleverly knit their stories’ plots with interesting opposing themes, characters and settings that take the readers, especially children, to a world where anything and everything is possible. The opposing themes stretch to encompass both real and imaginary worlds, adult

* The authors mix together their material to give a complete framework of what children care to listen to and feel interested in.
and child characters, humans and animals, and believable and fantasy events and settings. This blend shows and highlights the hero or heroine's stance and presents him or her with the choices each makes. The most outstanding opposing idea of real and imaginary worlds dominates the three novels and within the boundaries of these two opposing worlds, all the action takes place.

Both Saint Exupéry and Carroll present the child's view when set on an expedition full of adventures as opposed to the adult's view. The little prince and Alice, two youngsters, are portrayed as having a wider imagination than that of the adults in the stories. Their interpretations are more naïve but deeper in meaning as they tend to magnify events. The little prince, for example, is obsessed with the idea of having a sheep, a small animal he can befriend, converse with and take care of. In order to do this he is willing to imagine the sheep within a muzzle on a sheet of paper. This activation of the mind and creation of what is desired is a good example of how he is willing to go to extremes in the back of his mind to fulfill his dream, even if the sheep is only a figment of his imagination. Saint Exupéry's little hero cannot understand the closed and limited mentalities of the adults he meets. He rejects their empty worlds where nothing has an aesthetic value and practicality rules supreme. The adult world clashes with his child world and so he decides to return to his tiny yet fulfilling planet leaving behind the spacious world with all its meaninglessness.

Alice too, hunts a bunny rabbit down a hole and opens closed doors to see what lies behind. The strange noises and characters she keeps hearing and bumping into are magnified to create the wonderland world she constructs in
her own dream. She escapes her worldly existence and travels\* to a far away place where strange things become possible and happen in front of her curious eyes. The opposition arises from the beginning as her family is left behind and a place where animals talk, sing and dance is introduced. Characters appear and disappear in a very awkward manner. Yet when Alice remembers her cat, Dinah, which belongs to the real world, she sets a contrast between animals, those who are enchanted and her pet animal which simply accompanies her and likes to be cuddled. Dinah lives in Alice’s real world and acts as a common pet cat; the magical animals, like the white rabbit and the Cheshire cat, however, have the power of speaking in a fantasy world where everything is possible.

Carroll makes Alice shrink and grow in size many times to discover new places belonging to wonderland and not to the real world she comes from. This contrast in size shows how the child can accept any change to suit the story. It is not important how Alice physically looks, what lies behind the closed doors and down the dark rabbit hole is what counts. Whether awake or asleep, the imaginative mind of Alice is at work taking her on a series of unbelievable events. She becomes part of this wonder-world and participates in this crazy world, which highly contrasts the real rational world she belongs to, until at the end she learns how mistaken she is to favor such a chaotic world over her organized real one. For Alice the well organized world becomes her real world with all its problems which when compared to the chaotic wonderland is much better. She embraces her real world with its rational adults and accepts it after an educating journey that lasts for a very short while.

\* The trip she takes to wonderland is full of magical enchantments that are very exiting.
Hayy, like Alice and the little prince, lives in a different world constructed by him in an isolated place where humans are not present. This composed life contrasts the whole world off the secluded island. For him the animals of the island constitute his family. They replace humans by taking their roles, a deer for example becomes his mother and nourishes him until he is able to walk his first footsteps*. A world of animals becomes Hayy’s family in this story. However, the animals are not like the imaginary ‘sheep’ the little prince pretends to have or the fantastical animals Alice encounters in wonderland. Here they are real wild animals that live in the wilderness abiding by certain codes to be able to survive. The little prince and Alice’s stories are unrealistic imaginary tales based on fancy which constitutes the majority of the plot events and contrasts the rational world. Hayy’s story, on the other hand, is about an ordinary life set in rather peculiar new situations**. Thus it is a real world where imagination is restricted to Hayy’s mind only and involves no one else. The background circumstances of how Hayy is discovered alone on the island create an amusing farfetched beginning to the story. Unlike the other two novels, magic and fantasy have no place here. This story brings together the hardships of a child facing many dangers and later on an adult struggling to find internal peace. Unlike Alice and the little prince who remain children throughout the novels, Hayy presents both the child and then the adult***. This tough life is what teaches Hayy how to be pure and closer to God by

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* This plot is highly imaginative and intriguing for children. It triggers many questions of how such a relation between an infant and a deer can happen.

** The origins of Hayy and his life as a baby on the island are very strange and peculiar which makes the story highly unrealistic.

*** Hayy meets other adults at the end and starts seeing the corruption of society caused by man which is contrasted to nature on his island. This highlights the opposition between life in a corrupted society and the mystical pure life Hayy leads and so the choice between them is easy to make.
living in peace with himself and his natural surroundings. Hayy’s story combines the two opposite worlds of child and adult, just as good and bad concepts are combined in the same body.

Children’s literature, exemplified in Exupéry’s *The Little Prince*, Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and Ibn Tufail’s *The History of Hay Ibn Yaqzan*, both teaches and delights young readers. It teaches them new exciting information in a humorous way, it widens their imaginative senses and creative skills in a period where they are growing up and developing their mentalities and characters. Through the use of children as heroes and heroines, the writers are able to communicate their ideas in a better way*. Saint Exupéry and Ibn Tufail choose their main characters males whereas Carroll chooses a female to be his young heroine. This shows that there are works appealing more to girls and others appealing more to boys. This is because the writers give their characters qualities suitable for their type, for example the little prince travels on his own, and Hayy wrestles wild animals. Alice on the other hand is dealt with in a more gentle way where manners and behavior are important topics. Unlike the little prince and Hayy, Alice is involved more in matters of finesse, she rejects the mad tea party and apologizes to the flamingo she has to hit while playing the croquet game. She also shows motherly feeling towards the pig baby by trying to rock it to sleep and get it out of harm’s way. This shows how the three novelists choose their young heroes and heroines to suit the action and events in their stories.

The adventure spirit of discovering the real and unreal worlds is what dominates the three novels where contrasts keep guiding the two heroes and

* By arousing the children’s curiosity and then satisfying their needs.
the heroine to the end of their journeys. The three writers brilliantly present their masterpieces to the children of the world to educate them about life and the many choices they will have to make while growing up. I see the three novels having a special relationship between them, each one adds to the other until finally they complete one another. The findings, resulting from examining contrasting opposites, each main character makes at the end of his or her story is a starting point for the other. The little prince starts his journey to find more about life concluding that emptiness and void fill the universe and this conclusion is reached by comparing life on his small yet fulfilling planet and life on the other planets, especially Earth. Alice begins with this nonsensical atmosphere where anything is liable to happen under the broad line of imagination in wonderland taking her to the conclusion that absurdity and confusion resulting from extreme imagination cannot be tolerated and that the opposite real world is more liable and trusting to live in. Hayy brings together the conclusions of both characters. He understands that there has to be a meaning to life and he also follows an ordered life pattern in spite of the fact that he is not taught any human behavior or manners. This character combines meaning and order to create a life that best suits him. And it is through moderate imagination and comparing opposites, such as life and death, light and darkness etc, that he learns and finally reaches his comprehensive conclusion about life where he finds supreme fulfillment and satisfaction. However, the three protagonists at the end of their journeys reach the same conclusion of rejecting the misleading worlds they visit and embracing their opposite original real worlds.
By accepting a world and rejecting its opposite, the three characters, the little prince, Alice and Hayy, are able to make the choices they find most suitable for them. This choice making between opposites is what makes up the three novels that represent a slice of life in general where the child and adult will always stumble on the right and wrong decisions.
Bibliography


* Knoepflmacher, U. C. *Ventures into Childland Victorians, Fairy Tales, and


