



Alice in Wonderland is a coming of age story, a sexual dream as Victorian nightmare with references to the end of childhood (the end of the real) and the foreshadowing of the complexity of adulthood.

I grew up in a home that overlooked Lake Erie outside of Buffalo, New York. The horizon line between the lake and sky was always present through windows that opened up onto the lake. When my parents added onto the house they kept the original external windows, allowing these to become internal walls, so that you could see through rooms and onto the backyard, lake, horizon line, and sky. The sun would set in the west, and often, if the atmosphere had enough particles from Bethlehem Steel in it, the horizon line would light up along the lake, as the sun appeared to slip under the earth. At home I spent a lot of time just looking at this line, with the setting sun, and imagining different ways of getting there.

The view of the horizon line from atop the Great Pyramid of the Aztec site Chichen Itza, on the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, is a flat 360 degree perimeter. The feeling is of standing in the center of a spinning disk. This is the only time I have felt the earth's centrifugal force press in upon me, and seeing the unbroken edge of the horizon made the world seem finite. Perhaps I was just hot from climbing all those slippery steps; a girl had fallen earlier that morning.

The horizon line is a soft division. Unlike other transitions in Alice and Wonderland that take place through holes and doorways - claustrophobic spaces suggesting sexual transition - the beach scene in "The Mock Turtle's Story" is a slow fade from one state to another and occurs more within the mind than the body. Open water is a complex space to traverse and the place where the Mock Turtle speaks of the loss of childhood. This loss is also the loss of feeling real and living in the moment.

The drawing of The Mock Turtle's Story appears soft and transparent upon the wall, like a reflection or mirage. The color rubbed into the wall becomes part of the wall and part of the building, depicting space entered through the eye and mind. In the late afternoon, the sun hits the gold horizon line and the wings of the gryphon (who replaces the sun), dissolving substance into light. The gryphon represents education, enlightenment, the horizon - death.

*Chichen Itza caption*



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The Mock Turtle's Story represents a yearning in the distance in the form of an intellectual dream. In contrast, The Queen's Croquet Garden is a chemical and emotional transformation that occurs within the body. The image of Alice is graphic and pushes forward into the viewer's space, as do the cellophane flowers that are attached to the wall. The story has a concentration of sexual imagery. Alice is puzzled by the difficulty of the game and the difficulty of timing live body parts that do not cooperate, in particular the flamingo that does not keep its neck straight so that she can use it as a croquet mallet. Alice holding a flamingo is a sexual image similar to the image of Leda and the Swan. The radiating flowers indicate arousal, dilating blood vessels, and the inability of the eye to settle.

In the text of "The Queen's Croquet Ground," ridicule pushes characters into states of fear, imbalance, and passion. This text is inscribed in meandering and circular patterns around the flowers, both forwards and backwards. The mirrored writing (which Carroll also used) represents the mirrored universe of the child's experience, and the circular pattern creates holes referring to the original hole through which Alice falls.

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*Freidrich caption*

*Leda and the Swan caption*





