Not-So-Nonsensical:
Exploring Lewis Carroll's Representation of Victorian Childhood in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

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Victorian Childhood
Our ideas about childhood have changed drastically over time. Childhood during the Victorian Era consisted of strict rules, schedules, and parents gave little attention to their children. Lewis Carroll represents these ideas through illustrating Alice as a well-mannered Victorian girl.

Nonsense Significance
Carroll's representation of the adult figures in Wonderland, like the Red Queen, as silly and illogical indicates his criticism of Victorian adults and parenting norms of society. Illustrating Alice like an adult instead further indicates the strict upbringing of children that Carroll witnessed.

Why is this important?
Understanding how Carroll's environment impacted his writing allows us to understand his view of children and how that differed from society. Lewis Carroll's is one of the earliest examples of novels written for children, and we can see how his writing may have impacted other writers of the time, and later writers like Dr. Seuss and L. Frank Baum.

Connection to Nature
Carroll illustrates his understanding of a child's connection to nature through Alice's interaction with a puppy in the novel. This shows Carroll's understanding of the nature of children, which was advanced for his time.

Adult Alice
The change in view of childhood caused the stricter upbringing of children because parents believed they needed to force guidelines onto their children in order to protect their childhood innocence. Carroll illustrates this in the novel by showing the silliness in children being taught to behave like adults.