Learning about emotion in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*: A cognitive approach to reading

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Kirjallisuuden avulla voidaan luoda ympäristöjä, joissa lukijan on turvallista ja mielekästä paitsi oppia kulttuurisesti jaettuja, tunteisiin liittyviä merkityksiä myös harjoitella tunnetaitoja. Tutkielmassani tarkastelen, kuinka teksti ja kerronta mahdollistavat tunteisiin liittyvien merkitysten esittämisen ja niistä oppimisen. Keskityn tutkielmassani erityisesti narratiivisen empatian, ruumiillisuuden ja immersion käsitteisiin. Esitän, kuinka nämä käsitteet tukevat hypoteesiani siitä, kuinka kielen ja narratiivin kuvaannollisuus, aukkoisuus ja epätarkkuus kannustavat luovaan merkityksenantoon ja tätä kautta oppimiseen.

Tutkielman teoreettisena kehyksenä toimii kognitiivinen kirjallisuudentutkimus, joka on verrattain uusi kirjallisuudentutkimuksen näkökulma. Tutkielmassani sovellan tätä teoreettista kehystä Lewis Carrollin teokseen *Liisan Seikkailut Ihmemaassa* (1865). Teos esittelee tekstuaalisin keinoin lukijalle paitsi epäselviä tunneprosesseja ja -ilmaisuja myös tunteisiin liitettyjä sosiaalisia ja kulttuurisia merkityksiä. Teoksessa käytetään kertojan empatiaa, "nonsensea", tapahtumaorientoitunutta kerrontaa, hiljaisuutta ja mielen lukemisen mahdottomuutta korostamaan oppimisprosessin perustumista aukkojen täydentämiseen. Teoksessa voidaan nähdä painotettavan intuition ja mielikuvituksen merkitystä oppimisessa, aikuisten ja lasten maailmojen erillisyyttä sekä tästä erillisyydestä johtuvaa voimasuhteiden epätasapainoa, empatian merkitystä kommunikaatiotilanteessa ja tunteiden merkitystä lapsuuskäsityksen rakentumisessa.

Kognitiivista kirjallisuudentutkimusta on hyödynnetty lastenkirjallisuuden tutkimuksessa aikaisemminkin, mutta teorioiden sovellukset sekä ovat tähän mennessä keskittyneet korostamaan didaktiikan ja kirjailija-kertojan merkitystä merkitysten luomisen hallitsemisessa. Tutkielmassani pyrin haastamaan näitä näkemyksiä, joissa tekstin tuottajan ylivertaisuutta merkitysten ja oppimisympäristöjen luojana painotetaan. Keskityn lukijan, tekstin ja kirjailijan sijaan lukuprosessiin, josta voidaan erottaa kulttuurisesti jaettuja merkityksiä ja jonka voidaan nähdä perustuvan samankaltaisiin kognitiivisiin prosesseihin lukijasta riippumatta.

avainsanat: empatia, kognitiivinen kirjallisuudentutkimus, lastenkirjallisuuden tutkimus, Lewis Carroll, Liisan seikkailut Ihmemaassa, tunteet

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1. Introduction

Fiction creates environments in which it is possible to learn about not only unknown worlds but also ambiguous and abstract concepts. Emotion is one of these concepts: emotions are not simple, they are not distinct entities with clear limits, and one can even argue that they are indescribable. Moreover, learning about emotions is a lifelong process. Emotion schemas and the regulation of emotions are delicate areas of the human mind and especially susceptible to development. Literature is a resource whose importance cannot be emphasised enough in this respect. In order to learn about emotions as effectively as possible, one must use resources that reflect the complexity, ambiguity, vagueness and boundlessness of the phenomenon, and literature provides a unique possibility for this.

The present thesis aims at clarifying the different ways in which literature might prove to be an invaluable source of an indefinite amount of personal, experiential and stimulating learning environments about emotion. The premises for the claims in the present thesis come from a relatively new theoretical outlook on literature – cognitive criticism. The field is still trying to establish its place among the tradition of literary theory: this is why two of its most important theorists whose works are used in the present thesis use different names for the field: Peter Stockwell uses the name "cognitive poetics" and Maria Nikolajeva "cognitive criticism". The present thesis refers to the field as cognitive criticism. There is also a need for a discussion about the field's basic premises. One perspective for the discussion is given in the first chapter which explores cognitive criticism in relation to its hypotheses about the relationships between the text, the author and the reader. The discussion is also necessary because the field has been used in the study of children's literature from one perspective only which is reviewed in chapter 2.2.

The present thesis studies words, phrases and sentences on the textual level and characters, objects and events on the narrative level that potentially create environments from which reference to emotion can be extracted. This includes both direct and indirect affective words, phrases and sequences. More importantly, however, the present thesis claims that the more figurative and ambiguous either the expression or the phenomenon itself is, the more likely it is to stimulate some kind of cognitive activity in the readers. This ambiguity is first explained from the points of view of emotion, empathy, embodiment and immersion in chapter 3. In chapter 3.4., the concept of gaps and their potential in creating environments particularly suitable for learning are discussed. The hypotheses about environments that stimulate learning are purely theoretical in the sense that the present thesis does not cover actual learning results. This could be achieved with the help of empirical studies. This study concentrates on the theoretical framework

provided by one text, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), and the evidence for this framework is drawn from the text.

Some sort of emotional tone can be extracted from almost every bit of discourse in a text, because language is by nature embodied, and we tend to engage in meaning-making with this assumption in the background. The important parts are, however, those that have a confusing or ambiguous emotional tone. In other words, there are gaps in the emotional discourse and the narrative that potentially stimulate cognitive activity – assigning emotional states to characters whose minds cannot be read from direct references to emotions, for example. The different kinds of gaps – action-orientation, ambiguous emotional states, silence and non-readable literary minds – are discussed in chapter 4. With every gap, a text creates spaces in which the reader can actively explore the subtleties of an emotional state. There are countless ways to bridge these gaps, and every interpretation is equally important. Fiction shifts the attention from emotional expressions assigned from the outside by the narrator to the actual experience that is collective, yet subjective, context-dependent and unique. This shift reflects a phenomenon that is in the core of any study of emotion – both in cognitive sciences and literary studies. Emotions cannot be isolated. They do not occur alone. Quite the contrary, emotions often overlap in ways that complicate their recognition. Literature provides the reader with unique environments in which it is possible to explore the nuances of emotion. These nuances are in the core of human experience that words and phrases alone ultimately fail to describe.

2. Cognitive criticism

This chapter discusses the position of cognitive criticism inside literary criticism from the point of view of the reader-author-text problem. Cognitive criticism has its roots in cognitive sciences and cognitive linguistics. In its most basic definition, cognitive criticism is a theory that puts the terms and concepts of cognitive sciences to use in the study of literature (Zunshine 2015, 1–2). In a sense, these terms and concepts have been obvious to literary criticism and its object of study, literature, for a long time. For example, the relationship between emotions, imagination and art has been systematically discussed from Plato, Aristotle and Longinus to Spinoza, Tolstoy and Sartre, among others.

However, the above definition is rather crude, as cognitive sciences cannot be directly applied to literary criticism nor can literature be treated as just another form of data for cognitive sciences. In the first case, the importance of context and the multitude of different readings would be disregarded. In the latter case, the main concerns and objects of literary criticism, such as narrative structures and viewpoints, would be deemed irrelevant. Therefore, the present thesis

begins by introducing three theoretical traditions – the Romantic, formalist and reader-oriented – and their role in the formation of cognitive criticism.

Information gained from cognitive psychology and neurosciences has profoundly influenced the set of tools traditionally used in the critical analysis of texts. Cognitive criticism is said to connect the empirical and the theoretical (Zunshine 2015, 2), even though the framework of cognitive criticism itself is by definition theoretical. Hogan (2015, 273) argues, in unison with many of his colleagues, that literary criticism tends to move from non-literary theory to literary text, and that the opposite direction is widely underrated. Cognitive science is not an exception to this claim, as art is allegedly one of the most extensive areas of evidence that science has hardly touched. In terms of literary criticism, it is important to note that this refers not only to explaining how texts are produced and processed in the brain but also to texts as evidence for certain, arguably universal aspects of cognition. Furthermore, cognitive science itself is inherently interdisciplinary. The roots of the field lie in biology, psychology, computer science, information studies, linguistics and philosophy. Cognitive criticism extends these traditions by flexibly connecting cognitive science's findings with literature. As was mentioned above, cognitive sciences might find information from literary theory helpful in the study of the still widely uncharted area that is the human brain. Literary studies concentrating on the readers is necessary, because this kind of study creates the premise for new hypotheses, and may thus be used as a basis for experimentation in other fields of study. Assumptions from literary studies may inspire new and groundbreaking hypotheses.

Cognitive criticism is a field represented by a wide variety of paradigms and approaches. Lisa Zunshine argues in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies* (2015) that reducing cognitive criticism to a single study question or an umbrella hypothesis would misrepresent the field drastically. Zunshine's handbook is one of the newest and most comprehensive additions to the expanding field of cognitive criticism. The book covers a wide array of issues and topics. Zunshine divides the field into five major subfields according to the most important subjects: narrative, history and imagination (cognitive historicism, cognitive narratology, cognitive queer theory, neuroaesthetics); emotions and empathy (cognitive postcolonial studies, decision theory and fiction, cognitive disability studies, moral emotions); the new unconscious; empirical and qualitative studies of literature; and cognitive theory and literary experience. Besides the utilisation of the handbook, this chapter also aims at the critical evaluation of some of the underlying attitudes in the most current orientations of cognitive criticism.

These attitudes are particularly poignant from the point of view of the study of children's literature. Questions concerning literary criticism and children's literature are elaborated further

in chapter 2.2. The chapter revolves around questions about learning, didactics, cognitive capabilities and literary competence. Chapter 3 expands on the topic and emphasises learning about empathy and emotion. The chapter attempts at answering the question of *how* readers of fiction are provided with tools that potentially enhance learning about emotion. All in all, instead of concentrating on didactics, authorial intention and transferring information, as many cognitive studies of children's literature often do, a more open-minded view is promoted. Texts or authors do not teach. Instead, readers potentially learn.

2.1. The author, the text and the reader

One of the most profound discussions in literary criticism revolves around one question: to which aspect of the literary communication situation should a work of art be related? Is a work of art, such as a poem, a play or a novel, mainly an imitation of the universe, a creation of an artist or a cluster of meanings constructed in the reader's mind? Surprisingly, in many texts belonging to the realm of cognitive criticism, a confusion about the source of the cognitive processes discussed can be distinguished. Many cognitive critics do not even address the question: whose cognitive processes are we discussing – the implied audience's, the author's or the real readers'? Because of this confusion, it is crucial to return to the traditional discussion about the abovementioned aspects. Furthermore, it is important to address this question in order to be able to discuss the field's approach to children's literature which can be seen as inherently didactic and author-driven. In order to begin a discussion on literary reading, however, one must define all the possible participants and objects involved in the process that is reading.

2.1.1. Romantic criticism and its legacy

In his 1953 discussion on the position of the Romantic theory in the critical tradition, *The Mirror and the Lamp,* M. H. Abrams summarises the line of thought behind *expressive* literary theories as follows: "a work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings" (1953, 22). In other words, a literary text is a product of the poet's mind which is converting the reality into literary expression. This expressive stance to art was particularly popular among English and early German romantic critics. The legacy of these theories, which put the author's intentions to the foreground, can still be found even among cognitive critics who are often said to emphasise the reader's importance in meaning-making. Usually these theories highlight the author's role as an active selector of everything in the text – from words and structures to events and viewpoints. For example, Carroll focuses his analysis of

emotion and theatre in the author, who *prefocuses* the conditions for a certain emotion: "the audience's mental state is due to criterial prefocusing. The creators of the drama foreground those features of the situation that are likely to provoke the emotions they want to engender [--] In the case of vectorially converging emotions, criterial prefocusing rather than identification offers us a better model of explanation" (2015, 324). Phelan defines cognitive criticism as a theory that is based on the assumption that "there is a mind behind the text and that interpreters will attempt to read that mind (often by reading the minds of the characters)" (2015, 121). Furthermore, this stance is more than common in the study of children's literature from the point of view of cognitive criticism. Maria Nikolajeva emphasises the role of the author in creating the fictionality of the text: "[u]nlike the actual world, a text of fiction is a constructed set of selected events and characters, deliberately created by the author" (2014, 23). She even compares the author to a scientist creating conditions for predetermined purposes: "[n]othing is random or accidental; everything is part of a design" (Nikolajeva 2014, 24).

There are two major problems with these hypotheses. Firstly, they often disregard the fact that active selection or criterial prefocusing, if it indeed happens, occurs both consciously and unconsciously. Concentrating on the conscious decisions of the author undermines the concept of automatisation, which is central to any understanding of the human mind. Some cognitive processes are fully and others only partially automatic (Eysenck & Keane 2000, 158–159). Mental processes always involve at least some automatisation, and this is for a good reason. Humans do not have the resources to concentrate on every minute aspect of life as brought to us by our senses. Automaticity is one of the most controversial topics in the study of the unconscious, too, since individuals' psychological processes can be controlled by external stimuli and events in the immediate environment (Vermeule 2015, 477). So, no author can control everything.

Secondly, and more importantly, the effects that a certain literary structure, whether consciously selected or not, has in any particular reading situation cannot be fully predicted by the author or the literary critic. In their essay, "The Intentional Fallacy" (1946)*,* W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley famously claim that searching the author's intention ("a design or plan in the author's mind"*,* 1946, 469) and judging a text by its author's performance in reaching this goal is pointless. The writers show that there is a paradox in the process of this kind of judgment: either the text itself has to show the intended meaning, or the critic should search outside of the text for more information. In either case, it is impossible to reach this goal, as, in the first case, a text's purpose is not to carry practical messages but to "be" through language. The latter case is simply turned down by saying that, for example, asking the author what he or she meant would

not be a critical inquiry: "[c]ritical inquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle" (1946, 487). Accordingly, Wimsatt and Beardsley describe the intentional fallacy as an inherently romantic line of thought.

Another danger lies in believing that a text has goals towards which the narrative and thematic choices of the author actively lead. It is possible and maybe even likely that with this approach the critic renders one narrative strategy better than another. These kinds of value judgments do not serve for the purpose of literary criticism or science in general – explaining phenomena as objectively as possible. Orientations of cognitive criticism that focus on reading as a dynamic process (especially Stockwell 2002) might provide a solution to this problem by stating that no text has goals to which every reader can relate. Instead, there will always be common ways of reading, and the meaning-making of different readers overlaps. These ways of reading can be traced back to the texts, and the evidence for such shared readings can be extracted from the text itself.

2.1.2. Text and context

How much exactly can be extracted from the text *only*, then? Abrams describes the *objective* orientation as approaching the literary text as "a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in internal relations" (1953, 26). By objective orientation, Abrams refers to criticism that began to surface in the late 18th century as a counterstatement to the sentimentalism of romantic criticism, and, later, the didacticism and moralism of socialist realism. These critics were "undertaking to explore the concept of the poem as a heterocosm, a world of its own, independent of the world into which we are born, whose end is not to instruct or please but simply to exist" (1953, 27). These theories promoting the statement that art exists for art's sake have later become heavily criticised, yet, they contain important implications. First and foremost, the idea of art as an entity completely separated from its audience clearly connects to the Russian formalists and New Critics.

Literariness was defined by the Russian formalists as an effect of estrangement caused by literary language. In Viktor Shklovsky's (1919) view, literature does not follow the rules of everyday discourse, but the effects of defamiliarisation make the language in literature literary. Easterlin explains formalism as follows: "[t]he purpose of literary art, then, is to make the familiar strange, to defamiliarize the everyday" (2015, 615), to put the automatised processes of everyday life under the microscope. According to formalists, literary language, as opposed to everyday language, has a higher density of deviating linguistic structures. These deviating structures, or literary devices, make literary language special. In the formalist tradition, literary

analysis is thoroughly transparent, and its evidence is demonstrable in the form or on the surface of the text. The critic's task is to explain how meanings can be generated *without* readerly or contextual input.

As far as cognitive criticism is concerned, however, this is an insufficient premise for literary analysis. To reach a definition of reading that is as comprehensive as possible, one must also acknowledge the role of the context. The formalist approach acknowledged the effect of context on language and, especially, linguistic norms. The ways in which the norms of everyday language are defined vary from one context to another. Thus, what might be regarded as poetic in one context might be quite conventional in another. However, cognitive critics often claim that the only aspect to which one can relate the status or "appropriateness" of a text is not the linguistic norms in society but the context in which its readings are produced. For example, a well-grounded reading might denote quite different things in idiosyncratic, historical and formal contexts. The norms are defined in the context of the reading situation. The most important outcome of this claim is that one reading cannot be judged as more or less valuable than another. As Stockwell puts it, "[i]t is important to reconnect the different readings of literary texts between the academic and the everyday, and recognise that readings have status not objectively but relative to their circumstances" (2002, 4). Context is a concept which, in the way cognitive critics define it, provides the literary critic with a profoundly democratised look at reading.

Furthermore, cognitive criticism famously emphasises that the meaning of a text is created somewhere between the reader and the text. The words, structures and literary devices of a particular text provide the framework for the reader's meaning-making. For example, Stockwell claims that the most significant problem with a strictly formalist analysis is its rigorous concentration on the text object alone in search for the meaning. Stockwell argues that "[t]he 'meaning' of a literary work can be found in the minds of readers, configured there partly from readerly processes and individual experiences, and only partly from the cues offered by the elements of the text object" (2002, 91). The object of the cognitive critics' study, then, can be found in the minds of the readers on the one hand and in the text on the other. These two merge in the process that is reading. Stockwell emphasises the cultural impact of this outcome and states that "across groups of readers in a specified sociocultural situation, we can begin to distinguish prototypical and common readings from eccentric ones. This also encourages us towards a greater specification of the evidence in the textbase that is claimed to generate different readings" (2002, 123). Again, readings are regarded as equally valuable – though some of them might be more common than others. In summary, cognitive critics search for clues that point at culturally shared meanings in texts. These meanings stimulate different readings in individuals.

2.1.3. The reader responds

As can be expected, there are also several theories that emphasise the role of the reader as an active creator of meanings. Reader-oriented semiotics, for example, concentrates on the literary devices that affect the readings of a specific text. This demands knowledge of different kinds of codes, such as those listed by Nikolajeva (2014, 10):

> [T]he ability to understand how plots are constructed, especially in terms of temporality and causality; how narrative perspective affects our interpretation; how fictional representation relates to its referent, especially by way of figurative language; how texts are connected to each other and to their cultural contexts; and not least how we use our meta-critical skills when we approach literary texts.

Reader-oriented semiotics suggests that literature is full of literature-specific codes that the reader actively needs to interpret (see i.e. Culler 1975 and the figure of the interpretation process by Eco 1979, 14).

However, despite their emphasis on the reader's active role in the reading process, cognitive critics often move away from strictly reader-oriented views. This results from the fact that it is difficult to prove that the form of literary language is in any way different from other instances of language use. Every text is ambiguous because language itself is ambiguous and meanings are arbitrary. Literary language also includes language that does not draw attention to itself as particularly deviating – naturalistic and realistic writing offers a great number of examples of this. As Stockwell puts it, "it has been demonstrated many times that there is nothing inherently different in the form of literary language" and "it is reasonable and safe to investigate the language of literature using approaches generated in the language system in general" (2002, 7). This means that both linguistic and literary stylistics and their different views on literary language are acceptable in the close examination of literary texts. Moreover, interpretation of codes is not a specific process to reading. Instead, humans read, interpret and analyse different kinds of codes in their environment constantly – consciously and unconsciously.

As a consequence, many recent readerly approaches to literature tend to emphasise the psychological and the physiological more than the literary. Idiosyncratic interpretations are at the centre, and readers are sources of data. Contrarily, cognitive criticism "can encompass matters of readerly difference, but these are set into a general context of the various and varying cultural, experiential and textual constraints around real readers reading literature in the real world" (Stockwell 2002, 8). In a sense, cognitive criticism takes the ground-breaking ideas of reader response and reader-oriented semiotics one step further: the goal of cognitive criticism is to study what in the text itself activates the use of codes and what makes readers engage affectively with

the text. In a sense, cognitive criticism takes something from all of the abovementioned literary theories from Romantic to formalist and reader-oriented theories and connects the author, the context and the reader with the text. This connection is best explained through the concept of *reading*.

2.2. Cognitive criticism and the study of children's literature

The ambitious goal of cognitive criticism is thus to provide a common ground for researchers advocating any of the corners of the communicative triangle. Instead of the text, the reader, the context or the author alone, cognitive criticism recognises the importance of reading as a *dynamic process*, not as a fixed sequence of actions or mental activities. As Catherine Belsey puts its, "meaning is not a dead thing, interred in the text at the moment of its composition, but generated by this transaction of reading process itself" (2003, 25). Reading, in the sense cognitive critics want to explore it, is not merely about the reader or the text as separate phenomena. Rather, reading is something that connects the two, resulting in a natural process: "literary texts are artefacts but 'readings' are natural objects" (Stockwell 2002, 2). These readings provide the data for cognitive critics' research. Yet, readings are not interpretations. According to Stockwell, "[i]nterpretation is what readers do as soon as (perhaps even partly before) they begin to move through a text" (2002, 8). Some interpretations are quickly evaluated as erroneous, and they are rejected as a consequence. Other interpretations are evaluated as acceptable. These interpretations are then processed more carefully and reflected to new interpretations and norms in the context of the reading situation. This analytical process produces a reading.

As was suggested in chapter 2.1.1., there are two different orientations inside the field of cognitive criticism as far as emphasising the role of either the dynamic relationship between the reader and the text or the author as the ultimate source of meaning-making is concerned. Stockwell argues that "[c]oncerned with literary reading, and with both a psychological and a linguistic dimension, cognitive poetics offers a means of discussing interpretation whether it is an authorly version of the world or a readerly account, and how those interpretations are made manifest in textuality" (2002, 5). Stockwell continues that reading is "the process of arriving at a sense of the text that is personally acceptable" (2002, 8). In concentrating on reading, cognitive criticism "models the process by which intuitive interpretations are formed into expressible meanings, and it presents the same framework as a means of describing and accounting for those readings" (Stockwell 2002, 8). According to this view, cognitive criticism may provide the critic with a model that can be laid over onto the author-text-reader triangle since it is not restricted to any of its three corners.

Nikolajeva, in turn, formulates the purpose of cognitive criticism in the following manner: "cognitive criticism does not deal with readers exclusively, but also with (implied) authors' strategies in text construction as well as with artistic representation, including referentiality – the relationship between representation and its referent in the perceptible world" (2014, 4). In her analyses, Nikolajeva, alongside the majority of cognitive critics dealing with children's literature, utilises this viewpoint. Even though either of the two abovementioned orientations – Stockwell's or Nikolajeva's – is possible, there are some profound problems as far as emphasising the author's role in relation to children's literature is concerned. The present thesis attempts at uncovering these problems and providing an alternative means to analyse children's literature – a means focused on reading as a process. The underlying assumptions about childhood and the constructedness of the child reader are examined in chapter 2.2.1. A claim about the irrelevance of defining readers based on their cognitive capabilities is discussed in chapter 2.2.3.

Concentrating on reading as a dynamic process allows the critic to appreciate the possibilities that literature might offer for learning. Heath and Wolf emphasise the importance of adolescents' reading: it is important to study "the cognitive training of neural structures in the brain that take place as the reader practices the complex interdependent and cross-modal tasks involved in young adult reading" (2012, 143). However, learning is not limited to adolescence: the human brain is marked by its ability to develop through training, or, neuroplasticity (evidence for neuroplasticity from the point of view of communication is extensively covered in Grafman 2000, among others). Reading involves various skills that can be trained throughout an individual's life. Heath and Wolf continue that "fiction readers are simultaneously engaged in the tasks of processing extended text, sustaining visual attention, decoding and encoding 'rare vocabulary' and complex dialogue, and putting together current actions with a foreshadowing of future events and consequences to come (e.g., 'envisioning')" (2012, 143). Cognitive criticism combines the different ways of analysing comprehension, reader engagement and the reading process and is thus a fundamentally cross-disciplinary outlook on literature. Studying reading as a part of the developing mind of not only children and adolescents but also adults is not only fruitful but also extremely important. Conceptualisations about learning through reading are comprehensively discussed in chapter 2.2.2.

Furthermore, in addition to the mental processes of the reader, cognitive criticism highlights the importance of reading as a source of data for meaning-construction on a more social level. Stockwell defines "reading" as follows: "[r]eadings are the data through which we can generalise patterns and principles across readers and texts" (2002, 2). Biological, physiological, psychological and social aspects of life come together in the study of reading.

Thus, readings form an incredibly large and comprehensive supply of source material for literary research. This source material can be extracted from structures in texts across cultures. Texts reflect the cognitive processes of readers that produce readings in specific cultural contexts. These readings further affect the discourse environment in which new texts are produced. The premises for this kind of activity in relation to a single literary work are elaborated on the analysis section in chapter 4. Indeed, cognitive criticism is not just about the cognitive processes of the reader, such as comprehension, emotion, attention and decision-making. It is just as much about the different ways in which texts construct themselves in meaning-making to meet these processes.

2.2.1. The represented child

Children's literature is both a genre and a theoretical field with fluctuating limits and a heterogeneous content. Cognitive criticism has not yet been adopted fully in the children's literature scholarship, but recent works by Nikolajeva (2012a, 2012b, 2014) and Nikolajeva and Scott (2006) have certainly contributed to the development of the field. Nikolajeva bases her own definition of children's literature on other theorists and states that children's literature is "an amalgam of actual works of children's literature" which "possesses a number of recurrent features identified and studied by children's literature scholars" (2014, 14). As Rudd notes, however, "[c]hildren's literature consists of texts that consciously or unconsciously address particular constructions of the child, or metaphorical equivalents in terms of character or situation [--] the commonality being that such texts display an awareness of children's disempowered status (whether containing or controlling it, questioning or overturning it)" (1999, 25–26). This is reflected in the heavily institutionalised outlook on the genre, which suggests that everything adults define as children's literature actually involves only a fraction of all the children's literature produced every day in every reading that involves a child participant – an actual or implied narrator, reader or author.

There is thus a sense of otherness behind every representation of childhood in children's literature. In nostalgia and in the different means that have been used to valorise the innocence, intuitiveness and idealism of childhood, adults construct and reconstruct the child as something else in the process of becoming something similar – an adult. Nodelman states that "[i]n privileging childhood as this sort of 'other', we misrepresent and belittle what we are; more significantly, we belittle childhood and allow ourselves to ignore our actual knowledge of real children" (1990, 147). Childhood is therefore always defined from the point of view of

adulthood, when, in fact, adults do not have direct access to the child experience. This bias is reflected in not only the works but also the study of children's literature.

Consequently, there are several narrative strategies that have been used for the empowerment of the child. However, these strategies are temporary, because individual solutions do not change social structures: "empowerment is allowed on certain conditions, and is almost without exceptions limited in time. A full empowerment of a child character would imply an adult author's self-denial; but in the first place it would be a falsified representation of the existing societal order" (Nikolajeva 2014, 34). Children's literature as an institution is a result of this social order. Children's literature is most often written by adults for children, and adults either unconsciously or consciously do not ultimately question their dominating position. It is a perfectly sound claim that adults are not even able to do this, because their conception of childhood is based on the decoding of their own, constructed representations rather than immediate experience, which is forever lost once one reaches adulthood. Aetonormativity is often combined with other norms (gender, race, sexuality), and the overlapping norm systems may amplify or obscure one another (Nikolajeva 2014, 34). Power relations between the adult and the child are always non-negotiable and self-reproducing. As a result, full empowerment is impossible. This instability in power relations between the adult writer and the child reader is one of the most essential characteristics of children's literature.

2.2.2. Didactics and authorial intention

One of the most important consequences of the power structure of the adult-child relationship is that children's literature is often described as inherently didactic. In fact, throughout the history of children's literature studies, a debate about whether children's literature is didactic on the one hand or whether it should be placed in the realm of art on the other hand has split the scholarship into several schools of thought (Nikolajeva 2014, 2–3). There is always a requirement from the more powerful to the less powerful of becoming more like them: adults often think that children should be encircled by the safety of childhood, but, at the same time, they should become more like adults. Because of these oppositional forces, children's fiction tends to be "ambivalent and double voiced" (Nodelman 2008, 67). In other words, adults "want to say two different things at the same time: that children can and must stay as they are at home in the enclosed space of childhood that adults provide for them but also that children do and must change even in order to appreciate the value of the enclosed space" (Nodelman 2008, 67). The purpose of this chapter is to explain that, by defining children's fiction as inherently didactic, the researchers of children's literature do the exact opposite to dismantling the power structures surrounding the relationship

between the adult and the child. Cognitive criticism, in the way it is represented in the present thesis, encourages understanding children's fiction in a different manner. By giving up the strict definition of the child as an adult-to-be, we can lose the glorification of the unidirectional, didactic relationship from adult to child. Humans learn in all stages of life, and fiction provides potential learning spaces for everyone regardless of the implied audience, or the age or stage of development of the audience.

As was already suggested, some critics claim that the didactics in most works of children's literature reflect the importance of authorial intention. Nikolajeva (2014, 31–33) claims that intentionality is an aspect of the literary debate that simply cannot be circumvented in relation to children's literary criticism. According to Nikolajeva, "potentially, children's literature has stronger intentional quality due to its educational/ideological project. If transmission of social knowledge is intentional, the content of this knowledge must inevitably reflect the authors' or the texts' idea of what kind of knowledge is desirable to transmit" (2014, 32). In other words, some types of fiction – such as literature written by adults for children – are potentially more intentional than others. Going back to the discussion in chapter 2.1.1, this claim is problematic. The critic cannot go back to the author for evidence of their intention. Even if they could, there is no guarantee that the text actually works according to the author's conscious intentions. Moreover, no one can ensure that the reader actually conforms to these intentions. It is highly problematic to measure or evaluate the intentionality of one type of literature in relation to another, as can be seen in Nikolajeva's analysis, which often uses literary examples carrying strong ideological content, such as feminist, postcolonial, Marxist, queer, environmental and posthumanist values. However, ideology does not equal intention. One cannot assume that a text that reflects an ideology is necessarily created to direct its recipients towards that ideology.

If one argues that authorial intention matters, one usually also argues that writers of children's fiction want their readers to develop towards a certain goal – for example, towards a deeper understanding of emotional control or of the difference between fact and fiction. This is one part of the basis for the supposed didactics in children's literature. The present thesis argues that children's literature is first and foremost a form of art, and art *can* be used as a tool for socialisation. However, art does not have to be this kind of a tool: one cannot claim that a reading contributes to some predetermined type of socialisation or education of the individual responsible for that particular reading. This question should not even be treated as a dichotomy between art and education, since the two certainly do not exclude each other. Furthermore, the supposedly greater emphasis on the socialising aspects of children's literature can be treated as only one of the thematic traits of the vague concept of children's literature. There are other traits that are just

as important, such as ideology, moralism, different representations of genders and sexualities, and so on. Thinking about this as a question that only pertains to children's literature is futile, since art has always been used as a vehicle for socialisation regardless of the supposed cognitive capacities of the target audience.

Indeed, the discussion about art versus education has its roots in quite a common conception about children's literature's inherent didacticism that is, in turn, based on the supposedly differing cognitive capacities of the reader and the writer. Nikolajeva (2014, 1), for example, claims that this chasm between the sender and the addressee is the reason why cognitive criticism creates a potential for a whole new field of study in relation to children's literature:

> [C]hildren's literature is a unique literary mode in that the sender and the receiver of the text are by definition on different cognitive levels. I underline "by definition" since in any art form, the cognitive skills of the potential addressee may intentionally or unintentionally differ from that of the sender; yet for children's literature this is the most important premise.

Ethical questions inevitably rise from this presupposition. What should a morally more capable adult write for a cognitively less developed individual? In addition to the underlying assumptions about children's cognitive capabilities, complex issues of ethics and censorship arise with this question. For example, Nikolajeva (2014, 197) worries about the reader's emotional engagement with morally questionable characters:

> One issue that I find particularly controversial is presenting evil through the perspective of a villain, thus endorsing empathy and therefore, possibly, forgiveness…Let us remember that vicarious experience, drawn from fiction, affects us just as much as actual experience. Reading about violence can be traumatic. True, not as traumatic as actual experience, but enough to disturb a young, unstable mind.

Not only is the potential for learning about empathy and forgiveness completely ignored in this statement but it also shifts the responsibility of protecting children from harmful content towards a completely wrong direction – the artist. Since meanings are ultimately produced in the reading process, the artist *cannot* be in control of all the effects the work of art potentially has on the reader. Indeed, the most reasonable starting point for the analysis of children's literature is not the dichotomy between the cognitively more capable adult writer and the child reader but reading as a dynamic process, as will be argued in the following chapters and the analysis section of the present thesis. Promoting the former view creates a serious danger of self-censorship.

The issues that Nikolajeva presents as problematic or potentially unethical in children's literature are, at the same time, just those issues that should be studied, promoted and brought

forward in children's literature criticism. Difficult and morally questionable issues *should be addressed* in children's literature. Indeed, the most central question here does not involve judging the contents of some forms of entertainment but the ability and inability to choose. Due to the inherently asymmetrical power relations between children and adults in the institutionalised definition of children's culture, the situation in society is that adults are able to choose their form of entertainment while these choices are made for most children. Adults decide what gets published. Parents, educators and guardians choose what their protégés read and are being read to. If one is not able to affect the outcome of a choice, one cannot take responsibility for being exposed to it. Furthermore, it is not very fruitful to assume that reading about violence, for example, always or even often traumatises young readers. Quite the contrary, issues that are difficult and unfamiliar to any reader always create the premise for learning. Instead of defining children as cognitively inferior to adults, the starting point should be that children are capable, smart and, most importantly, able to learn.

2.2.3. The unnecessity of categorising readers based on their cognitive capabilities

Categorising readers and writers based on their cognitive capabilities in the manner proposed above is futile for multiple reasons. Firstly, this categorisation creates unnecessary opportunities for value judgment between different readers. Nikolajeva argues that there is no need to define what the child reader is in terms of age. However, the ambitious goal in her 2014 book, *Reading for Learning: Cognitive Approaches to Children's Literature,* is to chart most of the possible readings of "inexperienced" readers. To do this, she must list the main differences that might prove to be useful in distinguishing inexperienced from experienced readers. Nikolajeva bases her list on a comprehensive meta-analysis of empirical study from both behavioural and cognitive sciences and defines the child reader as follows: "firstly, this abstract, constructed "child" has limited cognitive and affective skills as compared to an abstract, constructed "adult", and secondly, that this abstract child has limited life experience as compared to an abstract adult. This may not be the case for any concrete child or adult [--]" (2014, 15).

This definition should be questioned because of four reasons. Firstly, Nikolajeva defines the child reader similarly to how Wolfgang Iser defines the implied reader in *The Act of Reading* (1978), and treats is as such, and abstraction that can be extracted from the text only. This is a completely reasonable viewpoint, but Nikolajeva never describes what the third abstraction to which these two implied readerships are mirrored – the full potential of the text – actually means. This abstraction can be seen more clearly in the following definition: "[f]ollowing reader-oriented semiotics, an expert reader is an abstract, hypothetical recipient of a literary text who

possesses a capability of realising to the full extent the potential afforded by the text. A novice reader lacks such capability" (2014, 15). Indeed, it seems to be a theoretical oversimplification to think that, even on an abstract level, any "hypothetical recipient of a literary text" could produce every possible reading for which the text might have potential, since reading is a result of both conscious and unconscious activity. As Belsey states, "[n]o single reading is thus exhaustive, and reading itself plays a part in the construction of meaning" and "[t]hat we do not necessarily find exactly what we set out to uncover demonstrates the material part the text itself plays in the process of making meaning" (2003, 25). Indeed, Nikolajeva continues her division of reading skills by further distinguishing between novice readers, expert readers and professional readers. Nikolajeva explains that expert readers do not engage with texts "deliberately, systematically, critically and analytically, in the ways professional readers do, and engagement can happen on a subconscious level" (2014, 19). By setting conscious opposite to unconscious engagement and juxtaposing this opposition with expertise and professionalism versus inexperience puts heavy and unnecessary prestige upon the former type of engagement. Criticism to this prestige is illustrated with examples from *Alice* in the analysis section of the present thesis.

Secondly, even if theoretical, hypothetical and abstract, basing a theory on these roles suggests that an individual might fulfil only one of them at a given moment. Using terms such as "novice reader" and "expert reader" suggests that these roles are strict and relatively non-negotiable. This categorisation looks at individuals' capabilities as static when, in fact, they are far from it. Even though one can safely assume that at least some similarities can be distinguished in the development of individuals, as has been argued by many developmental psychologists (see discussion about stage theories in Siegler, DeLoache & Eisenberg 2010, 16–17), the different components of literary competence are not stages that can be put in an order, one stage succeeding another. Rather, they are interconnected and overlapping. Most importantly, humans develop throughout their lives, and education is not an issue that only concerns children.

Thirdly, constructing a spectrum between experience and inexperience is unnecessary because experience cannot be treated as a clearly delineated, unified phenomenon. If readership was discussed on a spectrum based on experience, this spectrum could only be constructed in relation to *one* specific cognitive skill at a time. For example, one might discuss a literary work's potential in developing a reader's empathic skills, theory of mind, problem-solving *or* the ability to comprehend intertextuality. A model that includes "full potential" of literary competence at one end is by definition impossible, because literary competence, which is obviously one part of the kind of experience that affects readings, consists of multiple components. According to Bruner (1990), for example, literary competence consists of linguistic competence, cognitive

competence and social competence. All of these competences can be trained, and the most important goal behind many studies of cognitive criticism, Nikolajeva's study included, is to prove that these competences, regardless of how they are defined, can indeed be improved, developed and trained by reading both fiction and non-fiction.

In the present thesis, literary competence is not merely treated as "an essential component of a child's intellectual growth" that "should be trained and encouraged" (Nikolajeva 2014, 11). Instead, following the ideas of lifelong learning, it is a component of every individual's intellectual growth, at any stage of their lives. Humans develop constantly. Intellectual growth is not just for children or adolescents but it is for everyone at any stage of their journey towards being a more competent reader in relation to any component of the skill. The premise for learning is the same irrespective of the reader's age: learning involves restructuring, cognitive modelling and embodiment. These concepts are more extensively covered in chapter 3. Every reader, whether society defines them as adults, adolescent or children, develops at a different pace in relation to each of these aspects. Therefore, one cannot claim that *one*, all-encompassing spectrum, which has experienced readers at the one and inexperienced readers at the other end, could be constructed.

Lastly, and most importantly, given that the discussion is about *engaging* with literature, dividing readers into different groups based on their abilities is even more futile**.** The abovementioned division might lead to the unnecessary idea that one reading method is more valuable than another. Indeed, this – often underlying – value judgment can clearly be seen in several texts by some cognitive critics. Bortolussi and Dixon, for example, claim in their critical meta-analysis that the literary texts that Green & Brock use in their 2000 study on narrative transport "would seem to invite naïve forms of reading in which attention is directed to superficial aspects of the story world – plot and emotions – at the expense of deeper thinking and appreciation" (2015, 534). This formulation presents deeper thinking in opposition to plot-driven and intuitive reading, which is regarded as naïve and superficial. However, all reading methods are equal in the sense that both intuitive and analytical reading create premise for learning about emotions. Nikolajeva (2014, 14) directly states that only deep reading is included in her study:

> [D]eep reading cannot occur without appropriate decoding and comprehension skills, but the kind of cognitive and affective engagement I am interested in only becomes relevant when deep reading competence is achieved.

To Nikolajeva, a reading is the end result of a process that always involves linguistic comprehension in the form of meaning-making from words on a page. The ability to read and

literary competence are prerequisites for engaging with texts. Nikolajeva continues: "[g]iven the importance that cognitive critics ascribe to readers' capacity to engage with texts, it is surprising that they have not considered what happens if this capacity is absent or underdeveloped, and how texts may deliberately compensate for this obstacle" (2014, 10). To reformulate this commentary in the light of the arguments presented above, the present thesis claims that it is remarkable that such value judgments about the cognitive capabilities of different readers are relatively common inside cognitive criticism. Given the weight that many cognitive critics place on the democratisation of reading, it is surprising that the attention is not focused on the learning possibilities that textual environments create for individuals.

The present thesis also argues that the process of emotional engagement involved with different kinds of reading methods is essentially the same. Engaging in literature on the levels of narrative and learning does not require any specific sets of skills. One might argue that the minimal level of skills required to enjoy literature includes the ability to read, but even this is not true. One can engage in stories in several ways: by reading, listening, watching and looking. This is possible because narrative arguably precedes language, or, is "a universal human trait" (Keen 2015, 5). Indeed, one might hypothesise that humans also at least have the ability to engage in and, thus, enjoy these structures even before reading skills are developed. In the present thesis, "deep reading" means making sense of the story, or, indeed, any aspect or part of it, regardless of the sensory channel through which it is taken. This meaning-making is independent of the activity of reading. To provide an example, one of the most important situations in which children's literature is consumed is reading aloud. It would seem gratuitous to claim that an individual is not able to engage in the narrative if it is presented to them in the voice of somebody else. The effects of reading aloud to a child's development have also been studied empirically (Stephens, G. J., Silbert, L. J. & Hasson, U. 2010). Reading aloud is not only an essential method of developing a child's cognitive capabilities but also a source of emotional connection between the carer and the child. In this case, engaging in literature only requires the ability to engage in a reading situation.

Analogously to the representation of childhood in children's literature, the child reader is always represented from the point of view of the adult researcher in literature criticism. The adult researcher might aim at being objective and neutral, yet this is in vain: adults simply do not have any direct access to the child experience. It should be emphasised that the notion of the child reader as defined by age or other physiological variable is pointless. There are readers with different cognitive capacities, most of which are age-irrelevant. Individuals develop at their own pace. This is why the present thesis will not scrutinise child readers or readers with limitations in

some abstract and hypothetical set of reading skills. The learning process is the same for both "experienced" and "inexperienced" readers. As the following chapters argue, information about abstract concepts, such as emotions, is structured in the human brain with the help of schemas. Cognitive models assist in connecting schemas with wider networks of meaning. Besides cognitive modelling, learning about abstract concepts requires the acknowledgment of figurative language, metaphors and narratives. All of these are inherently fragmentary sources of information, as they include *gaps* that require bridging.

It can be argued that fiction is a source for both personal and social information about emotions. The goal of the present thesis is not to judge if one text is better than another in creating the premise for learning from emotion. All texts carry this potential, since all texts contain gaps. Following from this, all texts potentially teach their readers something. The present thesis turns away from defining readers and concentrates on the cognitive processes that, according to recent studies in cognitive sciences (extensively covered in Iacoboni 2009), are based on similar processes – imitation, mirroring and simulation – irrespective of the developmental phase in which they occur. The kind of cognitive criticism that the present thesis attempts at moves away from placing unnecessary weight on analytic reading alone and questions the role of the "professional" reader as a superior producer of meanings.

3. Literature and emotions

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify some of the most central terms connected with affective sciences and explain how they are used in cognitive criticism and in the present study. The terms emotion, feeling and affect are often used interchangeably, even though their differences are fundamental for affective sciences. *Emotion* is "a relatively brief episode of coordinated brain, autonomic, and behavioural changes that facilitate a response to an external or internal event of significance for the organism" (Davidson, Scherer & Goldsmith 2002, xiii). *Mood* is a cognitive state that lasts longer than an emotion and consists of "collections of background feelings" (Damasio 1994, 151). *Feeling* is the subjective realisation of a given affective state that might consist of one or several emotions.

Both emotion and mood are states that involve the broader and more abstract concept that is *affect*. By affect, cognitive scientists refer to the various ways in which emotions are experienced – as involving pleasure, displeasure, excitement, arousal so on. Affect can be clarified with the help of two models: the categorical model of affect by Panksepp and the dimensional model of affect by Russell. The categorical model is based on the existence of at least seven primary affects, or "a set of discrete natural kinds that are qualitatively distinct from

each other" that are "the products of distinct neurophysiological systems that are rooted in subcortical structures and that predate human evolution" (Zachar 2012, 2). Russell, in turn, "holds that all affective phenomena share the same fundamental structure – being composed of two independent dimensions [--] pleasure versus displeasure and [--] low versus high arousal" (Zachar 2012, 2). Russell therefore does not divide emotions into specific categories but relates them to their *valence* and *arousal.* Valence is essential in understanding narrative empathy and emotional simulation, and its importance is explained in chapter 3.1.

The present thesis investigates emotion according to valence and especially ambiguousness without denying the possibility of classifying affects according to other principles, as well. Indeed, it is especially important for a critic involved with language and emotion to acknowledge that there are several categorisations available for the researcher of emotion. Patrick Colm Hogan's recent study (2011), for example, explores how both basic and complex emotions, such as grief, guilt, shame and romantic love, are represented in different literary works. Although sometimes criticised in psychological discussion, the division of emotions into basic and complex emotions can be useful in relating emotion to learning and stereotypicality, for example. Basic emotions are evolutionary conditioned reactions to stimuli, whereas complex, social or secondary emotions are acquired, and they can thus be easily trained (Oatley & Jenkins 1996, 88–91). Secondary emotions start to develop when a person systematically begins "experiencing feelings and forming *systematic connections between categories of objects and situations, on the on hand, and primary emotions, on the other*" (Damasio 1994, 134). One might thus argue that, besides the order in which these emotions are acquired, the division also shows arrangement of emotions according to stereotypicality: basic emotions are possibly the ones that are more likely mentioned as stereotypical examples of the category "emotion".

This division illustrates the abstract and arbitrary categorical division of *emotion tags* on the one hand and highlights the ambiguousness and gapped nature of emotion schemas on the other. Emotion tags are the words used to describe emotions in both everyday and literary language, such as "happy" and "frustrated". Consequently, the more complex an emotion gets, the more difficult it is to categorise and describe it by means of language. These are the instances that generate more space for varying interpretations in both everyday and literary environments. Gaps are elaborated on in chapter 3.4. In summary, emotions can be ambiguous, as well as positively or negatively valenced. This ambiguousness also extends to expression and meaning. The ambiguous areas of meaning are not only the most interesting study areas but also one of the

central cognitive elements affecting humans' ability to learn and adapt. These are also the instances of emotion that are of special interest in the present thesis.

Learning about emotion equals increasing *emotional competence.* Emotional competence is trained constantly in social interaction and – as the present thesis argues – reading. Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (2012, 131) defines emotional competence as comprising of five essential components:

> [F]irstly, the knowledge that emotions can be experienced and expressed, secondly, the ability to have empathy, which is strongly tied to Theory of Mind; thirdly, the acquisition of emotional scripts, i.e., encoded emotions; fourthly, the knowledge that multiple emotions can occur at the same time or displace another in a emotional chain; and finally, the acknowledgment that a feeling causes different emotional reactions.

Two important concepts connected to learning about emotions arise from this definition: *theory of mind* is the individual's ability to separate their own mental world from those of others. In Nikolajeva's words, theory of mind "is what makes it possible for us to interact with other people, predict their behaviour and adjust our own" (2014, 77). Theory of mind is a prerequisite for *empathy*: one cannot feel for another person without completely acknowledging that other people have their own, separate mental worlds.

3.1. Empathy

Empathy is one of the most central aspects of the social existence of humans. Nikolajeva defines empathy as "the ability to understand how other people feel" (2014, 78). Suzanne Keen, in turn, defines empathy as "a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect" that "can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading" (2007, 4). Keen distinguishes "the spontaneous, responsive sharing of an appropriate feeling as *empathy*, and the more complex, differentiated feeling for another as *sympathy*" and summarises the difference between the two by claiming that "[e]mpathy that leads to sympathy is by definition other-directed, whereas an over-aroused empathic response that creates personal distress (self-oriented and aversive) causes a turning-away from the provocative condition of the other" (2007, 4). In other words, sympathy is what one experiences when another, often contributing emotion is elicited by the acknowledgement of another person's feelings. Empathy occurs when one person experiences affect in a similar manner as another. If this experience is negative, it often stimulates turning away from the eliciting conditions. Empathy combines affective, cognitive and physiological processes, as Kümmerling-Meibauer (2012, 127–128) states:

> The affective process is determined by emotional sympathy, the cognitive process refers to the possibility to perform a change of perspective and to put oneself in the position of another person, and the physiological process concerns autonomous activities of the nervous system, for example to empathise with another's joy, anxiety, or pain.

An important question arises from the above definitions of empathy: how can the researcher justify the existence of *similar* emotions in different individuals? What makes it possible to argue for the existence of a similar emotion and not *the same* emotion or, indeed, a completely different emotion with some, supposedly common traits?

This question lies at the core of not only the study of emotions but also the study of narrative empathy. Cognitive critics have adopted the term *emotional simulation* which refers to the process of empathising with any aspect of a literary work, such as characters, events or sequences of events. These narrative objects stimulate certain cognitive processes, and the end result of these processes is an emotion that approaches an immediate experience elicited by certain, aligning conditions in the actual world – a simulated emotion. Nikolajeva formulates the relationship between the actual world and the fictional world as follows: the vicarious experience of emotions provided by fiction "is possible since our brains can simulate responses to fictional emotions just as if they were real" (2014, 79). Nikolajeva (2014, 83) continues that the cognitive processes behind empathy are exactly the same irrespective of whether the eliciting conditions exist in a fictional or the actual world. Indeed, with the discovery of mirror neurons, the previously recognised phenomenon of empathy could also be demonstrated through neurobiological means. Nikolajeva highlights the importance of mirror neurons in the following manner: "through mirror neurons, our brains are capable of responding to fictional worlds as if they were actual; capable of making sense of a linguistically constructed world by connecting it to our empirical or mediated knowledge of the actual world" (2014, 23). To put it simply, mirror neurons are behind our ability to experience not only empathy in general but also emotions irrespective of whether the eliciting conditions for them are visual stimuli, representations, music, images or verbal descriptions.

Following from this, it could be argued that empathy itself cannot be elicited without *some* kind of a representation of the target emotion. The *eliciting conditions* for empathy necessarily include a medium: language in conversation or in a text, visual, linguistic or cultural decoding of another person's emotional expressions or body language in a communicative situation, or a memory. The verbal descriptions of emotional expression and seeing the actual kinesics of a person in a communication situation, for example, are processed in the brain in a similar manner, with the help of mirror neurons and prelinguistic structures such as metaphors, image schemas and narrative. *Emotion schemas* are "representations of sequences of action, of

the meanings of emotion, and of how emotions function" (Oatley & Jenkins 1996, 208). Bruhn ponders the role of memory in eliciting empathy in general: "when it 'revives' in the present, the recollected emotion is only 'similar to' the emotion originally experienced, not least because the original was immediately produced by the mental 'events' of recollection and contemplation" (2015, 595). Again, the abstract nature of emotions, their general indescribability and the arbitrariness of the language that is used to describe them should always be kept in mind. The main argument behind the above claim is that a memory is always a retrospective recreation and thus always altered in many ways in relation to the immediate experience. The present thesis argues that the cognitive models revived by any representation of an emotion, whether they are based on experience, memory, language or imagination, are always recreations. Even the most basic emotional expressions, such as smiling and frowning, are representations that require decoding. Moreover, both "literary" and "everyday" uses of language require similar kind of decoding, as was stated in chapter 2.1.3. One could consequently argue that empathy always includes the activation of mirror neurons since it always involves the decoding of these recreations. It does not matter what the eliciting conditions for empathy are: the emotional experience is always based on the same neurobiological process.

In a sense, the different definitions for the word "empathy" reflect the escaping nature of the phenomenon that this label attempts to describe. As Carroll states, "[f]or some it means identification – the sharing of identical emotions – whereas for others it may merely signal the occurrence of causally related, similar emotions" (2015, 324). In a way, pondering over the potential sameness of the emotions involved with empathy is futile. Taken to one extreme, one can think over whether it is even possible to argue for the existence of empathy, since one person can never know what and how another person feels. Humans must use different kinds of codes when describing and sharing emotions and other cognitive processes. In addition, language and cognition are intertwined in ways that are still unclear – how language shapes cognition, for example, still calls for more extensive research. The sharing of emotion is thus based on ambiguity, arbitrariness and constructedness. Since emotional experience is highly subjective, we can only point at the potentially aligning valences of emotions.

It follows from this that, instead of either strictly defining the emotion caused by empathy as either the same or claiming that the emotions are never the same, the present thesis argues that empathy involves at least sharing the valence of the emotion in question. Often emotions that are elicited by objects and events in the real world are considered central and emotions caused by aesthetic experience somehow more peripheral. There is no basis for this kind of preference since we cannot state that perception of the actual world creates more factual experience than what can

be created without external stimuli (imagining, for example). Again, if the very nature of the experience itself is discussed, the eliciting conditions do not matter. In fact, it could even be argued that the empathic emotions caused by reading on the one and perception of the real world on the other hand should rather be treated as separate, yet, equally valid experiences produced by overlapping systems in the brain at a certain moment. All in all, the study of the mind should be approached with care and humility. There are wide areas in the study of the human cognition that are still uncharted. There is so much that neither researchers of cognitive sciences nor cognitive critics understand – yet, one should not shun attempts to broaden this understanding. One way to do this is to remind oneself how humans deal with abstract concepts by relating them to concrete conditions, or embodiment.

3.2. Embodiment

One of the most important assumptions underlying the different theories of cognitive criticism is the notion of *embodiment*. Understanding embodiment is essential to any treatise of emotions and empathy. Embodiment means that humans understand and perceive their surroundings in relation to their material existence. Patrick Colm Hogan formulates the basis for embodiment as follows: "humans are continually thinking and acting in concrete conditions. In order to understand human action at any given moment, one must take into account both the psychological preconditions and the material circumstances" (2015, 331). Neuroscientists, such as Heath and Wolf (2012, 146–147) tend to emphasise the importance of the physiological and social environment in decision-making:

> Information is less stored than situated in bodily patterns and senses remembered and projected. "Future memories" enable readers to envision, embody, and reason about future actions by remembering affordances that environments or situations have given them or could provide. The modalities of the brain work as dynamic systems.

It is a principle of cognitive linguistics that "linguistic forms are based on extensions of embodied perceptions and physical experience with roots in our human condition and early infant development" (Stockwell 2009, 169). To provide a simplified example, an infant, who is learning how to stand, easily connects falling with the experience of failing. So, the immediate experience about balance corresponds with the emotional and bodily responses caused by the experience. As the cognitive skills of the developing human grow more complex, this metaphor extends to interpersonal relationships – mediated by language, of course.

Embodiment affects all components of language. This claim is based on Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) idea that metaphor precedes language, and it is a direct result of the human

experience always having its ultimate basis on embodiment. Crane (2015, 17) explains embodiment as follows:

> Thought itself – conceptualization, interpretation, reasoning – is just such an abstraction, which can only be thought about through metaphor: we imagine our mind as a space within which ideas are created and housed; we imagine it as a conduit through which ideas are conveyed to other people; we imagine ideas as buildings that are constructed, we imagine ideas as people, plants, products, and commodities; we imagine understanding as seeing or grasping.

Every cognitive model that a person constructs is thus based on concrete conditions. Cognitive models created about emotions and all the experiences an individual might have about them are not exceptions. Love burns, happiness is uplifting. "Depression" is characterised by "low" mood, and extreme happiness is "ecstatic".

Damasio (1994) claims that emotions are a proof of the fact that the body is the final framework according to which humans construct their understanding of the world. The phenomena of the mind can only be understood as a part of the structural and functional whole interacting with its environment that is human. Moreover, the environment is partly a construction of the being interacting with it. Both language and emotions are strictly tied to the body. Drawing from this, the differences in basic functions of the human body and the human experiences can explain differences between languages, and, as Stockwell aptly puts it, "cognitive poetics has the potential to offer a unified explanation of both individual interpretations as well as interpretations that are shared by a group, community or culture" (2002, 5). Language that is used to describe emotions, for example, might potentially give insights about how emotion is perceived in a specific cultural context. Furthermore, texts provide evidence, through the linguistic representations of embodied emotions, about meanings created by the readers about these emotions.

Emotion, as an abstract concept, is always understood through the embodied and metaphorical language. From literature, one can potentially draw information about emotion and all the cognitive models involved with emotions. This information includes the different manifestations of emotions, such as descriptions of the emotional process, cognitive structures still obscure to cognitive sciences and culturally shared knowledge about emotions. Literature provides an environment in which it is possible to learn about what emotions are, how they work and how they are treated in the specific cultural context of the novel. Besides the social aspects of emotion reflected in language, the present thesis suggests that there is one more level to the kind of evidence text offers for a cognitive critic. Fiction creates a premise for emotional engagement with the narrative, which can be into empathetic and immersive engagement. Because emotion

and reason work in accordance, as Damasio claims in *Descartes' Error* (1994), immersing oneself in the meaning-creation of a single word always involves some emotional activity. Thus, reading always involves emotional activity, even though the reader might not always consciously think about it. Following from this, this thesis argues that immersive involvement with a work of art is not less valuable than other types of involvement. Quite the contrary, it creates an environment in which it is safe to practice recognising emotions, what they mean and how they are manifested both in the subjective consciousness of the reader and the social space the literary environment reflects.

3.3. Immersive and empathic identification

Emotions and literature have throughout the history of literary criticism been connected by the idea of literature having the potential to evoke emotional reactions in readers. More than often, the answer to the question *Why do we read?* is that because we want to feel and get lost in literature. The feeling of getting lost is explained with the term *immersion*. In cognitive sciences, this phenomenon has been explained with the help of attention. Art's ability to transport its audience so that, as a result, some change has occurred, has been studied by Green and Brock (2000), for example. The metaphor of transport has been criticised among cognitive critics as simplifying the process and only exemplifying a prototypical reading situation (Bortolussi & Dixon 2015, 526). Indeed, the cognitive mechanisms involved with immersion are far more complex and dynamic. Besides attention, many cognitive critics explain the phenomenon from the point of view of information processing, empathy and sympathy. Based on his own empirical study on imagery or mental processing of information in images, Starr (2015, 257) suggests:

> [V]ivid imagery might offer privileged access to a fast route for aesthetic engagement because it involves a bidirectionally focused state, one in which perceptual activity is both self-generated and sparked by external presentation – for example the words that carry rhythm and rhyme, or the textual details that drive description.

This claim is based on the fact that responding to visual images is evolutionarily hard-wired in our brain as a quicker process than responding to verbal stimuli alone (Nikolajeva 2014, 95). The ways in which different readers thus engage aesthetically with a text vary according the reader's habits in decoding the language in the text, the reader's literary and emotional competence, personal preferences in information processing (as some information is always left out and some taken in), the readers' different tendencies in processes of imagination, and so on.

The ability to empathise requires distance. As was already mentioned, the acknowledgement of the existence of other people's separate mental worlds is a prerequisite for

empathic thinking. This also extends to the ability to empathise in literary environments: according to Stockwell, immersion in reading literature "involves a means of understanding how closely word choices are tied to context" (Stockwell 2002, 41), or, *deixis*. Readers tend to place themselves somewhere between the non-literary and the literary worlds that they create in their readings. Readers establish "proxy selves" (Easterlin 2015, 622) in relation to characters, objects, events and narrators. This has the effect of the reader naturally being an outsider in relation to the events in the narrative. Narrative roles are only one example of the different actualisations of deictic centre points. In effect, the ability to distance oneself from the objects in the text enables both immersion and empathy in literary environments. The deictic shift theory is firmly anchored in the idea that humans are able to distance themselves from the fictional world and the relational nature of its expressions – an idea that is also at the centre of empathy. The imaginative capacity of "taking a **cognitive stance** within the mentally constructed world of the text…allows the reader to understand projected deictic expressions relative to the shifted deictic centre" (Stockwell 2002, 46–47, emphasis in the original). In other words, the ability to take a cognitive stance in relation to the textual world also allows immersing in it.

The assumption that some readers are more capable of recognising deixis than others leads to the necessity of separating empathy from immersion. Nikolajeva defines immersive identification and empathic identification in the following manner: in immersive identification, "readers get so absorbed in fiction that they are unable to liberate themselves from the subject position imposed by the text" (Nikolajeva 2014, 85). In effect, this simply means that a reader becomes frightened when a character in a narrative gets frightened. According to Nikolajeva, this immersion frequently happens with novice readers, and it does not involve empathy, because empathy requires distance. More empathic forms of response to fiction develop when the reader is ready and able to step back from the self-centered subject position towards a position outside the characters. Novice readers are, according to Nikolajeva, more likely to respond affectively to literature than expert readers, who "should be able to understand a character's fear without being scared themselves" (2014, 85). This is presumably a result of the developing brain, which initially utilises the low path of the processing brain more than the high path.

This idea goes back to Wimsatt & Beardsley's 1949 essay, "The Affective Fallacy", in which the writers deem immersive identification as a dangerous, immature and less valuable response to literature than more analytical or empathic responses. According to this view, shared by other New Critics, purely aesthetic value is more prestigious than the experience gained from a more emotional engagement with a text. In the light of recent studies in cognitive sciences, however, this claim can also be criticised. Immersion is often studied in connection to different

reading habits, and it is most often associated with intuition and attention. Pleasure reading is distinguished from close reading, and the conscious regulation of reading pace is a key factor in the distinction between the two modes. Phillips (2015) has studied the two modes in different environments. She defines the modes so that pleasure reading is "a more relaxed mode of focus that allowed readers to become immersed in a novel" (2015, 57), whereas close reading is defined as a mode that "asks us to look more rigorously at a novel's form, analysing structures such as plot, characterization, setting, voice, and mood that give that work its narrative power" (2015, 57).

In practice, however, the two modes are not separate. They can be used simultaneously as is shown in Phillips' study. In fact, the two modes are not mutually exclusive, and one cannot be completely separated from the other. Phillips states that "though close reading stimulates a truly broad set of regions, the best scenario for activating the most parts of our brain would be to sustain cognitive flexibility and read with both kinds of attention" (2015, 63). The researchers have even noted that pleasure can be drawn from various kinds of reading – one style being close reading. Rigorous analysis can also be a source of pleasure, and presumably it is such for many. Moreover, as Oatley puts it, "[i]nsights of a personal kind when reading fiction are more likely to occur when the reader is moved emotionally by what he or she is reading and when the accompanying context helps the understanding of the resulting emotions" (1999, 115). Thus, close reading is not a more valuable mode of reading, not as far as neural activation or gaining pleasure are concerned. Instead of elevating close reading as a mode that requires better focus and more cognitive capability, the study proves that "each style of literary engagement has its own cognitive demands and produces its own neural patterns" (Phillips 2015, 63). Immersive identification is just as valuable a tool in learning about emotion than empathic identification. Immersive identification allows the reader to experience an emotion, which might further assist the reader in recognising, regulating and acknowledging the conditions that elicited the emotion.

Considering immersive identification less valuable also involves other problems. The readers might potentially be able to *choose* between affective and immersive empathy. Furthermore, there is also always the possibility that readers might neither get immersed in nor identify with the text. The multifaceted and complex combinations of immersive and empathic identification are reflected in Breithaupt's 2015 essay, for example. It examines the concept of empathic sadism, or, "the happiness that readers can derive from the suffering of characters (as well as real people)" and the cases in which "the positive emotions of the reader are derived from experiencing empathy with a suffering character" (Breithaupt 2015, 440). However, surprisingly

many cognitive critics, Breithaupt (2015, 447) included, seem to believe that most people are good in the sense that they will root for the "good" characters:

> Of course that does not mean that the readers could not root for the aggressor, but because the narration is interspersed with reminders of the selfishness of the two men, it seems likely that most readers will root against them. So far, this side-taking is not strange at all.

These kinds of statements suggest that even though rooting for the aggressor is possible, it is not likely. Yet without empirical evidence, this interpretation about "most readers" cannot be plausibly supported. Furthermore, it implicitly sets one interpretation above another – one as normal and another as "strange" – an attitude that the present thesis works against. Furthermore, one cannot assume that a narrative does not have any characters that might act as targets for empathy – or that empathy cannot be directed towards a certain character. Most people – if different instances of pathological conditions are not included – are most often at least *able* to empathise, the eliciting conditions just affect to which degree this empathy is felt, if it is indeed felt at all. So, to a degree, empathy is a matter of decision-making – a fact that Breithaupt completely misses.

It is somewhat problematic to assign emotional reactions to a reader in the manner described above. One cannot simply say that the reader will react to a text in a certain way. This is a problem in many recent studies of emotion in the field of cognitive criticism. For example, Kümmerling-Meibauer (2012, 136) claims that readers automatically react with disgust to emotionless and sadistic characters:

> Therefore, the reader certainly reacts with irritation when confronted with the description of Eric's murderous and brutal activities, recognising that Eric is highly skilled and determined on the one hand, but that he is driven by sexually abnormal behaviour on the other hand.

While this is certainly advisable behaviour, one cannot make such an assumption about any reader. It is possible that readers do not understand the motives of the character, thus eliciting emotional response that can be rather surprising. The reader might develop empathy towards characters that are unpleasant or that act in an inappropriate manner. Moreover, the reader might develop empathy towards characters whose motives are unclear, as long as there are some traits that are relatable for that particular reader. This is a crucial point in creating a premise for deeper learning. It is important to feel empathy even though one might feel hatred or disgust towards the target person.

Finally, literature is not just about identifying with characters. Narratives invite the readers to take multiple perspectives – through the characters, the narrators, the implied reader,

the implied author, and so on. Siding with one narrative role or another has to do with decision-making which can be anything between completely conscious and completely unconscious. There are structures in narratives that promote certain decision-making processes, but the narrative never fully decides for the reader which side to take. This is what leads to the multiplicity of interpretations that can be derived from a single narrative depending on the reader, the context, the time, or, for example, how many times one has actually read the story. One might even conceptualise that the cognitive model of a possible target for empathy is created in a wider discourse that assigns an identity to this target. There are concrete examples of texts in which the true personalities of characters are never revealed. Characters and their mental states might for example be only speculated by the narrator and/or other characters. This creates a gap in the narrative. In these cases, the reader is left with a puzzle that can be completed in various ways – each way just as valuable as another.

In conclusion, there are countless reasons why readers enjoy reading. According to Flesch, literature aims at satisfaction, and humans desire three things from fiction: "to be interested in the things that happen, to take pleasure in those events, and to be emotionally engaged" (2015, 379). These interests may also conflict with one another. For example, one might find pleasure in achieving a sense of status, and this might be why some readers enjoy the problem-solving that fiction often offers. The ability to recognise allusions often involves the thought "I know this allusion, thus, I am a capable reader". As Nikolajeva (2014, 226) states:

> Although children's literature has been extensively used as an educational implement, this does not exclude or preclude its parallel use as a source of aesthetic pleasure. Moreover, pleasure makes acquisition of knowledge more efficient.

Bortolussi and Dixon formulate this premise from the point of view of meaning-making: "deciphering symbolic meaning may be one of the most rewarding levels of literary engagements, producing a uniquely rewarding form of pleasure" (2015, 530). Learning is potentially one aspect contributing to the experience of pleasure associated with reading, as it involves the active participation on the part of the reader in the filling of the missing parts – the gaps – on both the level of personal schemas and the level of the narrative framework provided by the text.

3.4. Learning about emotion through gaps

The premise for the following analysis of learning about emotion in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is that when readers engage emotionally with a literary text, they always engage in the process of constructing cognitive models about the human mind. As a consequence, they also

engage in constructing cognitive models about emotions. Both common and more peripheral readings that produce the activation of the cognitive model construction of a particular emotion can arguably be distinguished from a particular text. It is the cognitive critic's task to find the premise for these readings. As was argued before, the concept that cognitive critics successfully use in bringing the author, the text, the context and the reader together is reading. Readings are unique, ever-shifting and dynamic results of the readers' meaning-making processes that are potentially triggered by a textual environment. Learning is a process that connects the different types of emotional engagement – immersive and empathic – with reading. On the one hand, one can immerse in literature: this immersion involves intuitive reactions to literary objects. This creates the possibility of learning about emotions and their status, intensity and meanings as experienced in the consciousness of an individual. In this way, the reader can accumulate knowledge of the emotional self. On the other hand, one can discern information about the social status of emotions in a given cultural context. Descriptions of emotions, situations, characters, and conditions that elicit emotional reactions in the agents and objects in the text create the environment for this learning process. These environments enable the accumulation of information about how emotions are handled in the social mind.

The statement "I feel empathy towards X" entails several aspects of both the social and the personal realms of emotion. Firstly, empathy alone is not an emotion, but it consists of several possibilities for emotions that overlap and occur simultaneously with one another. These emotions and the physiological feelings they cause are personal. Thus, what the critic can extract from the text is the surrounding conditions and effects of a potential emotional reaction. Since we can never fully know the nature of the emotional experience of another person, emotions at the cognitive level are highly personal. On the other hand, when humans start to communicate about emotions, they immediately become social. According to Palmer, the social mind reflects the "mental functioning that becomes visible through an externalist perspective on the mind that stresses those aspects that are outer, active, public, social, behavioral, evident, embodied, and engaged. More specifically, it refers to our capacity for intermental thought" (Palmer 2015, 137). In a sense, cultural products (oral, visual, verbal, and so on) are the only "fixed" and thus most reliable source material for justifying the existence of socially distributed cognition, socially situated cognition, extended cognition or intersubjectivity in a given context. Literature, for example, always reflects the social aspects of emotion, as the main medium through which it is represented is language.

Both the social and personal meanings of emotions are brought together in literature, which provides the readers with a unique environment to connect these meanings and increase

emotional competence. Kümmerling-Meibauer distinguishes the phases of this process: firstly, "readers have to recognise the presented emotions in order to assign them to 'emotional scripts'", secondly, they are "prompted to classify the 'new' emotions according to their knowledge", and finally, "this experience causes a learning process that leads to the enlargement and differentiation of emotional competence" (2012, 138). Theory of mind and empathic skills can also be practiced through *mind-reading* and the possibly resulting narrative empathy. Mind-reading is what happens when individuals try to construct another person's mental world at a given point of time based on any information available from kinesics, facial expressions, body language and tone of the voice to emotional and cognitive discourse. These pieces of information can also be acquired from literary texts, and connecting these pieces involves similar cognitive processes than mind-reading in a face-to-face situation, for example (Zunshine 2006, Vermeule 2010). Nikolajeva, for example, concludes that "[s]ince most fiction involves interaction between textual agents, embedded mind-reading is an indispensable part of it and frequently constitutes the major plot engine" (2014, 90–91). Embedded or higher-order mind-reading – the ability to read how a person sees the mental world of another person, and so on – occurs as soon as we engage with other individuals. The reader might engage in reading the minds of characters, focalisers and narrators. In a typical mind-reading situation, the reader reads the mind of the narrator, who reads the mind of the character.

However, one cannot claim that a text always either elicits a particular emotion in a reader or that a reader always engages in the kind of mind-reading or cognitive model construction of an emotion that the text might suggest. This is the consequence of the fragmentary nature of language: language, narratives, emotion schemas and cognitive models are full of unidentifiable areas, or *gaps*. Some narrative theorists, such as Wolfgang Iser (1978, 1980), claim that narratives always have indeterminacies or gaps, and in these gaps there is a universe of possible meanings that can be constructed. Gaps are an essential part in the creation of the narrative experience. The present thesis argues that emotional readings are constructed from the existing bits of information, and gaps in the emotional discourse of the text are actively filled in the reading process. Kümmerling-Meibauer explains how the reader must, with little or no description of emotions in the texts, actively seek for other means to find out about the characters' emotional state. This can be achieved by evaluating situations, events and relating previous life experience to them: "[s]ince the first person narrator only conveys fragments, leaving many gaps, the reader is put into the position of having to decipher the meaning of the fragmentary text as if composing jigsaw pieces" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2012, 135–136).

The assumption that a narrative always has gaps is based on the inherently "gapped" nature of language. Consequently, more ambiguous uses of language have a greater potential to create more gaps in the emotional storyline of a text than densely descriptive uses of language. One of cognitive criticism's fundamental objectives is to explore "the relationship between literal and figurative language, challenging the structuralist view that the latter is effectively redundant in everyday communication" (Nikolajeva 2014, 89–90). Stockwell agrees with this view and explains that "[e]xpressive (often poetic) metaphors tend to have low clarity but a high degree of richness, whereas explanatory (often scientific) metaphors tend not to be very rich but are very clear" (2002, 108). The more the text has gaps, the more there is room for interpretation. Similarly, more possibilities to bridge these gaps equals more possibilities to adjust one's ideas about the world the text represents. Empirical studies on this exist, too: Peskin & Astington (2004) have concluded that the performance of theory of mind is superior for children who have read texts that do not directly refer to emotion tags. Instead, to read these texts is to struggle to find the meaning for emotions and the surrounding phenomena. One can extend this idea to other techniques, too, such as nonsensical language. Moreover, the more ambiguous the text is, the less direct textual evidence can the critic find for elevating one interpretation above another as more correct, important or likely. Here lies the potential of literature: these gaps provide the readers with countless possibilities rather than restrictions. Moreover, as Abbott states (2015, 112), figurative language and montage-like structures best mimic the incompleteness and confusion of the human mind and the ultimate impossibility of expressing thoughts through language. This technique, too, is based on gaps. Figurative and ambiguous constructions often allow the potential reflection over the complexities of abstract phenomena, such as the overlapping or confusion of two or more emotions.

It is particularly important to emphasise that the cognitive activities involved with reading that produce different interpretations, readings and experiences are equally valuable in relation to learning. For example, interpretations rendered irrelevant by some literary critics might play an essential role in the development of children and adults alike with the help of literature and art. This is where cognitive criticism can be argued as having an upper hand in not only describing the multifaceted human brain but also placing the emphasis on the developing mental structures of the reader in the text itself. No interpretation is better than another if we look at the potentially evoked emotional responses – they will continue their existence even if an authority figure renders the interpretation irrelevant. It might even be harmful for the development of the creative mind if an authority figure deems an interpretation as irrelevant: this underestimates the reader, undermines their emotional response and potentially makes them more reserved readers. This

does not mean that healthy criticism should not be taught, quite the contrary. It is essential to teach about the different emotional responses that might be evoked by a text. It is also essential for both child and adult readers to have multiple interpretations at hand, as having access to them gives way to the acknowledgement and acceptance of their existence. In the present thesis the following view is promoted: the reader is allowed to pick any interpretation as the most plausible for their personal purposes, and, in relation to engaging with literature, it is always correct, because the act of problem-solving in this case has no definitive answers provided from the outside. The existence of gaps proves that information is not transferred from a source to a target in a learning situation. It is created anew from existing bits in the process.

As was stated before, learning concerns all humans irrespective of their age. Humans develop throughout their lives, and one cannot claim that one type of learning at a certain point is more valuable than another. Literature, in all its forms, always creates environments in which it is possible to learn something about emotions. From understanding the nuances of the meaning of a word or an emotion to creating a whole another meaning for them, these are all examples of learning – of creating. The contents of the information are formed in the reading process, analogously to process of meaning-creation from the text. Every reading contributes to the inventory of experience a reader has about the world and about reading itself – either by confirming or challenging existing knowledge structures. As this inventory expands, the processes involved with reading in relation to reaching the context-dependent goals of the reading situation might become more effective.

It is important to note that addressing the proficiency of a reader has to be related to the reading situation, its goals and the different components of reading competence. An otherwise informed and skilled reader might not be an effective a reader of literary expressions of emotion, for example, in the way they are realised in a reading situation. Similarly, a reader who has sophisticated knowledge of emotional expressions might not be familiar with some other aspects of culturally shared knowledge of reading. These skills present themselves differently in relation to different readings. All knowledge contributes to the readiness to react to new experience. Furthermore, just as every brain is different, so is the brain of a any reader in a given moment in time different. In other words, a reader might have one set of tools for approaching a text in one moment, and a completely another set just a brief moment later. Luckily, these sets of tools constantly fluctuate and develop, and all the culturally shared and personal readings of a text have the potential to affect the readiness to approach texts. Thus, one meaning is not more valuable than another in relation to learning in general, and one reading is not more valuable than other as far as their potential to stimulate learning is concerned.

4. Learning about emotion in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

The following chapter explores the environments which might affect learning about both personal and social meanings attached to emotions in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Following the theoretical premise presented in the above chapters, three assumptions underlie all of the claims in this chapter. Firstly, empathy is a feature that is crucial in effective cooperation between humans, and, as social beings, humans naturally tend to use this feature. How humans construct their identities is largely based on how they relate to other people (see i.e. Beckes, Coan & Hasselmo 2012). Thus, humans usually have a need to understand emotions and empathise with each other. This need can also be satisfied in literary environments with the help of narrative mind-reading (Vermeule 2010, Keen 2007, Zunshine 2006). Secondly, the facts that humans do not have direct access to each other's subjective, emotional experiences and that cognitive states are always mediated by language lead to the inevitable condition that emotional discourse is always incomplete, or full of gaps. In traditional terms, literary communication occurs between the text and both implied and real authors and readers: these terms were first introduced by Chatman (1978, 151). Since reading, as cognitive critics understand it, encompasses communication between all these participants, gaps can be thought to exist on linguistic, narrative and schematic levels. The emotional discourse constructed by a text – and, in a wider context, the emotional discourse constructed by the collection of texts inside a culture – always reflects this condition.

Thirdly, on the abovementioned levels, the readers attempt to bridge the gaps in the texts in a manner personally most suitable for them. On a narrative level, this tendency might be formulated as a principle according to which readers imagine the fictional world as close as possible to the actual world ("principle of minimal departure" in Ryan 1991). Bridging the gaps involves the careful evaluation of new information, its comparison to existing schemas and the re-evaluation of these schemas. This process also occurs with emotional discourse. Gaps in emotional discourse encourage the reader to think about the possibilities in which they can personally fill in the gaps. The gaps present themselves differently to different readers, because every brain, every consciousness and every life history is different. What might be completely clear for one might create a profound debate for another. However, as cognitive critics suggest, there might be common traits in the ways in which texts might stimulate cognitive activity in groups of readers.

Emotional discourse is realised in various ways in *Alice*. The general principle on all of the above levels is that the more ambiguous the expression is, the more important it is in terms of potentially stimulating cognitive activity in readers. The ambiguousness of the expression is

defined by three main factors. Firstly, from the point of view of mind-reading, it is essential to distinguish between direct speech and indirect speech. A character expressing their emotional state in direct speech gives the reader access to the character's unmediated emotional expressions, whereas indirect speech signals that the emotional state is assigned to the character by the narrator. Furthermore, the narrator might also express empathy. The methods in which *Alice* reflects these distinctions are discussed in chapters 4.1.1. and 4.1.2. Secondly, the clarity of the emotional expression is connected to the categorisation of the said emotion, which, in turn, can be most efficiently described in terms of valence. As was stated, ambiguous expressions allow more interpretations about the causes and consequences of the emotion in question. This thesis argues that direct references to ambiguous emotions create a cognitive gap that the reader might be inclined to bridge. The most prevalent ambiguous emotions in *Alice* are curiosity, madness, confusion and surprise, and each of these emotions is discussed in chapter 4.1.3.

The most important emotional expressions as far as learning is concerned are, however, those that are not directly spelled out. Therefore, the third point affecting the ambiguousness of an emotional expression is that texts can convey emotions through the description of events, actions, dialogue and so on. A reference to an emotional state can be constructed by textual means so that the reference does not involve any direct mention of an emotion. These are the most essential, effective and engaging methods that potentially affect readings about emotions. In *Alice*, at least three textual means systematically create frameworks for these readings: action-orientation, silence and characters that have non-readable minds. All of the above means potentially create environments in which both empathic and affective engagement are possible. Both empathic and affective engagement contribute to the meaning-making about emotions on a personal level. The means in which these environments are constructed in *Alice* are discussed in chapters 4.1.4. and 4.1.5. Scrutinising the nuances of this process in terms of psychological research with real readers – how it occurs, to which extent and how often, for example – is not within the scope of the present study. Empirical studies concerning the readers' ability to learn about emotions through reading literature have not yet been carried out.

4.1. Learning about the personal aspects of emotion in *Alice*

Mind-reading provides humans with a means to attempt at bridging the inevitable gap of not being able to enter another person's consciousness and, thus, to fully understand this person's experience of a particular emotion. In using theory of mind, humans construct a model of another person's mental world through their existing schemas of cognitive processes, such as emotions.

This is mind-reading, and it happens in all communication situations from face-to-face interaction to reading a novel.

In a literary environment, emotions are firstly spelled out in direct speech, which only allows one level of mind-reading. Emotions expressed in direct speech are less ambiguous in this sense: they arguably allow the most direct way to communicate a character's emotional state to the reader. So, when Alice says that "'I'm glad they don't give birthday presents like that!'" (110), little room is left for the reader to infer which emotion Alice is experiencing. Alice directly communicates that she feels glad and there is a minimal amount of narrator interference involved with the expression. How readers might conceptualise gladness of course varies. Compared to narrator-assigned emotions, direct emotion words in direct speech carry a lot of weight as far as credibility is concerned. Thus, they do not often need much further explanation. For example, it is clear that the Duchess expresses joy in the following direct quote: "'You can't think how glad I am to see you again, you dear old thing!' said the Duchess" (107). If explanation by the narrator occurs, it is often used to highlight the strength or degree of the emotion involved. In this scene, the narrator adds to the gladness that the Duchess herself expresses by describing the actions of the Duchess with a positively valenced adverb: "[--] she tucked her arm affectionately into Alice's, and they walked off together" (107).

4.1.1. Understanding the abstract and the arbitrary

Indeed, the narrator also assigns emotions to the characters. Deciphering narrator-assigned emotions involves "embedded" mind-reading (Nikolajeva 2014, 90–91): the reader has the possibility to read the mind of the narrator who is in turn reading the mind of a character. In the above example, the reader might conclude that the narrator, too, thinks the Duchess is glad quite simply because the positively valenced adverb "affectionately" is used. The narrator assigning emotions to characters is the most prevalent method of using direct references to emotions in *Alice*, or emotion tags. In *Alice*, the narrator widely uses reporting phrases that attach emotion tags to a character's line, such as "said Alice angrily" (81), "the Hatter went on in a mournful tone" (87) or "the Hatter asked triumphantly" (89). Reporting phrases help the reader combine an emotion tag, such as angry, mournful or triumphant, with a direct quote and its possible effects on the narrative event and the reader.

One must note that narrator-assigned emotions and the information given in the direct speech of a character might also conflict with each other. This is a widely used technique, the goal of which is to control the dispensation of information in a narrative. The direct quote might reflect one emotion and the narrator's comment another. It is left to the reader to decide which

emotional statement is either more reliable or personally suitable. This conflict can also be constructed by subtler means. In the following example, the content and the exclamation point signal anxiety, yet the narrator describes Alice as melancholy in the reporting phrase: "'Well, I've tried to say 'How doth the little busy bee,' but it all came different!' Alice replied in a very melancholy voice" (56–57). This highlights the relationship between the narrator and the character: the narrator reads the mind of the character, and this mind-reading is just as unreliable or reliable as any mind-reading. One can only extract the narrator's opinion of what happens in Alice's mind. Furthermore, this method draws attention to the fact that emotions rarely occur alone. Most often they are realised as overlapping sensations and feelings.

The levels of mind-reading and the emotion tags' relative ambiguousness are especially well reflected in the following example (61):

> 'Well, I should like to be a *little* larger, sir, if you wouldn't mind,' said Alice:
> 'three inches is such a wretched height to be.'
> 'It is a very good height indeed!' said the Caterpillar angrily, rearing itself upright
> as it spoke (it was exactly three inches high).
> 'But I'm not used to it!' pleaded poor Alice in a piteous tone. And she thought of
> herself, 'I wish the creatures wouldn't be so easily offended!'

In the above case the reader has the possibility to engage in reading the narrator's mind. The narrator reads both the Caterpillar's (angry) and Alice's (piteous) minds. Alice reads the Caterpillar's mind (offended). From the Caterpillar's aggressive reaction one could also conclude that the creature reads Alice's mind. This, however, is more unclear because neither the narrator nor the reader has direct emotion tags referring to the Caterpillar on which to base their mind-reading.

Indeed, the power of direct emotion tags lies in the combination of the tags with different events and actions described in the text. The narrator might attach an emotion tag to a reference to the reason behind this emotion. For example, Alice is described as feeling "very glad to get an opportunity of showing off a little of her knowledge" (72), "quite relieved to see it trot away quietly into the wood" (76) and "a little startled by seeing the Cheshire Cat sitting on a bough of a tree a few yards off" (76). The narrator might connect an emotional expression with an emotion tag, such as in the following instances: the Queen, for example, "turned crimson with fury, and, after glaring at her for a moment like a wild beast, screamed" (96). Finally, the narrator often combines an action with an emotion tag: "The Hatter shook his head mournfully" (86). The Queen is "tossing her head impatiently" (96) and "screaming with passion" (103). The children in the Queen's procession are "jumping merrily along hand in hand" (95). The White Rabbit, when

talking to Alice, is "peeping anxiously into her face" (98) and looking "anxiously over his shoulder" (99). These methods clearly state the reasons behind an emotion, which helps the reader develop a model of a character's mental world. Thus, this process can be used in the practice of the reader's theory of mind.

Reporting phrases with an emotion tag have a special meaning in *Alice* which is often counted as an example of the Victorian nonsense genre. Nonsense refers to uses of language in which respect for the rules and the authority of the parodied grammar is "inextricably mixed with the opposite aspect, for which the genre is justly famous, the liberated, light-fantastic, nonsensical aspect of nonsense, where rules and maxims appear to be joyously subverted" (Lecercle 1994, 3). The present thesis argues that emotional discourse is one way of keeping track of a nonsensical conversation. Following the emotions involved with the participants in a conversation assists in the evaluation of the informational value of speech turns.

As was argued before, reporting phrases help the reader combine an emotion with a statement. The conversation between Alice, the March Hare, the Dormouse and the Mad Hatter during the mad tea-party exemplifies the important role of emotion tags in a nonsensical conversation. Nonsense draws the attention to the emotional side of the story by defying logic and conversational maxims (i.e. the maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner in Grice 1975, 45–47). Emotional storylines can be used to give a sense of coherence in long stretches of dialogue and extended sequences of surprising events. Emotions help the reader keep track of the conversation that seems to consist of detached remarks that have little semantic coherence. Alice acknowledges that the conversation is rather confusing by stating that a speech turn taken by the Hatter "seemed to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English" (84). One part of the conversation seems to be about a broken pocket watch. The March Hare and the Hatter have unsuccessfully tried to mend the clock by inserting butter into its clockwork parts. However, even though the butter is of good quality, the clock is not working the way it is supposed to work, that is, showing which day it is. It seems that the March Hare put the butter in the works with a bread knife, which has caused some breadcrumbs to get inside the clock. The March Hare dips the clock inside a tea cup.

The following excerpt exemplifies the ways in which emotion tags help the reader follow the tone of the conversation even if the overall meaning of the events remained unclear (83–84):

> The Hatter was the first to break the silence. 'What day of the month is it?' he said, turning to Alice: he had taken his watch out of his pocket, and was looking at it uneasily, shaking it every now and then, and holding it to his ear.
> Alice considered a little, and then said 'The fourth.'

'Two days wrong!' sighed the Hatter. 'I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!' he added looking angrily at the March Hare.

'It was the *best* butter,' the March Hare meekly replied.

'Yes, but some crumbs must have got in as well,' the Hatter grumbled: 'you shouldn't have put it in with the bread-knife.'

The March Hare took the watch and looked at it gloomily: then he dipped it into his cup of tea, and looked at it again: but he could think of nothing better to say than his first remark, 'It was the best butter, you know.'

Alice had been looking over his shoulder with some curiosity. 'What a funny watch!' she remarked. 'It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is!'

Emotional discourse has such a strong role in the above dialogue that it can be seen as creating a storyline of its own. This is the case with most nonsensical dialogues in *Alice*. The emotional storyline runs alongside the main storyline and serves as a sort of an interpretative anchor in an otherwise incomprehensible line of events. The emotional storyline of the above excerpt would thus be The Hatter is "uneasy" – The Hatter is disappointed or tired ("sighed") – The Hatter is angry – The March Hare is submissive ("meekly") – The Hatter is still angry ("grumbled") – The March Hare is gloomy – Alice is curious. These emotions provide an added line of events which the reader can utilise in interpreting if not the reasons behind but the reactions caused by this strange communication situation.

Emotion tags are an easy way to point to both the subjective experience and the collective understanding of a phenomenon that is inherently abstract, yet thoroughly embodied. However, as was concluded in chapter 3, emotion tags for the most basic categories of emotion are words and phrases and, in this, the relationship between the tag and its meanings is arbitrary. Furthermore, emotion tags are arbitrary labels to a phenomenon that is quite difficult to comprehend. Literary environments, such as *Alice*, present yet another solution for easing this comprehension by connecting the abstract with the concrete in two different ways. Firstly, emotions can be concretised by connecting them with a physical sensation. In one instance, Alice concretises emotions by paralleling them with spices. The narrator invites the reader to compare the words that are used to describe both spices and emotions. Alice infers that the Duchess' savageness before was due to the pepper in the air. She continues (107):

'[--] Maybe it's always pepper that makes people hot-tempered,' she went on, very much pleased at having found out a new kind of rule, 'and vinegar that makes them sour—and camomile that makes them bitter—and—and barley-sugar and such things that make children sweet-tempered. I only wish people knew *that*: then they wouldn't be so stingy about it, you know –'

Noting that the same words are used to describe spices and emotions might encourage the reader to think about the similarities between different tastes and experiences of emotions. The word "bitter" might be used for both an emotion and a taste, because there are similarities between the physical sensations involved with tasting and experiencing the emotion.

In another instance, emotions are concretised with sounds. In the last chapter, Alice's sister dreams of Alice's adventures. The main method of recounting Alice's story is to connect the different creatures and events with the coinciding sounds and emotions. The adventures are summarised by linking the busy Rabbit and the sound of long grass rustling, "the frightened Mouse" and the sound of splashing, the March Hare and the sound of the rattling tea-cups and by describing "the shrill voice of the Queen ordering off her unfortunate guests to execution" (149), the sneezing of the pig-baby, the crashing of the dishes, "the shriek of the Gryphon, the squeaking of the Lizard's slate-pencil, and the choking of the suppressed guinea-pigs" (149) and, finally, "the distant sobs of the miserable Mock Turtle" (149). These sounds in the dream are mixed in Alice's sister's ears with the sounds of nature around her. This can again be explained with the help of embodiment: an image schema of an emotional experience is vivified by a sound involved with the said memory.

The second way of connecting the abstract with the concrete is assigning emotions to objects that would not normally be connected with emotions. Indeed, emotion is a profoundly human attribute, and it is thus used not only to anthropomorphise animals but also personify abstract entities in *Alice*. In other words, embodiment might ease understanding other abstract concepts through analogies. For example, during the mad tea-party in chapter VII, the participants discuss time as a feeling and experiencing entity: "'If you knew Time as well as I do,' said the Hatter, 'you wouldn't talk about wasting it. It's *him*.'" (85). The Hatter continues to describe time as not willing to stand beating (something that Alice does when she is learning music). Anthropomorphic stories represent "animals with identifiable human feelings" or "as types of human characters" (Murray & Malmkjær 1996, 18). Anthropomorphism and personification arguably assist in conceptualising abstract entities, such as time. By mixing conceptualisation with the polysemic nature of the word "beat" (with the two polysemes being very differently valenced), the text creates a unique textual environment for learning about emotions. Not only does time have human-like attributes but it is also an experiencing entity capable of "interpersonal" and emotional communication. Anthropomorphising may be interpreted as a part of the tendency to engage in egocentric reasoning. It is a way of coping with new information. Anthropomorphising provides the reader with familiar tools to deal with new and abstract concepts. Extracting an emotion and presenting it through an unlikely medium is

thus not only a method to draw attention to the said emotion but also as way of easing the process of learning about emotions.

4.1.2. Narrator empathy

The assumption that that the reader can read the narrator's mind entails that the (implied) narrator, too, can express not only attitudes about emotions but also nuances of the said emotions. These attitudes point at emotional reactions that the textual construction that is the narrator has towards characters and events in literary environments. In *Alice*, this can most clearly be illustrated through events that show the narrator communicating signs of empathy towards a character, especially Alice, to the reader. The narrator might show empathy towards characters with clear expressions such as "the wise little Alice" (17), "poor Alice" (16, 18, 19), and "the poor little thing" (19). The narrator conveys premises for descriptions of emotional states by various other means. These attitudes cannot be traced back to any other entity than the implied narrator.

The narrator might comment on the environment, for example. The emotional state that the narrator conveys in the indirect, descriptive content of the text might align with the emotional state assigned to a character. In the following passage, the narrator empathy discernible in the description of the garden seamlessly merges with Alice's emotions (16):

> [--] she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway; 'and even if my head would go through,' thought poor Alice, 'it would be of very little use without my shoulders'

Alice imagines the lovely garden and revels at the possibility of reaching it. The narrator's expression "poor Alice" emphasises the frustration connected with the realisation that she cannot reach this goal. The reader might align their opinions or disagree with the emotional judgment of the situation by the narrator. The narrator assists in creating moods in the text that point at different emotional states. The moods potentially help the reader connect emotional states to characters who are not explicitly described as experiencing any particular emotion. Narrator empathy is thus one of the main methods that potentially help the reader bridge the gaps in emotional discourse.

The mixing up of the narrator and the characters' emotions is a widely used technique in *Alice*. Chapter XI begins with a description of the placement of the jury members in the court. In the middle of this, rather neutral description with few emotionally valenced words, the attention

suddenly shifts to Alice. Alice is quite indifferent about her surroundings apart from the large dish of tarts that makes her hungry. The following expression is the first one in the chapter that has emotional valence: the tarts "looked so good, that it made Alice quite hungry to look at them—'I wish they'd get the trial done,' she thought, 'and hand round the refreshments!'" (129). With Alice suddenly as the centre of attention, the narrator assigns two emotions to her – pride and pleasure – and comments on the whole situation in the middle to add confusion to the shifting viewpoints in the scene (129–130):

> Alice had never been in a court of justice before, but she had read about them in books, and she was quite pleased to find that she knew the name of nearly everything there. 'That's the judge,' she said to herself, 'because of his great wig.'
> The judge, by the way, was the King; and as he wore his crown over the wig, (look at the frontispiece if you want to see how he did it,) he did not look at all comfortable, and it was certainly not becoming.
> 'And that's the jury-box,' thought Alice, 'and those twelve creatures,' (she was obliged to say 'creatures,' you see, because some of them were animals, and some were birds,) 'I suppose they are the jurors.' She said this last word two or three times over to herself, being rather proud of it: for she thought, and rightly too, that very few little girls of her age knew the meaning of it at all. However, 'jury-men' would have done just as well.

The most interesting part in this excerpt is the narrator's comment. This is a model example of the style of narration in *Alice*. The narrator's comment interrupts Alice's thoughts. The attention shifts away from Alice, and since the narrator clearly addresses the reader, one might interpret the judgment about the King's appearance as being the narrator's, not Alice's. In any case, it is not made clear whose opinion it is that the crown-wig combination is not becoming. Much of the narration in *Alice* is based on overlapping storylines that interrupt each other constantly. The use of this method results in a fragmentary reading experience. The readers must actively keep two emotional storylines (Alice's and the narrator's) in their minds while following the actual events (the trial) in the story.

Examples such as the above suggest that contesting emotional storylines coexist in a challenging story like *Alice*. For example, the events might be presented through one character while the narrator might show empathy towards another character. In this way, the reader must keep track of at least three emotional storylines: the narrator's and the two characters' that are involved in the communication situation. In the above example, the narrator continues but the viewpoint is Alice's. Her criticism continues: "'A nice muddle their slates'll be in before the trial's over!' thought Alice" (130). One of the juror's pencils squeaks, and the narrator notes that this is something that "of course, Alice could *not* stand" (130). Alice rudely takes the pencil away

from the juror, and the narrator shows empathy towards the juror. The juror's emotions are not directly spelled out, but narrator empathy might affect the interpretation (131):

> She did it so quickly that the poor little juror (it was Bill, the Lizard) could not make out at all what had become of it; so, after hunting all about for it, he was obliged to write with one finger for the rest of the day; and this was of very little use, as it left no mark on the slate.

Being "poor little juror" and "obliged" to do something strongly points at the empathising attitudes of the narrator. Moreover, they create a sense of the juror's inability to control the surrounding events. This may be interpreted as a situation that causes negative emotions in the character. At the same time, it is directly pointed out that Alice's emotional state changes from critical to frustrated. From the point of view of learning about the mechanisms of emotion, the simultaneous acknowledgement of several emotional storylines is a particularly important practice. The process reflects the mechanisms in which other people's emotions are generally handled in social situations. When concrete references to emotions are expressed, they are most often not isolated but generated in situations that involve several agents who affect each other's mental worlds, their emotional expressions and the realisation of the social situation itself.

4.1.3. Ambiguous emotional states

Certain emotions necessarily present themselves as irregular and unpredictable. Literary texts create unique environments in which it is possible to reflect this ambiguousness. Curiosity is a cognitive state that combines negatively and positively valenced emotions. Therefore, a statement such as "What a curious feeling!' said Alice; 'I must be shutting up like a telescope'" (18) cannot be defined as expressing strict pleasure or displeasure. In chapter IV, Alice ponders over whether the constant unpredictability in Wonderland, such as her ever-changing size, is interesting or anxiety-inducing. In the sequence, Alice's feelings shift from the pleasure of possibly getting nearer to her goals to anxiety caused by unpredictability. Alice feels "unhappy" (43), as described by the narrator, because getting out of the room in which she has grown uncontrollably seems unlikely. She says "'[--] I almost wish I hadn't gone down the rabbit-hole [--]'" but instantly continues by saying that "'yet—and yet—it's rather curious, you know, this sort of life! I do wonder what *can* have happened to me!' [--]" (43).

Alice decides to write a book about her adventures when she grows up but instantly realises that she *has* already grown up. Her tone is described by the narrator as "sorrowful" (44). However, she continues wishing and realises that she will not get older, which she regards as a "comfort" (44). This is once again followed by the realisation that not getting older is "always to

have lessons to learn" (44), which Alice deems as a disadvantage, and continues to scold herself for her bad decisions. Curiosity is not a clearly positive or negative state of mind itself. In the above sequence, however, the feelings initially caused by Alice's curiosity about the possible outcomes of the situation alter between anxiety and pleasure. Alice's fluctuating state of mind potentially encourages the reader to follow her line of thought through her emotions and, thus, ponder over the possible causes of these emotions as well as the nature of curiosity.

Confusion is another ambiguous emotion tag that might create a gap in an emotional storyline of a character. Confusion is an interesting state of mind in the sense that whenever confusion is resolved in *Alice* by a character gaining information, understanding something or supplementing a cognitive schema or a model, valenced expressions pointing at emotions occur. This can be seen in the following example, which describes Alice's puzzlement about the Pigeon mistaking her for a snake (63–64):

> Alice was more and more puzzled, but she thought there was no use in saying anything more till the Pigeon had finished.
> 'As if it wasn't trouble enough hatching the eggs,' said the Pigeon; 'but I must be on the look-out for serpents night and day! Why, I haven't had a wink of sleep these three weeks!'
> 'I'm very sorry you've been annoyed,' said Alice, who was beginning to see its meaning.

As Alice begins to understand the Pigeon's emotional state, she expresses empathy and pity. Ambiguous emotions can be used to illustrate how valence works: not only words but phrases, sentences, events and larger contexts have emotional valence. Being puzzled is a common state of mind for an outsider visiting Wonderland. As was said, puzzlement in itself does not entail particularly positive or negative emotions – it is an ambiguous state of mind. However, in the right context, combined with other emotionally valenced words, phrases, typographical elements and contexts, puzzlement can be combined with more clearly valenced emotions. Alice feels extremely worried for her identity which is seemingly being exchanged for her friend's identity and says "'[--] Besides, s*he's* she, and *I'm* I, and—oh dear, how puzzling it all is!" (24). In another instance, Alice is filled with wonder at the extraordinariness of a story, then extreme confusion: "Alice tried to fancy to herself what such an extraordinary ways of living would be like, but it puzzled her too much, so she went on [--]" (88).

Similarly, surprise is yet another central and complex mental state in *Alice* in the sense that multiple separate emotions can often be distracted from the experience that is called being surprised. Surprise exemplifies the often complicated and overlapping nature of emotional states in general. When Alice grows uncontrollably after eating a cake, she is described by the narrator

as being "so much surprised that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English" (21). This is the only emotion tag in the passage describing Alice's surprise. Yet, other emotions are pointed at by other means. Alice is in a state of wonder: she reacts to her changing size by saying "'Curiouser and curiouser!'" (21). The reporting phrase "cried Alice" (21) is used, which suggests at least some amount of distress.

Ambiguous emotional states of characters are also accentuated in *Alice* with a lack of direct emotion tags signalling specific emotions. For example, emotional states involved with confusion are highlighted with the help of typography. In the following extract, emotions are only referred to with the help of exclamation points (defiance, contradiction), dashes signalling ellipsis and the word "hastily" (insecurity) (83):

> 'I do,' Alice hastily replied; 'at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know.'
> 'Not the same thing a bit!' said the Hatter. 'You might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the same thing as "I eat what I see"!'

In the above extract, one might detect profound confusion in Alice, even though the emotion tag is not directly spelled out. The flexibility of ambiguous emotion tags, and their meanings' dependence on the context applies to all ambiguous emotional states. Their mere existence in a text provides the reader with a possibility to think about how the context affects the different realisations of ambiguous emotions in literary characters.

The Queen's croquet game in chapter VIII is an example that, connected with an occasional comic relief caused by the chaotic visual imagery provoked by the events, contrasts puzzlement and confusion with amusement. Again, there are few emotion tags in the description of the game. The events are clearly presented through Alice, who is "curious" (99, 101) about the events at the croquet ground. Even though Alice finds the game difficult and unfair, she cannot help but be amused by the strange events (99–100):

> [--] generally, just as she had got its neck nicely straightened out, and was going to give the hedgehog a blow with its head, it *would* twist itself round and look up in her face, with such a puzzled expression that she could not help bursting out laughing.

The other participants cannot quite control their emotions (101):

> The players all played at once without waiting for turns, quarrelling all the while, and fighting for the hedgehogs; and in a very short time the Queen was in a furious passion, and went stamping about, and shouting 'Off with his head!' or 'Off with her head!' about once in a minute.

All of the characters involved with the situation express aggressive emotions, yet Alice's reactions and the description of the events also encourage the reader to seek joy in the scene. The two emotions are presented in this scene as overlapping – not as opposite forces.

Besides overt emotional expressions such as the players' haste described above, confusion is often marked by silence in *Alice*. Alice struggles with understanding the rules that guide argumentation in Wonderland. These two statements are combined in the Dormouse's story about three sisters who live at the bottom of a well. The Dormouse's answers to Alice's questions are nonsensical, but to Alice, some of them are acceptable because they can be connected with at least some aspects of Alice's world. The struggle to understand the story and the failure to do so cause not only extremely negative emotions in Alice but also the need to be silent. In Alice's world, one cannot live without food or drink, so Alice demands clarification. The Dormouse says that the sisters live on treacle. Again, in Alice's world, this is not possible without being sick. The Dormouse adds that the sisters are indeed very sick. The Dormouse's story continues in a similar manner, and any information that would clarify Alice's thoughts is constantly denied by either nonsensical answers to her questions or interruptions. The explicitly expressed silence creates a break in the dialogue and in the story and is yet another method of creating a gap in the emotional storyline (90):

> 'Why with an M?' said Alice.
> 'Why not?' said the March Hare.
> Alice was silent

Alice's confusion, silence and lack of explicit emotional reaction are highlighted. From time to time, Alice manages to internalise the curious manner in which the creatures of Wonderland communicate. Even though the positively valenced emotions caused by this success are immediately disregarded by the creatures in Wonderland – usually with interruption, a change of subject or offense – it should be noted that Alice's curiosity is always further encouraged by the acknowledgment that she *is* in fact learning.

4.1.4. Action-orientation and the absence of emotion tags

Action-orientation is a widely used yet underappreciated characteristic of children's literature (Nikolajeva 2010, 153). As Nikolajeva (2014, 81) further states, this lack of recognition is often misplaced. Action-oriented texts might actually reach levels in stimulating cognitive activity and creativity that widely descriptive and detailed texts never do. Action-oriented passages create gaps in the emotional storylines of the text in the sense that they rely on the reader to make out

the emotional state of the agents themselves. Fast-paced events often lack any direct reference to emotions, and the readers might reflect on their existing information about similar events to form their own perception of the emotions involved with the situation. This process thus makes use of the readers' existing schemas about not only emotions but also their eliciting conditions.

There are several instances of action-orientation in *Alice* that illustrate the method's importance especially well. The narrator describes an event that is likely to elicit an emotion, such as in the following example: "'And now which is which?' she said to herself, and nibbled a little of the right-hand bit to try the effect: the next moment she felt a violent blow underneath her chin: it had struck her foot!" (62). Not a single emotion is assigned to Alice, and it is left to the reader to try to read Alice's mind in the situation. Only the possibly negative valence of the emotion involved is hinted at with the use of the word "violent". The emotion is clarified later: "She was a good deal frightened by this very sudden change, but she felt that there was no time to be lost, as she was shrinking rapidly; so she set to work at once to eat some of the other bit" (62).

The narrator also describes events that cause emotional reactions that are not signalled by emotion tags. Alice jumping as a result of an aggressive remark points at her being frightened or surprised: "She said the last word with such sudden violence that Alice quite jumped" (71). The Dormouse shrieking as a result of the Hatter pinching it mid-sleep might be interpreted as fear, anger or aggression: "The Dormouse had closed its eyes by this time, and was going off into a doze; but, on being pinched by the Hatter, it woke up again with a little shriek" (90–91). Events that show characters gaining their goals are positively valenced, whereas events describing characters being denied of their goals are negatively valenced: "'Come, my head's free at last!' said Alice in a tone of delight, which changed into alarm in another moment, when she found that her shoulders were nowhere to be found [--]" (62). Emotions can also override each other, which is reflected in the text (67–68):

> Alice laughed so much at this, that she had to run back into the wood for fear of their hearing her; and when she next peeped out the Fish-Footman was gone, and the other was sitting on the ground near the door, staring stupidly up into the sky.

Fear is not the most urgent emotion in this extract, even though it is the only emotion directly spelled out. How these events are interpreted – as amusing, confusing or maybe surreal – is dependent on the reader's existing schemas of emotional expressions.

Actions that seem random create a special case of gap in *Alice*. Whenever a character acts in a strange manner, attention is immediately drawn to the reasons behind these actions and the

following reactions of other characters. In *Alice*, this is often further accentuated by the surrounding characters' indifferent reactions to the randomness of the event (69):

> 'I shall sit here,' the Footman remarked, 'till tomorrow –'
> At this moment the door of the house opened, and a large plate came skimming out, straight at the Footman's head: it just grazed his nose, and broke to pieces against one of the trees behind him.
> '– or next day, maybe,' the Footman continued in the same tone, exactly as if nothing had happened.

Alice, the narrator and possibly the reader are thus invited to contemplate the reaction and the motivation behind the actions of the agents.

Action is also used to highlight the indifferent manner in which Alice sometimes reacts to the remarkable events in Wonderland. For example, when Alice first encounters the White Rabbit, she is not surprised or scared to see a talking and running rabbit. The narrator first creates a still, dream-like mood by assigning the emotional states "tired" and "sleepy and stupid" to Alice. The narrator describes how Alice weighs over the pleasure of making a daisy-chain and the trouble of actually getting up and picking up the daisies. The description is disrupted by a strange event (12):

> [--] suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes run close by her.
> There was nothing so *very* remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, 'Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!' (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural)

For some reason, Alice does not find the talking rabbit remarkable. Zirker analyses that Alice's lack of surprise only reflects the differing perceptions of the world of adults and children: "[t]hings that, to an adult, may seem very surprising – e.g. a rabbit that runs by and talks – are familiar to a child and therefore unsurprising" (2004, 32). Alice reacts in an unordinary way to a situation that has the potential of eliciting fear or surprise – these emotions are suggested by the quick pace of the narration. It is often stressed that Alice is not surprised or frightened by events that would in most cases elicit the said emotions. What finally evokes Alice's interest is the fact that the Rabbit has a waistcoat and a pocket watch. The narrator ends the situation by saying that Alice, who is "burning with curiosity" (12) because of this, follows the Rabbit into the rabbit-hole. The only emotion with which Alice is thus connected is positive curiosity.

Emotional expressions are explicit actions. Verbal description of an ambiguous emotional expression thus requires further investigation to the emotion behind the expression from the reader's part. To provide a simple example, jumping up and down is often connected with

positively valenced emotions, such as happiness. However, the expression itself is neutral, which makes it possible to combine the reaction with other emotions: Alice is described "jumping up and down in an agony of terror" (72). Indeed, descriptions of emotional expressions vary from quite straightforward cases to mere descriptions of action in *Alice*. The more ambiguous the expression is the more likely it is to create a gap. Furthermore, gaps invite active decoding of the ambiguous expression.

The verb "tremble", for example, is often connected with fear, although trembling is a reaction common with various emotions. The use of the word might guide the interpretation towards a certain direction, such as in the following extract (45):

> Alice knew it was the Rabbit coming to look for her, and she trembled till she shook the house, quite forgetting that she was now about a thousand times as large as the Rabbit, and had no reason to be afraid of it.

Alice's attitude towards the Rabbit has shifted throughout the story, and it is indeed unclear why she trembles until the word "afraid" is mentioned through negation. The following extract functions as another example in which an ambiguous action is used to signal a change of mood from pleasure to anxiety (50):

> It sounded an excellent plan, no doubt, and very neatly and simply arranged; the only difficulty was, that she had not the smallest idea how to set about it; and while she was peering about anxiously among the trees, a little sharp bark just over her head made her look up in a great hurry.

The emotional reaction of looking up is ambiguous: it might be a result of anxiety, fear and/or surprise. This ambiguity is emphasised by the juxtaposition of reactions signalling pleasure and fear. Alice coaxes the puppy, calls it "[p]oor little thing" (50) and "dear little puppy" (52), but at the same time is "terribly frightened", expects "every moment to be trampled under its feet" (52) and makes her "escape" (52). The reader is thus left with different possibilities of interpreting the cause for the action in the extract.

The different interpretative possibilities reflect the fact that mind-reading is always an uncertain process. In this process, misattributions are common. Verbal description of an emotional expression is in most cases even vaguer than an emotional expression in "actual" life. Sometimes the description of an emotional expression is so ambiguous that it requires clarification with an emotion tag. For example, lifting up one's hands might result from a multitude of emotions but, in the following extract, it results from surprise: "The Gryphon lifted up both its paws in surprise" (117). This technique is often used to highlight the ambiguousness

of the mind-reading process. For example, one can "grunt" or "sob" as a result of various emotions. There are different kinds of grunts, and the nuances of the expression cannot unequivocally be conveyed through language. This is exemplified by Alice trying to read the mind of the Duchess' baby, who is "sneezing and howling alternately without a moment's pause" (70). The events that might cause the baby's howling are neutrally listed: there is pepper in the air, the cook throws kettles at the Duchess and the baby, and the Duchess gives the baby "a violent shake at the end of every line" (73) of her lullaby. Yet, it is emphasised that Alice does not know how the baby actually feels and why: "The Duchess took no notice of [the flying dishes] even when they hit her; and the baby was howling so much already, that it was quite impossible to say whether the blows hurt it or not" (72).

There is, however, a difference between grunting and sobbing, and this difference is underlined by the following extract (74–75):

> The baby grunted again, and Alice looked very anxiously into its face to see what was the matter with it. There could be no doubt that it had a *very* turn-up nose, much more like a snout than a real nose; also its eyes were getting extremely small for a baby: altogether Alice did not like the look of the thing at all. 'But perhaps it was only sobbing,' she thought, and looked into its eyes again, to see if there were any tears.
>
> No, there were no tears. 'If you're going to turn into a pig, my dear,' said Alice, seriously, 'I'll have nothing more to do with you. Mind now!' The poor little thing sobbed again (or grunted, it was impossible to say which), and they went on for some while in silence.
>
> Alice was just beginning to think to herself, 'Now, what am I to do with this creature when I get it home?' when it grunted again, so violently, that she looked down into its face in some alarm. This time there could be *no* mistake about it: it was neither more nor less than a pig, and she felt that it would be quite absurd for her to carry it further.

Alice uses tears – an expression of sadness, that is – as a way to recognise what kind of a creature she is dealing with. Babies sob and pigs grunt. The difference between the two expressions as indicators of emotions is essential. The ability to recognise, interpret and categorise culturally shared meanings of emotional expressions is what makes humans different from other animals.

4.1.5. Silence

As was already stated in chapter 4.1.3., silence works not only as a break from the dialogue but also as a break from the possibility to read minds in a text. This opens up new interpretative possibilities and is thus one method of creating gaps in the emotional discourse of the text. In chapter IV, Alice and the animals are in a situation where Alice's access to information about her surroundings is partly obstructed. Alice runs away from the Rabbit in fear and finds herself inside a house. She drinks from a bottle, grows uncontrollably and cannot get out of the house. The

animals unsuccessfully attempt to get inside the house. Alice's attitude towards the situation is made clear: the narrator directly says that she is not afraid, and her actions and words support this interpretation. From the point of view of information and emotions, the more important aspect is how Alice reads the minds of the animals outside. The only clues that help Alice in this process come through her ears, as she cannot see outside. The event is presented through Alice, which means that the text alone does not provide more information for the reader than for Alice. The Rabbit is angry, because it cannot reach its goal of getting inside and, furthermore, it is offended by Alice trying to snatch it with her fingers. The Rabbit's anger is directly stated by the narrator and reflected in the tone of its speech. Alice tries to make sense of the animals' plans by listening to their dialogue. Silence and action alternate.

Silence marks a break during which neither Alice nor the reader has direct access to the animals' emotions. As none of the animals' plans work, the Rabbit suggests burning the house down, to which Alice replies: "'If you do. I'll set Dinah at you!'" (49). This is once again followed by "dead silence" (49) marking a break that invites the reader to interpret the animals' emotions and their consecutive plans. Because of the silence, it is not clear whether they act out of fear, anger, or both. Alice shares this insecurity by thinking about the animals' next move, which turns out to be – quite randomly – throwing a barrowful of pebbles at Alice. This makes Alice frustrated – "'You'd better not do that again!'" (49). This expression of anger produces another dead silence, once again evoking the question about the animals' reactions. The denial of access to information is used inside the narrative to establish power relations between characters in a communication situation. It is difficult to interpret the participants' goals without the ability to read minds and evaluate emotions. In a way, this also applies to the relationship between the implied narrator and the implied reader: the uneven distribution of information often sets one – usually the narrator – above another. This view portrays the literary communication situation as a Bayesian game of incomplete information in which the emotions are the cards, the textual environment the table and the participants players.

Demanding silence is not the only method used to set and maintain power relations in a communication situation. Choosing to be silent in a situation in which the other participant expects information to be dispensed is another tool for asserting one's position above the other. This involves the active cover-up of one's emotional expressions – disguising one's mind so that other participants experience difficulties in reading it. The conversation between the Caterpillar and Alice is based on recurring silences that the Caterpillar first controls. The sequence begins with one such silence, as if the two participants were evaluating each other's roles in the situation. The Caterpillar starts, yet immediately signals its indifferent attitude towards Alice. The

Caterpillar sets itself above Alice right from the beginning of the extract by signalling that it has information that Alice needs on the one hand and choosing to be silent on the other. Alice actively tries to be polite. The narrator directly spells this out in a reporting phrase: "Alice replied very politely" (55). Moreover, Alice addresses the Caterpillar as "sir". The emotions the Caterpillar expresses are related to either indifference or aggression. These emotions are mainly conveyed by the narrator in reporting phrases such as "in a languid, sleepy voice" (54), "said the Caterpillar sternly" (55), "contemptuously" (55), "decidedly" (60) and, finally, "angrily" (61). The narrator reads the Caterpillar's mind from its short remarks only. As the Caterpillar's emotional expressions shift towards aggression, Alice begins to gain control of the situation.

From one participant's perspective, the inability to read another character's mind firstly makes one insecure in a communication situation and thus feel the need to be polite. Secondly, the inability to read a mind might result in defiance of the apparent power structure of the situation. Alice's emotional state is made clear by the narrator. As the conversation proceeds, Alice moves from shyness and anxiety to frustration which she more or less successfully conceals from the Caterpillar. The Caterpillar's short remarks, its "*very* unpleasant state of mind" (56) and the fact that Alice does not know the relevance of the information the Caterpillar conceals make Alice frustrated. Attention is drawn to the shortness of the Caterpillar's remarks which are not only spelled out but also addressed to by Alice: "Alice felt a little irritated at the Caterpillar's making such very short remarks, and she drew herself up and said, very gravely, 'I think, you ought to tell me who *you* are, first.'" (55–56). Alice's irritation and the resulting need to stand up for herself are caused by not only the impoliteness of the Caterpillar but also Alice's inability to read its mind. The situation affects her so that she demands more information. After her anger is revealed, Alice gains control of the silent moments. It is clear now that silence restrains the Caterpillar's ability to read Alice's mind, which shifts control of the situation to Alice. The narrator signals this by moving from passive ("there was silence", 60) to active sentences, with Alice as the agent, as follows: "Alice said nothing" (60) and "This time Alice waited patiently until it chose to speak again" (61). Finally, the Caterpillar reveals that eating the mushroom makes Alice both shorter and taller. In the end, Alice is in control in the sense that she succeeds in using silence to get what she wants.

4.1.6. Failures in mind-reading

Mind-reading is an essential part of every communication situation, and success in mind-reading means being aware of the information environment that elicits emotions in other participants. Failures in mind-reading draw the attention to the expressions of emotions that are left unsolved.

Mind-reading is thus a process that is firmly rooted in the knowledge that a participant, firstly, has about the other participant and, secondly, can extract from the communication situation itself. Fear results from a perceived mistake – either from information being misinterpreted or completely disregarded by another participant in a communication situation. In Chapters IV and V, two events which exemplify communication situations that heavily use misinterpretation and the resulting emotions are described. The situations differ in the sense that in the first one the emotions are directly spelled out, whereas in the succeeding event the direct affective words are almost completely absent. The first event occurs when the Rabbit calls Alice by the name Mary Ann "in an angry tone" (41). Alice interprets the Rabbit's aggression as a signal that Mary Ann is inferior – a housemaid – to the Rabbit. Alice is described as being "so much frightened that she ran off at once in the direction it pointed to, without trying to explain the mistake it had made" (41). Thus, a misinterpretation by the Rabbit causes Alice to run away and continue looking for its gloves and fan. Alice no longer acts out of being good-natured but out of fear. The second event occurs when the Pigeon mistakes Alice for a snake: "'Serpent!' screamed the Pigeon. 'I'm *not* a serpent!' said Alice indignantly. 'Let me alone!'" (63). Mistakes and obstruction of information produce negatively valenced emotions, such as frustration. Not only is the Pigeon's claim ridiculous, but the fact that these events are consecutive potentially helps the reader bridge the gaps in the emotional storyline of the second event. After understanding the situation in the first scene, the reader might use this experience to understand and interpret the more ambiguous situation in the latter scene.

Alice's conversation with the Mouse in the pool of tears exemplifies another communication situation in which one participant constantly fails to recognise the premise which elicits negative emotions in the other participant. Furthermore, Alice continuously fails to recognise the Mouse's emotional state. Alice tries to converse about things she finds nice without noticing that this information is quite unpleasant to the Mouse. She tells about her cat Dinah, to which the Mouse reacts by giving "a sudden leap out of the water" (28). The narrator confirms the suggested emotion with an action combined with a tag: the Mouse "seemed to quiver all over with fright" (28). Alice acknowledges that this piece of information has hurt the Mouse's feelings and apologises. The Mouse answers "in a shrill, passionate voice" (29), which points at anger or contempt. Alice interprets the Mouse as being angry and reads its mind: "'Well, perhaps not,' said Alice in a soothing tone: 'don't be angry about it…'" (29). She, however, continues to talk about either Dinah or the neighbour's terrier and their abilities to catch mice. The Mouse's state of mind combines extradiegetic fear with anger. It is difficult for Alice to read the Mouse's mind because the emotional expressions for fear and anger are similar. The Mouse's reactions include

leaping out of the water suddenly, quivering and "bristling all over" (29), "trembling down to the end of his tail" and "swimming away from [Alice] as hard as it could go, and making quite a commotion in the pool as it went" (30). Alice constantly interprets the Mouse as being "offended" (30). Alice only reads the Mouse's mind from its explicit emotional expressions, which, and this mind-reading always comes too late.

Since the reader often has narrator-mediated access to Alice's mind, the reasons for her politeness are relatively clear. Other characters that exhibit overt politeness, however, are often difficult to read, which might stimulate discussion about the real emotions behind the characters' actions. From the point of view of emotions, politeness results from the need to control one's emotional expressions in a communication situation. Being polite always signals the acknowledgement of another person's goals, whether they are accepted or not. Being timid, for example, is always connected with the insecurity about one's position in a communication situation. Alice acts timidly because "she was not quite sure whether it was good manners for her to speak first" (70) or "she did not at all know whether it would like the name" (76). On the one hand, one might feel the need to be polite because of a genuine interest towards the other participant's feelings. This kind of politeness can be expressed through conflicting a character's direct words and the narrator's comment on the character's thoughts: "'Thank you, it's a very interesting dance to watch,' said Alice, feeling very glad that it was over at last: 'and I do so like that curious song about the whiting!'" (122).

On the other hand, one might recognise that the participant is, at least according to some standards, in an authoritative position in relation to other participants. The latter case is exemplified in *Alice* by the careful description of the emotions involved in the process of rebelling against authority figures. Authority figures are systematically ridiculed through descriptions of misunderstanding between the characters in *Alice*. For example, misunderstanding and the resulting offense alternate in the third chapter, which describes the absurd Caucus-race and the Mouse's long and "sad" (37) tale. In literature, concealing emotions can easily be represented by the omniscient narrator who can reveal how a character actually feels as opposed to their actions or emotional expressions.

Politeness that reflects the power relations in a communication situation prevents participants from revealing their true emotions. Politeness is signalled by direct remarks by the narrator: "Alice replied very politely" (55). As can be seen from the examples above, these expressions are often combined with short descriptions of action and the resulting emotions, and they leave little room for extensive interpretative work. The narrator also signals politeness by describing an unlikely emotional reaction to an event. These emotional reactions are always

described as less intuitive, and they involve at least some degree of emotional restraining. Politeness is also hinted at through descriptions of personal traits and the resulting actions. This setting usually requires active interpretation. For example, the narrator first directly assigns an emotion to the White Rabbit which is later confirmed by the tone of the Rabbit's speech (41):

> It was the White Rabbit, trotting slowly back again, and looking anxiously about as it went, as if it had lost something; and she heard it muttering to itself 'The Duchess! The Duchess! Oh my dear paws! Oh my fur and whiskers! She'll get me executed, as sure as ferrets are ferrets! Where *can* I have dropped them, I wonder?'

The signalled anxiety is followed by Alice experiencing the need to help the Rabbit by finding its gloves and fan. The narrator states that Alice is good-natured, and this is the reason why she politely attempts to help the Rabbit.

Covering up one's emotions as a means to promote hierarchical structures through politeness is heavily questioned with the help of sarcasm in *Alice*. This is, for example, reflected in the emotionlessness of the Duchess' footmen. The Frog-footman is described as "staring stupidly up into the sky" (68), which Alice thinks of as "uncivil" (69). Yet, she notes that as a frog it might not be able to help it, as "'his eyes are so *very* nearly at the top of his head [--]'" (69). The footmen speak in short sentences from which it is impossible to extract any expression of emotion. This might be interpreted as reflecting both their position in the strange hierarchy of Wonderland and their inability to escape these hierarchical structures. Their passive attitude is highlighted in their communication: they constantly disregard other participants' statements, which is noted by the narrator in reporting phrases, such as "the Footman went on without attending to her" (69). This reminds Alice of her previous discussion with the Caterpillar and the Pigeon, and she gets frustrated: "'It's really dreadful,' she muttered to herself, 'the way all the creatures argue. It's enough to drive one crazy!'" (70). Alice is not able to get any helpful information from the discussion, which renders the situation redundant. The footmen's minds are unreadable.

From the point of view of mind-reading, one of the most interesting characters in *Alice* is the Cheshire Cat. The Cheshire Cat's emotional state is never revealed – or even hinted at – by the narrator. Alice tries to read its mind, but it is never made clear whether these attempts are even near the truth. The only clue to the Cat's cognitive state is its grin, which is a blatantly ambiguous emotional expression itself. The narrator explains in indirect speech how Alice feels about the Cat: "It looked good-natured, she thought: still it had very long claws and a great many teeth, so she felt that it ought to be treated with respect" (76). Besides the ambiguity of the Cheshire Cat's grin, non-readability is also constructed in the text with the help of hints about the

presence of the Cat in a scene without any actual references to it. A scene elaborating on this non-readability follows the croquet game. The Queen has just passed a death sentence to the Cat, and the King eagerly goes away to find the executioners, because he seems to be scared of the Cat. The King does not approve of the Cheshire Cat and especially the way in which it looks at the King. In fact, as he meets the Cat for the first time, the King hides behind Alice's back (103). All the while, the Cat is clearly present in the scene but its thoughts, reactions or actions are not described.

The only way to access the Cat's mind is to look how Alice acts. As Alice gets back from the game, she finds herself in the following situation (105):

> When she got back to the Cheshire Cat, she was surprised to find quite a large crowd collected round it: there was a dispute going on between the executioner, the King, and the Queen, who were all talking at once, while all the rest were quite silent, and looked very uncomfortable.

Again, the Cat is not saying anything nor reacting in any way even though it is clearly present in the situation. Alice is asked to judge between three arguments, the purpose of which is to decide how the Cat is going to be executed. Alice mentions that, as the Cat belongs to the Duchess, she should also be asked about the situation. As soon as the executioner leaves to get the Duchess from the prison, the Cheshire Cat disappears, "so the King and the executioner ran wildly up and down looking for it, while the rest of the party went back to the game" (106). One might decide that the argument should at least evoke fear or panic in the Cat, whose life is supposedly in danger. However, the Cat's previous behaviour suggests that this might not be the case. The Cheshire Cat is the topic of the whole argument, but its mind cannot be read, as references to it are non-existent. Again, the reader is left with endless options for the emotional outcome for the Cat. The non-readability of the Cheshire Cat's mind is thus not due to its emotionlessness. Rather, its mind is left almost completely undescribed, which creates a gap that potentially stimulates the reader to ponder over the character's mentality.

4.2. Learning about the social aspects of emotion in *Alice*

As was mentioned in chapter 2, literature is a widely undervalued source for information about the human cognition. The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on this claim and discuss the different kinds of underlying social meanings of emotions in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. This chapter moves from imagination, intuition and learning to children's literature, education and childhood as institutions that are widely controlled by adults. Vivid imagination, wishing and hoping are important coping methods, yet resorting to one's imagination is something that is

shunned in the adult world. Learning is described as a process of relating new information to existing schemas. Learning as a process might itself produce positive emotions. However, logic is not a sufficient tool in Wonderland. Intuition works better in most cases. This can be interpreted as subtle criticism of the education system and the adult's position as a supreme supervisor of the methods according to which children are supposed to develop. These power hierarchies are further reflected in the value judgments placed on the successful and unsuccessful regulation of emotions in Wonderland. The norms that reign in the adults' world do not apply in Wonderland. In a sense, this reflects the impossibility of the institutionalised views on children's literature in general. If the child experience is forever lost for adults, how can the existence of this institutionalised genre be ever defended against more liberal views on children's literature? This unnecessary control has been critically revised before but not from the point of view of emotions, cognitive criticism and reading.

4.2.1. The value of imagination

The inability to control one's surroundings often creates anxiety in *Alice*. Alice deals with the fast-paced events and the resulting overflow of perceptual information by resorting to her imagination. This is a common coping method (see Taylor, Pham, Rivkin & Armor 1998). In a similar manner, the inability to control one's body is a source of anxiety in *Alice*. Loss of control over one's body is always connected with negatively valenced emotions. In *Alice*, loss of control entails the impossibility of reaching one's goals. For example, Alice hopes that by drinking from the little bottle beside the looking-glass she will grow – she describes her frustration in a direct quote and says that she is "'[--] quite tired of being such a tiny little thing!'" (42). She does indeed grow, but not in the way she expects (43):

> [--] before she had drunk half the bottle, she found her head pressing against the ceiling, and had to stoop to save her neck from being broken. She hastily put down the bottle, saying to herself 'That's quite enough—I hope I shan't grow any more—As it is, I can't get out at the door—I do wish I hadn't drunk quite so much!'

Her anxiety turns into pleasure as the growing stops – this is signalled by the turn of the event itself and the word "[l]uckily" (43) – and finally into discontent with the "uncomfortable" (43) situation. The narrator ends the sequence by saying that Alice "felt unhappy" (43). Discontent can be marked with direct emotion tags, typography and repetition: "She ate a little bit, and said anxiously to herself, 'Which way? Which way?'" (19). Alice pities herself at the prospect of losing control of her own body, and says "Oh my poor little feet. I wonder who will put on your shoes and stockings for you now, dears? I'm sure *I* shan't be able! I shall be a great deal too far off to trouble myself about you" (21–22).

The above extract is filled with hints about different emotions which, combined with the fast-paced description of Alice growing uncontrollably, result in a chaotic mood. Alice deals with the confusion by resorting to her imagination: she imagines her feet as personified entities to which one can send gifts via mail. Alice is worried about her feet having a will of their own, and she decides to be nice to them because she is afraid "they won't walk the way I want to go!" (22). She imagines the directions to her feet but soon scolds herself: "Oh dear, what nonsense I'm talking!" (22). Again, Alice cannot adjust to the expectations of the adult world above. Alice's intuitive reaction to confusion, which is quite a normal coping strategy, is considered improper in the adult world above, and Alice's existing schema about this situation affects her state of mind. This can be concluded from the strict judgment of vivid imagination as nonsense. However, one can clearly see that this nonsense provides Alice a much-needed break from the emotional confusion caused by the loss of control of her body and surroundings.

Nonsense is a linguistic method that works as a break – arguably for both Alice and the reader – from the emotional confusion caused by the surprising events in Wonderland. Nonsense is another euphemism for vivid imagination not accepted by the adult world outside Wonderland. Moreover, among different thought processes, a special weight is placed on wishing, expecting and hoping in *Alice*. The text plays with the idea of what is possible and impossible in Wonderland by describing these processes. Information about the rules in the world outside Wonderland is often juxtaposed with the events in Wonderland. Often, Alice begins to "wish" (43), "hope" (42) or "fancy" (42) whenever the confusion caused by the utter lack of information about what is possible in Wonderland gets too intense. These extracts describing Alice's imagination are usually coupled with one or several of the following affective words: "queer" (42) "curious" (43), "strange" (65). The use of these words emphasises confusion (42):

> 'How queer it seems,' Alice said to herself, 'to be going messages for a rabbit! I suppose Dinah'll be sending me on messages next!' And she began fancying the sort of thing that would happen: '"Miss Alice! Come here directly, and get ready for your walk!" "Coming in a minute, nurse! But I've got to see that the mouse doesn't get out." Only I don't think,' Alice went on, 'that they'd let Dinah stop in the house if it began ordering people about like that!'.

The extracts often end in the confusion being resolved and replaced by pleasure. In the above instance, the sensation of positively valenced emotions is attained through the description of reached goals: "By this time she had found her way into a tidy little room with a table in the window, and on it (as she had hoped) a fan and two or three pairs of tiny white kid gloves" (42). Using one's imagination might help resolve difficult problems that involve distress or other

negatively valenced emotions. These kinds of extracts also provide the reader with a chance to have a break from the intensity of the narrative.

Wishing that something happened often follows a negative emotional state in *Alice*. Negative emotional states are often issued by a situation in which reaching one's goals is somehow inhibited. For example, in the paragraph that describes Alice trying to figure out how to get through a small passage into a garden, the narrator first evokes a negative mood by calling Alice as "poor Alice" (16). This is followed by a direct quote, in which Alice wishes that she was able to "shut up like a telescope" (16). She half-believes that she can do this because of all the strange events that have happened in Wonderland so far. Alice's wishes become reality as she decides to drink from the bottle: she shuts up like a telescope. This has at least two purposes in the story. Firstly, it denounces the credibility of the adult world and not only places the child's logic above it but also renders it inaccessible to adults. Secondly, this creates a sense of unpredictability that is continuously present in Wonderland. Alice tries to control her completely uncontrollable surroundings. In this instance, she succeeds in predicting what happens – maybe by chance, maybe by being cleverer or more adjustable to Wonderland's rules than what other people in a similar situation would be. Lack of sufficient information about the rules of Wonderland results in unpredictability, and wishing and hoping are ways to cope with it. Alice uses her existing knowledge about the rules of Wonderland, and decides to eat the cake with the words "eat me" marked on it. This event is an echo of another event in which Alice drinks from the bottle labelled "Drink me". Alice expects that something curious will result from this because she has already adjusted her mind to the rules of Wonderland. However, she remains the same size, which surprises Alice: "it seemed quite dull and stupid for life to go in the common way" (20). Alice's understanding of Wonderland is once again challenged, and the boundaries between what is possible and impossible are blurred.

4.2.2. Learning and intuition

Learning is connecting. The following two paragraphs contain few emotion tags. This, however, does not make the excerpt devoid of expressions pointing at different kinds of emotional states (139):

> 'Here!' cried Alice, quite forgetting in the flurry of the moment how large she had grown in the last few minutes, and she jumped up in such a hurry that she tipped over the jury-box with the edge of her skirt, upsetting all the jurymen on to the heads of the crowd below, and there they lay sprawling about, reminding her very much of a globe of goldfish she had accidentally upset the week before.

> 'Oh, I *beg* your pardon!' she exclaimed in a tone of great dismay, and began picking them up again as quickly as she could, for the accident of the goldfish kept running in her head, and she had a vague sort of idea that they must be collected at once and put back into the jury-box, or they would die.

The most important notion about this extract is the reference to memory, its emotional consequences and, further, the effects of these consequences on decision-making. Alice has clearly not been in a situation where the uncontrollable growth of her body results in one person falling from a jurybox on to the head of another person. However, she is able to connect the situation with a previous experience about a goldfish, which makes it possible for her to react accordingly. As it turns out, the trial cannot proceed until all the jurymen are back in their positions. From the point of view of experience and learning, this situation is just as unbelievable as any other new situation Alice might encounter in the world outside Wonderland. The same mechanisms of learning work in both situations: being read this way, Wonderland does not seem that strange after all.

Learning like this is presented as a profoundly pleasurable cognitive process. The process of gathering information about one's environment, making decisions based on and acting according to this information and, lastly, noticing the expected results of the actions is described as a positively valenced mental process. This pleasure can be traced back to the notion of reaching one's goals. There are passages in *Alice* that begin with a fast-paced description of events and end with a single emotion tag which can often be interpreted as an emotion elicited by the events described. For example, as Alice reaches the bottom of the rabbit-hole, she jumps right up and runs after the White Rabbit. Alice loses sight of the Rabbit. She arrives at a hall but cannot find a door through which she could fit. Even though the reasons for Alice's eagerness are left somewhat vague at this point, the goal itself is clear – she wants to catch the Rabbit. As soon as she realises – and this realisation is directly mentioned – that she cannot reach this goal, nor get back up, the narrator assigns her with a negative emotional state: "she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again" (15). However, Alice immediately begins to gather more information about her surroundings. She sees a glass table with a key on it, and deduces from what she sees that the small key cannot open the large doors. This piece of information highlights the impossibility of Alice reaching her goal. The surprise and the distress are underlined by narrator empathy: "[--] but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small, but at any rate it would not open them" (15). Alice is persistent and continues to explore her surroundings. She finds a curtain and a small door to which the key fits. As soon as Alice is one step closer to her goal, the narrator assigns her with a positive emotion: "to her great delight it fitted!" (15).

Despite the fact that learning and knowing bring about pleasure, logic is a powerful tool in Wonderland only to a certain degree. Alice gets interrupted every time she succeeds in using deduction to accommodate to the rules of Wonderland. As Alice starts to get hold of the rules of Wonderland, she is interrupted by the Gryphon who changes the subject (118):

> This was quite a new idea to Alice, and she thought it over a little before she made her next remark. 'Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?'
> 'Of course it was,' said the Mock Turtle.
> 'And how did you manage on the twelfth?' Alice went on eagerly.
> 'That's enough about lessons,' the Gryphon interrupted in a very decided tone: 'tell her something about the games now.'

This could be interpreted as a subtle criticism of conventional methods of learning that are supposedly promoted and valued by adults outside Wonderland. Learning through lessons and memorising – a method commonly used in educational institutions – does not work in Wonderland. Failing to memorise lessons results in extreme experiences of shame in Alice. She is nervous about reciting a poem and performing before the creatures and sits down "with her face in her hands, wondering if anything would *ever* happen in a natural way again" (125–126), as she fails to recite "'Tis the voice of the sluggard". She mixes the words up between "the Lobster Quadrille" and the poem. This results in a song that the creatures call "by far the most confusing thing" (127). The shame overrides the potential feelings of offense that could be caused by the creatures' rudeness towards Alice, and Alice is "only too glad" (127) to stop. Alice expresses herself so eagerly that the Gryphon gets offended (127). The creatures' offense is clearly indicated: the Gryphon speaks "rather impatiently" (127) and "in an impatient tone" (124) and the Mock Turtle speaks "in an offended tone" (124), when they are answering Alice's questions that are presented "in a wondering tone" (123), "in a tone of great curiosity" (123) and "in a tone of great surprise" (124). Indeed, intuition is valued over reason and logic in Wonderland. As was mentioned, losing control of one's body results in a profound emotional confusion, which can cause an identity crisis. The only way to regain control is to get information through intuitive learning about one's surroundings. In fact, learning through logic and memorisation is impossible in Wonderland because Wonderland does not work according to the rules of the adult world above.

4.2.3. Power hierarchies and the (un)successful regulation of emotions

Successful regulation of emotions is regarded as mature outside Wonderland. There are several instances in which Alice fails to regulate her sadness as would be expected by society outside

Wonderland. This is yet another goal set by the socialising forces of the adult culture into which children are expected to grow. In a way, Alice reads the collective mind of the adult society when she scolds herself for crying over her size and the resulting inability to reach her goal. She draws information from her previous experiences of how a "respectable person" (19) is supposed to act and becomes frustrated as she fails to fill this role. Alice reflects her reaction to the collective attitudes of the adult world – to the attitudes she assigns to other people. From this, one can deduce that some kind of a social emotion is involved in the situation besides the sadness and frustration clearly described by the narrator. The emotion is not spelled out, but the juxtaposed act of cheating and the following prospect of punishment point at guilt. The idea of guilt as the social emotion behind Alice's reaction is confirmed in the following notion by the narrator: "once [Alice] remembered trying to box her own ears for having cheated herself in a game of croquet she was playing against herself, for this curious child was very fond of pretending to be two people" (19).

It is indeed later made clear that suppressing anxiety does not benefit Alice. Instead, her crying continues despite the fervent attempt to criticise the emotion out of her system (22–23):

> 'You ought to be ashamed of yourself,' said Alice, 'a great girl like you,' (she might well say this), 'to go on crying this way! Stop this moment, I tell you!' But she went on all the same, shedding gallons of tears, until there was a large pool all round her, about four inches deep and reaching half down the hall.

The adult norms can be seen in both the narrator's comment and Alice's self-criticism. What finally ends her crying is another surprising event to which she must react. Alice does not adjust to the norms of the adult world. She is conflicted in her open exposure of sadness and anger and in the knowledge that this reaction is considered unacceptable outside Wonderland. She assumes that showing one's emotions is not acceptable in Wonderland, either, and adjusts her behaviour accordingly. It does not, however, take long for Alice to notice that the rules of Wonderland are not the same as the rules of the world above. The world outside Wonderland could be interpreted as a world where adults are clearly in power. In Wonderland, the power relations are more complex and random.

Power relations in Wonderland are connected with the success of emotion regulation. Overtly expressive characters, such as the Duchess and the Queen, are described as having power that Alice's logic contests. Aggression and overt emotional reactions are usually connected with loss of power over oneself and thus over others. On the surface it seems that the Queen is in an authoritative position. Her servants fawn on her, apparently because they are scared of her aggressive reactions. The servants' reactions are directly spelled out. They talk "in a hurried,

nervous manner" (95), speak "in a timid voice" (98), look "anxiously" about (98, 99) and whisper "in a frightened tone" (99). Similarly, the Queen's reactions are overtly emotional and extreme, such as announcing death sentences at the littlest offences (96, 103) and "glaring" at Alice "like a wild beast" (96). The servants fear for their lives, even though it is later revealed that this fear is unnecessary.

The Queen's weakness lies in her complete inability to control her irrational anger. Alice is in a key position in this discussion, as she is juxtaposed with the Queen as the calm mind in control of the situation. For example, the gardeners are in the middle of an argument when Alice arrives in the garden. They only stop to answer Alice's question about their job. The gardeners' aggression towards each other changes into anxiety, as they reveal that they are painting the white rose-tree red because the Queen does not tolerate mistakes. Their explanation is cut short as the Queen's progression arrives at the scene, and the gardeners instantly throw themselves "flat upon their faces" (94–95). Alice thinks about the situation for a while, and decides to stand up because, according to the rules outside Wonderland, one does not bow at processions. As can be expected, this draws the attention to Alice, and the Queen starts to ask questions about her. Alice first attempts at politeness, which, in this occasion, is visibly connected with fear. She thinks about the situation and deduces that there is no reason to be afraid: "'My name is Alice, so please your Majesty,' said Alice very politely; but she added, to herself, 'Why, they're only a pack of cards, after all. I needn't be afraid of them!'" (96). After this, Alice answers the Queen "very loudly and decidedly" (96), which first infuriates and then silences the Queen. Alice is described as being "surprised at her own courage" (96). She continues with confidence. Alice's decidedness is noted by the creatures in Wonderland and she is appealed to by the creatures to give protection from the Queen and to make judgments about arguments. The creatures seem to trust Alice, because she is systematic in her emotional expression and, more importantly, she expresses empathy towards other characters.

4.2.4. Empathy as a communicative anchor

Signalling empathy is a way to connect with people. During the mad tea-party, Alice fervently tries to find common ground with the other participants, who do not seem to follow the communication rules Alice has learned in the world outside Wonderland. She tries to discover the conceptual connections between the two worlds by contradicting the Dormouse's claim that treacle wells exist, for example. The most important connection between the two worlds, however, cannot be found in common concepts or phenomena. The most important connection between the conversational cultures of the two worlds is the participants' ability or inability to

show empathy in conversation. The following dialogue exemplifies how, despite the seemingly unbelievable subject matter of time stopping, the conversation is successful (87):

> 'Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse,' said the Hatter, 'when the Queen jumped up and bawled out, "He's murdering the time! Off with his head!"'
> 'How dreadfully savage!' exclaimed Alice.
> 'And ever since that,' the Hatter went on in a mournful tone, 'he won't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now.'

Up until this point, the conversation has been fragmented and frustrating to Alice, with several interruptions and speech turns that do not seem to be connected in any way. Coherence is achieved through the mutual agreement that the situation described in the story is unfair. This momentary coherence is further highlighted by the following interruption by the March Hare. As was mentioned in chapter 4.2.2., interruption always occurs when Alice begins to get a grip on the rules of Wonderland. As soon as Alice begins to understand how to carry out the conversation, the Hare announces that it is tired and changes the subject. This, again, causes negative emotions in Alice that are described in a reporting phrase by the narrator: "said Alice, rather alarmed at the proposal" (87). Empathy results in a brief moment of understanding between the participants. As soon as Alice moves away from expressing her empathy, she loses the connection and begins to feel frustrated.

Consequently, one might argue that the ability to experience empathy involves getting information not only about the nature of another person's experience of emotions but also the reasons behind these emotions. Alice wants to know what causes sorrow in the Mock Turtle, and she pities the Turtle deeply (114). She asks the Gryphon for the reasons behind the Turtle's sadness and gets an ambiguous answer: "[--] the Gryphon answered, very nearly in the same words as before, 'It's all his fancy, that: he hasn't got no sorrow, you know. Come on!'" (114). The Gryphon, unlike Alice, does not express empathy for the Turtle, which, juxtaposed with Alice's cognitive state, might seem cold and unordinary. Unexplained and random emotional reactions for which one cannot see a clear reason stimulate the need to know more about them. This can be seen both on the character level and the level of narrative. Because humans have the tendency to connect with other people, the reader potentially wants to find out about the reasons behind a character's emotions, just as one character signals their interest in finding out about the reasons behind another character's emotional reactions.

4.2.5. Emotion and memory: the constructed childhood

As was mentioned in chapter 2.2.1., one of the most profound discussions in children's literary criticism involves the constructed nature of both the child character and the child reader. This is a result of adults only having their constructed and reconstructed memories of childhood experience to go by when creating discourse about childhood experience. Because of the heavily institutionalised nature of children's literature, this discourse is much more visible in society than the narratives created by children every day. Adults can never fully know what it is to be child, and the child experience is forever lost in adulthood. This is most aptly exemplified by the novel's ending, in which Alice's sister reconstructs the story Alice has just told her about her adventures in Wonderland. Alice' sister has only heard Alice's retelling of the story, and she bases her judgments on her own interpretation of this retelling. She calls the tale "wonderful" through the narrator, even though almost every basic human emotion has been called forth at some point of the story. Not all of these emotions – shame, fear, aggression, to provide examples – can be called wonderful. Either she embraces the wonderfulness of all the emotions, the negative ones, too, involved with the story, or she looks at Alice's story as a mere fancy of a child. There is more evidence for the latter interpretation. Alice's sister's dream presents the reader with a different kind of Alice compared to the character with whom the reader has become familiar during the course of the story. In the sister's mind, Alice has "tiny hands" and "bright eager eyes" and she does "that queer little toss of her head to keep back the wandering hair that *would* always get into her eyes" (148–149). There is little left of her defiance, rebellious nature, eagerness to learn and tendency to get frustrated in the face of failure.

Alice's sister thinks that, in future, Alice will evoke wonder in other children with her stories. The last sentence, contrasted with the emotional complexity of the story, points at the mythologised childhood to which Alice's sister no longer has access: she pictures Alice and wonders "how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days" (150). This sets the child experience – what the reader has witnessed in the story – against what is possibly falsely thought of childhood – the sister's interpretation. Alice is, generally speaking, a rebel. Even though she knows the rules according to which she should act, she actively abandons them as she moves along in Wonderland. The ability to abandon the rules of the world above and immerse in intuitive learning eventually make her trip to Wonderland a success. Her willingness to learn and the emotions involved with learning constantly override shame caused by failure. She is open-minded about the events in Wonderland no matter how frustrated she becomes. Furthermore, the

story that has just been told is anything but simple especially from the point of view of emotions. The sorrows are never simply sorrows and the joys are never simply joys.

5. Conclusion

The present thesis investigated the potential of fiction for learning about emotion from both personal and social viewpoints. Cognitive criticism and its position in the tradition of literary theory was discussed: several views promoting different stances towards the roles of the author, the text and the reader were covered. It was concluded that a strict concentration on the author's ability to control the interpretations that a text might provoke is especially dangerous in the research of children and adolescents' literature. An author cannot unequivocally instruct or teach through a text, and, similarly, a literary critic cannot predict the different ways in which a reader might learn from a text. This is also the reason behind the claim that dividing readers and writers into categories based on their cognitive capabilities is unnecessary. Reader-oriented theories were also covered, and it was stated that these views are also lacking in some respects. Reading is mainly about engaging with stories and schemas, and responding to a text is only one aspect of the dynamic process that is reading. "Reading", as a process connecting the social and personal aspects of meaning-making, was established as a justifiable object of literary study. Evidence for readings can be found in literary texts and supportive evidence in the discourse around it – from scientific discourse to other literary texts.

Some of the most important concepts surrounding the study of emotion in cognitive science were clarified. Special weight was placed on valence, empathy and emotional competence. The difference between emotional experience and emotional expression was explained in relation to literature with the help of two concepts – immersion and empathy. The embodied nature of metaphors, narratives and language on the one hand and emotions on the other was discussed. Embodiment is a condition which not only helps humans understand their existence but also affects all communication. It was also stated that emotions are strictly tied to the body and the material conditions of humans, which has certain effects on how emotions are conceptualised.

It was claimed that learning about emotion happens through filling in gaps on several levels of comprehension. Emotion schemas are gapped, language is inherently gapped due to its arbitrary nature and narratives are gapped. Literature is comprised of all of these aspects, which makes it a special learning environment. The different ways in which Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* creates these environments were mapped. It was concluded that direct references to emotions and descriptions of ambiguous emotions might create gaps and thus help

the reader concretise the phenomenon. Narrator empathy might draw attention to conflicting emotional storylines, and the absence of direct reference to emotion in action-orientated narratives might stimulate the reader to ponder the possible emotions involved in the situation. Silence draws attention to power relations in a communication situation, and politeness highlights the inconsistencies between expression and emotion. Non-readable minds potentially encourage profound discussion about the emotional states and motives of the non-readable characters.

Alice also offers the possibility to learn about emotion in a given social and cultural context. One can argue that in *Alice*, intuition is valued over logic. Logic does not work in Wonderland, even though it is valued in the adult world outside Wonderland. Imagination works as a coping method, even though wishing, hoping and nonsense are deemed unnecessary in the adult world. Regulation of emotions is closely connected to power relations and empathy works as a communicative anchor in a social situation. Empathy is what makes humans able to cooperate. Emotion is also a part of the different ways in which childhood is constructed in the minds of adults.

Literary theorists have used cognitive criticism in exploring text-picture interaction (i.e. Nikolajeva & Scott 2006). One area that has not yet been discovered, however, is interactive literature and the ways in which interactive environments might affect learning about emotion and reading in general. Using several sensory modes as opposed to one has positive effects on learning (Tindall-Ford, Chandler & Sweller 1997). This is an area that needs further examination as interactive media seems to provide much of the narrative content that both children and adults consume in the future. Another productive area of research would be how reading aloud affects the possibilities of learning about emotion. Voice has a great significance in the expression of emotions (see i.e. Pittam, J. & Schrerer, K. R. 1993). It would be of great importance to study how this kind of reading affects a child's ability to learn about emotions in the framework of, for example, attachment. The child might be more prone to learn new skills if the caregiver has provided emotional support to the child during the first months and years in the form of reading. Reading together may have great potential to be a tool for nurturing this supportive relationship, not only in creating a learning environment with common goals for both the child and the caregiver, which may also assist in forming a reciprocal relationship between the reader and the child, but also learning about emotions in a more creative way. Empirical study about learning from reading is also needed. Researching the brain in every way possible from neuroscience to cognitive approaches to literature, and researching especially the young brain, brings the adult world closer to the vast, experiential world of children. It is a perfectly sound claim that adults will never be able to understand how children experience the world. However, awareness of the

functioning of the developing brain is essential in approaching a deeper understanding of the child experience.

Understanding that the experiential world of children belongs to children only on the one hand, and that we can still accumulate knowledge about this world on the other hand, helps us deconstruct any unnecessary power structures between adults and children. Furthermore, acknowledging that learning is a lifelong process that affects everyone irrespective of their age or cognitive capabilities makes learning something that connects all readers of literature. Literature describes new environments and reflects new experiences. These experiences present themselves differently to every reader in every reading, but the mechanism remain the same. Similarly, the ways in which Alice reacts to the events and creatures of Wonderland reflect any new experience that a person might encounter in the real world. Alice realises her knowledge is not sufficient to process all the events in Wonderland, but she adapts and accumulates her knowledge and emotional competence in facing the events anyway. Thought this way, Wonderland is not weird or frightening at all. It is an environment filled with peculiarities that require active solving – gaps that require filling – by not only Alice but also the reader. Every gap presents a possibility to learn something new.

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