Socratic Seminar Prompt #3 – Alice in Wonderland:

**Introduction:** In his philosophical treatise, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), German-Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein states, “It is impossible to represent in language anything that ‘contradicts logic’ as it is in geometry to represent by its coordinates a figure that contradicts the laws of space, or to give the coordinates of a point that does not exist.”

**Prompt:** To what extent does Lewis Carroll’s 1865 novel *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* illustrate Wittgenstein’s later theories regarding the inexactitude of language, especially in relation to mathematics and the principles of logic?

**Directions and Considerations:** While you may consider Carroll’s use of rhetorical and literary techniques, such as chiasmus, in earlier chapters, please focus your analysis of the text for this prompt primarily on chapters 9-12 for this seminar. Think about things such as the Mock Turtle’s abundant use of puns, his declaration in the *Lobster Quadrille* chapter that, “I mean what I say” (as opposed to “I say what I mean.”), and the King of Heart’s statement to the Queen of Hearts that “[i]then the words don’t fit you” in the chapter, *Alice’s Evidence.*