A STORY OF THE PAST MAKES ITS WAY TO THE PRESENT:

MOBILITY IN *ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*

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by

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand a unique relationship between Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its media adaptations. Along with John Tenniel’s illustrations, *Alice* has been an enduring enchantment for both Western and Eastern readers and has inspired authors and artists to initiate their own creativity journeys. Looking at this classic text through the perspective of reader-response theory, I find *Alice* is laden with “mobility” that prompts people to rework and refashion it in various ways: books, movies, video games, and so on. Mobility is what the story is all about: movement and change. Likewise, mobility serves as a stimulus that incites readers to imagination and action. In the context of reading, this mobility spreads through three different aspects: the author, the reader, and the text. Each aspect needs to play along with the others, so that the story can remain alive and create meanings for more than one generation. In order to explore how the mobility in the original *Alice* has inspired contemporary authors and artists to engage their readers, three types of book adaptations (picturebooks, pop-up books, and an e-book) that were published after the year 1999 have been scrutinized. Through close reading, I have focused on what in *Alice* makes the movements possible and how each version of the book uses the medium traits to transmit the mobility that starts with the original. My reading response is also provided as an example of the engagement that a text invites. The findings suggest that Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* contains “drive” to make different renderings show motions in special ways. The picturebook versions employ the interaction of word and image to convey the inherent mobility whereas the pop-up books rebel against or adapt the traditional
structures of the picturebook to create the movement that brings the story to life.
The e-book app uses the interface of the tablet computer to imitate the 3D effects of
the pop-up book and bring the animation of the text to its full potential. As the
reader can detect and connect the mobility in the original to other media
representations, the sphere of the reading experience can be enhanced and expanded.
Moreover, we can also recognize the boundless activities to which a story narrative
can take us.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

ONE STORY, MULTIPLE TELLINGS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS

My Path to the Wonderland: Reading *Alice* through the Lens of the East

In Spring 2010, as I put on 3-D glasses and got ready to be blown away by the high-end, 3-D effects of Tim Burton’s *Alice in Wonderland* (Disney’s production), I could not stop thinking and comparing it to Lewis Carroll’s book. I remembered that animals speak and act unexpectedly. I recalled “magic food” which would transform Alice into different sizes of human figures. Likewise, there were a lot of ups and downs, ins and outs, appearances and disappearances. The scenes such as going down into the rabbit-hole and at the mad tea-party still existed in my memories, and I whispered to myself as the movie was running, “I saw those lifelike flows of actions in my mind long ago!” My reaction actually prompted me to examine Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (hereafter, *Alice in Wonderland* or *Alice*) more closely to find out what was embedded in the text. However, before diving into this dream story, I feel like reflecting on my first encounter with *Alice* and tracing back its arrival in the Chinese-speaking world, in order to see how gradually it lends itself to different cultural and media contexts.

Back in 1990 when I was in my elementary school years, it was Disney’s animation of *Alice* (produced in 1951) that originally tempted me to take a look at Carroll’s text. Perhaps because I came across Disney’s version prior to Carroll’s and read the story initially with my first language, Mandarin Chinese, I was completely
lost and confused while trying to relate to the story. For instance, I could never understand what those irrelevant conversations were all about. As I found difficulty in identifying any moral in the tale (because stories with morals play a major role in books for children in Taiwan), I quit reading it, unfortunately. In fact, I now realize that it was Carroll’s attempt to design a book for children without a lesson or moral. His frequent use of word play, puns, riddles and nonsense was rare and unusual to Chinese-speaking readers. Moreover, after the second or third-hand translation, the original author’s sophisticated choices of words were inevitably lost. Rickard (1975) comments that translating Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* is “an extreme case, the supreme challenge which can never be fully met” (p. 45). Beside parodies and nonsense verses, with some unique characters like the Cheshire Cat, the March Hare, the Mad Hatter, and the Mock Turtle, Rickard (1975) notes it is also difficult to transport the allusion of those English names to the context of different cultures. The Cheshire Cat, the March Hare, and the Hatter “are in fact the materialization and personification of one of the terms of the simile. The Mock Turtle derives fancifully, by a kind of meta-analysis, from mock-turtle soup, i.e. soup made from a calf’s head” (Rickard, 1975, p. 50). However, in the Chinese version of *Alice*, we can find only the transliteration or word-for-word translation and cannot see their prior existence as well-known English similes. Hence, some linguistic theorists point out that foreign readers must allow some parts of *Alice in Wonderland* to remain in English because there are “metalingual” and “metalinguistic” features that cannot be easily translated (Feng, 2009, p. 243).
Even so, Alice books have still been translated a great many times and widely read across many countries. It is said to be one of the most read books in the Western world, along with the Bible (Cohen, 1996; Stoffel, 1997). In the Eastern world, scholars identify Yuanren Chao (or Yuanren Zhao in the Chinese pinyin system) as the first person to put Alice into Chinese. Chao’s translation was a linguistic experiment for the New Literature Movement (also known as the May Fourth Movement: a revolt against Confucianism and the rigid social structures) as Chinese children’s literature was developing in the early 1990s (Feng, 2009; Hu, 2010). Not only is it an “experiment of practicing yutiwen, new ‘pronouns,’ for example, ta 他 (he), 她 (she), 它 (it),” but also a “new exercise for vernacular form of narrative and poetry” (Hu, 2010, p. 430). Before the New Literature Movement, we had only singular pronouns for any single person or object. Chinese-speaking children read and were educated to write in ancient literary Chinese, which appears extremely concise and compact to modern Chinese speakers, and to some extent uses a different vocabulary. For a text like Alice that is intended to be read and heard by children, Chao realized that only vernacular Chinese could afford “clear words, simple grammar and amiable tone” (Hu, 2010, p. 432). Therefore, he undertook the translation of Alice in 1921, fifty-six years after British Alice’s birth, and he has earned the highest praise for recreating the story in the Chinese context. Feng (2009) says, “Chao teased out more meanings and implications from the original text and excelled himself among other translators by rendering both the linguistically abnormal code and logically nonsensical message to his target language readers” (p. 246). A decently translated work hence becomes significant to generations after
generations of readers while the simplistic literal translation only destroys much of the original’s verbal art. Yet, there is not just the matter of “language” that makes Alice’s story profound and complicated. So, too, is its humor.

Martin Gardner (2000) mentions, “No other books written for children are more in need of explications than the Alice books. Much of their wit is interwoven with Victorian events and customs unfamiliar to American readers today, and even to readers in England. Many jokes in the books could be appreciated only by Oxford residents, and others were private jokes intended solely for Alice” (xxiii). Louise Rosenblatt’s (1994) transactional theory of reading, also known as “reader-response theory,” suggests that the interpretation of text involves expandable insights and aesthetic feedbacks, depending on the readers’ knowledge and experiences. In other words, comprehending any genre of texts not only relies on the authors’ offering of ideas, but also involves the readers’ interpretations of the authors’ meanings. So, if readers like me have problems in following the connotations of Victorian idioms and humors, the reason can be that we lack certain knowledge to construct meanings. Moreover, the so-called nonsense structure of Wonderland could engender negative responses among readers if they are accustomed to a text with some identifiable meanings, to instruct as well as to delight. Both the language and humor of Alice make it difficult to translate because of the readers’ limited knowledge and lack of comparable experiences.

In attempting to make a Victorian children’s text more culturally accessible, according to Hu (2010), two Chinese imitations came out after Chao’s translation: Congwen Shen’s Alice’s Adventures in China (published in 1928) and Bochui
Chen’s *Ms. Alice* (published in 1931). Hu (2010) comments, “It’s quite unusual in modern Chinese literary history for two Chinese writers to pick up the same character from a foreign novel and make her the heroine of their own works” (p. 436). Even though those two early Chinese editions excluded the core of nonsense literature and echoed the mainstream didactic emphasis of books for young readers, they reflected the historical background of that era. For instance, based on Hu’s (2010) study, in Shen’s adaptation of *Alice’s Adventures in China*, he had Alice dream another adventure, where she and the Rabbit traveled to China together. Wherever they went, they found famine, ignorance, and superstition. People also blindly worshiped the West. Instead of undergoing a fantastical journey, Shen’s Alice witnessed the corruption of the nation and the social issues of that time. The freshness and curiosity that Carroll instills in the original *Alice* thus was changed into a satirical narrative, and the taste of nonsense literature was totally removed.

In fact, many members of the modern audience are very likely to assume a completely different story from Carroll’s *Alice*. The renowned contemporary Taiwanese illustrator, Jimmy Liao, created his first picturebook, *Secrets in the Woods*, based on *Alice in Wonderland* in 1998 (Chen, n.d.). Eight years later, Liao made *Thank You, Furry Bunny, for a Wonderful Afternoon* (2006), a sequel to *Secrets in the Woods*. Both books received good reviews and earned him several awards, including “The Best Children’s Books” and “The Best Design in Illustrated Books” (Jimmyspa, 2012). In *Secrets in the Woods*, the girl has fallen asleep while an oversized rabbit comes along and invites her on a journey. They walk into a forest, discover secrets that were hidden by the girl long ago, see the dreams she
used to have, visit a hidden hole with small houses inside, and breezily soar to the sky. The illustrations capture a pleasant, uplifting tone of adventure, and manifest a sense of childhood nostalgia. The sequel, *Thank You, Furry Bunny, for a Wonderful Afternoon*, resonates similar themes, such as the search for self and the value of imagination. Whereas Alice falls into an unrestrained dream, Liao’s heroine visits an idyllic world and keeps looking for what she has lost. Here, we may identify two opposite directions in which some variants of *Alice* will go: either borrowing the characters and setting to create an ideal and dreamy event, or taking the other extreme of reproducing a literally chaotic and nightmarish world.

For Chao, a linguist, mathematician, and philosopher, whose interests and specialties were similar to Carroll’s, he saw the significance for children of the fantasy and word play in *Alice*. He advocated that it is children’s nature to have a world of free thought and argued “it would be the worst policy for adults to suppress the nature with their moralism or impose all the arbitrary restrictions upon children…” (Hu, 2010, p. 437). The belief in a literature that should avoid overt didacticism and appeal primarily to children’s imagination was in line with Carroll’s spirit, but elicited very different responses among Chinese readers who had long taken for granted that any unpractical idea was harmful and should be prohibited. Not surprisingly, in 1931, Carroll’s *Alice* was banned by the governor of Hunan Province of China, for the reason that “animals should not use human language, and it was disastrous to put animals and human beings on the same level” (Book and Periodical Council, 2009). Perhaps the reason sounds absurd today, but we can see
how seriously Alice has been taken in China, where the taste of nonsense literature has been excluded from the mainstream for ages.

As I have attempted to find a particular work that is the closest equivalent to Alice in terms of nonsense literature in either Mainland China or Taiwan, what I have found seems in vain. The “nonsense” kind of narrative is not very prevalent, and there are not many comedic literary forms that can amuse the audience to the degree done by Alice among English readers. However, Aliang (2006), the author of Chinese Annotated Alice, who endeavored to collect and publish the most accurate information about Alice books for Chinese readers, said that he would consider the Chinese traditional comic dialogue (xiangsheng or crosstalk) as sharing the techniques of handling language art as done in Alice (personal communication, February 10, 2011). According to Millen (2011), xiangsheng (crosstalk) is one of the foremost and most popular performing arts in the Chinese culture. Not only is the dialogue rich in puns, allusions, and humors, but it also includes social satires and commentaries (Chinaculture.org, 2003). Crosstalkers can either deliver a quick-fire monologue or have various engaging interactions (i.e. speaking, imitating, teasing, and singing) between themselves and their “dummies” (the roles that create conflicts and jokes). The basis of this performing art lies in ridiculing human experiences and is involved with overarching content, such as astronomy, geography, and politics. It also offers a relief for a Chinese audience that has tasted so much bitterness and cliché from their history.

Recently, xiangsheng “has been written into primary school textbooks that also won the favour of children” and spread throughout Asia (Lai, as cited in
Anonymous, *China Daily*, 2006). On the other hand, the dialogues in *Alice* have similar features and styles. Susina (2010) comments, “Within the narrators telling of the story, Alice and other characters frequently make dramatic presentations or recitations” (p. 32). Sometimes Alice has a monologue; sometimes she and other characters choose serious topics that have hidden humor. That is exactly what a Chinese crosstalker will do: present sobriety in humor and bring laughter to the audience. Alice’s journey is actually life-threatening as she tumbles into the rabbit hole. She is “never once considering how in the world she was to get out again” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 12). Nevertheless, in the midst of her long fall, she wonders about many things, and continually talks to herself and to an imaginary person.

I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny it’ll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downwards! The antipathies, I think—” (she was rather glad there was no one listening, this time, as it didn’t sound at all the right word) “— but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma’am, is this New Zealand? Or Australia” (and she tried to curtsey as she spoke—Fancy, curtseying as you’re falling through the air! Do you think you could manage it?) “And what an ignorant little girl she’ll think me for asking! No, it’ll never do to ask: perhaps I shall see it written up somewhere (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 13-14).

How fearless and reckless an innocent child is! Based on Aliang’s analysis (2010), Alice is performing monologue xiangsheng that is executed by one person who mainly tells jokes. Moreover, other forms of xiangsheng (i.e. dialogue xiangsheng or a multi-player talk show) can also be seen to parallel Alice’s conversations with

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1 The quote is drawn from Martin Gardner’s *The Annotated Alice: The definitive edition* (2000). Carroll’s original was first released in 1865. In order to respect both sources, I will put down the brief citation as such, but list the secondary resource (Gardner’s notes and reprint) in the reference list.
other characters like the Caterpillar, the Cheshire Cat, the Duchess, and the animals at the court (Aliang, 2010).

Beside the comic talk, the connection between Chinese crosstalk and the dialogues in *Alice* is also revealed in the use of the dialects. Usually, xiangsheng is performed in standard Mandarin, but in some cases, it is performed in other dialects for increasing ethnic flavor and reflecting the local culture through humorous storytelling (CulturalChina.org, 2007). Even though the audience might not understand that particular vernacular, they can still be entertained by the performers’ “face and voice,” the literal meaning of xiangsheng. In *Alice*, Carroll also integrated early British idioms and other dialects into the story. As Alice got stuck at the White Rabbit’s house because of her gigantic size, preventing anybody else from entering that house, the White Rabbit lost his patience and called to his gardener, Pat, to find out what was going on.

“Pat! Pat! Where are you?” And then a voice she had never heard before, “Sure then I’m here! Digging for apples, yer honour!”
“Digging for apples, indeed!” said the Rabbit angrily. “Here! Come and help me out of this!” (Sounds of more broken glass.) “Now tell me, Pat, what’s that in the window?”
“Sure, it’s an arm, yer honour!” (He pronounced it “arrum.”)
“An arm, you goose! Who ever saw one that size? Why, it fills the whole window!” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 41).

Here note that, whereas the White Rabbit speaks in standard, formal English, Pat speaks with an accent. In Gardner’s annotation (2000), he points this out, “Pat is an Irish name and he speaks in an Irish brogue” (p. 41).
Pat tells the Rabbit what is stuck in the window is an arm, which he pronounces as an “arrum” in stage Irish\(^2\) (Jones & Gladstone, 1998). In such a context, the things that Pat was digging for were not really apples, but potatoes because “Irish apples was a nineteenth-century slang term for Irish potatoes” (Gardner, 2000, p. 41).

Susina (2010) adds that Carroll made use of “the stock theatrical device of comic servants and occasionally uses dialect” in his writing, for both humor, and as a means to poke fun at the upper-middle class, so that the “smug self-righteousness and air of superiority are less discreet when describing the lower orders” (p. 36). Without this understanding, readers might not be able to perceive the insider’s joke. This example also shows that those conversations were not designed to be random or pointless, but symbolic and animated.

By and large, the traits that Chinese crosstalk and Carroll’s *Alice* have in common are interestingly connected. We find the clashes between solemnity and playfulness, boredom and amusement. Despite the genre and cultural differences, the wit, the wordplay, and the aesthetic effects somehow link the imaginative nonsense children’s literature to the traditional folk art of comic dialogue. This, once again, suggests that to enjoy *Alice*, readers must be capable of interacting with the text by stepping out of it, rather than passively following the storyline.

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\(^2\) Stage Irish was the prevailing English colonial stereotype reflected in Irish characters, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The entry of “stage-Irishman” (2000) in *The Concise Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* states, “As a product of colonialism, the first stage-Irishman reflected a desire to stigmatize the native Irish as savages or anathematize them as traitors, while later versions sought more commonly to provide amusement to English audiences by exaggerating the traits which differentiated the Irish from the English.” However, with the growth of national consciousness, in the twentieth century, people try to avoid such type of denigration of Irish characters.
As Carroll himself admitted, “words mean more than we mean to express when we use them; so a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer means” (as cited in Collingwood, 1899, p. 173). Hence, what Alice implicates is not to be determined by the author’s narrative, but by what the reader can deduce from the entire pattern. Based on the intertextual view of comprehension, Hartman, Morsink and Zheng (2010) emphasize that the reader, text, author, and context are all pluralized. Therefore, while mentioning the nature of “reading” and the element of “text,” we should take the expansion of literacy and all forms of media representations into consideration.

The Prosperity of Alice: Endless Adventures across Multiple Spheres

Carroll’s Alice has been mobilized across numerous platforms: movies, music, toys, computer games, and so on. Those spin-offs constitute verbal, visual, musical, material, and digital interpretations of Alice and suggest the story’s long-lasting power and popularity. A handful of studies show it has an enduring enchantment for both Western and Eastern readers and has inspired thousands of authors and artists to initiate their own journey of fantasy (Rackin, 1991; Sigler, 1997; Brooker, 2004; Hollingsworth, 2009; Susina, 2010). Scholars agree that Alice is not only a classic text in the history of English-speaking children’s literature, but it also has become a significant international children’s text that impacts a wide range of multimodal nature.

As a matter of fact, Carroll himself was a successful literary spin-off creator. Not only did he get involved in the publishing and distribution of his work, but he
also reworked his book to fit other media, such as the picturebook of *The Nursery Alice* and non-book items like “The Wonderland Postage-Stamp Case” (Susina, 2010, p. 67). Moreover, Susina (2010) stressed that Carroll began a whole lot of *Alice* product expansions earlier than Disney and any other companies. Beside the books and merchandise, he sought to have his *Alice* professionally staged after the publication of the book (Lovett, 1990). He consulted with various potential collaborators for nearly twenty years and eventually authorized the proposal of an aspiring playwright, Henry Savile Clarke, to compose the musical play, *Alice in Wonderland* (billed as “A Musical Dream Play, in Two Acts, for Children and others”), based on *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* (Lovett, 1990, p. 47). By revising the text and writing additional nonsense verse for the play, Carroll utilized all means for adapting the original story into a dramatic form. His first authorized stage representation made by Clarke in 1886 “was both a critical and successful success” (Susina, 2010, p. 66). After such a great sensation, “more than 20 film versions of the *Alices* have been produced since 1903 and more than 10 television versions since 1966” (Rackin, 1991, p. 31). And, there are still more to come.

Brooker (2004) compiled a list of cinematic adaptations, including movies with recurring reference to *Alice*, such as “the Wachowski brothers’ *The Matrix* (1999), which repeatedly uses motifs like the white rabbit and the mirror portal…” (p. 199). It seems that we never tire of or get enough from Alice and everything about/around her. Even the darker version of the action-adventure video game, American McGee’s *Alice* (2000), which sets in an imaginary world where Alice becomes insane and needs to keep killing and battling against the enemies for getting
her sanity back, can appeal to crowds of people (Brooker, 2004). Brooker (2004) notes that it is the creativity of the primary source of Wonderland that sustains those different renderings, and there are great possibilities for viewers/players/fans returning and revisiting the Alice books. “The text [Alice in Wonderland],” Susina (2010) remarks, “is no longer independent and, in many ways, becomes dependent of the modes of technical reproduction” (p. 68). Moreover, the text has become what Kinder (1991) would describe as “a supersystem,” which

…cut[s] across several modes of image production; …appeal[s] to diverse generations, classes, and ethnic subcultures, who in turn are targeted with diverse strategies; …foster[s] “collectability” through a proliferation of related products; …and undergo[es] a sudden increase in commodification, the success of which reflexively becomes a “media event” that dramatically accelerates the growth curve of the system’s commercial success (p. 123).

In fact, a text that comes to be a “supersystem” is generated by various factors. It developed out of a story created for the intended audience, and people who reach the text not only are aware of its influence, but also help disseminate it. In many cases, as Margaret Mackey (2002) suggests, there is an “ongoing cycle of parents, grandparents, and small children” engaging with the text, and “the very delights of that cycle have opened vast marketing opportunities” (xi). In addition to the ongoing appeal to generations of readers, Mackey (2002) also believes that “a book can reinvent itself or be reinvented by others in many ways” (x).

Using the example of Beatrix Potter’s picturebook The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Mackey (1998) explores how a story can provide fuel and energy for adaptations and commercial tie-ins. Sybille A. Jagusch, chief of the Children’s Literature Center of
the Library of Congress, mentions that some books are “stuffable,” which means, the
characters “lead themselves to product development, advertising, and the other
money-making enterprises that can make a children’s book known” (as cited in
Mackey, 2002, p. 179). Just as Carroll sees the potential for Alice to develop in the
artistic and commercial frameworks of literature, Potter also shows her
entrepreneurial genius to make her animal characters and artworks well-known
(Lear, 2011). Mackey (1998) notes,

Potter herself, as early as 1903, was exploring the potential
for manufacturing a Peter Rabbit doll. During her lifetime,
artifacts multiplied, from coloring books to wallpaper to
slippers (xvi-xvii).

Beside stuffability, the story’s plots that focus on action, or open-ended
themes that invite numerous interpretations can be possible factors that make a tale
proliferate. Mackey (1998) looks at a large number of Peter Rabbit renderings in
various media, such as the board books, movable books, videos, and CD-Roms.
Each version has played a role in the history of Peter Rabbit and made her more
conscious of the medium she has chosen. She comments that, in her investigation in
her later study,

The activity books, the audio books, and the bath and board
books all take their place in the proliferating world of
versions of this little story. It is a tribute to the power of
the original telling that Potter’s own books still command
pride of place among all these reworkings — though it will
be interesting to see if the video versions ever triumph in
terms of being more widely accessible to children (Mackey,
2002, xii).

As a matter of fact, fidelity to the original, for Mackey, does not matter the
most. Rather, she values “whether a reworking fully exploits the potential of the
new medium” much more (Mackey, 2002, p. 181). As we continue to see different renditions of a certain text, we are encouraged to engage differently with the fictional world. What’s more, it is proven that we can foster “a development of multiple skills and strategies that will serve young readers well as they mature in a world of many media” (Mackey, 2002, p. 183). Nevertheless, I wonder if it is possible that a text can nicely provide multifaceted experiences, motivate the readers to perform a variety of things, and even offer opportunities to transfer understanding developed in one medium when we initiate the processing of a text told in a different medium. Similarly to how Mackey has discovered the radical quality of *Peter Rabbit*, I see *Alice*, the classic that has impressed Beatrix Potter, with considerable features that can shine through not only the history of children’s literature, but also the contemporary world of media culture.

Hudson (1958) describes *Alice* as “the revolution in children’s literature” (p. 20) while Townsend (1996) notes it “can be appreciated at more than one level” (p. 69). Because to speculate about the effect of a text is more a “subjective” than an “objective” exercise, I propose that a fully imaginative story like *Alice* has been filled with “mobility” that helps authors and readers to have a dynamic, personal, and unique experience. I further attempt to develop the idea that the “mobility” of a literary text may affect media content and make the story appealing to all who are fascinated with various types of reading.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term *mobility* (2011) means “the ability to move or to be moved; capacity for movement or change of place.” Although this word hardly refers to literature, I would like to use it to represent the
capacity for the written text to be merged in a synthesis with other forms of art. Likewise, it indicates a textual element that stimulates readers’ imagination to form pictures and lively scenes. So, no matter how ancient a story is, through refashioning and replication, it can remain alive and create meanings for more than one generation. Jenkins (2008) has described the trend that “every important story gets told, every brand gets sold, and every consumer gets courted on multiple media platforms” as reflecting a “convergence culture”—the cultural shift in which media and participants operate (p. 17). In my view, mobility can be a key factor that makes a story spread through world culture and digital culture from the aspect of reader-text relationship since it is a story all about: movement and change.

**Mobility all over in *Alice* and its Inspired Adaptations**

Indeed, movement and change are the salient forces in Carroll’s original story. Demurova (2006) says Carroll seems to “lay down the conditions of the game, the time and the place of dramatic action” (p. 163). Likewise, in the story narrative, “somebody is always hitting, banging, beating, kicking, teasing, threatening, scolding, or killing (but not quite) someone” (Demurova, 2006, p. 163). Much evidence suggests that *Alice in Wonderland* is the malleable material that encourages creativity and activity. In 2003, two notable pop-up book engineers, Robert Sabuda and James R. Diaz, separately, added a third dimension and movement to penetrate the dynamic elements of *Alice* and have readers enjoy the text with visual surprise and tactile delight. Later, in 2010, readers/viewers even could experience the
interactive graphics of the text in an electronic reading device such as iPad\(^3\). This innovative application simulates readers’ engagement in a way that we normally find in a pop-up book, and further suggests the story of *Alice* has potential to move, shake, and even stir. In looking back to the original story, readers have been invited to jump from one world to another, to pass from one way to many other ways. It is a drama or movie composed of actions and speeches.

Furthermore, the absurd plot and the shifting time and place prolong uncertainty and push readers to read actively for knowledge that has been withheld by the author. Such a type of story is also said to be a “writerly text” that has a characteristic of pre-text and requires readers to read above capacity (Hunt, 1991, p. 81). In Umberto Eco’s (1979) words, he might call it an “open text” (p. 9) that leads readers to employ infinite ways to decode the unfamiliar patterns or hidden secrets.

But, in what ways does Lewis Carroll contribute to our understanding of a multiple perspective narrative? And, what gives *Alice* the potential to be reproduced into a multimedia and multidimensional text? What different enjoyments might a reader experience from the story itself and from other media representations? What has been increased, and what might be missing in the multimedia phase of *Alice’s* story? In order to answer those questions, I have sought to explore how the story serves as a springboard for both authors and readers to re-imagine *Wonderland*. Moreover, I expect to discover what Bolter and Gisin (2000) might describe as the ways in

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3 The iPad application of *Alice in Wonderland* came out in 2010. In 2011, the same British digital book publisher, Atomic Antelope released *Alice in New York*, which has been stated as “a special celebration of the 140th anniversary of *Through the Looking Glass*, first published in 1871” (Apple Inc., 2011). See *Alice for the iPad* on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gew68Qj5kxw&feature=player_embedded
which the older *Alice* refashions itself “to answer the challenges of new media” (p.15).

Following an elaboration of the concept of *mobility*, in Chapter 2, I will extrapolate some key components that exhibit the story in a mobile sense. In order to gauge how mobility shapes our conceptual schemata and media literacy, a number of modern adaptations of *Alice*: picturebooks, pop-up books, and an e-book (iPad specifically) will be analyzed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. John Tenniel’s illustrations will also be examined, and compared with those *Alice*-related works since overall qualities such as design and style can convey the mood and meaning of story. In Chapter 6, as the conclusion, I discuss which text/medium can effectively help a reader possess the dynamics and drama of the story and incorporate intertextuality—shared codes among genres. My goal is, by paying close attention to different types of media as story containers in which the story takes shape, I will be able to position the literary text within the new media landscape and recognize the boundless activities to which a story narrative can take us.

The famous children’s book author and illustrator Lane Smith in 2010 published a lighthearted picture book, *It’s a Book*. The story is a humorous manifesto on behalf of print in the digital age. A donkey is puzzled by the flat and rectangular *thing*, with a hard cover and a soft, yielding inside, which the monkey is reading.

“Where’s the mouse? Does it need a password? Can you make the characters fight? Can it text, tweet, too?” the donkey asks.

“No, it’s a book,” the monkey emphasizes.
Those who have faith in “concrete,” classic books might find that this particular picturebook is speaking their mind, and may feel there is no substitute for the experience of a piece of paper passing through their fingertips. However, the fact is that culture changes our reading patterns and impacts the presentation of the text as well. What matters to readers is how we can find the meanings residing in the text. Gracia (1995) proposed that texts are always composed of signs and do not necessarily contain languages and rules. He clarified, “A text is a group of entities, used as signs, which are selected, arranged, and intended by an author in certain context to convey some specific meaning to an audience” (p. 4). This concept makes clear that text has complex composites that are more than language and image. For that matter, whenever referring to “the text of Alice,” we shall see it as a whole (with signs, graphs, placement of print, and so on) and consider the interpretation of the reader as part of its generative process. The content/textual analysis, therefore, will be my major method for carrying out this study.

The method of unraveling significant details in Alice can help us understand what the underlying pattern is and what contributes to the mobility of the story. Secondly, what draws my attention is that a great many adaptations ride on the flood of creativity, either abbreviating or fusing the textual elements to recreate the topsy-turvy Wonderland. Even though a highly respected literary work sometimes might be changed into a travesty, and people are always questioning about fidelity, there are still some good quality adaptations and revisions. For instance, among contemporary picture book selections, Lisbeth Zwerger’s Alice in Wonderland (1999) and Helen Oxenbury’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1999) received
enthusiastic reviews because “they present an interesting picture of Alice entering a new millennium” (Brooker, 2004, p. 111). Therefore, I analyze new interpretations of Wonderland that were published/released after the year 1999 and probe what elements those authors all see as vital to an adaptation. By mapping some iconic features, such as down the rabbit hole, against each other, I may further understand the adaptations’ relationship to the original book and the way in which they construct their individual interpretations of Alice. In any reading/viewing event, one may evoke a diverse response to the text based on his/her past literary experience and choice of association (Rosenblatt, 1994). So, this study serves as my individual engagement in the words, images, states of mind, and even physical states, which are generated by a reading/viewing of Alice.

In short, because the novel itself is chock-full of mobile features, in response to the author’s pattern of words or pictures readers are more likely to carry on a continuing, constructive, and “shaping” activity. Underlying such an assumption, I figure the body of text, sets forth in certain patterns and sequences on the page, bears the potentiality for media integration, or at least for a brief moment of free play and deep laughter.
Chapter 2

DEFINING MOBILITY

“Curiouser and curiouser!” cried Alice…
“Now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was! Good-bye, feet!”
(Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 20)

Author, Reader, Text, and Play

The first giggle I had from reading *Alice* was definitely the moment when she opened up like a telescope, and she wondered how she could put on stockings and shoes herself because of her enormous height. She even would like to send a new pair of boots to her feet by carrier every Christmas for pleasing them; otherwise they would not walk the way she wanted. Then, she composed a short note which was typographically inscribed in the text:

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Alice’s Right Foot, Esq.
Hearthrug,
*near the Fender*,
*(with Alice’s love)*
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(Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 21)

Based on Gardner’s (2000) annotation, Carroll might instill a “subtle English/French joke” since the gender of foot in French is masculine (p. 21). To pretend her foot is a respectable person that she can socialize with manifests an elaborate form of fantasy and facilitates the transition to another imaginary play. Even though Alice promptly realized she was just talking nonsense, such a fragment engages the readers in personifying objects and acting out with imagination. John Morgenstern (2009) proposed in his *Playing with Books* that reading is not only an intellectual
performance, but also a play that liberates one’s thought and imagination.

Furthermore, Morgenstern suggested that *Alice in Wonderland* offered three different styles of play — direct, indirect, and collective, corresponding to the remarkable scenarios and characteristics it contained — “domestic scenes, tea parties, and croquet matches, talking animals and Alice’s adventures” (p. 78). Stories with domestic scenes which have a direct play style invite “the child [to act] out a play role that is different from the roles of his interlocutors” whereas the “animal fantasy is the ‘indirect style’ in which ‘the child enacts the play role through the medium of a toy figure…”’ (Sawyer, 1997, p. 83-84, as cited in Morgenstern, 2000, p. 76-77). On the other hand, child readers may “form a corporate entity to construct a narrative of heroic adventure” in response to an adventurous scene (Morgestern, 2000, p. 77).

If Morgestern is right that the act of reading can lead to the act of play, what reinforces the play-making tendency in *Alice* and what constitutes it as playful reading is something about which I am curious.

Like writing, reading is a creative event. Wolfgang Iser (1980), the prominent reader response critic, says, “The reading process always involves viewing the text through a perspective that is continually on the move” (p. 56). While reading, we activate “our own faculties, enabling us to recreate the world it represents” (Iser, 1980, p. 50). Reading is mobile and transactional under the rubric of reader-response criticism. In addition, it takes both sides—writer and reader—to play with a literary work. As Rosenblatt (1994) explained how readers evoke a “poem” under the guidance of the text and through their own internalization (p. 12),
I would like to suggest that the interaction among the author, the reader, and the text is a “play” (Figure 1).

![Figure 1. The dynamics among the author, the reader, and the text is a play.](image)

Likewise, the great magnetism that attracts more authors, artists, and readers to move along with and adapt the text, and thus, generate more play, I term as “mobility” (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Textual mobility is a key factor that engages people in reacting to a text and emanating in more creative play.](image)

Within the reading event, the textual mobility reinforces our engagements with particular texts. The “animate” part of a text/a medium, such as the vivid
language or the interactive device, draws the readers into the conditions of the text and stimulates the readers’ active participation. As the reader generates receptivity to certain kinds of ideas and experiences offered by the text, he/she can unfold the inherently dynamic traits of the text and set the work in motion (Iser, 1980). It is also the author’s or the artist’s task to leave the reader something to imagine and engage with (Iser, 1980). Lewis Carroll’s brilliant *Alice in Wonderland* offers elaborate testimony to the openness of the text. An evident instance is that he used the theme of dream to endow the story with a variety of elements that challenge the readers’ repertoires: “parody, satire, burlesque, the world turned upside down, informational literature, rational/moral literature, game logic, nursery rhyme, and the like, mixtures of these genres” (Reichertz, 2000, p. 69). All of these draw the readers and authors or artists into action of exploring the potentialities of the text and responding to the text in their unique ways. Hence, a more dynamic intervention in shaping the text brings to more deliberate forms of play (Figure 2). Here, the play includes devouring every single aspect of the book, interpreting the visual clues, sharing ideas with others, reproducing the story, and managing to have all sorts of creative activities. Multiple versions of the text and diverse styles of storytelling are undoubtedly constant.

I use the word “play” for describing the agency and energy of the authors and readers in the context of text processing. Likewise, I echo Mackey’s (2007a) idea that we approach and deal with the text in many different ways across many different media formats. The word “play,” according to Mackey (2007a) can “make room for a variety of activities, with multifaceted and multimedia connotations” (p. 166). In
addition, it can nicely delineate “an active commitment to the engagement” (Mackey, 2007a, p. 172). If play has a valid function in many of the ways we refer to text processing, I believe with assurance that our perception and interaction with a text needs a trigger for both internal and external play. That trigger, from my point of view, is “mobility.”

Play and mobility are two inseparable qualities as we mention about the intensity of engagement with the text. The reader recognizes the mobility that is intended to be the characteristic feature of the text, and then he/she fulfills the author’s purpose to initiate a play with the text. The play can even evoke more plays and become so much more influential if the reader takes an interest in reworking the text and proposing a new version. Mackey (2007a) calls the textual variation “a re-play of a story” and also makes the point that “to succeed, the re-played text has to offer its own play value” (p. 175). The “play value,” in brief, is the charm, the fascination, or the mobility that a text exerts. In addition, it implies more plays waiting to be discovered. For instance, the “play value” of an Alice pop-up book can be its ability to stand up and simulate a world of three dimensions. When one finds the pop-up edition with some room for an interactive digital representation, he/she may be inspired to draw on his/her knowledge, skills, and experiences to achieve another reworking of the text. Thus, a text can remain open to multitude of effects.

Mackey (2007a) comments, “One striking phenomenon of our contemporary cultural ecology is the way that many texts are produced in simultaneous cross-media incarnations” (p. 174). Indeed, it is quite common to see a previously published text with tremendous media adaptations. Moreover, it is worth noting that
some readers (i.e. contemporary authors and artists of Alice) choose various movements and sensations which they find compelling to reform a text and attract more plays in a sophisticated way. Bakhtin (2004) mentions that

\[\ldots\text{the authors creating the text, the performers of the text (if they exist) and finally the listeners or readers who recreate and in so doing renew the text—participate equally in the creation of the represented world in the text (p. 253).}\]

This aspect of seeing the text in an ongoing process of creation and recreation within a reciprocal relationship between the author and the reader enables us to gain a holistic view of reading/interpreting/processing a text. In the meantime, it makes us aware that the mobility manifests itself in various ways. Below, I will use Alice as a primary example to discuss the interplay among the author, the reader, and the text, and then speculate how mobility is derived from each play.

**The Play among Author, Reader, and Text**

When the writer/storyteller throws out his/her idea in the text, the reader can decide whether to accept the invitation to develop relationships, assemble meanings, and collaborate in a way to arouse pleasure. In Figure 1, the author, on the top, seeks to infuse his/her knowledge, memories, experiences, or imagination into a certain genre or medium. He/she decides what the text should contain: languages, signs, images, or movements. When the author initiates the construction of a text, he/she activates a state of play. The play may involve capturing all the things that the author values, such as social rules, sentimental pathos, and the pure pleasure of humor. On the other hand, it may focus on conveying a kind of experience, such as allowing one to visualize a scenario or liberating one from his/her subject position.
Nodelman and Reimer (2003) use French literary theorist Roland Barthes’ conception of the textual effects (“plaisir” – “text of pleasure” and “jouissance” – “text of bliss) to divide the pleasures of literature into two: “the pleasures of the familiar” and “the pleasures of the strange” (p. 23). They stress that while the pleasure of the familiar “gives readers what they expect and like,” the pleasure of the strange “upsets readers’ expectations in ways that free them from the familiar” (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003, p. 24). This of course can be part of the author’s play in terms of devising a text. Drawing on Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory of language, Barthes (1975) posits,

> The writer of pleasure (and his reader) accepts the letter, renouncing bliss, he has the right and the power to express it: the letter is his pleasure; he is obsessed by it, as are all those who love language (and not speech), logo-philes, authors, letter writers, linguists… (p. 21).

And, “[w]ith the writer of bliss (and his reader),” says Barthes (1975),

> …begins the untenable text, the impossible text. The text is outside pleasure, outside criticism, unless it is reached through another text of bliss: You cannot speak ‘on’ such a text, you can only speak ‘in’ it, in its fashion…(p. 22).

Relating Barthes’s perspective on the author to Lewis Carroll, I find it rather difficult to define him. In *Alice*, he offered noticeably weird content and structure that could dissuade the readers from paying attention. But, at the same time, he inserted comical word play and dialogues that could elicit spontaneous laughter. Hence, it seems more appropriate to say that he is a writer of both pleasure and bliss. At another level, we can suggest that he admirably incorporated intricate types of textures for enriching his play and engendering considerable pleasures in literature.
While the author is trying to offer meanings, organize the trajectory of the story and decide a kind of textual pleasure that he/she expects to deliver, he/she needs to have an intended audience—a playmate. Carroll’s playmate was Alice Liddell, a ten-year-old girl who pleaded for him to write down his improvised account of underground adventures (Rackin, 1991). Critics found that Carroll was socialized more with children than adults (Woolf, 2010; Collingwood, 1898). Children appealed to him, and he was more willing to converse with them and make their voice to be heard (Collingwood, 1898). Morgenstern (2009) remarks, “Alice in Wonderland is the first successful children’s novel in which the narrator finds a voice with which to address the child narratee…” (p. 91-92). Carroll understood well what his young readers would be fond of and fascinated about. Instead of repeating the prevalent moralizing pedagogy, Carroll captured a child’s thoughts and anticipated the delight his young audience could have as he made the dull subject interesting and amusing. The animals and the jokes about lessons are easy for children to follow. Many scenes in Alice can be directly translated into the favorite games that the author would like to play with his audience: a tea party, the game of croquet, and the lobster-quadrille. In order to make the tale playful, the author needs to have a playful soul. Meanwhile, he/she has to be interested in sharing the play and draw the readers in. As the German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1989) states, “[T]he playing is a being-played” (p. 106, as cited in Mackey, 2007a, p. 177).

It does not matter which comes first: either the author devises a form of text or simply feels like connecting with the intended reader. Both ways can evoke play—the foundation of creativity and openness—and affect so many different
responses to our reading. For the play between the reader and the text, it is a kind of building block. It uses the human capacity to piece together a complete shape or construction, and it is a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual exercise. In engaging with the exposition of the story, the reader needs to envision what those words and lines point to, and probably needs to supply actions, such as turning the book around or talking to others about it, responding to a particular set of verbal or pictorial symbols. Sometimes, the reader may have to absorb an unfamiliar experience, uncover the inexplicit, organize or reorganize perspectives, and realize what the text is potentially trying to offer.

Martin Gardner, an ardent reader and leading expert on Lewis Carroll, mentioned in an interview that he was not intrigued by *Alice in Wonderland* when he was very young (Susina, 2000). He felt that the tale “was sort of frightening, and the scenes changed so rapidly from one page to another,” so he did not finish reading it until he grew interests in word play, symbolic logic, and recreational mathematics as an adult (Susina, 2000, p. 62). After revisiting the text, he was aware that the subtleties and complexities of *Alice* were in need of clarification. Hence, he set off in search of the history, the explanations, the examples, and the parallels for disclosing the mystery of *Alice*. His *Annotated Alice* displays his exploration and realization, and also reflects his commitment to the engagement of the text, so that it can be seen as his play with *Alice*.

Iser (1980) reminds us that the reading process is not always “smooth or continuous” (p. 62). Rather, the reader will encounter the moments of uncertainty, interruptions, and detachment as young Gardner. Iser (1980) says, “We look
forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their nonfulfillment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject…” (p. 62). In this respect, the reader is often in the process of synthesizing all the senses and information and situating the meaning in the way he/she thinks it can be fit. From Iser’s (1980) point of view, “this is the dynamic process of recreation” which “is steered by two main structural components within the text: first, a repertoire of familiar literary patterns and recurrent literary themes, together with allusions to familiar social and historical contexts; second, techniques or strategies used to set the familiar against the unfamiliar” (p. 62).

By focusing on the way in which the reader requires to make the text meaningful, I find that the text really can arouse and encourage the making of play. For to perceive, the reader initiates a series of events and draws on many different approaches to support the text processing activities. No matter what the range of experiences might be—known or unknown, good or bad, enjoyable or tedious—the reader’s ability to respond and play with a text reflects his/her mobility for the text. Here, by mobility, I mean the kind of flexibility the reader has. As a matter of fact, the roles of the author and reader are fluid and transformative: the author can become a talking animal to interact with the protagonist, and the reader can identify with the protagonist to converse with the author or other characters. The text, therefore, becomes “an arena in which reader and author participate in the game of the imagination” (Iser, 1980, p. 51). As a whole, the creation or interpretation of text is always an ongoing process. The textual mobility has been reinforced by multiple plays that are generated by authors and readers.
Seeing Mobility in the Aspects of Author, Reader, and Text

Literally, mobility means changes and movements. In the context of reading, as I mentioned previously, it can be seen from three different aspects: the author, the reader, and the text. The evocation of play is a kind of mobility in which the participants (the author and the reader) are attempting to communicate with/through the text. The author is also a reader, and he/she is very likely to tell a story that has previously been told. As the author finds what works the best for his/her work, he/she approaches it, formulates it, and edits it. For instance, beside the obvious use of parodied children’s works, Carroll drew on a mass of materials, “especially those published in the first six decades of the nineteenth century” to shape his fantasies (Reichertz, 2000, p. 6). A series of literary genres that he used include “travel book conventions, the cautionary tale, the fairy tale, the nursery rhyme, children’s poems, parody of moral and informational literature for children, and the conventions of the world turned upside down, the looking-glass book, and the dream vision” (Reichertz, 2000, p. 6). Hudson (1958) points out, “Carroll was clearly influenced by Lear’s nonsense verses; conceivably he was slightly influenced by The Water Babies” written by Charles Kingsley (p. 24). Susina (2010) added literary fairy tales and “various collections of Hans Christian Andersen, Aesop, and Japanese and Russian fairy tales” as great writing sources for him (p. 28).

Furthermore, his friendship and interaction with another notable author, George MacDonald, inspired him to write works for a wider audience and to lengthen the manuscript of Alice’s Adventures under Ground (Susina, 2010). Indeed, Carroll’s Alice contains many things that we may be familiar with: animals,
conversations, eating and drinking, adventure, games, and so on. But, Virginia Woolf (1939) notes a key point, “Only Lewis Carroll has shown us the world upside down as a child sees it, and has made us laugh as children laugh, irresponsibly” (as cited in Phillips, 1971, p. 49). Even though Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) received a disciplined and rigorous education, and it is known that he struggled due to a stammer, he had no problem talking to children and loved to create stories for them (Stoffel, 1997). Woolf (1939) explains, “But since childhood remained in him entire, he could do what no one else has ever been able to do—he could return to that world; he could re-create it, so that we too become children again” (as cited in Phillips, 1971, p. 48). More than enough detailed information shows Carroll was by nature a child-friendly writer, and his work and art is the true sign of his genius (Collinswood, 1899; Jones & Gladstone, 1998; Woolf, 2010). He was an Oxford mathematics don, a logician, a poet, and a photographer. Many facets of Carroll’s life, according to Guiliano (1982), are as intriguing as his creative work. Understanding Carroll’s life and background can help enrich our appreciation of *Alice* books and understand what contributes to his works.

Following Carroll’s examples, we may, therefore, assume many aspects to the versatility of an author. His/her capability of applying intertextual knowledge and incorporating multiple identities can affect the presentation of the text. For the authors, mobility indicates how they foresee the possible readers and organize the narrative text—especially the fictional ones—in an interactive and communicative way (Figure 3).
From the reader’s perspective, when some elaborate operations are encouraged to be made (i.e., the reader is invited to fall into a dream and adjust to a world without laws), any inward and outward actions that the reader takes to respond to the text are the mobility of the reader. Rosenblatt (1994) proclaims, “First of all, each of the readers was active, not a blank tape registering a ready-made message. He was actively involved in building up a poem for himself out of his responses to the text” (p. 10). Therefore, in responding to a story like Alice, internally, the readers may be impressed by the extraordinary characters and events. They can follow the steps of the heroine, visualize the descriptions, and read with or against the fantasy. Because Wonderland is a place to visit, not to live, the readers easily feel distant from the setting, and it seems the author’s desire is to have us wander into his mysterious world. Hollingsworth (2009) explains the domain Alice discovers as “from one discrete space to another” (xx). The sudden changes in scene and location incidentally coincide with the progress of the storyline, and according to
Sherer (1996), “this, in turn, symbolizes some kind of rite of passage, a movement towards some deeper knowledge” (p. 2).

As the readers wonder what will happen next, their rational abilities lead them to willingly explore and imagine. Meanwhile, the readers will need to remember prior knowledge and use intertextual links to decipher the secrets and the complex layers of dreamscape that the narrative creates. In the same way, if the reader is capable of comparing one text with another and discovering the similarities and differences, the play of reading experiences provoked by the reader is an internal stimulus that propels energetic and pleasurable reading. It is impossible for the readers to just stay still and keep quiet. Outwardly, the readers may need to utter the sentences or turn the page back and forth to try to make sense and order out of the text. Very likely, the readers will depend on others’ interpretations and responses to foster a better understanding. In Tell Me, the author Aidan Chambers (1996) points out, “The act of reading lies in talking about what you have read” (p. 7). It is common to see that book talk plays an essential part of an ardent reader’s life. When the readers share and discuss the details and their memories about the text, they will soon catch on and extend the range of meaning-making. Even when we are reading alone, we may laugh at the jokes and nonsense the story involves, or we may attentively look for secrets that are hidden within the text. During the process of reading, a number of things are continuously going on even though the printed texts seem still. The readers do not passively receive the information, but need to employ various senses and actions to make meanings. Apparently, the readers have wanted to do this with texts for as long as there have been ones.
Moreover, in the constantly evolving media culture, the chances are that audiences require multiple acts of literacy to connect the open organization and construct meanings (Kress, 2003a). We do not only interpret what is clearly laid out, but we also learn to bring together different networks or media to form mutual intellectual interests. Therefore, we find that many fans of Alice retell, rework, refashion, or remediate the tale to show their own way of interpreting and interacting with the text. The readers connect and transmit what the text means to them across different media systems and play with narrative form in various ways. Jenkins (2008) is well aware of how the digital culture shifts participants’ behavior and redefines the readers/audiences as consumers who are not only the viewer, but also decision makers, to “bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other consumers” (p. 18). He argues,

If old consumers were assumed to be passive, the new consumers are active. If old consumers were predictable and stayed where you told them to stay, then new consumers are migratory, showing a declining loyalty to networks or media. If old consumers were isolated individuals, the new consumers are more socially connected. If the work of media consumers was once silent and invisible, the new consumers are now noisy and public (Jenkins, 2008, pp. 18-19).

All I see for sure is that each reader is not necessarily limiting him/herself to a single way of reading. On the contrary, he/she is able to manipulate perspectives or varied materials to experience or re-experience the storytelling (Figure 4).
The Reader's Mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal:</th>
<th>External:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Feelings and thoughts emerge from the reader as he/she evokes the play with the text.</td>
<td>- The reader physically reacts upon the text (utter the sentences, turn the page back and forth, laugh at the jokes, look for the secrets... etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The reader's attention to the text activates prior assumptions and associations.</td>
<td>- The reader forms a book talk with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The reader is capable of comparing one text with another and extending the range of meaning making.</td>
<td>- The reader takes the tale across different platforms.</td>
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**Figure 4.** The reader’s mobility indicates the reader is actively engaged in the reading and potentially redefines and refashions the text across different media systems. (The list can be added to as long as we can locate more acts of the reader.)

Thus far, I have concentrated on how mobility will be aroused as the author and reader attempt to create or respond to the text. The entire process, though, might be personal and individual; the text is ultimately the result of creativity by both authors and readers. Rosenblatt (1994) reminds us, “Yet we must remember that once the creative activity of the author has ended, what remains for others—for even the author himself—is a text” (p. 15). Here, the text functions as the gathering place for people who are interested in meaning-making to communicate and formulate relationships. Although it is not necessary for us to comprehend a text by knowing the author, texts represent the entities that authors use to convey meanings (Gracia, 1995). Any time audiences turn to a text, they have a chance to fulfill or reconstruct the purpose that the author sets for it. Likewise, they get to connect to the thread of thoughts and bridge the gap between the circumstances under which the text was produced and the circumstances surrounding them.
Texts are not meant to be just symbols on the page. With negotiation and cooperation between the author and the reader, texts have a tendency to reveal movements and transformations, and become plays that optimize our physical, cognitive, and social spontaneity. Kress (2003a) states, “Texts have a site of appearance: simply, they have to appear somewhere” (p. 48). Whether book or on the screen, each container’s form, function, and content are open to view, revision and integration with different resources. Some literacy researchers make the point that the making of texts is subject to design (Kress, 2003a; Carrington, 2004; Evans, Roy-Charland, & Saint-Aubin, 2009). By understanding what the different modes are and what they can best do, the author/designer will best meet the demands of a specific text for a specific audience. For instance, Lewis Carroll was well aware of drawing on existing knowledge and making use of different modes (writing and image) to engage his readers. He adapted his beloved classic for children from “naught to five” with colorful and enlarged illustrations in the shortened version of the picturebook, The Nursery “Alice” (Sibley, 1975). Moreover, his enthusiasm for theatre and drama made him envision the stage version of Alice and encouraged other playwrights to retouch the story in various dramatic forms (Lovett, 1990).

The mobility of the text, therefore, means the potential use of the resource and is related to the idea of “affordance” – what it is made to communicate in different modes or media. According to Bearne (2003), affordance influences how the text is used or revisited and ties it to what is structured to give it substance, meaning, and shape. For instance, a printed text can be made into a visual film as it is held together in the reader/viewer’s mind during the time it is being experienced.
Affordance shares the common element of time, choice of language, and some internal transformation of the word into images, sound, and movement (Bearne, 2003). We can even say texts contain “drive,” to stimulate the movement of stories and encourage audiences to render the same story over and over again.

Overall, the concept of textual mobility is not really new, but it begins to answer questions such as “what makes an ancient tale thrive across different time periods and media platforms?” Sundmark (1999) remarks,

> Writing does not necessarily end the process of reinterpretation, however. Even when a tale has been arrested in writing, the text can still serve as a point of departure; it can inspire new tales and shape new storytellers and lead a parallel life outside the ‘authoritative text,’ in popular culture, or, even, in academic reinterpretations (p. 8).

As my elaboration on the mobility of the author and the reader shows, multiple causes can make *Alice* maintain a living tradition and appear in a mobile fashion. Hollingsworth (2009) discovered that Carroll has been “challenging and enriching a conventional, linear narrative” and making “a special appeal to our media-drenched subjectivities” (xxiii). Therefore, to explore what unique features it has and what contributes to an animated reading experience might aid future research on the narrative’s function. In the following sections, I will be discussing some particular elements that boost the textual mobility of *Alice* and some possible reactions a reader may have.
What in *Alice* Makes the Movements Possible

- **Characterization**

A great work must come with great characters. A great character with strong traits certainly captures the readers’ attention and elicits interactions. Alice’s independent and indomitable spirit lets the readers infer what kind of person she is and find her hard to summarize. Especially, when the mystery of her surroundings pushes her to question her identity and to speak in two voices, like in role-playing, we are led to reflect on the question, “Who am I, then?” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 24). She never stops asking questions, and she constantly reports her thoughts to the audience. Her unconventional thought patterns challenge our fundamental perceptions and motivate us to react as well. Her voyage into unreality not only releases her from restraints, but also allows us to freely think and talk. Lloyd (2010) points out that her students (age 18-22) have a special delight in Alice because she, “unlike other fairy-tale heroines, requires no fairy god-mother, huntsman, or good fairy—just her own wits and ingenuity—to navigate through Wonderland successfully…” (p. 8). Besides, Carroll (1887) himself gives the following description of Alice and provides a clue about what kind of girl she is:

Loving, first, loving and gentle: loving as a dog (forgive the prosaic simile, but I know no earthly love so pure and perfect), and gentle as a fawn: then courteous—courteous to all, high or low, grand or grotesque, King or Caterpillar, even as though she were herself a King’s daughter, and her clothing of wrought gold: then trustful, ready to accept the wildest impossibilities with all that utter trust that only dreamers know; and lastly, curious—wildly curious… (as cited in Lovett, 1990, pp. 210-211).
Among the personalities accumulated from the story, we are invited to build an image of her. Either a tiny version of Alice or a giant one; a dreaming girl or an actual child, she appears as a model performing a crucial transition—everything is fluctuating and full of potential. Sigler (1997) writes, “Like the Caterpillar, she is mutable, in a constant process of becoming” (xiv). We find she has lots of possibilities; therefore, any representation or rendition of her is easily established or amplified. Some authors take the liberty to modernize Alice and have her say, “Wow!” and “Nice…” in the text (Clark, 2009). Some illustrators cartoon this Victorian girl and exaggerate her into a rather comical figure: with golden fish eyes, sausage-like lips, and a pair of huge feet (see Seibold’s adaptation, Figure 5), whereas some others give her a kohl-eyed, gothic look combining mystery and horror (see Garcia’s portrait, Figure 6). Different depictions embody a completely different vision of Alice and suggest ample styles into which the heroine can fit.

**Figure 5.** Seibold’s Alice

**Figure 6.** Garcia’s Alice
In fact, Alice’s ability to adapt to new situations with her physical or emotional modifications makes her a “round character,” also called a “dynamic character” in the narrative. Based on E. M. Foster’s definition (cited in Wheeler, 2010), round characters often display the inconsistencies and internal conflicts that can be found in most real people. They change or evolve over time and have the capacity for change. Although in Wonderland Alice “[has] never been so much contradicted in all her life before” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 52), she keeps trying to come up with a new perspective to think through her experiences and survive under such a constantly changing environment. A good example is shown in the midst of the chaos at the Duchess’s place. When Alice finds the baby is mistreated, she gets the baby out of the house, where the baby suddenly becomes a pig. Instead of concluding that things are out of control, she appears to be an optimistic thinker. She talks to herself, “If it had grown up, it would have made a dreadfully ugly child: but it makes a rather handsome pig, I think” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 64). For Alice, choosing a right side to think about issues makes them more tolerable: either a very ugly child is in the making, or a handsome pig is developing. Once she is more aware of the rules of the game, her ability to make it through Wonderland and back into reality is applaudable. Moreover, Alice’s growing adaptability comes with her realization that she actually has control over her illusion. From a totally confusing state to a more mature and prepared mind, Alice introduces a more personal and sentimental aspect of the journey that readers can easily internalize and empathize with. Her reflective voice, worries and fears also lead to a close character-reader relationship, and multiple perspectives lead the reader to feel more profoundly and
perceive more fully the experiences of life. Furthermore, her unique personality and potent adaptability have moved her adventure up on different scales of interpretations, so she means whatever readers need her to mean.

- **Time-Space**

We are all familiar with the scene in which Alice chases the White Rabbit and tumbles down the hole. Whether she is dreaming or actually in a fantastical world, she experiences it as if it is real.

   Down, down, down. Would the fall never come to an end?

   Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice soon began talking again. (Carroll, 1865/2000, pp.13-4)

Alice’s long, slow fall not only symbolizes her venture into the unknown, but also introduces her shift into a curious time and space zone where many things are oppositional to logic and reason. The literary critic and media theorist, Marshall McLuhan, notes that Wonderland is created to suggest “a fantasia of discontinuous space-and-time” and provide “the confident Victorians a playful foretaste of Einsteinian time-and-space” in which both elements are not uniform and absolute, but relative (as cited in Hollingsworth, 2009, xxi). Space-and-time or time-and-space can be understood through Bakhtin’s (2000) idea of “chronotope (literally ‘time space’)” (p. 84). Bakhtin (2000) borrowed Einstein’s relativity theory to illustrate that there is an inseparable relationship between time and space in the literary text. He writes,

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and
responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope (Bakhtin, 2000, p. 84).

Moreover, he asserts,

Thus the chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space, emerges as a center for concretizing representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel. All the novel’s abstract elements—philosophical and social generations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect—gravitate toward the chronotope and through it takes on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work (Bakhtin, 2000, p. 250).

Like Bakthin, Hollingsworth (2009) notices the spatial and temporal connection in Alice and provides an alternative way to see how the story which consists of one or more ideas of time-space develops a conceptual action system and encourages the readers to let the imagination do the work for assembling layers of movements. He remarks,

Therefore, however one chooses to interpret Alice’s defining movement from A to B, from boring book to Wonderland, or from waking to sleeping, or from innocence to knowledge, this arc of action involves the passing of time and the consequences of this passing: preparation for a shift from one space-time to another, the first of a cascade of such movements (Hollingsworth, 2009, xxii).

For perceiving how the movement may derive from the schema of time-space, Westmoreland (2010) uses French philosopher Henri Bergson’s notion of duration and explains, “Motion contains the following elements: (1) the homogenous, divisible space that is traversed, and (2) the indivisible, consciously real act of traversing” (p. 172). Based on this classification, we find that the description of space that occurs over the course of a Bergsonian duration inevitably elicits
imagined movements from the reader and invites imagined staging. The spaces that Alice moves across, whether homogenous or indivisible, can readily form a lively scene in the readers’ mind. In turn, each distinct scene that shows the space is mutating or merging in the narrative can also make us aware of the vagaries of the moving events. For instance, when Alice runs into the White Rabbit once again and continues following him, the previous scene (the hallway with the glass table and the little door) has vanished and switched into a completely different landscape: the salt-water which is made of her tears. Instead of walking and running, Alice needs to swim. Even though these spatial changes are unpredictable, as readers we come to recognize the continuous supply of actions.

Besides going from one space to another, Alice also goes through a different concept of time. Our sense of time is comically challenged as she goes along to the tea-time party.

“If you knew Time as well as I do,” said the Hatter, “you wouldn’t talk about wasting it. It’s him.”

(Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 72)

In the above-ground convention, time has “infinite, orderly, impersonal, and autonomous nature” (Rackin, 1991, p. 55). However, in the underground world, the Mad Hatter personifies the time and explains to Alice that Time has been frozen ever since the Queen of Hearts said that the Mad Hatter was “murdering the time” while he performed a song terribly. In fact, Time is punishing the Mad Hatter by stopping still at six o’clock, trapping him in a perpetual teatime. Rackin (1991) adds on, “Since time is now like a person, a kind of ill-behaved child created by human beings, there is the unavoidable danger that he will rebel and refuse to act
consistently. That is exactly what has happened in the Wonderland tea party: the Hatter says time ‘won’t do a thing I ask! It’s always six o’clock now’” (p. 55). Nevertheless, Carroll solves this motionless time issue by substituting space (Rackin, 1991). Like a game of musical chairs, Alice and other characters move around the tea table as they speak. It reminds us that time is still linear and progressive. By varying the uses of time-space, Carroll brilliantly creates the movements of the story.

- **Transition and Transformation**

  When, for the very first time, Alice has shifted in size and lost her secure stability of identity, she is faced with difficulties in growing up. She keeps on pondering and reasoning,

  Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I’ve been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I’m not the same, the next question is “Who in the world am I?” Ah, that’s the great puzzle! (Carroll, 1865/2000, pp. 22-23)

Critics parallel her physical change with the growth from childhood to adulthood and symbolize her resultant anxieties about self-identity as the process of adolescence (Auerbach, 1973). Gardner (2000) notes there are totally “twelve occasions in the story on which Alice alters in size” (p. 17). Sometimes she gets confused about who/what she is when the change is rapid and unexpected; sometimes she learns from the experience and cleverly uses this as an advantage to aid her in getting what she wants or where she wants to go.

Along with the theme of transformation, the composition of both text and illustration also allows the readers to see the transitions of the characters and the
events. For example, after eating a magic cake, Alice’s neck has stretched so long that her head strikes against the roof of the hall. Carroll puts the illustration precisely next to the relevant passage in the same vertical sequence, so that “Alice’s height is enhanced by her vertically filling the page” (Figure 7) (Hancher, 1985, p. 126). Besides seeing Alice standing upright with the perceptual pull from both ends of the image, we can also find different visual emphases that are set up to promote the changes or actions in the illustrations. Some other instances, like the baby turning into the pig (Figure 8), or the Cheshire Cat disappearing and leaving its grin behind (Figure 9), demonstrate the continuous movements arising from the contrast between two sequential pictures. Almost without exception, many artists notice the explicit sequences of transformation and transition in Alice and vary in approach to suit the implied action.

Contemporary illustrators, such as Maggie Taylor, employ pictorial elements to express the change of Alice and the fading away of the Cheshire Cat (Figure 10). By using subtle lines and hues, the larger Alice and the vanishing Cheshire Cat look almost transparent and smoothly blend into the background. The dynamics is accomplished by comparing the lower subject to the higher diagonal subject. Also, the smaller Alice looks further diminished in relation to the normal size of the glass table and the larger Alice. The asymmetrical balance creates more visual interest and corresponds to the suggestive movement from the text. Overall, transition and transformation deliver motion to texts and inspire artists to revive the correlating narrative details.
When Alice takes her great leap into the world beneath and beyond ordinary human experience, one of the curious things she meets is the nonsensical...
conversation with the Wonderland creatures. Early in the story, two meanings of “dry” are played out as the Mouse intends to dry them by reciting the driest thing he knows. No one has tried to question his logic. Only as he speaks without specifying the antecedent for the pronoun, “it,” do other animals feel confused. Yet, their indifference toward the grammar of language manifests their enjoyment of absurdity.

“Found what?” said the Duck.
“Found it,” the Mouse replied rather crossly: “of course you know what ‘it’ means.”
“I know what ‘it’ means well enough, when I find a thing,” said the Duck: “it’s generally a frog, or a worm. The question is, what did the archbishop find?”

(Carroll, 1865/2010, p. 30)

Nonsense is shown without serious aspects or consequences, but is simply amusing at different levels: ambiguities, puns, puzzles, or random acts of combining meaningless terms for the sake of entertainment. Referring to the pursuit of pleasure, we might ignore the fact that this sort of verbal play actually requires the author to master the language, and the readers to go beyond logical thinking. For instance, on the notable quote of the Cheshire Cat, “we’re all mad here,” we see the direct description of the madness in Wonderland. Yet, as we read the phrase more than once, we may infer Carroll is playing on the word: mad/made, and we can re-interpret the quote as “everything/everyone is all made (fabricated) here.” Such symbolic nonsense enables varied readings. Another interesting word game is shown in the “long and sad tale” told by the Mouse to Alice after they get out of the pool of tears. The story is presented visually as a twisted, tail-like shape, in verse on the page (Figure 11). Looking at the curve and the shape of the tail, Dr. Jacqueline Reid-Walsh suggested that it also seemed to depict to readers the way that Alice falls
through the deep tunnel (personal communication, April 24, 2012). In addition, two teenage students notice this poem is a type of “tail rhymes,” formed by different length of rhyming lines, and each stanza is shaped like a mouse with a long tail (Figure 12) (Weil, 1991; Gardner, 2000). According to their article, which was published in the New York Times in 1991, there are four puns within the poem: “(1) the word ‘tale’ signified the story the mouse is telling, but includes the tail visually; (2) the word ‘tail’ signified the tail of the mouse but includes the tale it tells; (3) the tale is told in the poetic form of the tail-rhyme; and (4) the line structure of the triplets (two short lines, then a longer line) resembles the shape of a mouse” (Weil, 1991, p. 47).

Indeed, we find the concrete poetry appealing, but as we look into the content, we discover a black humor in the bottom and simultaneously feel a sense of insanity. By minimizing the last word “death” (Figure 11), it decreases the severity and power of it. However, by putting it last, it evokes a sense of falling an untimely ending in the eternal abyss. Perhaps, Alice is not that interested in the cause and the effect of the tale and its implication of her fall as a fatal threat. Yet, by making the abstract more a presence in fantasy, we can suspect that any object could be depicted in any way; anything might serve as the scaffolding for anything else. Gelett Burgess says, “[N]onsense is the fourth dimension of literature” (as cited in Throesch, 2009, p. 39). Comprehending it by all senses gives an opportunity for mind expansion. Hence, nonsense literature is not lacking sense, but is transgressing or exploding the frame of linguistic order.
Either by form or by content, *Alice in Wonderland* is able to stimulate countless reader-text activities. Sundmark (1999) suggested the given text was “cross-breeding between oral and literary genres” (p. 9) that had a self-generating feature whereas Sigler (1997) believed the “loose, episodic dream structure” (xiv) appealed to audiences and prompted many other ways of storytelling. In my opinion, a sophisticated range of examples reveals that the *Alice* book calls on the reader’s interaction and imagination in making the story come alive and inducing innovative reading. Along with some mobile features in verbal and visual communication, the text opens up a wealth of possible connections between narrative and media. It also calls my attention to the range of media adaptations of *Alice*. For better understanding of the dynamic relationship between readers, texts,
and media/interfaces, I would like to continuously develop the idea of “mobility” and seek a new perspective on reading. In Chapter 3, I will take a close look at three unabridged picture books of *Alice in Wonderland*. Those author-illustrators all released their reworked *Alice* after 1999 and developed their unique expressions through distinct styles of illustrations. By paying attention to how they display the narratives along with the pictures, and to what specific scene they endeavor to re-interpret, I expect to identify more suggested movements to which readers can detect and respond.
Chapter 3

VISUAL ANALYSIS:

FINDING MOBILITY IN THE PICTUREBOOKS OF *ALICE*

The Use of Pictures

The forty-two illustrations displayed in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by John Tenniel, gained more attention than Carroll’s text initially (Hancher, 1985). Many people might not have read the complete story of *Alice*, but were impressed by its illustrations. In fact, before the book first came out, the fame of Tenniel, as the political cartoonist, had been well established (Wakeling, 2008). Many reviewers emphasized the artist and thought it was Tenniel’s drawings that made *Alice* noteworthy (Hancher, 1985). However, studies show that Carroll worked closely with Tenniel in preparing the illustrations (Hancher, 1985; Wakeling, 2008). Susina (2010) stresses, “Carroll, unlike most authors of the day, was far more involved in the physical production and design of his book” (p. 8). In addition, if we read *Alice* closely, we will notice that the words and pictures reinforce one another. The interplay between verbal and visual elements exactly reveals “interanimation,” what Lewis (2001) describes as when “[t]he words are pulled through the pictures and the pictures are brought into focus by the words” (p. 48).

For instance, in the episode of Alice’s encounter with the Caterpillar, we can tell how unpleasant their interaction was by the short and rude sentences, like “You!”… “Who are you?” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 48). Meanwhile, we may find the power relationship between them portrayed as we see the Caterpillar sitting on the
top of the mushroom and looking down at Alice in Tenniel’s picture. He smoked heavily and asked Alice to repeat the poem “You are old, Father William.” In the illustration, Alice was on tiptoes and looking attentively toward the Caterpillar. Even though we did not get to see the face of the Caterpillar, we could predict the serious look he would have and how intimidating he was. A few more dialogues later, the tension between them seemed to have melted away while Alice was reciting the nonsense verses.

“You are old, Father William,” the young man said,
“And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
Do you think, at your age, it is right?”

(Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 49)

There are four verses in the poem. Similarly, Tenniel used four frames of pictures to portray the ridiculous conversations between the father and the son. He made readers pause and reflect on what seems to be happening. The narrative shifts from words to pictures; words to pictures. Such changes bring about mobility in the relationship between the two media. For Lewis (2001), the word-picture relation is dynamic and can change anytime as the reader comes along and partakes in the context. That might also be the motive for why Carroll made illustrations a necessary component in *Alice*. He never aimed at one single vision and voice. Even though there would be greater complexity in the making of an illustrated text, he allowed the inclusion of verbal and visual enigmas in order to push the boundaries of convention in books for children.

Oleg Lipchenko (2008), whose interpretation of *Alice* is highly thought of by the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, comments, “He (Carroll) plays on the
imagination of the readers, so that everyone’s views are unique. At the same time, there are many attractive details in his writing. That’s why everything can be shown differently” (p. 18). Hence, a reader’s imagination and interpretation is expected from the entire work/medium. No longer are we viewers. We transcend as audience into what Jane Doonan (1993) calls, “the beholder,” who approaches books with an active mind and seeks meanings from the interwoven signs and intended arrangements (p. 9). As we desire to identify and reflect on language and visual input, we will create a unique reading experience. At the same time, the mobility of the text — the number of ways the story’s details motivate readers to play with the narrative form — will also increase. Hundreds of contemporary children’s book artists have realized and experienced such a transformative power in Alice, so that they adapted the story and challenged readers to perceive it in a new way. In order to observe the mobility derived from this classic in the context of contemporary picturebooks, I selected works by Helen Oxenbury (1999), Lisbeth Zwerger (1999), and Oleg Lipchenko (2009). All of their literary texts remain unabridged, and their artworks are esteemed and celebrated by various award titles. Oxenbury’s modern Alice has garnered her the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal for distinguished illustrations in the U.K., while Lipchenko won the Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award for his surreal Alice. The Austrian artist Zwerger, who won the Hans Christian Andersen Medal in 1990, also tried to enliven her vision of a dreamlike Alice, a work that was recommended by School Library Journal and The New York Times. Since their illustrations have exceptional quality, it is worth a close scrutiny. In the following, I will analyze their reworkings of
Wonderland and look for the means they use to create mobility among the word, 
age, and reader.

**Visual Aspect**

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her 
sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or 
twice she had peeped into the book her sister was 
reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 
“and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice “without 
pictures or conversation?” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 11)

Readers, authors, illustrators might have echoed Alice’s sentiments and 
expected to see books that include words and images or a range of visual design. 
Joseph Schwarz and Chava Schwarz (1991) note, “…most of the powerful 
contemporary media usually combine two or more means of communication— 
visual, verbal, aural, kinetic—in their effort to develop their potential appeals” (p. 3). 
Carroll surely created an effectively powerful story format that embodies evocative 
language and imaginative pictures. With the collaboration of verbal and visual 
elements, it compels the audience to use supported literacy and visual skills for 
better comprehension. The re-working of Alice in the form of picturebooks is no 
different in celebrating the idea of exploring different levels of looking and reading. 
In addition, picturebooks open up both literary and aesthetic communication. The 
lavish pictures can encourage readers to become aware of elements of art and figure 
as the illustrator relates the story. For Joseph Schwarz and Chava Schwarz (1991), 
picturebooks are irresistible media. They can hold greater meanings; they can bridge 
hard subjects and complex emotions. At the same time, they can aid in literacy
development without being overt and overly moralistic. However, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) point out, “…each medium has its own possibilities and limitations of meaning. Not everything that can be realized in language can also be realized by means of images, or vice versa” (p. 19). Their argument is in line with Schwarcz’s (1982) point, “It is always a matter of transfer, of transformation: no communication in any medium is ever exactly translatable into any other” (p. 10). And yet, to return to the re-illustrated picturebooks of Alice, I expect to find ideas and meanings that cross over and focus on the different artists’ unique visualization and play with Carroll’s original. Since the text stays the same, why not let the pictures talk?

- Survey of the Dreamscapes: Style, Pattern, and Format

Oxenbury’s Alice

One of the obvious things I notice when comparing the contemporary picturebooks to Tenniel’s 1865 preliminary wood engravings is color. There is no doubt that Tenniel’s pictures are superb and animate. However, the black-and-white images might seem too flat and old-fashioned for our fast-forward, high-resolution saturated generation. “For the joy of full-color spreads,” Sinkler (1999), the critic of The New York Times, says, “there’s reason to update Alice” (p. 40). Helen Oxenbury, who is famed for her baby board books and watercolor paintings, took on the challenge of featuring the modern-day Alice. In the illustrator’s note, she said she had loved Alice since childhood as her mother shared it with her. Still, she enjoys this classic. Therefore, for young readers today, she creates “a soft, beautiful, springtime world” (Cart, 2000, p. 922) and makes the bizarre Wonderland creatures more endearing.
Starting from the book cover, Oxenbury redefines some aspects of Carroll’s tale. We might never feel the White Rabbit is easy to befriend from the original text due to his short temper. However, Oxenbury demonstrates how intimate this furry bunny could be with Alice (Figure 13). Their gestures of sharing secrets arm in arm on the book cover actually allure readers to disclose what is coming after. Besides, instead of the traditional Victorian dress, stockings, and leather shoes, Oxenbury’s heroine is wearing a simple blue tank dress and white sneakers. It is an outfit that any girl next door might wear. Oxenbury explains,

…children today are very physically, very… their body language is confident. And the clothes they wear are… they're allowed to move easily (Reading Rockets, n.d.).

She justified why Alice could be contemporary in appearance. Moreover, she also exposes the real nature of a young girl—not so elegant and well-mannered.

**Figure 13.** The book cover of Oxenbury’s *Alice*. From *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by H. Oxenbury, 1999.

**Figure 14.** Oxenbury’s depiction of Alice and her sister. From *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by H. Oxenbury, 1999.

In the first episode, Alice is sitting next to her sister. She sprawls, bites grass, looks bored, and seems to be in a trance (Figure 14). She feels irrelevant to
the breezy surrounding and her sister’s book. The creamy watercolor effect, to our eyes, renders a sweet taste and uplifting mood. When a rabbit in black-and-white pencil drawing passes by on the next page, a new drama begins. Similar to how Carroll worked in throughout the story, Oxenbury begins her pictures in reality and continues in fantasy. She uses a combination of watercolor and pencil to present different tones and layers of the story. Even though she does not use a particular style to differentiate reality or dream, her pencil sketches act as a transition between different scenes and create a continuum. Instead of sensing the darker side of Carroll’s text, we get a more cheerful and cartoonish kind of design. As the *Horn Book* contributor, Long (2000) comments,

Oxenbury’s illustrations have a sweetness of tone and an amiable spirit that especially recommend this edition for precocious younger listeners as well as for children in the middle grades…Oxenbury has created a magical world with funny, fabulous creatures and inviting landscapes…(p. 72).

Besides the lighthearted style of Wonderland, this edition has lavish illustrations (about 101 pictures among 207 pages) and is very action-packed. Including both endpapers, almost every single drawing displays the characters’ mobility to respond to their situation and to each other. Even though some critics think Oxenbury misses Carroll’s eccentricity, readers can still observe different characters engaged in a specific event and become acquainted with the story’s trajectory.

**Zwerger’s Alice**

Zwerger, who also complemented the classic tale with watercolor painting, on the other hand, matched the storyline with a more whimsical and surreal design. Some agree that it captures “Carroll’s intellectual angularity” and is more possible to
appeal to older children and young adults (Cart, 2000, p. 922). The mysterious atmosphere begins with the book cover (Figure 15).

![Figure 15. The book cover of Zwerger's Alice. From Alice in Wonderland by L. Zwerger, 1999.](image)

Here, we see the well-known mad-tea party. However, it is definitely not a noisy and bustling meeting place, where people are crying out, “No room! No room!” Rather, we see that the protagonist and the two other characters, March Hare and the Mad Hatter, have a very solemn and contemplative look. Three of them gaze in different places whereas the Dormouse is falling asleep. Time seems frozen; everything is still and disassociated. Even the tea-things are separate and isolated on the table. Such a solitary and static expression also occurs on the face of Alice within the book a couple of times. She seems to sleepwalk or be preoccupied by things. The muted gestures are very different from Oxenbury’s Alice, but allows the readers to ponder the situation without being distracted from the narrative. Long (2002) contrasts both Oxenbury’s and Zwerger’s Alice and concludes, “If Oxenbury’s Alice is Carroll’s ‘child of the pure unclouded brow,’ Zwerger has her ‘dreaming eyes of wonder’; and she’s the one who looks ready and able to counter the mad quips of Wonderland’s inhabitants with a child’s relentless logic” (p. 73).
As I looked at Zwerger’s Alice, the first thought that came to me was: Is that girl wearing a school uniform? My memory suddenly flew back to my high school years since what Alice was wearing in Zwerger’s picture was very similar to what I used to have: a white dress, dark vest, dark tie, and black shoes (despite the bright red stockings).

“Emphasis on white, red, and black,” Stevenson (1999) thinks, “echoes the cards and keeps the palette energized rather than restful” (p. 125). To highlight the movement of the character, there are times when only the partial body of Alice is shown, such as her upper body (when she holds up the Rabbit’s fan and gloves), “her legs (when Alice outgrows the house), or all but her face (when Alice hastily departs the courtroom)…” (Stevenson, 1999, p. 125) (Figure 16).

Those pictures create a sense of spatial continuity and movement that invites the readers to go along with the events that the story suggests. Whether by stasis or a move, the artist is able to find numerous ways to construct a dreamlike quality.
Zwerger gives the tale the flavor of whimsy and wit and features a compelling dramatic sense.

**Lipchenko’s Alice**

Another remarkable dreamscape formation is through Lipchenko’s intricate color use and page layout. Through a hole in the paper jacket, he draws in the audience to believe Alice is peering at us and inviting us to follow her to where the Rabbit goes (Figure 17).

![Figure 17. The book cover of Lipchenko’s Alice](image)

From *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by O. Lipchenko, 2009.

Before falling into Wonderland, we have been shown a cast of Wonderland characters in all brownish color. If looking at it attentively, we may find five people (two adults and three girls) on the boat in the middle of river right behind Alice. Knowing how the tale originated, we find Carroll’s field trip with the Liddell sisters and his fabricated adventurous story have been intertwined in the cover picture. Lipcheko (2008) stresses, “I don’t know if there is a recipe to illustrating *Alice*, but the artist has to find the way to express him/herself” (p. 19). In an attempt to present his personal joy in the story that continues to enchant and amuse readers, Lipchenko
has offered subtle details and visual complexity. He integrates things that are related to Carroll (i.e. photography and theater) into his vision of Wonderland. Likewise, he creates a dense of images and symbols that will entice the readers to spend time scrutinizing the design and detecting the hidden secrets. His interpretation of Alice is both fresh and nostalgic.

*CM Magazine’s* reviewer, Valerie Nielsen (2010) describes,

> Far from a proper Victorian dress, stiff bearing and long headband-controlled hair, the 2009 Alice has untidy fringed hair, a plain white-collared dress and a decidedly mischievous set of expressions.

Lipchenko’s Alice bears resemblance to a modern child, but the Mary Jane shoes and the sepia tone of the illustrations create the feeling of old photographs (Figure 18).

![Figure 18. Lipchenko’s depiction of Alice](image)


From the colorful book cover to the brownish-yellow inside pages, Lipchenko guides us to the underground of the old days, and he finely executes every single visual element: the frame for the text, the initial letters opening each chapter, and even the page numbering. He comments,

> This book is an Art project—not just another Alice. Every aspect of creation of this book is Art, from the visualization
of the story’s world, filled with strange yellowish atmosphere, until the finalized physical appearance of the book, which is the Art of Printing” (as cited in Nielsen, 2010).

Lipchenko’s boundless visual inventiveness fills each picture with meaningful and playful details and rewards numerous reexaminations.

- **Physical Features of the *Alice* Picturebooks**

Besides the variations in styles and patterns, those three illustrators all chose a large size format to display their artwork. Moreover, their books are all taller than they are wide whereas most picturebooks tend to be wider. A question of interest is immediately striking. Does the actual physical appearance of individual books affect our reading and interpretation? The answer is a positive yes. Nodelman (1988) suggests,

> In fact, larger books do allow larger effects, while smaller ones demand restraint from an illustrator, lest they appear overly fussy; but these differences are as much a matter of convention as of technical limitations (p. 44).

In comparison to the information that wider books tend to focus on: detailed depiction on setting and the relationships between characters and their environment, Nodelman (1988) points out,

> But in narrower books, or in those books in which illustrators have chosen to place pictures only on one side of the two-page spread, there is less opportunity for depicting setting and, as a result, greater concentration on and closer empathy with the characters depicted (p. 46).

It is true as we find those three illustrators frequently let Wonderland characters fill in the narrower pages, especially at moments when they are experiencing intense situation (i.e. Alice abruptly grows or shrinks), or strong emotion (i.e. the animals
fear for Alice’s terrifying figure). Therefore, the characters’ facial expression and body gesture come to be the main focus of our attention, and we may take an attitude of empathy to identify with their external and internal conflicts.

Moreover, how the words and pictures are set up, in terms of the page orientation, can affect our “glance curve”—“a certain fixed path which we seem normally to follow within the picture space” (Gaffron, as cited in Nodelman, 1988, p. 135). Since we tend to read from left to right, up to down, the artist who arranges his/her work to be taller than it is wide directs readers to look closely at the figures or objects that are located on the top and bottom, which we might otherwise ignore in the wider books (Stewig, 1995). At other times, as the artist aims to complement the words by running ahead of them, he/she purposely pushes the action forward and makes the readers continuously read through the text. Interestingly, both Carroll and Tenniel also chose the portrait layout to offer a visual angle on the characters in their manuscripts. The schemata, then, direct the readers towards a cluster of ideas in which we are together with Alice falling into the long, deep well and involving in a series of motion and emotion accordingly.

When picking up Oxenbury’s, Zwerger’s and Lipchenko’s picturebooks, I paid conscious attention to my eyes and my hands. The large format enabled me to see clearly and sustain attention. The bulk of the pages demanded the use of both hands. During reading, my hands flipped the pages and either followed or directed the work of my eyes. Powers (1999) stresses, “Reading is not just an activity of the mind, but of the whole body” (p. 15). It is interesting to see how the actual size of the book could elicit my physical performance. The cooperation between my eyes
and hands helps me to sort out the information between the written words and pictures. In the meantime, I can always bring my imagination to the dynamics of pictorial composition that different illustrators try to depict. On the other hand, Nodelman (1988) thinks it is our mind’s eye which is attributing to the picturebook the quality of movement, not that our eyeballs are led to rolling around. He argues,

The dynamics by which pictures convey relationships among their parts demand activity of the mind, not of the physical eye. We must relate the various objects to each other not in terms of the order in which we actually do look at them but in terms of how we understand they ought to be looked at—in terms of the temporal sequences we determine they suggest (Nodelman, 1988, p. 161).

Moreover, Nodelman quotes the English artist and poet, Roland Penrose’s (1973) words, “Art has the unique quality of being able to halt the march of time while still giving the illusion of movement” (p. 265, as cited in Nodelman, 1988, p. 159). That is true of many pictures in these three selected Alice picturebooks and in John Tenniel’s illustrations. Given some clarifications, we are certain that there will be no mobility until people are actively involved in the text. While trying to trace the mobility in Alice in Wonderland in a different format, we should keep three things in mind: 1) the narrative information conveys action, 2) the pictures imply action, and 3) people can initiate and follow through with the action. In the following section, I will discuss what creates a narrative sequence and exuberant action in pictures.

**Depiction of Narrative, Movement, and Action**

We should all be familiar with how Alice entered Wonderland. Carroll told us that she started nodding off into a daydreaming state as she saw a clothed and
talking rabbit. Oxenbury, Zwerger, and Lipchenko all portray their imaginary rabbits in the picturebooks. Oxenbury makes the rabbit wear glasses, a bow tie, a vest, and a Victorian suit, in white, but have no pants. Zwerger’s rabbit has a bright red robe, black pants and leather shoes. Lipchenko’s rabbit is in brownish color because of the sepia tone throughout the book, but we can still tell Mr. Rabbit is wearing a dark hat, and a dark formal suit. Three artists vary the amount of details to create their desired effects: that is to make the rabbit run and direct our eyes from one place to another. While both Oxenbury’s and Zwerger’s rabbits are starting to their feet from left to right, on the horizontal plane, Lipchenko’s bursts out of the frame, diagonally (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Oxenbury’s and Zwerger’s rabbits are moving on the horizontal plane. Lipchenko’s rabbit is bursting out of the frame, diagonally.

According to Bang (2000), the diagonals in picture usually imply more energy, tension, and movement. Even though pictures only show us one particular moment, those illustrators achieve a continuing action by having the character progress from one place to another. As we follow from point to point, readers are reminded about
the shifting time and the ongoing event. In fact, Oxenbury, Zwerger, and Lipchenko try to arouse narrative expectations and make the movement apparent to viewers whereas Tenniel only chose a standing rabbit to unfold the same narrative.

Another scenario that Tenniel did not depict but on which other artists elaborated is Alice’s landing in an almost bottomless hole in the ground. Carroll describes the fall is so long that Alice has a plenty of “time” to look around and think to herself, and she notices bookshelves, pictures and maps on the sides of the well. With our experience of gravity in reality, we expect to see the protagonist being pulled downward in the hole. Oxenbury’s Alice in pencil sketches occupies the top half of the picture. We are given an angle of elevation to look up at her (Figure 20). Alice’s floating hair and dress inform readers about the persistent landing. Very different from Oxenbury’s depiction, Zwerger’s Alice occupies the bottom half of the picture. The weight of her position and the curve and the narrowness of the tunnel make her more like sliding down the well rather than falling (Figure 21). With a glimpse of bookshelves at the upper part, Zwerger also demonstrates various layers to Alice’s journey: a cutaway view of a rat and different insects tunneling underground. As for Lipchenko, his craftsmanship is subtler than a direct expression of the event and fact. He is concerned largely with iconology. He offers a fascinating account of the possible things in the shelves: jars, tea sets, vases, books, portraits of the Knight, the Duchess and even Mona Lisa. Alice falls with her face up and feet in the air at the bottom edge of the picture (Figure 22). The readers are invited to dive into many details in the large proportion of the shelves. The use of vague background adds to the situation in space and atmosphere. At this point, our
focus is led to Alice because the heavy vertical lines of the surroundings effectively go toward her to enhance the weight and the depth.

![Figure 20](image1.png) Oxenbury’s illustration of Alice’s fall. From *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by H. Oxenbury, 1999.

![Figure 21](image2.png) Zwerger’s illustration of Alice’s fall. From *Alice in Wonderland* by L. Zwerger, 1999.

![Figure 22](image3.png) Lipchenko’s illustration of Alice’s fall. From *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by O. Lipchenko, 2009.

Overall, even though what we see are only flat, two-dimensional pictures, all these artists generate a graphic projection of the verbal content and show readers how variously the same narration will affect various minds.

There is much evidence of movement in the illustrations of *Alice*. One more noticeable action is the appearance and disappearance of the Cheshire Cat. He is portrayed as enigmatic and a wise guide in the Wonderland. Carroll pointed out his first vanishing on the tree branch outside the Duchess’ house during the conversation with Alice. His disappearance at will is dramatic, but not out of Alice’s expectation. In Carroll’s account, Alice has been getting used to many queer things already. In Tenniel’s drawing, we may find the emphasis of the Cat’s wagging tail which lays down diagonally toward Alice’s sight (Figure 23). Moreover, the purposeful L-
shaped kind of text-picture arrangement —“the top or base of the illustration runs the full width of the page, but the other end leaves room on one side for a quadrant of the text”— marks the significant scene and transition in the narrative (Hancher, 1985, p. 127).

Figure 23. Tenniel’s drawing of the Cheshire Cat

The contemporary artists under discussion, furthermore, adjust such implications. With the immediately-relevant passage of text strategically placed as a caption, Oxenbury makes the Cheshire Cat into a colorful, double-spread comic strip showing the progress from the whole body to the grin. In the four equal frames, the facial expression of the vanishing cat keeps changing. Moreover, his body figure also changes from opaque to transparent. By having the distinct frames around pictures, Oxenbury highlights the physical action of the Cheshire Cat (Figure 24).

According to Nodelman (1988), pictures that are surrounded by defined borders imply “detachment and objectivity, for the world we see through a frame is separate from our own world, marked off for us to look at” (p. 50). While Tenniel only uses one single picture to demonstrate the magical disappearance of the Cheshire Cat,
Oxenbury reveals her deep engagement with the strip format and complements the action-filled words of the text.

**Figure 24.** Oxenbury’s drawings of the Cheshire Cat
From *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by H. Oxenbury, 1999.

In contrast, both Zwerger and Lipchenko choose the “still” picture inserted in the corresponding passage to depict the same scene. Zwerger’s Cheshire Cat has a bright red face and an all-white body (Figure 25). He appears in the left bottom corner of the page when Alice first encountered him. The second time he appears with a big grin before the description saying he vanishes. Zwerger then presents his complete absence until the queen’s croquet-game. He is at times placed in the middle of the text or at the right top corner of the text with the L-shape (Figure 26).

Literally, we do not get to see his vanishing process. However, his sudden appearance sprinkles freely throughout different episodes and seems surprisingly energetic. Whereas Tenniel and Oxenbury address explicit motion of the character in the pictures, Zwerger has the character randomly appear within the text. She uses white space around the character to provide a focus that demands readers’ involvement. The readers are in an effective relationship to the event without being overwhelmed by the pictures. The mysterious presence of the Cheshire Cat becomes more of an idea than an actual effect.
As for Lipchenko, the Cheshire Cat can move across various places. We may find him integrated in the frame for text, merged with the decorative letter, groveling in the cupboard of the Duchess’s kitchen, disguised in the gutter, and sitting on the tree branch with Alice (Figure 27).

Moreover, the Cat’s figure is sometimes in charcoal, hidden among many details; sometimes he is in sepia, right in front of the audience’s eyes. Even though we do not see the “activity” of the Cat, the compositional dynamics hold up the character and give the sense of solidity. Unlike other illustrators’ versions, Lipchenko expresses a
closer relationship between the Cheshire Cat and Alice. As they converse, both characters are sitting on the branches. The tree trunk is placed across the gutter and divides them into two sides. Although their positions are not even, the symmetrical, horizontal placement of words and pictures creates a harmonious atmosphere. In addition, from their poses and the gestures, they seem to have a pleasant interaction. The Cheshire Cat appears neither weird nor eerie. Lipchenko amplifies the role of the Cat as a mentor and companion in the picture.

**Mobility among Illustrators, Readers and Picturebooks**

As we have seen, different artists approach Carroll’s *Alice* differently. Their re-imaginings show how they negotiate meanings residing between the original text and their own interpretations. The readers and beholders, therefore, are invited to enter numerous fictional worlds and construct some web of understanding. Doonan (1993) states,

> Whether the illustration is congruent or deviates from the text, the reader-viewer will be able to make more meanings if it is not assumed that illustrations merely reinforce the subject matter of the words, and the pictures are allowed to do their own talking. We miss much in any work of art if we only look for what we expect to find, instead of opening ourselves to what it has to offer (p. 169).

There is an active interaction not just between the illustrators and the text-meanings, but also between the readers and the meanings of the whole new design. In the medium of the picturebook, the readers are no longer “bound by linear sequence, but can orchestrate the movement of the eye” (Hunt, 1991, p. 176). Instead of experiencing different modes of expression simultaneously, the readers need to alternate between words and pictures and rethink the position of verbal resources
within semiotic configurations. As a result, picturebooks emphasize the dynamic and joint nature of reading, and in such a way that the readers can constantly interact in different directions of storytelling between the intentions of the writer and the visualization of the illustrator. When the narrative continues, it becomes clear that at the story level, picturebooks can create a more intense reading experience. In her book *Literacies Across Media: Playing the Text*, Margaret Mackey (2007a) replaces “play” with our use of the word “read” in order to include all kinds of texts with which readers can interact and view. She argues that the word “play” can “make the liveliest connections with our contemporary textual ecology” (Mackey, 2007a, p. 165). Furthermore, she illustrates why the idea of “play” nicely captures our understanding of perceiving a text across multimodal media. She defines, “playing as pretending or imagining,” “playing as performing,” “playing as engaging with the rules of the game,” “playing as strategizing,” “playing as orchestrating,” “playing as interpreting,” “playing as fooling around,” and “playing as not working” (pp. 166-171). The last claim of “playing as not working” does not mean something is insignificant, but rather it means that there might not be a direct or immediate practical outcome coming after the activity of reading (p. 171). Her notion of play coincides with my thought that reading *Alice* involves all kinds of bodily immersion and all parts of mental efforts. The readers’ mobility is involved in organizing attention and association toward the text whereas the illustrators’ mobility means finding the way to combine his/her impressions with a deeper reading of the text. In fact, it is interesting to see lots of activities occur in the form of the picturebook. Not only can we discover how the story inspires different illustrators to apply their text-
processing in a new format, but also we, as audience of both the original *Alice* and the remake one, can view the text through a variety of lenses and coordinate relevant information from different sources. Nodelman (1988) makes a striking point,

> All things considered, then, the picture book is a subtle and complex form of communication. It is unusual as narrative in its supplementation of verbal information with visual and as visual art in its focus on the meaningful aspects of visual imagery. It is unique in its use of different forms of expression that convey different sorts of information to form a whole different from the component parts—but without those parts ever actually blending into one, as seems to happen in other mixed-media forms such as film and theater, so that someone reading a picture book must always be conscious of the differences of the different sorts of information (pp. 20-21).

It is also clear that without the readers’ participation, any sophisticated stories and art works become meaningless. Following the same logical order, I am aware of the reason why the verbal and visual codes can speak and interact with readers. Nodelman (1988) explains, “[N]either pictures nor the books they appear in can communicate directly and automatically. They imply a viewer with a mastery of many skills and much knowledge” (p. 21). The more unusual the text is, the more powerful are the narrative effects it might create. Nevertheless, unless the readers are willing to “play” with the text, the horizon of the literature and the depth of the format design will not be perceived.

**A Further Discussion about Mobility in Picturebooks**

In Chapter 2, I listed a triadic conception of the dynamic among the author, the reader, and the text (including images and media/interfaces). While exploring what constitutes vigorous activity and creativity in reading or text-processing, I
realized the definition of “mobility” could be narrow as the book content and
construction details provide movement of one sort or another. Or, it could be broad
as the people react beyond the pages and undertake their own text-making in all
manners of creativity. The reworked illustrations of *Alice in Wonderland* display
both situations and add a new dimension to our understanding of interactivity with
the text. The collaboration of Carroll and Tenniel, undoubtedly, stirred the artist-
authors’ imaginations and propelled them to make their own visualization concrete.
Their art works are products of intellectual and creative exchange. Spectators do
whatever is necessary to comprehend and orchestrate meanings from their
adaptations. There is a holistic system, activated by the authors/artists and readers,
involving the ability to work with the text, not only to represent or to interpret it, but
even to construct a new realm of storytelling.

In an age where a good deal of literature can be adapted to almost every
medium, there is no avoiding that *Alice* will continue traveling through our emerging
multimodal culture. In order to become more proficient in such a transformative text,
readers should expand their “interpretative repertoires,” including analytical
approaches like visual grammar and semiotics, visual communication, and visual
literacy (Serafini, 2010, p. 86). From the example of the picturebook adaptations, I
have tracked several elements that are vital to contemporary illustrators from a
corporal and aesthetic perspective. I have also pointed out what made each
adaptation so distinct as well as what they share in common. Revisiting a classic
from a different artist’s eye enables me to rethink the old tale, explore new
possibilities, and sustain engagement. Mackey (2009) uses concepts of “thick play”
and “big world” to explain why people return to the same story, seek the recognition in the variation, and rework it over and over again. She says,

Thick play offers ways of lingering in a particular fictional world, savouring, repeating, extending and embellishing the imaginative contact with that world, often in complex, irregular and inexplicit ways that may indeed be ‘superimposed upon or knotted into one another (Mackey, 2009, p. 93).

A big world usually occurs where the thick play takes place. In her words, it is “a fiction that extends beyond the limits of one text,” and it goes across many different platforms (Mackey, 2009, p. 93). Carroll’s Alice creates a big world with spectacle and attraction that leads to a series of intertextual plays and develops an ever-expanding crowd of followers. In moving from one version to another, suggested by Mackey (2009), we gradually become “experts not only in the world of the story but also in the art of adaptation” (p. 97).

Undoubtedly, the effect that the picturebook has on the text is different from the novel. In addition, we should not expect to experience the same thing from the adaptations since the text must change somewhat to fit the demands of the new medium. Oxenbury, Zwerger, and Lipchenko try to rework Tenniel’s illustrations and provide multiple levels of interactivity. To some extent, we get to notice how Carroll’s words allow those artists to pursue their own interpretations, but each interpretation is also a productive moment of experimentation. Each demonstrates that the textual mobility flows. Even if today’s young people may encounter the new rendition prior to the original creation, we should not forget there are many ways to enter the fictional world. Picturebooks offer one channel, and so do other media. As long as the text appeals to people and enables many forms of encounter, the tale is
anticipated to carry over into every new epoch and become everlasting. Beckett (1999) comments, “Carroll’s empty chair seems to beckon, and contemporary authors of many nationalities have taken up their pens to retell Alice’s adventures in a surprising variety of text…” (p. 25). I find that the conversation between the Cheshire Cat and Alice in the chapter of Pig and Pepper seems to connote the prosperity of the text.

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”
“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.
“I don’t much care where—” said Alice.
“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.
“—so long as I get somewhere,” Alice added.
“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the Cat, “if you only walk long enough.” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 65)

Alice has been walking long enough from British borders to the entire world; from Victorian era to the twenty-first century. With extensive mobility, the text can get anywhere.
The Use of Movables

First it marked out a race-course, in a race-course, in a sort of circle, (“the exact shape doesn’t matter,” it said,) and then all the party were paced along the course, here and there. There was no “One, two, three, and away!” but they began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to know when the race was over (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 31).

In the episode of *A Caucus-Race*, after swimming around in Alice’s pool of tears, the animals need to dry off. A big bird, the Dodo, who is usually regarded as Carroll himself in a wry reference to his stutter (Do-do-dodgson), suggests that they should all run a caucus-race where the participants run around in no particular pattern and direction, start or leave off whenever they wish, and become a winner at last since it is not a serious match. This passage, though absurd, is absolutely animated in that it shows a sequence of movements. In fact, any cursory glance at the content will show an ever-constant shift and departure: from reality to dream; from stasis to mobility. In Chapter 3, I mentioned a few occasions that contemporary illustrators would neglect to elaborate on, such as Alice’s fall down the rabbit-hole and the grinning Cheshire Cat. Whether the original illustrator did or did not picture the appearance of characters and settings, some post-Tenniel Wonderland artists are all tempted to produce a new “text” that encourages readers and viewers to gaze with fresh eyes both at the book itself and at the broader realm.
As I have ventured into this newly-adapted Wonderland with Alice, I was curious how much diversity there would be. Meanwhile, as I depart from one version to another, it is even more wondrous that the book keeps on evolving, progressing, expanding, and triggering more interactive art forms: paper-engineered books, such as movable books. Not only are there two elements (words and images) woven together to tell a story, but also folds, flaps, tabs, turns, and other special effects are used to invite readers into a tactile and participatory reading experience. Lewis (2001) comments, “Picturebooks with tabs to pull, flaps to lift, wheels to rotate, pages to unfold, holes to peep through, and most recently, buttons to push and sounds to listen to, are now quite commonplace” (p. 98). “And yet,” the founder of the Movable Book Society, Ann Montanaro (n.d.) says, “for more than 700 years, artists, philosophers, scientists, and book designers have tried to challenge the book's bibliographic boundaries. They have added flaps, revolving parts, and other movable pieces to enhance the text” [bold emphasis mine]. Montanaro’s comments about this “text enhancement” compelled me to ponder how the movable relates to Carroll’s Alice. I believe it is not a random thought that paper engineers (artists who create movable illustrations) have discovered Alice a good material to be transported into the movables. In fact, many characteristics of this book make it seem destined to become an “evocative text,” the text that dazzles the implied readers, demands attention, and provokes “personal response; reader participation; and life-to-text, text-to-life connections” (Kurkjian, Livingston, Henkes, Sabuda, & Yee, 2005, p. 480). Below, I will analyze several features in Alice which lend themselves readily to be converted to paper-engineered books.
First, a recurrent theme of *metamorphosis* in Wonderland stimulates authors and artists to propose a kinesthetic aspect of the text. Manlove (2003) points out, “In *Alice* everything has the plasticity of dream: Alice alters in size, the Cheshire Cat shrinks to a grin, the Countess’s baby turns into a pig, the whole court at the end is transformed into a pack of cards” (p. 23). Perhaps paper engineers, perceiving an inherent malleability, desire to bring graphic gestures into focus and reproduce Alice’s journey by their selection of moveable options. Moreover, in reading the story aloud, we will also find the qualities of “liveliness” and “mirth” in the text (McGillis, 1986, p. 31). “In *Alice,*” McGillis (1986) says, “Carroll generates liveliness through sound: a puppy barks, a baby howls, a cucumber frame crashes, a pencil squeaks on a slate…The White Rabbit ‘pops’ down the hole; Alice’s fall ends with a sudden ‘thump! thump!’; and Alice slips into the sea of tears with a ‘splash!’” (p. 31). The voice of the noise makes the story ripe for all sorts of attractive forms and encourages readers to derive meanings from the cooperation of different senses.

Second, with a mass of suggestive games in the text, literary critics find that “Carroll puts on the pages of *Alice in Wonderland* the off-the-page activities of reading” that make reading itself associated with play (Brown, 2006, p. 355). In *Alice,* there are linguistic games for you to puzzle, nonsensical events to make you laugh, and a group of animals inviting you to a “win-win” game where all participants are winners and eligible to get a prize. The theme of Wonderland is a deck of cards, whereas the sequel, *Through the Looking Glass,* is based on a game of chess. Carroll thrusts us into a game mindset and a play attitude geared toward making the experience of reading an amusement and fascination to readers.
Movable book creators capture this high-spirited energy and evoke a playful activity that encourages readers to play and interact with the text, literally.

Third, the non-sequential and disjunctive structure makes Alice a highly participatory text in which it demands the readers’ active involvement in sorting out the meanings and patterns. Meanwhile, even though the plot of story is pre-determined by the author, the readers are offered opportunities to move around at will within the text since each episode of Alice can stand on its own and deliver a story. Moreover, the narrative is an indefinable literary form that fuses together numerous components (i.e. words & images; senses & nonsenses; comedy & parody) that make it contain a crossover appeal. In other words, as a text, Alice invites the readers to look at it in multiple ways, and at the same time, it has the feature of malleability that allows the linking of various modes and materials. Attuned to the ethos of hybridity and multiplicity, paper engineers, thus, can seek out invention, subversion, and experimentation and push what can be done with the text to its limits.

Even though Carroll did not explore placing Alice in a movable book format, the nature of the story has inspired authors and artists to transform the internal movements of reading into external, visual, and tangible forms. Likewise, they consider the text as an artifact that can be manipulated, reconstructed, and transferred from a two-dimensional format to three-dimensions. This form of expansion on the print book takes account of the mobility and adaptability of the text. In other words, by discovering certain features of the text (such as metamorphosis, playfulness, and a multifaceted narrative), paper engineers supply concrete actions and transitions that stimulate the readers’ eyes and demand that readers grasp for
deriving meanings. Not only has the integration of materiality and imagination been brought to the foreground, but also the reader’s role in animating the process of reading becomes explicit and crucial. Soon, I am convinced that what Carroll offers in *Alice* is more than pictures and conversations, but an abundant textual mobility that extends both authors’ and readers’ literary experiences and propels us to look for the new relationships beyond images and words. As the dynamics among the author, the reader, and the text carry over to the form of movables, I wonder how the imagery and objects that fill the Wonderland world will be presented and interpreted. What purpose do the movable editions have, and what additional engagement can a reader experience? “Come, we shall have some fun now!” thought Alice (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 70). Why don’t we have a playful heart like her and see how the medium of movables would give both contemporary authors and readers a new sphere of textual games?

**Multiple Sensory Engagements:**

**Readers as Pop-up Players**

…and, after waiting till she fancied she heard the Rabbit just under the window, she suddenly spread out her hand, and made a snatch in the air. She did not get hold of anything, but she heard shriek and a fall, and a crash of broken glass, from which she concluded that it was just possible it had fallen into a cucumber-frame, or something of the sort. (Carroll, 1865/2000, pp. 42)

When Alice is cramped in the Rabbit’s house because of her enormous size, the page depicts her open hand at the top of the illustration, and the Rabbit, appearing beneath her hand, crashes onto a cucumber frame (Figure 28).
Alice seems very willing to catch a little animal with her hand. But, before snatching anything, the text tells us she first hears something and then uses senses other than sight to presume what is happening and what is out there. Like playing the “touch box” or the “guess box,” which has one or several mysterious objects, participants depend on various senses (usually the tactile sense) to identify the object. Even though it is Alice who is penned up inside and other creatures are running around outside, Carroll provides a vivid picture of the protagonist using her sensory coordination to perceive the outer world and generate meanings. Her senses are her gateway to Wonderland and so are ours.

Movable book authors particularly emphasize the “materiality” and “tangibility” of the text. They exert simple or intricate paper construction to invite readers to have a hands-on and interactive reading experience. Readers may pull a tab, flip a flap or turn wheels to see characters perform action and objects move. By sight, touch, and other senses, movable books are enjoyed even though very often people denigrate them and do not think they have much to offer in terms of literary conventions (Lewis, 2001). Yet, Lewis (2001) comments, “There is some justice in

Figure 28. Tenniel’s drawing of Alice’s big hand and the Rabbit
this view, but it is far too simplistic for it tidies up too neatly something that, if we are honest, rather resists pigeonholing” (p. 98). For this reason, it would be better to “understand the movable if we view it as a hybrid, a merging of two, otherwise incompatible artefacts: the toy and the picturebook” (Lewis, 2001, p. 98). In Iona and Peter Opie’s term, they are books encompassing “bookish format” and “unbookish characteristics” (cited in Montanaro, n.d.). Instead of being concerned with how much their “unbookish” parts might overshadow their “bookish” parts, I argue that perceiving and handling such texts differently is inevitable and necessary. Some scholars find that a spectator can obtain an enriching and stimulating learning experience as he/she manipulates movables and assembles meanings gleaned from multiple components, including verbal, visual, tactile, and auditory representations (McGee & Charlesworth, 1984). Some believe that the paper mechanics, as a hook for the reader to browse, examine, and engage, augment the overall narrative and even create a heightened animated or theatrical effect (Reid-Walsh, 2007). In the following discussion, I will evaluate three different movable versions of Alice and attempt to understand what sensory engagement those texts seek from the readers.

**Alice in the Movable Land**

Three books that I am going to explore were respectively published in 2003 and 2010. The two books that came out in 2003 have six spread, sculpture-type, pop-up pages while the other one that was released in 2010 has only one spread of pop-up page, and the rest are basic lift-flaps or pull-tabs. I include the 2010 version in my comparison for three reasons. First, not only does it have interactive mechanisms such as flaps and pull-tabs that cause movement on the page surface,
but it also displays the interplay between words and 3D effect full-color illustrations. Second, the subtitle of the book, *Open Me: For Curiouser and Curiouser Surprises*, announces an invitation for manipulation and has created the suspense of expecting possible sensory engagement. Third, this book is made as a primer of *Alice*, offering a brief information about characters, traits of Wonderland, and the simplest form of movable types, such as lift-up flaps, that invite readers to open the realistically-shaped flaps and find what is hidden underneath. In order to get a fair comparison as well as to understand how the reader-text relationship may develop depend on different movable formats, I will first take a look at the 2010 movable version, a relatively plain interactive book, and then I will review two other pop-up versions from 2003, more intricately-crafted works. Since the production of a movable book needs a team of people (author, designer, illustrator, and paper engineer), I will list the complete bibliographic information before examining the text and the construction details.

**Castor: Increasing Curious Surprises**

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<td>2010</td>
<td>Paper Engineering</td>
<td>Not mentioned specifically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text</td>
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<td>Cover Designer</td>
<td>Jake da’Costa &amp; Joanne Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustration</td>
<td>Zdenko Basic</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Carton Books Limited (New York)</td>
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Timed to coincide with the widely-anticipated release of the 3D *Alice* movie by Tim Burton in 2010, this edition has numerous reasons for catching the readers’ attention. The front cover shows the famous scene of the Mad Tea-Party. The
protagonist, Alice, shows up with a very typical look of the Barbie doll: blonde hair, blue eyes, rosy lips, and skinny body. As we turn the first page, what come to the eyes are some major role depictions: the Cheshire Cat, the Queen of Heart, the Duchess, etc. There is a small guidebook demonstrating what Wonderland looks like and how it functions from the White Rabbit’s point of view. The introductory page is quite informative, and its tone is humorous and interesting. For instance, referring to the caucus-race, the Rabbit gives the advice that we, as the Wonderland tourists, should carry some small items in our pockets in case we are asked to exchange rewards. Locked by a cupcake sticker, *The White Rabbit’s Guide to Wonderland* booklet invites the readers, especially young ones, to open it and read through it before heading to the adventure.

While our eyes tend to move from the left to the right and from top to bottom on the densely printed page (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), the second spread is ingeniously set vertically. This type of arrangement makes the readers turn the book from horizontal to vertical and add to the feeling of Alice’s deep falling. During the fall, four cupboard doors and a pocket watch with flaps entice the reader to lift the cover and see the things inside. With another turn of the page, the next scene is back to horizontal, to depict Alice’s safe landing on the underground. The purposeful page layout of landscape-portrait-landscape not only indicates the spatial change (from above-ground to underground), but also links the marvel of the story’s movement with the readers’ movement. What is also appealing is that the act of turning and moving makes readers believe that they have the power in their hands to
unleash the movements of characters and setting. The action-packed story now becomes action-fulfilled.

Another example that invites readers to participate is located in the episode of Alice’s pool of tears. The designer uses the pull-tab function to allow readers to stretch out Alice’s neck and legs for demonstrating her growth. In terms of the design, the placement of the words and the movable image creates an open situation and stimulates the reader’s ability of association. The combination of four components, including the direct speech of Alice, the pictorial representation, the movable mechanism, and the narrative’s action, invites a thoughtful scrutiny and manual play. Readers may follow the instruction to pluck the “Pull Me” tab, read out Alice’s classic quote displaying over her head, “Curiouser and curioser,” and make the protagonist open out like the telescope. While manipulating the movable figure and dramatizing Alice’s situation, as if playing with a paper doll, readers can identify with the situation and simulate the character’s state of mind. Once readers have had the pleasure of interacting with the character, they can linger on the page and indulge themselves in verbal, visual, or tactile fun. Together, the balance of three narratives (words, images, and movables) can achieve a powerful sensory effect and can generate an enjoyable reading experience in an interactive way.

Besides the pull-tab function, other movable techniques that this book has are the “magic wallet flexagon” (Smith, 2008, p. 43) (Figure 29) and the “the jalousie or venetian blind” (Montanaro, n.d.) (Figure 30). The former technique shows that Alice becomes shorter from one side of the page and grows taller if we flip another side in correspondence to the Caterpillar’s advice. By opening the intertwining
panel, the readers manipulate Alice’s metamorphosis and see the consequences of the character’s action. The latter magic of the jalousie or venetian blind is exactly mirrored on the principle of a pull-tab with two transformational plates (Carter & Diaz, 1999). With one pull of a tab, the base page of the Cheshire Cat’s grin remains, but the frontal page of his body vanishes. In turn, if we push back the tab, the Cheshire Cat will appear again. The paper engineer makes use of various techniques to emphasize and mirror the world of fantasy. Readers are encouraged to move the page up and down, and in and out, to see the events described and interpreted.

Figure 29. The “magic wallet flexagon:” Alice becomes shorter from one side of the page and grows taller if we flip another side in correspondence to the Caterpillar’s advice. From Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by H. Castor, 2010.
The next-to-last page, the courtroom scene, is a visual three-dimensional spectacular. The pack of cards literally springs up and flies over Alice’s head. The heart-shaped patterns or objects scatter all over the place, and yet the atmosphere is not friendly at all. The queen is furious, the animals are frightened, and Alice is leaping out of the plane as if trying to break up their menace. Although it is the only pop-up page in the entire book, it nicely builds up to the climax and depicts the chaotic scene. As we fold out the pop-up page, the resolution sets in peaceful and pastoral scenery on the last double-spread page. The trees are waving, the river is flowing, and the Wonderland creatures spread out to all the corners. Compared with Carroll’s original, however, this version ends with Alice recalling her adventure instead of focusing on her sister recollecting her own innocent childhood. Perhaps the author here attempts to evoke more thoughts and emotions for Alice. Then, a sign, entitled “READ ME,” displayed on the right corner of the page, brings up a
A fundamental question to readers: “How does one get to Wonderland?” The author suggests we should “look back through Alice’s adventures” and “find twelve hidden keys” in the pictures. Each key has a letter on it, and assembling them together will help to find out “the key” to the dreamland. Guess what? The key is: “IN YOUR DREAMS.”

The author cleverly instills the word play and utilizes a condensed interactive format to tackle reading, writing, and art. Meanwhile, he suggests that readers return to where the dream begins and explore new meanings and details in the text. Even though there are not many intricate movable constructions, the simple combination of lift-flaps, pull-tabs, and pop-ups still sparks imagination and interactivity. The pop-up specialist, Ron van der Meer comments, “Some of the simplest techniques are the most effective” (as cited in Avella, 2009, p.106). This edition, I believe, contains all the charming interactive elements!

• **Sabuda: Reviving the Classic Style**

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<th>Art Design</th>
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<td>Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland: A Pop-Up Adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s Original Tale</td>
<td>Robert Sabuda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Art Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Paper Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text</td>
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<td>Illustration</td>
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<td>Adapted John Tenniel’s picture</td>
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Devoted to reviving the classical *Alice*, Sabuda bases his version on Tenniel’s drawings and raises the bar in the pop-up realm (Simon, 2003). Susina (2010) observes, “He (Sabuda) has taken those illustrations and marked them with
heavy, black outlines, giving an impression of early wood cuts, and then enhanced them with four colors” (p. 157). On the front cover, the White Rabbit appears in a hurry at the right corner, while Alice, at the left, is chasing after him. Our eyes are drawn to the direction where they are going, and our hands are tempted to unfold the cover. Soon, a large cluster of trees springs from the center, growing up high as though they were coming to life. Moving the page, we may even hear that the clash of paper is a bit like the wind rustling the leaves. The three-dimensional illustrations dramatically transport us into the field where three characters: Alice, Alice’s sister, and the White Rabbit, show up together. However, by looking closely, we will notice a few more characters are hidden in the picture (Figure 31). The Cheshire Cat is showing off its teeth and grinning. The Mad Hatter is holding a teacup while the Queen of Heart looks like she is yelling, “Off with their heads!” Sabuda skillfully disguises them in green in the tops of the trees to hint that Alice starts daydreaming and will be meeting those characters later. Meanwhile, he creates the down-to-the-rabbit-hole scene with the “accordion-fold, tunnel-vision” technique (Mattoon, 2010) (Figure 32). Like a kaleidoscope, as we pull up the top cover, poor Alice is viewed helplessly falling into a tunnel. The more we pull out that accordion-style pop-up, the deeper she is descending to the underground. This is very different from the 2010 version where the falling scene is created by demanding readers to turn the book vertically.
The sophistication of Sabuda’s paper engineering can also be found from the way he combines pop-ups with the narratives. In order to compensate for the lack of textual space, Sabuda adds panels to each side of the spread and clips them in place by a small corner holder. The blogger Keli Rowley (2009) comments that this device “allows him to build eye-popping center-spread pop-up feats while still maintaining room for the text.” Hence, besides seeing the large pop-up rising up from the gutter, readers are offered opportunities to comprehend the story through Sabuda’s exquisite choices of words, pictures, and movables. For instance, on the second spread, what arrests the readers’ immediate attention is the sudden emergence of the White Rabbit’s house. It literally stands up on the surface, and Alice’s arms and legs swing from the chimney and roof. The pop-up house is big and catchy. Likewise, it is made to be touched and seen through. A couple of small animals are standing near the house and watching Alice’s plight. We are involved in her distressful situation and are aware of her physical discomfort.

**Figure 31.** Sabuda’s rendering of the first scene: three characters (the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter, and the Queen) are in the tops of the trees. From *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by R. Sabuda, 2003.

**Figure 32.** The accordion-style pop-up: The more we pull it out, the deeper Alice is descending to the underground. Retrieved May 15, 2012, from, http://monoclip.jp/book_music_dvd-foreignbook/monodtlamazon/105/
On the edge of the spread, the gatefold cover designed as a door, with a shimmering brass plate engraved “W. Rabbit,” impels readers to open it and find out what will pop up next. Then, the narrative explains what makes Alice grow, and invites reader to compare the three-dimensional representation to the description.

She went in and found her way to a tidy little room with a table in the window, and on it a fan and tiny white kid gloves. She took up the fan and gloves and was just going to leave the room, when her eye fell upon a little bottle. There was no label this time, but nevertheless she uncorked it and put it to her lips. “I do hope it’ll make me grow large again, for I’m tired of being such a little thing!” (n.p.)

Beneath the text are a pop-up fan and a pair of long white gloves. They do not look “tiny,” and neither does the room/house. Apparently, Sabuda tries to exaggerate the theme with pop-up effect to arouse a deeper reaction. Moreover, because of his elaborate pop-ups, Sabuda’s Alice is thicker and more complex than others’ and demands more bodily participation. Not only do we need to adjust the distance and orientation between eyes and page, but also we need to coordinate both of our hands and our body to bringing the book to life. Mackey (2007a) mentions it is unlikely for people to focus our reading with sight only. Even though we rarely pay conscious attention to our physical relationship with a book, our body posture, corporeal interaction or emotional expression may affect our involvement in the texts and bear cognitive consequences (Mackey, 2007a). Therefore, as Sabuda reenacts Alice into a physically-interactive representation, he does not undermine the value of literary reading, but provides a more “well-rounded, cohesive whole reading” experience (Rowley, 2009, October 18).
After the first couple of routine pop-ups, I thought that my expectation in regard to Sabuda’s rendering was likely to be disappointing. In general, each double spread contains similar thread of ideas: to make characters or object burst out from the plane. Nevertheless, he ambitiously engineers every single detail and continuously invents immense surprises and interactivity. I see the baby transformed into the pig just by turning the page and without the need of using a pull-tab. The Cheshire Cat emerges from behind the branches and seems to play hide-and-seek as I flip the page back and forth. Perhaps Sabuda is a purist of pop-ups, so that he does not use other movable devices to make the Cheshire Cat vanish and leave its unique grin behind. On the contrary, he maintains the complete body shape of the Cheshire Cat and makes it rather threatening and disturbing. As we open another panel, the Cat is staring at us and baring its big mouth.

Some more refreshing and impressive moving parts come at the renowned tea-time scene. By turning the page, we find the table readily spreads out, while the cups are nicely placed, and the effect is further enhanced by the use of foil paper. In addition, Sabuda faithfully presents the Mad Hatter and March Hare’s rudeness of putting the sleeping Dormouse into the teapot. By moving the page, we can even partake in their “bullying” action. Furthermore, Sabuda does not forget to include the scene of the card gardener painting the white roses in red with an inventive movable element of the sliding slat/transformation. The color of a rose changes immediately as we flip the page. Attempting to show a number of new formats, Sabuda consistently pushes the boundaries of the book and forces the insiders (characters) and outsiders (readers/viewers) to mingle and interact each other. The
display of the croquet game serves an excellent example. A crowd of players tumble up against each other from the right to the left. The Queen, at the left, points to a few poker players and commands them to be expelled. One of the characters looks terrified and goes beyond the border as we extend the page by 180 degrees. Readers are propelled to think about what we can do to the text: pore over the illustration, imagine the clamor of the scene, and touch the pages to make those characters perform.

The fine workmanship and eye-popping paper engineering continues to the last turn of the page. Whereas Tenniel’s drawing shows us a whole pack of cards rising into the air and coming down toward her, Sabuda uses two full decks of cards (104 pieces) which burst out over the plane, creating a relatively graphic and overwhelming visual effect (Simon, 2003). Animals are running toward the edge of the page, and Alice, standing in the middle of the spread, lifts up her arms and defends herself from the chaos. If we open the “little book” that contains the text within this pop-up spread, we will see more animals piling up and coming out to increase the drama. Suddenly, I feel like I have a theater right in front of me. But the better thing is that I can decide how fast to view it: to fast-forward or to rewind it as I wish.

Having said all that, I must note that Sabuda’s Alice works as a good introduction to the full-length novel and lends itself readily to touching the responsive nerve of readers. He offers readers/viewers a visual and movable feast, and demonstrates how we can think outside the box and read beyond the flat. He argues that his pop-up books are four-dimensional because there is “height, width,
depth, and the element of time involved in his paper engineering” (as cited in Puleo, 2011, p. 17). A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor mentioned that Carroll, “who himself worked paper-engineering projects, would be pleased with this adaptation” (*Kirkus Review*, 2003, September 15). If it is so, I believe it is because the degree of artistry and creativity reinforces the wonder of the text.

- **Seibold: Creating an Imaginary Space**

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Seibold’s unique illustration gives *Alice* a cartoonish flavor and calls the attention of the reader to a hilarious experience. On the front cover, Alice has golden fish eyes. Her lips are as big and red as sausage. There is an over exaggerated bow on her head. What she matches with the typical Victorian girl’s dress is a pair of clown-like shoes. She will definitely not be considered to be the mainstream type of “cute” girl, but probably a very eccentric one. What’s more, in Sabuda’s version, Alice is chasing after the White Rabbit, whereas in Seibold’s, the Rabbit is actually placed above her head and looks like he is running away from her

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4 Scholars find that Lewis Carroll was closely immersed in designing and marketing his *Alice* books. The Wonderland Postage-Stamp Case (1890) was one of the clever “paper-engineering” works he ever created. It is “a folded piece of cloth-reinforced card containing pockets into which postage stamps could be kept. This was held in a card slipcase of around 10.5cm x 8cm. Both parts were illustrated by coloured adaptations of Tenniel, producing a transformation effect: Alice with the baby becomes Alice with the pig and The Cheshire Cat fades away” (The Lewis Carroll Society, 2010, April 4). Some details can be found in the website of The British Postal Museum and Archive: http://postalheritage.wordpress.com/2012/01/27/the-wonderland-postage-stamp-case/
mind. After turning the cover, we find that Alice and her sister are the main focus. They both are moving out of the flat position and exhibit vibrant, contrasting colors (green and red). The artist purposely has the Rabbit and the sister both wear green and stay at the opposite side of Alice. This seems to imply that the sister is influencing Alice to wander off and come across the White Rabbit. Moreover, there is a touch of humor and originality: Seibold creates a small book for Alice to read and invites readers to open it (Figure 33).

![Figure 33. Seibold’s rendering of the first scene: Alice is reading a “boring,” but comical book. From Alice in Pop-up Wonderland, by J. O. Seibold, 2003.](image)

So, anyone who is curious about her reading should turn the pop-up book the other way around and look at that mini book from her point of view. Instead of presenting a book “without pictures and conversations” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p.11), Seibold makes it into a tale with comical pictures and nonsensical verses. He states, “This is the book that Alice was reading when she was bored” on the book cover. The content is so “boring” but amusing that the readers can get the double pleasure of reading:

> Long ago in the days of old.  
> In the land of YORE, the most boringest story took place.  
> It had a castle in it and – did I say this book is boring?  
> Because there is this one part – but it takes sooo long to get to!  
> “I am the FINEST TAILOR in the LAND,” said the little mouse.
This part is boring. But no one heard this boast. BORING.

The wording jibes with what Alice could have made: abrupt, jumpy, and grammatically incorrect. Likewise, it relates to Carroll’s composition interest, “litterature.” Reichertz (2000) mentions,

Carroll develops a theory of writing out of what he calls amassed “litterature”: ‘litter’-ature or bits and pieces of “random flashes of thought,” sometimes immediately traceable “to books one was reading,” sometimes “struck out from the ‘flint’ of one’s own mind by the ‘steel’ of a friend’s chance remark,” and sometimes simply as “effect[s] without a cause,” such as those that frequently occur in reverie and dream (p. 7).

This account well explains what shapes the original *Alice*; meanwhile it also elaborates a view of what fuels authors/artists and their adapted works. Here, Seibold makes exemplary use of “a story within a story” and “a book within a book” to reveal the multi-linear and metafictive nature of his pop-up work. In order to capture the underplot and to engage in the material fabric of the text, readers are encouraged to withdraw their attention from the story and enter the secondary fictive world. As long as readers remember the major storyline is still going on, those design features are not distracting, but rather enhance the readers’ responses and activities.

Similar to Sabuda’s devotion to the pop-up mechanism, the paper engineer of Seibold’s version, James R. Diaz transcends the two-dimensional quality of book pages and makes specific characters and settings rise up from the center. In fact, this is not Diaz’s first time to engineer the book of *Alice*. In 1980, he cooperated with Jenny Thorne and John Strejan and employed marvelous techniques like a coil (a spiral cut), pull-tabs, and pop-ups to enliven the original text and drawings. After
twenty-three years, Diaz keeps his mastery of movables, but the aesthetic effect is changed by the oddness of Seibold’s artistic style. Each spread contains at least two moving parts, as well as the artist’s characteristic juxtaposition of words and pictures. Though the movable images inevitably grab the readers’ instant attention, the pervasive patterns and cartoonish expressions are still inviting to look at several times. For instance, on the first spread, beside the pop-up images of the White Rabbit, Alice and her sister, there are artistic floral designs enriching the fairytale aspect of the story (Figure 34). Turning away our eyes from the flowers, we find a white glove (which perhaps belongs to the Rabbit) which directs us to the rabbit hole. Then, we can start to predict that Alice is about to fall, and more surprises are ahead. Instead of falling down, Alice is actually falling toward the readers. There are lots of boxes labeled “everything” which are falling with her. These boxes may symbolize her losing everything of the real world while she is transitioning into the underground. The role of her sister is diminished by her small pop-up size. As the sister inquisitively peeks in through the hole above Alice, Seibold delineates their world difference. To demonstrate her shrinkage after tasting the magic drink, the paper engineer makes some doors with smaller and smaller flip-flaps on the hallway. We find that she is in the sea of teas when we open the first door and then see the characters of the caucus-race bursting up from beneath the second door. Not only do these doors represent her different stops, but they also count as a visual technique to animate the scenes.
Given their emphasis on creating the text’s dimensionality, the author and the art designer stick to the story sequence and showcase each significant part with movables: Alice’s overgrowing in the White Rabbit’s house; her encounter with the hookah-smoking Caterpillar, the Duchess in the kitchen saturated with pepper, the Pig-Baby, and so on. Meanwhile, they find new potentials in format and associate the book as more than a surface to display the content. By adding new materials or cuts, a book reveals new layers and demands the readers’ physical participation. The scene in which the Fish-Footman hands over the invitation letter to the Frog-Footman is an effective example. The letter is done in grand print and is enclosed in an envelope. The readers can lift it out of the envelope and read the content: “You are so invited to play croquet.” At other times, the readers can lift the flap to make the character transit to the next scene, or pull the tab to activate some sort of movement. We can even say that the reader becomes part designer and part performer of the text and image.

When the sidebar is opened, one of the eye-catching effects in that is a small pull-down screen that magically reveals the Cheshire Cat’s demonic smile. With a
simple pull, a sliding panel immediately conceals the Cat’s body and leaves it a grin. The presence of the three-dimensional representation of Seibold’s mad tea-party and the croquet game is not as astonishing as Sabuda’s. However, one can still observe the pop-up creation from different angles. We may start at the front of the page and continue with another turn to view a different side in order to see the multiple layers of each page. Moreover, we can think more deeply about how the pop-ups inflect what we read and what we see.

In Seibold’s interpretation of Alice in the maddening trial, the protagonist looks extremely furious and powerful while other characters are intimidated and distanced from her. Alice’s violent reaction is interpreted as her subversion toward the turmoil of the adults’ world, and is further enhanced by a three-dimensional representation of an enormous Alice standing in the middle of the courtroom, lifting up her arms and intending to fight. While most artists follow Tenniel’s drawings to make a pack of cards fly over her, Seibold uses colors, sizes, and her location (in the center of the spread) to intensify her dominance and rebellion against the tyrannical institution.

In comparison with the two other versions, Seibold’s edition re-envisions Carroll’s nonsensical world and evokes some complicated feelings. His hand-lettered narratives with various sizes, shapes, and script colors are definitely not pleasing to the eye, but his wild style of art composition and comical take on each scene catches attention and tickles a happy nerve. In addition, he purposely inserts symbolic patterns and intricate details for readers to linger over and ponder. Just as how Carroll coordinates visuals with his stylized textual elements, Seibold
incorporates movables into his signature graphic design to echo Alice’s extraordinary adventure.

**A Brief Review**

These three different versions stand for three different styles of pop-up books. They all use Carroll’s classic as the springboard to arouse playful interactivity. Different authors vary the mobility expertly, using either simple or intricate movable combinations to rework the major episodes and characterize some details. As in the scene of the whirlwind of playing cards, the designers selectively pick on a focal point to either stress the predicament that Alice is going through, or to express her emotional explosion under such a circumstance. The pop-ups conceived by these different artists provide a series of interpretive highlights rather than a thorough presentation of the story. Though the visual inputs might distract from the verbal messages, the blend of text and image elicits “different levels of literacy skills, whether child or adult” (Reid-Walsh, 2007, p.753). How these three *Alice* pop-ups assist in constructing meanings despite the limited format is quite an issue to discover. In the following, I will look over the abbreviated text and the authors’ choices of episodes.

**The Narrative Matters**

The coordinated precision of text, illustration, and paper engineering reveals a new dimension in the actual structure of *Alice*. In order to have readers recognize the tale, the motif and major episodes need to be carried on. For instance, what makes Alice follow the White Rabbit and enter Wonderland is simply curiosity. The
motif of curiosity brings forth another motif of transformation while Alice is driven to taste magic food. While she starts to adapt to her new size and new circumstances, we find the motif of identity. Hence, there are certain episodes that authors have to include in order to develop the story. No matter how much a reader, in general, will pay attention to the verbal text as well as the visual surprise, the word, illustration, and movable device are three equally strong components in a pop-up book (Dales, 2007).

The creators of the three reworked editions mostly follow Carroll’s narrative and abridge the text into a couple of double-page spreads (the 2010 version has thirteen spreads, and the two other 2003 versions have only six). In the original, the full, illustrated text is divided up into twelve chapters. A diverse space-time zone has been introduced, and bizarre characters appear one after another. Apparently, with the act of page turning, movable books can immediately display the transition of landscape and shift of characters. Moreover, the reading pace can be slowed down for obtaining secrets and details in the pictures. Sabuda’s adaptations manage to cohere the sequence very well along with some pop-up surprises of his own. The small booklets to the side improve the limitation of space for words and contain an abbreviated form of Carroll’s text. Some well-known quotes like “[c]uriouser and curiouser” and “[h]ow queer everything is today” are included. The significant motifs clearly convey, but some puns and illogical passages are missing. The Mouse’s tale/tail and the Cheshire Cat’s saying, “we’re all mad/made here” does not seem to be a focal point to Sabuda. Furthermore, the Mad Hatter’s notable riddle, “[w]hy is a raven like a writing desk?” is removed from the conversation at the tea
party as well. It is certainly not fair to request a single pop-up book to cover all the important points. Nevertheless, we still have to admit that there are parts of story not meant to or are not suitable to communicate in three dimensions.

On the other hand, Seibold only uses bits and pieces of Carroll’s text and jumps out of the conventional adaptation. He maintains some important themes, but at the same time, he boldly incorporates the speech bubbles into the text and twists the classic favor into a comic style. There are a few playful aspects in the dialogue, such as when the Fish-Footman delivers an invitation to the Duchess, the Frog-Footman replies, “Dude, thanks.” By using a very common phrase, the distance between the reader and the text seems reduced. Some critics have complained about the chaotic fonts and disrupted narrative (Mattson, 2003; Fleishhacker, 2004). Likewise, the text and the mechanical parts are not well connected, while some action abruptly shifts without giving any explanation. However, from my perspective, the gaps (unexplained details) in the text release possibilities for readers to rely on their external knowledge for acquiring imagination and interpretations.

Castor’s retelling generally includes the major episodes: tumbling into the rabbit hole, size-altering in the large hallway, playing the caucus game, meeting the Caterpillar, and so on. However, throughout the book, the author injects some of his own interpretations, so that Alice becomes personalized. Readers might feel Alice has become their friend, and that they are going through the adventures together. For example, before the narrative starts, we can read a self-introductory letter of Alice. It states her name, her age, and how her story originates. Even though this adaptation does not have so much complicated paper-engineering construction to
please readers, there are some witty incidents and supplementary information shaped as a tag, a chalkboard or a wood sign. Those indexes illustrate things that the story does not say and allow readers to know more details. Like the other two renditions, puns and puzzles are taken out of their original narrative sequence. Still, readers can experience the mysterious spirit of Wonderland and benefit from those reshaping insights. To sum up, while the nature of movables appears to favor visual and tactile elements over the narrative, the author’s style of translating the theme into their own storytelling matters to the overall narrative.

**Some Other Thoughts:**

**Movables — Where We Should all Move Together with the Text**

Alice’s inquiry about the book’s design and content ("What’s the use of book…?") constantly revolved in my mind as I engaged in her adventurous story in three-dimensional extravaganzas. Beside words and pictures, paper mechanics come along to enrich the readers’ experience with text, and make us interactive, complicit in the storytelling. Through folding, pulling, and turning, the story becomes exceptionally personal and intimate because it demands that the readers perform a sensory and physical immersion which static books do not usually do. Likewise, books with movable elements invite exploration and observation from multiple angles and at multiple speeds. Oftentimes, I feel that the paper engineer acts as a puppeteer, but hands the strings to us in order to develop a play, a story, and a life. Without the readers’ activation, the characters will not move, the plot is pointless, and the pop-ups will just remain flat.
In the article, *What Makes a Good Pop-up Book?*, Betty Carter (2009) mentions that “the paper mechanics should serve a purpose beyond visual stimulation, enhancing theme or content in some meaningful way” (p. 626). Like picture books, pop-up books are an art medium that must create a synergistic relationship between art and text, generating a cohesive meaning stronger than their individual components (Carter, 2009). Each of these three *Alice* pop-up book editions enthralls its audience in unique ways. Castor retains the spirit and humor of Wonderland. Sabuda cleaves more closely to the original *Alice* while Seibold produces more of a series of interpretive highlights than a thorough presentation of the story. They are both readers and co-authors of Carroll’s *Alice*. Furthermore, they attempt to anatomize and reconstruct the materiality of Wonderland, for readers to have the experience of being an author with final control. However, if the reader fails to understand the context, interpret based on his/her repertoire, and exert his/her energy, then I wonder what is the use of such a book without using creativity and imagination. Noteworthy in this respect, the readers’ engagements enable the implanted mobility of the text and yield plenty of insights and activities. Bringing the text to life, is not only the task of the paper engineers, but also of us, as the readers, viewers, and players.
Chapter 5

DIGITAL ANALYSIS:

CAPTURING MOBILITY IN THE E-BOOK OF ALICE

From Paper to Screen

“When I used to read fairy-tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one!” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 39).

Alice, who used to think fairy tales were fabricated and fictional, decides that her adventures are just like one after going through a great deal of the impossible and incredible. She shouts, “There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought!” (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 39). In fact, there are plentiful books about her, including electronic versions. Since Alice in Wonderland has fallen into the public domain, we can easily find the full digital text online: Project Gutenberg⁵, Literature.org⁶, eBooks @ Adelaide⁷ and so on. Anyone who would like to read a certain chapter of Alice may look at the table of contents on the computer screen and click on the hyperlink. The link will lead you to the particular scene and storyline, and the entire searching process will take you only a second (it took me only 0.1 seconds at Project Gutenberg). Moreover, if one is interested in knowing the underlying meanings and the context of the story, there are a number of websites (i.e.

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⁵ Project Gutenberg: http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page
⁶ Literature.org: http://www.literature.org/authors/carroll-lewis/alices-adventures-in-wonderland/
⁷ eBooks @ Adelaide: http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/carroll(lewis/alice/index.html
Victorian Web Study Site\(^8\) and Lenny’s Alice in Wonderland Site\(^9\) offering annotations, interpretations, and analyses. Readers can navigate through a web or network of linked texts for gaining more details and insights. Regardless of the different layouts and functions on each website, Wonderland becomes so readily available, easily understandable, and only a few “clicks” away. The online resources offer endless opportunities to enhance comprehension through easy access to information, such as vocabulary and background knowledge.

Besides the Internet as a medium for digital Alice, a variety of software programs and edutainment games related to Alice are now available in CD-Roms (Susina, 2010). The sound, graphics, animations, gaming features, and text links invite the reader-players to have fun exploring interactive adventures and connecting them to multimedia and hypermedia technology (Susina, 2010). While entertaining and somewhat enticing the audience to access the text, those digital reconfigurations are still seen as inadequate to reflect the organic, classic Alice. Researching and evaluating several CD-Rom versions from the early 1990s to 2000s, Susina (2010) discovered that most of those hypertext versions of Alice either loosely follow the story details and run counter to Carroll’s intention of creating a lesson-free text, or neglect the meaningful arrangement between Carroll’s words and Tenniel’s images and misuse the hyperlinks to increase the complexity of browsing the text. He says, “Most of the hypertext versions of Wonderland confirm the inability of the developers to successfully adapt Carroll’s imaginative text to new media” (p. 158).

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\(^8\) Lewis Carroll: An Overview – The Victorian Web:
http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/carroll/index.html

\(^9\) Lenny’s Alice in Wonderland Site: http://www.alice-in-wonderland.net/
Moreover, he sees a limited value overall in the new *Alice* media spin-offs. They are imitative, monotonous, and redundant, which result in a corruption of children’s literature.

On the other hand, seeing that the new media offer a unique way for readers to engage with the literature, Susina (2010) uses James Paul Gee’s (2007) finding regarding video gameplay to respond to the concerns about the repackaging of children’s texts into new media.

I am convinced that playing video games actively and critically is not “a waste of time.” And people playing video games are indeed…learning “content,” albeit usually not the passive content of school-based facts…The content of video games, when they are played actively and critically, is something like this: *They situate meaning in a multimodal space through embodied experiences to solve problems and reflect on the intricacies of the design of imagined worlds and the design of both real and imagined social relationships and identities in the modern world.* That’s not all that bad – and people get wildly entertained to boot (Gee, 2007, p. 40).

Gee’s account of the gaming culture provides an alternative perspective on learning and knowing. He observes the power and possibilities of new media, and he finds other pathways in which literacy skills, intellectual acquisition, and social affiliation can occur. Holding onto the notion that print literature is the “pure” vehicle for delivery of the “authentic” reading or learning experiences is gradually losing ground in the age of new media. In addition, we do not come across a text without any background of exposure to other media representations. Many chances are that we will meet a well-known title (like *Alice*) in various manifestations and adaptations. Instead of suggesting that the original print version is the canonical or
superior text, Mackey (1996, 2007a, 2009, 2011) thinks that it is more practical and necessary to be aware of a number formats that are being made available to the new generation and to know what is happening to our media culture today.

For this reason, I would like to turn to the most adventurous e-book invention to date, *Alice for the iPad* (2010), and explore how the old text takes on the affordance of the electronic reading device to refashion itself. I select the interface of Apple iPad, in particular, for observing the textual mobility presented by means of the e-book, for the following two reasons. First, it is the only medium so far that the digital book publisher has chosen to launch the highly interactive *Alice* reading app (alias of application). Second, amidst the multitudinous competing electronic reading devices, the iPad has been regarded as a “game changer” that shakes up our conception of electronic reading and opens new doors for children’s texts, such as picturebooks and movable books (Puleo, 2011, p. 48). With the promotional boost of Apple, which especially features the *Alice* reading app in their commercial, this app has been downloaded “on over 500,000 iPads,” says Chris Stevens, the founder of the British digital book publisher, Atomic Antelope, and the co-author of *Alice* app (*The Toronto Review of Books*, 2012). Meanwhile, it is also been advertised by such media as the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, the *New York Times*, and even the Oprah Winfrey Show10. By tapping, stirring, shaking and turning the iPad, 

10 On the Atomic Antelope’s official website, a brief YouTube video shows that the famous American talk show host, Oprah Winfrey, was amazed by the animated and versatile features of the *Alice* app. As the interviewee mentions that parents can record their voices in the program for reading aloud, Oprah credits, “It’s going to change the way kids learn!” See video on: http://www.atomicantelope.com/atomic-antelope-on-oprah/
the illustrations spring to life, shift around on the screen, and resemble the presentation of pull-tabs and pop-up books.

Reid-Walsh wonders if this rendering expresses a kind of nostalgia for the movable books or any interactive paper-engineered artifacts (personal communication, April 23, 2012). In her comparative study of the early English movable books and the interactive media of the present days, Reid-Walsh (2011) considers the historical movable books as the old interactive media and explores their connection with the contemporary digital media from the context of the design and the readers’ visual and tactile engagement in media. In her words, “[T]here are lines of continuity between old and new media” (Reid-Walsh, 2011, p. 165). Through examining the development and variation of the movable books, not only does she validate the value of looking at the contemporary media on both paper and digital platforms from the historical lens, but also suggests that the changing innovations can always be traced back to the old days. In this aspect, the new media are not necessary to be perceived as competition or substitution for the old media. On the contrary, they expand the idea, the styling, and the operation of the old media, so that we can find the re-incarnation of the traditional types of reading in the contemporary media. In order to better understand the territory of *Alice* as a digital text which inhabit a special middle ground between the old and the new interactive media, I would also like to begin with a bit of history that will take us into the larger picture of the changes currently taken place in regard to reading.
Experiencing the Old and New Forms of Reading

Compared to the “digital natives,” those who grow up immersed in digital technologies and who have an array of literature formats on hand (Prensky, 2001), I seem so old-school that I remember looking for a book from shelf to shelf at the bookstore. Sometimes, if the book was out of stock, I would need to go to another store to find it. Oftentimes, if the book was a little pricy, I would just pay a few visits to that store and finish reading it there. Even though the owner might not like seeing me walk out without buying anything, I have always enjoyed diving into the piles of books, touching their spines, judging their covers, and feeling the atmosphere of the reading environment. As I thought of a certain book title, I could even recall where I read it, and what other exterior factors (the smell of the book or the noise at the store) contributed to my reading. For me, the process of looking for a book and spending some time at the physical bookshop added to the holistic experience of reading.

Through the years, I have learned to use various media devices, know how to find a nice book deal online, and have tried to download and store texts in the digital medium. The e-book, “a book whose text is available in an electronic format for reading on such a device or on a computer screen” (The Oxford English Dictionary, 2012) has gradually become another access for me to the spectrum of literature. Now, not only do I read a text in print, but also on dozens of devices: from smartphones to e-book readers to tablets to laptops. “Then you keep moving round, I suppose?” said Alice. “Exactly so,” to borrow the Hatter’s quote.
Mackey (2001) explains such a phenomenon that the reader processes a text or a story from one media platform to another implies two premises. One is that the story can draw the reader to different media, and the other one is that various media can lead the reader to the story and make him/her aware of its multimedia affordances. Both assumptions indicate that the reader is constantly prompted by the allure of the story and the surrounding media landscape. While new forms and styles of the text come up, the reader is required to take over the challenge of making connection between the print and other media, so that he/she can explore more of the story as well as more of the medium/interface. In this sense, we may say that the story and the media format impact and reinforce one another in terms of literary and literacy experiences.

On the other hand, according to McLuhan (2003), the story itself which is composed of words or signs is a medium as well. He argues,

This fact, characteristic of all media, means that the “content” of any medium is always another medium. The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph (McLuhan, 2003, p. 19).

Moreover, he stresses,

“[T]he medium is the message” because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action (McLuhan, 2003, p. 20).

In other words, even if the story is confined to a certain format, it still has its own visual identity and plays a role in integrating or representing another medium. Bolter and Grusin (2000) propose that the process where one medium defines itself by refashioning and borrowing from another medium as “remediation,” and they
believe that “remediation is a defining characteristic of the new digital media” (p. 45). Even though the concept of remediation is not especially novel since human beings have been practicing recasting and recombining media for long, Bolter and Grusin (2000) notice that the trend of remediation is at a much more rapid rate of change because of the evolving digital technology. The ways that people can do things with the text are multiplying. The prevalence of digital devices, at the same time, comes to be a particular kind of a boost to the electronic literature.

Before *Alice for the iPad*, the digital versions of *Alice* on other basic electronic reading gadgets, such as so-called e-book readers or e-readers (i.e. Amazon Kindle, Sony Reader, and Barnes & Noble Nook) appear like the conventional book and contain their restricted features: black-and-white texts/illustrations (depending on the version that the readers download, as some do not include illustrations). Yet, they mostly have some useful quality, which enables readers/users to access texts easily and freely. For instance, based on the introduction of the Amazon website (2012), the Kindle owners can store up to 1,400 books in the device, and they are also allowed to have the content read aloud to them if it is available from the publisher. Besides preserving abundant books, the e-book readers simulate reading on paper and provide some ideal functionality to enhance the reading performance. Michelle Armstrong (2011, November 23), the librarian at Boise State University, surveyed a couple of e-readers and notes that the tools of highlighting, note taking, bookmarking, navigating, and searching have been equipped on those reading devices to assist readers in practicing “active reading.”
By “active reading,” she means that it is “a combination of reading and analysis, often using techniques to emphasize parts of text.”

In fact, this concept was suggested as early as 1941 in Mortimer J. Adler’s essay, *How to Mark a Book*. According to Adler (1942), in order to truly absorb the book and make it part of one’s own, readers must not only “read ‘between the lines,’” but also “write between the lines” (p. 268). He emphasizes that “the physical act of writing, with your own hand, brings words and sentences more sharply before your mind and preserves them better in your memory” (Adler, 1942, p. 270). Just as how the students obtain knowledge by asking questions and taking notes, Adler (1942) thinks that readers will get the most out of the book by raising questions and setting down their reactions in words. He lists a number of ways, such as underlining and making notes in the margins, for demonstrating that marking a book can transform reading into a conversation with the author. Furthermore, he takes “active reading” into a new level where proficient readers should not only retain information from the text by mind, but also by hand. Interestingly, decades later, we can still apply some of those strategies to the text on e-book readers. For example, via the Kindle app, the readers can highlight and add notes to a passage. Likewise, we can even find how many people have read and highlighted the same passage by flicking the phrase. Unlike printed books, e-books allow the readers to remove highlights and notations. If there is an unknown term, the readers can look it up directly in the built-in dictionary, as well as in the external web search engines like Google or Wikipedia (Armstrong, 2011, November 23). The tables of contents,
search functions, and linking make navigation relatively friendly. Moreover, the readers can increase the font size to make the words easier to read.

Certainly, each e-book has its unique feature, and each e-book delivers its content based on how the author creates and renders the text. Depending on the device and the software application, readers should adjust their reading strategies from one to another. It seems no different from how we apply specific techniques to perceive and handle various genres and types of print. When reading a fantasy novel, we read between the lines, picture what the narrative says, and try to be immersed in the words for getting the most out of the story. If reading a newspaper, we may scan the heading, look at the pictures, and jump back and forth among columns. “A combined way of reading,” as Hillesund (2010) suggests, “is extremely frequent when people are flicking and scanning through newspapers or browsing the Web, intermittently slowing down to continuously read an article or two.” Readers may shift their skills of reading as the media representation shifts. But this is not to say that the readers will be able to uncover every “semiotic domain” (Gee, 2007, p. 19). “By a semiotic domain,” Gee (2007) means,

…any set of practices that recruits one or more modalities (e.g., oral or written language, images, equations, symbols, sounds, gestures, graphs, artifacts, etc.) to communicate distinct types of meanings (p. 19).

Through content as well as format, each semiotic domain recruits us to “think, act, interact, value and feel in certain specific ways” (Gee, 2007, p. 36). In theory, we can consider Carroll’s illustrated book Alice as a semiotic domain. As we are more used to the paper-based texts, I wonder what “certain specific ways” that the new domain of Alice as digital book expects readers to acquire. What are the story
schemata that prompt the authors to convey their imagination and experiences through a new format? What are the conceivable engagements of reading the printed text of *Alice*, then being transferred to the digital reading space? So, let me now restart my close reading with *Alice*, but on the platform of iPad. I seek to understand in what ways the digital text of *Alice* creates movement and depth on the screen and engages its readers in participating in the creation of meaning and performance.

**Alice in iPadland**

“Wake up, Alice dear!” said her sister. “Why, what a long sleep you’ve had!”
“Oh, I’ve had such a curious dream!” said Alice. And she told her sister, as well as she could remember them, all these strange Adventures of hers that you have just been reading about… (Carroll, 1865/2000, pp. 124-125)

Alice’s strange adventures are a shared repertoire that has much to offer people for creation and recreation. From picture books to pop-up books to electronic books, the *Alice* reading app inventor, Christ Stevens (2010, April 14) stresses that the technology is not the essential source for making a successful digital text happen, but it is the content. As he attempted to invent a book app on the iPad, *Alice* popped up to him at first. It is not only because it is an out-of-copyright book, but also because the layers of visual and verbal interplay easily led him to shade in the many outlines suggested by the given text (*The Toronto Review of Books*, 2012, January 9). Along with his partner’s (Ben Roberts) creative participation, his vision, therefore, became a reality, with a convergence of old media and new media as Jenkins (2008) would suggest. In the interview in *The Toronto Review of Books* (2012, January 9), Stevens describes,
The original Sir John Tenniel illustrations were carved out of wood block before being printed onto the page — as a fortunate result of that, they have a thick outlined style to them. Each page of the original Lewis Carroll book jumped out at me, and elements seemed to beg to spring to life. It was supernatural really; this imperative to create movement in the pages. Almost as if Tenniel somehow anticipated me using Photoshop and an iPad to adapt his work over 100 years later [emphasis added].

The impression of lifelikeness toward Alice evoked the developers’ retrospection and subsequent formation of their work. Besides scrutinizing an old copy of Alice and scanning the pictures, they also looked for inspiration from the traditional pop-up books to see how to apply simulated physics to an object (Stevens, 2010, April 14; Dishman, 2010, October 10). They regarded their iPad Alice as “a kind of super-modern take on the pop-up book format” (Stevens, 2010, April 14). Furthermore, in comparing their 3D-like animation to Tim Burton’s 3D movie version, they feel that their work is especially a nod to Tenniel’s illustrations.

Their responses toward their own work and other related media adaptations give rise to the dynamic nature of the original text of Alice, and of course invite more people to join the overarching activities in relation to the text across a wide range of media. As the readers or viewers devote themselves to the particular narrative and the form of text, they can always choose to revisit, re-enjoy, and rework the story world in many different ways. In Mackey’s (2009) account, such a devotion to vast textual experiences is a kind of “thick play” (p. 171). In brief, it means “immersion and engagement” that enables the initial narrative boundary to be pushed further out, and moves readers to step outside the book (Mackey, 2009, p. 177). A broader zone of the story – “a big world,” will, therefore, involve more participants, develop
potential for creativity, and expand our understanding of the text (Mackey, 2009, pp. 182-183). At this point, we can say that the authors of *Alice for the iPad* are both members and propellants of the “big world” of *Alice*. They recast the fictional world and offer an exciting look at how the story can be shifting and evolving via the new media. In the following section, I attempt to analyze some details that the developers captured from the story and have chosen to animate through the iPad.

**Exploring and Judging the *Alice* App**

To be precise, *Alice for the iPad* is an e-book app (also known as a book app) that goes beyond a digital snapshot of a printed book. Readers can have a multimedia experience (audio, video, animation, etc.) and physically engage in the story, like making things move, swirl, and jump to you through touching the interface (King, 2010, August 12). However, the digital technology and products are changing dramatically. Multiple ideas are easily merging into one. It is also common to see a digital book with interactive and animated features just like an e-book app. Much confusion arises among e-books, enhanced e-books and e-book apps (King, 2010, August 12). In this paper, I do not focus on their distinctions, but look closely at the dynamics involved in reading the electronic version of *Alice*.

The cover of the iPad *Alice* (Figure 35) displays a sepia-toned picture and creates a vintage mood. Bill the Lizard jumps out of the chimney on the top left. In the center, there is Alice holding the bottle with the tag “Drink Me,” and on her right rear there are tree gardeners trying to paint the roses red. Also, in the background, we notice a round table with a key on top, and right in front of the table, a large puff of smoke permeates the air. A couple of scenes that appear at once create an element
of suspense, and draw the reader into the action of choosing from two different editions: the 52-page abridged edition or the 249-page full edition. Both editions have the same 19 animated scenes\(^{11}\) using Tenniel’s illustrations. At the bottom of each page, there is the grinning Cheshire Cat. By touching its face, we will hear the royal toot and see the White Rabbit lay down the scroll of parchment that takes us to the index and the settings. Clicking on the index, we will see both the table of contents and the thumbnails of different pages (Figure 36). If we feel like taking a look at a particular scene, we may just “slide” up or down the screen and find that page. This navigational tool is user-friendly and helpful in searching the content.

In the settings, there is a user’s guide showing options that readers can have, such as to have the pages curl or just slide (Figure 37). Likewise, it teaches the novice readers how to manipulate the text on iPad. In a way, this app makes extensive use of the iPad swipe and tilt controls. Not only does it bring to the foreground the tactile/physical movement of handling a book, but also makes the readers feel like they are playing a computer game. By touching the screen, we can anticipate that something is going to move or change even though we are still in the same interface. Here, the book app combines the text with animation and displays the hybridity of the text. Like a pop-up book, which is usually considered as the compound of the picturebook and toy, the *Alice* book app shows the dual features of

\(^{11}\) Those 19 animated scenes are: 1) the White Rabbit’s looking at the pocket watch, 2) Alice’s falling into the well, 3) Alice’s opening the curtain and finding the door to the garden, 4) Alice’s noticing a bottle with the tag “Drink Me,” 5) Alice’s first time altering in size: “shutting up like a telescope,” 6) Alice’s swimming in the pool of tears with the Mouse, 7) Alice’s giving away her comfits after the caucus-race, 8) The lizard Bill’s being kicked out from the chimney, 9) Alice’s encounter with the Caterpillar, 10) Alice’s entering the Duchess’ kitchen filled with pepper, 11) Alice’s holding the pig-baby, 12) the Cheshire Cat’s appearance and disappearance, 13) Alice’s joining in the mad tea-party, 14) the gardeners’ attempt to paint the white roses red, 15) Alice’s meeting with the Queen of Hearts, 16) Alice’s reunion with the Duchess, 17) the King and Queen’s trial for the missing tarts, 18) Alice’s growing at the court, and 19) the whole pack of cards rising up into the air.
the text: the printed book and video game. Henke (2001) declares that it is the recent trend of the book apps — the programmers convey a known book concept through the addition of extra new styles. Thus, the readers will experience the unfamiliar format in light of a previously familiar perception. Given that idea, I find a little correlation between Alice, as an adventurer, and me, as an explorer in an unfolding complex of spaces. In the story, Alice tries to incorporate what she learns from the aboveground into the unruly underground, and eventually surpasses it. I wonder if I will be able to make it through this new realm of reading. “Interestinger and interestinger!”

Figure 35. The title screen of Alice for the iPad. From Alice’s for the iPad, by C. Stevens & B. Roberts, 2010.

Figure 36. The screenshot of the index, where we can find the table of contents and the thumbnail of each page. From Alice’s for the iPad, by C. Stevens & B. Roberts, 2010.

Figure 37. The screenshot of the settings. Here we can switch from the abridged story to the complete version. Also, we can make the page curl or just slide. From Alice’s for the iPad, by C. Stevens & B. Roberts, 2010.
Active E-Reading

“Oh dear, oh dear!” said the Rabbit. “I shall be too late!” What would it be too late for, I wonder? Well, you see, it had to go and visit the Duchess (you’ll see a picture of the Duchess, soon, sitting in her kitchen): and the Duchess was a very cross old lady: and the Rabbit knew she’d be very angry indeed if he kept her waiting. So the poor thing was as frightened as frightened could be (Don’t you see how he’s trembling? Just shake the book a little, from side to side, and you’ll soon see him tremble)…

(Emphasis added)

(Carroll, 1890, *The Nursery “Alice,”* Chapter I).

Turning the first page, we see the huge capital A (of Alice) “landing its feet” in the top of the tree (Figure 38). Following the letter A is a capitalized phrase stressing, “ALICE WAS BEGINNING TO GET VERY TIRED…” Under the tree, there is the sleeping protagonist with blond wavy long hair. Beside her, there is a wide-open illustrated book. It is very likely that the artists intended to get the readers’ attention to what makes her sleep by emphasizing and depicting the scenario with words and pictures. In fact, this picture of sleeping Alice is not included in Carroll’s novel version of *Alice Adventures in Wonderland*, but it is based on the front cover of his picturebook version, *The “Nursery” Alice*12 (Carroll, 1890).

Stevens and Roberts (2011), the authors of the iPad *Alice*, skillfully integrate Carroll’s two versions of *Alice* with their unique typographical and graphic design to

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12 *The “Nursery” Alice* was intended for very young readers “aged from Nought to Five” (mentioned in the preface). For this picturebook edition, Tenniel colored twenty of his original illustrations in *Alice in Wonderland*. Emily Gertrude Thomson, Carroll’s friend, designed the front and the back cover art of the book (Stoffel, 1997). Michael Everson (2010, February 15) notes, “Much of the narrative consists of the author’s addressing the young listener, explaining the story by reference to the illustrations. The effect is rather charming, particularly where Carroll pokes fun at features in Tenniel’s illustrations.”
make their book app distinctly impressive in comparison. Yet, much to my surprise, reading through *The “Nursery” Alice*, I found that Carroll has already suggested an interactive way that the readers can further experience the motion of the story through the picturebook format. For example, when introducing the appearance of the White Rabbit, Carroll (1890) clearly suggests to the readers that they can “[j]ust shake a book a little, from side to side…” for visualizing the actions of the character. His reading advice (to shake and to move the book) happens to coincide with the interactive features of *Alice for the iPad*. Viewed in this way, we may consider *The “Nursery” Alice* as the forerunner of the iPad *Alice*.

On the second page, the gigantic word “SO” captures the readers’ immediate attention and serves as a big transition to signify Alice’s determination to follow the Rabbit. Interestingly, the Rabbit, watching its pocket watch, is kept in the letter O of SO (Figure 39). It can be interpreted as us seeing it through the eyes of Alice. Or, it can be seen as an advance announcement about where it will go: to the rabbit-hole. Likewise, in referring to the idea that time is running, the developers make the pocket watch hang on the letter S and animate it as it is swinging on its chain. The animation is very sensitive to the readers’ movements in holding the iPad. It can respond to both a finger tug as well as to tilting the iPad to get it to go beyond the display. The watch looks so real that the readers are enticed to swing it around and play with it. Similarly, in *Nursery “Alice,”* Carroll (the narrator) intentionally points out that the watch demands the contact of “hands.”
Wasn’t that a funny thing? Did you ever see a Rabbit that had a watch, and a pocket to put it in? Of course, when a Rabbit has a watch, it must have a pocket to put it in: it would never do to carry it about in its mouth — and it wants its hands sometimes, to run about with [emphasis added] (Carroll, 1890, *The Nursery “Alice,”* Chapter I).

Implicitly, the iPad rendering of this scene expresses Carroll’s enthusiasm for the play between the text and the audience. While touching the movable watch, the readers may pretend to hurry with the Rabbit and repeat what it says, “Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!” Soon, the readers are led to enter an engaged stance and perform a variety of activities through interaction with the text. This is borne out by the fact that Carroll’s *Alice* (whether the novel or the picturebook version) is potentially capable of several different realizations and connections. The materials are so rich in mobility that the iPad *Alice* can embrace various other possibilities.

While “flipping through” the e-book and looking at the subsequent pages, I found more interactive elements which appeal to the readers’ visual and tactile curiosity. For instance, the jar of orange marmalade falls from the top of the screen where it can be dragged and turned. The “Drink Me” bottle floats along the page where it can be tossed and spun about (Figure 40). A variety of foods and objects like comfits, cupcakes, mushrooms, rose petals, and tarts realistically move and dance if we put our hands on them. Some other handsomely-made animations that encourage the readers to manipulate by touch include: Alice’s shutting up like a telescope (we may stretch Alice’s body and neck to see her grow), the pepper’s spreading all over the Duchess’ kitchen (we can throw pepper at the Duchess and the Cook), the Cheshire Cat’s vanishing and reappearing (touch the screen to see the
appearing and disappearing act), and the playing cards’ rising up and flying toward her (we may raise Alice’s arm to defend against the barrage of cards). In addition, some characters’ heads and bodies are bobbling in accordance with the narration.

The readers can feel involved in the action and conversation by moving their heads up and down. A great example is shown at the mad tea party. The developers maintain Tenniel’s pictures, but add energy to the characters, so that we may see the Mad Hatter’s and the March Hare’s heads bobble. The virtual gravity and physics are two evident components that contribute to the mobility and interactivity of the text. The readers are encouraged to go along with the designed animation and play with those characters and objects.

Figure 38. The screenshot of the first page. The developers intend to get the readers’ attention to what makes her sleep by emphasizing and depicting the scenario with words and pictures. From Alice’s for the iPad, by C. Stevens & B. Roberts, 2010.

Figure 39. The screenshot of the second page. The rabbit is “locked” in O, and the pocket watch can be swung around by touching it. From Alice’s for the iPad, by C. Stevens & B. Roberts, 2010.

Figure 40. The screenshot of the scene that deals with Alice having a magic drink. We can toss and spin the bottle around. Retrieved May 17, 2012, from http://jasondeheras.com/?p=12
Even though the animation and movable effects in *Alice for the iPad* are thoughtfully created, the reviewer from *Publishers Weekly*, Elizabeth Bluemel (2010, June 24) comments that “its very beauty makes its limitations more evident, and makes what is missing stand out.” Using the scene of going down the rabbit-hole as an example, Bluemel argues,

...when you think of *Alice in Wonderland*, one of the most iconic images in a reader’s mind is that of Alice falling down the rabbit-hole — that long, long, endlessly l-o-n-g drift downward. You can see it in your mind’s eye, that drop, can’t you? Yet in this *Alice*, the journey is truncated to the point of near irrelevancy.

The text, cut from a page and a half in the original to a few sentences, just doesn’t do justice to the girl or the rabbit hole. Visually, the designers chose to use as the falling object (one that actually drops quickly from the top of the page to the bottom when you turn to the page), not Alice, but the rather insignificant jar of marmalade she picks up and discards on the way down. Alice’s fall is all but lost. Here, the design replaced the literature rather than enriching it.

I understand why the critic feels disappointed about this rendition, and I agree that the developers can use the potential of the iPad to do a better job. On the other hand, I find that the typographical layout and art design in the abridged version (labeled bedtime edition) deliberately portray the dynamics of the falling scene and propose a novel way of visualizing it. First, the background color shifts from a lighter color to a darker one as we turn the page. The beginning paragraph states, “Alice found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep well.” Thus, we have a confirmation that Alice is helplessly dropping in a bottomless pit. Second, although we do not see the protagonist or many other things fall together with her, the artists use the absence of Alice and many cracks in the interior wall to give a frightful
impression. Moreover, the animated marmalade jar is falling right through the verbal text at an accelerated rate and then landing toward the word “THUMP!” at the bottom of the page (Figure 41). It echoes the movement of Alice already alluded to by the moving jar, and it leads the eye toward the verbal text that describes Alice’s experience. While so many artists are trying to depict this prominent scene via images, the authors of iPad Alice mean to pass up this preoccupation to replicate a similar idea, but instead encourage the readers to become Alice and experience the fall from her point of view.

Even so, some parts of this reading app are flawed by design. The table of contents of the unabridged version is not active. The readers are not allowed to touch an entry and jump to that chapter, but can only navigate the page and link to its content through the index section by tapping the Cheshire Cat at the bottom (Figure 42). Likewise, the royal toot that comes with this action can become annoying and tiresome. The pleasure of playing with the Cheshire Cat can have been missed as well. Another uninspiring feature is the display of the Mouse’s tale in the unabridged version. The long tale of the Mouse is split into three different pages, so that the readers may have difficulty finding the shape of the poem that supposedly is printed in a way to resemble the tail of the Mouse. Moreover, the black humor that Carroll secretly installs at the end of this poem is carelessly “amplified.” By bolding and enlarging the word “death,” the artists explicitly indicate the fearful aspect of this tale as well as of Alice’s situation. Carroll’s intention to decrease the word so as to convey a mysterious impression is unfortunately removed.
Comparing the full and the abridged versions of the iPad Alice, I prefer the latter one. It is geared toward a younger audience, and the graphic design accommodates the literary content better. For the same animated scene, such as Alice opening the curtain and finding the passage to the garden, in the abridged version the developers have more flexibility in dealing with the choices of words and pictorial compositions. There is an interactive view of the garden. The scenery is moving and changing as we slide the screen. The narration corresponds to what the picture displays. On the contrary, in the complete classic version, the developers somehow are forced to push the correlative picture to the next page because of a lack of room. What is written does not meet what is depicted, so that the readers are not allowed to feel the chemistry of the synthesis that we can usually experience in the picturebooks.
Moreover, the lavishly-illustrated abridgement not only provides the coherent verbal and visual elements, but also reflects the adaptors’ ingenuity. In the index section, each page of the table of contents is added to a brief corresponding heading whereas the full edition’s index only exhibits the page number. Personally, I enjoy the headings of “I’m late!” (the page that shows the Rabbit’s first presence), “A Good Catch!” (the page that describes Alice’s grasp of the pig-baby), and “Riddle Me This” (the page that talks about Alice’s attempt to guess the Hatter’s riddle). Those subtitles connect the adaptors’ interpretation and expression to the certain episode and arouse curiosity. Likewise, they denote the authors’ wit and make this retelling unique from others. Inside the text, the adaptors favor using large and bold lettering to stress the mood and enhance the visual weight. For instance, while Alice is determined to sit down at the table of the tea party, the March Hare and the Hatter protest her joining their gathering with cries of “No room! No room!” Instead of making just a series of undecorated statements, the artists capitalize and darken the quote “NO ROOM!” By maximizing the fonts and placing them in the middle of the page, the artists successfully make the words pop up and reinforce the rudeness of the Wonderland creatures. The modification in layout and design in the unabridged edition carries voluminous meanings and symbols that set my heart knocking and my brain ticking.
Further Discussion

Overall, I enjoyed this electronic version of *Alice*. I feel it strikes a good balance between the literary reading and the entertaining viewing. It allows the readers to internalize the words and create mental images. Likewise, it has artistic and movable pictures that draw the readers to behold and linger on the page. It is an enhanced combination of a picture book, a pop-up book, and an interactive animation that blurs the conventional borderline of reading and non-reading.

Nevertheless, some reviewers are worried that the moving images can be too much distractive to sustain the readers’ concentration on the words (Downes, 2011, April 21). Some are even using the example of the “flat” experience that the TV brings to the audience to show what a passive spectator a reader of e-books can become (Bluemle, 2010, June 24). Both perspectives suppose a decline in thorough and insightful reading as our reading style transitions from paper to screen, from print to digital. Wolf and Barzillai (2009) see the reading behavior has been inevitably different due to our increasing use of digital media and express a similar concern,

The emphases of digital media of efficient, massive information processing; flexible multitasking; quick and interactive modes of communication; and seemingly endless forms of digitally based entertainment encourage such lives [a life of activity and a life of enjoyment]. These emphases, however, can be less suited for the slower, more time-consuming cognitive processes that are vital for contemplative life and that are at the heart of what we call *deep reading* (p. 33).

In their words, the *deep reading* means:

the array of sophisticated processes that propel comprehension and that include inferential and deductive
reasoning, analogical skills, critical analysis, reflection, and insight (Wolf and Barzillai, 2009, p. 33).

Basically, Wolf and Barzillai (2009) believe that deep reading can bring forth deep thinking in which the readers not only comprehend the text, but also reach beyond the surface to develop their own thoughts and wisdom. For that matter, they stress, “What we read and how deeply we read shape both the brain and the thinker” (p. 35). To be sure, such intellectual vigor does not come naturally, nor does it develop instantly. It requires immense amounts of time and practices for the readers to equip their analytical ability and rational autonomy (Wolf and Barzillai, 2009). Besides, the fact is that reading is not only about the mental work. It also involves the bodily effort: hands to control the pace of reading, a mouth to repeat the words, ears to listen to the sound that reverberates in the air, and so forth (Mackey, 2007a). Likewise, it includes social, historical and cultural elements, different ways of knowing and working with all sorts of tools and technologies (Gee, 2009, 2010).

Kimmel (2012) stresses, “Perhaps one of the most powerful features of reading is the permeable boundary between the experience of the individual reader and the larger social world of the reader” (p. 11). Her view echoes with Gee’s (2009) belief of a range of the social context incorporating in our understanding of and engaging with a text:

And people don’t just read and write these texts. They do things with these texts, things that often involve more than just reading and writing. They do them with other people—people like fundamentalists, lawyers, biologists, manga otaku, gamers, or whatever—people who sometimes (often) make judgments about who are “insiders” and who are not (Gee, 2009, p. 16).
As I retrospect my experience with *Alice for the iPad*, it is through a social networking website for me to come across it. People posted the promotional video and recommended this remediation online. Prompted by curiosity, I borrowed my friend’s iPad, learned to operate the machine, downloaded the book app, and used all my ability to decode and handle the text as well as the interface. I discovered that I preferred using my fingers rather than the stylus to manipulate the pages. At the same time, I enjoyed a small library loaded on the device for me to browse and compare the iPad *Alice* to the picturebook *Alice*. What’s even more fabulous is that there were several social opportunities for me to share this digital version with children and adults, either in person or online. By actively seeking out as many of inherent meanings and movements as possible and sharing the exploration I experienced with others, I found that not only did I reshape my vision of the *Alice* tale, but also immersed myself in the multiple fantastical realms of *Alice*. My personal experience indicates that we can experience the deep reading on the digital platform.

While people voice their doubts about e-reading, we cannot afford to overlook the active role a reader can take, and the various additions of play a reader can generate. Besides, the design and the composition of this particular digital text are not random. They describe the sequence of the story and link one element to another. Moreover, the opportunity for the readers to make meanings in and across several different modalities may drive more thoughts and discovery. Kimmel (2012) suggests, “We can look at new technologies as competition for the time and attention of young people, or we can look for ways to harness these technologies to put more
‘books’ in the hands of more readers” (p. 12). *Alice for the iPad* nicely preserves the words and illustrations from the original and employs the touch screen technology to attract the readers’ attention and participation. It melds the text with interactive elements and invites the readers to play with it and linger on it. The expressive mobility, in fact, does not overturn or replace the virtues of print. Rather, it proposes a new literary world where depth and dynamism can combine.

“Explain all that,” said the Mock Turtle. “No, no! The adventures first,” said the Gryphon in an impatient tone: “explanations take such a dreadful time.” So Alice began telling them her adventures from the time when she first saw the White Rabbit. She was a little nervous about it just at first, the two creatures got so close to her, one on each side, and opened their eyes and mouths so VERY wide, but she gained courage as she went on. Her listeners were perfectly quiet till she got to the part about her repeating “*You are old, Father William,*” to the Caterpillar, and the words all coming different, and then the Mock Turtle drew a long breath, and said “That’s very curious.” “It’s all about as curious as it can be,” said the Gryphon. “It all came different!” the Mock Turtle repeated thoughtfully (Carroll, 1865/2000, p. 105).
Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Mobility as a Delivery Mechanism for More Alice Re-making

I do not know if “Alice in Wonderland” was an original story – I was, at least, not conscious imitator in writing it – but I do know that, since it came out, something like a dozen story-books have appeared, on identically the same pattern (Carroll, 1889/2006, p. 2).

In the preface of *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll (1889/2006) mentioned that many Alice retellings sprang up like mushrooms after the hit of his original book. Even though he did not feel quite content with some imitations, curiosity and quest for new adventures never seem to go away (Sigler, 1998; Peliano, 2011). Peliano (2011) comments,

Alice moves beyond illustration into art, into movies, into fashion, into animation, into games, into comics, into the mix that now reigns and requires other comprehensions. And they all coexist in our alicinatory times of mixtures and countless seams and transitions through multiple networks. I do not know of another girl with so many faces, a traveler from an imaginary world, bringing with her the paradoxes that defy our senses and our common sense. The Alice books do not fit into any mold or explanation, instead spreading a worldwide net of creative possibilities (pp. 25-26).

I think Peliano is right in saying Alice is being laden with infinite possibilities of interpretation and imagination. The motif (i.e. transformation), the structure

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13 In the article, *Authorizing Alice: Professional Authority, the Literary Marketplace, and Victorian Women's Re-Visions of the Alice Books*, Carolyn Sigler (1998) mentioned that Carroll had mixed feelings about various Alice imitations: they both fascinated and frustrated him. He even “considered a lawsuit against American author Anna Richards over her unauthorized sequel to the Alice books, *A New Alice in the Old Wonderland* [1895]” (Sigler, 1998, p. 351).
(rambling, dream-like sequences), the characters (strange creatures), and the blend of everything (nursery rhymes, riddles, games, and comic conversations, etc.) amusingly touch upon our sensitivity chords and stimulate all sorts of activities and interactivities. Though I do not intend to privilege the story of Alice as being a superpower text that enchants the readers by nature, it is fairly curious how much people turn to this story of the past to pursue identities and the fulfillment of their goals today, whether to simply seek the pleasures of reading or to deliberately form a project and transmit it in a new platform.

“Why Alice?” This is a fundamental question that drives me to explore what prompts the readers to become co-authors or co-artists of a particular story. In reader-response theory, the text only exists meaningfully as the readers voluntarily take on a partnership with the author and actively partake in the creation of meanings (Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1994). Therefore, in the context of reading, speaking of the “mobility,” not only do I mean the textual components that fuel the imagination and association, but also take the dynamics among the author, the reader, and the text into account. Since a literary work demands both sides – authors and readers – to form ideas and to establish relationships, reading a text is an “activity” (Fish, 1980, p.70), which involves more than cognitive perception. In fact, reading can bring about various forms of engagements, including bodily expressions and movements.

Mackey (2007a) and Hillesund (2010) both emphasize the relationship between reading and materiality. Likewise, they are aware that rarely do we pay attention to the physical efforts of reading. Mackey (2007a) comments, “…it is rare to find a study of reading processes that takes full account of what the hands are
doing as the reader comprehends the text” (p. 113), whereas Hillesund (2010) argues, “…research on reading (whether paper or screen based) has had a strong focus on visual perception and cognitive aspects of reading, that is, on reading as a mental activity…” (n.p.). Given the fact that physical aspects of reading are usually taken for granted, in my aesthetic engagement with different types of Alice books, I have become more conscious of the work of my eyes, ears, and hands, and of any outward reaction. My exploration of the textual mobility, therefore, includes the reader’s physical handling of and responding to the text. Furthermore, I consider the readers’ action of reworking the text as the evocation of play, which the readers are no longer spectators, but experimenters, inventors, or performers who have energy and agency to engender more dynamics among the reading community, and thus make the mobility not only inherent in the text, but also influential beyond the text.

Seven Alice adaptations (three picturebooks, three pop-up books, and one digital book) are scrutinized in my research. Each of them demonstrates mobility through its format. The picturebook artists, Helen Oxenbury, Lisbeth Zwerger, Oleg Lipchenko use distinct styles of compositions and pictorial details to complement Carroll’s text and to make the words come to life in the context of the pictures. Oxenbury’s Alice is cheerful and delightful, Zwerger’s is mysterious and whimsical, and Lipchenko’s is symbolical and more focused on ushering the readers into the world of Lewis Carroll. Besides the variations in styles, their artworks vary in approach to reflect the movements in Alice’s story: the choices of colors, the placement of objects, the uses of viewpoints, and so on. Not only do they invite the
readers to journey through the dreamscape they re-create, but they also allow us to play our own ideas around the pictured world over and over again.

Three pop-up book authors, Harriet Castor, Robert Sabuda, J. Otto Seibold have similar motives as the picturebook artists. However, they further reshape the two-dimensional text into three-dimensional ones, so that the readers can closely observe the textures and layers of Wonderland and experience the movements and transformation of the characters and objects. Castor’s adaption serves as an introductory guide to Alice’s story. The paper engineer does not include many intricate techniques, but consistently inserts annotated signs at the side of the page and periodically complements the climax of the story with a pop-up effect. The readers will be hooked on exploring and re-reading the details embedded in the text. Sabuda’s pop-ups are revolutionary and a feast for the eyes. Every single page has something jumping toward you. Moreover, because of the sculpture-like movable constructions, as the object bounces from the surface, the readers can even hear the sound of the setting. Seibold’s re-imagination of Alice is relatively odd and disorderly. Each spread combines a few movables with his characteristic juxtaposition of words and pictures. Besides rendering the nonsensical plot and pattern, Seibold also provides a secondary fictive world with abundant comical elements. In order to make the connection with his unique artwork, the readers should notice the fragments of the text and stretch all of their senses.

A turning of the page or pulling of tab is a telling. Before the movables are being moved, the readers will only see one side or one part of the story. After the page is turned, a tab is pulled and some concealed parts are revealed, the readers can
coordinate relevant information, assemble different layers of the story, and be encouraged to re-play and watch for special effects. In *Alice for the iPad*, Chris Stevens and Ben Roberts expand such an idea and further digitalize the movements of *Alice* in an interactive way. They combine the power of storytelling with physics so that the readers can experience multiple degrees of the story’s motion by a simple touch. The readers can tap the screen to see Alice grow or shrink and the Cheshire Cat appear or vanish. In addition, some scenes are designed as animation. Even if the reader does not create any movement, the pictures will still work and capture their attention. However, some critics are concerned that the animated effects may detract from a kind of sustained reading that usually occurs on the flat, still, printed page. Mackey (2011) says, “When the printed word is on a paper page, we know where to find it. The same is not true of the electronic alternatives. The word scrolls up the screen and evaporates” (p. 108). I agree that the “stillness” of the printed book is a valuable quality that allows the readers to pause, to respond, and to transform the words into lively mental pictures. On the other hand, I feel that an animated text provides a rather visible and tangible aspect of reading. The readers will be affected by the interwoven arrangements that trigger various responses. Likewise, a new set of literary strategies and skills, as well as a new of thinking about story-making might be able to occur.

In the *Alice* book app, I see an incredible phase to which a literary work can be taken. The app’s developers export the book conventions borrowed from the print world to the e-book format. They do not intend to increase the barrier between the old media and new media reading, but choose to use the flexibility of the tablet
computer to augment the potential of the text. In the meantime, they recognize the play that Carroll intends to create for the child readers from the picturebook and novel version of *Alice*. Therefore, they strive to make the movements of *Alice* readily accessible and touchable in light of Carroll’s originality. Even though this digital adaptation is not flawless, it offers us much room for discussion and comparison, and brings insights into how we can take materials from the paper and transport them onto the screen. Creatively, the iPad *Alice* refashions this classic text and also sustains the important part of its textual mobility. Furthermore, it takes the readers’ activities into consideration: the eyes, the hands, the voices, and the wits, so that a magically engaged reading moment has been activated.

By saying so, I do not disrespect the other media representations since every domain/medium has its distinct way to approach the readers (Gee, 2007). In fact, the picturebook, pop-up book, and e-book adaptations of *Alice* all share similarities with the original novel in terms of mobility and modality. They flourish precisely at the parts where words and images interact and are grounded in appealing to more senses than just sight due to the fantasy elements (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Hence, within the multiplicity of their contexts, this seemingly timeless Wonderland has been powerfully enhanced.

However, while people take *Alice* into different media adaptations, the results can be twofold: wonderfully inventive or fatally boring and redundant. During my process of selecting effective retellings, unfortunately, I did come across a couple of travesties. An *Alice* pop-up book with sounds by Libby Hamilton and Richard Johnson (2010) is one of the examples. Like many pop-up books, it explores
dimensional possibilities by adding new layers, cuts, and shapes, and furthermore, it adds audio effects on almost every double-page. Yet, the paper engineering is not visually appealing, and the artistic elements are relatively dull. Even though it is movable, I am metaphorically not moved. Rosenblatt (1994) illuminates, “The various strands of response are often simultaneous, often interwoven and often interacting” (p. 69). Perhaps, I have traveled through such high quality Alice adaptations that their depth and ingenuity has already affected my taste. Then, as I have tried to locate the elements of mobility within that particular reinvention, my effort was in vain. Therefore, I believe that the textual mobility can vary from reader to reader and from time to time depending on the individual disposition of the text.

As Lewis (2001) states, the text “can only function, can only ‘live’ in the supporting context of a reader’s engaged and active attention” (p. 58).

For some reason, I did not find Alice in Wonderland fascinating the very first time I read it as a child. The odd language and quirky characters bothered and bewildered me. However, two Alice movie reproductions from Disney drew me to the book. While I was watching the film, what I read and what I saw intertwined together. Then, what I felt puzzled about seemed to be swept away by the tremendous mobile elements in the storytelling. I found myself to be simultaneously operating on different levels of vision, comparing those movements in my mind’s eye in which the story led me to visualize and with my physical eyes in which the movie presented to me. Surprisingly, an intense connection occurred. In my view, the textual mobility makes it simple to go across various platforms, and in return,
those adaptations keep the story alive and make us see different *Alice* might come to be.

Linda Hutcheon (2009) provides a keen insight about the relationship between the original literary work and its progeny in her article, *In Praise of Adaptation*. She remarks,

An adaptation is not vampiric: it does not draw the life-blood from its source and leave it dying or dead, nor is it paler than the adapted work. It may, on the contrary, keep that prior work alive, giving it an afterlife it would never have had…(Hutcheon, 2009, p. 333).

When *Alice* moves from one page to another, or from one page to the screen, the presentations of movements differ from each other. Likewise, different formats require different knowledge, skills, and reading paths to engage in interpretation (Kress, 2003b). Kress (2003b) comments, “The screen is now the dominant site of texts: it is the site which shapes the imagination of the current generation around communication” (p. 150). For potential research, we may further look to the screen versions of *Alice* (movies, computer games, etc.) and see how its mobility continuously carries over each remediation. In the meantime, we may choose to look at the sequel to *Alice for the iPad, Alice in New York* (2011), which takes Alice to the Big Apple and recasts the story of *Through the Looking Glass*. This edition receives a Kirkus Star Award for the reason that “[a]s with the previous app, the 26 animated, interactive pages are the show-stoppers; characters and objects wobble, sway or get tossed around based on touch” (*Kirkus Reviews*, 2011, June 20). As we consciously acknowledge and realize the fact that the imagining and re-imagining of
the text always happens in relation to the movements of the story, we may adopt on participatory attitude to identify with a wide variety of media adaptations.

Looking back at where I started in the adventure of *Wonderland*, I am quite amazed at my own transformation: from uninterested to highly engaged in the text. The exploration of “mobility” bridges me to Carroll’s text and heightens my enthusiasm for reading it in the new media landscape. It seems that the story can change its look as it enters any medium at any moment. Alice and the Wonderland creatures similarly do not hesitate to do any wildly playful thing with us. No matter who we are or where we go, we are all invited to follow the White Rabbit, embark on a journey, imagine the unimaginable, reach the unreachable, and embrace the wonder. So, instead of asking, “Why Alice?” perhaps it is better to say, “Why not Alice?”

**ALICE**

She drank from a bottle called DRINK ME
And up she grew so tall,
She ate from a plate called TASTE ME
And down she shrank so small.
And so she changed, while other folks
Never tried nothin’ at all.

(Shel Silverstein, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, p. 112)
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