Curating Illustrations of Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

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Curating Illustrations of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

by

Lindsay Persohn

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Literacy Studies at the College of Education, University of South Florida.

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DEDICATION

This work would not have been possible without the help and support of family and friends. To Vicki Persohn-Comegys, I could never repay you for your kind support throughout all of my endeavors in life. No, mom, you never have to call me “Doctor.” To my brother, Neil Persohn for helping with any project, large or small, for asking many probing questions, and for providing dry, sarcastic encouragement throughout this long journey. To my dad, Gordon Persohn, who I think would have thought this whole project is pretty neat. To Timmy Moy for support to start this journey, encouragement to continue, and plenty of ancient wisdom along the way. Thank you, Mark Woods and Jamie Woods, for providing office space and tolerating my presence at Pop’s Painting. Thank you to Gizmo Woods, for keeping my lap warm and necessitating short walks during the longest work days, and to Christopher Woods, Jr. and Jackson Woods for making their own sandwiches, doing their own dishes, and providing plenty of entertainment during breaks from work on this project. Last but always, I would like to express a lifetime of thanks to my husband, Chris Woods, for helping me with many hours of scanning book pages in institutions across the country, and for entertaining countless questions like “What do you think about Alice’s relationship with the Cat?” Thank you for your endless support, encouragement, and enjoyment in every facet of my life.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................................................ vii

ABSTRACT ..................................................................................................................... viii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .............................................................................. 1
  Context: Why Wonderland? ...................................................................................... 3
  Purpose ....................................................................................................................... 4
  Perspectives and Processes ...................................................................................... 5

CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .................................................. 9
  Foundations for Understanding Wonderland Illustration .................................... 10
  Reading Illustrative Interpretations ....................................................................... 14
  The Relatedness and Complexity of Text ............................................................... 16
  Linguistic semiotics ................................................................................................. 17
  Discourse .................................................................................................................. 17
  Literary Frames and Methods of Critique .............................................................. 18
  Narrative Language in Literature ........................................................................... 20
  Visual Interpretations ............................................................................................... 20
  Elements of design .................................................................................................... 21
  Visual semiotics ....................................................................................................... 22
  Finding Meaning In Illustration ............................................................................. 24
  Indeterminacies in words and illustrations .............................................................. 25
  Theories of picturebook reading ............................................................................. 26
  Interpreting Multiple Modes .................................................................................... 26
  Meaning in Historical Constructions of Literature for Children .......................... 28
  Reading Historical Texts ......................................................................................... 29
  Reading *Wonderland* .............................................................................................. 29
  A Brief Synopsis of *Wonderland* .......................................................................... 31
  *Wonderland*'s Historical Contexts as a Basis for Meaning-Making ...................... 32
  Recurring Themes in Wonderland .......................................................................... 33
    Nature ...................................................................................................................... 33
    Time ....................................................................................................................... 36
    Reality ..................................................................................................................... 38
    Size ......................................................................................................................... 40
    Development of personal identity ....................................................................... 41
  Historical Reactions to *Wonderland* ................................................................. 43
  The Future of *Wonderland* .................................................................................... 47

CHAPTER THREE: Curation as A METHODOLOGY ................................................. 53
  Study Design and Purpose ....................................................................................... 53
Curation .............................................................................................................................. 54
Curating Wonderland ........................................................................................................ 55
A Guide for the Curation Process ...................................................................................... 56
Scope of the Project .......................................................................................................... 57
Methods ............................................................................................................................ 58
1. Image collection process .............................................................................................. 58
   a. Database and critical literature search ................................................................. 58
   b. Locating editions .................................................................................................... 59
   c. Scanning and labeling images ............................................................................... 59
   d. Organizing images and managing the data ............................................................ 60
   e. Recording preliminary interpretations ................................................................... 61
2. Research the story and illustrations ............................................................................ 62
   a. Searching for critical reviews ............................................................................... 62
   b. Close reading using illustration analysis prompt ................................................. 62
   c. Chronological analysis by image/chapter ............................................................. 63
   d. Reverse chronological analysis by artist/creator ................................................... 64
   e. Qualitative observations and controlled vocabulary ............................................ 65
3. Thematic conceptualization of an exhibition of ideas .................................................. 66
   a. Analyzing a priori themes ...................................................................................... 66
   b. Tracking new insights ............................................................................................ 66
   c. Conceptualizing exhibits ....................................................................................... 69
4. Select specific illustrations .......................................................................................... 70
   a. Selections for the dissertation document .............................................................. 70
   b. Selections for the physical exhibition ..................................................................... 70
   c. Framing the exhibit of each theme ....................................................................... 71
   d. The role of writing academic text in the curation process .................................... 71
   e. The aesthetics and sociocultural messages of exhibits .......................................... 72
   f. Choosing stopping points ....................................................................................... 72
5. Contextualize the illustrations ..................................................................................... 73
   a. Writing two contextualizing texts ......................................................................... 73
   b. Consulting the literature ....................................................................................... 73
   c. Selecting quotes ..................................................................................................... 74
6. Strategically arrange illustrations ................................................................................ 74
   a. Image and text arrangement ............................................................................... 74
   b. Representing data .................................................................................................. 75
   c. Obtaining permissions ......................................................................................... 75
   d. Data constraints and work-arounds ....................................................................... 76
7. Interpret illustrations and themes ................................................................................ 76
   a. The impact of genre and audience ....................................................................... 76
Reflections on and Complications with the Process ......................................................... 77
From Methods to Methodology ....................................................................................... 77
Visual Research: The Foundation for Curation as Methodology ...................................... 78
Beyond Semiotics: Interpreting Arts ............................................................................... 80
Curation: Connecting Visual Arts, Texts, and Culture ..................................................... 82
Curatorial design ............................................................................................................. 83
The collection of curatorial “data .................................................................................. 84
Analysis of data for curation ......................................................................................... 85
Curatorial publication ........................................................................................................ 86
Trustworthiness, Credibility, Authenticity, and Reflexivity in Curation ................. 87
The Exhibits .................................................................................................................... 89

CHAPTER FOUR: INTERPRETATIONS FROM THE RABBIT-HOLE, OR DOWN, DOWN, DOWN: AN ICONIC
NON-ORIGINAL IMAGE .................................................................................................... 91
A Purpose and Process of Collection and Curation .................................................... 94
A Brief History of the Scene in Illustration ................................................................. 97
Physics, Einstein, and Wonderland ............................................................................. 100
Tracing Freudian Influence ......................................................................................... 104
Alice in Disney’s World or Disney in Wonderland ..................................................... 109
Artists Open Meaning through Interpretation ......................................................... 110

CHAPTER FIVE: THE HATTER, ILLUSTRATIONS OF MADNESS OVER TIME .......... 112
A Purpose and Process of Collection and Curation .................................................... 115
The Hatter and Madness ............................................................................................. 117
The Turn of the 20th Century: Danger, Violent Ostracism, and Placidity ................. 120
Post-War Medical Experimentation and The Hatter .................................................. 123
Psychedelic Treatments and Dropping Out: The Hatter Becomes Homeless .......... 126
Materialism, Consumerism, and Profit: The Hatter of the MTV Generation .......... 129
Contemporary Portrayals of the Hatter in Dystopian Existence .............................. 131
Discussion ..................................................................................................................... 133

CHAPTER SIX: HUMANOIDS IN WONDERLAND AND THE ANTHROPOMORPHIZED PLAYING CARDS 135
A Purpose and Process of Collection and Curation .................................................... 137
Portrayals of Humanism in Wonderland .................................................................. 140
Humanoid Playing Cards ............................................................................................ 141
The Queen and King of Hearts ................................................................................... 149
Humans/Animals/Objects ........................................................................................... 155
“Nothing But A Pack of Cards” ................................................................................ 161

CHAPTER SEVEN: READERS IN WONDERLAND: SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES AND THE RETURN OF THE READERS’ GAZE .............................................................. 163
A Purpose and Process of Collection and Curation .................................................... 164
A Brief Context for Gaze in Wonderland ................................................................. 165
Artists’ Develop Perspective and Authority Through Gaze ..................................... 167
Characters Look at the Reader .................................................................................... 168
Pages Look at the Reader ........................................................................................... 171
Characters place readers at the center of the action ................................................. 171
Readers gain an omniscient perspective ................................................................. 172
A New Experience of Alice’s Presence ...................................................................... 175
Alice, Everywhere and Everyone ............................................................................. 178

CHAPTER EIGHT: READING BETWEEN IMAGES AND TEXTS: CURATING WONDERLAND .... 179
Multiple Analysis Techniques .................................................................................... 180
Reading Between Text and Illustration ................................................................. 182
Changing Interpretations of Classics ................................................................. 183
Author/Illustrator/Reader Interaction ................................................................. 184
Study Limitations ............................................................................................... 186
Remaining Questions of Curation and Wonderland ......................................... 188
Questions About and Challenges with Curation ............................................ 188
Questions about and Challenges with Wonderland ......................................... 191
Final Conclusions ............................................................................................... 192

References ........................................................................................................... 195
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: John Tenniel’s Duchess in the kitchen................................................................. 2
Figure 2: Alice in Wonderland sculpture in Central Park, New York City. .................... 5
Figure 3: An illustration analysis prompt. ............................................................................ 8
Figure 4: Lewis Carroll directs readers to this frontispiece by John Tenniel. ............... 13
Figure 5: Lewis Carroll directs readers to look at John Tenniel’s illustration of the Gryphon. 14
Figure 6: The White Rabbit in Chapter 1 of John Tenniel’s edition.............................. 35
Figure 7: Lewis Carroll’s manuscript illustration of the Rabbit........................................ 36
Figure 8: Tenniel’s Alice and Caterpillar. ......................................................................... 42
Figure 9: Tenniel’s Alice holds the Drink Me bottle. ........................................................ 49
Figure 10: A poor reproduction of Tenniel’s Alice in the J. Watson Davis edition......... 50
Figure 11: A birds-eye view of the chart of illustrations collected for this study........... 61
Figure 12: A snipped excerpt of my qualitative analysis spreadsheet............................. 63
Figure 13: A snipped excerpt from my illustration isolation spreadsheet...................... 68
Figure 14: A summary outline of my research methods. ................................................. 95
Figure 15: Down, Down, Down images isolated from 111 Wonderland editions.......... 96
Figure 16: Blanche McManus provides the first published illustration of this scene...... 98
Figure 17: Milo Winter’s Alice appears as a girl............................................................... 108
Figure 18: Tenniel’s Alice, Hatter, March Hare, and Dormouse at ‘A Mad Tea-Party’. ....113
Figure 19: Tenniel’s Hatter in the courtroom................................................................. 114
Figure 20: A 1938 image of a hat maker working.......................................................... 118
Figure 21: Peter Newell’s illustration of the Hatter. ................................................................. 120
Figure 22: Hydrotherapy baths, Agnews State Hospital in Santa Clara, California. .......... 121
Figure 23: Gwynedd Hudson’s wild-looking Hatter. ................................................................. 122
Figure 24: A 1920 brochure for the Spann Sanitarium in Dallas, Texas.......................... 123
Figure 25: A detail image of two doctors preparing to perform a lobotomy. ...................... 124
Figure 26: Mervyn Peake’s child-like Hatter. ................................................................. 125
Figure 27: Leonard Weisgard’s disinterested Hatter. .................................................. 126
Figure 28: An advertisement for Thorazine published around 1962............................... 127
Figure 29: John Tenniel’s White Rabbit dressed for the courtroom................................. 137
Figure 30: Lewis Carroll’s manuscript illustration of card characters. .............................. 143
Figure 31: John Tenniel’s illustration of the card gardeners........................................ 143
Figure 32: Bessie Gutmann’s card gardeners have no heads........................................... 146
Figure 33: Bessie Gutmann’s King and Queen of Hearts. .............................................. 147
Figure 34: Charles Pears and Thomas Robinson’s card gardeners.................................. 147
Figure 35: Edwin John Prittie’s card gardeners resemble gnomes.................................... 148
Figure 36: John Tenniel’s second illustration for Chapter 8. ................................... 150
Figure 37: L.J. Bridgeman’s title page illustration................................................................. 151
Figure 38: Gertrude Kay’s King and Queen of Hearts.................................................... 152
Figure 39: Harry Rountree’s Queen of Hearts overshadows the King of Hearts........... 154
Figure 40: John Tenniel’s Alice trying to play croquet..................................................... 156
Figure 41: Peter Newell’s illustration of Alice’s attempt at croquet................................. 157
Figure 42: Tenniel’s card characters and animals return to their natural state................. 158
Figure 43: John Tenniel’s Alice at the end of Chapter 6. ............................................... 167
Figure 44: Copeland & Bridgeman’s opening illustration............................................... 168
Figure 45: Harry Rountree’s Cheshire Cat. ................................................................. 169
Figure 46: A model for an author-illustrator-reader relationship in illustrated classic novels.
ABSTRACT

In the 150 years since Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel (1865/1866) first published *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, various illustrators have found inspiration in this story to recreate its images again and again. Since Carroll and Tenniel, *Wonderland* has concerned itself with sociocultural ideas and the work of artists who re-illustrated this story provide ways to trace history of these ideas.

Accordingly, the purpose of this project was to examine connections and breaks with tradition in illustration that contribute to an evolution of meaning in the *Wonderland* story. Additionally, through this project, I worked to interpret ideas from different artists in different times and spaces in an attempt to understand intersecting ideas of culture and *Wonderland* illustration. Through this work, I developed the concept of *curation* as a visual research methodology in order to make sense of and share my discoveries. *Wonderland* offers a rich context to explore and elucidate the arts-based qualitative methodology of *curation* because of its literary merits, artistic interpretations, and persistence and pervasion worldwide over the last century and a half.

Curation allowed me flexibility in thinking about thematic interpretations of the illustrations I studied. Specific curatorial methods led me to identify the scene of Alice’s decent to *Wonderland*, visual characterizations of the Hatter character, and depictions of the playing card characters as signals of sociocultural changes. When examined together, these interpretations point to an ever-shifting relationship between author, illustrators, and readers in classic, illustrated novels. Specifically, through the illustrations in *Wonderland*, Alice is no longer portrayed as a particular girl and illustrators over time have placed readers as the subject of the adventures. In recent times, *Wonderland* has gained some ability to cross over
from its pages into the real world and take a look at its readers. This shift in perspective in Wonderland speaks to a current sociocultural environment wherein reality is hyper-subjective and nothing is quite as it seems.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

When I first viewed Camille Rose Garcia’s (Carroll & Garcia, 2010) dark, Gothic illustrations for Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (originally published 1865; hereafter referred to as Wonderland), I was intrigued by their striking dissimilarities to John Tenniel’s (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) original illustrations that set the standard for Wonderland in my mind. I thought, “How could Garcia see this story so differently?” As one example, compare an image from Garcia’s 2010 edition of the story (See Carroll & Garcia, 2012, p. 68) with John Tenniel’s (1865/1866) illustration (Figure 1) for the same scene in chapter six of Wonderland. Closer examination reveals Garcia’s and Tenniel’s pictures of this scene are actually very much alike in content and composition. Both images contain a Duchess with an oversized head sitting in the center of the image, holding a crying baby and frowning at Alice. In both images, Alice seems to have just entered the scene, while the Cook stands in the background with a pepper shaker in her hand. From here, the images diverge. Garcia’s ghost-like Cook is oriented toward the action and clearly she holds a raised cleaver in her other hand, a violent departure from Tenniel’s (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) Cook who dutifully faces the stove and stirs the soup. The Cheshire Cat sits smiling on the hearth, looking in Alice’s direction with pointed teeth showing in Garcia’s image. Garcia’s hard lines, saturated colors, and abundant black ink shapes of flying pots and pans, spilling liquids, dripping borders, bats, spiders, and other creatures of the darkness reflects a dystopian Wonderland. The similarities and differences in Garcia’s (Carroll & Garcia, 2010) and Tenniel’s (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) illustrations exemplify the situatedness of
artistic expression, as their images for the same story shine light on different messages about Wonderland. In 1865, when Carroll and Tenniel’s (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) edition was published, the book was received as a lighthearted story of nonsense written specifically for an audience of late-Victorian children. But, as a 21st century adult reader, my first view of Garcia’s work evoked a dark overall impression of the story—very different from that evoked by Tenniel’s portrayal of the book.

Figure 1: John Tenniel’s Duchess in the kitchen.

Reprinted from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel, 1866, London: Macmillan. Public domain. Image courtesy University of South Florida, Tampa, Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection.

For Garcia, her experience of growing up outside of Disneyland, in the shadow of a perfected world influences her artistic style and further shapes readers’ image of Wonderland (Garcia, 2005). For me, my experience of growing up with stories and images of Wonderland shapes how I view my own world and how I solve the problems I encounter. I continue to find Alice and Wonderland around me, in real-life references to the situations, characters, and themes from the book. To explore this archeology of a collection of illustrated versions of one story, I examined connections and breaks with the tradition of illustration that contribute
to an evolution of the meaning the story. The work of each new Wonderland illustrator offers a different perspective on the story. Studying the body of Wonderland illustrations offers a glimpse at consistencies and changes in the book’s image over time. Underlying messages are situated first in the times in which they were adopted then echo through the work of subsequent artists who reflect, extend, and counter meanings in the story over time. To make sense of my discoveries in Wonderland illustrations, I developed curation as a research methodology and utilized it to develop an exhibition of ideas and illustrations surrounding larger shifts in Wonderland meaning.

**Context: Why Wonderland?**

The specific instance of Wonderland provides complex and interesting grounds for study because of its continued prevalence in stories of childhood and its persistence in stories of adulthood as well. As Wonderland has never been out of print in over 150 years, the story and its illustrations are continuously and variously intertwined with stories and images of childhood since its initial publication (Woolf, 1947). No person alive today existed before Wonderland. In a present-day context, 150 years after Wonderland made its way into stories of childhood, Alice has been deemed a “culture hero” and a “modern myth” (Hollingsworth, 1999, p. 97). Her stories have been explored as both an “attachment to childhood” and a “[nostological] yearning for agedness” (Mavor, 1999, p. 64). Haughton (Carroll, Tenniel, & Haughton, 1998) found Alice’s stories “generate new meanings with every generation of readers, enlarging the possibilities not only of children’s literature but of all literature” (p. lx). I would add that illustrators have had a hand in generating new meanings and possibilities for readers as well. The essence of this project attempts to contribute to the conversation around a big question in the study of literature for young people through the study of Wonderland over time: What does children’s literature do? (Nikolajeva, 2016).
Purpose

Lines between the dream-fantasy Wonderland novel Carroll and Tenniel (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) first set forth and the lives of its readers have become blurred. Wonderland’s storyline, themes, and images can be found today worldwide, as exemplified in the Wonderland sculpture in New York City’s Central Park (”Alice in Wonderland,” see Figure 2). This bronze sculpture was commissioned by philanthropist George Delacorte and created by Spanish-born American sculptor José de Creeft in 1959 as a gift to the children of New York City. It depicts Alice, the rabbit, the Mad Hatter (a caricature of Delacorte), and the doormouse. “This sculpture is for children and meant to be climbed on.” (”Alice in Wonderland,” 2014). This sculpture is neither text nor illustration, in the traditional sense, and the invitation to climb on the work of art is a postmodern attitude toward the arts. This sculpture and other Wonderland arts outside of the book become a part of the experience of the story for today’s viewers, even if they have never read the text firsthand. In his lifetime, Carroll was interested in the new mediations of the Alice texts, as they gained popularity quickly and were interpreted through other illustrations, theatrical productions, illuminated lantern sequences, and photographs (Groth, 2012). This project returns to those interests. Beginning with Carroll’s first Alice manuscript and illustrations, I followed the text as it came into publication as Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland with John Tenniel’s illustrations (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866), and then to reinterpretations of Wonderland by various artists over the last 150 years.
Accordingly, the purpose of this project was to examine connections and breaks with tradition in illustration that contribute to an evolution of meaning in the Wonderland story. Additionally, through this project, I worked to interpret ideas from different artists in different times and spaces in an attempt to understand intersecting ideas of culture and Wonderland illustration. Through this work, I developed the concept of curation as a visual research methodology in order to make sense of and share my discoveries. Wonderland offers a rich context to explore and elucidate the arts-based qualitative methodology of curation because of its literary merits, artistic interpretations, and persistence and pervasion worldwide over the last century and a half.

Perspectives and Processes

Across the course of its history of publication, the artwork accompanying Wonderland offers an account of visual representations of the story. In the spirit of historical analysis, I explored relationships between the unabridged Wonderland text, Lewis Carroll's (1864)
manuscript illustrations, John Tenniel’s first published illustrations (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866), and the illustrations of 111 other artists since 1864, to think about “at least tentative answers to questions such as how change occurs in society, how human intentions matter, and how ends are influenced by the means of carrying them out” (“Research Methods,” 2017).

To explore the interconnectedness of culture, literary text, and the art of illustration, I attended to words, existing images, and overarching ideas of Wonderland through the lens of a curator. Following a seven-step iterative process outlined by Friis-Hansen (2001), I framed my thinking and my actions using methods from museum curation: collect, research, thematically conceptualize, select, contextualize, strategically arrange, and interpret.

To summarize my process, first I identified 280 editions of Wonderland books through a search of WorldCat, the collective world-wide library catalog. Then, I identified illustrated unabridged, English-language editions and determined which libraries held these editions. I identified six libraries in the United States collectively holding most of the editions for study: University of South Florida (Tampa), University of Florida, Syracuse University, San Francisco Public Library, University of Texas (Austin), and New York University. I traveled to each library to view each edition. Upon arrival, I ensured the editions met my criteria for inclusion in this study (i.e., illustrated, unabridged, English-language, available for view). I collected digital research scans of illustrations in Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland from 111 editions since manuscript development in 1864.

I organized and studied all illustrations I collected. I systematically and iteratively recorded my observations and questions about each of the more than 5700 illustrations in my research collection using a study template. I created a study template (see Figure 3) based on themes of nature, reality, size, time, and identity development in Wonderland literature and principles of visual literacy outlined in my review of the literature (Chapter Two).
Continuing the seven-step process outlined by Friis-Hansen (2001), I thematically conceptualized significant ideas in the images and words of Wonderland beginning with established themes of nature, reality, size, time, and identity development prevalent in the story in order to develop more layered and complex interpretations of the illustrations. I selected specific illustrations from my digital collection to offer comparative and/or contrasting ideas.

My initial iterative examination of the illustrations helped to frame my identification of other themes of interest to me in the research collection as a whole. These new themes led to my development of an exhibition of illustrations and their contexts in this project. As I wrote contextualizing narratives about these new themes for this dissertation document and for a display of physical Wonderland editions in my institution’s Special Collections library, I curated a collection of illustrations to support my discussion of new themes in Wonderland images.

| Text and Image: [illustration number (chapter number and image sequence in chapter; i.e. 1.3 is third illustration in first chapter)] |
| Image caption: [if any was published] |
| Who or what is pictured? [a description of the subject of the image] |
| What is happening? [a description of the action in the image] |
| When/where does it take place? [a description of the setting in the image] |
| How is the scene portrayed? [a description of the way in which the image is shown; i.e., centered, bottom third of page, borders, long shot, low angle, color image, etc.] |
| Other observations/notes: [any other observations about the image] |

**Contextual Themes from Wonderland**

- **Nature:** [a description of connections with nature in the image]
- **Time:** [a description of evidence of time in the image]
- **Reality:** [a description of way in which the image may play with what is real]
- **Size:** [a description of evidence of size as a theme in the image]
- **Personal Identity:** [a description of connections to the development or maintenance of personal identity]
- **Other potential themes:** [a description of any other prominent or budding theme evident in the image]
**Methods to Methodology: Curation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image of interest? [yes or maybe, otherwise left blank]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points considered: [a description of how the image may relate to other images in the research collection]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterpoints considered: [a description of how the image may be read against other images in the research collection]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonderings: [any questions or possible connections to new themes]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3:** An illustration analysis prompt.

Literary and visual evidence suggests that Lewis Carroll (also known as Charles Dodgson, 1832-1898) devised *Wonderland* as a story that both plays by Victorian conventions and challenges them (Groth, 2012), and John Tenniel crafted realistic illustrations to portray fantastical situations and satirical circumstances. Carroll and Tenniel’s collaboration (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) provided fruitful circumstances for artists to leave their mark on *Wonderland* meanings through the art of illustration. I traced shades of meaning through their illustrations and focused on multiple histories: Alice’s descent to *Wonderland*, madness through the Hatter character, anthropomorphization through the card characters, and a return of the readers’ gaze toward *Wonderland*. Through these three close readings and analyses from my research collection, I suggest the text over time illustration has redefined the experience of reading *Wonderland* and has become less about readers looking at the book than the book looking to the reader for new interpretations of the story.
CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

*Wonderland* is a book of nonsense for children, a classic for adults, and a book in which adults may become children (Woolf, 1947). *Wonderland* evokes a contested binary that the future is the child’s foreign territory, while the adult reader may understand the story with the wisdom of an elder (Mavor, 1999). This relationship is made more complex by the fact that adult readers of *Wonderland* likely have some recollection of the story from childhood, given its pervasiveness worldwide. Child readers carry with them new visual interpretations of the story into adulthood. Alice (the character) is at once a “stern, sensible, ‘adult’” and a “mischievous, insecure, [child]”, and her “two selves often separate and talk things over with themselves” (Jorgens, 1972, p.153). Carroll even tells readers that Alice “was fond of pretending to be two people” (1865/1866, p. 13), as she would give herself good advice but seldom follow it. *Wonderland* is an allegory demonstrating a child’s struggle with authority and social conventions (Blackburn, 1986), a topic of apparent universal and lasting interest.

Before the publication of *Wonderland* in London in 1865 and in New York in 1866, most illustrations in other books served as a “pleasant visual reminder” of the characters and events described in detail by an author (Kelly, 1982, p. 62). However, in the hands of Carroll and Tenniel, *Wonderland*’s illustrations are “inextricably wedded to the total performance of the work” (Kelly, 1982, p. 62). Carroll relied heavily on illustration to establish the appearance of his characters (Kelly, 1982) and his scenes, and illustrators since have conveyed their own take on appearances. The story and its images carry enduring ideas,
well-researched, broadly investigated, and variously portrayed. Nature, reality, size, time, and identity development are universal and well-established themes in critical literature about Wonderland (e.g., Day, 2010; Goodacre, 1977; Groth, 2012; Hancher, 1985; Hollingsworth, 1999; Lovell-Smith, 2003; Meier, 1999; Monteiro, 1999; Sinker, 2010; Wong, 1999). These themes have an adaptability that “[repays readers] with fresh insights and aesthetic rewards” (Guiliano, as cited in Wong, 1999, p. 136). In this study, I examined the illustrations of Wonderland building on these well-documented themes to establish new themes.

In this chapter, I contextualize my foundations for understanding Wonderland illustration and build the case for my methodological approach for curating illustrations. First, I review relevant literature to address the elements of literary and visual analysis which are necessary for interpreting stories and images as separate communication systems. Next, I review theories of picturebook reading in the field of children’s literature as these multimodal approaches are necessary for interpreting an illustrated story such as Wonderland. Finally, I review prevalent themes of analysis of Wonderland including a specific review of nature, reality, size, time and identity and the ways in which these themes have been used to interpret Wonderland. I conclude with historical reactions to Wonderland which are necessary for contextualizing each edition and which serve as a necessary precursor for my methodological approach for curation.

**Foundations for Understanding Wonderland Illustration**

Lewis Carroll first illustrated his manuscript for Wonderland (known as Alice’s Adventures Underground, 1864) but, as his own diary suggests, he was ultimately dissatisfied with his artistic abilities (Jaques & Giddens, 2013). Carroll sought an illustrator who could “render human-like animals and caricatures” (Jaques & Giddens, 2013, p. 11). Carroll knew of Tenniel’s specific talents through Tenniel’s work for Punch, a popular political publication
in Oxford, England. In fact, Hancher’s (1982) work suggests many early readers of Wonderland may have been drawn to the book because of their familiarity with Tenniel’s distinctive style in Punch. Carroll personally approached Tenniel about the project with his own manuscript sketches in hand and, eventually, Carroll’s sketches influenced much of Tenniel’s work (Hancher, 1985). Carroll was a meticulous person by all accounts and involved himself often with Tenniel’s artistic process, “making suggestions until they got on Tenniel's nerves” (Kelly, 1982, p. 63).

Carroll’s highly active role in the publication process and his punctilious specifications led to a complicated early history of Wonderland (for a review of ‘The Origins of Alice’, see Jaques and Giddens, 2013). Neither Carroll nor Tenniel was satisfied with the quality of the first printing perhaps due to woodblock or inking technicalities, or perhaps due to poor paper quality, based on Carroll’s journal writings and letters to the publisher (Goodacre, 1982). For the rest of his life, Carroll wrote introductory material, corrected minor misprints, and adjusted minute details of the Wonderland text for subsequent printings. For example, in the 1865 version, Alice lands in Wonderland in a “heap of sticks and dry leaves.” However, by 1872, Carroll removed the “sticks” (Jaques & Giddens, 2013, p. 100). He made amendments and clarifications to narrative moments, but the majority of his changes to the text were small adjustments to grammar and punctuation. Carroll continued to “police the appearance” of each new printing, placing quality before profit in the publication of his work (Jaques & Giddens, 2013, p. 38). Carroll tracked reviews of the book, as well as its subsequent printings, editions, and renditions in a detailed ledger.

Most scholars feel Carroll’s story is “notoriously scant on both visual detail and physical description” (Jaques & Giddens, 2013, p. 174), as his words leave space for shifting illustrative perspectives as time passes and artistic influences change. Brooker’s (2004) close examination of five Wonderland editions published or republished around the year 2000
suggest there are as many similarities as differences in seemingly disparate artistic interpretations, drawing on Tenniel’s original illustrations as much as Carroll’s words. Paradoxically, new illustrations are “expected to ‘tick the boxes’ of the original illustrations, keeping both child and adult readers engaged, and yet be sufficiently distinctive to counter any sense that the images are just Tenniel in disguise” (Jaques & Giddens, 2013, p. 184).

Illustrations are significant to this text and Carroll calls attention to illustrations at the start of the story as Alice thinks, “What is the use of a book … without pictures or conversation?” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, p. 2). Carroll directs the reader to look at the illustrations in the book on two occasions (once to the frontispiece and once to the illustration of the Gryphon; see Figures 4 and 5). Upon close examination of Carroll’s words and Tenniel’s illustrations, Kelly (1982) theorizes that Carroll focused his story on abstract concepts and the discursive nature of language and he used the illustrative space to establish characters as “unchanging and unchangeable figures in a swirl of abstract linguistic play” (p. 73).

Tenniel’s illustrations make concrete for readers Carroll’s words (Kelly, 1982) and Carroll’s academic and recreational writings as a logician and mathematician naturally provide a basis for this claim.
Figure 4: Lewis Carroll directs readers to this frontispiece by John Tenniel.

Reprinted from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel, 1866, London: Macmillan. Public domain. Image courtesy University of South Florida, Tampa, Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection.

However, the work of other Wonderland illustrators challenges this theory. The story’s capacity to inspire countless visual interpretations since Tenniel’s work speaks to Carroll’s idiosyncratic ability to represent notions of nature, reality, size, time, and identity development through an interplay of words and images. Tenniel’s ability to realistically portray Carroll’s surreal scenarios creates a sense of irony between the text and images. Hancher (1985) suggests there is much to learn from looking closely at other artistic constructions of Wonderland illustrations. Yet, how is one to read between the pictures and the text, as his words leave space for shifting illustrative perspectives as time passes and artistic influences change? My study of illustrations since Tenniel suggests Carroll’s logic
opened the door to modern interpretations of this story, expressed through the works of other artists. Specifically, I discuss representations of the Alice character and her descent to Wonderland, portrayals of mental illness through the Hatter character, and the anthropomorphization of the playing card characters reflect and extend these long-standing themes. These scenes and characters led to my conclusion that the Wonderland book itself has become a character in this story, looking to readers for their actions and reactions to Carroll’s words and artists’ visual interpretations over the last century and a half.

Figure 5: Lewis Carroll directs readers to look at John Tenniel’s illustration of the Gryphon.

Reprinted from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel, 1866, London: Macmillan. Public domain. Image courtesy University of South Florida, Tampa, Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection.

Reading Illustrative Interpretations

In the case of Wonderland, many factors outside of Carroll’s original text shape the image of Alice for each generation. Illustrators’ styles, contexts, and experiences mold the interpretation of Wonderland they share with the world. As artists imitate the works of other artists, slowly, through observation, correction, and experimentation (DeLuca, 1984), new
Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection iterations of the image of *Wonderland* become a part of existing images. This observation echoes Sipe’s (2001) conclusions on the palimpsest of stories in that children build intertextuality through the arrangement of their experiences with variant editions. Alice, her *Wonderland* counterparts, and the fantastic scenarios they encounter in the *Alice* stories have been re-envisioned through “countless subsequent interpretations, translations and adaptations” (Carroll, Tenniel, & Haughton, 1998, p. lx) and “have meant many different things to different artists” (Sinker, 2010, p. 35). To make sense of a wide variety of artistic interpretations of the story, I utilized diverse lenses for reading text and images. I also had to think flexibly about the preconceived ideas I brought to the story and images of *Wonderland* through my own experiences, interpretations, and readings.

Susanne Langer (1953) might define visual art as forms in virtual space charged with an expression of human feelings— “a symptom of the artist’s state of mind” (p. 25). She says art “may be said to ‘express’... the life of the society from which it stems, namely to indicate customs, dress, behavior, and to reflect confusion or decorum, violence and peace” (Langer, 1953, p. 25, emphasis is hers). She poses a question that anchors art in culture: “What does art create?” (Langer, 1953, p. 10). She begins to respond to this question through a discussion of objects that embody feelings inseparable from themselves and the experience that produces those objects. If art “invariably reflects the political and sociocultural contexts in which it is made” (Sipe, 2011), art is a product of culture, perceived first within its own context. But, as in the case of *Wonderland*, when artistic images and associated narratives pervade several generations, their representations and perceptions evolve over time. These artistic interpretations layer meaning in illustrated classic literature, each edition drawing in influences of those images that came before. I approach artists’ interpretations of *Wonderland* with the sharpened fluidity of Langer’s theories on feeling and form.
Erekson (2009) said, “Conventional illustrations are rich sites for critical viewers to examine pictures because they can at once explore new interpretations of familiar content and also engage in critical examination of the process by which pictures impact meaning” (p. 159). In order to study the body of Wonderland illustrations, I had to make sense of a variety of literary and artistic components, then read with and against my own understandings and experiences with the story and its images. The following section outlines those literary and artistic components, how I framed them in my thinking about this project, and, ultimately, how I pushed past what I thought I knew to make new discoveries.

The Relatedness and Complexity of Text

By current semiotic standards, texts can be defined in a multitude of ways. Text can refer to printed alphabetic characters that convey a socially agreed-upon linguistic message. But, text (broadly defined) can be more ephemeral and less directly related to the printed word. Conversations can be understood as texts and images are visual texts. I use the term text in a broad sense, as the interrelatedness of texts is essential to this project. Framing a discussion of text in this way ties the words, images, stories, and illustrations of Wonderland to each other in complex, multifaceted, and useful ways. Broad thinking about text allows for an inclusive and layered look at how Carroll, Tenniel, and other illustrators of Wonderland contribute to the multitude of critical views of the story, as well as evolving images associated with Carroll’s words.

Reading is a complex process, involving “what the eye tells the brain” and “what the brain tells the eye” (Smith, 1971, p. 81, 96), requiring a reader to be selective in consideration of visual input and to be able to use prior knowledge to discern units of meaning. This reading process becomes even more complex as skilled writers like Lewis Carroll utilize literary devices to convey meanings that transcend word-level and sentence-level understandings in a narrative. For instance, taken separately, the words of Wonderland
carry a subset of meanings that build into the sentences of Wonderland. Furthermore, the sentences carry a subset of meanings when isolated from their paragraphs. The paragraphs carry a subset of meanings when isolated from their chapters, and the chapters carry a subset of meanings when isolated from the rest of the work. All stories make use of particular language, a tool through which the author expresses societal values and attitudes for the reader, inherent to any text, regardless of authorial intent (McCallum & Stephens, 2011). An author’s work is situated in its context. Meanings are conveyed not only by the individual letters and words on a page, but by the words collectively through an understanding of semiotics, elements of literature, and individual and collective interpretations of a story.

**Linguistic semiotics.** The ‘signs’ of linguistic semiotics operate through a system of signifieds and signifiers. ‘Signs’ can be examined from their constituent parts, the signifier (the “nomenclature”) and the signified (the “form”) (Barthes, 1964/1977, p. 10). In linguistics, the signified is not the ‘thing’ itself, but a mental representation of it. The signifier is the word collectively agreed upon to represent the signified (Barthes, 1964/1977). The signifier and the signified work like the recto and verso sides of a paper, inseparable without sacrificing meaning. A message, encoded in words, derives value from its syntagms, or the combination of signs in “linear and irreversible” (Barthes, 1964/1977, p. 58) space and its systematic associations (or associative relationships) to other units of language. Barthes relays a Saussurian notion that language is only possible because signs recur. Further, value in linguistics hinges meaning on the ideas surrounding significations, or (as Barthes quotes Saussure) “the reciprocal situation of the pieces of the language” (Barthes, 1964/1977, p. 54). The value of one sign is less important than the values of the signs around it.

**Discourse.** Beyond the sentence level, discourse consists of organized sets of sentences that convey a message through their rules, or “grammar” (Barthes, 1977, p. 83). Discourse can be categorized broadly as one of three types: enthymematic (intellectual...
discourse), metaphoric (lyric discourse), and metonymic (narrative discourse, Barthes, 1977). *Wonderland* presents an opportunity to address all three categories of Barthes’ discourse. As literature “can be seen as a sort of privileged vehicle of narrative” (Barthes, 1977, p. 85), *Wonderland* has for the last century and a half provided critics and casual readers alike with discourse ripe for re-interpretation and debate. For example, when *Wonderland* was first interpreted through the discourses of psychoanalysis in the first part of the twentieth century, critical readers linked Carroll’s words to their perceptions of sexual connotations in *Wonderland*. A. M. E. Goldschmidt’s (1933/1982) essay titled “Alice in Wonderland Psycho-Analysed” claimed *Wonderland* as a distortion of Lewis Carroll’s desire for young girls (Kidd, 2011). Goldschmidt’s assertion sparked a wave of similar interpretations of the story by other critics, providing a stark contrast to initial reception of the story as innocent nonsense.

Examining the discourse within and around *Wonderland* at various points in time provides a basis for understanding deep meanings in Alice’s journey. An analysis of *Wonderland* discourse also provides basis for understanding shifts in meaning in the story. To get to discourse-level meanings, I first had to examine the parts and pieces of the processes for reading literature and illustration. With a foundation for understanding reading, I examined the stories (i.e., discourses) within and around *Wonderland*.

**Literary Frames and Methods of Critique**

In Frank Smith’s (1971) discussion of *Understanding Reading*, he presents several aspects of the word-reading process based in the fields of linguistics, psychology, and physiology. The human eye recognizes distinctive visual features of print. These distinctive features point to letter identification, or for more fluent readers, word identification. Some readers experience immediate comprehension of these distinctive features while others comprehend on a word-by-word basis. Words are identified either through their visual features or through a reader’s knowledge of the way words are sequentially constructed.
Semantic features specify shades of meaning of particular words; they are not physical attributes of the marks on a page, but abstractions of meaning. The webs of semantic meaning are created by conceptual “categories” (Smith, 1971, p. 154). For example, the meanings of man and woman are closer than meanings of man and girl because man and woman differ only in gender, whereas man and girl differ in gender and age.

Iser (1978/1987) addresses theories of reader response through elements of semantics, pragmatics, functions of literacy, processing of text, and relationships between text and reader. He says that the role of a reader can be fulfilled in different ways “according to historical and individual circumstances, is an indication that the structure of the text allows for different ways of fulfillment” (Iser, 1978/1987, p. 37). The reader’s role is “prestructured” by three components: “the different perspectives represented in the text, the vantage point from which he [sic] joins them together, and the meeting place where they converge” (Iser, 1978/1987, p. 36). And, when those processes and thoughts are unfamiliar, a reader can bring to light aspects of his personality that he had previously be unable to formulate consciously (Iser, 1978/1987, p. 50). Readers use their familiarity with the conventions of a genre to set expectations for reading (Cadden, 2011). “The reader approaches the text with a certain purpose, certain expectations or hypotheses that guide his choices from the residue of past experience” (Rosenblatt, 1938/2005, p. 26).

As I approached this study with Iser’s theory in mind, I acknowledge that critical and creative interpretations of Wonderland have played a major part in shaping the structure of the reader’s role. Wonderland presented a unique experience for child readers in the mid-1800s in that Carroll claimed it was written purely for enjoyment when children’s literature had traditionally contained overt lessons to children. Today’s readers likely see Wonderland differently because of past interpretations, setting unique expectations for the readers’ experience in current times because the story is prevalent in worldwide culture and has been
during the entire lifetime of all present-day readers. In works of literary art, the parts inform the whole of understanding, and vice versa, through a complex fabric of meaning wherein metaphorical threads are woven into patterns, or words are woven into themes.

**Narrative Language in Literature**

In an attempt to define literature, Eagleton (1983/2008) suggests it is not the fictional, creative nature of literary works that define them; it is the use of “language in peculiar ways” (p. 2). Literature utilizes language in ways different from the conventions of everyday speech; it is a particular organization of language. Formal literary devices like imagery, sound, syntax, meter, rhyme, and narrative technique intensify, twist, condense, and invert the meanings of everyday language. The “disproportion between the signifiers and the signifieds” alerts a reader to “the presence of the literary” (Eagleton, 1983/2008, p. 2).

In literature, the “texture, rhythm and resonance of ... words are in excess of their extractable meaning” (Eagleton, 1983/2008, p. 2). Literature forces a reader to a new, dramatic awareness of language as it “estranges or alienates ordinary speech, but in doing so, paradoxically, brings us into a fuller, more intimate possession of experience” (Eagleton, 1983/2008, p. 4). Literature utilizes a kind of self-referential language, as it draws attention to itself and the way in which it is written as much as what is written. Eagleton (1983/2008) brings to light another point essential to a critical understanding of literature: “there is no reading of a work which is not also a ‘re-writing’” (p. 11), as individuals and groups bring their own knowledge and values to a work. Lewis Carroll was a master of word play and logic, creating literary situations open to persistent evolution and contributing to *Wonderland’s* status as classic literature.

**Visual Interpretations**

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) say, “the visual component of a text is an independently organized and structured message, connected with the verbal text, but in no
way dependent on it—and similarly the other way around” (p. 18). Meaning is made in the interstices between images and words, for each reader from individual and collective understandings of the world. Illustrators have an understanding of visual conventions (i.e., visual literacy) in order to convey an intended message to readers and make use of conventional images to guide readers (Erekson, 2009). The language of images can help readers define experience more accurately when words are not sufficient to convey meaning (Berger, 1972/2008). Several factors come into play in the act of interpreting visual art. In order to make sense of literary and artistic ideas in the context of *Wonderland* (itself a complex and enduring idea), I outlined broad questions about text and image, arts and aesthetics, and *Wonderland*’s themes in an analysis prompt (see Figure 3) that I used to look closely at each image in my research collection of illustrations. I utilized elements of design and visual semiotics to frame concepts in the analysis worksheet.

**Elements of design.** Dondis (1973) details some elements of the semiotics and syntax of visual literacy: dot, line, shape, direction, tone, color, texture, scale, and motion. The dot is considered the smallest unit of visual communication. Dots, close together, form lines which communicate motion and energy. Lines convey the complexity and implicit meanings of shape. Shape conveys three basic directions: horizontal and vertical, diagonals, and curves, each containing their own meanings. Tone conveys a presence or absence of light. Color is “loaded with information” relaying associative and symbolic meanings (Dondis, 1973, p. 50). Texture stands in for the sense of touch and conveys dimension. The ways in which visual elements influence each other’s meanings can be described as scale. Elements of motion can be explicit or implicit in visual symbols, constituting a record of movement in the other design elements. Dondis (1973) says artists find their meaning in these choices. These elements helped me make meaning of what I saw in over 5700 images in this data set, to
identify who or what is pictured, what is happening, when and where it takes place, and how scenes are portrayed.

In my interpretation of Wonderland illustrations, the elements of design (e.g., dot, line, shape, direction, tone, color, texture, scale, and motion) helped me understand each illustrator’s method of artistic creation. However, my focus in this project was linguistic and artistic messages conveyed by illustrations and how new ideas may link with previously explored ideas, not the affordances provided by the means by which they are conveyed.

Yet, elements of design do not capture the social and intellectual space within which the illustrations were created. To determine the situatedness of each Wonderland edition, I used concepts of visual semiotics. Part of meaning in illustration comes from within the image, through visual qualities of the objects portrayed and the relationships between them. However, part of meaning in illustration comes from outside of the image, through cultural influences and traditional connotations (Nodelman, 1988). Although there may not be one “right” way to interpret an image, there are more insightful, better-conceived interpretations (Barrett, 2002, p. 37). “Better” interpretations are “in harmony with the social and intellectual milieu in which the [work] was produced” (Barrett, 2002, p. 37).

Visual semiotics. Images are often studied with a framework of visual semiotics. The study of visual semiotics works to answer two fundamental questions: “What do images represent and how?” and “What ideas and values do the people, places, and things represented in images stand for?” (van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 92). These questions of representation and the ‘hidden meanings’ of images stem from Barthian ideas about the layering of meaning in signs (van Leeuwen, 2001).

Roland Barthes (1977) provides a three-fold framework for understanding layers of meaning in images; Barthes names these levels of meaning linguistic, denoted, and connoted. The linguistic message works like a caption, a literal description of the image, permitting a
viewer to focus the eye. *Denoted* meanings can be thought of as literal interpretations of an image (Barrett, 2002), the coded message between texts (texts in the broadest sense of the word, to include images, music, alphabetic texts, etc.). The *connoted* meaning (or the *obtuse* meaning, as Barthes also calls it) opens the “field of meaning totally” by extending meaning beyond culture, knowledge, and information through analytics (Barthes, 1977, p. 55). Obtuse meaning is a “signifier without a signified”, which makes it difficult to describe (Barthes, 1977. p. 61). Obtuse meaning is indifferent to the obvious story told in the first two layers of meaning, “‘over the shoulder’ or ‘on the back’ of articulated language” (Barthes, 1977, p. 61). As an illustrative example, in a photograph, the linguistic message is *what* is photographed (e.g., a field of flowers) and the denoted message conveys *how* it is photographed (long shot, high view). The connoted message conveys what the image is *about* (serenity, freshness). Noth (2011) states that pictures, drawings, paintings, photographs, colors, print ads, posters, design, films, diagrams, logograms, traffic signs, and maps are topics of visual semiotics, but not all visually communicated signs (like writing and nonverbal communications such as gestures and body language) are considered sub-domains of visual semiotics (Noth, 2011).

Barrett (2002) explains that anyone can engage in meaningful interpretation of an image (i.e., understanding the linguistic, denoted and connoted messages) by asking questions such as “What do I see? What do I feel when I look at it? Does it have personal significance to me?” (Barrett, 2002, p. 2). From a detailed account of the literal clues provided in an image (what is depicted—people, places, events—and how those depictions fit together), a reader of an image can pursue questions about the *connotations* in art to develop an understanding of what the work is *about*. These questions for art interpretation may beget outside research for the viewer: “How does it fit with other works by the same artist?… Is it an admired or an abhorred work of art, and for what reasons?… What is it about for the
artist? From what cultural traditions does it emerge? Has it influenced art made after it?” (Barrett, 2002, p. 2). For the concepts of symbolism and connotation, Barthes (1977) says we look to the collective rhetoric surrounding an image and the attitudes corresponding with an image.

**Finding Meaning In Illustration**

Unlike literary texts, which carry meaning in words, or works of art, which carry meanings in images, illustrated children’s literature carries meaning across multiple modes. In illustrated literature, much meaning is made in the interstices between text and image, for each reader forms individual and collective understandings of the world. Lamb (1962) says, “words and pictures make their own expanding rings of association on the surface of a reader’s consciousness” (p. 578). To interpret or read illustrated texts requires an understanding of the words, the images, and how the two work together.

Sipe (2012) described four main ways in which scholars consider text-picture relationships: metaphors and analogies, theoretical constructs, typologies/taxonomies, and phenomenological approaches. Scholars use metaphors from the arts, science, and technology to discuss relationships between words and pictures. For example, it is often said pictures and words metaphorically “work together.” It is the mental processes of the reader that constitute the “work” in word/picture relationships (Sipe, 2012, p. 7). Sipe (2012) cited scholars and authors who describe the relationships between words and images in books through metaphors involving rhythm, harmony, dissonance, drama, cinematic terminology, textiles, physics, ecology, and a host of other metaphors in the arts and sciences. When metaphors cannot sufficiently describe the relationships between words and pictures, writers may utilize theoretical constructs. Theoretical constructs “attempt to illuminate the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of word/picture associations” (Sipe, 2012, p. 5). Phenomenological approaches to
the connections between words and pictures ask what happens inside the minds of readers as they make sense of word/picture relationships (Sipe, 2012).

**Indeterminacies in words and illustrations.** Sipe (2012) makes a connection between Iser’s theories on reading printed word and reading image: in the minds of readers, words and pictures fill each other’s “indeterminacies” (Sipe, 2012, p. 11). In many instances, one mode communicates more effectively than the other (e.g. seeing a specific shade of orange is more precise and economical than describing it in words). Nodelman (1988) develops the concept of *limiting*, as he suggests that words limit pictures, just as pictures limit words. For example, a picture of a woman may be described with a caption ‘The Queen.’ The caption tells the reader about the woman’s social class while the picture shows the reader what the Queen looks like. An illustrator, never illustrating exactly what is written, finds space in the words for pictures to do their best work (Sendak, 2007; Sipe, 2012). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) suggest that the “*kinds of meaning*” expressed in language and image are “from the same broad domain”, but words can express “mental process clauses and nominalization” while images present perspective uniquely (p. 19, italics theirs).

The relationship between text and image in illustration is unique (Moss, 1982) and study of illustration must be treated as such. Following Moss’s advice, I considered the ways in which illustrators’ concepts and creativity work with and against Carroll’s words and critical interpretations of the fantasy world of *Wonderland*, historically situated in the contexts in which they were created and in retrospect. Over time, the intended audience of *Wonderland* has broadened from a story for children to a story for anyone, and printing processes have evolved from the static forms of woodblock printing to the many affordances of digital design and printing. Across these many changes, I worked to discover illustrators’ connection to the story and to develop an understanding of immediate and worldly *Wonderland* contexts.
Theories of picturebook reading. Scholars of picturebook illustration tend to view the relationship between text and illustration as an emphasis on events and relationships, rather than “subtleties of feeling” (Nodelman, 1988, p. 151) but illustrations provide information about stories via their format, mood, style and meaning (Nodelman, 1988; Kiefer, 2007). Nodelman (1988) describes all word/picture relationships in books as ironic. When authors and illustrators choose to let the “different qualities of their different arts . . . communicate different information”, the “words tell us what the pictures do not show, and the pictures show us what the words do not tell” (Nodelman, 1988, p. 222). Sipe (2012) uses the construct of synergy to describe these complex word/picture relationships, as the sum of the components of a picturebook are greater than their parts. Though there is much overlap, research in the field of picturebooks might be considered differently than research with illustrations in chapter books. Most work in the field of interpreting illustrated literature stems from the study of how readers interpret picturebooks. Picturebooks and illustrated novels differ in the ratio of words to image, and typically differ in the depth of the relationship between words and images. This Wonderland project provides a different context for developing new and more complex understandings of how illustration and the children’s novel work together, as the relationship between the words and illustrations in picturebooks differ from the relationship between words and illustrations in illustrated chapter books. 

Interpreting Multiple Modes

Serafini and Blasingame (2012) addressed the changing relationships between words and image in a discussion of contemporary novels. Illustrations are no longer just an accompaniment for words; illustrations are used as integral to storytelling. As one example, the 2008 Caldecott award winner, The Invention of Hugo Cabret (Selznick, 2007) is told with words and pictures intermittently. It is unusual for a chapter book to win a picturebook
award, but this is an unusual novel. After several pages of words, readers see images that carry the narrative with no words on the page. Readers are confronted with the images and, if left uninterpreted, would find holes in the story. Image is no longer an adornment for words, but integral in meaning-making. Categorically, Serafini and Blasingame (2012) outlined the significance of the changing forms and formats in the contemporary illustrated novel. In order to understand the contemporary illustrated novel, readers may need to interpret based on the principles of multiple forms and formats (i.e., line drawings, photographs, diagrams, graphic design elements, etc.). Serafini and Blasingame (2012) went on to outline two other shifts in the contemporary novel: changing perspectives and changing boundaries of the children’s novel.

Changing perspectives of the traditional narrator, the contemporary novel may include multiple voices, rather than the authoritative, didactic narrator of yesterday (Nikolajeva, 1998). Interpreting a story from a variety of perspectives creates a need for readers to understand the words they read and the images they encounter, as well as how the narrator’s perspective may influence meaning. As one example, Iassen Ghiuselev’s (Carroll & Ghiuselev, 2003) Wonderland illustrations show scenes from multiple perspectives, crossing space and compressing time, creating an unusually heightened sense of omniscience. Making sense of Ghiuselev’s images requires readers to recognize and interpret this unique perspective. Serafini and Blasingame (2012) also discussed the rise in popularity of the dystopian novel, changing the boundaries of topics for the children’s novel.

Rodney Matthews (Carroll & Matthews, 2008/2009) and Camille Rose Garcia (Tenniel & Garcia, 2010) follow this trend in their signature styles, clearly portraying Wonderland as a dystopia. In Matthews’ illustrations, many objects have faces, looking over the story and creating a sense that everything is watching. Garcia’s hard lines, saturated colors, and abundant black ink, used to integrate the shapes of bats, spiders, and other creatures of the
darkness reflect her view of growing up outside of Disneyland, in the dystopian shadow of a perfected world. While the composition of many of her illustrations are like Tenniel’s, her choices in shape, color, and tone bring darkness to the forefront for readers. But in order to interpret new developments how children’s literature is portrayed, readers need some understanding of the historical constructions of this genre.

**Meaning in Historical Constructions of Literature for Children**

Before the 17th century, “children had not yet been invented” (Tunnell & Jacobs, 2013, p. 80) because youth lived and worked like small adults. The texts they read taught the alphabet and Bible verses. As philosophers like John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) advocated for childhood as a time of innocence and exploration, new texts accompanied these new ideas. Historically, texts written for children contained an overt moral or pious lesson; “children needed to behave properly to keep their souls safe” (Mikkelsen, 2000, p. 16). By the mid-1700s, John Newbery emerged as a London publisher who aimed to produce texts for children “with entertaining games, rhymes, and fables, rather than catechism” (Tunnell & Jacobs, 2013, p. 81). But, didacticism in children’s literature remained prevalent throughout the 19th century (Tunnell & Jacobs, 2013), making the widely accepted theme of “nonsense” in *Wonderland* (1865) particularly intriguing, as the story is also understood as a parody of Victorian Oxford, England and a lesson in growing up.

In the history of illustration, by the 1850s, illustrators Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway, and Randolph Caldecott were illustrating fairy tales, myths, alphabet books, and verse for children. Crane’s illustrations are characterized by his use of heavy outlines, bold colors, flat tints, and detailed backgrounds the same designs used by Crane to create wallpaper and furniture (May, 1981). Greenaway is known for her idyllic portrayal of children in long gowns, with delicate flowers, serene, natural settings, and pastel colors (Mikkelsen, 2000; Rogers, 2008). Caldecott is known for showing action in pictures in order to extend rhymes, songs,
and stories of folklore (Tunnell & Jacobs, 2013). The work of these illustrators set the field of illustration for children into motion, creating images that “would fill the gaps of text and interpret the words of the stories” (Mikkelsen, 2000, p. 19), creating increasingly interlaced relationships between words and pictures. Each of these artists, through their own distinct styles, contributed to understandings of conventional illustrative practice as their work entwined meaning in words with meaning in images.

Reading Historical Texts

Grenby (2011) points out two factors necessary for researchers to understand the “matrix of events and attitudes out of which the literary work developed” (p. 103) in historical children’s literature: the relationship between the texts and their contexts, and an understanding of which contexts are important. Political, social, economic, cultural and intellectual histories are important to understand a particular historical text (Grenby, 2011; Rudd, 2011). Grenby (2011) suggests wide reading of primary material from the associated time period, combined with serendipity and intuition lead to researchers which contexts are of the greatest importance for understanding historical texts. Grenby further suggests researchers investigate not only the production, but also the initial reception of the work through the study of book reviews, published letters, and associated literary periodicals. To this end, the following section includes a summary of the criticism surrounding Wonderland.

Reading Wonderland

In the previous sections, I reviewed how to read literature, how to read images, and how to read illustrated texts/picturebooks. These theories and processes are required in the interpretation of children’s literature, and I utilized these lenses variously to examine the over 5700 illustrations of Wonderland in my research collection. However, Wonderland is particularly complex given its long publication history, its deeply rooted historical contexts for meaning, and the wildly varied reactions to the story. My reading of Wonderland
illustrations also required specific knowledge of the original contexts of the story’s
development. In this Wonderland project, the relationship between historical context of the
printed words and illustration varies. But, texts are not just reflective of historical contexts;
they become part of history themselves (Rudd, 2011). Although the narrative function of
illustration “forces some amount of particularization” (DeLuca, 1984, p. 23), the fantasy
genre of Wonderland in particular offers freedom for illustrators to do “whatever they
please” (p. 24). With this in mind, I developed a framework for looking at and describing
each Wonderland illustration (see Figure 3 for this analysis prompt.)

Each work is a product of the artist’s personal creation of form in response to the
environment (Langer, 1953). Some illustrations of Wonderland may not be ‘significant’ to the
body of work. Some editions do not showcase artistic talent. Some editions were not
illustrated with a child audience in mind (such as Salvador Dalí’s 1969 edition (Carroll & Dalí,
1969) rare and costly works). Some editions go beyond the text (and some critics may say
certain illustrations go too far beyond the text). Some editions utilize old-fashioned
techniques or contain little or no color when color printing technologies were readily
available (such as Barry Moser’s (Carroll & Moser, 1982) woodblock illustrations or Ralph
Steadman’s (Carroll & Steadman, 1967/1986) ink drawings). Some editions carry more
meaning in their formats than others; format, particularly book size and paper quality, was an
ubiquitous concern of Carroll’s in Wonderland’s initial publication and subsequent editions
and printings (Jaques & Giddens, 2013). With historical contexts, the fantasy genre, artists’
aesthetic concept and creative processes, intended audience, and printing processes in mind,
I worked to discover illustrators’ connection to the Wonderland story, and develop an
understanding of immediate and worldly contexts.
A Brief Synopsis of Wonderland

Though it is impossible to concisely provide the full context for the story of Wonderland, here I provide a brief synopsis of the plot and major characters from And Introduction to ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’ and ‘Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There’ in Nineteenth Century Literature Criticism (1996) in order to refresh readers’ awareness of some important details with the assumption those who are interested in this topic have read Wonderland at some time in its unabridged form:

In Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Alice falls into a rabbit hole and emerges in the imaginative world of Wonderland, where she soon discovers that the solid, logical laws of science no longer apply. In Wonderland, Alice grows and shrinks, animals talk, and language makes little sense. She meets a peremptory hookah-smoking Caterpillar, a dodo, then a Duchess with an ever-smiling Cheshire Cat. The Cheshire Cat directs Alice to a tea party with the Mad Hatter, the March Hare, and the Dormouse. The Wonderland Queen—a playing-card Queen of Hearts—introduces Alice to the Gryphon, who takes her to the Mock Turtle, and, after telling Alice about the Mock-Turtle’s education, the two perform a dance, called the Lobster Quadrille. Alice then finds herself at a trial where she has to give evidence. Finding the trial absurd, she tosses the playing-card participants into the air. Her dream comes to a sudden close, and she finds herself awake on a river bank with her sister. (p. 37)

This story began in a boat on the real ‘golden afternoon’, July 4, 1862, as Alice Liddell (rhymes with ‘fiddle’, age 10), her sisters (Lorina and Edith- ages 14 and 8 at the time), and Reverend Robinson Duckworth first heard Reverend Charles Dodgson (also known as Lewis Carroll) tell a story of Alice’s adventures down the rabbit hole. Alice and her sisters begged Carroll/Dodgson to write the story down for them, which he illustrated and titled Alice’s Adventures Underground (Day, 2010). It would be more than three years, in November of
1865, before Carroll and the Liddell girls would see *Wonderland* in print. Carroll financed the printing of the book and worked closely with Andrew Macmillan (his publisher) to print, promote, and distribute it. Alice Liddell received the first special vellum copy; Carroll sent Princess Beatrice (Queen Victoria’s youngest daughter) the second gift book copy, seemingly as a method for word-of-mouth promotion with prestigious families (Jaques and Giddens, 2013). The book saw success quickly and has remained a staple of children’s classic literature ever since.

**Wonderland’s Historical Contexts as a Basis for Meaning-Making**

For the published *Wonderland* illustrations, Lewis Carroll commissioned Sir John Tenniel, a prominent political cartoonist in Oxford, England for the *Punch* publication (e.g., Brooker, 2004; Hancher, 1985; Sink, 2010). Tenniel had knowledge of and experience with the visual techniques of satirists, and his distinctive style blended satire with elements of realism. *Wonderland*’s first audience would have seen previews for Tenniel’s illustrations in *Punch* (see Hancher, 1982, 1985). As evident in Hancher’s (1982) comparison of *Alice* illustrations and *Punch*, a girl strikingly similar to Alice in form and posture appears in the center of a *Punch* title page (January-June 1864; likely before Tenniel began his illustrations for *Wonderland*). Hancher’s (1982) comparison also reveals likenesses to *Wonderland*’s caterpillar, frog and fish footman, Father William, gardeners, and the evolutionary ape (from the Caucus Race) in *Punch*. Though Carroll was concerned about his book’s appeal to the child reader, Tenniel’s status in the community was a strategic marketing choice for Carroll, the unknown children’s author, in appealing to those who make the purchase, the book-buying adults (Delahunty & Schultz, 2011; Jaques & Giddens, 2013).

Charles Dodgson/Lewis Carroll (1832 - 1898) was a writer, mathematician, logician, reverend, and photographer. He wrote fiction under the pen name Lewis Carroll. Yet, he published works about mathematics and logic under his given name. He kept extensive
journals, which are often useful to scholars in understanding his personal history and motives. Carroll was an avid consumer of new technologies and these technological advancements played a role in the development of his narratives and images. He owned one of Edison’s electric pens and Remington’s typewriters, and was interested in the future of cinematography (Groth, 2012). Carroll was intrigued by the new media technologies developing in his day, technology that made voice and image more permanent.

Recurring Themes in Wonderland

Though photography is never explicitly mentioned in Wonderland, Meier (1999) finds implicit, metaphorical, and thematic connections between the story and the art of photography. Carroll was a master portrait photographer, and during his lifetime photography redefined the human experience of nature, reality, size, time, and personal identity. These themes from Carroll’s personal contexts pervade Wonderland. By beginning with a basis for understanding these contexts situated in British Victorian culture, I was able to trace influences of these ideas through my chronological study of over 5700 Wonderland illustrations. I utilized these themes, with principles of visual literacy, to help bring focus to my viewing of each image.

Nature. The mid-1800s in Britain saw a “series of crazes” in natural history, including recommendations for natural history as a subject “especially appropriate for children” (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 391). Tenniel’s stylistic choices provide a visual angle on the Wonderland text “that evoke[s] the life sciences, natural history, and Darwinian ideas about evolution” (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 385). Tenniel was considerably knowledgeable and skillful at drawing animals, an important topic requiring visual representation in Wonderland (Hancher, 1985). The Punch publication was already known for aping theories of natural selection. So, in the context of Wonderland’s first publication, Tenniel was well-known for his work in Punch’s cartoons, connecting Tenniel and natural selection even before
Wonderland. Tenniel’s illustrative style has much in common with natural history drawings: cross-hatching, fine lines, accurate proportions, anatomical detail, and sketchy but realistic backgrounds (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 391). In 1865, illustrations of Wonderland were praised by the Times for their truth to the animal form (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 395).

Tenniel’s stylistic and aesthetic choices in illustration add another element to the satirical nature of the story, as he utilizes naturalistic illustrations to portray fantasy situations. We can understand Tenniel’s illustrations as a combination of his skillful interpretations of Carroll’s inventive intentions and Tenniel’s interest in portraying the characters as “real” animals (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 402).

Wonderland, in words and illustrations, conveys ideas about the origins of people, the contentious topic of the 1860 Oxford (England) Darwinian Debate. Carroll included an ape in his manuscript illustrations—the symbol of the debate on natural selection (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 386). The ape appears in Tenniel’s illustration of the caucus race and has appeared in many other artists’ portrayals of the same narrative moment, though the ape is never mentioned in the story. Carroll’s frog footman and fish footman at the Duchess’s house in chapter six provide further evidence of “evolution gone berserk” (Day, 2010, p. 408). If animals are semi-human, humans may conversely be evolved animals (Lovell-Smith, 2003).

Typical Victorian stories for children would have concerned themselves with moral lessons of kindness to animals. Wonderland’s animals “[chop] logic,” compete with Alice, and talk of things animals might in the natural world like fear, death, and being eaten (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 386).

In illustration, for example, Lovell-Smith (2003) notes the White Rabbit “occupies a point between animal and human, simultaneously both of these things and neither of them” (p. 384). A visual comparison of Carroll’s manuscript and Tenniel’s published illustrations demonstrate that many of Carroll’s intentions for the Wonderland illustrations made their
way to print (Hancher, 1985). In Tenniel’s illustration, Lovell-Smith (2003) says his “rabbitness” is accentuated by his lack of pants and his meticulously drawn proportions and anatomy (See Figure 6). But, his upright posture, clothing and accessories, eyes and hands suggest he is human (Lovell-Smith, 2003).

Figure 6: The White Rabbit in Chapter 1 of John Tenniel’s edition.

Reprinted from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel, 1866, London: Macmillan. Public domain. Image courtesy University of South Florida, Tampa, Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection.

I would add to Lovell-Smith’s (2003) discussion: Lewis Carroll’s manuscript illustrations for Alice’s Adventures Underground accentuate the Rabbit’s human-like identity, with the limbs and body of a man, dressed in a long coat, pants, and shoes (See Figure 7). He seems to only have the head of a rabbit. Hancher’s (1985) comparison of John Tenniel’s illustrations to Carroll’s prototype manuscript illustrations demonstrate “striking similarities” (p. 28) in synchronization to the narrative and content. When Tenniel departs from Carroll’s prototype manuscript illustrations, it is generally in favor of greater artistic skill and greater realism.
Tenniel’s naturalized characters “look as if they have been invited back to re-enact a frantic moment as a posed still” (Sinker, 2010, p. 38). This style has the effect of “freezing time” (Meier, 1999, p. 123), an idea closely linked to photography.

Figure 7: Lewis Carroll’s manuscript illustration of the Rabbit.


Time. Victorians were generally “obsessed with time” (Meier, 1999, p. 125). Carroll’s portrayal of time in Wonderland offers an antidote to “pocket watches, clocks, and train schedules,” the linear, mechanical “all-pervading acceleration of life in his society” (Meier, 1999, p. 124). When Lewis Carroll wrote the Alice stories, his contemporary readers would have expected a linear Victorian plot structure with logical events that unfold over time as means to a logical end. Traditional Victorian stories created links in a narrative chain, serving Aristotelian laws of causation and continuity to a satisfying conclusion (Meier, 1999). The Carrollian Narrative is different in rhythm and motive from the traditional Victorian narrative structure (Hollingsworth, 1999). Alice’s stories lack a firm and logical series of
events, in favor of “discontinuities, absurdities, and whimsies” (Hollingsworth, 1999, p. 89). The nonsense becomes sensible as a series of surprises through the relationships between episodes and function through satirical meanings. Hollingsworth (1999) exemplifies these purposes in the caucus race. Alice and the animals dry themselves by racing in a “sort of circle” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) with no defined start or finish. But the episode does not contribute to a running narrative and alternately could be seen as a series of puns, a satire of the political process, or an illustration of Victorian attitudes toward Darwinism (Hollingsworth, 1999). Running in circles can be viewed similarly to standing still.

Victorian children often learned by memorization and Carroll believed this kind of “unthinking learning by rote … killed time by stifling imaginative possibility” (Groth, 2012, p. 668). In Wonderland, the Hatter and the Hare “murdered time” (Groth, 2012, p. 668). After buttering his pocket watch, the March Hare dips it into his teacup, and the Hatter talks of knowing “Time” and asking him to preform favors with the clock (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866). The Hatter advises Alice that if she kept on good terms with Time, she could simply “whisper a hint to Time” at the start of her 9:00 a.m. lessons “...and round goes the clock in a twinkling! Half-past one; time for dinner!” (Carrol & Tenniell, 1865/1866, p. 102). This way of thinking about time is not anchored in the common sense of the Victorian era. At the Hatter’s table, it is always 6 o’clock, tea-time. Because “it’s always tea-time, and we’ve no time to wash the things between whiles,” Alice speculates this is why The Hatter, Hare, and Dormouse periodically move around the table to a clean place. When she asks what they do when they come to the beginning again, the matter is not resolved as the Hatter suggests they change the subject. This instance brings time to a halt, placing a hard stop in the forward trajectory of the conversation. Photography has the effect of stopping time, preserving moments for later reference. Hollingsworth (1999) suggests through Carroll’s
creative and socially complex life and his manipulation of the likeness of reality in photographs, Carroll developed his unconventional plot structure and non-sequitur narrative.

**Reality.** Photographs appear to be a “double” of reality (Meier, p. 118). Dondis describes the human eye as the original camera, and the photograph as “the most technically dependable means of representing visual reality” (p. 69). Photography “stimulated and shaped the consciousness of individual ... Victorians” (like Carroll and Tenniel) and Victorian society (Hollingsworth, 1999, p. 91). Before the camera, perspective organized the visual field as though it were the ideal; each spectator was the unique center of the world. There were no representations of “reality” outside of perception by the human eye. It is not surprising the camera and positivism emerged together (Berger & Mohr, 1982, in Stanczak, 2007), as photographs present a simulacrum of a knowable universe. Photographs provide a valuable tool for documenting and constructing empirical knowledge. Much of the literature and published methodologies in visual research deal with photographs. Well-known anthropologists Collier and Collier (1986) make note of the camera’s use in anthropological studies: the camera is often used as a tool for observation and juxtaposition in order to compare similar phenomena in different cultures and bring light to cultural patterns. Photographic images are considered a “mechanistic record of culture, behavior, and interactions” (Collier & Collier 1986, p. 5).

Photos simultaneously offer an opportunity for novelty and failure, as they can obscure or highlight their contexts. In photo, depictions of reality could be altered by man or machine, incidentally and intentionally, evoking questions about other unexpected violations of norms (Hollingsworth, 1999). Image technology offered a great departure from the predictable ways of Victorian thinking, opening the door to many newfound freedoms in thought. The photographic processes in darkrooms provide a “startlingly surreal, ghostly representation in reversed tones ... a glimpse of selfhood at odds with everyday reality”
After photography’s advent, “what you saw depended upon where you were when” (Berger, 1972/2005, p. 18). This perspective produced new meanings that had lasting effects on many aspects of culture.

Photographs changed the aim of artists. Until photography, artists aimed to create a likeness of the real world (DeLuca, 1984), but since photography, artists have worked to portray things cameras cannot, so artistic mediums can do their best work. But, just as photographs capture a likeness of reality, they also present the opportunity to manipulate this “machine-made reality” (Hollingsworth, 1999, p. 91). When Lady Mary Filmer, a pioneer in artistic photography, began to create some of the first collage photographs in the mid-1860s, artists of many mediums felt the possibility of layered realities (Hollingsworth, 1999). Photography led to conceptions of the moving images of cinematography. The art and science of photographs fundamentally changed human perception of the visual, and defamiliarized space and perception (Meier, 1999, p. 120).

Carroll was himself a skilled and prolific photographer (Hollingsworth, 1999) and he became at home in the “unreal space of the camera” (Monteiro, 1999, p. 102). Even in the kind of photographs thought at the time to represent a positivist reality, Carroll tells of fantastic instances. In 1860, Carroll wrote a short story titled “A Photographer’s Day Out”, which portrays a photographer named Tubbs in “increasingly slapstick situations” (Hollingsworth, 1999, p. 95). Tubbs, trying to impress a girl, describes his landscape negative as it develops (emphasis in the original):

“Trees rather misty—well! the wind had blown them about a little; that wouldn’t show much-- the farmer? well, he had walked on a yard or two, and I should be sorry to state how many arms and legs he appeared with-- never mind? call him a spider, a centipede, anything—the cow? I must, however, reluctantly confess that the cow had
three heads, and though such an animal may be curious, it is not picturesque”
(Carroll, 1860, as cited in Hollingsworth, 1999, p. 96).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the long exposure time of mechanical photograph production meant moving objects appeared distorted or blurred (Solnit, 2003; Persohn, 2015). Carroll was interested in the aesthetic qualities of the photograph and the concept of development, rather than photos as an accurate representation of reality (Hollingsworth, 1999, p. 94). Carroll’s glass negatives offered the opportunity to see the world upside down and backwards, black as white and white as black (Mavor, 1999, p. 65). Photographic processing provided Carroll occasions for specific sensory experiences of visual “materialization, inversion, reversal, and changes in size” (Hollingsworth, 1999, p. 86), characteristics manifest in the Alice stories. In short, Carroll’s aesthetic, fanciful take on photographic practices likely contributed to the development of Alice’s surreal situations.

**Size.** Goodacre (1977) documents twelve changes in size for Alice in Wonderland. At the time of Goodacre’s study of size in Wonderland, she says, “no artist has yet portrayed the changes in size accurately and consistently” (Goodacre, 1977, p. 24). By her account, there are inconsistencies between the sizes mentioned in the story and their portrayal in illustrations, as well as the ways in which characters met by Alice when she is one size encounter Alice of another size. For example, when Alice meets the Duchess in her kitchen, Alice is about 9 inches tall. Later, when Alice meets the Duchess again in the croquet scene, Alice is three inches taller than when they first met. Perhaps, Goodacre offers in explanation, these inconsistencies are lingering products of Carroll’s “spontaneous narration” that first brought the story of Alice’s Adventures Underground into existence, or perhaps “size change is of everyday occurrence in Wonderland” (Goodacre, 1977, p. 24), explaining inconsistencies in size by way of the rapid changes in the Wonderland world. Through the latter explanation, characters would be unlikely to regard unusually- or inconsistently-sized
surroundings or characters in *Wonderland*. Themes of growing up and the confusing process of becoming an adult are implied through Alice’s changes in size.

Carroll, also reflects themes of “eat or be eaten” (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 406) and thereby extending themes from traditional children’s tales of ogres and miniature characters, calls attention to Alice’s ability to gain control over her size and growth as she masters the bits of mushroom and cakes. Alice’s size changes so drastically and so quickly in the story she finds herself “repositioned in the food chain” (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 387). Tenniel, both reflecting and extending Carroll’s story in his illustrations, shows Alice in unusual proportions to her surroundings. Alice, illustrated the same size as the unclothed mouse in the Pool of Tears, frightens the mouse away when she mentions her cat Dinah (Hancher, 1985).

Contrarily, Alice is accused of being a serpent in the tree and a monster in the White Rabbit’s house when the cakes make her grow (Lovell-Smith, 2003, p. 406). Alice’s changes in size are not always proportionate, as she hits her chin on her foot just before she finds herself with “an immense length of neck” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) p. 70) in the pigeon’s tree. With the Chapter 5 illustration of Alice and the Caterpillar, Carroll’s text indicates Alice is not pleased with her height equal to that of a caterpillar. Lovell-Smith (2003) notes the reader is miniaturized by Tenniel’s proportions and perspective as he shows us the mushroom at ground level (Figure 8). The scene from this viewpoint contributes to a sense of Alice’s changes in size, a defamiliarization of space, and a change in perspective.

**Development of personal identity.** Portrait photography offers the opportunity to view identity as a performance (rather than identity as essential in nature) (Meier, 1999). The development of *Wonderland* coincides with the advent of the collodion process in photography, which involves glass negatives that can be reproduced in unlimited quantity, rather than the paper negatives of the Daguerreotype photo. The collodion process caused a significant decrease in the cost and increase in popularity of photograph production. In fact,
in the mid 1800s, small mass-produced portraits known as carte-de-visite were circulated and collected widely. This kind of commercial photography offered the opportunity for the sitter to assert his individual identity through the portrait, while paradoxically restricting him to just a few stock poses and settings (Monteiro, 1999). This practice had a particular effect on social classes, as royalty circulated cartes-de-visite and the public learned kings and queens are in form and features just like other people (Plunkett as cited in Montiero, 1999). Any middle-class citizen could trace the steps of royalty, having his portrait made in the same pose behind the same desk as the next ruler, therefore providing the potential for blurring social class distinctions.

Though Carroll collected these popular photographs, he seemed aware of the threats to individualism presented by severely restricted settings, as he continued to practice
theatrical and varied portraiture. In fact, according to Monteiro (1999), Carroll made two photographic portraits of Alice Liddell in the same garden on the same day in 1858. In one, she was dressed in “a bright cotton dress with billowing sleeves, white socks, and shiny leather shoes” (Monteiro, 1999, p. 105). In the other photograph, Alice Liddell wears torn rags and bare feet. The narratives presented “discourage reading a unified identity” across the two photographs; the Wonderland Alice is described as a “‘curious child ... very fond of pretending to be two people’” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, p. 12, as cited in Monteiro, 1999, p. 105). In Wonderland, Alice conveys to the Caterpillar, “Three inches is such a wretched height to be” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, as cited in Monteiro, 1999, p. 110), about the size of the cartes-de-visite. The Queen’s carte-de-visite resembles her Wonderland counterpart (Monteiro, 1999), and Alice rejects the flat representations when she escapes the Queen’s men by proclaiming, “You are nothing but a pack of cards” (Monteiro, 1999, p. 114).

Alice staunchly objects to the Queen’s notion of “living backwards” when she states that she “…ca’n’t [sic] remember things before they happen” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, in Mavor, 1999, p. 64). While the passing of time establishes personal identity, growing up, aging, and dying contrarily threaten personal identity. Alice seems to be aware of this concept when she says, “There’s no use going back to yesterday because I was a different person then” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, as cited in Meier, 1999, p. 125). These adjunct characterizations within Wonderland are thematically and spatially related to the photographs Carroll was in the habit of making.

Historical Reactions to Wonderland

When Carroll published Wonderland in 1865 and 1866, a story showcasing a mix of “rhyme, nonsense poetry, natural conversation, impossibility, surrealistic fantasy, improvisation, absurdity, mischief, wit, and a strong female child character who stands up to the illogic, oppression, and hypocrisy of the adult world” (Mikkelsen, 2000, p. 24) would have
been rather new ideas for its first child readers (Wong, 1999). The morality contained in
children’s literature is particularly interesting in the context of Wonderland, a children’s
book originally celebrated for having no moral. But, as Jaques and Giddens (2013)
demonstrate, shortly after Wonderland was published, Carroll seemed to struggle with
morality in regard to Alice. In the years between 1865 and 1890, Carroll developed
adaptations of the story that make childhood the center of “moral innocence”, while
encouraging adults to celebrate this special but short state (Jaques & Giddens, 2013, p. 61).
During this time, Carroll also aimed to expand the Alice empire while remaining skeptical
about consumerism. Regardless of Carroll’s intentions to avoid embedded morals in the Alice
books, they reflect “the values and attitudes of the British upper-middle class during the
Victorian period” (Susina, 2010, p. 3).

Wonderland, never out of print in its long life, confirmed fantasy as a legitimate genre
for children and though it is not the first of its kind, it is certainly the best-known and most
persistent (Stevenson, 2011). The narratives written for children carry an ideology, a way of
understanding ideas, values, and attitudes, “formulated in and by language” (McCallum &
Stephens, 2011, p. 370). Literary works produce, reproduce, and challenge ideologies
(McCallum & Stephens, 2011), and Lewis Carroll’s Wonderland is an enduring example of
these purposes. Social, scientific, and literary conventions in the mid-Victorian era when
Wonderland was initially published were in a state of great change. Eagleton (1983/2008), in
his discussion of The Rise of English, describes the relationship between the Victorian
religious ideology and daily life at the time: Victorian religious practice had a great “pacifying
influence, fostering meekness, self-sacrifice and the contemplative inner life” (p. 20, italics
in original). But “literary texts constitute a reaction to contemporary situations” (Iser,
1978/1987, p. 3), and the impacts of scientific discovery and social change called into
question norms of the time. Literature, as it is “[entwined] … with the deepest unconscious
roots of the human subject” (Eagleton, 1983/2008, p. 20), reflects, circulates and advances these questions. Wonderland both reflects and challenges Victorian ideas. O’Neil (2010) quotes John Dewey as saying, “artists and authors are not separate from a culture; rather it is their expression of their experience within the culture that both informs and alters it” (p. 42).

As mentioned previously, Kenneth Kidd (2011) reports the Alice stories became subject to psychoanalysis in the 1930s, with A.M.E. Goldschmidt’s (1933) essay titled “Alice in Wonderland Psycho-Analysed”, claiming Wonderland “an unconscious distortion of the author’s desire for little girls” (Kidd, 2011, p. 74-5). Whether a true attempt at psychoanalysis, or whether the essay is a psychoanalytic parody remains debatable; either way Goldschmidt’s suggestions “took root” (Kidd, 2011, p. 75). Carroll became at once a “sainted innocent” held by some as a gentle, honorable author of “joyous nonsense”, and by others as a “pedophile” who wrote a dark allegory about his obsession with Alice Liddell (Brooker, 2004, xv). Today, questions about Carroll’s relationship with Alice Liddell (the young girl who inspired the story), and ways the in which that relationship manifests in Wonderland, remain a source of speculation and contention for many critics and casual readers. Jenny Woolf’s (2010) biography, The Mystery of Lewis Carroll, sheds some light on the intricacies of his life and times to provide an updated, contextualized and more positive view of Carroll’s relationships with young females.

As the story of Wonderland has been read, interpreted, and adapted since the mid-1800s, it has been subject to shifting perspectives in children’s literature. Nodelman (1992) suggests children’s literature attempts to speak about and for children, as children are neither the authors nor critics of works identified as children’s literature. Nodelman (1992) addresses this notion of The Other in children’s literature, founded on the principles of Jacqueline Rose’s (1984) book The Case of Peter Pan or the Impossibility of Children’s
Literature, which brought to the forefront the innate issues of colonization as adults write for an audience of children. But, he concludes we cannot “escape the imperialist tendencies at the heart of human discourse” and perhaps the most useful way to approach criticism of children’s literature is by “not forgetting” all discourse carries the imposition of someone else’s ideas (Nodelman, 1992, p. 34).

Today’s common Post-Freudian interpretation of Wonderland concerns itself mainly with the text as an “inward exploration” (i.e., Alice’s journey to self-discovery), but Lovell-Smith (2003) situates the story in its own time as an “outward-looking text” (p. 385). Day (2010) describes Wonderland as “a time capsule of life in mid-nineteenth century” (p. 407). Popular thinking about time and space in the mid-Victorian era was rapidly changing, as technological advancements reframed the possibilities of reality. Logic and what is ‘real’ came into question. The Age of Scientific Reason brought systematic thinking to the forefront, and, naturally, subscribers to countermovements explored the supernatural, the ‘unreal’. Carroll worked and played on both sides of this movement (Heath, 1974); links between Carroll’s life as a mathematician and logician, and his interests in the aesthetic qualities of photography and possibilities of fantasy storytelling are well-established. Groth (2012) describes Wonderland as “critique masquerading as convention” (p. 676) as Carroll’s linguistic pranks and logical conundrums undermine the rational foundations of his time. For example, in Chapter 5, when the Caterpillar asks Alice, “Who are you?” she replies, “I - I hardly know, sir, just at present ...” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, p. 65). Heath (1974) identifies this exchange as a “straightforward request for identification” misinterpreted by Alice as a “metaphysical enquiry about personal identity” (p. 47). In Chapter 6, when Alice meets the Cheshire Cat for the second time, he famously states, “We’re all mad here. I’m mad. You’re mad.” When Alice inquires how the cat knows she is mad, she is met with circular logic, as he states, “You must be ... or you wouldn’t have come here” (Carroll &
Tenniel, 1865/1866, p. 90). These scenes exemplify the “seemingly endless cycle of unanswered questions and questioning answers” (Groth, 2012, p. 668). In *Wonderland*, spaces for multiple interpretations abound.

The *Alice* stories carry broad themes of nature, reality, size, time, and personal identity development, themes well-researched by scholars of literature and other related fields (e.g., Day, 2010; Goodacre, 1977; Groth, 2012; Hancher, 1985; Hollingsworth, 1999; Lovell-Smith, 2003; Meier, 1999; Monteiro, 1999; Sinker, 2010; Wong, 1999). I attended to these themes during my analysis of the illustrations in this research collection, then worked to move beyond these themes to frame and discuss other themes evident through the connections between story, illustration, and culture as I developed a curated collection of *Wonderland* illustrations (See CHAPTERS FOUR, FIVE, and SIX).

**The Future of *Wonderland***

Carroll’s and Tenniel’s own identities in the broader context of Victorian society permeate the writing and illustration of the *Alice* stories. Particularly, knowledge of Carroll’s photographic life and Tenniel’s cartooning work in Punch provide context for beginning to understand visual interpretations of *Wonderland*. The story can be read as a response to the many questions of the day regarding scientific reasoning versus religious beliefs prominent at the time Carroll wrote it. Questions prominent in Carroll/Dodson’s journal, fiction, and nonfiction writing, and his illustrations extend these questions. Tenniel’s work in *Punch* provide extensions and rehearsals of these ideas in *Wonderland*. Sinker (2010) describes the story as nonsense in response to faith and reason, a story of “a very small girl alone in a world of extreme flux and chaos” (p. 36). Alice seems to be caught in an “endless cycle of unanswered questions and questioning answers” (Groth, 2012, p. 668). For all of these reasons, *Wonderland* has remained a classic, extending questions of the human/environment
relationship through universal themes of nature, reality, size, time, and identity development.

In the preceding review of the literature, I provided some evidence of the richness of context for *Wonderland*. Tenniel’s illustrations are integral and “intimately involved” with Carroll’s printed word, “precisely rendered and exactly placed” (Wong, 1999, p. 137). Since its initial publication, what has happened with the images of *Wonderland*? Certainly, *Wonderland*’s images are different now than they were then.

Carroll was interested in Alice’s own afterlife, and how he could control future readings of the *Alice* books, evidenced in his editorial prefaces to and his extensive correspondence with his publisher about subsequent editions (Groth, 2012; Jaques & Giddens, 2013). Carroll reports in his diaries he attended live performances of *Alice* stories and collected reviews of variant editions of the story (Groth, 2012; Jaques & Giddens, 2013). She became a “cultural phenomena which both delighted and horrified Carroll” (Groth, 2012, p. 670). He expressed an “anticipatory desire to ‘be there’ to encode future responses to Alice, to push through the surface of print into the space of reading” (Groth, 2012, p. 668). In this project, I work to understand how illustrators respond to Carroll’s story, attending to Carroll’s and Tenniel’s influences in subsequent artistic interpretations, as well as the themes I discussed in this review of the literature.

After Carroll’s death in 1898 and the expiration of *Wonderland*’s copyright in 1907, subsequent illustrators were left to shape the story visually publishers and artists free access to Tenniel’s originally published illustrations. Publishers and other authors frequently duplicated Tenniel’s images, and they oftentimes used poorly copied versions. For example, Figure 9 shows Tenniel’s (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) Alice and Figure 10, the same illustration as it appears in Davis’s (Carroll & Davis, c. 1900) edition. Alice’s facial features show evidence of heavy inking or excessive pressure on the printing block in Davis’s
reproduction edition. This can be seen as an unintentional alteration of Tenniel’s illustrations.

Figure 9: Tenniel’s Alice holds the Drink Me bottle.

Illustrators did not intentionally alter Tenniel’s original illustrations until well after the book’s centennial even though they were freely available after 1907. Intentional artistic reworking of Tenniel’s illustrations simultaneously re-established his connection to Carroll’s writing while altering meanings. These artistic interpretations created new spaces for understanding Tenniel’s and Carroll’s connection to contemporary times. In Abelardo Morell’s (1999) edition, each image is created around parts of Tenniel’s original illustrations. Morell
creates 3-dimensional collages including cut-outs of Tenniel images for his edition. For example, the second illustration of Chapter 1, in the bottom left corner of this image, readers see Tenniel's cut-out of Alice re-positioned to pull back a velvety curtain, allowing readers and Alice to look into the pages of a book picturing an inviting garden (See Carroll & Morrell, 1999). Tenniel's Alice is entering a new Wonderland. Morell (1999) states:

When I began to make photographs illustrating this book by Lewis Carroll I had in mind that books themselves should form the architecture and landscape where the story takes place. Because books belong to both the physical and imaginary worlds, I thought that they might serve Lewis Carroll’s tale well. Traveling to Wonderland could seem, after all, to be an experience very much like that of walking across the pages of a story—like going deep into a book (Morrell, 2018).

Figure 10: A poor reproduction of Tenniel's Alice in the J. Watson Davis edition.

This quote offers one idiosyncratic example of the multi-layered meanings in illustrative art—complex literary meanings layered with messages conveyed in visual arts. Artistic application of Tenniel’s illustrations in Morrell’s works substantiates the connectedness of Carroll and Tenniel. His collages also demonstrate the relevance of Tenniel’s classic works to modern interpretations of the story. Abelardo Morrell (Carroll & Morrell, 1999) uses portions of Tenniel’s images in ways and sequence similar to their original functions (i.e., the cut-out of Alice is utilized to portray the Alice character, the Queen of Hearts is still the Queen of Hearts).

Andrea D’Aquino (Carroll & D’Aquino, 2015), in contrast, repurposes a selection of Tenniel images variously for use outside of their original functions. In D’Aquino’s page 94 illustration, she has re-purposed part of Alice’s body and one leg as a fungus. The original Tenniel figure is somewhat disguised in its new shape and purpose. Mixed media mushrooms on either side of Alice reinforce the idea that this girl is somehow related to fungi. Removing the upper part of her body and one leg makes her image much less human. Perhaps this illustration echoes Darwinian ideas; little girls and fungi are made of the same stuff. The Alice character, as she is known through Tenniel, places a cartoon of a human girl in nonsensical surroundings, while D’Aquino places a cartoon of a human girl in an altogether different biological category. The use of Tenniel’s Alice in this mushroom image maintains a connection to the original Alice, while calling into question the representation of her identity and expanding the possibilities of who ‘Alice’ could be. D’Aquino’s frontispiece alludes to her slicing of Tenniel’s illustrations in a quite literal way (Carroll & D’Aquino, 2012, no page). Her alterations to Tenniel’s forms speak to the differences in their functions. This Alice is no longer the main character of the story, but a reference to an historical image associated with
the story. D’Aquino’s Alice is pictured as modern and altogether different girl (e.g., see Carroll & D’Aquino, 2012, p. 12).

The last 150 years of Wonderland illustrations can be seen as a sequence wherein artists build upon existing ideas in comparative and contrasting ways. Nodelman (1988) tells us pictures in a sequence act as schemata for each other. As such, artists encapsulate the zeitgeist of their times in the images they present alongside words with shifting meanings. Each artist’s rendition of Wonderland paradoxically loses historical connotations while shaping connotations for tomorrow’s history, shifting meanings in illustration. My examination of the body of Wonderland illustrations provides evidence of this paradox exemplified in Morrell’s (Carroll & Morrell, 1999) and D’Aquino’s (Carroll & D’Aquino, 2015) editions as described above. Tenniel’s influences are overt in these examples from Morrell and D’Aquino, but there are much subtler shades of influence in the body of Wonderland illustrations. These subtler relationships comprise much of the focus of my investigation.
CHAPTER THREE: CURATION AS A METHODOLOGY

For this project, I examined Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* with John Tenniel’s illustrations, and subsequent editions as reinterpreted by various artists over the last 150 years. Through this study I collected examples of texts that represent a chronology of time in the evolution of *Wonderland* illustration. I explored relationships between the unabridged *Wonderland* text, Lewis Carroll’s manuscript illustrations, John Tenniel’s first published illustrations, and the illustrations of other artists since 1864, to think about “at least tentative answers to questions such as how change occurs in society, how human intentions matter, and how ends are influenced by the means of carrying them out” ("Research Methods,” 2016).

**Study Design and Purpose**

How does one study such complex and enduring phenomena as the illustrations of *Wonderland*? Illustration in chapter books often functions as an occasional visual narrative of the written text. Those written texts have their own aims, audiences, and purposes. When illustration is abundant or prominent in chapter books, or when meaning in illustration reaches beyond a visual narrative of the written text, the study of illustration may be beyond the scope of what visual semiotics aims to do [as a visual research methodology (i.e., Stanczak, 2007)]. Visual semiotics examines images for their explicit and implicit meanings, as well as their sociocultural connections. Visual semiotics may not account for the connections between written literary texts and the fine art illustrations that accompany them. Therefore, for this project, I chose a research methodology that affords me the
opportunity to look at Wonderland illustrations for their narrative literary functions, historical contexts and connections, as well as aesthetic, holistic qualities of illustration as a fine art. As professional interpreters of the narratives in historical and visual texts, museum curators work with these intentions therefore I experimented with curation as a visual research methodology for the interpretation of Wonderland.

Accordingly, I explored the evolution of Wonderland illustration by collecting texts that represent a chronology of time. I examined connections and breaks with tradition in illustration that contribute to an evolution of meaning in the story. From my discoveries, I developed curation as a research methodology and utilized it to author an exhibition of ideas and illustrations surrounding large shifts in Wonderland meaning. In doing so, readers will have the opportunity to make their own meanings of the images, as one might from a museum exhibition, viewing this dissertation document as an in-depth guide to a curated collection of Wonderland illustrations with an accompanying physical exhibition.

Curation

The field of curation is oriented in such a way as to educate the public broadly in concepts of design and culture (Moser, 2008). The word curator comes from the Latin root curare, meaning “to take care of” (Chambers, 2006, p. 47). In an attempt to better define the role, Chambers (2006) surveyed the job descriptions and resumes of about 200 “curators”. Though curators were defined in a variety of ways, General Curators’ responsibilities pertain to their subject of specialization, collections management, exhibit development, education, publicity and public relations, fundraising and administrative tasks (Chambers, 2006). Accordingly, Moser (2008) described the field of curation as “complicated” (p. 27). Moser (2008) elaborated on some of the tasks of curators—organizing exhibitions, writing and publishing critical works, developing screenings and performances, coordinating fundraisers, conducting studio visits, and speaking in public about their work.
Recently, popular references to curating seem to mitigate the functions, skills, and products of curatorial work. For example, a mass email from Amazon.com Prime Music promoted its “hand-curated reading playlists” (email communication, February 28, 2016). I can purchase from a display of “curated” snacks at my local coffee shop. I can “curate” my own sandwich with the help of a sandwich artist. The use of the term curated in these instances, reads as synonymous with selected. On October 4, 2009, the New York Times published an article titled “On the Tip of Creative Tongues” addressing the appropriation of the term curation to tasks outside of the museum, in fields from food to fashion to music. The article states, “The word ‘curate,’ lofty and once rarely spoken outside exhibition corridors or British parishes, has become a fashionable code word among the aesthetically minded, who seem to paste it onto any activity that involves culling and selecting” (2009). In describing myself as a curator in this Wonderland project, I have documented my thoughts and processes so I may offer my application of curation as a formalized research methodology.

Curating Wonderland

Lewis Carroll’s Wonderland provides a complex intersection of diverse and enduring ideas about literature, art, sociology, and more. Wonderland is complex in part because its original context is naturally and intentionally intertwined with Carroll’s written word and John Tenniel’s illustrations. Wonderland parallels the rapidly changing cultural, political, and social climate of Oxford, England in the 1860s, including Darwin’s debates on natural selection, an increasing preoccupation with time, questions about what is real, and a new awareness of unique personal identities. Both masters of their craft, Carroll and Tenniel combined fantasy and realism in ways unknown to child readers before their time (Lovell-Smith, 2003). Artists’ individual interpretations of Carroll’s words and Tenniel’s illustrations have led to new universal understandings of the story over time. As I researched Wonderland
illustrations, developed this dissertation document, and developed a physical exhibition, I maintained a curator’s mindset and purpose, as I acted as a steward for this collection of illustrations, design, and culture related to Wonderland images.

A Guide for the Curation Process

For this project, I followed Friis-Hansen’s (2001) process of curation to collect, research, thematically conceptualize, select, contextualize, strategically arrange, and interpret illustrations from Wonderland in order to address questions about the relationships between illustrations and their stories. I engaged in a process like that of a museum curator’s development of an exhibition. I created texts like those accompanying museum exhibitions, including but not limited to introductory speeches and contextualizing narratives for the artworks. In curating this collection of illustrations, I worked to understand how the relationships between the words and pictures of Wonderland have evolved together over the last 150 years.

I curated this collection of illustrations to perpetuate the asking and answering of questions about Wonderland and illustration by readers, as well as address my research purposes for this project:

- To examine connections and breaks with tradition in illustration that contribute to an evolution of meaning in the Wonderland
- To develop curation as a methodology and utilize it to author an exhibition of ideas and illustrations surrounding large shifts in Wonderland meaning.

In addition to developing this dissertation document, I curated a brick and mortar exhibit for the USF Library’s Children’s Literature Special Collections Reading Room.
Scope of the Project

For this project, I focused on the evolution of Wonderland illustrations through an analysis of the linguistic and artistic messages in illustrations of Wonderland since Carroll's manuscript draft in 1864. Wonderland has never been out of print its 150-year history, so the ideas in the story serve as a standing narrative in English literature. The artwork accompanying Wonderland offers an account of visual representations of the story. Each Wonderland edition is a product of the artist’s personal creation in response to the environment (Langer, 1953). With these considerations in mind, I explored the relationship between Lewis Carroll’s (Carroll, 1864) manuscript illustrations, John Tenniel’s (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) first published illustrations, the illustrations of other artists since 1864, and the unabridged Wonderland text.

Varied influence from Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel (1865/1866) can be seen in re-illustrated Wonderland editions of the last 150 years. Naturally, artists must work within the technological bounds of their art form, sometimes limiting and sometimes freeing the possibilities of visual representation. Most readily visible are the physical and logistical aspects of illustration that have changed with advances in printing technologies. Artists working with woodblock carving and printing in the 1800s were bounded by different conceptual and practical constraints than contemporary artists working with digital design and printing technologies. Although developments in printing technology are not the focus of my analysis, I recognize they are a source of difference in the relationships between the first illustrations of Wonderland and the images of artists after Tenniel. Printing options (i.e., form, content, cost, etc.) have become increasingly diversified over time. Print technologies often speak to physical print attributes such as book size, full color, and printing technique; these attributes were not paramount in my analysis. But advanced printing technologies also furnish illustrators new ways of representing ideas. The artistic attributes made feasible by
digital design are an inextricable part of this analysis, as they can comprise significant parts of an artist's aesthetic message. My focus in this project was the linguistic and artistic messages conveyed by illustrations and how new ideas may link with previously explored ideas, not the affordances provided by the means by which they are conveyed.

Methods

One intent of this project is to create a dialogue between the diverse yet similar illustrations from different artists in different times and spaces. I center on questions about illustrations of *Wonderland* in their own contexts as the images attached to new connotations, receded from others, and often changed altogether. The following process, borrowed from Friis-Hansen’s (2001) curation methods, provides details of each step in this project:

1. **Image collection process.** I collected over 5700 images across 111 editions of *Wonderland* and organized the images for study.
   
   a. **Database and critical literature search.** Though a search of the worldwide library catalog, WorldCat, and a review of the collections lists of Lewis Carroll collectors Selwyn Goodacre and Edward Wakeling, I compiled a comprehensive list of Carroll’s *Wonderland* editions illustrated by various artists since 1865. I compiled a list of 280 Alice’s *Adventures in Wonderland* books, then narrowed my focus to the illustrations of the 111 unabridged editions meeting my criteria for inclusion in this study (i.e., illustrated, unabridged, English-language editions housed in collections in the United States). During the course of my literature review process for this study, I noted mentions of specific illustrations and editions in my edition list.
b. **Locating editions.** Based on my review of WorldCat, I determined the following libraries held the most editions of *Wonderland*: The Effie Lee Morris Collection at the San Francisco Public Library, The Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, The Special Collections Research Center at Syracuse University in New York, the Alfred C. Berol Collection of Lewis Carroll at New York University in New York City, the Baldwin Library of Historical Children’s Literature at the University of Florida in Gainesville, and The Children’s and Young Adult Literature Special Collection at the University of South Florida in Tampa. I visited each of these libraries in the Fall of 2014 through Winter of 2015 to review the books and collect digital reproductions of all of their illustrations. The quantity, rarity, and locality of the illustrations within the parameters of this project necessitates a digital collection of images for extended and iterative study. In addition to the images I collected from research libraries, I personally own several editions of *Wonderland* and utilized my copies when possible. For other editions not held at any of these six libraries, I utilized interlibrary to loan to obtain copies of the books or digital reproductions of the illustrations.

c. **Scanning and labeling images.** At each library, I made my own digital scans of the images whenever possible, but I also relied on assistance from librarians and other personnel. I used a high-resolution Epson Perfection V37 flatbed scanner to collect most illustrations, unless flatbed scanning could have damaged the book, was not allowed by the lending institution, or if the scanning bed was not large enough to accommodate the book format. In those instances, I used the next best
reproduction method reasonably available (e.g., digital photographs of the illustrations, the institutions’ available scanner). As I scanned the illustrations, I created a digital folder named by illustrator and publication year for each edition. I named each illustration scan file based on its illustrator and position in the book. For example, I labeled Tenniel’s second illustration in the first chapter “1.2”. I labeled each book’s illustrated front matter as chapter “0” and back matter as chapter “13”. With this system, I could identify each image by a name (e.g. “Tenniel 3.1” indicates the first illustration in Tenniel’s chapter 3).

d. **Organizing images and managing the data.** After visiting each research site and to prepare for my analysis of the illustrations, I organized each image in a chart, chronologically aligning each illustrator’s works (in columns) with the chapter of Carroll’s text (in rows) they accompanied in the printed book. I left blank cells as place holders in the chronology for each edition not containing a scene. Figure 11 shows a single page birds-eye version of this spreadsheet. I labeled each illustration with the naming convention I utilized in my image file organization. In its full form, the spreadsheet became difficult to work with, as the file size grew to over 14 gigabytes. I moved the file to an external hard drive but before completion of this study, my aging MacBook Pro was unable to process the illustration spreadsheet and other documents necessary to support this study. I purchased a new MacBook Pro with upgraded processor and storage and transferred only working files relevant to the project at hand.
Figure 11: A birds-eye view of the chart of illustrations collected for this study.

e. **Recording preliminary interpretations.** As I organized the illustrations, I made preliminary notes about my questions and observations of the images. When an image piqued my interest, I outlined its cell in red in the chart. This system made images of interest easier to identify as I researched each illustration in my step 2 as I analyzed each image in another corresponding chart.
2. **Research the story and illustrations.** As I continued to research the *Wonderland* narrative and *Wonderland* editions, I looked closely at all illustrations from the 111 editions in my image collection.

a. **Searching for critical reviews.** I conducted a search of literature in art, literature, and education databases surrounding *Wonderland*. I sought comment and critique of Carroll’s literal and satirical meanings in the narrative from the book’s initial publication to present. I searched for comment and critique of each illustrated edition, published in each edition’s own time as well as retrospective critique, and recruited a special collections librarian to help me with the historical search. I read literature I collected since my initial literature review for this project and reread literature I read during my literature review process.

b. **Close reading using illustration analysis prompt.** Following the advise of curator Dana Friis-Hansen (2001), I began with the artwork, then learned about the artist. While reading and reviewing this literature, I recognized the need for a consistent approach for analysis of the images. I studied each of the more than 5700 illustrations using an illustration analysis prompt I devised specifically for this project (See Figure 3 for details about the prompt). I copied and pasted the analysis prompt text into an analysis spreadsheet organized in columns by illustrator (chronologically by publication date) and in rows by *Wonderland* chapter (See Figure 12 for an excerpt of this qualitative analysis spreadsheet). The prompt includes cues about the illustration and its interaction with the text, aesthetic qualities such as artistic
style, techniques, and media, connections to established themes in *Wonderland*, an indication of whether or not the image may connect with my curated collection of ideas, and any other notes about the image. This prompt guided my focus as I looked closely and systematically at each illustration in iterative phases.

Figure 12: A snipped excerpt of my qualitative analysis spreadsheet.

c. *Chronological analysis by image/chapter*. I used the analysis prompt to record my observations, thoughts, and questions about each image, moving across each row block/chapter of the spreadsheet, from Carroll’s manuscript illustrations of 1864 through Andrea D’Aquino’s illustrations of 2015. First, I chronologically studied all illustrator’s Chapter “0” works, then Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and so on. Naturally, some images held my attention in ways others did not. As an example
of extremes, a small black line decorative shape in the corner of a page holds fewer points for analytical description than a two-page full-color spread situated within the context of a chapter. With each image, I made an effort to observe if, how, and why the image may contribute to themes in the story or in the history of Wonderland’s illustration. In many images, I did not find evidence of new or significant connections with the a priori themes of nature, time, reality, size, and identity development. In these instances I left that section of the analysis prompt blank. I also made note of any other potential or evident themes in the illustrations in this section of the analysis prompt. During this step of my analysis, I continued to outline images of particular interest in red.

d. **Reverse chronological analysis by artist/creator.** Then, I looked at each illustration again, down each column of my chart, studying each illustrator’s entire Wonderland work from D’Aquino’s illustrations of 2015 to Carroll’s manuscript illustrations of 1864, while recording a second round of observations about each image in the same analysis prompt spreadsheet. During this step of my analysis, I was able to further my connections between and across illustrations over time, as I had the experience of my first step of analysis by chapter to inform my observations. In doing so, I made stronger historical connections by tracing artistic influences back in time and had more to say about connections to contextual themes. I continued to outline images of particular interest in red in my image organizing spreadsheet and noted possible connections and my wonderings based on my experience with
the illustrations in my illustration analysis spreadsheet. Even after this second close look at all illustrations, some images did not seem to contribute to thematic ideas and those spaces beside my analysis prompts remained blank.

e. **Qualitative observations and controlled vocabulary.** As I recorded my observations, I considered what I might say about each illustration if I encountered it in a museum exhibition, using my analysis prompt as a guide. This approach helped me approach each illustration as a unique work of art. However, more often than not, an illustration was quite similar to another image I had viewed in the collection, leading to my development of a somewhat controlled vocabulary. Much of this vocabulary involved characters’ names and setting details, as many illustrations portrayed similar content (e.g., Alice, White Rabbit, Queen of Hearts, croquet grounds, etc.). I also used controlled vocabulary to describe the ways in which the illustration is portrayed (e.g., long shot, close-up, high angle, no frame, marginal borders, etc.). With the sheer number of illustrations I had to observe, I was aware that I had to balance a sense of progress with fatigue. On most days, I could thoughtfully observe no more than 100 illustrations. This required considerable amount of observational time each day with intermittent breaks. I found that while my analysis spreadsheet is useful as a reflective tool, it was most useful to help me process my notes about the illustrations in the moment.
3. Thematic conceptualization of an exhibition of ideas. I considered themes in the illustrations from these 111 editions of the book and their relation to changes in portrayals of scenes, characters, and ideas in the books.

a. **Analyzing a priori themes.** As I researched the Wonderland narrative and studied the collection of illustrations, I utilized my notes about ideas related to nature, time, reality, size, and the development of personal identity from the analysis spreadsheet to begin to understand how these themes from Carroll’s words were portrayed or excluded in illustrated over time. I determined significance in these ideas through my broad study of Carroll, Tenniel, Wonderland, and the fields of literature and art (specifically illustration). Framing my thinking about these illustrations through a priori themes helped me to focus my attention as I made observations, to make sense of my vast body of quantitative observational data, and to better understand how these themes continuously situate Wonderland in sociocultural evolution. From existing themes, I was able to isolate and name new thematic ideas.

b. **Tracking new insights.** While examining each image for portrayals of nature, time, reality, size, and personal identity, I recognized different patterns across the illustrations and I noted these new potential themes in my analysis spreadsheet. I have always been intrigued by the Hatter character and first noticed the wild variety of ways in which illustrators represent him. Through an investigation of the history of treatment for the mentally ill, I found that changes in his portrayal tended to trace movements and counter-movements in treatment for mental illness. My
study led me back to illustrations of the Hatter character, to identify and write about illustrations that exemplify treatment of mental illness in their own time. Next, I began to think about how I increasingly felt as if the book was looking back at me during my study. I focused on my observational notes about many instances of characters’ gaze directed toward the reader. This idea did not become fully formed until I thought through the beginning and ending scenes of the book. In the first chapter of Wonderland, I noticed an increasing prevalence of illustration for Alice’s decent to Wonderland (a scene often captioned “Down, Down, Down”) and quickly noted Tenniel did not illustrate this scene. I also noted a prevalence in my own mind for this scene. Taking a closer look at Alice’s decent to Wonderland led to me more closely examine her return to the waking world. The playing card characters provide a basis for Alice to regain control of her surroundings. I realized I had never given much thought to the card characters, but in my observation of the body of Wonderland illustrations, these characters appear in all but 10 of 111 editions (present in 91% of editions in this study). Their prevalence in the story led me to consider their function in the story and the variety of physical identities given to these characters by illustrators led me to look more closely at portrayals of their bodies. As I studied and wrote about Alice’s decent to the dream of Wonderland and the scenes that led to her return to the waking world, I looked more closely at the ways in which illustrators grant readers perspective of the book and characters gain their own perspective of the outside world through the concept of gaze. In this
step of my analysis, I isolated illustrations from each of these four emerging ideas (Down, Hatter, Cards, Gaze) in a separate spreadsheet so I could look more closely and write about the evolution of each idea (See Figure 13 for an excerpt from this chart of isolated illustrations related to these four themes). Before my focus on the playing card character, I had already noted the prevalence of anthropomorphized characters in the story and isolated instances of anthropomorphization in my study chart. This isolated illustration chart led me to quickly identify the presence of both animals and objects with human qualities. After further parsing my anthropomorphization analysis by animal and object, I saw the card characters as a prevalent curiosity and isolated illustrations of them in a separate tab for viewing.

Figure 13: A snipped excerpt from my illustration isolation spreadsheet.
c. Conceptualizing exhibits. As I conceptualized and confirmed new themes, I made notes about which illustrations and arrangements might effectively create a vignette of images and ideas for a wider audience. In a sense, I conceptualized two exhibitions: the physical exhibition of *Wonderland* materials and the “exhibition” of ideas and digital reproduction of illustrations in this dissertation document. The dissertation document became a space to work out conceptual ideas, less constrained by size than the physical exhibition. The space for my physical exhibition was a natural choice, as I planned to hold the exhibition in conjunction with the formal defense of my dissertation. My institution, the University of South Florida, Tampa has a considerable collection of *Wonderland* editions and an exhibit space in the Special Collections Reading Room. I received permissions to use the space and materials from the collection for my exhibition. I outlined topics for contextual narratives around each theme, selecting from available works illustrations that exemplify my talking points. Working with the real constraints of space and materials, I had to iteratively rethink and reorganize which illustrations and ideas I would exhibit. While I address the concepts of Alice’s fall to *Wonderland*, the development of the Hatter character, the evolution of the playing card characters, and the concept of gaze in this dissertation document, I realized it would be impossible to address all of these ideas in the physical exhibition space available. I arrived at an exhibition concept
for addressing gaze in Wonderland as this was one main conclusion from the findings of my study.

4. **Select specific illustrations.** Using preliminary selections of illustrations to represent different themes (see the tab row of Figure 13 with “Gaze to Readers” highlighted in blue), I narrowed my focus to illustrations offering comparative and/or contrasting ideas and elucidating significant ideas in Wonderland based on my observations, questions, and conclusions.

   a. **Selections for the dissertation document.** Specifically, I had identified four recurring themes: Alice’s descent to Wonderland, mental illness portrayed through the Hatter character, anthropomorphization of objects and animals, and, finally, the artistic concept of gaze. For this dissertation document, I selected illustrations to help me tell the story of the themes I discovered. Throughout the course of my study, to begin to narrow my choices, I identified specific illustrators and illustrations I knew I wanted to share. Artistic stylings, linguistic messages, or the ways in which they caused me to think similarly or differently about the story were basic criteria for selection. I also took into account the availability of authoritative reproductions of the images, as some institutions I visited to collect research images offered authoritative scans of the illustrations for publication freely while others charged a considerable fee per scan. As this project was entirely self-funded, I chose a free option over a paid option when more than one illustration would serve to make my point.

   b. **Selections for the physical exhibition.** Because of space parameters for the physical exhibition, I chose to focus on the concept of gaze
while including illustrations representative of the other three topics when they contributed to the development of gaze in *Wonderland*. University of South Florida, Tampa, Special Collections acquired a large number of *Wonderland* items during the course of this project, and I had the opportunity to help promote the new acquisition with this exhibition. Therefore, for the physical exhibit, I chose illustrations from editions in the University of South Florida, Tampa collection or in my personal collection. Creating the final design for the physical exhibit was one of the last steps in my process. Due to the logistics of deadlines and university paperwork, combined with the need for my exhibit to mesh with my dissertation defense, the dissertation document had to be near completion before I could devote time to solidifying the details of the physical exhibit.

c. **Framing the exhibit of each theme.** I created visual outlines of each idea by seeking illustrations to elucidate ideas about the narratives I drafted around the ideas of Alice’s fall, the Hatter, the playing cards, and gaze, regardless of their mention in critical literature. I began to highlight and integrate these illustrations in my written discussion of findings in this document. I also began to determine which of those selections could represent the concept of gaze in the physical exhibition.

d. **The role of writing academic text in the curation process.** As this dissertation document began to take shape, I also worked in an inverted process, selecting critical points in my discussion, then selecting images to illustrate them. I often searched my illustration analysis chart for
keywords (e.g., Down, Hatter, Cards, Gaze, etc.) to locate illustrations as they pertained to my developing discussion, then wrote about ideas surrounding those images. Re-ordering and transitioning coherently from one idea to the next in an academic text was one of my greatest challenges in this project, as those ideas came about organically.

e. **The aesthetics and sociocultural messages of exhibits.** I considered aesthetic appeal (in both a positive and negative sense) and considered which artistic and sociocultural eras were present in my selections and which were not represented. For example, the 1960’s in America were a time of great artistic and sociocultural change. Ralph Steadman’s *Wonderland* edition of 1967 (Carroll & Steadman, 1967/1986) exemplifies major shifts in authority through political messages in art. Recognizing, for instance, that Steadman’s playing card characters have “Union Card” printed on their bodies is a clear sign of a political message. I knew Steadman’s illustration had to be represented in both the dissertation document and the physical exhibition.

f. **Choosing stopping points.** Through this process, I realized my conclusions could never be final—this vast collection of images present new and appended ideas for as long as I continue to think, read, and write about *Wonderland*. Some stopping points became natural, like choosing only enough illustrated editions for the physical exhibition based on the available physical space. As for this dissertation document, choosing stopping points became more difficult, as a digitally-produced document has almost no size constraints. Time and attention became greater factors for stopping points in this document,
as I knew my readers would have limited time and attention to devote to reading this dissertation. I reflected on the writing process to help me establish appropriate stopping points in the dissertation.

5. **Contextualize the illustrations.** I contextualized the illustrations using academic discourse in the dissertation and through descriptive narratives for the exhibit.

a. **Writing two contextualizing texts.** Given that my research results in the production of an academic text (i.e., dissertation) and a physical library exhibit, I adapted Friis-Hansen’s stages for curation to apply to the creation of individual chapters in the dissertation that provided draft texts for different components of the physical exhibit (i.e., informational panels accompanying the illustrations, a curator’s talk). While I attempted to unify chapters in the dissertation document to create an overall positive and cohesive experience for my dissertation readers, the set-up of a physical exhibition requires a different kind of flow.

b. **Consulting the literature.** I contextualized my selected illustrations of *Wonderland* by synthesizing research from published critical literature, then added my own observations and findings. Based on my retrospective rereading of other scholars’ ideas, I selected ideas from the literature for inclusion in my dissertation results chapters and in the exhibition narratives. I considered critical literature about the *Wonderland* narrative, critical perceptions of the illustrator’s work in published literature, and historical and sociological narratives surrounding the time in which each selection was produced. Political, social, economic, cultural, and intellectual histories helped me
understand historical contexts (Grenby, 2011; Rudd, 2011). Naturally, my understandings are embedded in the contexts I provide, by sheer nature of the curatorial process. If art “invariably reflects the political and sociocultural contexts in which it is made” (Sipe, 2011), art is a product of the culture, initially perceived within its own context. But, those perceptions can change over time. As I laid out my illustration selections and connected them with words, chronology again became important to building meaning around these images.

c. **Selecting quotes.** I sought quotes from Carroll’s story to offer evidence of his unique literary voice, as well as the narrative context related to the images from the story. I quoted other scholar’s works and added my own findings and questions. Throughout the contextualizing narratives I wrote, visual and artistic content and logical links to Carroll’s words and the contexts in which they were re-illustrated played a large role in what I chose to say about the illustrations.

6. **Strategically arrange illustrations.** I strategically arranged illustrations in the chapters of this document and in the accompanying exhibition to evoke the ideas portrayed in the story, in the critical literature, and from my own findings, utilizing a mindset like that of museum curators. I selected points from the academic discourse I developed in the dissertation document and used them as a basis for my development of informational panels for the physical exhibition.

a. **Image and text arrangement.** I drafted image and text arrangements in this dissertation document as I conceptualized, selected, and contextualized the main ideas of this project. This process helped me identify what was missing from each arrangement: various artistic
movements, eras, and sociocultural ideas. To tell a more complete story, I went back to my research collection of images and selected additional illustrations to expand on underrepresented shifts in the themes I discussed and make identified shifts plain for readers. As mentioned previously, the academic writing process helped guide me to arrangements for this dissertation document. For the physical exhibition, I reflected on some of the most memorable and, in my mind, most successful museum exhibitions I have visited. I realized those exhibitions at the forefront of my mind had a clear theme and a strong take-away message, and stimulated though-provoking conversation for me long after I left the physical space. My goal was to create a similar experience for visitors of my exhibition.

b. Representing data. I aimed to connect moments in history and in the narrative, rather than to suggest a singular path of development in Wonderland illustrations. My intent was to draw attention to the nature of the illustrations, questions about them, and possible responses to those questions. Perhaps because of my chronological analysis method, or perhaps because of the historically-situated nature of my research purpose, chronological arrangement of these illustrations was most logical. When illustrations were absent in the chronology of ideas, I explained the absence and its significance to the theme in words.

c. Obtaining permissions. As I finalized my selections of images for inclusion in this project’s publications, I wrote to publishers to obtain permissions to reproduce the images in this document and obtained
authoritative scans from libraries requiring researchers to use the library’s high-resolution scans.

d. **Data constraints and work-arounds.** Arranging illustrations for the physical exhibition accompanying this document presented a new set of challenges, necessitating my selection of a subset of images. With limited physical space and limited *Wonderland* edition availability, I had to pare down my illustration selections, then revise my contextualizing panels and talks. My goal was to maintain some richness of my content while working within real physical limits.

7. **Interpret illustrations and themes.** This project constitutes a form of my idiosyncratic interpretation of *Wonderland* in order to develop responses to my purposes for this research and to promote the proposition of new questions.

   Accordingly, I reviewed my notes from all previous steps.

   a. **The impact of genre and audience.** As I reviewed the first six processes in this project, I revised the series of texts necessary for the curation process. Curators often compose contextualizing panels and a curator’s talk for the exhibit, but I also composed my conclusions, new questions, and overall impressions of the collective for this dissertation document. These rehearsed interpretations through written documents constituted another form of interpretation through the process of writing. Developing a physical exhibit of illustrations forced me to pare down my ideas and address only the most essential parts of my message about Wonderland. Writing a presentation for the formal defense of my work further helped me process my ideas. During the defense, I presented a tour of the physical exhibit with a curator’s talk. Further
interpretations derived from casual and academic conversations about this work, never recorded word for word, but vital to furthering the development of my ideas about Wonderland illustration. This part of my process is never finished and contributes to ever-developing understandings of the messages conveyed to readers through Wonderland illustration.

Reflections on and Complications with the Process

As with any research project, the methods in action described above are not as clean or clear-cut as this linear presentation makes them seem. The writing process necessitates a metaphorical smoothing out of the tangle of real challenges faced in research. These seven curatorial steps overlapped each other and often necessitated much time and space for theoretical thinking and logistical problem-solving. Some steps, summarized in a paragraph or two here, took months to complete for a collection of more than 5700 images over 150 years of historical ties and varied critical views. From research proposal defense to dissertation defense and exhibition, three years passed. The methods detailed above, while they convey a complexity of the tasks, cannot sufficiently convey the challenges unique to the parameters of this project, and likely do not convey the unique challenges and opportunities of curation as a research methodology.

From Methods to Methodology

Drawing from the fields of visual research methodologies, building on my own experience with curating this collection of Wonderland illustrations, and learning from the experience of other curators, I propose curation as a formalized qualitative research methodology. Visual research may be conceptualized as a broad term methodologically encompassing some of the same theoretical intentions and pragmatic procedures of curation as a methodology. But the unique qualities of art necessitate a tailored look at works for
study. The concept of *curation* I set forth extends beyond collection, analysis, and comparison of images and words, to set multiple images in dialogue with each other around a complex set of themes and questions in order to make multiple meanings from images and narratives and to promote questions as often as answers. At the crossroads of children’s fantasy literature, symbolic and satirical illustration, and wide-spread popularity over time, *Wonderland* provided an interesting, unique, and broad context for studying curation as a methodology. Below, I outline tenets of visual research, then describe how curation can be characterized as a visual research methodology in its own right.

**Visual Research: The Foundation for Curation as Methodology**

Visual research takes many forms, as both content and context for research questions. Visual research methodologies are “highly contingent on epistemological positions, populations, researcher interests, rapport, and confidentiality” (Stanczak, 2007, p. 3). Epistemology necessitates broad questions about the pursuit of knowledge: What can we know, and how do we come to know it? “Just as subjectivity and realism interact in the space between the image and the viewer, the same occurs between the producer of the image and the subject or content” (Stanczak, 2007, p. 7). As Berger said, the camera brought to light the idea that “what you saw depended on where you were when” (Berger, 1972/2008), just as the development of the novel has been linked to the development of individual identities. Images are framed from a point of view and understood from a particular perspective. The authenticity of the discussions to follow about image and narratives hinge on researcher reflexivity, as visual research can only be conducted through the lens of individuals.

The field of visual research draws upon knowledge from disciplines including sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and visual arts. In particular, the work of visual anthropologists has forwarded the field of visual research (e.g., Rose, 2001; Stanczak, 2007).
Images interpret the world and display it in particular ways. Research with images can require various methods in organization of data, structure of analysis, and ways of making meaning. The study of images *created for research* should be considered differently than the study of images *already in existence* (Collier & Collier, 1986; Rose, 2001). Plainly, the images included in this project already exist. Images render views of the world and those views are “never innocent” (Rose, 2001, p. 6). Stanczak’s (2007) body of work points toward an understanding of visual research as a way to know “the social world of ourselves and others” (p. 20).

Many visual researchers from various fields choose a semiotic approach to their work. Visual semiotics works to answer two fundamental questions: “What do images represent and how?” and “What ideas and values do the people, places, and things represented in images stand for?” (van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 92). These questions of representation and the ‘hidden meanings’ of images stem from Barthian ideas about the layering of meaning in signs (van Leeuwen, 2001). ‘Signs’ can be examined from their constituent parts, the signifier (the “nomenclature”) and the signified (the “form”) (Barthes, 1964/1977, p. 10). The signifier and the signified work like the recto and verso sides of a paper (Barthes, 1964/1977), inseparable without sacrificing meaning. Barthes (1977) views the meanings of signs in three layered categories: linguistic, denotated, and connotated. The linguistic message of signs work like a caption (Barthes, 1977). The denotated meaning involves perception, determining who or what is depicted and what is happening in the image. The connotated layer of meaning takes on broader concepts: ideas, values, what things ‘stand for’ (van Leeuwen, 2001). Though a visual semiotic approach takes into account the social meanings of images by analyzing images in relation to one another, it fails to examine how individuals orient themselves to the image based on meaning in space in time (Acord, 2010).
Noth (2011) addresses this important consideration in semiotic research: “Symbols live, but they can die, too” (Noth, 2011, p. 314). In the particular instance of his research, Noth refers to changes in the language of the symbols of advertising campaigns; they change with consumers’ preferences and habits. The same could be said of semiotics in general, as signs and perception of signs change with changing culture. In this project, the signs of illustration link a stable set of words (that carry shifting meanings over time) to changing images.

A semiotic interpretation and analysis of Wonderland illustration may not fully address the research questions I aim to answer, nor perpetuate other readers’ inquiry into the artful images of Wonderland. This project requires I weave my understanding of ideas from the Wonderland text (from their first contexts in the mid-1800s to present-day) with a wide variety of their illustrative iterations. In this way, I had to orient myself with each image across time, the very constraint of a visual semiotic approach Acord (2010) identifies. Additionally, a semiotic approach does not provide for understanding the extent of aesthetic meanings evident in many Wonderland illustrations. “A work of art is intrinsically expressive” (Langer, 1953, p. 395) and individual artist’s interpretations of Wonderland show complex understandings of Carroll’s words and Tenniel’s illustrations as they developed over the last 150 years.

**Beyond Semiotics: Interpreting Arts**

Langer (1953) poses a question that anchors art in culture: “What does art create?” (p. 10). She begins to respond to this question through a discussion of objects that embody feelings inseparable from themselves and the experience that produces those objects. Literature is the “art of words” (Langer, 1953, p. 305) and literary critics often consider Barthian notions of language systems. Command of the symbolic system of language is required of writers and readers of literary works (Moss, 1982, p. 34), as artists and authors
are charged with the simplification and manipulation of life’s image (Langer, 1953). “The novel is history as the picture is reality . . . . To represent and illustrate the past . . . is the task of [the] writer” (Langer, 1953, p. 290, italics in original).

Curators’ experience of visual arts begin as a process similar to readers’ experience of literary arts, “drawing on past linguistic and life experience, [to link] the signs on the page with certain words, certain concepts, certain sensuous experiences, certain images of things, people, actions, scenes” (Rosenblatt, 1938/2005, p. 30). The connection between the visual art of illustration and the literary art of the stories they accompany is a unique and complex relationship, particularly with a story as pervasive and enduring as Wonderland.

The “qualification one must have for understanding art is responsiveness” (Langer, 1953, p. 396). Interpretation begins with contemplative questions like “What do I see? What do I feel when I look at it? Does it have personal significance to me?” and moves to connect the work with other works by the artist (e.g. “How does it fit with other works by the artist?”) (Barrett, 2002, p. 2). Interpretive questions often then seek to position the artist in the world (e.g. “What is it about for the artist? From what cultural traditions does it emerge? Has it influenced art made after it?” (Barrett, 2002, p. 21). Artists imitate other artists via their schemata, seeing what they see as forbearing artists have taught them to see it (DeLuca, 1984). Nietzsche is quoted as saying the artist tends “to see what he paints rather than to paint what he sees” (DeLuca, 1984, p. 21). Specific to this study, Wonderland illustrators after Tenniel are quite likely to bring some concept of Wonderland’s appearance to their work. The prevalence and prominence of Wonderland images worldwide constitutes some visual schemata, even for people who have never read Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland in full. Slowly, through observation, correction, and experimentation, artists break out of the “prison of style” (DeLuca, 1984, p. 21) and introduce new Wonderland images to our collective schemata. Noting influences and novelties, illustrators’ reworking of
images to accompany Carroll’s *Wonderland* text provides the basis for my discussions and exhibition.

“Appreciation—being impressed or left cold—comes first [before criticism]; but . . . that recognition is a product of analysis, reached by discursive reasoning about the work and its effect” (Langer, 1953, p. 406). Consideration for when, where, and how an image was produced can be important no matter what kind of visual research one conducts. This becomes particularly critical when the study image was produced outside of a researcher’s lifetime or lived experiences. Grenby (2011) points out two factors necessary for researchers to understand the “matrix of events and attitudes out of which the ... work developed” (p. 103): the relationship between the texts and their contexts, and an understanding of which contexts are important. Political, social, economic, cultural, and intellectual histories are important to understand a particular text (Grenby, 2011; Rudd, 2011). Established visual research and arts-based research methodologies may not sufficiently provide for understanding the complex and layered relationships between the fine art of illustration, the narratives of the children’s novel, and the cultural implications of their interstices across time and space.

**Curation: Connecting Visual Arts, Texts, and Culture**

The arts and arts-based research methodologies lend themselves to nuanced and complex understandings of the world (Leavy, 2008). Accordingly, one goal of this curatorial methodology is to explore and experiment with the tenets and techniques of curation. From my notes and experiences in developing the products of this project, I worked to outline *curation* as an arts-based visual research methodology, attending to the patterns and inconsistencies I found in my process, as well as my considerations in the decisions I made during the process. I did this through iterative study of my own notes and continued research into the processes of other curators. Through this project, I worked to understand ways in
which the concept of curation may be utilized as a qualitative, arts-based research methodology.

**Curatorial design.** In a TED talk entitled *How Art Gives Shape to Cultural Change*, curator Thelma Golden explains the ways in which art can “change the way we think about culture and ourselves” and how the work of museum curators can create spaces to address complicated ideas (Golden, 2009). Golden (2009) makes many explicit connections between the nature of art, the context of culture, and the making of meaning. Curators have been conceived as “authors” of exhibitions (Heinich & Pollak, 1989 as cited in Acord, 2010). The work of curators communicates another layer of meaning to an artist’s original intention (Davillon, 1999 as cited in Acord, 2010). Exhibitions re-position artifacts outside of their initial contexts, deciding “what to include, what goes where, [and] how to tie it together” (Lubar, 2013, p. 171). Curatorial intentions can promote or discount historical understandings of artistic works. While my project specifically deals with illustrations for exhibition, similar mindsets and processes would be useful in curating any artistic media (e.g., performance, sound, sculpture, etc.).

There is no single way to create a successful museum exhibition (Canby, 1999; Kaplan, 2001). Curators conceptualize their jobs differently with different works from different artists, framed around different statements, different questions, and different themes in varied places and spaces (see the collection of curators’ *Words of Wisdom* edited by Kuoni, 2001). Phillip Townsend, a curator at the University of Texas, Austin, identifies themes in the artist’s work as the driving force in the conceptualization of an exhibition. Once a theme is identified, the exhibition and contextualizing narratives direct viewers to create their own conceptualizations of that theme (Townsend, personal communication, December 29, 2015). Though the specific work of curators can vary, essential qualities of the work described by
these curators are useful to move beyond the casual conception of curation as a synonym for “selection.” But how does one mobilize these ideas to achieve such lofty and important goals? Based on the work of practicing curators and my own experience curating this collection of Wonderland illustrations, the design for curatorial projects depends on the works at hand, the researcher’s prior experience with them, and the discovery of alternate ways of thinking about artistic interpretation. Anchoring new knowledge to background knowledge is essential for developing a rich understanding of works of art.

Exhibitions “establish and administer the cultural meanings of art” (Greenberg, et al, as cited in Acord, 2010, p. 447). Because works may carry significance of varied and specific sociocultural and historical eras, a researcher must be able and willing to adapt lines of inquiry as key ideas and themes come to light. Frisa (2008) refers to the theoretical discourse of curators as “a strategy of fluid research” (p. 177), an approach that can be risky and impressionistic, but interested in reflection, debate, and expression (the dialogue I aim to create with this project). New research questions may emerge from the study of artistic works, in addition to or in place of initial research questions, built on background understandings. A adaptable design, in addition to flexible researcher thinking, are necessary to curate a collection of research data.

The collection of curatorial “data.” To describe works of art as data seems to minimize their artistic qualities. Nevertheless, researchers work with data so, for the sake of the common researcher vocabulary, I utilize this broad term to point to any artifacts a curator may curate. The collection of data (i.e., “artifacts”) for a curatorial project likely extends to ideas, experiences, literature, and objects, beyond the physical items for exhibition. Curators engage personally with data in many ways; the collection of data in a curatorial project may take place slowly over time. Museum curators work within their area of expertise, and with existing collections, new items to build permanent collections, and/or
borrowed works from other institutions for the specific purposes of an exhibition. In the instance of this project, I collected ideas, literature, and digital scans of artifacts to support iterative analysis of the works over the course of several years. My study data set included (1) my collection of digital scans, (2) my iteratively written descriptions of these illustrations, (3) literature related to curation, (4) *Wonderland* and its illustrations, and (5) my lifelong experience with *Wonderland* and its associated images and ideas. Museum curators may go about collecting data in an organic way, through years of study related to a particular field of art, viewing countless works of art and the work of other curators, interconnected with life experiences, as well as planned and spontaneous conversation with others. Whether a curator collects the data set quickly and selectively or gradually and organically, it is bound to be contextualized with thick description and personal experience.

**Analysis of data for curation.** As with other qualitative research methodologies, curation requires the researcher make sense of data, sometimes large amounts of data, then identify themes to construct a public display of firm and tentative conclusions while posing new questions for further exploration. Data analysis for a curator is likely holistic, inductive, and contextualized. Curators’ analysis of “data” stems from broad knowledge of the art world, experience with the work of other curators though academic study, and exposure to a variety of curated exhibitions, lending itself to a holistic exploration of themes relevant to the curator’s life and times. The inductive processes of curators requires the responsiveness Langer (1953) described as a qualification for understanding art, contextualized by a deep understanding of the artistic subject matter and a framing concept for broadly selected themes.

Dana Friis-Hansen (2001) offered practical advice for curating an exhibition: begin with the artwork, then with the artist. Try to understand where the artwork fits within the artist’s body of work, how it relates to the artist’s peers, and how it fits within its historical
context. He said, “A great exhibition is like a seven-course meal with good wine and fascinating conversation, not a stew in which many ingredients have been tossed together and boiled until each is indistinguishable from the whole” (Friis-Hansen, 2001, p. 67). Jane Farver (2001) also likened the exhibition to a conversation: “As moderator of the ‘discussion’, the curator must be able to elicit passionate, even extreme, opinions, yet keep the dialogue lucid and well paced...” (p. 59-60). The data analysis in curation is the development of this conversation, within any practical confines of the exhibition space, time, and potential audience.

Both the physical and intellectual work of curation happen iteratively, arriving at a sharable product. Based on this project, built on Friis-Hansen’s (2001) verbs for curation, I propose researchers interested in curating their own exhibitions loosely employ these action verbs as they relate to the specific content and contexts of the project at hand: collect, organize, research, conceptualize, select, contextualize, arrange, interpret. The curated product (i.e. the exhibition) is derived from a depth of knowledge about the subject matter that extends well beyond the trite use of the word as a synonym for “selecting.”

**Curatorial publication.** Publication in curation may consist of the artifacts in a physical exhibition as well as their ancillary materials, speeches, articles, journal or book publications, and more. Artistic interpretation of the curated materials lends itself to multiple interpretations and audiences, necessitating various forms of publication. For instance, in this project, this dissertation document constitutes one form of a curated product that is constrained by the linear affordances of written publication. I utilized digital scans of the *Wonderland* works for academic publication and presentations. I worked within the availability of time, space, and the availability of *Wonderland* editions in my institution to develop the physical exhibition and developed talks and documents to support my presentation of the exhibition during my public dissertation defense.
I plan to initiate a corresponding digital exhibition of artifacts, which will present a new set of opportunities and challenges. Digital exhibition of *Wonderland* illustrations allows for simultaneous display of images from the same edition, even when just one physical edition is available. In a physical exhibition, under glass, any edition can only be open to a two-page spread at once. As new technologies for digital publication develop at an astonishing rate, digital exhibition also offers increasingly unique opportunities to link texts online.

The process of creating a digital exhibition is unlike that of creating an exhibition in a museum space, for instance, because digital publication is more readily read in nonlinear ways than a physical exhibition. With digital publication, the authoring process must prepare for nonlinear presentation, unlike the metaphorical smoothing out of ideas necessary for linear presentation. Digital publication opens an exhibition to new audiences, as the need for traversing time and space to a see physical exhibition is eliminated through online technologies.

Regardless of the mode or audience, curatorial publications likely center on an exhibition of artifacts contextualized to showcase themes, questions, and responses. Mary Jane Jacob (2001) offered a recipe for exhibitions by first listing ingredients: art, artists, audiences, “spaces (variable)”, and “institutions (optional)” (p. 86). Then, she advised young curators, “Start with art and let it lead you to its makers: propose questions that concern you and that you care about, unanswerable questions that are worth investigating to find ways of thinking about them” (Jacob, 2001, p. 86).

**Trustworthiness, Credibility, Authenticity, and Reflexivity in Curation**

The charge of the curator has been described as threefold: scholar and scientific investigator, educator (broadly defined), and custodian of artifacts (Hoire, 1986). I approached this project with the lens of an education researcher, a teacher, a teacher educator, a librarian, and an academically trained art enthusiast. Though I am not trained
specifically as a curator, I have a variety of specific experiences as a scholar and scientific investigator, an educator, and a custodian of artifacts. In the world of curation, one heavily debated question asks: Can you teach someone to curate? (Moser, 2008). This is similar to a question teachers and teacher educators face: Can you teach someone to teach? Certainly, some amount of pedagogical, methodological, and content knowledge can improve understanding of these fields, but credentials do not “arrive in a neatly packaged box” (Moser, 2008, p. 27) and often there are great distances between the competencies prioritized by university education and the complex realities of the job.

The human factor is the great strength and the fundamental weakness of qualitative inquiry and analysis (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). As this statement relates to curation, curatorial selections can skew interpretation and/or provide an “overly idiosyncratic interpretation” (Barrett, 2002, p. 27). But, qualitative approaches to research are based on the assumption that close connections to a particular phenomenon “produce the clearest and most informed understanding of the topic” (Stanczak, 2007, p. 5). I have gathered research and perspectives from the fields of visual research methodologies, arts-based research methodologies, visual arts, children’s literature, and Wonderland in order to inform my curatorial decisions. While focusing on Wonderland specifically, other various forms Alice has taken in her 150-year literary life cannot be ignored. My own collective understanding of the story and its images constitute a form of implied interpretation (Barrett, 2002) and affect the choices I make about which illustrations to include in this project. My informed understanding and interest in connecting the contexts of Wonderland is useful to this work. The connections and disconnections between visually portrayed ideas in Wonderland proved useful in understanding the illustrations of children’s literature, and the evolution of the sociology of illustration for children.
Through this project, I promoted a dialogue between the original Carroll/Tenniel Wonderland illustrations (1865/1866) and the works of those artists who re-illustrated Lewis Carroll’s original written word. I identified and highlighted artists’ visual portrayals as they brought to light themes of reality, nature, time, size, and identity development, themes well documented in the Wonderland text (Day, 2010; Goodacre, 1977; Groth, 2012; Hancher, 1985; Hollingsworth, 1999; Lovell-Smith, 2003; Meier, 1999; Monteiro, 1999; Sinker, 2010; Wong, 1999). As I intend to help viewers make connections between the story of Wonderland and its illustrations, the work of Housen and Yenawine in the development of their Visual Thinking Strategies (Housen & Yenawine, n.d.) influences the way I think about and therefore convey impressions of these works of art. My aim is to create an aesthetic and informative experience for viewers of this project exhibition. In this way, I curate [i.e., collect, research, thematically conceptualize, select, contextualize, strategically arrange, and interpret (Friis-Hansen, 2001)] a collection of Wonderland images beginning with the author’s first manuscript drawings and Tenniel’s published illustrations, and conduct research into the images of illustration and the contextual stories of the artists and circumstances in which the illustrations were created.

The Exhibits

In the following chapters, I share my discoveries in art, history, and culture as they relate to three human and humanoid characters in Wonderland: Alice and her descent to Wonderland, the Hatter at the Mad Tea Party, and the anthropomorphized card soldiers. I have written these chapters as stand-alone manuscripts that function to contextualize the illustrations of each scene across the editions I examined. As a result, there is some repetition across chapters four through seven with regard to analyzing the larger data set. However, each chapter also contains specific information about the data sets and analytic procedures that were relevant to the characters under scrutiny.
Through these close readings and analyses from my research collection, I suggest the text over time has become less about readers looking at the book than the book looking to the reader for new interpretations of the story. To illustrate this point, I created a brick and mortar exhibit that will allow viewers to interact with the outcome of my curatorial process.

In the chapters that follow, I repeat a brief summary of my methods, and tailor my methods discussion to each chapter topic before sharing what I found by isolating and examining the subset of illustrations related to that topic. Each chapter functions to exhibit a different set of ideas that necessitated a different way of thinking about each isolated set of illustrations. Each set of ideas comes from a different point in the book (i.e., “Down, Down, Down,” the Hatter character, the playing card characters). These ideas build to some of my observations about shifts in the text’s meaning over time through the gaze of Wonderland. Following the presentation of the next four chapters as exhibits (i.e., dissertation “results” Chapters Four through Seven), I conclude the document with my observations and notes on the curation process and wonderings for further research.
In the story of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (first published by Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866), Alice’s descent into Wonderland is a popular scene for illustration, though it was not depicted by the original illustrator, John Tenniel. Modern readers may be surprised by this fact, given the recent pervasiveness of this image of Alice. In the last 20 years, illustration of this scene has appeared in 23 of the 28 editions published, seven of those editions include the illustration of this scene over multiple pages, and three editions include this scene on the books’ cover. The reason for its early omission is clearly connected to, or directed by, Lewis Carroll’s text. Throughout the composition and construction of Wonderland, Lewis Carroll wrote the text and designed images symbiotically. In spaces in which he used images, he refrained from detailed description in the corresponding text. Conversely, in spaces where he used thick description, he omitted repetitive images.

In the following excerpt, the rabbit hole scene (referred to as Down, Down, Down) documents this phenomenon as Lewis Carroll explicitly described Alice’s descent through the text (Carroll & Tenneil, 1865/1866):

In another moment down went Alice after it [the White Rabbit], never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep well.
Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next.

First, she tried to look down and make out what she was coming to, but it was too dark to see anything: then she looked at the sides of the well, and noticed that they were filled with cupboards and book--shelves; here and there she saw maps and pictures hung upon pegs. She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed: it was labelled "ORANGE MARMALADE," but to her great disappointment it was empty: she did not like to drop the jar for fear of killing somebody underneath, so managed to put it into one of the cupboards as she fell past it.

'Well!' thought Alice to herself, "after such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling down stairs! How brave they'll all think me at home! Why, I wouldn't say anything about it, even if I fell off the top of the house!' (Which was very likely true.)

Down, down, down. Would the fall never come to an end! 'I wonder how many miles I have fallen by this time?' she said aloud. 'I must be getting somewhere near the centre of the earth. Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think--' (for, you see, Alice had learnt several things of this sort in her lessons in the schoolroom, and though this was not a very good opportunity for showing off her knowledge, as there was no one to listen to her, still it was good practice to say it over) '--yes, that's about the right distance-- but then I wonder what Latitude or Longitude I've got to?' (Alice had not the slightest idea what Latitude was, or Longitude either, but she thought they were nice grand words to say.)

Presently she began again. 'I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth and 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 like 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 curtsying 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 to do ask: perhaps I shall see it written up somewhere.'

Down, down down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice soon began talking again. 'Dinah'll miss me very much to-night, I should think!' (Dinah was the cat.) 'I hope they'll remember her saucer of milk at tea-time. Dinah, my dear! I wish you were down here with me! There are no mice in the air, I'm afraid, but you might catch a bat, and that's very like a mouse, you know. But do cats eat bats, I wonder!' And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, 'Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?' and sometimes, 'Do bats eat cats?' for, you see, as she couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it. She felt that she was dozing off, and had just begun to dream that she was walking hand in hand with Dinah, and was saying to her very earnestly, 'Now, Dinah, tell me the truth: did you ever eat a bat?' when suddenly, thump! thump! down she came upon a heap of sticks and dry leaves, and the fall was over. (p. 3-6)

In this scene, readers hear the story through a third person omniscient narrator as Carroll provides a detailed description of Alice’s thoughts and words, the setting, and her actions. In this passage, his words lend themselves to vivid images of Alice's fall and his direct address of the reader draws the reader into interaction with the book. For example, the narrator asks the reader to think about Alice’s actions (“…fancy curtsying as you're falling through the air! Do you think you could manage it?”), encouraging readers to develop a mental vision of the act and to interact with the narrator.

Although Carroll did not commission John Tenniel to include an illustration of this scene in the first published images of Wonderland, many illustrators have selected this scene
for illustration. In subsequent publications, why would more than half of *Wonderland* illustrators choose to portray this scene? And what is the impact of these illustrated scenes on the accumulated conceptions of *Wonderland*? These questions provided impetus for me to explore illustrations of his scene and their potential connections to larger shifts in sociocultural thinking.

**A Purpose and Process of Collection and Curation**

For this project, I examined connections and breaks with tradition in *Wonderland* illustration that contribute to an evolution of meaning in the story. From my discoveries, I developed curation as a methodology and utilized it to author an exhibition of ideas and illustrations surrounding large shifts in *Wonderland* meaning. To summarize my research process, I provide Figure 14 and the following details. First, I identified 280 editions of *Wonderland* through a search of WorldCat, the collective world-wide library catalog. From that list, I identified 111 English-language and unabridged editions, as well as which libraries held these editions. I identified six libraries in the United States collectively holding most of the 111 editions for study: University of South Florida (Tampa), University of Florida, Syracuse University, San Francisco Public Library, University of Texas (Austin), and New York University. I then traveled to each library to view each edition, ensured they met my criteria for inclusion in this study, and collected my own digital scans of each book’s illustrations (a total of over 5700 illustrations).

I organized and studied all illustrations from the 111 unabridged editions of *Wonderland* identified for inclusion in this study and accessible to me. See Figure 11 for a birds-eye view of the chart of illustrations collected for this study, organized chronologically by illustrator in columns and by chapter in row blocks. I systematically and iteratively recorded my observations and questions about each of the more than 5700 illustrations in my research collection using a study template I created for this project based on themes in
Wonderland literature and principles of visual literacy. In my research chart, I left blank cells as place holders in the chronology for each edition not containing a scene. The resulting chart shows the presence and absence of illustrations by way of cells occupied by and empty of images. This chart set-up served to help me more clearly identify shifts in the incidence of representation of the scenes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following seven steps based on Friis-Hansen’s (2001) discussion of curation and the sub-steps specific to this project are intended to provide a summative outline of my research process.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Image collection process:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Database and critical literature search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Locate editions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Scan and label images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Organize images and manage data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Record preliminary interpretations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research the story and illustrations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Search for critical reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Close reading using illustration analysis prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Chronological analysis by image/chapter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Reverse chronological analysis by artist/illustrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Record qualitative observations using controlled vocabulary</td>
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<td>3. Thematically conceptualize exhibition of ideas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Analyze a priori themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Track new insights</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Conceptualize exhibits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Select specific illustrations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Select illustrations for the dissertation document</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Select illustrations for the physical exhibition</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Frame the exhibition for each theme</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Consider the role of writing academic text in the curation process</td>
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<td>e. Consider aesthetics and sociocultural messages of exhibits</td>
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<td>f. Choose stopping points</td>
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<td>5. Contextualize the illustrations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Write two contextualizing texts (dissertation document and exhibition texts)</td>
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<td>b. Consult the literature</td>
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<td>c. Select quotes</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Strategically arrange illustrations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Arrange images and text</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Represent data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Obtain permissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Work within data constraints and develop work-arounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Interpret illustrations and themes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Consider impact of genre and audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 14: A summary outline of my research methods.
Through this iterative study, I made observations about the collection as a whole and identified my own themes from the illustrations. I identified Alice’s fall into Wonderland as a prominent image and isolated those images in a chart (Figure 15).

![Figure 15: Down, Down, Down images isolated from 111 Wonderland editions.](image)

Sixty of 111 editions I obtained and which were published between 1864 and 2015 include at least one image corresponding with this scene. When I isolated Down, Down, Down (hereafter referred to as Down) illustrations in the 60 editions containing this scene, leaving space when the scene was not present in an edition, I identified the characteristics of typical and atypical images of this scene as well as cycles of its presence and absence in illustration.

Figure 15 shows shifts in the incidence of representation of this scene. The clearest shift in incidence occurs in the middle of the twentieth century, then again in the last quarter of the twentieth century. These shifts correspond with major releases of Disney’s animated Alice in Wonderland (in 1951 and 1981) film. After looking closely at the influence of Disney on this scene, I noted other points at which the incidence of this image shifted, the early 1900s and around the 1930s. My knowledge of the discussions about the physics of this scene and Alice’s age-old question about what would happen to a person who fell through the earth, I took a closer look at how the physics of falling have been represented by illustrators over time. I found that early shifts in the representation of Alice’s fall loosely correspond with Einstein’s introduction of his theories of relativity. The shift around the 1930s corresponded with a noticeable difference in Alice’s age in physical appearance. In the early 1930s, this scene is also notably missing from my timeline of this scene. My broad studies of Wonderland
pointed to the influences of Freudian psychology on interpretations of Alice’s adventure. As I further investigated A.M.E. Goldschmidt’s landmark Freudian Wonderland criticism of 1933, I saw this piece as a major potential contributor to perceptions and reflections of the Alice character.

My study of the illustrations in a chronological fashion led me to these conclusions. As such, new iterations of the image of Wonderland become a part of existing images, echoing Sipe’s (2001) conclusions on the palimpsest of stories, as readers build intertextuality through the arrangement of their experiences with variant editions. The re-illustration production of this classic story seems to work in much the same way, as illustrators build on what they have seen in the work of other illustrators and add their own interpretations through artistic style and personal context.

A Brief History of the Scene in Illustration

Although Wonderland’s status as a fantasy and a dream story gives illustrators latitude in representations of Alice’s fall, the illustrators who chose to present this scene, made creative and logistical choices in that visual representation. To create those works, artists drew on both imagination and worldly knowledge, and both fantasy and realistic concepts that can be identified in illustrations of Alice’s descent to Wonderland.

Blanche McManus was first to establish a visual for the Down scene through her frontispiece for her edition, published in 1899. McManus’s illustration foreshadows the plot with a map of Wonderland hanging on the rocky wall, a framed picture of the Hatter, Dormouse, and Hare, a picture of a Cat, and a picture of the Mock Turtle and Gryphon. McManus’s image confirms Carroll’s description in several ways; there are cupboards, books, maps, and pictures. A tureen marked “MOCK TURTLE SOUP,” a bottle marked “TO MAKE ONE GROW TALL,” and a tray of “THE QUEEN’S TARTS” are positioned on the shelves. An upright Alice appears calm, except her wide eyes are focused on the unclothed White Rabbit just
below her feet. She holds a jar labeled “ORANGE MARMALADE” (Figure 16) while other jars of marmalade sit on the shelves around her. McManus’s illustration serves to visually concretize Carroll’s description of Alice’s fall in many ways.

Figure 16: Blanche McManus provides the first published illustration of this scene.


The way in which Alice falls merits further investigation, as it varies over the history of the scene (e.g., feet first, head first, etc.). However, the stability of physical details across other factors in illustrative representations of the scene is remarkable and becomes
apparent when observing and describing each isolated illustration of the scene iteratively and sequentially.

In my research collection, Alice is pictured falling in 53 of 60 editions (over 88%). The illustration is most often presented as a full-length, long shot. McManus used this framing choice for her illustration and it was a seemingly natural choice given Carroll’s description of the long descent down “a very deep well.” Fifty-one of 60 editions (85%) contain an illustration of this scene like McManus’s show cupboards, bookshelves, pictures, maps, or marmalade and 35 of 60 (58%) show all of these details from Carroll’s textual description.

Perhaps illustrators picture Carroll’s nomenclature to establish a strong connection between the story and their own illustrations. Perhaps the items specifically named by Carroll are seen by illustrators as significant to the story. These physical details about the Down illustration provide a relatively consistent image for the scene across time and, because of the scene’s position at the beginning of the narrative, it establishes the story as well.

The editions in which Down is pictured differently may provide useful counter-examples to indicate sociocultural patterns and changes reflected in Wonderland illustration of this scene. I observed several quantitative shifts in the incidence of this scene that pointed me to qualitative shifts and vice versa.

Figure 15 is a chart that captures the number of occurrences of illustrations of the Down scene. The chart is organized by illustrator, and in chronological order by publication date. Each illustration depicting Down is in its own square. In the following sections, I present interpretations and explanations for the inclusion or omission of the Down scene in editions of Wonderland. I situated the illustrators’ choices through connections to social and cultural events as well as through a thorough review of literary criticism of Wonderland across time.
Physics, Einstein, and Wonderland

The Wonderland narrative provides illustrators opportunity to draw on imagination and experience using fantasy and realistic concepts. Fact and fiction can be identified in illustrations of Alice's descent to Wonderland as well as in Carroll's text. Alice provides some basis for addressing these topics but her thoughts provide only a vague and seemingly unreasonable estimate of her travels (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866):

'I wonder how many miles I have fallen by this time?' she said aloud. 'I must be getting somewhere near the centre [sic] of the earth. Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think--... yes, that's about the right distance-- but then I wonder what Latitude or Longitude I've got to?'

The narrator goes on to say: “Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, p. 3). As advances in human understanding of physics influenced popular understanding of the physicality of falling, the rise and fall of theories about gravity, time, and space, as well as misunderstandings of these theories contribute to illustrations of this scene. I considered the physics of Alice’s fall, including elements of distance, velocity (the relationship between distance and time), and acceleration (a change in velocity). Gravitational force is key to understanding Alice’s fall as well.

Long preceding Lewis Carroll, ideas from great minds like Aristotle (c. 384-322 BC), Galileo (1564-1642), and Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1726) would have been known by the Wonderland author (Blown & Bryce, 2012) and likely informed and influenced the physical description of Alice’s fall. After all, Lewis Carroll was the author’s pseudonym. Carroll was the mathematician and logician, Charles Dodgson. Aristotle believed that space is uniform and consists of three dimensions: length, width, and height (Horowitz, 2017). Aristotle also set forth the idea that if two objects with different masses were dropped from the same height,
the heavier one would reach the ground faster. Aristotle’s theory does not support Alice’s voiced fear of dropping the marmalade jar and killing someone beneath her. According to Aristotle, Alice would reach the ground before the jar. Alice’s thoughts on this topic highlight misunderstandings about gravitational force, perhaps because she is a child, not a scientist, or perhaps Carroll was highlighting common misconceptions about physics and falling.

Galileo disagreed with Aristotle’s theory of gravitation, and scientific lore indicates he revised the theory in 1590 by dropping a large and a small cannonball from the Leaning Tower of Pisa (Dine, 2017). The two balls of different sizes and masses reached the ground at nearly the same time. Galileo attributed the difference in time as air resistance. Galileo’s assertions counter Alice too, as the jar would fall at the same rate as Alice and would seem to be suspended in front of her (Carroll, Tenniel, & Gardner, 2000). According to Galileo, if the jar was destined to land on someone below, so was Alice. Further, if Alice had tried to replace the jar on a shelf as she passed, she would surely break her arm (Russ, 2013). Galileo’s practical and thought experiments with gravity led him to assert that if one was to fall through the center of the Earth and attempt to come out the other side, as Alice speculates she might in her monologue, she would actually “oscillate back and forth forever” (Carroll, Tenniel, & Gardner, 2000, p. 13). But, Carroll’s words, once again, intervene in this potential logical interpretation, as he tells readers Alice does not oscillate; she lands in Wonderland with a “thump! thump!” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, p. 6).

Sir Isaac Newton proved the law of a gravitational constant, with the thump of an apple. Newton observed the apple falling from a tree toward the center of the Earth, perpendicular to the Earth’s surface (Andrews, 2017). Newton’s law of gravitation also states the gravitational force between two objects is directly proportionate to their masses. Therefore, the larger the mass, the stronger the force between the two objects (Primack, 2017).
On the real-world side of the rabbit hole, Alice could not fall 4000 miles (as she speculates in her monologue), fall slowly, and land safely. A healthy seven-year-old girl might weigh about 50 pounds. If her velocity was uniform, falling 4000 miles would take Alice about 19 minutes and, with nothing to slow her accelerations, Alice would arrive in Wonderland at over 25,000 miles per hour, according to The Splat Calculator (“The Splat Calculator,” 2016). Therefore, some force, real or imaginary, must slow her descent and counter the effects of gravity and provide an illusion of safety.

Most artists chose to show Alice’s dress with a ruffled hem on a long skirt, adhering to styling conventions set by Tenniel’s Alice for a late Victorian-era girl. But, her skirt can serve a practical purpose in helping her survive her fall, acting as the canopy in a parachute system. Parachutes decelerate and balance payload (Gao, Zhang, & Tang, 2016). In order to slow her acceleration during her fall, Alice’s skirt would have to inflate, like any other parachute canopy (Russ, 2013).

Time is a prominent theme in the Wonderland story, and Newton and other classical mathematicians and physicists saw the passage of time as separate from the dimensions of space—a very different conception than we have today. Newton conveyed time as a river of sorts, flowing in one direction at the same rate for everyone, or as a universal grandfather clock that “hovered over the rest of nature in blithe autonomy,” advancing at a smooth and constant rate (Holt, 2014, p. 187). But, in 1905 (forty years after the first publication of Wonderland), Albert Einstein published a paper laying out his special theory of relativity, contradicting Newton’s assertion that time flows the same way for everyone and demonstrating that the measurement of time is relative to the observer’s frame of reference (Holt, 2014).

After McManus’s debut of this scene in 1899 and before the introduction of Albert Einstein’s theory of special relativity in 1905, six editions of Alice were published and three
included an image of Alice falling to Wonderland. Einstein’s general theory of relativity, published in 1915, further revised the model of what would happen to Alice during her fall, as gravity and her passage through the space of the rabbit-hole may cause her to experience time slowly. Between 1905 and 1915 (between the publication of Einstein’s theory of special relativity and his theory of general relativity), 13 editions of Wonderland were published and 5 contained an image of this scene (38%). This decline in incidence of the Down scene could be attributed to increasing societal knowledge of physics and the fact that Einstein’s theories are complex and the details are difficult to understand without a strong background in physics.

Interestingly, Alice’s words foreshadow Einstein’s special theory of relativity. She conveys a personal conception of time, rather than steady movement to Newton’s clock: “Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, p. 3). Alice’s observation could be due to fact that her surroundings are unfamiliar and her experience of time is slowed, or perhaps, Alice’s experience of time is related to the fact that she is entering a dream: “In psychoanalytic theory, it is the loss of linear perspective this is regarded as giving dreams and fairy tales a logic all their own” (Petersen, 1985, p. 428). Einstein’s special theory of relativity links three-dimensional space to the fourth dimension of time, making plain the interconnectedness of space and time through a concept he dubs spacetime.

While Einstein’s theories corrected the long-held assertions of classical mathematicians and physicists like Aristotle, Galileo, and Newton, soon after Einstein’s publication of these theories, contradictions and “major conceptual difficulties” with Einstein’s work arose (Will, 2017, p. 18). Will (2017) reports within 10 years of its development, the general theory of relativity was more or less dismissed as not very
important for physics. Experts viewed Einstein’s claims as small adjustments to Newton’s theory and they considered his work an unfit subject for serious science. From 1905 to 1951, only 10 of 37 (27%) editions contain this scene. Combined with the topic’s decline in popularity, illustrators without a physics background may have avoided depicting the scene to also avoid the complex ideas of gravity, distance, velocity, acceleration in their depiction of what may happen to Alice during her fall. Einstein’s theories of relativity were not on the rise again until the 1960s, when astronomers realized general relativity played a role in understanding “quasars, pulsars, the cosmic background radiation, and the first black-hole candidate” (Will, 2017, p. 19). Or, perhaps, as Freud’s psychoanalytic themes made their way into the world, illustrators shied away from depicting Alice’s entrance to Wonderland in a book intended for an audience of children.

**Tracing Freudian Influence**

In the late 1800s, Sigmund Freud coined the term *psychoanalysis*, bringing to light a set of ideas that would change the face of literary and artistic interpretation forever, retrospectively and for the future. Specifically, psychoanalytic interpretations of Alice’s fall ascribe meaning to *Wonderland* beyond the physical aspects, as this passage marks Alice’s entrance to the dream world. For Freud, psychoanalytic interpretation of dreams aims to uncover the symbolic meanings in the dream. In his words, “the dream makes use of such symbolizations as are to be found ready-made in unconscious thinking, since these, by reason of their case of representation, and for the most part by reason of their being exempt from the censorship, satisfy more effectively the requirements of dream-formation” (Freud, 1900, p. 114). As Carroll himself describes Alice’s journey as a dream, critics of *Wonderland* do not have to look long to extend psychoanalytic interpretation to scenarios and passages in the story.
A widely known psychoanalytic analysis of Alice’s fall is specified in A.M.E. Goldscheidt’s 1933 essay. In the 19 editions of Wonderland published between 1933 and 1951, only 4 (21%) contained an illustration of this scene. Goldscheidt’s essay suggests Alice’s journey is erotic from the start, as Alice follows the White Rabbit down the rabbit-hole. Goldscheidt (1933/1982) does not mince words: “The symbolism begins almost at once. Alice runs down the rabbit-hole after the White Rabbit and suddenly finds herself falling down ‘what seemed to be a very deep well.’ Here we have what is perhaps the best-known symbol of coitus” (p. 280).

Initial critical reaction to Goldscheidt’s essay indicates considerable speculation that the essay was intended as a parody of a psychoanalytic interpretation, written as “fraud rather than Freud” (Brooker, 2004, p. 79). Parody or not, the essay opened Wonderland to Freudian analysis and readers may have believed Alice “was about phallus” (Auerbach, 1973, p. 33). Goldscheidt’s essay created space for other psychoanalysts to interpret Alice’s descent through the symbolism of the unconscious.

Paul Schilder’s remarks of 1942 (1971) pointed out that Wonderland presents Alice with continuous threats to the “integrity of the body” (p. 286) and “stability of space” (p. 287). Schilder (1942/1971) cited Fenichel (1936) as a source for the theory that little girls can be a symbol of the phallus. Schilder (1942/1971) acknowledged the complicated state of these kinds of conversations and the lack of knowledge of Dodgson’s fantasy life, but went on to state, “. . . we are reasonably sure that the little girl is substitute for incestuous love objects” (p. 291). Further, John Skinner’s (1947) psychoanalysis focuses on the dream aspect of Wonderland and Lewis Carroll’s “unresolved emotional problem” (p. 300), referring to Carroll’s potential for issues with women due to insufficient attention from his mother and the presence of eight sisters. Skinner (1947) goes on to say Carroll’s “interest in the figures of little girls and this love of little girls was the eventual expression of his denial of adult
sexual life” (p. 302). Jenny Woolf’s (2010) modern reading of Carroll’s life and interests paints an entirely different picture of Carroll as a man who “sees the female child and pure-minded femininity as an antidote to Sin” (p. 116). Carroll had taken an oath of celibacy at Christ Church, and had effectively eliminated sex from his life (Woolf, 2010).

Martin Grotjahn’s writings on the symbolism in Wonderland (1947) make many references to Fenichel, Schilder, and Skinner, and their standing on the equation “Girl = Phallus” (1947, p. 35). Grotjahn (1947) sums up his take on the psychoanalytic symbolism in Wonderland:

Without this appeal to the unconscious motives and intentions of the author, he succeeded in creating a fantasy of enduring value with great fascination for all of us. It should be possible, therefore, aside from personal motivation and meaning, to point out and to interpret some of the relations between the Adventures and the unconscious of the reader. Without this appeal to the unconscious of the reader, the Adventures would have remained what they originally were: a slightly regressive daydream of the Reverend Charles Dodgson. His schizoid personality, his compulsive character traits, his often paranoid behavior, his regressive attitude and loving fascination by sexually undifferentiated child-actresses, his childhood experiences as the son of a minister and the oldest of eleven siblings— all this gave him the qualifications to create the Adventures and to be joined there by his friends, with whom he had so little contact on this side of Wonderland. (p. 37)

Grotjhan (1947) also symbolized Alice’s descent to Wonderland as “a trip back into the mother’s womb” (p. 312). Garland (2008) reinforced the idea that the “Alice texts are primarily concerned with desire and control, directed to the female child and held by Lewis Carroll” (p. 24). While Wonderland was written before Freudian psychoanalysis was “invented,” Empson (1935) contested Carroll “has the feelings that would correspond to it . .
whether his mind played the trick of putting this into the story or not…” (p. 273). It seems many psychoanalytic assertions stretch the evidence to form gaps that make way for hefty theorizing.

The 1930s and 1940s, a period in which Alice’s descent to Wonderland and Lewis Carroll’s relationships with young girls was heavily criticized by psychoanalysts, marks a particular point of interest in the chronology of Down illustrations. In 15 of 18 editions (about 83%) published from 1933 to 1951, the illustrator omitted images of this scene altogether. However, other illustrations in Wonderland editions in the early 1930s show a notable change in Alice’s appearance, as she is pictured much older than in most previous editions, only making these possible explanations more complex. This co-occurrence of the aging of Alice along with increased psychoanalytic criticism may be evidence of artistic responses to the cultural milieu. The difference between Milo Winter’s (Carroll & Winter, 1916/1932; Figure 17) image of Alice and John Morton-Sale’s (Carroll & Morton-Sale, 1933, frontispiece illustration, no page) image of the Alice character is striking. While Winter’s Alice has the long hair, loose knee-length white dress, and bobby socks of a girl, Morton-Sale’s Alice has coiffed hair, a long red dress with fitted bodice, and much longer proportions of a woman. It seems this Wonderland illustrator of the early 1930s many have been influenced to depict a more mature subject of psychoanalytic interpretations of the story than the seven-year-old girl Carroll describes. Also, both of these illustrators avoid showing Alice while she is falling, thereby avoiding the visual depiction of sexual references, in favor of showing her watching the Rabbit.

In contrast, I discovered one conspicuously phallic image during my analysis of Wonderland illustrations. Although it is not a representation of the Down scene, the imagery is unmistakable and in close chronological proximity to apparent aversion to overt sexual depiction. In Chapter 4 of Wonderland, an oversized Alice, stuck in the White Rabbit’s house
due to her uninvited consumption of cakes, kicks Bill the Lizard back out of the chimney as he comes down to try to remove her (see Carroll & Card, 1945, page 35. Linda Card (Carroll & Card, 1945) shows Bill the Lizard with an unusual tail. The point at which his tail joins his body could, removed from the context of the story, convey symbolism of Alice’s found virility forcing him out of the chimney (another tunnel ripe with opportunity for coital psychoanalytic interpretations). Or, perhaps this image is symbolic of Alice’s “penis” effectively ejecting Bill from the space she occupies. After all, it is Alice who shoves her foot up the chimney to ultimately send Bill sailing across the White Rabbit’s lawn.

Figure 17: Milo Winter’s Alice appears as a girl.

After Card’s portrayal, artists of the 1950s seem to work to restore Wonderland’s innocence somewhat, as new interpretations of the story return Alice to childhood. Hall’s (Carroll, Hall, & Sibley, 1986) illustrations created in the late 1930s to establish this premise of renewed innocence and set the scene for Walt Disney Studios’ journey in Wonderland.

Alice in Disney’s World or Disney in Wonderland

Almost 90 years after Blanche McManus first set this scene in illustration, David Hall, a Disney animator, created images of Alice’s descent to Wonderland with strikingly less correspondence to Carroll’s description (Carroll, Hall, & Sibley, 1986). Hall began sketching images in 1939 as a part of an early attempt at an animated Disney Wonderland movie, but due to heavy competition in the world of Wonderland film and other factors at the time, it was not produced (Carroll, Hall, & Sibley, 1986, p. 145; For a summary of Wonderland film efforts, see the Afterword in Carroll, Hall, & Sibley, 1986.) Hall left Disney studios in 1940 and his images remained largely unknown in the Disney community and unavailable to the public until they were discovered in the Disney archives and printed as book illustrations in 1986 (Carroll, Hall, & Sibley, 1986, p. 156). Hall’s Alice bears a clear resemblance to the better-known Disney Alice of 1951. She has long blonde hair, a blue dress, white apron, white stockings, and black Mary Jane shoes. While Alice herself may look familiar to readers, Hall’s visual interpretation of the scene wherein Alice enters Wonderland places her in an entirely new and unusual environment, one that readers had not previously experienced from other illustrators (see Carroll, Hall, & Sibley, 1986, page 10). An Alice figure is pictured four times in this scene, presumably due to her mobile nature in movie animation, another departure from typical portrayals of this scene.

Disney’s studios revived the idea of a Wonderland film with artist Mary Blair, who helped to create the 1951 classic production. Tenniel’s Alice and Disney’s Alice bear many physical resemblances: long hair pulled back from their faces, good posture, dainty, black
Mary Jane shoes, a knee-length dress and a white pinafore, (all common characteristics of a young girl in Tenniel’s Victorian England). Disney’s Alice appears as a similar age to Tenniel’s Alice. Disney’s scene takes many cues from Carroll’s description, as the Alice character is resilient and reliable. Disney’s Alice has a need for logic and she conveys an air of intelligent and observant innocence, as does the Carroll/Tenniel Alice. Just as Carroll’s narrative does much to shape Disney’s representation of it, Disney’s creation has a strong sphere of influence on Wonderland illustrations published after its release.

Sharp increases in incidence of Down can be attributed to two major releases of Disney’s Alice in Wonderland, adapted from Carroll books, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and Though the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There (1871). The original release of Disney’s animated film, Alice in Wonderland, in 1951 and its release for the home video market in 1981 correspond with major shifts in the incidence of this scene in published books. Before 1951, 17 of 55 (31%) editions published from McManus to Disney contain the Down scene. It appears in 7 of 11 (64%) of editions published between 1951 and 1981. From 1982 to 2015, 35 of 41 (85%) of print editions published have least one illustration of this scene. (See Figure 15 for this timeline.) Five editions feature this scene as cover artwork; the first two with Justin Todd in 1984 (Carroll & Todd, 1984) and Anthony Browne in 1988 (Carroll & Browne, 1988), both published in the decade after Disney’s release for the home video market. The influence of Tim Burton’s 2010 Disney Wonderland movie on images of this scene is beginning to emerge in a few unusual illustrations of Alice’s fall, such as in Yayoi Kusama’s (Carroll & Kusama, 2012) and Andrea D’Aquino’s (Carroll & D’Aquino, 2015) editions.

**Artists Open Meaning through Interpretation**

Varied interpretations of the Down scene evidence connections to physical, psychological, and sociocultural influences in Wonderland. Alice survives the physical fall
with no injury. Her psychoanalyzed self may not have fared so well. In many ways, “Alice has at once been preserved intact and transformed dramatically” (Kidd, 2011, p. 74), as psychoanalytic interpretations of Wonderland enter the discussion. Alice’s journey is one in human experience. Rackin (1966) points out Alice seeks to make meaning in the Wonderland below ground through the Victorian conventions she knows in her above ground world. However, her quest for a “world of secure assumptions and self-assured regulations is doomed to failure” (Rackin, 1991, p. 36), as logic in Wonderland applies sporadically, nothing stays the same for any length of time, and words and actions provide spaces for multiple interpretations. To survive the adventure, “Alice must separate herself from identification with others, develop an ego, become aware of aggression (her own and others’), and learn to tolerate adversity without succumbing to self-pity” (Stowell, 1983, p. 5).

The trends in illustration of this scene reveal more than meets the eye. This scene provides literary passage into Alice’s adventure for both Alice and the reader. The Down scene can be viewed as a metaphor for not just the physical birth of a human, but the inevitable push for children to grow into their own adult lives in the waking world.
CHAPTER FIVE: THE HATTER, ILLUSTRATIONS OF MADNESS OVER TIME

Alice’s encounter with the Hatter in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* is introduced near the close of Chapter 6, when Alice has a conversation with the Cheshire Cat about choosing paths and unavoidable madness (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866):

‘What sort of people live about here?’

‘In that direction,’ the Cat said, waving its right paw round, ‘lives a Hatter: and in that direction,’ waving the other paw, ‘lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad.’

‘But I don't want to go among mad people,’ Alice remarked.

‘Oh, you can't help that,’ said the Cat: ‘we’re all mad here. I’m mad. You're mad.’

‘How do you know I’m mad?’ said Alice.

‘You must be,’ said the Cat, ‘or you wouldn't have come here.’ (p. 90)

Following this conversation, Alice chooses to walk in the March Hare's direction. Thinking the Hare might be raving mad, she fleetingly wishes she had chosen the direction of the Hatter. But her choice proves to have no consequence, as she comes upon the Hare and Hatter having tea together under the same tree. Alice sits down at the end of the table in an armchair (See Figure 18).

In this scene, Alice’s exchange with the Hatter is laden with illogical statements:

‘Your hair wants cutting,’ said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.
'You should learn not to make personal remarks,' Alice said with some severity; 'it's very rude.' The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he said was, 'Why is a raven like a writing-desk?' (pp. 96-97)
Tea-Party’, the non-sequitur conversations around the tea table, and the known madness of real hatters in Carroll’s day serve to convey elements of this character’s persona over time becoming commonly known as the Mad Hatter.

Figure 19: Tenniel’s Hatter in the courtroom.

Reprinted from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel, 1866, London: Macmillan. Public domain. Image courtesy University of South Florida, Tampa, Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection.

Even as illustrations of this character sit beside the same set of Carroll’s words over time, illustrators have drawn various physical, emotional, and social traits, conveying a variety of ideas about mental illness through portrayals of the Hatter. Sometimes he appears as a friendly, docile man; in other editions, he looks confused and idiotic. He is, at other times, portrayed as a creepy or even sinister humanoid. These varied portrayals seem to reflect a broader cultural depiction of mental illness. A recent literature review of the public stigma associated with mental illness in the United States reveals, “Children and adults
endorsed stigmatizing beliefs of people with mental illness, especially the belief that such individuals are prone to violent behaviors, and stigmatizing actions, in the form of social distance” (Paracesepe & Cabassa, 2013, no page). Stigma and social distance are linked to positioning of the reader in relation to the Hatter in Wonderland illustration. The Hatter character in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865/1866) has proved a source of varied portrayals of mental illness over the last 150 years.

A Purpose and Process of Collection and Curation

For this project, I examined connections and breaks with tradition in Wonderland illustration that contribute to an evolution of meaning in the story. From my discoveries, I developed curation as a methodology and utilized it to author an exhibition of ideas and illustrations surrounding large shifts in Wonderland meaning. To summarize my research process, I provide Figure 14 and the following details. First, I identified 280 editions of Wonderland through a search of WorldCat, the collective world-wide library catalog. From that list, I identified 111 English-language and unabridged editions, as well as which libraries held these editions. I identified six libraries in the United States collectively holding most of the 111 editions for study (University of South Florida (Tampa), University of Florida, Syracuse University, San Francisco Public Library, University of Texas (Austin), and New York University), then traveled to each library to view each edition, ensured they met my criteria for inclusion in this study, and collected my own digital scans of each book’s illustrations (a total of over 5700 illustrations).

I organized and studied all illustrations from the 111 unabridged editions of Wonderland identified for inclusion in this study and accessible to me. See Figure 11 for a birds-eye view of the chart of illustrations collected for this study, organized chronologically by illustrator in columns and by chapter in row blocks. I systematically and iteratively recorded my observations and questions about each of the more than 5700 illustrations in my
research collection using a study template I created for this project based on themes in Wonderland literature and principles of visual literacy. In my research chart, I left blank cells as place holders in the chronology for each edition not containing a scene. The resulting chart shows the presence and absence of illustrations by way of cells occupied by and empty of images. This chart set-up served to help me more clearly identify shifts in the incidence of representation of the scenes.

Through this iterative study, I made observations about the collection as a whole and identified my own themes from the illustrations. I identified the Hatter as having both stabilized and wildly varied aspects to his appearance. Set beside Carroll’s same unabridged text across editions, I, as the reader, reacted to the Hatter character with a wide range of emotions from pity to intrigue to unease. I wondered what factors may have influenced illustrators to portray the Hatter character with such a wide variety of attributes.

A search of critical literature related to Wonderland, the Hatter, and illustration in art and literature databases reveals no discussion of the Hatter’s appearance. I sought to examine the evolution of this character through a collection of illustrated transformations. As I isolated the existing 235 Hatter images from Wonderland editions between 1864 and 2015 and read about the treatment history of forms of mental illness known as “madness,” I began to see the ideas I read reflected in the illustrations. It seemed illustrators often depicted the Hatter character in ways that sympathized with the popular treatment and portrayal of madness, or the desired effects of those treatments in their own time. For example, when treatment focused on ridding a person of the evils of madness, the Hatter appeared as a sinister character. When treatment turned to community care, the Hatter appeared as a vagrant.

I further observed that the positioning of the reader plays a large part in conveying these social perceptions. An illustrator’s positioning of the reader is closely linked to the
artistic concept of gaze, a term I define as the exchange of subjectivity and objectivity between who or what is doing the looking and who or what is being looked at. Foucault (1966/2001) describes the picture in which the depicted looks out at the viewer, “eyes catching one another’s glance, direct looks superimposing themselves upon one another as they cross” (p. 5). Eyes in Wonderland “force [the reader] to enter the picture, assign him [sic] a place at once to be privileged and inescapable…” (Foucault, 1966/2001, p. 5-6). The focus on the character’s eyes and this concept of gaze is critical to understanding the reader’s position in relation to the Hatter. In the examples to follow, I traced reflections of trends in treatment and public perceptions of ‘mad’ people through the Hatter’s appearance in Wonderland illustration. In doing that, I noted illustrators’ positioning of the reader in relation to the Hatter character’s gaze, as gaze is tied to perception and the exchange of subjectivity and objectivity. The collection of ideas and images I share below constitutes one form of my interpretations—a selection of contextualized Hatter illustrations selected for their reflections of trends in treatment of the “mad.”

The Hatter and Madness

Sir John Tenniel was the first to set the scene for the Mad Tea-Party and the image of the Hatter in readers’ minds when his illustrations were published alongside Carroll’s words in 1865 (see Figure 18). Tenniel was an illustrator for the popular political publication Punch. He had a knack for portraying fantasy situations in realistic-looking ways, with lifelike anatomical proportions, delicately detailed lines, and cross hatched shading. In Tenniel’s images, the Hatter wears a large top hat, a tall collar, a dotted cravat tied sideways, a checked vest, and a jacket. His facial features are exaggerated, and his longish hair is slightly unkempt. His eyes are a bit wild, but he seems predictable enough that Alice (and readers) need not fear his “madness.”
The idea of any hatter turning “mad” is rooted in the original context of the story. During Lewis Carroll’s time, the hat-making industry was booming. Hats, worn by nearly every individual, conveyed social status in addition to serving practical functions. Hatmakers’ process was laden with occupational hazards, including damage to the hands, lungs, liver, and central nervous system (Heal, 2013). Hat makers used mercuric nitrate to speed the process of separating fur from the pelt in a process known as carroting because of the solution’s orange color (Waldron, 1983). The solution has been linked to symptoms of “excessive timidity, diffidence, increasing shyness, loss of self-confidence, anxiety, and a desire to remain unobserved or unobtrusive” (Waldron, 1983). In warm, unventilated working conditions, hatters often developed “hatters’ shakes,” a condition caused by mercury poisoning, making the body move in a jerky fashion, starting first with the fingers, eyelids, and tongue, progressing to the arms and legs (Heal, 2013; See Figure 20).

![Image of a hat maker working](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Felt_hat_maker,_1938_(8867471917).jpg)

Figure 20: A 1938 image of a hat maker working.

Working conditions like these persisted widely until 1941, when the U.S. Public Health Service banned the use of mercury in the American hat-making industry (Medical Laboratory Observer, 2007). The Hatter in Wonderland states he sells hats (he does not make them) (Carroll, 1865/1866, p. 168):

‘Take off your hat,’ the King said to the Hatter.

‘It isn’t mine,’ said the Hatter.

‘Stolen!’ the King exclaimed, turning to the jury, who instantly made a memorandum of the fact.

‘I keep them to sell,’ the Hatter added as an explanation: ‘I’ve none of my own. I’m a hatter.’

Also, the characterization of Wonderland’s Hatter does not seem to align with medical descriptions of mercury poisoning (Waldron, 1983). Still, the persistent correlation between real hatters’ maladies and the actions of the Hatter in Wonderland have immutably linked the two.

Madness, in broader medical terms, can be associated with a range of conditions, including bipolar disorder, dementia, and most often schizophrenia (Whitaker, 2002). Treatment of these conditions has a heavy past, laden with misconceptions, wrong turns, and forced agendas, often void of concern for the patient’s recovery and wellbeing. The artists’ positioning of the reader in relation to the Hatter character can reflect or contradict the social perceptions of madness in the artists’ time.
The Turn of the 20th Century: Danger, Violent Ostracism, and Placidity

When Peter Newell’s illustrations were published in 1901 (Carroll, Newell, & Martin, 1901; Figure 21), the objective of treatment for madness was to secure, pacify, and sedate patients (Porter, 2002). Caretakers of those with mental illness were often hostile and violent toward their charges, and doctors surgically rid patients of various body parts believed to cause illness. Hydrotherapy was also a popular form of treatment at this time, meant to tranquilize patients (Whitaker, 2002) (See Figure 22). Patients were suspended in particularly cold or particularly warm baths, with their eyes and ears covered to block out other sensations. Other forms of hydrotherapy left patients in wet, close-fitted sheets for days that would shrink so tightly around their bodies and lock in body heat (Whitaker, 2002).

Figure 21: Peter Newell’s illustration of the Hatter.


Newell’s Hatter (Carroll, Newell, & Martin, 1901) seems to reflect these ideals, as his softly open mouth and slightly crossed eyes make him seem harmlessly fascinated. It is
difficult to imagine this Hatter, with his dull expression, moving very quickly or becoming wild and unruly. The calm focus of this image invites readers to look and wonder at the Hare’s watch along with the characters. The overall placidity conveyed in this illustration aligns with the outcomes of treatment for madness at the turn of the twentieth century—outcomes which subjected people to torturous conditions that left them incapable of thinking or moving in order to elicit a subdued state.

Figure 22: Hydrotherapy baths, Agnews State Hospital in Santa Clara, California.


Increasingly in the first half of the 1900s, a growing number of people were diagnosed and misdiagnosed with mental illnesses. Overcrowded facilities provided treatment in new physically brutal ways. People were whipped and treated as wild animals. Gwynedd Hudson’s Hatter, published in 1922 (Carroll & Hudson, 1922; Figure 23), has savage eyes, an impish smile, and sharper edges. With bold colors and images that cross over the frame,
Hudson’s Hatter is wilder than *Wonderland*’s Hatters before him, perhaps playing on fears that those with mental illness must be locked away in asylums to protect the public (Figure 24). Many patients were medically sterilized with the hope that by eliminating the procreation of those deemed ‘mad’, madness could be eliminated from the population. But, as views of this practice began to closely resemble the mission of Nazi Germany, the practice fell out of favor (Whitaker, 2002). In this vein, people suffering with madness are portrayed as different from others or different from ‘normal’ (Wahl, 1995).

![Figure 23: Gwynedd Hudson’s wild-looking Hatter.](image)

Interestingly, as demonstrated in Hudson’s illustration, Alice is out of readers’ view in the image. Perhaps these characters are on display, as mental health patients were frequently made to be public spectacles. Or perhaps, she is kept at a safe distance in keeping with the general consensus about separating and restraining people with mental illness. In this image, she appears to be the focus of the Hatter and Hare’s scrutiny, situating her as the ‘other.’

**Post-War Medical Experimentation and The Hatter**

After World War II, treatment of mental illness took another dark turn. The lobotomy was billed in medical reports as a fast fix for mental illness (Whitaker, 2002). This trend
seems to have once again brought a kind of calm harmlessness to portrayals of the mad. Initially, after the lobotomy procedure, patients were often reduced to “‘wax dummies’” (Whitaker, 2002). The caption for Figure 25, originally published in the article Turning the Mind Inside Out in the May 24, 1941 edition of the Saturday Evening Post reads, “Dr. Walter Freeman, left, and Dr. James W. Watts study an X ray before a psychosurgical operation. Psychosurgery is cutting into the brain to form new patterns and rid a patient of delusions, obsessions, nervous tensions and the like.” Slowly, patients recovered some independent functioning, but at best reached a point described as a simpleminded shamelessness. “Lobotomy was... seen as a ‘surgically induced childhood’” (Whitaker, 2002).

Figure 25: A detail image of two doctors preparing to perform a lobotomy.

Public domain. Image courtesy of Saturday Evening Post.

Mervyn Peake’s Hatter, originally published in 1946 (Carroll & Peake, 1946/1978; Figure 26), has a carefree air and childlike expression. His hat does not seem to be a hat at all and would not likely be sold as such. This Hatter’s hat is a creation for an indifferent wearer, one who is not concerned by conventions of fashion or function, reinforcing this
Hatter’s childlike nature. Alice is once again not pictured in the scene and readers can assume she is the focus of the Hatter’s gaze just outside the illustration frame, watching madness unfold in front of her.

Figure 26: Mervyn Peake’s child-like Hatter.


Leonard Weisgard’s Hatter of 1949 (Carroll & Weisgard, 1949; see Figure 27), like Peake’s (Carroll & Peake, 1946/1978) wears more than one hat, a nonsensical choice as three hats does not improve upon the function of a single hat. Weisgard’s frowning Hatter does not seem to be particularly happy that Alice is sitting at his table but, with both hands resting on his cheeks, he does not appear to be interested in taking action to change the circumstance.
Psychedelic Treatments and Dropping Out: The Hatter Becomes Homeless

Once pharmaceuticals took over treatment of mental illness after the 1950s, patients were locked inside their own bodies, receiving high doses of “antipsychotic” drugs (Figure 28), often worsening conditions and making relapse more frequent (Whitaker, 2002). Around that time, there was a cultural shift from asylum care to community care (Whitaker, 2002), causing an influx in homelessness of those deemed ‘mad’. The advertisement reinforces the idea that madness is a spectacle, as the giant eye stares widely at the combative man. It is difficult to tell for whom in this image Thorazine is meant.
Figure 28: An advertisement for Thorazine published around 1962. Public domain. Image courtesy of Smith, Kline, & French Laboratories.

Tove Jansson’s Hatter, published in 1966 (Carroll & Jansson, 1966/1977), carries a casual tone, with slouched postures and hanging lines (see Carroll & Jansson, 1966/1977, page 63. The depicted perspective situates readers at the table with the characters, further contributing to the informal mood of this image. As the Hatter looks to his right, the Hare looks at the Hatter, and the Dormouse at the center of the image has his eyes closed, a viewers’ eye wanders around this image with no clear focal point. This Hatter does not readily show signs of ‘madness’. But, on closer examination, there is an association—madness and homelessness often coexist. Jansson’s artistic style seems to reinforce the
Hatter’s potential for vagrancy. This Hatter also bears resemblance to one of Jansson’s own literary characters, Snufkin, who she describes as a “vagabond” (Jansson, 1946/1959, no page).

In the late 1960s, drug treatment for mental illness was quickly rising, producing an image of madness based on a “drug-induced deficiency in dopamine” (Whitaker, 2002, p. 164) According to Robert Whitaker, the traits often associated with madness are due, in large part, to the effects of the drugs used to treat the condition, not the condition itself (2002). This turn in treatment seems to associate with psychedelic effects of other drugs in the 60s, giving images of the Hatter a bizarre not-quite-human quality, as seen here in Ralph Steadman’s illustration published in 1967 (Carroll & Steadman, 1967/1986, no page number). This Hatter has a lumpy face shape, pipe-like open mouth, groovy but defective glasses, and a hat tag that reads “CAN YOU COME BACK NEXT WEEK”. The appearance of the chapter title, the shape of the tree’s leaves, its trunk growing through the center of this asymmetrical table, and even the limited table setting contradict established visual and narrative conventions of Wonderland to that point. Alice’s posture also reinforces counter-culture movements of the time, as she slouches low at the head of the table, scowling at elder characters. The entire scene is at once conventional and anti-establishment, a kind of social madness.

Salvador Dalí’s (Carroll & Dalí, 1969/2015) surreal illustration for the Tea-Party (see Carroll & Dalí, 1969/2015, page 59) communicates its own kind of madness with images that clearly have layers of meaning not strictly signified. The clock central to the image bears resemblance to Steadman’s table (Carroll & Steadman, 1967/1986) with a tree growing through the center and Dalí’s own The Persistence of Memory (1931) in the melting clock face. Gillian Beer (2011) suggests because Time does not move for the Hatter (he states it is always 6 o’clock, the time shown on Dalí’s clock), the characters move around the table, like the hands of the clock in order to progress. A closer look at this clock reveals cups, saucers,
and a teapot on the clock’s flatter surfaces. Those familiar with Dali’s work may recognize another self-reference from Landscape of a Girl Skipping Rope (1936). This girl recurs in each of Dali’s illustrations of Wonderland (Carroll & Dali, 1969/2015). The butterflies at the top of the tree hint at a release after metamorphosis and could link to Alice’s own transformation as she stands up and rejects the madness of the scene by walking away from the characters at the close of the chapter. The large skeleton key in the same vivid color as the tree seems to be tethered to the branches, perhaps signifying a scene at the end of the chapter in which Alice finds a door in a tree leading her back to the hall from Chapter 1, and again to the little locked door leading to the Queen’s garden. These abstracted concepts, even at the surface, can be read as a bizarre (and therefore mad) interpretation of Wonderland. Additionally, this work seems to have a face; the tree’s branches form eyes and bushy eyebrows, the clock resembles a downturned mouth. The page itself looks back at readers.

Materialism, Consumerism, and Profit: The Hatter of the MTV Generation

In the 1980s and 1990s, visible characteristics of the Hatter were solidified while paradoxically Wonderland was further stylistically destabilized. The Hatter often wore a jacket, contrasting vest, loose tie, top hat, and wild hair like Tenniel’s original Hatter, but his expressions ranged from benign to malicious, and his identity from young to old. Published in 1988, Anthony Browne’s (Carroll & Browne, 1988) edition conveys surrealist details different from Salvador Dali’s interpretations. Browne’s illustrations often invite readers to look closely and identify the covert details. In Browne’s illustration of the Hatter (see Carroll & Browne, 1988, page 65), while there is no Alice and no character eye engagement with the audience, the reader can quickly become engrossed in the details of the image. The illustration is visually calm but high on character energy and curiosity. The Hatter wears six stacked hats and a butterfly for a tie. His asymmetrical face is a curious
detail, as it was well-known Lewis Carroll was rather asymmetrical in appearance (Woolf, 2010). In this image, readers see faces in food, and items grouped together with one or two that do not belong. Browne also plays with proportions, placing a miniature hat and shoe on a plate with petit fours and cookies. Size is an important concept in Wonderland, as Alice herself becomes miniature and giant. These representations on a literal illustrative level make no sense. Therefore, they manifest madness in their own right. Perhaps this Hatter's madness is a product of his non-sequitur world, or perhaps the Hatter's own madness gave root to the madness in his surroundings.

Published in 1990, Greg Hildebrandt's (Carroll & Hildebrandt, 1990) vivid image of the Hatter character (see Carroll & Hildebrandt, 1990, no page number) utilizes an unusual perspective that seems to miniaturize the reader, making the characters large and in control. While this young Hatter does not abide by social norms of proper table manners and he seems to be discontent with the view of his watch, he does not appear to be ‘mad’. This visual treatment is consistent with trends in diagnosis of and remedy for many forms of ‘madness’ at the time. As messages from the National Alliance of the Mentally Ill (NAMI) took hold in the 1980s, and medications that work to normalize brain chemistry were developed, public view of mental illness began to shift to that of a biological disorder (Whitaker, 2002). As NAMI advocated for awareness of mental health issues and gained influence over perceptions and portrayals of mental illness changed (“About NAMI,” 2017). The 1990s brought the advent of new “safer” drugs to treat a wide range of mental illness, and patients and the public began to accept drug treatment as a necessary way of life, “gobbling up antidepressants, anti-anxiety agents, and any other number of psychotic medications” (Whitaker, 2002, p. 254).

Not surprisingly, new medications produced new waves of profits of for their makers, taking a dwindled market of less than $400 million in the late 1980s to $3.5 billion by 2000 (Whitaker 2002, p. 258-263) as trials of these medications moved from academic settings to
the for-profit sector. Personal spending on treatment for schizophrenia alone reached $17.6 billion in 2013 (Dean, 2017). But these new treatment drugs were not without detrimental effects. For some patients, side effects like excessive weight gain, obsessive compulsive disorder, and suicidal thoughts were seen almost immediately (Whitaker, 2002, p. 285). Sadly, these anecdotes often did not make it into the research reports. Questions about the long-term effects of these drugs remain to this day. The perspective given to readers of Hildebrandt’s Hatter image (Carroll & Hildebrandt, 1990), regardless of the illustrator’s intention, makes concrete the immense impact of mental health issues for individuals and society.

**Contemporary Portrayals of the Hatter in Dystopian Existence**

By the early 2000’s “despite increasing public awareness and discussion about mental illness and substance use disorders, stigma is still a major barrier to many people seeking treatment. New research has identified communication strategies that are effective in reducing stigma and increasing public support for policies and programs benefitting people with behavioral health conditions...They found that communication strategies using personal stories of individual experiences, struggles and successes, can be particularly effective” (“Effective Messages to Fight Stigma,” 2017).

Coinciding with the pervasive stigma is a dangerous increase in opioid addiction, which is often connected to mental health, “A new study suggests that people with anxiety and depression are consuming a disproportionate share of prescription painkillers, a finding that could add a new wrinkle to the epidemic of opioid use in the United States. Researchers at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and the University of Michigan found that nearly 19 percent of the estimated 38.6 million people with those two most common mental health disorders received at least two prescriptions for opioids during a year. And more than half
the prescriptions for the powerful, highly addictive painkillers went to individuals in that group, the researchers asserted” (Bernstein, 2017, no page).

Rodney Matthews’ image from 2008 (Carroll & Matthews, 2008/2009; see pages 50 and 51) may hint at the unknown effects of drug treatment on the future with his dystopian science fiction influences. He uses a familiar arrangement for this scene, with Alice at the far end of the long table and the Hare, Dormouse, and Hatter sitting in a row. But this illustration has many other characters who act as spectators of the scene. This use of gaze exemplifies the conveyance of a sense of surveillance often present in dystopian images. Abundant sharp details keep the reader’s gaze moving all over the page, mocking the actions of a paranoid spectator. There is so much to see. The bugs in the forefront, the house in the background, and the tree above Alice’s shoulder all have the potential to watch what is happening. Even the cream pitcher and the Hatter’s teapot have faces. The image of the Hatter himself is dehumanized with his wild black hair, pointed ears, a long, hooked nose, and warts, classic characteristics of the wicked. He seems to be chained to the watch on the table, rather than the watch fastened to the Hatter.

Camille Rose Garcia’s illustrations of 2010 (Carroll & Garcia, 2010) offer an interesting contrast and portrayal of contemporary madness (see Carroll & Garcia, 2010, page 82). Although Garcia’s images for this scene are quite similar in content and composition to Sir John Tenniel’s images of 1865 (as they often are throughout her edition of the book), they are wildly different in artistic style as Garcia appropriates Mexican folk art in her interpretation. Garcia’s work furthers dystopian themes of dark madness, speaking to her life experiences “growing up in the shadow of Disneyland”, where just outside of Disney’s idealized grounds, Garcia experienced “adolescent alienation, social marginalization, and destructive indulgences” (McGee in Garcia, 2005, p. 9). She is quoted as saying, “‘everyone I knew was either a thief or a drug addict’” (McGee in Garcia, 2005, p.10). Garcia’s Hatter has
darkened eyes, a sharp nose, thin furled lips, feral hair, spidery hands, and a pallid complexion. The bat sleeping in a teacup in the foreground is another sign of darkness.

Garcia’s (Carroll & Garcia, 2010) illustrations utilize many of Tenniel’s (1865/1866) compositions, making the differences in artistic style and social message all the more apparent. Garcia’s Hatter illustrations offer a tribute to the original with adaptations featuring Day of the Dead folk art styles (“Day of the Dead Art,” 2017). Garcia’s work represents a globalized, highly-specific cultural portrayal of the Hatter which blends themes of death with artistic elements from anime (large eyes) and graffiti art (splashes and drips).

In 2012, Yayoi Kusama (Carroll & Kusama, 2012) represents the Hatter with a bright, striped, and rather feminine bowler hat (see Carroll & Kusama, 2012, pages 92 and 93). Unlike any representation of this character published before it, Kusama uses just two colors in an intricately arranged pattern, on a two-color background to suggest the character’s presence. She uses dots, polygons, and stripes, familiar shapes in unfamiliar ways to portray this standard character’s image in a non-standard manner. The irregular circles in contrasting yellow tones in the background again convey a paradoxical sense of random regularity, as readers see familiar shapes and colors without a systematized arrangement. This image suggests it only takes a hat to be ‘mad,’ just as it now only takes a hat to form an identity (Schneider, Griffin, & Anderson, 2014). Madness is no longer an atypical condition; this hat could be worn by anyone. It also suggests a disembodied portrayal of the individual which can reflect our move into the digital age of anonymity.

Discussion

Over the last 150 years, the Hatter’s depiction seems to shift from one extreme to the other, from lighthearted curiosity to sinister danger. The trends in illustration also capture connections to cultural shifts in understanding and treating mental illnesses. With Kusama’s
(Carroll & Kusama, 2012) text as modern marker, it seems the Hatter character becomes an embodiment of artistic movements and cultural shifts in thinking about “madness.” As time has passed, the pendulum of portrayal seems to swing more quickly, with each illustrator balancing the last, contributing to popular views of mental illness or working to present images that speak against popular thinking of the time. These images also exemplify the various ways in which artists depict social histories of mental illness; madness may be young, old, wretch, idiot, menace, acquaintance, foe, friend, or even self. Over time, portrayals of madness in Wonderland have shifted readers’ perception from the detached to the familiar. When it only takes a hat to be mad, mental illness is close to everyone.
Anthropomorphization is a blatant and recurring theme in Wonderland, as Alice has many encounters with non-humans that appear, react, and interact in humanlike ways. For the purposes of this study, I operationally define anthropomorphization as instances in which the non-human possess human characteristics over their own natural tendencies. In Lewis Carroll and Sir John Tenniel’s time, Charles Darwin had recently held debates about the origins of man in Oxford, England (1860), making evidence of human/animal connections germane to Wonderland’s first readers. In Wonderland, the lines between human and animal are questioned in unusual ways as social interaction is dominated by non-human characters (Elick, 2015), curiously extending Darwinian ideas. Wonderland brought the natural order of the world into question and continues to present today’s readers with questions about what it means to be human.

In Wonderland, animals are given the upper hand, as they are generally rude and confrontational toward Alice, the human main character (Elick, 2015). They own the world she has entered, and she is merely a visitor. Social status is conveyed through conversation dictated by Lewis Carroll. Thanks to the work of illustrators of Wonderland over the last century and a half, the physical portrayals of non-human characters make these social interactions more complex, as often characters’ physical bodies do not match with Alice’s expectations for social interaction with them.

Within a framework of Lewis Carroll’s narrative, illustrators assign various appearances to characters in Wonderland. Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty & Baldwin, 2004) acknowledges
that the essence of the body is tied to the essence of the world, thereby linking the individual
physical body to the individual social experience of the world. Because existence and
experience are subjective, the body is central to and inseparable from existence and
experience of the world (Merleau-Ponty & Baldwin, 2004)

Alice’s experiences with anthropomorphized characters in Wonderland, and their
experiences with her, call to question established social structures at an individual level.
Readers may recognize this as a disruption to categorical ideas about the structure of the
natural world as well as Carroll’s narrative disturbs the Darwinistic hierarchy again and again
through its presentation of humanoid characters. Elick (2015) asks, “What if animals could
talk back to us? What if they do not need our help or, conversely, are not willing to be
helpful to us? What if they could become self-defining agents by means of intelligent,
forceful language?” (p. 23). Elick (2015) claims Wonderland is the first children’s book to
present such anthropomorphic “what if” questions, wherein animals do not answer to
humans.

Tenniel’s illustrations, through his guided interpretation of Carroll’s words, concretize
a humanoid continuum in Wonderland, as exemplified in his illustrations of characters like the
White Rabbit, the Caterpillar, and the playing card gardeners (see Figure 29 for an example of
the White Rabbit, dressed for work). Deeply rooted in questions about human identity and
the human environment, anthropomorphization in Wonderland has proven a playground for
other artists as well. No doubt, the unusual bodies Alice (and readers) encounter in
Wonderland contribute to the experience of this unusual world.
Figure 29: John Tenniel’s White Rabbit dressed for the courtroom.

Reprinted from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel, 1866, London: Macmillan. Public domain. Image courtesy University of South Florida, Tampa, Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection.

**A Purpose and Process of Collection and Curation**

For this project, I examined connections and breaks with tradition in *Wonderland* illustration that contribute to an evolution of meaning in the story. From my discoveries, I developed curation as a methodology and utilized it to author an exhibition of ideas and illustrations surrounding large shifts in *Wonderland* meaning. To summarize my research process, I provide Figure 14 and the following details. First, I identified 280 editions of *Wonderland* through a search of WorldCat, the collective world-wide library catalog. From that list, I identified 111 English-language and unabridged editions, as well as which libraries held these editions. I identified six libraries in the United States collectively holding most of the 111 editions for study (University of South Florida (Tampa), University of Florida, Syracuse University, San Francisco Public Library, University of Texas (Austin), and New York
University), then traveled to each library to view each edition, ensured they met my criteria for inclusion in this study, and collected my own digital scans of each book’s illustrations (a total of over 5700 illustrations).

I organized and studied all illustrations from the 111 unabridged editions of *Wonderland* identified for inclusion in this study and accessible to me. See Figure 11 for a birds-eye view of the chart of illustrations collected for this study, organized chronologically by illustrator in columns and by chapter in row blocks. I systematically and iteratively recorded my observations and questions about each of the more than 5700 illustrations in my research collection using a study template I created for this project based on themes in *Wonderland* literature and principles of visual literacy. In my research chart, I left blank cells as place holders in the chronology for each edition not containing a scene. The resulting chart shows the presence and absence of illustrations by way of cells occupied by and empty of images. This chart set-up served to help me more clearly identify shifts in the incidence of representation of the scenes.

Through this iterative study, I made observations about the collection as a whole and identified my own themes from the illustrations. I quickly saw that humanoid characters were abundant and varied in the second half of *Wonderland*. I isolated illustrations of these characters in a separate chart for study and recognizing that only one edition in the 111 lacked images of anthropomorphization (i.e., Marie Laurencin’s, 1930 edition). Laurencin’s sparse and sophisticated painterly images portray delicate human figures and only one animal with no signs of humanism, the puppy at the end of Chapter 4.

Within the other 110 editions, artists’ representations of humanoids varied. Prominent examples included the White Rabbit, the Caterpillar, and the Cheshire Cat as individualized animal characters with varied human traits (e.g., possessing pocket watches, smoking, speaking the English language, walking upright). As I copied illustrations of
humanoid characters from my full chart of over 5700 illustrations to my isolated humanoid illustration study chart, I recognized a need to further isolate anthropomorphized animals from anthropomorphized objects. Anthropomorphized animals and anthropomorphized objects differ largely by at least one aspect essential to the study of humanism: animals are alive before anthropomorphization while objects are brought to life through the transformation. In the illustrations of Wonderland, I saw subtle and blatant physical attributes assigned by illustrators and by the text that make an object also like a human. Only 8 of the 111 editions (7%) do not contain illustrations of anthropomorphized objects.

I realized I had never given much thought to the anthropomorphized objects in the story. In particular, the playing card characters are abundant and varied in their bodily forms. Across the 111 Wonderland editions I studied, a total of 614 illustrations of card characters appear in 101 editions. Charles Robinson (1907) includes 23 illustrations of card characters, the most in the history of the book. Fifteen editions contain at least a dozen illustrations of card characters, and 54 editions contain at least 5 illustrations of card characters. This trend is not surprising, as John Tenniel includes card characters in his frontispiece illustration and Carroll’s text directs readers to look at the King in the frontispiece (i.e., “The judge, by the way, was the King; and as he wore his crown over the wig, (look at the frontispiece if you want to see how he did it,) he did not look at all comfortable, and it was certainly not becoming.” Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, p. 163). In 54 of the 101 editions containing card characters, illustrators include them in the frontispiece image, front cover end pages, or in another image placed before the start of the story. Additionally, card characters appear in 9 cover illustrations, and in both the front matter and the cover illustration in 4 editions.
In addition to their prominence in illustration, I identified the importance of the card characters to the successful resolution of the story, as it is Alice’s ultimate rejection of the card people as “nothing but a pack of cards” that restores her to the waking world.

Upon closer examination, the humanoid card characters and the variety of illustrative portrayals of these characters over time conveys messages about physical bodies and social status. While the Queen of Hearts is a prominent character in Wonderland, she appears mostly human in many editions. The King of Hearts often receives fewer human liberties. The card gardeners, soldiers, and royal children, receive a wide range of human physical attributes (e.g., card characters with human heads and cardboard bodies, card characters with human bodies wearing playing cards). Because of my initial unfamiliarity with the theoretical underpinnings of anthropomorphization, combined with very little background thinking about these card characters and how they function in the story, this part of my study was exploratory in nature. Questions pursued in the study of post-humanism became essential to my exploration. In the discussion that follows, I address questions about how illustrations in Wonderland present a variety of ideas about what it takes to be human.

**Portrayals of Humanism in Wonderland**

In an insightful discussion of the materiality of bodies in children’s literature, Nikolajeva (2016) poses a question that provides a complex and useful lens for examining humanoids in Wonderland: What does it take to be human in a post-human world? Post-human studies seek to question humanism as an ideology that gives humans supremacy over all other life and things by exploring human connections with non-humans and with real and man-made environments (Nikolajeva, 2016). Clearly, post-humanism existed before the term was coined and Wonderland provides a long-standing context for exploring Nikolajeva’s question.
Specifically, the first incidence of a humanoid object to occur in the 1865/1866 Carroll/Tenniel edition is Tenniel’s third illustration for Chapter 1, wherein Alice is pictured holding a bottle with a tag that reads “DRINK ME” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, Figure 9). On first glance, this may not read as an anthropomorphic image, but the bottle’s label makes reference to itself in the first person and the implied subject pronoun is you, “You drink me.” The bottle, a typically inanimate object, gives instructions to a human girl— and, because of Carroll’s words and the building momentum of the story, she follows them every time. This situation opens doors to questions about who controls what and what controls who, as the contents of the Drink Me bottle cause Alice to grow quite large, rapidly and drastically altering her relationship with her environment.

The bottle seems to know its contents are of use to Alice, just as the “EAT ME” cake later in the same chapter alters her size again to help her pass through the door into the garden of Wonderland. The human attributes and relationships of nonhumans are a driving force in the Wonderland story, as evidenced by their prominence in Carroll’s text as well as illustrator’s works. However, the most prevalent and abundant example of humanoid objects in Wonderland are the playing card characters.

Humanoid Playing Cards

Playing cards in the waking world are generally made of coated cardboard, mass-produced, and easily replaced. Carroll’s choice of playing cards to represent the gardeners, soldiers, courtiers, royal children, and Queen and King of Hearts of Wonderland implies they, too, may be disposable. Cards are typically used to play games that require knowledge, skill, strategy, and practice. These card characters seem to be part of the game of wit and survival Alice is playing, a game that goes on to take the shape of chess in Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There (Carroll & Tenniel, 1871). These card characters abound in the
latter half of the *Wonderland* story, as Alice makes her way into the Queen’s garden and eventually into the Queen’s courtroom.

The choice of playing cards to represent these characters also carries a referent social structure, as card suits signify a ranking and each number or face card carries a hierarchical value. The physicality and social status given to card characters by Carroll’s narrative, and accompanied by the illustrators’ images of the characters over time, pushes questions of natural order and extends human relationships with things, beyond Darwin’s conversation about the human relationship to other lifeforms. In the story, Alice first encounters humanoid playing cards at the beginning of Chapter 8, as she comes upon three of them in the Queen’s garden, painting white roses red. Lewis Carroll’s manuscript illustration shows the cards with arms and legs at their corners and without heads, in favor of a large mouth on Seven’s card face, making eyes of the top two spades and a nose of the single spade (Carroll, 1864, See Figure 30). But, rather steadily across the history of *Wonderland* illustration, card gardeners tend to possess humanoid qualities set by John Tenniel’s first published illustrations: flat, rectangular cardboard bodies and three-dimensional human heads, arms, and legs (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866; See Figure 31).
Figure 30: Lewis Carroll’s manuscript illustration of card characters.


Figure 31: John Tenniel’s illustration of the card gardeners.

Reprinted from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel, 1866, London: Macmillan. Public domain. Image courtesy University of South Florida, Tampa, Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection.
At first glance, the gardeners are distinguishable only by their numbers, but a closer look reveals slight differences in their facial features (their noses in particular) and unique facial expressions. They are individuals. Their heads are covered with cloth hoods with prominent collars, fixed under their chins. With their soft, pointed shoes, these gardeners resemble elves. After observing them for a moment, Alice initiates a conversation:

‘Would you tell me,’ said Alice, a little timidly, ‘why you are painting those roses?’ Five and Seven said nothing, but looked at Two. Two began in a low voice, ‘Why the fact is, you see, Miss, this here ought to have been a red rose-tree, and we put a white one in by mistake; and if the Queen was to find it out, we should all have our heads cut off, you know. So you see, Miss, we’re doing our best, afore she comes, to—’ At this moment Five, who had been anxiously looking across the garden, called out ‘The Queen! The Queen!’ and the three gardeners instantly threw themselves flat upon their faces. There was a sound of many footsteps, and Alice looked round, eager to see the Queen.

First came ten soldiers carrying clubs; these were all shaped like the three gardeners, oblong and flat, with their hands and feet at the corners: next the ten courtiers; these were ornamented all over with diamonds, and walked two and two, as the soldiers did. After these came the royal children; there were ten of them, and the little dears came jumping merrily along hand in hand, in couples: they were all ornamented with hearts. Next came the guests, mostly Kings and Queens, and among them Alice recognised [sic] the White Rabbit: it was talking in a hurried nervous manner, smiling at everything that was said, and went by without noticing her. Then followed the Knave of Hearts, carrying the King’s crown on a crimson velvet cushion; and, last of all this grand procession, came THE KING AND QUEEN OF HEARTS....
When the procession came opposite to Alice, they all stopped and looked at her, and the Queen said severely ‘Who is this?’ She said it to the Knave of Hearts, who only bowed and smiled in reply.

‘Idiot!’ said the Queen, tossing her head impatiently; and, turning to Alice, she went on, ‘What’s your name, child?’

‘My name is Alice, so please your Majesty,’ said Alice very politely; but she added, to herself, ‘Why, they’re only a pack of cards, after all. I needn’t be afraid of them!’

This passage provides details such as bodily shape and card suit for illustrators to incorporate or ignore in their portrayal of card characters. This passage plants a seed of doubt about the reality of Alice’s experience, as she thinks they are “only a pack of cards” and no cause for fear. These gardeners clearly feel threatened by the Queen’s presence and her potential for sentencing any and all of them death at any time. But as the story continues, and as it has been illustrated over time, the gardeners’ status has become more and less human, bringing danger variously closer to and further from Alice and human readers. Bessie Gutmann (Carroll & Gutmann, 1907, see Figure 32) shows the card gardeners with no heads. The caption, “You shan’t be beheaded” is almost laughable, as it seems impossible to behead something without a head.

Later illustrations in Gutmann’s edition reveal the soldiers and royalty also have no heads (See Figure 33). The Queen and King are cards with limbs. Their faces appear on their card bodies. Combined with the image of Alice in this edition, as a young girl dressed in all white, Gutmann’s illustrations seem to scrub Wonderland of any potential for danger. However, safety in this dream world is short lived, as illustrations by Charles Pears and Thomas Robinson in 1908 (Carroll, Pears, & Robinson, 1908) are the first to show the gardeners with human bodies wearing sandwich board card costumes (see Figure 34). Live human bodies make beheading more difficult and certainly messier and make the danger of
the Queen’s orders more real for Alice. Edwin John Prittie’s (Carroll, Tenniel, & Prittie, 1923) illustrations show the card gardeners as small enough to sit on branches to paint the roses (See Figure 35).

![Image](image.png)

Figure 32: Bessie Gutmann’s card gardeners have no heads.


They, too, have card bodies and their small size indicates they may be a kind of gardening gnome. In comparison, Ralph Steadman’s (Carroll & Steadman, 1967/1986) illustration of this scene (see Carroll & Steadman, 1967/1986, no page) conveys protection to these gruff card-men from the Queen’s tyranny, as they are Union members. Their Union Cards situate these gardeners as adults, which may also help to deflect the danger of the Queen’s tyranny away from Alice, the child. Beheading humans or humanoids introduces the moral dilemma of taking a life that is not relevant when the Queen orders the beheading of cardboard.
Figure 33: Bessie Gutmann’s King and Queen of Hearts.


Figure 34: Charles Pears and Thomas Robinson’s card gardeners.

As Carroll’s narrative begins to establish the social hierarchy relative to physical status in the Wonderland world of cards, while illustrators’ vacillating choices for bodily portrayals of the card characters variously bring Alice (one of the few humans in the story) closer to then further from the dangers of Wonderland. In these examples, the dangers of Wonderland are real for a cardboard card. Cardboard is quite easy to cut, easy to behead, without great consideration for moral implications. Cardboard cards situate Alice as “other,” separate from the danger of beheading. Card characters with human bodies position Alice in the same category as the continuously-threatened cards. Human readers may feel that danger advance and recede, bringing about questions about real dangers versus dream situations.
The Queen and King of Hearts

The Queen of Hearts, as the character who orders death sentences on a whim, and the King of Hearts, who remains mostly in blithe compliance throughout, and the other card characters who are at the mercy of the Queen’s mood swings provide other illustrative examples of how danger in *Wonderland* appears to Alice and to readers. Without much direction about the Queen’s appearance from Carroll’s words, Tenniel’s second illustration in Chapter 8 establishes a strong physical and social appearance for the Queen. She is dressed in recognizable patterns of playing cards, but her overall shape is not like that of a card. Her face is sizable and round, as is her midsection. Her facial features are large and domineering, as she strongly asserts her authority (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, See Figure 36). A human queen ordering a beheading is much more dangerous than a cardboard card making orders. Inherent in a two-dimensional deck of playing cards, face cards have faces with human likeness and number cards typically have no faces, reinforcing the hierarchy in *Wonderland*. 
However, in *Wonderland*, face cards become more like humans and number cards get faces and voices. In fact, Bridgeman's (Carroll, Bridgeman, & Copeland, 1893) title page illustrates this transformation as the Queen comes to life, lifting off of her card backdrop into the three-dimensional world (See Figure 37). According to her status as a playing card and a social symbol, the Queen of Hearts should be a loving, motherly type. Instead, in *Wonderland*, she is a tyrant, taking every opportunity to order another beheading. Her inherent social position and character attributes in the deck of cards do not mirror her actions in the story. Several illustrators have brought the Queen to life on the page as a version of a card queen.
Gertrude Kay (Carroll & Kay, 1923) illustrates the Queen and King with their blue-lined, white faces look as if they have been cut out from a deck of playing cards (Figure 38) and animated.

Figure 37: L.J. Bridgeman’s title page illustration.

The Queen’s treatment of the other card characters implies she may have forgotten she is ultimately (at least in the waking world) made of the same stuff. The Queen is entirely indifferent to physical or social status when making her orders, as she is clearly Takes the upper hand in social situations. Philip Gough (Carroll & Gough, 1949) takes the Queen’s aggression to a new level with a mouth bordered in teeth that look like they were made to tear flesh (See Carroll & Gough, 1949, page 89). Gough’s Queen foreshadows Carina Garland’s (2008) insightful discussion of female aggression and the Queen as “vagina dentata” (p. 25) (literally “vagina with teeth”). While she holds a delicate flower in one hand, Gough’s Queen points aggressively with the other, knits her eyebrows, and emphatically says “And who are these?”
Gough’s King (Carroll & Gough, 1949) stands in the background, not surprisingly, he is a “Suicide King” (nicknamed so because he appears to hold a knife to his head; “The Origin of the ‘Suicide King,’” 2017). Garland builds on Barbara Creed’s work in The Monstrous Feminine to address the aggressive, destructive tendencies of the Queen of Hearts character, threatening to destroy a Wonderland world wherein the majority of characters (object, animal, and human) are males.

In Tenniel’s (1865/1866) second illustration for Chapter 8, the King of Hearts clearly commands less power than the Queen (See Figure 36). While his overall shape suggests a human, the King flattened likeness stands in the background while the rounded Queen stands in the foreground. His hair, hat shape, beard, and clothing convey details that tie this King to all of the kings of hearts in decks of cards everywhere, including those standing behind him in the scene.

Most illustrators follow Tenniel’s lead in their portrayal of the King character as a less human character than the Queen. A look at Harry Rountree’s (Carroll & Rountree, 1901) illustration of this scene (Figure 39) makes the King’s social inequities even more physically obvious than Tenniel’s King, as he portrays the King as a card and the Queen as a human. Rountree depicted the angry, domineering Queen in three-dimensional color while another Suicide King stands within the bounds of a flat piece of cardboard. Rountree’s King (Carroll & Rountree, 1901) is unusual in the history of this Kings’ image in that he does not have useful limbs. His entire body is contained within the perimeter of the card’s face, taking his physical limitations of power to the extreme. He is held captive by his materiality. While the King is able to gain a bit more ground in other scenes by other illustrators over time, he very rarely reaches a position of power in the Queen’s presence in illustration.
The King’s secondary social position is set by Carroll’s words, as even he is a servant to the Queen. In one instance in which she shouts, “Off with his head!” The King responds by saying, “I will fetch the executioner myself” and hurries off (Carroll, 1865/1866, p. 126). Subsequent illustrators mostly follow this lead. Counterexamples exist in just three illustrations over all editions. Philip Gough (Carroll & Gough, 1949), the same illustrator who introduced the vagina dentata Queen, chose to illustrate a point at which the King’s words command power in the courtroom of Chapter 12 (See Carroll & Gough, 1949, page 137). The King sits above the Knave of Hearts and the court’s judges, holding the rule book and
proclaiming, “‘All persons more than a mile high to leave the court!’” Of course, this rule is directed at Alice who has been growing to her human size while sitting in near the jury. Libico Maraja (Carroll & Maraja, 1957) seats the King on a pedestal above the Queen (see Carroll & Maraja, 1957, page 95) in the courtroom and Moritz Kennel (Carroll & Kennel, 1971) shows the King standing at the throne, holding his scepter in the air (see Carroll & Kennel, 1971, page 115). Otherwise, throughout the history of *Wonderland* illustration, the King, whether more human or more card, stands beside or behind the Queen.

**Humans/Animals/Objects**

In the interconnected nature of physical and social status in *Wonderland*, the card soldiers are made to act as arches in the croquet match of Chapter 8. Although Tenniel’s image of this scene is without the card characters, he shows Alice looking into the eyes of her flamingo/mallet with a hedgehog/croquet ball under her foot with little background detail (See Figure 40). The animals serve as living objects to facilitate the game, encouraging confusion around the natural order of the world. Card people who act as croquet arches take the scenario a step further to complicate human/animal/object relationships. The card soldiers are croquet objects with human qualities. These characters are simultaneously things (cards), performing as other things (croquet arches), and human-like, calling to question any sense of natural order readers may bring to the story.

Since Tenniel, many illustrators created elaborate landscape scenes with full backgrounds and many characters, including the card soldier croquet arches, the Queen and King of Hearts, the Knave, the White Rabbit, and many others present at the match. Peter Newell (Carroll, Newell, & Martin, 1901) is the first illustrator to include a landscape image of this scene (Figure 41), showing plainly these mixed-up relationships in a single illustration. Readers see humans dressed as cards, cards with some human qualities, and animate creatures made to act as objects. This image paradoxically establishes a complex continuum
of humanism while breaking down the delineations of human/animal/object relationships. Once again, natural order does not apply. Cues of physical and social status and signals of danger from the real world cannot be interpreted in the same way in *Wonderland*.

Figure 40: John Tenniel’s Alice trying to play croquet.

Reprinted from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel, 1866, London, UK: Macmillan. Public domain. Image courtesy University of South Florida, Tampa, Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection.

Another complex scene of mixed-up Darwinism appears as the book’s frontispiece in Tenniel’s edition (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866) See Figure 4), illustrating the court scene of Chapter 11 how the King wore his crown over his wig in an uncomfortable and unbecoming way. The Queen and King sit on their thrones, above the rest of the courtroom. She is portrayed with crossed arms and an equally cross expression. The King looks a bit surprised, yet typically diffident. Seemingly human guards of the club suit stand on either side of the thrones while the White Rabbit, dressed as the court herald, stands near the King. Nearest
the Queen, readers see the jury box filled with “creatures” holding their slates. Three bird-judges are seated on a bench at the floor level below the thrones, with the tarts in question on the table in front of them. The judge closest to the reader has the face of a parrot, a powdered wig, and human hands folded on the table in front of him. Standing in the foreground of this illustration is the Knave, in chains, with arms crossed, upturned nose, pursed lips, and an overall willful air. Soldiers stand on either side of him, one clearly belonging to the hearts suit.

During the nonsensical court proceedings, Alice grows to her natural size of the waking world, dwarfing the characters of the Wonderland world. When the Queen calls for the
sentence before the verdict, Alice loudly objects, “Stuff and nonsense!” To that, the Queen replies, “Hold your tongue!” When Alice refuses, the Queen once again emphatically shouts, “Off with her head!” Alice’s rejection of the scene is firmer this time as she, now standing, says, “Who cares for you? . . . You are nothing but a pack of cards!” At this, the cards rise up in the air and come raining down on her (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, See Figure 42). As Alice screams and tries to beat them away, she wakes up on the bank with her sister, where the story began, and the cards are just leaves falling in the breeze.

Figure 42: Tenniel’s card characters and animals return to their natural state.

Reprinted from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel, 1866, London, UK: Macmillan. Public domain. Image courtesy University of South Florida, Tampa, Children’s and Young Adult Special Collection.

Tenniel’s illustration shows Alice in a somewhat defensive position with her hands raised near her head and an aggravated expression (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, see Figure 42). The cards form an arch from the floor up over her head. While most are numbered suit
cards, several seem to have fading facial features. Three face cards are shown in little detail. Near her feet are the animals of the court scene, now without clothing, scurrying and scampering away, returning to more natural positions. The humanoid objects and animals are returning to their natural state. This is the moment in which Alice’s words and actions wake her from her dream. Once again, many artists follow Tenniel’s illustrative lead to conclude the story. In Chapter 12, 67 editions (about 60%) include at least one image of cards fluttering around Alice containing various states of humanoid/animal/object forms and transformations.

My iterative study of these illustrations reveals an unexpected yet distinct hierarchy: a humanoid object is on trial, while humanoid animals act as jurors, and three human characters serve as witnesses. Perhaps this set-up begins to restore logical, waking order in Alice’s dream. The Queen presides, and her physical body has taken many shapes, from human form to lively cardboard. This Wonderland courtroom begs questions about natural order, social power, and what is real. How does the meaning of Alice’s interaction with the cards change when they, too, are portrayed as humans instead of objects? Is Alice in real danger, or is this just a game? In the court scene beginning in Chapter 11, the Knave often appears more human in illustration than he has in previous scenes while the text in Chapter 12 reiterates his body is made “entirely of cardboard.”

The humanoid King and Queen are positioned to preside over the courtroom in Tenniel’s frontispiece. But this court lacks any real sense of law and order; no one is really in charge, impromptu rules change on the spot, and various parties make vague attempts to alleviate the chaos. Once I recognized the card character’s role in the disruption of natural and man-made order, it became increasingly apparent Alice is the one who is actually on trial. When the scene escalates, Alice receives the sentence of execution, not the Knave. The Knave is presented as a proxy to get the trial started. The Hatter, the Duchess’s Cook,
the Duchess (she is in jail at the time of the trial) and Alice are the only consistently human characters throughout Carroll’s story and all illustrators’ images. The Hatter, the Cook, and Alice are the three witnesses in the trial. The Hatter’s testimony is about tea, the Cook’s is about pepper, and Alice’s does not materialize into anything resembling a testimony. The court proceedings spiral out of control and order is restored only when Alice takes charge and rejects the dream. Gilian Beer claims, “we can give thanks for Alice, who reads and interprets against the grain of the court proceedings” (Beer, 2016, p. 200). Greg Hildebrandt’s (Carroll & Hildebrandt, 1990) Alice makes this fact clear (see Carroll & Hildebrandt, 1990, no page), as he shows a relatively large Alice who points scoldingly at the King while holding the Ace of Hearts. This illustrative choice suggests it is Alice who holds the upper hand in this game. In a modern context, Alice’s Ace outranks the King and the Queen.

Perhaps the lines of natural order must be blurred for Alice to see she has the power to regain control. *Wonderland* is a metaphor for growing up and Alice’s encounters help her develop the skill and knowledge necessary to control her fate. She manages to navigate the changes in her body and her environment. She is able to restore natural physical and social order through her words. *Wonderland* provides Alice practice for being an adult. By proxy, readers gain this experience as well. Alice is able to test her strategies for dealing with strange situations in a dream world of *Wonderland*, as children do (Helle-Valle & Binder, 2009). Alice escapes the dream by restoring natural and social order with her rejection of the card characters as “nothing but a pack of cards.” So, it is not the Knave who is on trial at all, but Alice herself. The trial in *Wonderland* can be viewed as a dream metaphor for the trials of life. At the close of Alice’s dream and a signal of her transition to the waking world and restoration of natural order, the card people transform from humanoid back to object.
"Nothing But A Pack of Cards"

The conclusion of Alice’s dream has personal significance to me. While I did not read Carroll’s full text until I was older, I watched the Disney animated version of the story as a child so frequently and intensely that I had memorized virtually every word and lyric. It was not until I followed my curiosity about the card characters during this study that I connected Alice’s actions in this scene to a situation from my childhood. I had a recurring nightmare in which a nameless, faceless being chased me. Each time I dreamt it, I woke up in a panic until I realized I was alone in my room, safe in my house. After many occurrences of this intense dream, and the experience of innumerable viewings of Alice in Wonderland, I recall having the idea to take control of my dream by stopping, turning to my pursuer, and rejecting the image in the dream. Just as Alice rises up and emphatically states, “YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A PACK OF CARDS!” I followed her lead. Though I am sure I chose my words differently, these actions ended my dream for good. Alice, faced with the climax of a tortuous and potentially terrifying situation finds her voice just in time and returns to her safe and familiar surroundings, and she likely taught me to do the same.

Alice and I both successfully rejoined the waking world, out of the dream unscathed and a bit wiser for the adventure. I translated Alice’s experiences in Wonderland to my own situation, further blurring the lines between the real and unreal.

The anthropomorphism in Wonderland across time and talent shows worlds of possibilities in what it may mean to be “real,” leading to the personalization of the question, “Who are you?” Whether my life became a part of the story or the story became a part of my life is easily debated. In a sense, I became like Alice by utilizing her methods to solve my problems, rejecting a dreamworld in favor of the logic and order of the waking world. The reciprocity of the reader/book relationship is particularly complicated in a story with the longevity and prevalence of Wonderland. No person alive today existed before Wonderland
and the story’s continuous publication ensures the story was always available with fresh illustration to present-day readers. In the following chapter, I discuss a possibility that the reader has been pulled into *Wonderland* over time as the book itself has gained perspective and authority to make demands of the reader and ultimately make the reader the main character of the book. My experience and my study of *Wonderland* illustrations provides evidence of a changing relationship between readers and texts.
CHAPTER SEVEN: READERS IN WONDERLAND: SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES AND THE RETURN OF THE READERS’ GAZE

Over the last century and a half, *Wonderland* illustrators have created distinct visual images of Lewis Carroll’s words. In doing so, they have shifted readers’ perspectives on the characters and eventually on the book itself. Illustrated books require readers to gaze at the artwork in combination with the words to comprehend meaning.

In the art world, the concept of *gaze* communicates thoughts and feelings and elicits questions with deep meanings about the exchange of subjectivity and objectivity between who or what is doing the looking and who or what is being looked at. *Gaze* is a concept for examining perspective and authority. Applied as a lens for study of illustrations, gaze provides evidence of a changing relationship between *Wonderland* and its readers over time. Some illustrators stay true to the text, using Carroll’s language to dictate the images. Some illustrators move from Carroll’s literal descriptions of scenes, attending rather to figurative interpretations and connotative meanings (Barthes, 1977). In this chapter, I alternately address two aspects of gaze, perspective and authority, to demonstrate the ways in which relationships between *Wonderland* reader, author, and illustrator have changed since Carroll first recorded the story.

Through the hands and minds of their artists, illustrations of *Wonderland* constitute a conversation of sorts between illustrators and readers since 1865. Below, I describe the ways in which different illustrators created a space for engagement with Alice, with other characters, and with pages of the book through the visual information they provided. I came
to identify a shift in perspective as I iteratively studied a collection of over 5700 illustrations published in *Wonderland* editions of the last 150 years.

**A Purpose and Process of Collection and Curation**

In this project, I examined connections and breaks with tradition in *Wonderland* illustration that contribute to an evolution of meaning in the story. From my discoveries, I developed curation as a methodology and utilized it to author an exhibition of ideas and illustrations surrounding large shifts in *Wonderland* meaning. To summarize my research process, I provide Figure 14 and the following details. First, I identified 280 editions of *Wonderland* through a search of WorldCat, the collective world-wide library catalog. From that list, I identified 111 English-language and unabridged editions, as well as which libraries held these editions. I identified six libraries in the United States collectively holding most of the 111 editions for study (University of South Florida (Tampa), University of Florida, Syracuse University, San Francisco Public Library, University of Texas (Austin), and New York University), then traveled to each library to view each edition, ensured they met my criteria for inclusion in this study, and collected my own digital scans of each book’s illustrations (a total of over 5700 illustrations).

I organized and studied all illustrations from the 111 unabridged editions of *Wonderland* identified for inclusion in this study and accessible to me. See Figure 11 for a birds-eye view of the chart of illustrations collected for this study, organized chronologically by illustrator in columns and by chapter in row blocks. I systematically and iteratively recorded my observations and questions about each of the more than 5700 illustrations in my research collection using a study template I created for this project based on themes in *Wonderland* literature and principles of visual literacy. In my research chart, I left blank cells as place holders in the chronology for each edition not containing a scene. The resulting chart shows the presence and absence of illustrations by way of cells occupied by and empty
of images. This chart set-up served to help me more clearly identify shifts in the incidence of representation of the scenes.

Through this iterative study, I made observations about the collection as a whole and identified my own themes from the illustrations. As I examined the set of illustrations in forward chronological order I felt as if the pages of the book increasingly looked back at me. When I studied the set of illustrations in reverse-chronological order, I confirmed this observation, tracing back to the first instance of my eyes meeting those of a *Wonderland* character, Alice in the middle of Tenniel’s edition. Then, I isolated incidences of gaze cast toward the reader in a separate chart for further study. This chart confirmed my suspicions. Illustrations increasingly show a gaze directed toward the reader in *Wonderland* in overall frequency and quantity over time. This analysis led to another, related discovery. An unexpected shift in reader engagement with *Wonderland* occurs as the book itself looks outward and the reader becomes the subject of the books’ gaze. The reader is no longer the objectifying party in the relationship between author, illustrator, and reader as *Wonderland*’s lines of fantasy and reality blur further.

**A Brief Context for Gaze in Wonderland**

Lewis Carroll demonstrates an awareness of the reader’s perspective through the *Wonderland* narrative. In Chapter 1, he directs the reader to think about Alice’s actions and to consider them personally (“...Fancy curtsying as you’re falling through the air! Do you think you could manage it?”). Carroll’s words openly invite the reader to engage personally with the story, and he addresses readers directly several times during the story, telling readers to look at illustrations, sharing anecdotal asides, and providing explanatory information. But, what happens when *Wonderland* characters turn their gaze toward readers? My analysis of 150 years of *Wonderland* illustration reveals a variety of individual and collective ways in which characters engage visually with readers.
Since the Carroll/Tenniel collaboration first published in 1865, Alice has been aware of the reader. Tenniel’s illustrations of Alice address the reader through her gaze. Alice seems to look to readers once in Tenniel’s 1865 illustrations, at the midpoint of the story, near the end of Chapter 6 (See Figure 43). In this chapter, Alice dutifully rescues a baby from his careless caretaker, the Duchess, by carrying him with her as she exits the scene. While she holds the baby in her arms, he becomes a pig (pp. 87-88).

...There could be no doubt that it had a VERY turn-up nose, much more like a snout than a real nose; also its eyes were getting extremely small for a baby: altogether Alice did not like the look of the thing at all. `But perhaps it was only sobbing,’ she thought, and looked into its eyes again, to see if there were any tears. No, there were no tears. `If you’re going to turn into a pig, my dear,’ said Alice, seriously, `I’ll have nothing more to do with you. Mind now!’ The poor little thing sobbed again (or grunted, it was impossible to say which), and they went on for some while in silence.

Alice was just beginning to think to herself, `Now, what am I to do with this creature when I get it home?’ when it grunted again, so violently, that she looked down into its face in some alarm. This time there could be NO mistake about it: it was neither more nor less than a pig, and she felt that it would be quite absurd for her to carry it further.

So she set the little creature down, and felt quite relieved to see it trot away quietly into the wood. `If it had grown up,’ she said to herself, `it would have made a dreadfully ugly child: but it makes rather a handsome pig, I think.’ And she began thinking over other children she knew, who might do very well as pigs....

Tenniel’s Alice for this scene seems to look to the reader as if to ask for advice, or at least sympathy, echoing Carroll’s narrative. Her expression conveys a mix of surprise and
uncertainty. Carroll states Alice wonders what she will do with the creature when she gets home, echoing another of Elick’s (2015) many “what ifs” brought to mind by this story. Alice, a young girl wandering through a strange land who just witnessed reverse evolution, casts her gaze toward the reader, involving the reader personally with the situation. While this scene quite obviously suggests Darwinian ideas, it also suggests a reciprocal relationship between Alice and the reader through Tenniel’s illustration.

Figure 43: John Tenniel’s Alice at the end of Chapter 6.

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**Artists’ Develop Perspective and Authority Through Gaze**

Illustrators of Wonderland utilize ideas in Lewis Carroll’s text and their own artistic expressions to shift perspectives for characters and readers alike. Over time, minor characters also look out of the fictional world of Wonderland and into the eyes of readers
providing evidence of the story’s own evolution. Eventually, the book’s pages and other figures gain the authority to address the reader visually.

**Characters Look at the Reader**

In the book’s publication history, the first of many minor characters to engage with readers is Copeland and Bridgeman’s (Carroll, Bridgeman, & Copeland, 1893) illustration of a bird with a collared shirt and glasses, and an ape-like creature that may be a referential nod to Darwin’s debates (See Figure 44). But these creatures are not just presented to the reader; they engage visually. The bird and the ape cast their gaze out of the image toward the reader, each asserting their individual identity. The round frame brings focus to the page and the ape’s ear overlaps the frame’s line, bringing these characters into the reader’s space. To illustrate the significance of these aspects of this image, consider an alternative: if the bird and the ape were facing each other, these characters would not demonstrate an awareness of the reader or of a world outside the book. Their world would be contained within the pages of the book. With the characters positioned to look toward the reader, with the position of the illustration before the start of the story, it is almost as if they are looking out of a porthole to an audience so the story can begin, framing this edition of *Wonderland* as a performance.

Figure 44: Copeland & Bridgeman’s opening illustration.
Harry Rountree’s 1901 (Carroll & Rountree, 1901) edition presents another example of a character who looks out at readers: the Cheshire Cat near the close of chapter 6 (See Figure 45). He is shown as a relatively large, isolated head framed by white space with no setting details, giving him even greater visual prominence without context of this scene. His grin could be a laugh, a cackle, or even a hiss, a disposition more energetic than the accompanying text for this image states. The Cat is speaking to Alice in this passage, about his madness, her madness, and which path she should choose. As Rountree (Carroll & Rountree, 1901) has directed the Cat’s gaze toward readers, the subject of this conversation can shift as well. Casting gaze toward the reader asserts authority, and this Cat could just as easily be addressing the reader.

Figure 45: Harry Rountree’s Cheshire Cat.
Millicent Sowerby’s (Carroll & Sowerby, 1907) card soldiers of 1907 look at readers at the opening of Chapter 11 (See Carroll & Sowerby, 1907). This image is significant because this is the first instance of a humanoid object asserting itself to readers in Wonderland, and it seems to open the door for other objects’ identity development in the evolution of Wonderland.

Willy Pogany’s 1929 (Carroll & Pogany, 1929) illustrations give authority to a human character who, by appearances, previously had little. Pogany shows the Duchess’s cook in the courtroom of Chapter 11 (Carroll & Pogany, 1929), she stands large and looming over readers, giving her more power than the narrative bestows. While this minor character functions to work against constructions of social class in the narrative (she throws pots and pans at the Duchess in her kitchen in Chapter 6), Pogany’s image of the Cook puts the reader in a particularly vulnerable position. Cook is clearly looking down at the reader, the reader who looks back at the cook from a perspective very near the ground. The Cook’s foot and hips extend beyond the reaches of her frame, making the reader even smaller by comparison. Pepper flying from the shaker, combined with her intense stare, make the Cook look particularly angry. In this particular edition, other characters do not visually engage with readers; rather the reader is a spectator, situated to observe characters and action at eye level. The reader gains a new perspective of the courtroom scene from Pogany (Carroll & Pogany, 1929, p. 175). By placing minor characters in a position to engage with readers, these illustrators disrupt the social hierarchy put into place by Carroll’s narrative.

A noticeable upward trend in the incidence of characters looking at readers occurs between the 1940s and the 1970s. Before the 1940s, 19 of 45 editions (42%) included an image with a gaze directed at readers (6 of these editions (14%) include reprints of Tenniel’s Alice holding the pig baby). From the 1940s to 2015, 53 of 67 editions (about 79%) of editions
include at least one other illustration that engages with the reader (none of those directly printed from Tenniel’s works).

The 1960’s signals an overall shift in the book’s interactions with the reader. Tove Jansson’s edition originally published in 1966 (Carroll & Jansson, 1966/1977) marks an increase in the overall incidence of images that focus on the reader. One particularly interesting illustration in Jansson’s edition is an image of a large group of unnamed, unmentioned characters standing together who appear to be shouting something in the readers’ direction (see p. 42). Jansson includes ten images in which Wonderland characters look at the reader, four more than in any edition before it. Before Jansson, 7 of 64 editions (about 11%) included more than two images that show focus toward the reader. After Jansson, 26 of 48 (over 54%) of editions include more than two illustrations casting a gaze in the reader’s direction.

Pages Look at the Reader

Salvador Dalí’s (Carroll & Dalí, 1969/2015) image from Chapter 7 offers readers the opportunity to consider complex messages. Clusters of leaves form eyes, the tree trunk through the center of the clock/table forms a nose, and the melted clock forms a downturned mouth. The page as a whole seems to look back at readers, suggesting the scene centered on madness is looking for action, reaction, or interaction from the reader. This is the first incidence of illustrative elements working together to cast gaze toward readers. Dalí’s edition opens interpretation of the story and after Dalí, illustrators often shift focus to the reader as an integral subject in the story.

Characters place readers at the center of the action. Barry Moser’s 1982 (Carroll & Moser, 1982) edition is the first edition to illustratively exclude an Alice character in favor of placing the reader at the center of the action as the main character. In the cover illustration, the Hatter peers over his glasses, directly at the reader. This cover image not
only focuses strongly and intentionally on the reader from the start, but the Hatter’s expression reflects his stated feelings toward Alice as she walks upon his tea party in Chapter 7, placing readers in Alice’s role before the even open the book. In the text of Wonderland, when the reader is not given an omniscient perspective, the reader walks alongside Alice, hearing her thoughts and often seeing what she sees.

However, several illustrators have presented an alternate perspective. In exploring the concept of gaze as it relates to the Mad Tea Party scene, readers may assume they play the role of Alice when her likeness is absent from the scene, particularly when Wonderland’s characters cast their eyes in the reader’s direction. Many illustrators direct characters’ attention to the reader in one way or another throughout publication history, it is often Alice who looks toward the reader. But, in 1982, Barry Moser (Carroll & Moser, 1982) omitted an Alice likeness from the story in a major shift; characters throughout the book direct their focus toward the reader. This shift in perspective places the reader at the center of the story, as a stand-in for a traditional Alice figure. As Alice wrestles with finding her own identity in a world of constant flux, the reader as Alice takes on these same questions of personal identity development.

Readers gain an omniscient perspective. In the Down, Down, Down scene, a scene typically focused on Alice, Barry Moser’s (Carroll & Moser, 1982) black ink illustrations portray a well-shaped space lined with the items described by Carroll in the text. In the first illustration for this scene, Moser places the reader looking down the well. In his second illustration for this scene, rocks, a jar, and a kettle fall through the organized well, now lined with books and maps. The illustration places the reader at the center of the action, looking up the well as if the reader is falling. Moser (Carroll & Moser, 1982) places the reader in Alice’s position again and again, giving the characters and the story authority over the reader’s perspective of Wonderland.
Marketa Prachaticka (Carroll & Prachaticka, 1987) creates a different situation wherein readers are given a new perspective and new authority over the story. Her black pencil illustrations compress time and space, two important concepts in the story. Prachaticka flattens the movements from several moments into single illustrations, collapsing the time and space conveyed through Carroll’s nonlinear narrative. In the original Victorian context of Wonderland, readers would have expected stories to create links in a narrative chain, serving Aristotelian laws of causation and continuity to a satisfying conclusion (Meier, 1999). But, the Carrollian Narrative is different in rhythm and motive from the traditional Victorian narrative structure (Hollingsworth, 1999), and Prachaticka’s idiosyncratic style captures the essence of a nonlinear perspective. The Alice stories lack a firm and logical series of events, in favor of “discontinuities, absurdities, and whimsies” (Hollingsworth, 1999, p. 89).

Prachaticka’s (Carroll & Prachaticka, 1987) illustration of the Down, Down, Down scene shows two adjacent segments of the chapter on a single page: Two Alices, one White Rabbit, one deep hole, and a long tunnel. The reader is first situated above the scene, to look down at Alice, the White Rabbit and down the rabbit hole. In the second plane of the image, the reader is below Alice, looking up at a girl gliding down the deep tunnel. This play on perspective effectively reflects the omniscient point of view the narrator provides and the movement of the characters described in Carroll’s passage.

The turn of the twenty-first century brings new perspective and authority for Wonderland readers through illustration. In 1998, Abelardo Morrell created much of his illustrations from Tenniel’s illustrations (Carroll & Morrell, 1999); his creations present a book reborn. Morrell’s book seems to know it has a former life. Morrell’s illustrations are photographs of collaged three-dimensional scenes that contain a book. Presumably this is the book of Wonderland and Morrell’s Alice is the Alice from Tenniel’s book. In fact, all of
Morrell’s characters are portrayed through Tenniel’s illustrations of them. Morrell creates each of his images using 3-dimensional collages including cut-outs of Tenniel images and books with other props. For example, in his illustration for Chapter 7, Abelardo Morrell (Carroll & Morrell, 1998) uses portions of Tenniel’s images in ways and sequence similar to their original functions. Morrell’s reincarnation of Tenniel’s work conveys an awareness of a previous existence, serving to complexify the book’s identity through its layered meanings. Morrell’s (Carroll & Morrell, 1999) illustrations present a prominent self-awareness that *Wonderland* is both anchored to its printed likeness while simultaneously lifted from the page to trace its own life story. Readers see the book while the book sees itself.

Iassen Ghiuselev’s (Carroll & Ghiuselev, 2003) edition asserts itself to the reader in a new way, demanding readers’ attention and signifying an authoritative spin on anthropomorphization as the book takes on humanoid characteristics. It includes a bookmark with ribbon affixing to the spine a sign “READ ME,” an obvious spin on the “DRINK ME” bottle’s directions to Alice. But the directive “READ ME” further signals a significant shift in the relationship between reader and book. Whereas Alice is directed to “Drink Me” by the bottle on the table in Chapter 2, any reader by the nature of the reading experience follows directions given by the book’s marker. The contents of the DRINK ME bottle changes Alice’s size and perspective, just as the contents of the READ ME story can change the reader’s perspective through consumption of the book.

Additionally, Ghiuselev’s illustrations give the reader a nonlinear and multidimensional view which grants the reader an omniscient perspective and the power to see the past, present, and future in *Wonderland*. For example, in the first illustration for Chapter 8, readers see Alice at the edge of the Duchess’s open kitchen and at the end of the Hatter’s table. The Hatter is seated at the table and he is peeking through the curtains of the second-floor window (Carroll & Ghiuselev, 2003) While Alice seems unaware she is standing behind
herself, readers are given a perspective that allows them to see her likeness twice on the page. The Hatter at the table also seems unaware he is watching himself from above. These scenes are not concurrent in the text but seem to be running in parallel dimensions in Ghiuselev’s illustrations. While readers are granted power over the story through this unique multidimensional perspective, readers simultaneously follow the book’s command to READ ME. This shift in perspective and authority signals more than meets the eye, as the book itself now holds some blatant authority over the characters, the story, and the reader.

**A New Experience of Alice’s Presence**

Alice’s likeness is removed again from *Wonderland* by John Vernon Lord in 2009 (Carroll, Lord, & Goodacre, 2009) and Yayoi Kusama in 2012 (Carroll & Kusama, 2012). Lord (Carroll, Lord, & Goodacre, 2009) places the reader in Alice’s position, at the center of the action. In his illustration for Chapter 1, the reader looks down a neat and stable-looking Rabbit-hole shaded in soft pink with books, maps, and jars, cabinets, shelves, and drawers. The point of view granted by this illustration looks straight down, from what would be Alice’s vantage point in the scene. Readers never see an Alice from this illustrator, but her presence is made distinctly visible through the text in his edition, as her words and thoughts appear in blue ink throughout the black text of the story.

**The disembodied eye.** Yayoi Kusama’s (Carroll & Kusama, 2012) illustrations appear differently without an Alice. This edition offers few distinct characters in favor of an aural, psychedelic experience. For example, the Down scene is a series of three pages of dots, varied in organization, size, and color. The images fill their pages from edge to edge. At first look, these images seem an unnatural fit for illustrations of *Wonderland*. The illustrations have resemblant qualities to images from the fields of biology, mathematics, and astronomy. The first illustration with black dots of varying sizes ringed by white space could read as biological in nature, nuclei surrounded by membranes contained within a round cell.
The second illustration contains a long string of dots in no perceivable size pattern connected by a thread and laid in concentric circles, evoking mathematical ideas. Her third illustration resembles views of space through a telescope or satellite.

Kusama is known for her polka dot images in painting, sculpture, and more: “Their shapes and what they signify do not really matter. I paint polka dots... [to] return to the nature of the universe.” (“Kusama Happenings,” 2017). Upon examination, Kusama’s three illustrations are all closely related to nature. Nature is a significant theme of the story and pervades human thinking about the surrounding world. Kusama evokes fundamental ideas of nature and opens identity in new omnipresent ways through Alice’s universal quest, a dream framework, and “the nature of the universe.” Kusama places herself as the main character at the end of the book with a postscript: “‘I, Kusama, am the modern Alice in Wonderland’” (Carroll & Kusama, 2012).

Yayoi Kusama’s (Carroll & Kusama, 2012) edition directs the gaze of the book to readers in a different way— with pages filled with eyes, not connected to any particular character or any direct Wonderland scene. Rather, the pages themselves seem to set their gaze toward readers, contributing to a new layer of conceptual artistic meaning to the discussion of gaze in Wonderland. Kusama’s Wonderland (Carroll & Kusama, 2012) works beg the questions “What is looking at what?” or more likely, “Who is looking at who?” The book itself seems to observe the reader.

The disembodied eye is hard for the reader to ignore, especially in the quantities Kusama presents. Rather than confronting the reader with a gaze that can be returned to a character or object, the reader can only look back at more eyes. These eyes are not lifelike but flattened two-dimensional representations of the eye. The reader is the focus of the eye, but the reader is not permitted to return the gaze in a natural or social way. The reader is only met with other staring eyes.
Andrea D’Aquino’s (Carroll & D’Aquino, 2015) collaged works often layer a humanlike eye in a depiction of an object or idea. D’Aquino’s edition contains a total of 29 images with eyes and eye images cast toward the reader. From the start of this edition, readers see eyes. The opening end pages show a dark grey background with eyes of a heart looking toward the “eyes” of a spade looking out of the page. Gaze is set as a prominent theme from the beginning of this edition. Four collaged human eye images in the DRINK ME bottle look in various directions. Perhaps they are watching to learn if Alice (or perhaps the reader) will take a drink from the mysterious bottle. The four eyes are all different and signal more than one person, making the experience of this scene more public. D’Aquino’s collage technique further disembodies the eye, and depersonalizes the gaze directed toward the reader.

In the Hatter scene, D’Aquino’s seats the reader at the tea table, across from the March Hare, the Hatter, and Alice. These three characters have collaged human faces. The Hatter’s representation is of particular interest, as he has two faces, a cubist-style representation of two perspectives at once. One face looks in Alice’s general direction while the other looks in the reader’s general direction. A closer look at this illustration reveals human eyes in the teacups and a human head atop the teapot. A sculptural bust sits on the table facing the reader with a teacup atop his head. This whimsical illustration provides the reader curious ways to engage with the scene, ways that break down the typical relationship between reader, illustration, and story. The illustration seems to look for interaction with the reader, fundamentally changing the reader’s perspective and authority. D’Aquino (Carroll & D’Aquino, 2015) also uses flattened representations of the eye in similar ways to Kusama on several occasions in her edition.
Alice, Everywhere and Everyone

Foucault (1966/2001) describes a picture in which the depicted looks out at the viewer, “eyes catching one another’s glance, direct looks superimposing themselves upon one another as they cross” (p. 5). Eyes in Wonderland “force [the reader] to enter the picture, assign him [sic] a place at once to be privileged and inescapable...” (Foucault, 1966/2001, p. 5-6). Over time artists have chosen to exchange glances with the reader through more than just characters’ eyes. The Wonderland book itself has developed a gaze toward readers that seems to contribute to and reflect the embedment of Wonderland in worldwide culture. Illustrators’ presentation of an outward gaze provides an opportunity for the reader to be drawn into the story, to become involved in the character’s lives and in Alice’s dream. Wonderland returns readers to the nature of the universe by presenting questions about what it means to be human in a world of confusing circumstances and challenging scenarios. Illustrators carry and extend these questions of human existence through their own artistic styles, situated within their own times, and therefore reflecting individual and societal ideas.

In this instance, the author lives on (contrary to Barthes, 1967) through the constant reinvention of this deeply rooted story by illustrators and readers alike. Pivotal changes in engagement between author, illustrator, and reader in this story can be traced through time in an examination of varied illustrators’ interpretations of the author’s fixed set of words as they are conveyed to an ever-evolving audience. These editions I highlight seem to mark points in the evolution of the book itself, as it takes a closer look at readers. Have readers become a part of Wonderland, or has Wonderland become a part of readers’ worlds? My observations point to both relationships in a blurring line between Wonderland and the real world, as a shift in perspective and authority echoes through the changing gaze of Wonderland.
CHAPTER EIGHT: READING BETWEEN IMAGES AND TEXTS: CURATING WONDERLAND

In this project, I examined connections and breaks with tradition in Wonderland illustration that contribute to an evolution of meaning in the story. From my discoveries, I developed curation as a methodology and utilized it to author an exhibition of ideas and illustrations surrounding large shifts in Wonderland meaning. Through study of over 5700 Wonderland illustrations across 111 editions over 150 years, I saw evidence that the story provides an appealing, flexible fantasy framework for artistic interpretation. This observation came as no surprise, as I chose to study Wonderland because of its rich artistic interpretations, literary merits, and persistence and pervasion worldwide over the last century and a half.

My exploration of illustrations was based on the field of museum curation through seven action steps to curation suggested by Friis-Hansen (2001): collect, research, conceptualize, select, contextualize, arrange, and interpret. Based on well-established themes in Wonderland and principles of visual literacy I utilized these actions to study over 5700 illustrations and, in essence, perform a qualitative meta-analysis. My observations of the illustrations individually with my thinking about the illustrations collectively led me to discover new themes in the story across its images. By studying Wonderland illustrations chapter by chapter, edition by edition in a chronological fashion, I built an historical understanding of artists’ interpretations of each episode (i.e., illustrated scene) in Wonderland. Later, I studied Wonderland illustrations in a reverse chronological fashion,
edition by edition, and saw illustrators’ interpretations as related to the work of artists before them.

While I studied illustrations in a chronological fashion, several analysis sub-techniques emerged from what I saw. I treated chronology differently as I examined each theme I identified. In particular, I focused on three scenes from the story I recognized as individually useful to make connections between sociocultural ideas and Wonderland illustration over time. Specifically, I studied illustrations of Alice’s fall to Wonderland, visual portrayals of the Hatter character, and the identity and function of the playing card characters. Those three scenes collectively revealed a shift in the readers’ perspective and authority (through the artistic concept of gaze). My close look at gaze in Wonderland helped me come to understand a shift in the author/illustrator/reader relationship over time.

Multiple Analysis Techniques

To begin from the beginning, Alice’s fall down the rabbit hole (a scene often known as Down, Down, Down) represents not only her entry into the world of Wonderland, but it has been a source of psychoanalytical examination since Freud. Even though it was not originally a scene illustrated by John Tenniel, its details across time are relatively stable and offer some clues to understanding multiple perspectives on falling and Freud. When studying Down illustrations, I looked within each edition, then across editions, and then to sociocultural shifts in criticism of the scene across time. I examined how this one scene (the setting, the character, the theme), presented over and over, captures aspects of culture as impacted by diverse fields. Down is a timeline of intersections between illustration and culture.

Alice’s encounter with the Hatter character comes near the middle of the story. Variations in this character’s visual portrayal in illustration signal variations in sociocultural treatment of people with mental illness. My study of the Hatter was conducted through a
forward chronology of the evolution of one field of study as represented in the portrayal of a character. The Hatter presents a timeline of reflections on madness.

At the end of *Wonderland*, anthropomorphized playing card characters provide Alice’s exit from her dream. My study of the anthropomorphized card characters began with a timeline within the book, looking at the first instance of anthropomorphism and their significance in the plot as a point for further study. Then I isolated particular sets of these characters— the card gardeners, the Knave, the King, and the Queen of Hearts— to observe changes in their bodily appearance over time. Illustrations of each character suggested their characterizations are at once fixed and flexible. In other words, each of these characters maintained many physical and social characteristics of their cardboard counterparts while simultaneously displaying a wide variety of relationships with the physical and social worlds around them.

These various ways of studying a vast body of image speaks to the flexibility of curation as a methodology. Curation also afforded a lens for seeing other meta-ideas across the collection of illustrations.

In addition to findings about the *Wonderland* story in particular, I made observations relating this qualitative meta-analysis to studies I previously conducted using time-lapse photography (Persohn, 2015). In my time lapse study, I photographed my teaching at short intervals over an extended period of time to learn about my own qualitative habits in instruction. As I studied illustrations of *Wonderland*, I realized I had in essence created a different kind of time-lapse study, using available consecutive images of the story. The first aspect in common with both studies is the amount of visual data, several thousand images in each study, many of those images quite similar in composition. With the use of time-lapse photography, I found the technique useful for identifying overarching themes and patterns in qualitative data, the same purpose I undertook in studying *Wonderland* illustrations.
The three *Wonderland* scenes I describe in this document collectively revealed a shift in the readers’ perspective and authority (through the artistic concept of gaze). A close look at gaze in *Wonderland* helped me come to see a shift in the author/illustrator/reader relationship over time. The body of *Wonderland* illustrations reveals there is reciprocity in the illustrative process, as images printed alongside Carroll’s words over time reflect not only each artists’ personal context but serve as a reflection of readers’ contexts as well in an evolving relationship between author, illustrator, and reader.

**Reading Between Text and Illustration**

Reading between text and illustration over time is a complex and daunting process, particularly in the context of a story as pervasive as *Wonderland*. Illustrations in a book can work through many kinds of relationships with text (Sipe, 1998), conveying ideas reflective of their situated contexts. Iterative illustrations of a single text by a wide variety of illustrators evidence multiple interpretations. Those interpretations over time, when examined together, help to tell a bigger story of how the art of illustration is tied to changes in culture.

Langer poses a question that anchors art in culture: “What does art create?” (Langer, 1953, p. 10). She begins to respond to this question through a discussion of objects that embody feelings inseparable from themselves and the experience that produces those objects. If art “invariably reflects the political and sociocultural contexts in which it is made” (Sipe, 2011), art is a product of culture, perceived first within its own context. But, in the case of *Wonderland*, when artistic images and related narratives pervade several generations, their representations and perceptions evolve over time. These artistic interpretations layer meaning over time in illustrated classic literature, each edition drawing in influences of those images that came before.
Changing Interpretations of Classics

I have a new appreciation for the ways in which illustration shapes meaning within and across editions of a classic illustrated book. I offer a scenario in which one illustrator’s gaffe involving a significant character: The White Rabbit. He is a driving force in the story’s plot. He wears a waistcoat and looks at a pocket watch. His human characteristics spark Alice’s curiosity and she follows him down the Rabbit Hole into *Wonderland*. The original White Rabbit, drawn by Sir John Tenniel is well-proportioned, standing on two legs in a coat, vest, and cravat, holding an umbrella under his left arm and looking at a pocket watch in his right hand (See Figure 6). While an umbrella is a creature comfort, the watch indicates this rabbit has a schedule. The White Rabbit appears in 7 of Tenniel’s 24 illustrations with anthropomorphized animals, making him a fairly major character. Naturally, the White Rabbit is commonly illustrated character across editions. Many illustrators follow Tenniel’s lead and portray him in much the same way, confirming Carroll’s textual description of the character as well.

Moritz Kennel, whose *Wonderland* illustrations were published in 1971 (Carroll & Kennel, 1971), presents readers with puzzling visual circumstances. The White Rabbit is given a specified appearance at the start of the book (page 2) but that appearance is later confused when matched with the scene of a wholly different character. On page 69, the character who looks like the White Rabbit is dipping his pocket watch in his tea. According to Carroll’s text, the White Rabbit was not in attendance at the Mad Tea Party; this should be the March Hare. While it is possible this is an intentional confusion of identities, it reads as a glaring faux pas.

No matter which way this mix-up is examined, it creates confusion in the space between Carroll’s intentions for the story, the openness inherent to the text, and visual cues for readers. Readers of this edition may have been confused about the role of the Rabbit, as this illustrator must have been. Artists’ misinterpretations of the story contribute to ways in
which readers create mental images or “mind movies” during comprehension of the story, long after they have put the book down. Placing the Rabbit’s image in a different character’s context confuses identities for readers. It seems this illustrator passed his character confusion to readers, causing readers to either accept Kennell’s image of the Rabbit as both characters or mentally re-illustrate the characters to match their own interpretations of Carroll’s words. Acceptance of Kennell’s error creates confusion in the mind of the reader about the story. Rejection of the error by a savvy reader causes the reader to mentally picture a different likeness for at least one rabbit character. Regardless of how readers resolve Kennell’s images (Carroll & Kennel, 1971), a reciprocal and entwined relationship between illustrator as reader and reader as illustrator exists. This illustrator inadvertently rewrites part of the story for its readers.

**Author/Illustrator/Reader Interaction**

Iterative shifts in meanings of *Wonderland* speak to relational shifts in the author-illustrator-reader triad surrounding this story. This instance of circumstances drives me to consider a new relationship between author, illustrator, and reader of classic works of literature, wherein the author remains steady, yet interpretations remain pliable to varied spaces and times, while the illustrator and the reader continue an iterative conversation around universal themes like relationships with nature, personal identity, time and what is real.

My conclusions in this study evidence a theory of reading that positions illustrator as reader and reader as illustrator, two positions of mutual importance and reciprocal interpretation. The interpretive space left open by some artists suggests the reader provides his or her own personal mental illustrations of *Wonderland*. This particular collection of illustrations points to an understanding of the author/illustrator/reader triad as continuous
and iterative. In this project, the author remains constant. However, interpretations of the same set of Lewis Carroll’s words over the last century and a half have changed as words gain and lose meanings over time. For example, Carroll’s jokes apparent to Wonderland’s first readers of the 1860s may be lost on readers in the current decade. But, the illustrators of Wonderland are presumably readers of Wonderland as well. Illustrators’ readings, lives, talents, and shortcomings affect their visual portrayals of Carroll’s words to new generations of readers.

Illustrators likely have viewed the work of other Wonderland illustrators before them, bringing some individual visual schemata to their own work. Their reading of the story, the works of the illustrators before them, and their unique individual experiences form the framework for their own artistic interpretations. Readers also develop continuously renewed understandings of the story based on their lives, their exposure to the Wonderland story in varied formats (i.e., books, performances, merchandising, etc.). In this way, readers bring to the print book their own schemata for understanding Wonderland. During the process of reading, readers become their own “illustrators” through their mental images of the story. Illustrators as readers have loosened meanings and made spaces for each generations’ modern influences. Readers as illustrators have exponentially expanded potential meanings in the author/illustrator/reader triad. Illustrators are readers and readers are illustrators in their own right.
To illustrate this theory of author/illustrator/reader interaction around classic stories, I offer a diagram (see Figure 46). The dashed lines on each side of the triangle represent a constant flow of ideas between the author’s words, an illustrator’s images, and a reader’s interpretations, with spaces between interpretations that allow for sociocultural influence. In the instance of *Wonderland* (and potentially other re-illustrated classics), the author remains constant even while his words evolve new meanings and old meanings fade. Illustrators (and illustrators as readers) and readers (who create their own mental images of a story) of classic works as prominent as *Wonderland* likely bring to the text some ideas about the story. Those existing ideas contribute to readings.

![Diagram](image)

Figure 46: A model for an author-illustrator-reader relationship in illustrated classic novels.

**Study Limitations**

Naturally, this study is not without limitations. While I attempted to maintain flexibility in my thinking about *Wonderland* and its illustrations, I wondered what would constitute too much flexibility in thinking and when would the process or outcome does not resemble its intention. I frame my experience of the book through my iterative study of these illustrations, and think of myself as a continuous reader, as I carry in my mind illustrations from 111 editions over 150 years. Naturally, my experience of *Wonderland* is also
informed by my readings and viewings of other forms of *Wonderland* not included in the parameters of this study. As I conducted this research project during the 150th anniversary of initial publication of the book, a renewed influx of *Wonderland* imagery and ideas surrounded me as I worked. With that in mind, my work is necessarily selective. During my research, popular references to the story and its images were ever-present in news, magazines, and social media articles. My stack of reading related to this project was ever-waxing and waning. Additionally, because *Wonderland* touches so many fields (e.g., literature, visual arts, dramatic arts, merchandising, etc.) I had to eventually curtail my search for new information in favor of making sense of what I already collected. I will continue to gather knowledge about this story and its images for the rest of my life, but for the timeline of this project, I had to stop trying to incorporate new or different ideas in this document. Unlike the perpetual six o’clock at the Hatter’s Tea Party, the hands of my clock continued to turn and the days of each month were marked off of my calendar. I had to table many interesting and worthwhile pursuits to proceed with writing a doctoral dissertation.

During my study of these illustrations, I, like Alice, had trouble with size and proportions. A visual data set of this magnitude presented challenges with its opportunities. Data organization and management of around 6000 images is cumbersome and time-consuming. I created a corresponding chart to hold my analyses of each of these images. With the spreadsheet program I used (Numbers for Mac), I experienced some issues because of the size of my files. The spreadsheet containing all of the images I collected reached about 14GB. At times, I would have to wait for it to fill in while scrolling. In the corresponding spreadsheet for textual analyses, I often had to wait for the computer to catch up with my typing. In order to finish the project, I had to upgrade to a new MacBook Pro.

During my days of illustration analysis, I had to balance mental and physical eye fatigue with persistence in order to progress in a reasonable timeframe. As Langer said, the
“qualification one must have for understanding art is responsiveness” (Langer, 1953, p. 396).

I quickly realized I became less responsive to the art if I attempted to study more than 100 illustrations in a day. At that pace, my initial analysis of the complete set of Wonderland illustrations still took over four months, as I studied the illustrations in forward and reverse publication chronology. After I began to see patterns in the illustrations I studied, I realized I was selecting illustrations from my research collection to illustrate my own thinking based on my multi-faceted analysis. I began to see curation as reaching a sort of saturation point at which details in the illustrations I saw individually and collectively responded to the questions I had about culture and illustration in the context of Wonderland. I was attempting to frame my thinking with themes based on the work of readers before, while looking for new, personal interpretations. Asking specific questions and exploring possible answers to explain and illustrate concepts became central to my curatorial process.

Remaining Questions of Curation and Wonderland

As I have looked at these illustrations and worked to contextualize the ideas they portray, I have envisioned countless interesting ideas worth pursuing from this research collection of images. This set of illustrations provides endless opportunities for further consideration.

Questions About and Challenges with Curation

Colloquial uses of the term curation seem to imply “I chose these things and put them together because I like them.” This elementary way of thinking about curation exploits its use, and ultimately dilutes its meaning. Perhaps because we live in a world where we can “curate” our own foot-long sandwiches or music playlists, I took for granted the complexity of the process. While I had experience with studying large quantities of qualitative data in my time-lapse study, my teaching practice was the focus of that data set. I was already intimately familiar with the contexts and questions of that study before I began.
Conversely, in my study of Wonderland illustrations, I had to get to know the subject. I had read Wonderland, viewed the movies, and recognized the references in everyday life. This project caused me to learn about the life and times of Lewis Carroll, the Victorian context of the story, and Carroll’s relationship with John Tenniel. From those beginnings, I studied the various illustrators’ lives and the circumstances by which they created their Wonderland works. I believe curators in a museum setting most often come to these kinds of rich understandings of their subject more organically and over more time, building background knowledge of the artists, artistic movements, and artistic statements in their areas of expertise over the course of years of academic study, wide viewing of artifacts, and broad conversation with like-minded individuals and groups. My study of Wonderland was more contrived, targeted, and, by the nature of the dissertation process, more isolated.

Like Alice, I had to “grow up” so to speak as a researcher and writer, sorting out the logic and making sense of the authority figures in Wonderland’s literature. I embarked on this analysis with the admittedly rose-colored mindset that all illustrators are artists. My analysis of this body of images told a different story. Some illustrations, while they may be aesthetically pleasing, are a translation of the verbal to the visual. Other illustrations add a new layer of meaning, conveying ideas less easily expressed (and sometimes impossible to express) in words.

The writing process surrounding this project has created distinct challenges for me. I had great difficulty writing this dissertation document and disentangling my findings, as they are intertwined in such a way they do not lend themselves to a linear document. This lead me to think about the intentions of this project. I set out to curate an exhibition and that does not lend itself to the kind of writing I am doing here. I spent a lot of energy trying to transition smoothly from one idea to the next. I realized these ideas fit together in a web, not a ladder.
In an attempt to create a web of ideas, I looked into the possibility of curating a digital exhibition instead of a physical exhibition of *Wonderland* illustrations. Because of the size of this project and the number of findings my study generated, I thought I would structure and enter content into a digital exhibition space as I reviewed it. For me, these efforts were misguided as I ended up with information and ideas in digital piles when I needed to connect multiple paths for readers to navigate my ideas. I had to reorganize my thinking entirely, backtrack through the entries I made in the digital exhibition, add framing and detail ideas in a systematic way, and leave some ideas out I had already included because they did not connect to other ideas. In the end, my plan for a curated digital exhibition was too ambitious. I learned that authoring a digital exhibition while recording my process and decisions for a written dissertation document would have constituted another, separate dissertation study. I had to scale back my ambitions, plan for a small physical exhibition of *Wonderland* illustrations, and table my plans to curate an online exhibition for future research.

As I made my own connections between illustrations, recorded my learning, worked toward a digital exhibition, then stepped back to create a physical exhibition, a question recurred: must curation arrive at a sharable product? In my case, I believe the answer is yes. *Wonderland* holds meaning for anyone who looks past a superficial reading of the story of a young girl. After all, I chose to study within the context of *Wonderland* partly because of the story’s prominent status in today’s world. Certainly, after working to research the topic for over three years, I wanted to share these ideas with as audience, including those outside of academia. It is safe to say not many will read this dissertation in its entirety, and a physical exhibition constitutes one other form of product. A future digital exhibition would ensure other interested parties would have access to not only the work I have done so far, but also to make their own meaning from the illustrations I have collected.
Questions about and Challenges with Wonderland

In the future, I would like further explore author/illustrator/reader relationships by plotting Wonderland illustrative inclusions and omissions across history by observing which points in the narrative have been selected for illustration, and which ones have been consistently omitted. This type of study has the potential to reveal findings similar to what I learned from observations of the Down scene, wherein shifts in sociocultural thinking as well as cultural events had a great impact on the appearance and incidence of the scene.

Further, a feminist reading of the collection of illustrations may reveal other messages about the evolution of the world into which Alice fell. As Carroll and Tenniel were both childless men with Victorian ideals, feminist theory as a lens to examine illustrations by illustrator gender may unearth shifts in the Wonderland environment and characterizations, not to mention portrayals of the Alice character.

Another future step in this research is to isolate all images of Alice in each edition from my full research collection, make targeted observations of images of Alice. Despite Alice’s concretized appearance based on artists’ representations, textual flexibility remains. Today, “Alice” can be anyone. While many illustrations of this book are remarkable for their style and overall presentation (e.g., Maggie Taylor (Carroll & Taylor, 2008) for her layered photo-montage, Rodney Matthews (Carroll & Matthews, 2008/2009) for his science fiction version of Wonderland, Camille Rose Garcia (Carroll & Garcia, 2010) for her Gothic rendition) these interpretations vary less in linguistic content than in artistic style, fruitful grounds for further study of social and cultural reinterpretations of Wonderland. Perhaps Alice’s curiosity, optimism, and need for logic open her characterization for readers well beyond the visual bounds of her appearance. This book continues to offer opportunity to examine illustrative influences in meaning of the story.
Though I believe there is no easy answer to the question “Who is Alice?”, a study of her visual portrayals in light of each other would likely result in responses to the question, “Who can Alice be?”. This study shows she may represent questions of fundamental human concern (i.e., nature, time, reality, identity development) and therefore resonate with generations of people from all walks of life. Alice’s journey in so many ways charts my experience with understanding one’s own perspective in the world. The connections and disconnections between visually portrayed ideas in Wonderland could prove useful in understanding the illustrations of children’s literature, and the evolution of the sociology of illustration for children.

Final Conclusions

Throughout this project, I returned repeatedly to thinking about why Wonderland became and remains to be a classic story for children and adults. I am intrigued by the number of people I encounter who know the story, share in the references, and identify with the journey, but have never read the book.

Through conversation with friends and reflection on my own experiences, I realized my life’s journey resembles the episodic nature of Alice’s adventure in many fundamental ways. It seems major changes in life often occur nearly simultaneously. As one example, getting a new job necessitates a different daily routine, different daily surroundings, perhaps a different schedule, a different location, new relationships, including new forms of interaction in existing relationships. Then, suddenly the world as I knew it looks entirely different. One great change necessitates shifts in other areas of life. In discussing this observation with others, I learned many people around me can identify with this experience. I, like Alice, have experienced changes in my day to day reality, my size (physical, emotional, and/or mental), a slowing or acceleration of my experience of time, and changes in my own individual identity.
My study of more than 5700 illustrations published over 150 years of publication demonstrates anyone can enter Wonderland through Alice’s journey. While Lewis Carroll directly addresses the reader, separating the reader from the story, the illustrators of Wonderland have placed readers in Alice’s Mary Jane shoes again and again. By today’s interpretations, Alice could be anyone and anyone could be Alice. Readers have become increasingly involved in the story of Wonderland first through Carroll’s words and the returned gaze of the characters in illustration, and then the returned gaze of the book itself. With blurred lines between fantasies of the Alice character and the real lives of readers, references to Wonderland can be found all around in the human world. Readers can step inside the book, but it seems the book can also step outside of its fictional world. Changes in Wonderland’s meaning over time speak to a larger shift in human culture, eerily echoing William Shakespeare’s famous monologue from As You Like It (c. 1599):

“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts...”

Readers have become (willingly or not) actors on the stage set by Wonderland, its images seeping into the world outside of its pages, as the book itself gains perspective authority, and autonomy to make demands of the reader.

This speaks to other shifts in today’s culture, as it is now almost impossible to tell real from fantasy, fact from fiction, authority from imposter. Today’s news might just be “fake news” or opinions made out to be fact, circulated worldwide by conglomerate media groups. Photographs, once the duplication of reality, are altered and enhanced beyond recognition. Like in the evolution of Wonderland, the whole world is watching, as anyone can share their likeness, their ideas, and their opinions to an online environment potentially posted and re-
posted to be seen by the eyes of millions of viewers. Everyone is an authority and, simultaneously, no one is the authority.

Alice’s way through *Wonderland* was charted by Lewis Carroll, her own personal guide, an author and storyteller, with a great sense of logic who would certainly see his heroine back into the waking world unscathed and wiser for her adventures. But, when the wakeful world resembles the pages of *Wonderland* in its pitfalls, madness, and uncertainties, life is confusing. Alice, through her adventures in *Wonderland*, teaches me to be strong, curious, logical, and persistent, to always doubt, but never truly fear. As I find my way through life, strength, curiosity, logic, persistence, and the courage to question the nonsense and unjust situations of the world guide me forward. Just like Alice’s adult-like sister wished for Alice at the conclusion of *Wonderland*, I find I am able to keep “the simple and loving heart of [my] childhood” and “find pleasure in all [the] simple joys” (Carroll & Tenniel, 1865/1866, p. 192), even throughout the confusion. I believe this story has taught many other readers to do the same.
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