

CARROLLIAN LANGUAGE ARTS & RHETORIC: DODGSON'S QUEST
FOR ORDER & MEANING, WITH A PORPOISE

By

Madonna Fajardo Kemp

Approved:

Rebecca Ellen Jones
UC Foundation Associate Professor
of Rhetoric and Composition
Director of Thesis

Susan North
Director of Composition
Committee Member

Charles L. Sligh
Assistant Professor of Literature
Committee Member

Herbert Burhenn
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

A. Jerald Ainsworth
Dean of the Graduate School

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ABSTRACT

Lewis Carroll (Rev. Charles Dodgson) is a language specialist who has verifiably altered our lexicon and created fictional worlds that serve as commentary on our ability to effectively create meaning within our existing communicative systems. This ability to create language and illustrations of everyday language issues can be traced back to his personal quest for order and meaning; the logician and teacher has uncovered the accepted language and language practices that can result in verbal confusion and ineffective speech, as well as the accepted practices that can help us to avoid verbal confusion and social conflict—all of which reveals a theorist in his own right, one who aides our understanding of signification and pragmatic social skills. Dodgson's fictive representations of our ordinary language concerns serve as concrete examples of contextual language interactions; therefore, they serve as appropriate material for the teaching of rhetorical theory and, most especially, language arts.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Deborah Mae Tate, who showed me the Garden, and to Rev. J.C. Tate, whose unconditional love allowed me to find the key.

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I would like to acknowledge the tireless guidance of Dr. Rebecca Jones, the encouragement of Dr. Joyce Smith, the life-changing commentary from Dr. Susan North, the constructive criticism from Dr. Aaron Shaheen, the contagious enthusiasm of Dr. Charles Sligh, the reliable support of Dr. Marcia Noe and Dr. Joe Wilferth, and the harassment from Dr. Matthew Guy. It is no wonder that the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga has an excellent English department. I would also like to acknowledge my cousin, Dr. Robert Cooksey, who once, a long time ago, during “the circling about the table,” said things that made me “curiouser and curiouser.”

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PROLOGUE

As I jumped down the rabbit-hole into the Wonderland we call rhetoric, I knew that I would be struggling to get into the garden. Philosophical forays have never been my forte. Philosophers are usually difficult to understand and appear to talk in circles; which is, no doubt, why Oscar Wilde commented on the subject:

Answered the Rocket. "I am not going to stop talking to him merely because he pays no attention. I like hearing myself talk. It is one of my greatest pleasures. I often have long conversations all by myself, and I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I am saying."

"Then you should certainly lecture on Philosophy," said the Dragon-fly. ("The Remarkable Rocket")

Wilde understood that philosophy to most of us regular folks is received as just plain hot air. Yet, we all sense there is something there, which is why we keep trying to find the key that will get us into the garden.

While struggling to find the key to my understanding of the philosophy behind rhetoric, I was also developing a plan for the revival of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871)¹ as language arts instruction material. During the preparation of a sample reading lesson for middle grades students, I had remembered my beloved *Alice in Wonderland*, mainly because I had read it over twenty times, enjoying it just as immensely the last time as I did the first. One lesson grew into

¹ Texts that are now more commonly known as *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*.

two and then three. After creating an entire unit, I found that I had not nearly covered all of the material made available by Carroll.

Eventually, I was able to identify possible lesson plans for eighth grade students on reading, writing, grammar, communication, speech, etc. that employed the wor(l)ds of Alice. In fact, I had calculated that 92% of the standard performance indicators required by the state of Tennessee could be facilitated with a trip into Carroll's created lands. I had already sensed that the *Alice* books were about language, but this creation of lesson plans led me to the epiphany that the *Alice* books were about all aspects of language and speech and communication, not just created and playful language.

After a short struggle with rhetorical theory and philosophy, I found that applying Carroll's wor(l)ds to the theorists that I was encountering helped me to truly grasp the theories they espouse. My Bakhtin text shows evidence that my drinking from Alice's wor(l)ds led me to a better taste of Mikhail Bakhtin, which, in turn, led me to drinking from Dodgson's larger world. Like Alice, I grew smaller and larger with ever sip and bite, until I was just the right size for my foray into the gardens of rhetorical theory. But, like Alice, I didn't start to grasp the order until I got into the garden, where the results of miscommunication bloom like the white roses that were supposed to be red.

Applying Carroll's wor(l)ds to these theories brought about another epiphany: the *Alices* should be used to illustrate rhetorical theory. My hopes of some ground-breaking publication vanished like the Cheshire Cat as I researched what had already been done in this realm. However, with Gilles DeLeuze's smile still lingering, I realized that what has not been done is the uniform presentation of Rev. Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) as theorist who had taken up themes that both preceded and proceeded the Oxford logician and writer of children's tales, a

theorist who offers a space to explore the theories that existed during his time and the ones that were created later, a theorist who offers his own take on rhetoric and the language that is used to create it. Furthermore, I did not find an assertion that Dodgson's fiction is a useful tool for teaching rhetorical theory.

My assertion that Dodgson was able to provide useful and effective teaching tools should come as no surprise; after all, the evidence of his life points to the over-arching ethos of teacher. He was, after all, a teacher of mathematics, and he did create numerous games and puzzles for children that were meant to encourage logical thinking². He even wrote letters to his child-friends that at first glance appear merely comical but always reveal a lesson³. In all he did, we sense evidence of a man who was interested in teaching others the order that his logical mind created, even if that meant telling the Queen that she had been remiss in not visiting her subjects on the Emerald Isle⁴. Furthermore, Virginia Woolf recognized Dodgson as a teacher first and foremost: "If Oxford dons in the nineteenth century had an essence, he was that essence" (48). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that my study is merely the result of one teacher recognizing the effective lessons that another teacher has created, as well the knowledge-base that allowed him to create them.

² "One of Carroll's great interests in later life was in developing logic as an entertainment for young people, and he spent a great deal of time on this" (Jenny Woolf 52).

³ Consider his letter to Princess Alice (15 Aug 1892): "I am sending my best love, for you to divide with your brother: and I would advise you to give two-thirds to him, and take three-quarters for yourself" (*The Letters* 924).

⁴ On 11 June 1897, Dodgson wrote to Lord Salisbury to urge the Queen to visit Ireland: "'The Irish,' a friend said to me the other day, 'are a race of Celts: and a Celt *must* have a *chieftain!*' That means, I take it, a *visible* chieftain: whereas I fear our Queen has been, all these years, to our Irish brethren, *vox, et praeterea nihil* ['a voice and nothing more']" (*The Letters* 1126).

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION: GETTING INTO THE
RHETORICAL GARDEN

*Let the tutor, above all things, impress upon the minds of his pupil
what merit there is in a just disposition of parts, and a becoming
treatment of subjects.*

—Quintilian, *On the Teaching of Speaking and Writing*

Carroll's wor(l)ds are still thriving, a fact which is most obvious because they are still affecting the creation of speech, texts, songs, movies, and imitators world-wide. Most recent proof of this assertion is Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), Kerli's "Welcome to the Tea Party" (2010), David Denby's *Snark: A Polemic in Seven Fits* (2009), and the appearance of Carrollese⁵ on the "word-of-the-day" apps. But the fact that Carroll has created ideologically meaningful works is most easily recognized in the still useful language arts and rhetoric lessons we find within his works, in the many theories that have danced with Alice, and the theory that can be found once we jump into the rabbit-hole.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871) are widely accepted as Victorian era creations that resulted from a purely Victorian mind, which is why Florence Lennon felt she was able to view *Victoria through*

⁵ I am employing the term *Carrollese* in a new fashion. The *OED* gives the following definition for *Carrollese*, *Carrollian*, and *Carrolline*: "Resembling, or characteristic of, the style of 'Lewis Carroll' (C. L. Dodgson (1832–98), author of 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland')"; however, I find that *Carrollese* is better defined as Dodgson's created words and phrases.

the Looking-Glass. While scholarship has certainly situated the *Alice* books in a Victorian context, the reader of these texts finds that the author has given us a Wonderland and a Looking-glass world and characters that are not so easily deposited into a known era or culture. Certainly, some of the words or phrases employed are typically Victorian (or British); however, those words are used in a manner that reveals their meanings through context⁶. In fact, a close consideration of Wonderland and the Looking-glass world reveals that Lewis Carroll (Rev. Charles Dodgson) has created an imaginary world where our ability to communicate effectively through language is considered not within the confines of a historical, worldly context but merely as a function of human expression in social settings. And in this manner he is able to address so many of the issues that are of concern in the world we know, where language, particularly English, proves just as problematic as it proves helpful. In his *Alice* books, Carroll gives us prime examples of the inherent issues experienced with our figurative language; the problems that arise when we employ homophones, homograms, and homonyms; the reason that syntactic rules are necessary; the importance of pragmatic social communication skills; the powerful nature of our speech; and various other issues related to language and communication—all the things that novels demonstrate about language. In essence, Carroll has given us not only enjoyable children’s literature, but also enjoyable language lessons.

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (AIW) and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There (TLG)* have served as the impetus for an ever-evolving Carrollian discourse

⁶ When Alice remarks that she will have to send her shoes to her feet “by carrier” (*AIW* 12), the meaning of *carrier* is discernible through the context in which the word is used, as Alice follows mention of the term with the comment “how funny it’ll seem, sending presents to one’s own feet” (*AIW* 12). Alice feels it is odd “to be going messages for a rabbit!” (*AIW* 30), but we understand that she means errands because she says this after being told to retrieve items from the Rabbit’s house.

community⁷, one that Robin Lakoff finds to reveal “the centrality” of *AIW* and *TLG* (368) and one which certainly speaks to their author’s lasting influence, yet in most aspects Carroll cannot be considered revolutionary. He created an imaginary world, produced his own words, personified animals, humorously commented upon social and political concerns of the day, and parodied the poetry and literature of his time, all of which had been previously done, even in the so-called “children’s literature” that appeared before the creation of *AIW* and *TLG*. However, something about Carroll’s tales made them more relatable and more timeless than any children’s story that had been published before and most that came after the release of *AIW* and *TLG*⁸. And that something lies in the way that he has illustrated a concern we all—young and old—face at one time or another: how to communicate effectively.

My consideration of Dodgson—the man and the author we call Carroll—has led to a realization that, while no white (or black) stone appears to have gone unturned in the vast Carrollian discourse community, the lessons he was able to impart about communication and language in his *Alice* books have been left buried—or at least partially so.

At the heart of Alice’s worlds stands a man who was in essence a theorist, a man whose interest in order and meaning (and whose sharp wit) allowed him to create enjoyable illustrations of rhetorical as well as linguistic theory. When we compare Dodgson’s approach to teaching to

⁷ I have applied the term *Carrollian discourse community* to the plethora of writings that have been centered around or that have been created because of Dodgson’s life and texts. The OED gives the following definition for *Carrollese*, *Carrollian*, and *Carrolline*: “Resembling, or characteristic of, the style of ‘Lewis Carroll’ (C. L. Dodgson (1832–98), author of ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’)”; however, based on Claire Kramsch’s application of discourse community when speaking of those who interest themselves with the work of Emily Dickinson (17-18), I felt “Carrollian” was a most fitting adjective for this discourse community “that has a broadly agreed set of common public goals and purposes in its use of [. . .] written language” (Kramsch 127).

⁸ Consider MacDonald’s *Cross Purposes* (1862) and *The Princess & The Goblin* (1872), as well as Kingsley’s *The Water Babies, A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby* (1863), which ironically won a Lewis Carroll Shelf Award in 1963. In fact, sixty-four books were awarded the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award between 1958 and 1979. The list serves as a veritable what’s what in the world of children’s literature, as well as a list of many books that are not as recognizable or have not been as marketable as the *Alices*.

that of Burke's, we find a perfect example of why Dodgson's fiction offers a better way to explain rhetorical theory, as Dodgson has provided not only an amusing look at faulty communication, but also a more sensible explanation of how ambiguity or vagueness occurs. In trying to explain vagueness, Kenneth Burke exhumes John Locke's philosophical rant:

The ambiguity of substance affords [. . .] a major resource of rhetoric. We can appreciate this by referring again to John Locke, when he says that in speaking of substance "we talk like children: who being questioned what such a thing is which they know not, readily gives this satisfactory answer, that it is something; which in truth signifies no more, when so used [. . .] but that they know not what; and that the thing they pretend to know and talk of, is what they have no distinct idea of at all." (*Motives* 1317)

Burke has chosen the approach that many theorists choose; he has tried to explain his theory with theory—from a philosopher, no less. Contrariwise, Dodgson (as Carroll) explains vagueness by providing an amusing example of inadequate evidence:

They told me you had been to her,
And mentioned me to him:
She gave me a good character,
But said I could not swim.

He sent them word I had not gone
(We know it to be true):
If she should push the matter on,
What would become of you?

If I or she should chance to be
Involved in this affair,
He trusts to you to set them free,
Exactly as we were.

My notion was that you had been
(Before she had this fit)
An obstacle that came between
Him, and ourselves, and it.

Don't let him know she liked them best,
For this must ever be

A secret, kept from all the rest,
Between yourself and me. (*AIW* 129)

By presenting the poem as evidence in a court case, Dodgson does not have to turn didactic. He makes us unearth the issues inherent in the poem when Alice argues that the poem cannot be used to convict the Knave because it proves nothing: “If any one of them can explain it [. . .] I’ll give him sixpence. *I* don’t believe there’s an atom of meaning in it” (*AIW* 130). We can easily figure out that lacking pronoun antecedents result in our ignorance and confusion as to who *he*, *she*, *them* are. Without antecedents for the pronouns, we have no way of knowing who has done what or to whom the author of the poem is referring; consequently, Alice is right—and quite sensible, I might add. Where Burke has tried to explain an abstract idea with an abstract explanation, Dodgson has given us a concrete example of how vagueness occurs, as well as a concrete example that makes the topic seem much more important to the average person.

Dodgson was a man whose interest in language and doing all effectively led him to share his observations of ineffective communication, which allowed him to create language arts lessons that are valid over a century and an half later. That Dodgson was able to create language that has been adopted by speakers world-wide should not be surprising given his obvious grasp of language and communication. That Dodgson was concerned with effective communication should not be surprising given that he was a man who sought order in all that he did. In this study, I consider Carrollese and the Carrollian world as evidence that Dodgson was a theorist whose personality and style allowed him to create effective, enjoyable, and lasting lessons in language arts and rhetorical theory. Overall, I am arguing that Dodgson’s commentary on the English language can be considered as offering a theory of communication because *AIW* and *TLG* are persuasion pieces written for an audience that can effect change. Dodgson, ever the

rule-maker and rule-follower, has used his children's literature to point out the accepted language and language practices that are not sufficient and therefore result in verbal confusion and ineffective speech, as well as the accepted language rules that help us to avoid verbal confusion when they are followed.

In Chapter II: No-nonsense Carrollese, I give evidence that Dodgson was a man whose quest for order permeated his entire life and whose created language reveals a language specialist who was able to impact language in a meaningful way.

In Chapter III: Don't Forget the Porpoise: The Rhetorical Dodgson, I show how Dodgson's works have been employed by other theorists as examples, how some claim that Dodgson is a pragmatist or a semiotician, and how Dodgson's rhetoric reveals him as a theorist in his own right.

In Chapter IV: The Carrollian Art of Language, I give evidence that Dodgson's fantastical tales can be used as both language arts and rhetorical theory instruction, as they exemplify most of the language arts standards required for eighth grade students⁹ and serve as concrete examples of abstract theoretical ideas.

In Chapter V: The Dodgson Legacy: Reeling and Writhing with Language, I reiterate the usefulness of Dodgson's fiction as teaching tools that provide concrete and relatable examples for children and college students alike.

⁹ By the State of Tennessee.

CHAPTER II

NO-NONSENSE CARROLLESE

Jack: You never talk anything but nonsense.

Algernon: Nobody ever does.

—Oscar Wilde, “The Importance of Being Earnest”

The Man and His Sensibilities...

Rev. Charles Dodgson, who initially wished to remain separate from Lewis Carroll—the writer of children’s stories—was an Oxford don, an ordained minister, a mathematician, a famed photographer, a political theorist, an activist, a published writer, and a concerned English citizen who considered himself a loyal subject of Queen Victoria. Given the vast biographies and biographical sketches available on Dodgson, it appears unnecessary to include the usual biographical information in this study. However, in considering that Carrollese has been assimilated into our lexicon and the claim of some that Carrollese is nothing more than nonsense, it is worth noting that Dodgson was an accomplished man whose personality would not have allowed him to create nonsense.

Numerous authors have tackled the subject of Dodgson the man, and few who have written about him in earnest have failed to notice his quest for order. D. B. Eperson points out that Dodgson’s first published text, *A Syllabus of Plane Algebraic Geometry*, was “an attempt to arrange in logical sequence the processes of analytical geometry” (93). It seems odd that Dodgson would feel the subject of geometry was not a clearly ordered system; however, he apparently felt the need “to give definitions to the concepts of algebraic geometry and to outline

the axioms on which the subject is based” (Eperson 93). John Pudney describes a man who “kept a note of every menu served to guests in his room, so that no visitor should be confronted with the same meal twice” (92). Michael Holquist maintains that you cannot seriously study Dodgson without recognizing his desire to order everything about him: “Dodgson's whole career can best be understood as a quest for order” (102). Besides mentioning Dodgson’s attempts to ensure that his publications were as perfect as possible, games were conducted properly, and governmental affairs conducted efficiently and fairly, Holquist also draws attention to the minutiae that Dodgson felt worthy of his time and attention:

When he had packages to be wrapped, he drew diagrams so precise that they showed to a fraction of an inch just where the knots should be tied; he kept congeries of thermometers in his apartments and never let the temperature rise above or fall below a specific point. (102-103)

Stuart Dodgson Collingwood cites an article written in *The Guardian* to illustrate how Dodgson’s sermons were critiqued as the essence of order: “his argument mapped out in the form of a diagram, [. . .] he set to work to prove it point by point” (76). And Pudney notes that even the boy Dodgson was so concerned with structure that he wrote out the duties of a station master after riding a train (31). It is obvious to anyone who has studied Dodgson that he was not a man who would purposefully create chaos or nonsense. Yet, if you look up the genre to which *AIW* and *TLG* have been assigned, you would undoubtedly find the word “Nonsense”—a classification that any serious member of the Carrollian discourse community would have to refute. Dodgson apparently did not complain about this classification of nonsense. However, a most fitting response may be found in *TLG*: “‘You may call it “nonsense” if you like,’ [the Red Queen] said, ‘but I’ve heard nonsense compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary!’” (170)

Oxford English Dictionary (OED) tells us that a book that has been declared nonsense is “a book of nonsense.” The generally accepted notion in the field of literature is that a nonsense book lacks a system of logic, which most likely stems from the term *nonsense* that means “relating to absence of rationality or meaning” (*OED*) or the one that means “absurdity, nonsensicalness” (*OED*), but most likely not the one that means “a trivial or worthless thing” (*OED*). However, we treat books that have been declared nonsense as trivial or, even worse, as incapable of contributing to our knowledge.

Michael Holquist decries this label of nonsense for Dodgson’s fiction because he senses what others have sensed: Dodgson does not give us absurdity—he does not give us gibberish. In “What is a Boojum? Nonsense and Modernism,” Holquist concedes the label of nonsense for Dodgson’s works, but he does so with a disclaimer; he wants us to recognize nonsense as

a system in which, at its purest, words mean only one thing, and they get that meaning through divergence from the system of nonsense itself, as well as through divergence from an existing language system. (105)

Holquist is trying to rescue Dodgson’s fiction from the realm of absurdity or gibberish because he senses in Alice’s worlds, like in everything else Dodgson did, a “compulsion toward order” (104). However, Holquist’s phrasing leads us to believe that nonsense in the wor(l)ds of Alice results from a comparison of a new system to an existing system of language. And that is not the case. Dodgson only plays with our existing language or linguistic structure, which Holquist does acknowledge while discussing “Carroll’s portmanteaux”: They are

not gibberish because they operate according to the rule which says that all coinages in the poem will grow out of the collapse of two known words into a new one. Carroll can display words he invents and still communicate, because he does so according to rules. (114)

August Imholtz agrees with Holquist on this point, asserting that “Carroll’s work, and ‘Jabberwocky’ in particular, is very English in its language, both real and invented” (211 - 12). Dodgson has not given us gibberish because Dodgson has given us our own language; furthermore, Dodgson has not given us gibberish or a comparison of systems. The logician and the logophile gave us our system, specifically the nonsense (or irrationality) that is created everyday when our existing language system does not allow for the logical transference of meaning. Dodgson, the man obsessed with order, had realized that some of our language and our communication rules are nonsensical, and Dodgson the Oxford don intended to show us the error of our ways through “Uncle Dodgson’s” entertaining wit.

Dodgson’s children’s tales contain an impressive commentary on language which has stood the test of time, which explains why they have never gone out of print and are still being read by children world-wide¹⁰. Calling Dodgson’s meaningful tales of childhood and language nonsense is not logical: ““If it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be, but as it isn’t, it ain’t. That’s logic”” (*TLG* 191). Imholtz reminds us that “Carroll once remarked of his nonsense verse that ‘a perfectly balanced mind could understand it’” (225). T. B. Strong certainly understood it; he understood that “Mr. Dodgson has shown the existence of all sorts of pitfalls and surprises round the ordinary course of conversation” (42). Dodgson felt that a perfectly balanced mind could understand the logic of his children’s tales because his children’s tales discuss the language we all use; they are merely meant to persuade us that our language needs to

¹⁰ According to the University of British Columbia, an institution that maintains an impressive Carroll collection, “the Carroll classics have been translated into more than 60 languages” (“Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”). *AIW* was first published in America in 1866; from 1866 to 1977 136 official editions were published in the U.S. (*Handbook*).

make sense if we are going to communicate effectively and signify meaning as desired. Since it is children who are taught the rules of language, children are logically the perfect audience for a commentary on how language is ordered. Dodgson's readers may not all have understood that he was commenting on language or have been of a "perfectly balanced mind," but they have been mostly of one mind—the mind that enjoys the Carrollian world and the language found within it.

And His Words

Dodgson was a man who craved a meaningful, orderly existence, and he was a man who created words that at one time appeared disorderly and meaningless. However, when we consider Carrollese and its adoption by English speakers, we find that Carrollese has filled a perceived gap in our vocabulary. Strong recognizes this notion in "Lewis Carroll," where he insists that the word *chortle* was immediately included in a dictionary because "it supplied a felt want in the language" (43). The English language has the largest lexicon of any language; at this point, it hardly seems necessary to borrow more words to express ourselves, even more unnecessary would be to borrow the fabricated language of an imaginary world initially created for one small Victorian girl; however, we have adopted Carrollese as English. Based on the belief that "lexical borrowing is often triggered by a perceived gap in the vocabulary of the recipient language, particularly with respect to cultural phenomena associated with the source or donor language" (Schendl 56), our continued use of Carrollese reveals esteem for the words and appreciation for the world from which they derive.

"Curiouser and curiouser!" exclaimed the young heroine of the movie *Ondine* (2009). Presented as an exclamation for the first time, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, by Lewis Carroll in *AIW*, this particular exclamation is recognizable world-wide. In *Ondine*, a

young girl sees a woman swimming around in a lake in her fine new dress as if that were normal behavior; therefore, the girl's use of this Carrollian exclamation is completely appropriate, as it is employed to signify surprise in a most unusual situation. "Curiouser and curiouser!" exclaimed Kevin E. Noonan on the *Patent Docs: Biotech & Pharma Patent Law & News Blog*; apparently, Noonan finds the continuing "rift that has arisen between the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the Justice Department over the question of patent-eligibility for isolated genes" quite an unusual conundrum ("Curiouser and Curiouser"). "Curiouser and Curiouser" appears to have been taken up as a book title in 1932 by the publisher Maggs Bros. for their encyclopedic listing of odd writings: "*Curiouser and Curiouser:*" *A Catalogue of Strange Books and Curious Titles*. And it has been usefully employed as a title ever since, with the most recent non-biographical utilization found in Joan Wendland's *Alice in Corporateland: A Curiouser and Curiouser Business* (2010). In fact, *Google Books* lists 220 books published in 2010 alone that include the phrase "curiouser and curiouser." Many similar examples may be discussed, as Carrollian language has become yet another loan language from which English speakers borrow words, much like French and Latin. For instance, the most famous quote used to describe J.R.R. Tolkien is C.S. Lewis's "You might as well (to adapt the White King) try to influence a bandersnatch" (Lewis as qtd. in *Collected Letters*). And, most recently, the authors of *Limits to Parallel Computation: P-Completeness Theory* (1995) employ the term *bandersnatch* to illustrate the conundrum they will be addressing: "Your company can take an n -word specification of a bandersnatch and, in about n^3 steps, can test if the specification is reasonable and design an optimal bandersnatch that meets it" (Greenlaw, et al. 3). As these examples illustrate, Carrollian has been adopted as English, an assertion which is verified by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*).

The *OED* lists several words which are believed to be the sole creation of Dodgson, including *bandersnatch*, *galumphing*, *Cheshire Cat*, *outgrabe*, *jabberwocky*, *mimsy*, *vorpal*, *manxome*, *frabjous*, *tulgey*, *jubjub*, *slithy*, *mome*, *boojum*, and *chortled*. Additionally, the *OED* attributes “curiouser and curiouser” to Dodgson (as Carroll) and the terms *Carrollese*, *Carrolline*, and *Carrollian* to the desire for describing Dodgson or Dodgson-like styles, tones, topics, or language. Approximately 150 *OED* quotations are contributed to Dodgson¹¹ and his nom de plume; 21 of which are “first quotations” that have resulted from his invented Carrollese. Furthermore, the definition of *rabbit hole*, when used figuratively, as it is in *The Matrix*, is recognized as Carrollese: “2. fig. Used to indicate passage into a strange, surreal, or nonsensical situation or environment [. . .] with allusion to ‘L. Carroll’ *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)” (*OED*).

The *OED* bears testimony to the immediate and lasting adoption of Carrollese. C.S. Lewis is cited as using Carrollese in *The Allegory of Love* (1936): “Always at a critical moment, a strange knight, a swift ship, a bandersnatch or a boojum breaks in.” Furthermore, Rudyard Kipling is cited as using *frabjous*; J.B. Priestley is cited for his use of *rabbit hole*; and several *OED* citations for Carrollese involve *New Yorker* magazine, *Newsweek* magazine, and *Yale Law Journal*. While the *OED* is not a comprehensive publication that will note every use of Carrollese, it is, currently, the most respected dictionary of the English language, and the entries attributed to Dodgson and his nom de plume, as well as the citations which include him, are plentiful enough.

¹¹ One of the citations listed for Dodgson is *doppelgänger*; while he is not credited with the creation of the word, he is credited with the modern conventional spelling.

The *OED* offers definitive proof that Carrollese has been adopted by English speakers, but scientific journals evidence the adoption of Carrollese by other languages, as well. Of special note is the word *boojum*, a word that has come to describe a pattern that arises during one of the phases of superfluid helium-3, whose motion can result in the decay of a supercurrent (*Boojums* 3-4). David Mermin’s insistence that this phenomenon be called *boojum* resulted not only in a change to the scientific approach of nomenclature, but also in created Russian words: *budzhum*, *budzhummi*, *budzhumom*, and *budzhumami* (“Writing Physics” 300).

While the continued use of Dodgson’s created vocabulary is certainly worth noting, his created vocabulary does not constitute the entire body of Carrollese. Most utterances employed in the creation of *AIW* and *TLG* can be considered Carrollese because of the way they are employed, which is evidenced by Michael Hoey in “Lexical Priming and Literary Creativity.” Hoey determined the effects of Carrollese on our lexical expectations by investigating Dodgson’s impact on language priming¹² and found that Carrollese has affected our understanding of English at a basic and an instinctual level. Hoey has ascertained that we are primed for our language associations—semantic, pragmatic, syntactical—by our first experiences with a word (8); with this assumption made, Hoey studied the response of people who hear the phrase “The time has come,” which he chose from *TLG* (10). He found that most people are primed to

¹² In “Syntactic Priming: Investigating the Mental Representation of Language,” Branigan et al. explain language priming, specifically syntactic priming: “If the processing of a stimulus affects the processing of another stimulus, then the two stimuli must be related along a dimension that is relevant to the cognitive system. Under certain circumstances, we can conclude that they are represented in a related manner. If the relationship between two stimuli is syntactic, then we can use this relationship as a way of understanding what syntactic information is represented, and how that information can interact with other information. We define *syntactic priming* as the proposal that processing a particular syntactic structure within a sentence affects the processing of the same (or a related) syntactic structure within a subsequently presented sentence” (490).

associate the phrase with a speech or communication act, with a quotation position, and with a non-finite clause beginning with the word *to* (13). In essence, Hoey maintains “that Lewis Carroll’s sentence conforms to most of the priming that native speakers of the language are likely to have and overrides a few” (15). His study reveals the effects of Carrollese, even when the Carrollese is not the invented words of Dodgson, as he credits Dodgson with “the establishment of new primings” (18).

Primings are related to phrasal context, or the way that our mind makes logical connections between words. I.A. Richards, whose theory revolves around meaning derived from phrasal context, ends *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936) with a reference to “Jabberwocky”:

[This notion of a word as being backed up by other words that are not uttered or thought of] is only recognizing on a larger, wider scale the principle that Lewis Carroll was using in Jabberwocky. (1293)

Richards is commenting on the fact that, while we may not have a ready referent available for the created words of Dodgson, we can derive meaning from “Jabberwocky” because Dodgson created words that fit into our rules of language, such as how graphemes may be presented and which parts of speech may go where—or how words and phrases logically go together.

The words and phrases we consider Carrollese are sufficient evidence that the children’s author and logician did not unconsciously create language. If his words had been created from a haphazard, ignorant approach, he would not have been able to impact our language in a solid and lasting way. The fact that Dodgson was able to create words and phrases that have been thoroughly adopted as part of the English language reveals his intricate and thorough understanding of language. Furthermore, Dodgson’s fiction and his own thoughts on the words he created for *TLG* were presented as evidence in *Eastman Photographic Materials v.*

Comptroller General of Patents, Designs, and Trademarks (1898) to prove that all words have meanings, whether we know the word is invented or not. Moreover, Humpty Dumpty's take on language was presented as a condemnation of the dissenters in *Tennessee Valley Authority v. Hill* (1978). The fact that courts of law have accepted Dodgson as a specialist in created words and the signification of meaning, along with a realization that he was able to verifiably affect our lexicon leads us to recognize him as a language specialist, which, in turn, leads us to investigate what Dodgson has contributed to our understanding of language.

CHAPTER III

DON'T FORGET THE PORPOISE:

THE RHETORICAL DODGSON

Even if there is only one possible unified theory, it is just a set of rules and equations. What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe?

—Stephen Hawking, “A Brief History of Time”

Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice in Wonderland* (AIW) and *Through the Looking Glass* (TLG), has altered our language and our understanding of language. While most people do not fully understand the impact Carroll has had on our communicative system, they do recognize Carroll as the creator of words and worlds because they have either read the *Alices* or have seen, read, or heard at least one of the various constructions birthed from Carroll’s intellectual matrix. But those who are most familiar with Carroll’s intellectual matrix realize that it belonged to a man named Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a man who “was conscientious, meticulous, fastidious, pedantic” (Pudney 15), a man whose entire existence revolved around logic and symbols. We should not truly be surprised that the created worlds of Dodgson also revolve around symbols and logic. Moreover, we should not be surprised that this concern for symbols and logic manifested itself as a commentary on our communicative system. We cannot productively communicate without a thorough understanding of the symbols that constitute our language (graphemes) or a logical (or sensible) way to employ these symbols as building blocks (morphemes) or as structures (utterances employed in phrasal context). Dodgson was a man who

desired order and dwelt on logic and symbols, a man who understood language well enough to create morphemes and utterances that filled a perceived gap in our language. Therefore, it should not be surprising that his fictive discourses explore our communicative system.

While very few have recognized Dodgson as a theorist in his own right, many have certainly recognized his texts as ideologically significant. It may seem odd to call children's tales "ideologically significant," but the *Alices* meet the requirements set forth by Mikhail Bakhtin for a creation worthy of serious consideration:

In each period of historical existence, a work must enter into close association with the changing behavioral ideology, become permeated with it, and draw new sustenance from it. Only to the degree that a work can enter into that kind of integral, organic association with the behavioral ideology of a given period is it viable for that period (and, of course, for a given social group). Outside its connection with behavioral ideology it ceases to exist, since it ceases to be experienced as something ideologically meaningful. (*Marxism* 1219)

AIW and *TLG* entered an "integral, organic association" with ideology almost immediately after their first publications. And theorists are dancing with them still. From Frege to Wittgenstein to Richards, we find evidence of a tryst with Dodgson's creations. Many theorists have explored the wor(l)ds of Alice and/or the various letters, pamphlets, and texts created by this famous author who desired an orderly, logical existence. However, a relative few have considered either *AIW* or *TLG* as texts that quite thoroughly investigate our communicative systems, as texts that contain concrete examples of the matter that lies at the heart of both linguistic and rhetorical theory: verbal confusion.

Theory may be logically applied to and even located in the fictional works of Dodgson because fiction has been located as rhetoric by Wayne Booth, as explicative of speech genre by Mikhail Bakhtin, and as a natural form of speech act by Mary Louise Pratt. Yet, few theorists

have moved past a marginal mention or frame-building approach when it comes to the worlds of Alice, a fact recognized by Robin Lakoff. We may assume that the *Alices* have not been thoroughly studied as rhetoric or speech genre or speech acts as other fictive representations have because they have been falsely deemed nonsense (in the gibberish sense) or because they are children's literature; however, *AIW* is relatively more recognizable as speech act because of the nature of its creation, as well as the recognizable intratextual speech acts that serve as the theme of the text.

Pratt's take on authorship allows us to apply speech act theory to any text: "an author is implied in a text only in the same way subjects are implied in any speech act they perform" (64). We find this take is especially applicable to *AIW* because we know that Dodgson created his text after creating these tales for and relating them to Alice Liddell and other children he knew. Moreover, speech-act can be seen at work in the conversations occurring within the worlds of Alice, as well. The Gricean Cooperative Principle¹³, a bedrock of speech-act theory, is quite conducive to the overall message that arises through the verbal interactions in *AIW* and *TLG*. A careful consideration of speech acts within Dodgson's fiction reveals that Dodgson would agree with the four Gricean maxims: speech should be (1) necessary, (2) truthful, (3) relevant, and (4) logical (Pratt 64-65), even if it is humorous. Pratt finds that most of everyday language falls outside the Gricean principle (70); however, Dodgson shows us differently, as he offers concrete examples of everyday language that lacks one or more of the Gricean maxims and demonstrates that principle-free everyday language results in confusion and/or conflict. Based on Pratt's take of fiction as speech act and representations of speech-act within the texts, we find that Dodgson's text is the perfect example of Pratt's theory on fictive discourse.

¹³ Created by Paul Grice.

All in all, Pratt finds representative discourses are “world-creating, world-describing and world-changing undertakings” (71), and therefore must be speech acts. Pratt’s description of representative discourse sounds suspiciously like a description of *AIW* and *TLG*, but it also sounds similar to Bakhtin’s and Booth’s theories of fiction. Pratt seemingly conjures up Booth when she maintains that “authorship is no more, and no less, than another of the many ways a subject realizes itself through speech” (64). Booth makes this clear when he asserts that “we think of the writer as someone who addresses us, who wants to be read, and who does what he can to be readable” (105). And Pratt communes with Bakhtin when she asserts that speech act theory allows us to view “language as a social practice” (60), which is, of course, Ferdinand de Saussure’s take on semiology¹⁴, as well. Overall, Pratt, along with Booth and Bakhtin, allows us to move Dodgson’s fiction from the frame and into the big picture. Through Pratt we can freely and unabashedly spy the various theoretical materials that color *AIW* and *TLG*.

J. B. Priestley saw the big picture when he announced in 1921 that he feared the impending flood of Freudian-induced literary critics that would invade the worlds of Alice once the German translation of Carroll’s work was released¹⁵, thereby drawing attention away from the essence of the work. Priestley had recognized the logical and rhetorical nature of the *Alices* and feared that nature would be tainted with inappropriate applications of unrelated theory. Priestley’s statement may now be seen as prophetic or as a catalyst for what he feared. Either way, in 1961, Patricia Spacks had declared that “the questions raised by what most critics call Carroll’s ‘word-play’ are the questions of modern philosophers” (274), but the cacophony of the

¹⁴ “Semiology is ‘a science which studies *the role of signs as part of social life*’” (Saussure 15).

¹⁵ Priestley did believe that he was referring to the first German translation of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*; however, the first German translation was published in 1869: *Alice’s Abenteuer im Wonderland*.

psychoanalysis, psychedelic, and just plain psycho that had crashed into Alice's world had drowned out Spacks's logical assertion. That Freudian theory may be found in a book that does not mention psychoanalysis or the subconscious and was written by a man who was neither psychoanalyzed nor discussed his subconscious is debatable. However, that linguistic and rhetorical theory should be found in books that revolve around communicative acts is a certainty. And we can recognize this certainty through a brief consideration of the theorists who have used Dodgson's fiction to explicate linguistic and rhetorical theory.

In "A Note on Humpty Dumpty," Priestley maintains "Humpty Dumpty and his kind pester us with their uncouth and inappropriate terms so that they may be spared the labor of thought and yet may convey the impression of great profundity" (265). Contrariwise, Jean Jacques Lecercle, through his consideration of Dr. Ettelson's approach to *AIW*¹⁶, comes to the conclusion that a Humpty Dumpty approach to life allows us to reach new levels of understanding. While one treatment renders the figure as ignorant and the other as intelligent, the essence of the figure is the same in both treatments:

¹⁶ In "Lewis Carroll and the Talmud," Jean Jacques Lecercle discusses the madness of scholars who find within the worlds of Alice whatever essence it is they seek. Apparently, Dr. Ettelson claims that *Alice in Wonderland* "is a cryptogram" based on the Talmud (Lecercle 210), an interpretation that Lecercle initially found to be "profoundly unfaithful to Carroll" (208). However, Lecercle comes to realize that Ettelson may have actually been faithful to Dodgson's style, as Ettelson is able to draw upon the essence of Dodgson by looking at his own world through the looking glass (208). By applying Dodgson's works to "the tradition of the midrash," Lecercle finds that Ettelson's approach is not as mad as it initially seems, because Lecercle is certain that Carroll would have approved of the drive to "explain everything, even the punctuation" (Lecercle 210). Lecercle's consideration of Ettelson's interpretation leads him to realize that we are all just "disciple[s] of Humpty-Dumpty" (213).

Humpty Dumpty¹⁷ makes words mean what he wants them to mean whether they signify meaning for anyone else or not. Humpty Dumpty serves to exemplify a profound personal belief held by the Rev. Charles Dodgson: “No discussion, between two persons, can be of any use, until each knows clearly *what* it is that the other asserts” (*The Letters* 1122). This Dodgsonian dictum is certainly logical in and of itself, but we also find it to be the heart of Bakhtin’s theory about “the sociological nature of the structure of expression and experience”: “The claim can be made that it is a matter *not so much of expression accommodating itself to our inner world but rather of our inner world accommodating itself to the potentialities of our expression*” (*Marxism* 1218). Obviously, if we wish to convey meaning to other communicants; we must choose the words that will signify to others the meaning that we wish to convey.

Unfortunately, we find the Dodgsonian dictum about speech participants achieving mutual understanding was overlooked in the creation of Kenneth Burke’s “From ‘The Thinking of the Body’: Comments on the Imagery of Catharsis in Literature.” After announcing that he will use Carroll as a spying glass lens during his inspection of catharsis, Burke appears to bypass catharsis and delivers *AIW* through a Freudian lens, focusing on some imagined “anal-oral reversibility” (342), which is not solidified in his article or in the texts. Interestingly, Burke mentions the Queen’s ““Sentence first—verdict afterwards”” right before “the circling about the table” (343) and never sees the *motive* for Dodgson’s rhetoric. Burke, like Humpty Dumpty, has made words mean what he wants them to mean, regardless of the author’s motives, providing us

¹⁷ Humpty Dumpty tells us that a name must mean something (*TLG* 224), that words can mean what you want them to mean (*TLG* 229), and that you must master words in order to make them do as you please (*TLG* 230). Alice feels Humpty Dumpty treats conversation as a game (*TLG* 226), which, in essence, he does, as he is always trying to get the upper hand and to point out Alice’s incorrect use of words (*TLG* 226). Yet, his lack of mastery is reflected in his attempts to explain the words used in “Jabberwocky” and to create his own poetry (*TLG* 231-34).

with an example of the psychobabble that Priestley foretold. Not all theorists, not even all rhetorical theorists, have recognized Dodgson's fiction as illustrations of the verbal confusion that lies at the heart of rhetorical theory. However, many theorists have noted the sense of concreteness that Dodgson affords us with his witty and entertaining take on ineffective communication, where Humpty Dumpty is just one of the participants that reveals how our attempts to communicate can go awry.

In "Logic and Language in Through the Looking-Glass," Spacks identifies the Humpty Dumpty problem: "with the Humpty Dumpty method of dealing with words we find a solipsistic approach to semantics" (271). The extreme self-focus that lies at the heart of the solipsistic approach allows Humpty Dumpty and his disciples to disregard a larger concern for signification, as the only thing that matters is making words mean what the speaker wants them to mean. This solipsistic approach further disregards a larger concern for contextual appropriateness or pragmatic skills, as speech interaction takes on a geocentric-like model, with the self as the center of the speech universe. Spacks is able to recognize the solipsistic approach of Humpty Dumpty because she recognizes a larger concern for language and rhetorical theory within *TLG*, where we are led to believe that communicants who take a Humpty Dumpty approach to language are not likely to convey meaning.

Priestley and Spacks are not the only two who have returned from Dodgson's "fantastic" worlds and found them brimming with linguistic and rhetorical concerns; many scholars have returned from Dodgson's created worlds with the understanding that the issues with our communicative systems is "what Alice found there." Even those scholars who have chosen to focus on Dodgson the logician/mathematician recognize a concern for language in the *Alices*. For instance, Robin Wilson recognizes Dodgson's focus on language, which she relates to the

author's logic-inclined psyche. To prove her point, Wilson reprints scenes in which she senses the "logical and philosophical absurdities [that] permeate the *Alice* books" (5). Unfortunately, she does not explain why the scenes are logical or philosophical or absurdities. However, she does remind us that Dodgson, the logician, has taken up matters of language in other texts as well, such as *What the Tortoise Said to Achilles* where Dodgson's take on Zeno's paradox¹⁸ was so impressive that it later caused Bertrand Russell to describe it as one of "Dodgson's greatest contributions to logic" (Wilson 196). Wilson's treatment of Dodgson—the mathematician concerned with language—does reveal much about how Carroll would approach language: addressing the "Circe-Squarer," Dodgson made it clear that "we cannot waste our time in listening to anyone who does not accept the ordinary *data* of the subject" (as qtd. in *Numberland* 100). And, in the subject at hand, we find the ordinary data has been taken up by those who also see the linguistic and rhetorical themes of the *Alices*, as well as the theorist who created them.

Spacks certainly finds *TLG* to be a text that revolves around language concerns and categorizes the entire theme of the work as "the question of meaning and the question of value" (273 - 274). For instance, she employs I.A. Richards and C.K. Ogden's *The Meaning of Meaning* to marry Carrollian nursery rhymes to the force of language: "Tweedledum and Tweedledee fight over their rattle not because they want to [. . .], the rhyme says they do, and therefore they must (Spacks 272). In other words, the utterances are more powerful than the speaker—which answers Humpty Dumpty's rhetorical question: "which is to be master?" (*TLG* 230)—the speaker or the spoken. Spacks does show us how Dodgson's texts can and have been used to

¹⁸ Zeno's paradox: "Do we not know that the Eleatic Palamedes (Zeno) has such an art of speaking that the same things appear to his hearers to be alike and unlike, one and many, stationary and in motion?" (Socrates as qtd. in *Phaedrus* 157).

explain theory, but she goes one step further and gives us a glimpse of Dodgson the theorist when she points out that *TLG* “seems disorderly [because it] is a condemnation of the ordinary sloppy thinking of the reader and the sloppy traditions of his language” (269). Spacks tells us the real reason we can view Dodgson as not just the illustrator of theories that arose after his publications, but as theorist in his own right: “Carroll’s world of fantasy is most profoundly, in its semantic aspects at least, the sort of world for which such a logician as Charles Dodgson might yearn: a world of truth and order” (269). While Spacks recognizes Dodgson’s inextricable quest for order and his obvious theme of language, she mistakenly places the order, logic, and rule obsessed Dodgson at home in a world where verbal confusion actually leads to a continual state of chaos and confusion. But, most important to this study, Spacks links Dodgson to Richards and Ogden for good reason. When closely considering the words and phrases employed by Dodgson—within the speech contexts presented in *AIW* and *TLG*—we find that Dodgson does exactly what Richards and Ogden would call for over a half of a century later: focuses attention “to those [forms of verbal confusion] that are more subtle and more frequent” (*The Meaning* 1276). In essence, he ferrets out the words and phrases that cause communication problems, compelling us to consider our language, or speech, more closely. Therefore, it is not surprising that both Robin Lakoff and Daniel Kirk have not shied away from assigning Dodgson to a specific rhetorical theory camp, although they have differing opinions on the camp to which he should be assigned.

In “Lewis Carroll: Subversive Pragmaticist,” Lakoff takes the same view as Spacks when it comes to Dodgson’s interpretation of “which is to be master”: “Alice is [. . .] a proto-Whorfian: her language creates not only her perception of reality, but her own and everyone else’s actual reality” (381). However, Lakoff rebuilds our solipsistic Humpty Dumpty and gives

him a nice, new pragmatic¹⁹ shell. In fact, Lakoff uses Dodgson's fiction to argue for a new pragmatics in general, and she does this by turning the worlds of Alice into Pragmaticland, giving us a Humpty Dumpty that views language as a human commodity that can be changed at will (372), instead of a Humpty Dumpty that has no concern for whether or not his speech partner can create meaning from his words. Lakoff does note that Dodgson is, in essence, questioning the sensibility of our language rules (368), but she also finds that Dodgson has offered a Catch 22 of sorts: upon leaving these worlds a decision must be made between the belief that language that is wholly arbitrary or in an adherence to illogical rules in order to systematize language (368 - 369). Of course, she problematizes her main assertions by further claiming that "the book inverts his, and our, reality" (369), which can be taken as a negation of the Catch 22 assumption. Nonetheless, most important to this study is Lakoff's belief that Dodgson the pragmatist shines through the *Alices*, revealing our understanding of languages to be faulty but "rational and meaningful *because* they are shared" (384), as well as her declaration of Dodgson "as a pragmatist before there was pragmatics" (369).

Lakoff feels Dodgson is able to fully illustrate a pragmatic approach toward language because he employs Alice to illustrate the irrationality of ordinary language practices (383). On the other hand, Dodgson's treatment of ordinary language has led Kirk to assign Dodgson the label of semiotician. In *Charles Dodgson, Semeiotician* Kirk presents the same image of a rhetorical theorist at play; however, Kirk sees that play as illustrative of a different school of thought than Lakoff. Since the semiotician is ultimately concerned with "any system of signs

¹⁹ In her study of Dodgson, Lakoff gives the following definitions for pragmatics: "I like to define pragmatics as 'the interesting stuff about language'—the reason many of us were attracted to linguistics. We wanted to know how language did the things it did, to us and for us; why some people used it to get their needs met, and others to get into various kinds of trouble; why using language was sometimes fun, and sometimes frightening" (367); and "as the field concerned with the communicative assumptions shared by humans as members of a society or culture" (378). However, she does clarify that she does not find "any rigorous definition" of pragmatics to be desirable (369).

which can be used in some communicative function” (Kirk 1-2), it is not surprising that the author of arithmetical texts would be associated with such theories. Kirk certainly locates math and logic in the *Alices* (39-40), but he also testifies to the all-encompassing approach to language that can be located in Dodgson’s work: a focus on symbols and signs as the foundation of our language systems (74). While Kirk notices the internalized drive Dodgson possessed “to clarify the issues²⁰ by clarifying the language in which they were expressed” (29) and “a new dimension in developing the importance of language” in Dodgson’s other works of fiction (48), he marks the *Alice* books with a white stone because he finds in them the evidence that Dodgson was a revolutionary theorist: “experience as a test of meaning is emphasized by the problem of whether cats eats bats, [and] was published thirteen years before Charles Sanders Peirce’s famous article, ‘How to Make Our Ideas Clear’” (59). Overall, Kirk assigns Dodgson a foundational role akin to the one Lakoff has for pragmatics. However, Kirk’s claim that Dodgson meant to “liberate us from the bondage of the one-word-one-meaning attitude which holds each of us from time to time in mental check” (72) resulting in his belief that “Dodgson must have been free from language” (75) is at odds with what we know of the man who felt that rules were both necessary and desired, the man who owned over 40 dictionaries (*Library*), the man who created the *stipulative definition*: “Any writer may mean exactly what he pleases by a phrase so long as he explains it *beforehand*” (*The Letters* 610).

Dodgson’s desire for order is also noted by Gilles DeLeuze in *The Logic of Sense*, where he posits Dodgson in an ancient rhetorical regime we call stoicism (9). This linking of Dodgson’s writings to stoicism is most evident when we recognize that the stoics concerned themselves with the correctness of our deductive analyses or the use of speech to convey accuracy (Cicero 325).

²⁰ Kirk is referring to Dodgson’s publications on women studies, vivisection, damnation, etc.

It is interesting to consider the effects of rhetorical schools on Dodgson, given the number of books on philosophy and logic that were found in his library after he had passed on; he had possessed works by Locke, Bacon, Pope, Mill, Keynes, Aristotle, and Cicero—at least four lots were auctioned off that contained works by Cicero (*Library*). Whether Dodgson illustrates or parodies the stoics, he does illustrate what occurs when the accuracy of the proposition (or signifier) is demanded, as DeLeuze has acknowledged.

Like Lakoff and Kirk, DeLeuze places Dodgson in a revolutionary position when he credits Dodgson with “the first great *mise en scène* of the paradoxes of sense” (xiii), but DeLeuze does not label Dodgson, nor does he place the creator of Alice at the revolutionary end of a new rhetorical order. In his treatment of the White Knight’s discussion of “A-sitting on a Gate,” Deleuze maintains that Dodgson is illustrating the infinite proliferation of verbal entities ($n_1 \rightarrow n_2 \rightarrow n_3 \rightarrow n_4 \dots$)²¹: “The series, [which] taken in its regressive sense, may be extended to infinity in the alteration of a real name and a name which designates this reality” (30). Whether or not this infinite struggle for truthful speech is a declaration of a stoic stance, it is certainly representative of the Dodgson that can be located in all of his publications, the man who easily recognized logical pitfalls. Either way, it serves as one of the numerous examples Dodgson, as Carroll, has provided within the *Alice* books that reveals his obsession with ordinary language and the theories that encircle it.

Deleuze chooses to frame his theoretical treatment of sense with Dodgson’s fiction because he “find[s] that Carroll’s entire logical work is directly about signification” and that

²¹ “The name of the song is called ‘Haddocks’Eyes.’ ‘Oh, that’s the name of the song, is it?’ Alice said, trying to feel interested. [. . .] ‘That’s what the name is *called*. The name is really ‘The Aged, Aged Man.’ ‘Then I ought to have said, “That’s what the *song* is called?”’ Alice corrected herself. ‘No you oughtn’t; that’s quite another thing! The *song* is called “Ways and Means”; but that’s only what it’s called, you know!’ ‘Well, what *is* the song then?’ said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered. ‘I was coming to that,’ the Knight said. ‘The song really *is* ‘A-sitting on a Gate.’” (*TLG* 263)

“everything that takes place occurs in and by means of language” (22). Furthermore, Deleuze spotlights “Carroll’s paradox” as Frege’s paradox; however, Deleuze does not draw attention to the fact that Frege did not publish his paradox until 1892, twenty-one years after Dodgson exemplified the infinite proliferation of verbal entities in *TLG* (29). It is interesting that Deleuze thoroughly investigates Dodgson’s impact on the theory of signification without applying his equation for the infinite proliferation of verbal entities ($n_1 \rightarrow n_2 \rightarrow n_3 \rightarrow n_4 \dots$) to Dodgson himself, as Lakoff²² and Kirk have done: Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson \rightarrow logician \rightarrow Lewis Carroll \rightarrow children’s author \rightarrow rhetorical theorist \rightarrow pragmatist (or semiotician).

The fact that Dodgson is a theorist should not be a disputed fact. Since Dodgson gives us “comparisons between the meaning of words,” and Richards declares that “The whole business of rhetoric comes down to comparisons between the meanings of words” (*The Philosophy* 1286), we can assign Dodgson’s work as an exploration of rhetorical concerns²³. We certainly can see that Alice’s experiences exemplify what happens when meaning is not conveyed as intended; they exemplify what happens when signification goes awry, whether it is because of the incorrect use of words or the complicated nature of words or the way the words are delivered (and in what context). Dodgson has given us a tool for the illustration of theories because he was both muse to the theorists that would follow him and theorist.

²² Lakoff sees the proliferation of verbal entities as “the Knight’s insist[ance] on distinctions” that are not required “by the normal rules of everyday conversation” (377).

²³ Collingwood recognizes that, above all else, Dodgson is concerned with meaning: “The humour [of the *Alice* books] [. . .] is the acute sense of paradox which revels in [. . .] the habit of playing with words which is built upon an accurate conception of their proper use” (*Diversions* 3-4). Moreover, Dodgson understood rhetoric well enough to determine the failings of other authors; for instance, Dodgson felt Kingsley’s *Alton Locke* was lacking definition that would have allowed it to “stir up many fellow-workers in the same good field of social improvement” (Pudney 58).

While the number of theorists and scholars who have employed Dodgson's fictive representations as illustrations of language concerns is grossly under-represented here, sufficient material has been presented, allowing us to conclude that the *Alices* have been under-appreciated as ideologically meaningful texts that aid our knowledge of how communicative systems work. Deleuze, for one, assures us that Dodgson has given us children's literature with a "porpoise"²⁴:

Carroll's entire logical work is directly about signification, implications, and conclusions, and only indirectly about sense—precisely, through the paradoxes which signification does not resolve, or indeed which it creates. (22)

Certainly, signification is the larger concern being explored in "A Caucus Race and A Long Tale," where we find the Mouse to be signifying that his family's tale (story) was "long and sad," but Alice considers the signified to be the Mouse's actual tail—causing her to be baffled by the adjectives the Mouse has used (*AIW* 25).

In the Alice books we find plentiful evidence of a theoretical mind at work, as Dodgson examines such topics as syllogisms, abstraction, pragmatic social skills, and stigmatization. An Aristotelian theme can be located in *AIW*, where the Pigeon assumes Alice is a snake based on faulty syllogism: after being told that "little girls eat eggs quite as much as serpents do," the Pigeon has deduced that "if they do, why, then they're a kind of serpent" (*AIW* 52). While some may find the Pigeon's faulty syllogism to be a mere grasp at humor, we cannot understand the humor unless we understand the theory being parodied. Furthermore, the abstractness of language is taken up when the Dormouse asks if Alice has ever seen "such a thing as a drawing of a muchness?" (*AIW* 77). We find that Alice has finally learned what is required of certain

²⁴ "No wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise.' 'Wouldn't it really?' said Alice in a tone of great surprise. 'Of course not,' said the Mock Turtle. 'Why, if a fish came to *me*, and told me he was going on a journey, I should say, 'With what porpoise?'" (*AIW* 109).

speech genres when she stops herself from telling the Mock Turtle that she has eaten one of his friends: “I’ve often seen them at din—” (AIW 107). And Alice’s adventures with the Fawn help us to consider stigmatization through language, as the Fawn was walking happily with Alice until they left “the wood where things have no names” (AIW 186).

The theorists previously discussed have also extracted evidence from the Alice books of a man concerned with language. We find that DeLeuze shows us a “stoic” stance in the Knight’s discussion of “A-Sitting on a Gate.” Robin Lakoff delivers a proto-Wharfian concern at work in the King’s eating of the ham sandwich and hay (381), as Alice’s words have ensured the occurrence. Kirk illuminates a pre-Peirce take on the question of “Do cats eat bats?” versus “Do bats eat cats?” (58-59). We also find Dodgson’s theoretical approach to language has been taken up by those who examine “Jabberwocky.” Referring to the translation problems that have arisen with “Jabberwocky,” Lösel points out that “Lewis Carroll puts the translator into a difficult position. He takes language at its word and uncovers secret relations between words” (as qtd. by Imholtz in “Latin and Greek” 212). Moreover, Richards’s utilization of “Jabberwocky” is meant to solidify his argument that you can only get meaning within a sentence: “[this notion of a word as being backed up by other words that are not uttered or thought of] is only recognizing on a larger, wider scale the principle that Lewis Carroll was using in Jabberwocky” (*The Philosophy* 1293). Richards finds that we can understand “Jabberwocky,” even though it is full of created words, because it exemplifies the need to consider all words as a group when contemplating signification, which is, of course, a furthering of Ferdinand de Saussure’s syntagmatic theory—the belief that words signify best when considered in succession or relation to one another. These theorists do not merely serve as conduits for the linguistic and rhetorical concerns found within the texts but also as witnesses that can speak to the theoretical nature of the texts.

It may be difficult for some to see Dodgson as theorist because they see “play,” but his type of play has been recognized as theory. Twenty-five years after the publication of *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, Saussure likened language to chess. Saussure uses chess to explain his synchronic theory of linguistics, which revolves around the fact that “linguistic changes affect isolated elements only” (88), much like moving one piece on a chessboard affects only the other pieces next to which it has been placed. Whether or not we find a reasonable analogy has been created, Saussure allows us to easily visualize language as a game that can be played.

Wolfgang Iser tells us that there are different reasons to play a game or different types of games that can be played. For instance, *agōn* is a game of contest or struggle and *alea* is a game where chance rules. Both types of games may be easily identified in Dodgson’s fiction, but we find that Dodgson plays both types of games with the same pieces: utterances. In *AIW*, where *alea* can be found, we find cards and Alice’s remarks on a lack of rules. Alice must maneuver through her social interactions in Wonderland and figure out how to convey meaning in a socially acceptable way without knowledge of a logical approach. In *TLG*, where *agōn* is evident, Alice proceeds through a game of chess with a relegated approach; if Alice wants to be queen in the Looking-glass world she must follow a certain path, which causes her to converse with specific people. However, Alice is not able to converse sensibly with these people, even though she is trying to follow their rules, because the rules are flawed. Both forms of play result in realistic verbal confusion and social conflict; therefore, Dodgson has chosen the forms of play that we are engaging in everyday when faced with the lacking or overly-prescriptive rules that exist within our current communicative systems.

Iser maintains that “there are already elements of both free and instrumental play in games of conflict and of chance” (Armstrong 216), so it should not be surprising that Dodgson is able to reveal the sort of language play that is just fun and the sort that reveals an underlying issue. What is most interesting is that Dodgson does not offer us *ilinx*, which is a game that “subvert[s] all fixed positions in order to induce vertigo” (Armstrong 217). This is most obviously understood when we compare Dodgson’s dream worlds²⁵ to the ones found in movies like *Inception* or *What Dreams May Come*, or even those in Shakespeare’s fiction. Both *agōn* and *alea* are being played with utterances in the worlds of Alice, just as they are in our world because Dodgson recognizes that they are both logically applicable to our everyday socio-linguistic conditions. Dodgson does play with language, but he plays language games that we play all the time.

Dodgson shows us that, whether we approach our social interaction as intentional or accidental, we will not be able to make meaningful moves through communication unless we communicate logically. In our everyday communications we have to make certain movements in order to convey meaning. If our movements are restricted because we do not know or forgot the rules that allow us to move forward with meaningful conveyance (or because the rules are bad and send us to the wrong spot on the rhetorical board), we cannot convey meaning in a profitable

²⁵ Dodgson’s dream worlds make perfectly good sense because they are not meant to represent de-stabilizing worlds and they do not engage in de-stabilizing games. Rather, they are meant to reveal as much of our reality as would be found in a dream that results from a child’s concerns with language rules that are causing her (or him) issues on a daily basis. It is important, however, not to get lost in the dream aspect. The dream aspect is not meant to take center-stage, which is why the fact that Alice has been dreaming is not implied until the end of the story. The dream aspect exists to provide a framework for play that reveals the inadequacies of our language rules (not our linguistic structure, for which we need only to follow the existing rules).

manner, which means we are likely to face the Duchess's sentence, which most likely won't make sense²⁶.

Dodgson realized that we could not solve our communication issues through consideration of separate words because it is not the words themselves that are causing issues; the issues arise from how, when, why, where we employ our words, which speaks to Saussure's assertion that a material object is only of value when "it takes on or becomes identified with its value in the game" (108). For Saussure the individual morphemes can be replaced as long as the replacement carries the same value as the original morpheme (109). Dodgson shows us that this may not be the case. Saussure appears to have considered much of what Dodgson has obviously considered; however, Saussure felt that we would greatly benefit from organizing grammar along a syntagmatic and paradigmatic axis (135), while Dodgson appears to have taken our understanding of this axis for granted and felt we would benefit from better language rules that help us to avoid verbal confusion, chaos, and threats of being decapitated or buttered.

Dodgson shows what we already know, but what we do not always understand. We know that we spoke to someone and that the conversation resulted in confusion or conflict, but we rarely know that the reason this negative occurrence happened is due to the nature of our communicative system, which is not logically regulated. This should not be surprising to the rhetorical theorist, as Richards and Ogden take up the theme of rules in *The Meaning of Meaning*:

It is not always new words that are needed, but a means of controlling them as symbols, a means of readily discovering to what in the world on any occasion they are used to refer, and this is what an adequate theory of definition should provide. (1278)

²⁶ An example of Zeno's paradox.

Dodgson's fictive play allows us to recognize the real issues that have caused our communication mishaps: we do not have a logical system for controlling the symbols in a way that ensures signification routinely occurs as desired.

The play at work in the *Alices* is unquestionably a result of Dodgson's logic driven mind. He once wrote to you a young man named "Gaynor" to tell the boy that if he insisted on spelling Dodgson without the "g" than Dodgson would have to start calling him 'aynor. The logic behind this playful remark is if we dispense with some of the *G*s we must dispense with all of them—it is only fair and would make much more sense. And the logic behind this playful remark is found in Dodgson's approach to argument, as is discussed in T.B. Strong's "Lewis Carroll":

If he argued, he was somewhat rigid and precise, carefully examining the terms used, relentless in pointing out the logical results of any position assumed by his opponent, and quick to devise a puzzling case when he wanted to bring objections against a rule of principle. But his skill lay rather in tracing consequences than in criticizing fundamental assumptions. (11)

Strong recognizes Dodgson's "play" in the *Logic* as an attempt to solidify meaning for words, "as if they were mathematical symbols" (45). He recognizes Dodgson's quest for a systematic approach. Strong further cements the assertions of this study because he allows us to locate Dodgson as theorist not because he offered straight-forward criticism of theories or approaches, but because he traces the logical consequences of one approach or another, of one theory or another. And one of the ways he does this is through the encasement of our communicative attempts in a diorama that allows us to forego horological concerns: he offers us the types of verbal confusion that result regardless of historical time period because they are inherent in our communicative systems.

What we learn from the *Alices* is that we must consider our language more carefully, as a system. Saussure tells us that language rules are founded in tradition that has resulted from arbitrary influences (74). Dodgson has recognized that language rules were not always created from thoughtful and logical appropriation. Moreover, Dodgson realizes that we do not have issues with rules in general, whether they are created arbitrarily or not, but we do have issues with inconsistent or nonsensical rules; W.H. Auden takes up this notion in “Today’s ‘Wonder-World’ Needs Alice,” where he both recognizes the language theme and the desire for sense. Auden, who recognizes that Dodgson is showing us language issues through the eyes of a child, notes that Dodgson is revealing not a problem with rules themselves, but with the lack of a consistent structure which results in a child (or a learner of language, as it were) not being able to “perceive any law linking one command to another in a consistent pattern” (Auden 11). Through Alice, Dodgson tells us that we must carefully observe our rules in action, not just to learn what is expected of us verbally (as children must), but also to carefully consider our rules. After all, if we are going to have language rules, they should be sensible rules that prevent verbal confusion.

What Alice found in Wonderland and the Looking-glass world is what we find there: the verbal confusion that arises when signification does not occur as intended. Alice is the voice of the fledgling human who is trying to understand why she (or he) is not able to communicate effectively with others. She serves to remind us that language does not come from *a priori* knowledge but from *a posteriori* knowledge.

The *Alices* are epistemological in that they show us how we know what we know about language and communication. Alice tells us that manners are not learned through sermonic instruction; we learn manners, for the most part, by observing others and by experimenting with interactions until we learn how to communicate without being rude (or how rudeness occurs)

and/or until we learn how to avoid the verbal confusion that causes conflict and chaos. Dodgson is offering us empirical knowledge of our language because Alice's experiences with language are based on Dodgson's perceptual observations of communication. If our knowledge of language is constructed through interaction and personal observation, how do we avoid the conflict that can be caused through verbal faux pas before we commit them? We can observe the interactions between others that result in conflict and learn from those (as children do) because Dodgson has offered us an *it-is construction*, one that allows us to learn about communication through observation, not through dry, unrelatable lectures.

The creator of the *Alices* gave us an entertaining and enlightening tale that was meant to convey the knowledge of our communicative systems, most especially that of English, where “Language is worth a thousand pounds a word!” (*TLG* 178) and the verbs are stubborn: “adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs” (*TLG* 230). Through his theoretical play, Dodgson gives us perfect illustrations of language issues—illustrations that can be used while explaining rhetorical theory to adults, as well as teaching both language arts and rhetoric to children.

CHAPTER IV

THE CARROLLIAN ART OF LANGUAGE

*The arts are made great [. . .] by those who are able to discover
all of the resources which each art affords.*
—Isocrates, “Against the Sophists”

Almost immediately after its release, *Alice in Wonderland* was marketed and treated as a lesson book in English and German (Collingwood 107). This is not surprising given that *Alice in Wonderland* (*AIW*) and *Through the Looking Glass* (*TLG*)²⁷ represent Dodgson’s obvious commentary on ineffective communication and language, most specifically the English language²⁸. Dodgson’s ability to humorously comment on language and how it is used has enabled him to provide excellent tools for talking to students about the complexities and problems we encounter with language every day.

Because Dodgson has provided us with humorous literature that addresses language, speech, and other communication issues, Dodgson has provided us with a useful instructional tool; however, *AIW* and *TLG* have been grossly over-looked by today’s language arts teachers. In a recent investigation of how many Tennessee State standards may be addressed by incorporating *AIW* and *TLG* as instructional tools, I was not surprised to find that most of the

²⁷ *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Saw There* are now more commonly known as *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, and they are often published together in one book, as was the case with the Kingsport Press edition used in this study.

²⁸ What is English? “‘Fiddle-dee-dee’s not English,’ Alice replied gravely” (*TLG* 275). When should it be used? “‘Speak in French when you can’t think of the English for a thing” (*TLG* 175). Are you speaking English? “‘I speaks English, doesn’t I?” (*TLG* 281).

Eighth Grade Language Arts standards²⁹ might be addressed through a reading of the *Alice* books. Based on readability tests, *AIW* and *TLG* may be utilized in an eighth grade classroom, as they should be considered appropriate instructional level materials for both students at and slightly below grade level expectations: *Alice in Wonderland* has been rated as eighth grade reading material according to Laesbarhedsindex (LIX), Rate Index (RIX), and Fry tests, and *Through the Looking Glass* has been rated as seventh grade reading material according to New Dale-Chall, Fry, and Raygor Estimate tests.

Tennessee lists 82 language arts standard performance indicators (SPIs) that the 8th grade student must tackle, such as “SPI 0801.1.2 Identify the correct use of verbs within context” (“Tennessee English”). Obviously, almost any book could be employed to teach and to evaluate the skill of identifying parts of speech within context; therefore, it is not surprising that the *Alice* books would satisfy all such SPIs (SPI 0801.1.1-SPI 0801.1.7 and SPI 0801.1.9-SPI 0801.1.12). However, the *Alice* books can be used as tools to achieve almost all the Tennessee 8th grade language arts SPIs, with the possible exception of a mere eleven. Moreover, it is the best choice for addressing certain SPIs, such as “SPI 0801.8.8 Analyze figurative language within context” (“Tennessee English”). In line with Quintilian’s proposal that rhetoric—“The art of using language effectively so as to persuade or influence others, [. . .]; the study of principles and rules to be followed by a speaker or writer striving for eloquence” (*OED*)—should be taught from a young age, as and when grammar is taught, the language arts material provided by Dodgson—within his fantastical works—may also be considered appropriate illustrations of not only language arts concerns, but also of how we communicate.

²⁹ “Tennessee English Language Arts Standards, Grade 8” (Effective 2009-2010).

Verbal Confusion

Verbal confusion and other language-related problems are experienced by everyone who tries to communicate with another being, and it starts with speech used every day without any thought given to the words employed: figures of speech. Dodgson addresses many of the problematic figures of speech that have been adopted by English speakers world-wide. Alice almost drowns in her tears (*AIW* 17) because she, like most English speaking children, was told at one time or another to stop crying or she would “drown in her tears,” which, of course, is physically improbable. Dodgson draws attention to another improbability when Alice decides she won’t ask for information because she may “see it written up somewhere” (*AIW* 4); this statement violates our normative use of metaphor, as we would say we might “see it written down somewhere,” but Alice’s version actually makes more sense because we generally do not look down for signs, we look up. The same conundrum is found when Alice, after a slate comes off the roof and falls towards the creatures on the ground, overhears the creatures yelling “Heads below!” (*AIW* 36); once again we have more sensical speech that violates our common understanding of the phrases we employ routinely, as we would most certainly have said, “Heads Up!”

Quintilian instructs teachers to “distinguish words that are [. . .] misapplied, or used contrary to the rules of language” (66 – 67). One reason Quintilian may have felt that contrarily used words are worth our time and attention is the conflict that can arise from application. The conflict that arises from verbal confusion is illustrated through Dodgson’s numerous examples of problematic figures of speech, where inherent idiosyncrasies and the issues they create are the focus of Dodgson’s rhetoric. The Mad Hatter is obviously being accused of actually “killing time” when the Queen says “He’s murdering the time!” (*AIW* 74). And the King should not

really make sense when he uses the common expression “stand down,” which is why the Mad Hatter responds with “I can’t go no lower [. . .] I’m on the floor, as it is” (*AIW* 121). No comment on problematic sayings is complete without considering the universal “I didn’t mean—” (*TLG* 272); therefore, we should not be surprised when the Red Queen reprimands Alice for employing this phrase: “That’s just what I complain of! You should have meant!” (*TLG* 272). Why speak if you do not mean what you say? We do it all the time; we say “I could care less” when we mean “I couldn’t care less,” and we say “I see” when we mean “I understand you”: “‘Only I don’t sing it,’ [Humpty Dumpty] added as an explanation. ‘I see you don’t,’ said Alice. ‘If you can see whether I’m singing or not, you’ve sharper eyes than most’” (*TLG* 233). In Dodgson’s illustrations we find that the misapplied words cause anger and irritation, but the misapplied words are also being used in accordance with accepted language traditions (or rules). In essence, Dodgson is pointing out that Quintilian is right, except the misapplied words are not being used contrary to our rules; they are a part of our accepted rules or language traditions. The logic that has led to these supposed “nonsensical” conversations reveals the nonsense we are encountering as our own; after all, Alice is using the words and phrases we use every day, and she is most often the one saying things that do not make sense. Dodgson has given us a way to speak to students about the “misapplied” words that we believe we are applying correctly and how they affect the understanding of those who hear our message, as well as how they can result in a response that we did not expect nor do we understand, which of course results in ineffective communication, as the communication process is likely to break down once one of the parties is too angry to participate in a productive conversation.

Other authors have commented on the common sayings that have proven nonsensical, but none have done so with the humorous flair of Dodgson: “‘Where’s the servant whose business it

is to answer the door?' [Alice] began angrily. [. . .] 'To answer the door?' [the Frog] said. 'What's it been asking of?'" (TLG 280). These examples of figurative language can be used to explain figures of speech, which Quintilian found advisable (66-67), and to cover Tennessee SPI 0801.8.8: "analyze figurative language," which basically equates to identifying and defining these terms. Furthermore, examples like these are ludic in that "the aim [of their usage] is not primarily to communicate meaning but to draw attention to the way the normal rules of language can be bent or broken to convey novel effects" (Crystal 464), which places them in the realm of pathos, as a comedic appeal is a pathetic appeal because it works on our emotions. And if we feel emotionally invested, we are more likely to empathize, which results in our openness to the transformation (or educative process) that the author desires³⁰. That Dodgson desires the education of his readership should not be surprising; after all, it is the base assertion of Patricia Spacks, who claims that "Alice's adventures are an educative process" (272).

Unnecessary Speech

Dodgson's lesson on ineffective speech is not relegated only to figures of speech but touches almost every aspect of verbal confusion that can result from currently existing rules that are either illogical or are not being followed, such as those rules that address the problematic or unnecessary quantifier. How can we take more of something if we have had none? "'I've had nothing yet,' Alice replied in an offended tone, 'so I can't take some more.' 'You mean, you can't take *less*,' said the Hatter; 'it's very easy to take *more* than nothing'" (AIW 75). Dodgson makes it clear that we can take more. Dodgson, ever the mathematician, also finds fault with trying to expand on the idea of nothing, as nothing is the equivalent of zero: "'Nothing,' said

³⁰ "We see the value of empathy and understanding as the only real means to achieve the common ground necessary for any truly transformative process" (O'Brien 87).

Alice. ‘Nothing *whatever?*’ persisted the King” (*AIW* 125). Of course, the King is in essence asking Alice if she is certain she is telling the truth, but that is not what he has said; what he has said and what he means are two different things, which explains the obsession of Dodgson’s characters with saying what you mean and meaning what you say.

While some of these commentaries on the problematic or unnecessary quantifier are presented in a form that requires inference, some are stated outright: “‘I am seven and a half, exactly.’ ‘You needn’t say “exactly,”’ the Queen remarked” (*TLG* 213). Dodgson’s characters reveal the conflict that can arise from words employed in a contrary fashion or in an expected fashion that leads to contrary understandings; therefore, these examples that lead to conflict can be used to “identify the kind(s) of conflict present in a literary plot,” which allows for the exploration of Tennessee SPI 0801.8.10, as students can certainly recognize the person vs. person, person vs. self, or person vs. environment situations that arise because of problematic communication.

Syntax and Semantics

In his *Alice* books, Dodgson is able to comment upon almost every aspect of speech, so it is not surprising that he includes the major elements of linguistic concern: semantics and syntax. Syntax is obviously important; words must appear in a certain order for them to make sense and be understood. If we want to know the answer to “‘Do cats eat bats?’” we cannot ask “‘Do bats eats cats?’” (*AIW* 4) We cannot move words around without losing the intended meaning, or can we? “‘For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.’ [. . .] ‘From the Queen. An invitation for the Duchess to play croquet’” (*AIW* 55). Apparently, sometimes we can and sometimes we cannot, as Dodgson has evidenced. And, sometimes, when we move the words

around we do not just say something nonsensical, we say something quite humorous: “‘I’ve often seen a cat without a grin,’ thought Alice; ‘but a grin without a cat!’”³¹ (*AIW* 67). Alice’s experiences reveal that the placement of our words affects our message—especially if you want to “‘say what you mean’” (*AIW* 69); they also correlate with Ferdinand de Saussure’s assertion that external factors do not affect internal rules (23), as even falling down a rabbit-hole does not change the fact that words must be presented in a prescribed order if they are to convey meaning.

Dodgson’s treatment of semantics leads us to a better understanding of the rhetorical and philosophical discourse that has accumulated over the years in regards to signification. The King in *AIW* is found verbally trying on words: “‘Important—unimportant—unimportant—important’” (*AIW* 127). This seems useless because he must use the one that relays the message he is trying to impart, unless the King can make words mean what he wants them to mean, like Humpty Dumpty does:

“There’s glory for you!”

“I don’t what you mean by ‘glory,’” Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. “Of course you don’t—till I tell you. I meant ‘there’s a nice knockdown argument for you.’”

“But ‘glory’ doesn’t mean ‘a nice knockdown argument,’” Alice objected.

“When *I* use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.” (*TLG* 229)

Even though Alice is only a child, she understands that we cannot assign just any meaning we want to just any word, which is why she tries to correct the Cheshire Cat’s lexical choice (*AIW* 65). The Cheshire Cat, like a wayward philosopher, responds flippantly to Alice’s reliance on

³¹ Tenniel’s illustration of the Cheshire Cat’s grin is an appropriate example for Tennessee SPI 0801.7.2: “Select a visual image that best reinforces a viewpoint or enhances a presentation.”

semantic rules: “Call it what you like” (*AIW* 65). Again, when Alice tries to correct the words used by the Mock Turtle, the Mock Turtle tells Alice “I mean what I say” (*AIW* 109), which echoes the words Alice herself used when addressing the March Hare and the Mad Hatter and is an example of a solipsistic approach, an approach described by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson as “the Humpty-Dumpty notion that something means ‘just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less’” (185).

Concision and Clarity

Dodgson reveals that you can mean what you say, but that does not ensure that others will understand the meaning you are trying to convey. Many teachers focus on concision as a means of affecting clarity, but young or immature writers rarely explain themselves enough or in a sufficient manner. Concision is not always the best way to convey a message; as Dodgson points out, being concise is not always possible:

“I meant by ‘impenetrability’ that we’ve had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you’d mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don’t mean to stop here all the rest of your life.”

“That’s a great deal to make one word mean,” Alice said in a thoughtful tone. (*TLG* 230)

While Humpty Dumpty may have been thinking all of the above when he said the word *impenetrability*, he did not convey all he was thinking with the utterance of this one word; furthermore, he was not likely to relay all of his thoughts with any one word, unless he can successfully manage a portmanteau³², where “there are two meanings packed up in one word” (*TLG* 231). All in all, we get the sense that Dodgson felt a better understanding of how semantics

³² “A word formed by blending sounds from two or more distinct words and combining their meanings” (*OED*). The definition of *portmanteau*, as it is used in this sense, is credited to L. Carroll. “A word formed by blending sounds from two or more distinct words and combining their meanings” (*OED*).

affects our ability to convey meaning to others would result in better communication, because he has given us an explanation (or two) that support this key idea, an idea that is set in opposition to solipsism and can be used to cover Tennessee SPI 0801.3.9: “select illustrations, explanations, anecdotes, descriptions and/or facts to support key ideas.” Certainly, after reading the Humpty Dumpty and Cheshire Cat excerpts, side-by-side, most students will grasp their import as evidence that we must use the right words and the necessary amount of words in order to be understood within a given situation.

The Power of Speech

We know that all utterance has meaning, and, furthermore, that utterances have power. In fact, some utterances are more powerful than others, as the utterances of the Mouse clearly demonstrate: “Our family always *hated* cats—nasty, low, vulgar things!” (*AIW* 19). Words can be used to oppress or stigmatize, and the Mouse’s speech is typical of someone who wishes to exert the power of class over another person or class³³. Additionally, utterances can be used to exert power over another individual: the Caterpillar uses speech to contradict and condescend to Alice because he is using speech to assert authority. He makes Alice uncomfortable with his “very short remarks” (*AIW* 42). The examples given here are indicative of Judith Butler’s assertion that words of this sort do not merely “relay a message of [. . .] inferiority,” they speak to “the verbal institution of [. . .] subordination” (351). In other words, the Mouse and the Caterpillar are not just trying to say they are of superior class; they are using the powerful nature of speech to ensure their superiority is considered part of the social institution. These examples allow us to “identify and analyze [tone] that shapes meaning within context” (Tennessee SPI

³³ The Mouse is a perfect candidate for Tennessee SPI 0801.8.6: “Identify and analyze how the author reveals character.”

0801.8.7) and to “evaluate text for fact or opinion” (Tennessee SPI 0801.5.2), as well as to “identify instances of bias and stereotyping” (Tennessee SPI 0801.5.8).

Almost all of the creatures of Wonderland attempt to use speech as a tool to “subjugate” or “suppress” Alice. Attempted verbal subjugation is evident when the March Hare and the Mad Hatter see Alice for the first time: “‘No room! No room!’ they cried out when they saw Alice coming” (*AIW* 68). Alice responds “indignantly,” which indicates that she is aware of the attempt to verbally control her (*AIW* 68). Of course, the most powerful speech is the speech that silences the utterances of others. After growing so large that she was stuck in the Rabbit’s house with her arm hanging out the window, Alice grows tired of the rowdy creatures who are throwing pebbles at her: “‘I’ll put a stop to this,’ she said to herself, and shouted out, ‘You’d better not do that again!’ which produced another dead silence” (*AIW* 37). Interestingly, her reaction to the pebble-throwing creatures appears to be the first time Alice realizes the power of speech, but it is not.

We find Alice understands the power of speech when she is addressing herself: “‘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.)” (*AIW* 3). Alice uses these “nice grand words” because she desires to sound intelligent, whether she believes she is or not. Alice finds out, as most children eventually do, that sometimes people are not powerful, but have only seemed so because of the power of the words they have employed: the soldiers who come for Alice in the courtroom are shooed away because, whether they call themselves soldiers or not, she finally realizes that they are “‘nothing but a pack of cards!’” (*AIW* 133)

Wonderland and the Looking-glass world are filled with creatures that use words to construct a façade of power and/or intelligence, but none more so than the Walrus:

“The time has come,” the Walrus said,

“To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings.” (*TLG* 197)

The Walrus is representative of the humans who employ speech to make themselves appear intelligent and, therefore, powerful. Of what use would it be to the Walrus or the Carpenter to discuss these things, especially since two of them are “mute points”? There is no use to these types of discussions other than to give the appearance of intelligence, which, among other reasons, is a good indication that the Walrus and the Carpenter are excellent subjects to employ while covering Tennessee SPI 0801.5.9: “make inferences and draw conclusions based on evidence in the text.” Applying this particular SPI to the Walrus and the Carpenter seems especially apropos since Alice herself tries to conclude which of the two she likes better based on the poem about them (*TLG* 199); however, a consideration of these characters should occur before the students read Alice’s response to the poem, so that the students will not be affected by Alice’s consideration. Ultimately, we find that the Walrus and the Carpenter are able to establish power over the oysters because they have used language that creates a mistaken belief that they were powerful in the first place.

Polysemic Words

Dodgson’s commentary on language would not be complete without attention being given to the multiple meanings that many English words carry. It is rather surprising that a language with such a large lexicon would need to “make a word mean so much,” but some words are associated with numerous different meanings. Much of Dodgson’s humor can be contributed to the misunderstanding that arises when a polysemic word is utilized; for instance, the Mouse

tries to dry the wet Alice by telling her a dry (boring) tale (*AIW* 22-23), and when Alice speaks of beating time the Hatter replies, “He won’t stand beating” (*AIW* 72).

Most of Dodgson’s commentaries on multiple meanings are presented as easily understood puns; however, his most complicated attempt, a homonymic pun involving two meaning-packed utterances, may be more difficult for the average English speaker to identify and is actually a lovely example of Saussure’s syntagmatic and paradigmatic interdependence theory. We find that when the Sheep first cries “Feather!” Alice takes it for an exclamation; however, Alice asks why the Sheep keeps yelling the word *feather* and the Sheep tells her it is because she is a “goose” (*TLG* 217). The real reason the Sheep keeps yelling the word *feather* is because it is a synonym for *row*, and he wants Alice to row the boat they are in. And the term *goose*, which may come to mind when one hears the word *feather*, is a double entendre used by the Sheep to imply that Alice is a foolish person, apparently because she does not understand that the Sheep is telling her to row the boat. Here, we have a funny illustration of a topic taken up by Saussure between 1906 and 1911—how signification occurs. Alice is supposed to understand that the Sheep is telling her to row the boat and, as a result of her not understanding the first comment, that the sheep is using paradigmatic association to tell she is silly for not understanding the initial command that resulted within a syntagmatic delivery. After all, Saussure maintains that “all linguistic units depend either on what precedes or follows in the spoken sequence, or else on the successive parts of which they are themselves composed” (126). Dodgson has used two words related by one of their meanings to reveal that an entirely different meaning can be signified when their homonyms are employed simultaneously.

Homophones

Much like words with multiple meanings, homophones are often a source of confusion in the English language, a fact that did not escape Dodgson. In fact, it is his humorous treatment of homophones that led to the most famous representation of a shape poem: The Mouse's Tail. Because Alice hears *tail* when the Mouse says *tale*, she envisions an actual tail as the Mouse tells his story:

“Mine is a long and a sad tale!” said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing. “It *is* a long tail, certainly,” said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse's tail; “but why do you call it sad?”
(*AIW* 25)

Dodgson's commentary on homophones leads us to humorously consider *not* and *knot* (*AIW* 27), *axis* and *axes* (*AIW* 60), *tea* and *T* (*AIW* 119), *flour* and *flower* (*TLG* 275). Dodgson's treatment of English reveals the problems that arise with a language that adopts freely, with little thought as to whether or not the new word may sound or look like existing lexical options; his treatment also allows us to “recognize [possible] usage errors occurring in context” (Tennessee SPI 0801.1.14), to “analyze [a pun] within context” (Tennessee SPI 0801.8.8), and can be employed to “choose the correct meaning/usage of a multi-meaning word by replacing the word in context with an appropriate synonym or antonym” (Tennessee SPI 0801.1.17).

Historical Words

Many of the words that we claim as English are actually borrowed from another language or created by compounding, processes which can be illustrated humorously with the words of Dodgson. Nothing says compounding like compounding two words that have already been compounded: Rocking Horsefly and Snapdragonfly (*TLG* 182-183). And Dodgson draws attention to the foreign words we employ everyday as English: “Said the Dodo solemnly, [. . .]

‘I move that the meeting adjourn, for the immediate adoption of more energetic remedies.’ ‘Speak English!’ said the Eaglet” (AIW 23). The Eaglet is actually justified in telling the Dodo to speak English, because the words the Dodo has chosen are borrowed from other languages and were not initially English (or Anglo-Saxon words): *energetic* is Greek; *adjourn* is Old French; and *remedies* and *adoption* are French. Of course, this remark about the un-English parts of our language is hardly surprising after the Mouse has told a story concerning the Norman invasion, a story that was preceded by mention of the same French-speaking peoples: “‘I dare say it’s a French mouse, come over with William the Conqueror³⁴” (AIW 18). Dodgson’s comments on the history of our language are interesting to consider and can certainly be utilized while covering Tennessee SPI 0801.8.13: “determine the influence of culture or ethnicity on the themes and issues of literary texts.” An exploration of cultural influence is appropriately applied to these illustrations as they speak to the different cultures that have influenced our language.

The effects of the Norman invasion on our language most certainly can be considered as part of the message intended when the Anglo-Saxon messenger arrives on the scene: “‘He’s an Anglo-Saxon Messenger—and those are Anglo-Saxon attitudes” (TLG 239). What are Anglo-Saxon attitudes? The answer may be partly discerned from the poem “Jabberwocky,” which Dodgson originally intended to be an Anglo-Saxon poem. The Jabberwocky poem is written in a language Alice does not understand; still, she is able to determine that “‘*somebody* killed *something*” (TLG 160), because the language of the poem follows the rules of the English

³⁴ While Tennessee 8th grade students do not necessarily cover the Norman Conquest, Tennessee 9th grade students do learn about the rivalry between the French and English through their coverage of European monarchs (in World History); therefore, a preliminary discussion of the events of 1066 can prove helpful.

language or the Old English language³⁵, as it were. While middle grades and secondary students do not generally take up the topic of Old English (or West Saxon), college students do, which makes these examples appropriate in classes such as History of the English Language, where they can be used to scaffold new knowledge onto existing schemas.

Words at Work

Dodgson leaves almost no linguistic stone unturned in his *Alice* books. We find examples of different words with the same meaning, as both “jurors” and “jurymen” are used to describe the members of the jury at the trial (*AIW* 115), and words that sound similar, such as *lessen* and *lesson* (*AIW* 103) and *purpose* and *porpoise* (*AIW* 109). Even different phrases that mean the same thing get the Dodgson treatment: “To Tweedledum’s House” and “To the House of Tweedledee” (*TLG* 189). Of course, all of these are examples of how difficult language can be; sometimes it is hard to find the right word to express how we feel or what we mean. However, sometimes there is only one right word for what we mean, which the Mad Hatter should have known when he was asking Alice to verify the information he had gotten from his watch. When he asks Alice “what day of the month” it is (*AIW* 71) he reveals the absurdity of such a question. Not just any word can be inserted into just any phrase.

Why did Dodgson take up the theme of language? Because he saw, or rather heard, what we have all heard: the confusing words of others. When Jeremy Bentham employed the word

³⁵ It is not surprising that Time is a “him” given that Anglo-Saxon time was masculine: “‘If you knew Time as well as I do,’ said the Hatter, ‘you wouldn’t talk about wasting *it*. It’s *him*’” (*AIW* 72). The word “tima” (time—hour) was a weak masculine noun in Old English.

*antipathist*³⁶ he assuredly confused many people who had no ready referent archived for the word, most certainly because he employs it in a contrary fashion; after all, we understand that *sympathy* and *empathy* are applied when we share or have concern for the feelings of others, so we would assume that *antipathy* means to be against feeling. Bentham, however, employs *antipathist* to signify “a natural enemy,” which Dodgson comments upon by playing with the word: “How funny it’ll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downward! The Antipathies, I think” (*AIW* 4). Really, who of us has not, at one time or another, been confused by something we have heard or read? Children certainly experience this referent confusion all the time, as is illustrated in *AIW* with the use of the word *suppressed*:

Here one of the guinea pigs cheered, and was immediately suppressed by the officers of the court. [. . .] “I’m glad I have seen that done,” thought Alice. “I’ve so often read in the newspapers, at the end of trials, ‘There was some attempt at applause, which was immediately suppressed by the officers of the court,’ and I never understood what it meant until now.” (*AIW* 120-121)

What had occurred in Alice’s mind the first time she heard the word *suppressed*? Recently, a ten-year-old child, who had never heard the word before, revealed that meaning is easily assumed based on prior knowledge: “*Depressed* means sad, so *suppressed* means happy?” Given our ten-year old subject’s response, both of these examples may be properly chunked for Tennessee SPI 0801.6.1: “formulat[ion] of questions before, during, and after reading,” as these sections will most likely lead to questions about the terms on which Dodgson is commenting. Furthermore, in *AIW*, we find that the gryphon felt that Alice should understand the meaning of *uglification* since

³⁶ According to the OED, an antipathist is “One possessed by [natural contrariety or incompatibility] or constitutional aversion; a natural enemy.” The first citation is contributed to Jeremy Bentham, a utilitarian philosopher.

she knew the meaning of *beautification* (AIW 101-102), basing his assumption on her presumed ability to understand antonyms. While *depression* and *suppression* are not antonyms, neither are *beautification* and *uglification*, but both assumptions are formed due to a general premise that most words have antonyms. Of course, Alice's mistake is more humorous than that of our ten year-old subject because there is no such word as *uglification* (or, at least, there wasn't before Dodgson created it). All of the aforementioned examples can be utilized during an exploration of Tennessee SPI 0801.1.16: "use context clues and/or knowledge of root words and affixes to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words." In fact, the way Dodgson introduces and plays with these examples of words built from Latin roots makes their consideration the perfect introduction to a serious discussion of why Latin root words are important to our understanding of English.

The words we choose to employ have fallen under great scrutiny within the field of rhetoric. How we assign meaning is of great concern to rhetoricians and philosophers alike. And some of the most troublesome words are the ones that describe abstract thoughts: "Did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness?" (AIW 77). We may believe that Alice would think it was difficult to draw muchness because muchness is not a word, but the real reason Alice would think it difficult to draw muchness is because it represents those abstract words for which we have no concrete referent.

Ambiguity and Vagueness

The lack of a concrete referent is an issue that creates ambiguity—"when a word can be taken in two or more senses" (*Rhetorica Ad Herennium* 280). Ambiguity most usually results from the use of a pronoun without a specified antecedent. Dodgson provides a much underappreciated example of the aggravation caused by ambiguity in the poem read at the court

hearing, which, in its capacity as evidence, reveals the importance of specified antecedents (*AIW* 129). Pronouns that lack antecedents and undeclared subjects lead to the most exasperating confusions for Alice. When the Pigeon goes on a tirade about “them,” Alice has no idea to whom the Pigeon is referring (*AIW* 50). And when the Caterpillar tells Alice ““One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter”” (*AIW* 49) Alice has to exert all of her mental energy to figure out to what the Caterpillar is referring. These examples can obviously be used to “stress the correct pronoun-antecedent agreement for personal pronouns within context” (Tennessee SPI 0801.1.11), as well as to “identify the [author’s] purpose for writing” (Tennessee SPI 0801.3.1), especially the poem used as evidence, which does not have a title and, therefore, is the perfect choice for Tennessee SPI 0801.3.10: “select [or create] an appropriate title that reflects the topic of a written selection.” These examples can also be used in consideration of when we should avoid ambiguity and when we should employ it; in *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* the author maintains that “we must avoid those ambiguities which render the style obscure” and “seek those which produce an emphasis” (280). Dodgson has clearly employed ambiguity to emphasize the pitfalls of ambiguity, as he does with vagueness.

Akin to ambiguity, and just as confusing, is vagueness. Bertrand Russell finds vagueness to be “a matter of degree, depending upon the extent of the possible differences between different systems represented by the same representation” (“Vagueness”) ³⁷. In other words, sometimes our speech is not detailed enough to make sense. Dodgson draws attention to vagueness³⁷ when he creates homonymic puns, but he pens a more obvious example when Alice requests assistance from the Cheshire Cat:

³⁷ It is interesting to note that Russell claimed to have created a language that prevents vagueness (“Vagueness”), while Dodgson created a language that initially allowed for a greater emphasis of vagueness.

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where,” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you walk,” said the Cat.

“—so long as I get *somewhere*,” Alice added as an explanation.

“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the Cat, “if you only walk long enough!” (AIW 64)

Alice’s speech was not sufficient enough to garner the response she desired, just as the Dormouse’s story is insufficient, which causes Alice to ask for more details (AIW 75). Of course, the Dormouse’s impromptu details reveal that he is not a good story teller (like many of the children’s authors that came before Dodgson) and is just saying anything that pops into his head, which reveals a possible reason for vagueness of speech: ineptitude.

Pragmatic Social Skills

Ineptitude is at the essence of most communication problems. Although no one wants to admit the reason for miscommunication or lack of communication may be his or her own ineptitude, both Mikhail Bakhtin and I.A. Richards imply that our inability to understand words or utterances in context is the root of ineptitude. Bakhtin’s theory squarely places communication problems in the arena of ineptitude when he claims that people who “feel quite helpless in certain spheres of communication [. . .] do not have a practical command of generic forms used in a given sphere” (1239). Richards and Ogden indicate that miscommunication may arise from our assumptions that others communicate as we do:

Normally, whenever we hear anything said we spring spontaneously to an immediate conclusion, namely, that the speaker is referring to what we should be referring to were we speaking the words ourselves. (1276)

While people of all ages make these communication faux pas, the essence of the matter may be clearly illustrated with the experiences of children, as Dodgson does.

Ineptitude is the essence of childhood; therefore, it should not be surprising that Dodgson's tale, which is written for children, illustrates the specific difficulties that children experience with language. In general, the issues faced in childhood are illustrated by the fact that Alice often says the wrong thing and offends the creatures because she has not learned the pragmatic social skills needed for social interaction—a very common lesson for children to have to learn. We find examples of the type of speech or utterances for which children are often reprimanded: “‘Don't grunt,’ said Alice; ‘that's not at all a proper way of expressing yourself’” (*AIW* 62), which is the equivalent of “use your words.” A language lesson that all children should learn is that socially unacceptable speech may lead to being ostracized: “‘If you are going to turn into a pig, my dear,’ said Alice seriously, ‘I'll have nothing more to do with you’” (*AIW* 62). There are, after all, social rules that govern our speech, such as how we are to introduce two unacquainted parties: “‘Alice—Mutton; Mutton—Alice’” (*TLG* 283). Certain utterances and responses are deemed appropriate and are required by our society, a reminder of which we find in the Rabbit's questioning of Alice's reaction to the Duchess's sentence of execution: “‘What for?’ said Alice. ‘Did you say, ‘What a pity!’?’ the Rabbit asked” (*AIW* 85). Even though Alice did not feel pity, if she expressed anything at all, she was expected to express pity, which is what Bakhtin was recognizing when he asserted that there are “forms of utterances that are [socially] mandatory” (1240). These are certainly examples that can be used to cover Tennessee SPI 0801.5.9 again (infer and conclude), as Dodgson never says that the children should use their words (and in a prescribed manner) or they are no better than animals, but he does turn the baby into a pig because it does not use human speech. The baby/pig episode allows for the “prediction

of future events” (Tennessee SPI 0801.5.1), as long as the prediction is encouraged after the baby’s first grunt (*AIW* 62), and for the “analyz[ation] of cause-effect relationships” (Tennessee SPI 0801.5.3), as the baby turns into a pig because it does not “use its words.”

As Dodgson points out, there are pragmatic social skills that children must learn in order to be deemed socially acceptable, and these skills most often revolve around our utterances, which is why socially unacceptable speech or actions are pointed out, whether they are comical or not: “As they all spoke at one, she found it very hard to make out exactly what they said” (*AIW* 90). Alice is certain “Manners are not taught in lessons” (*TLG* 273), because manners, or socially acceptable behaviors and speech, are learned from observing them in action—and from reading them in entertaining children’s tales, apparently. Alice finds on several occasions that the “do not speak unless you are spoken to” rule is problematic, for she is sure never to know which end of this rule she is to be on:

“Speak when you’re spoken to!” the Queen sharply interrupted her. “But if everybody obeyed that rule,” said Alice, who was always ready for a little argument, “and if you only spoke when you were spoken to, and the other person always waited for you to begin, you see, nobody would ever say anything.” (*TLG* 271)

Alice’s reaction to this rule allows for the consideration of Tennessee SPI 0801.5.6: “identify an example of deductive or inductive reasoning in the text,” as Alice has realized the futility of this language rule through deductive reasoning. Through Alice’s interactions with the Queen and the Rose, who is frustrated because she was waiting for Alice to speak first (*TLG* 165), Dodgson acknowledges that there are rules that govern not only what we should say, but also when we should say anything at all—and if these rules are not logical they should be altered.

Alice certainly experiences the reality of language rules when speaking to the Mouse. Through her interactions with the Mouse, Alice reveals that she understands there are rules for

language use: “‘O Mouse!’ (Alice thought this must be the right way of speaking to a mouse: [. . .] she remembered having seen in her brother’s Latin Grammar’)” (*AIW* 18). However, it is not her address that proves troublesome; rather, it is the topic she chooses to broach. While speaking of her cat is acceptable and even expected for most speech situations in which Alice would find herself, it is not acceptable when speaking to a mouse. Through her conversations with the Mouse, Alice learns what all children learn sooner or later: speech that is acceptable in one context is unacceptable in another, and unacceptable speech is ineffective speech.

Paralanguage

The effectiveness of speech is a topic broached several times by Dodgson in the *Alice* books, where lack of conversation, speechlessness, and even body language are explored. The silence between the Caterpillar and Alice (*AIW* 41) results from Alice’s hope to avoid the condescension of the Caterpillar, who is, seemingly, waiting for Alice to speak so that he may have a chance to “lord it over” her. The actions of the Pigeon leave Alice speechless because she is not equipped with the speech necessary to respond to an unwarranted attack (*AIW* 51). In other instances, Alice mistakenly takes a lengthy pause in speech as a cue that the speaker has said all he wishes to say (*AIW* 100). Besides problems caused by lack of speech, problems caused by inappropriate body language cause Alice to wonder if the utterances of another character are being directed at her. Because Humpty Dumpty does not look at Alice when he is talking to her, Alice thinks he is not talking to her (*TLG* 223). Alice thinks it “decidedly uncivil” that the Frog Footman “was looking up at the sky all the time he was speaking” (*AIW* 56). We find this inappropriate body language causes Alice to assume the creatures are rude or ignorant, which is exemplified when Alice responds to the Frog Footman’s behavior with disdain: “‘he’s perfectly

idiotic!” (AIW 57). These examples of ineffective speech caused by body language issues can be used while covering Tennessee SPI 0801.2.4: “determine the most effective methods of engaging an audience during an oral presentation,” which should include issues such as body language and eye contact.

Futile Words

Dodgson not only addresses ineffective speech, he also addresses words that are socially assigned more weight or meaning than should be allowable. A favorite of Victorians was the word *best*; if something was declared the best, then it was all the rage, as it most certainly would be by English speakers today. Since *best* is a relative term that should be used in a comparison of identified objects (or subjects), it is not surprising that Dodgson took exception to the inappropriate use of the word, which had become quite common. In Wonderland, the March Hare doesn't understand why dipping the watch in butter could have ruined the watch because “It was the *best* butter” (AIW 71). Just because someone had determined the butter that he had used was the best butter does not mean that it would be the best choice made in every decision faced. This particular example can be used to cover Tennessee SPI 0801.1.15: “select the appropriate use of underlining/italicizing,” as emphasis has been placed on the word *best* for a particular reason. We are meant to recognize the futility of using the “best” of something if it is not the correct thing; therefore, this example may also be used to “identify a false premise in text” (Tennessee SPI 0801.5.7). Furthermore, the word *best* has been taken up by philosophers and rhetoricians alike; in fact, George Campbell and Richard Whatley have a tryst with *best* right before the *Alices* were written and I.A. Richards, who openly admits he has been to the Carrollian school of thought, does the same after the *Alices* were written.

The Lessening

Dodgson has provided quite the all-encompassing lesson on language, a topic most children claim to abhor. Yet, children world-wide enjoy the *Alice* books. And this enjoyment is just one of the reasons Dodgson offers a better way to talk to students about grammar and language. Dodgson focuses on language as it is used, rather than words in isolation, and when we teach students about the art of language, we should focus on the type of verbal interaction we find in the *Alices*. Several possible lesson topics have been discussed in this chapter, and several more have been included in appendices of this study, where an individual lesson and a sample curriculum-based text have been included.

The genius behind the lessons Dodgson provides is that they are delivered in a way that makes them applicable to any time period because they are devoid of horological and cultural concerns. Furthermore, they are delivered in a way that is humorous and entertaining—in a way that hardly seems a lesson at all. And even if a lesson is discerned, it does not lessen our enjoyment because it is a lesson applicable to anyone who needs to communicate, which is everyone. It is also a lesson that lies at the heart of rhetorical theory, which should not be surprising given Quintilian's assertion that we should be teaching language arts and rhetoric at the same time, as is evidenced in the approach to this discussion of Carrollian Language Arts.

CHAPTER V
THE DODGSON LEGACY: REELING AND WRITHING
WITH LANGUAGE

*When you want to urge the doing of anything, think what you
would praise a man for having done.*

—Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*

Some have claimed that Dodgson did not intend to teach anything with his *Alice* books; for instance, Jan Susina quotes one of Dodgson's letters to a child to prove that Dodgson's fictional stories "do not teach anything at all" (111); however, Dodgson's letters to children were often full of humorous contradiction, as is evidenced by a lengthy letter written to Bertie Coote that states he cannot write to Bertie because he has no ink (*The Letters* 276). Dodgson wrote another such letter, claiming there were no morals in his *Alice* books, and he has even made fun of the morals presented by other authors:

"And the moral of that is—'Be what you would seem to be'; or, if you'd like it put more simply—'Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.'" (*AIW* 95)

However, we find that Dodgson's tales are covertly didactic. Children rarely appreciate being preached at and if we can deliver stories that make them think about not drinking just anything because it may be poison (*AIW* 7) then we can deliver a story with a moral (or ten) that is understood, even if it is not presented as a mind-numbing sermon. Dodgson, the language learner, understood what Mikhail Bakhtin understood, our basic understanding of language and

the rules that govern how we communicate are learned through observation of language in action. However, Dodgson, the teacher, also understood that we learn from texts and from instruction as well, especially if texts and instructions can offer us an observational view of matters. Dodgson understood that “Everything’s got a moral, if only you can find it” (*AIW* 94). Children’s tales, much like any other tale really, always include something educational, something didactic, something that constitutes a moral. But Dodgson has given the world the two best commentaries on language, without making them appear like moralistic sermons: “And the moral of that is—” language is universal and language has rules, but learning about it is only fun if you don’t claim the lesson includes a moral.

Dodgson offers us what arguably amounts to the two best texts for the teaching of language arts to children—books that have also been used quite often to explicate linguistic and rhetorical theory. While Dodgson has provided much fodder for philosophers and theorists, he has been largely overlooked as a theorist in his own right; the reason for which may lie with the fact that his work was written for children and has been declared nonsense. However, a closer look at the linguistic and rhetorical issues portrayed in the *Alice* books reveals that the only nonsense occurring is that which occurs every day when our utterances do not follow logical linguistic and contextual rules. Dodgson should be recognized as a theorist because he has not only been accepted as a language specialist in judicial circles, verifiably expanded our lexicon, and, according to Michael Hoey, altered our syntagmatic word associations, but also given us proof that he has traced the logical consequences of many of the linguistic and rhetorical theories that both preceded and proceeded his time—theories of which he understood well enough to create easily understood concrete illustrations.

The paradigmatic and syntagmic word associations of which Saussure speaks are found in Alice's wor(l)ds; so are the mandatory utterances, as well as the speech genres, of which Bakhtin speaks; so are the verbal confusions of which I.A. Richards speaks; so are the metaphors of which George Lakoff speaks; so are the contrarily used words of which Quintilian speaks; so are the verbal paradoxes of which Gilles DeLeuze speaks. Through his children's literature Dodgson gives us examples of almost every communication and language issue that we may face, and he does so in a dioramic way that allows us to forego most external factors, but also in a way that sheds light on the different types of communication macrocosms we face on a daily basis. After all, Alice deals with the alien peer, those with more power, those with less power, those who wish to appear that have power but do not. Alice even gives us a glimpse at the types of pre-verbal activities we engage in, as well as the verbal interactions we have with ourselves. Alice even takes on the more philosophical concerns of language, such as if a word needs to mean something, if we can change the meanings of words, if we can lose our names, if we can force an action to occur because we have spoke into being, if we can create an entire social order by speaking it into being, if the abstract can be signified. Alice and her alien peers use polysemic words and homophones and puns and similes and metaphors and Latin root words and deductive reasoning; they show us character analysis and cause-effect relationships and false premises. And they make us consider pronoun-antecedent issues and conflict that arises from verbal confusion and how tone affects our message. And the list goes on.

Because Dodgson thoroughly explores many of the different speech genres and language concerns we face and consider, Dodgson gives us concrete examples of language in action—an it-is construction—which allows him to reveal how verbal confusion and chaos occurs, how conflict arises when good language rules are not followed, when bad language rules are

followed, or when we do not know which rules to follow because we find ourselves in alien situations. And all of these examples are perfect material for language arts and rhetorical theory instruction because they are not only delivered without the shroud of a specific culture, era, or time frame, but they are delivered in an enjoyable and entertaining manner. Dodgson has created literature that has endured and has permeated cultures around the world because he has provided an enjoyable lesson from which we all benefit: our speech must be effective if we are to be successful and our speech must be contextually appropriate in order to be effective. But Dodgson has also given us proof that social and linguistic rules will always restrict our speech, most certainly if we expect to actually say what we mean or mean what we say. He has shown us that we need to closely consider our communicative systems, as the nonsense and play found in the worlds of Alice has resulted from the illogical nature of the systems we employ everyday—the ones with rules that do not necessarily make sense, but still must be learned.

Too often we try to teach philosophy with philosophy and theory with theory and language with dry, unrelatable examples (such as those provided by the Dormouse and many philosophers), which by no means clarifies the matter for the masses. We certainly see evidence that the dry, unrelatable approach is ineffectual for the majority of people who actually use language when we consider Kenneth Burke's attempt to explain the problem of vagueness with an explanation from John Locke. Fortunately, we find that philosophers and theorists can employ simpler illustrations to explicate their ideas; they most certainly have utilized Dodgson's work in this fashion. Additionally, we find that middle grades teachers would be at a loss to find other texts that cover as many language arts issues as *AIW* and *TLG* do, and, if they could, the texts are more likely to be textbooks that do not offer these issues in context, which is not only desirable but a requirement of many of the SPIs that must currently be observed.

Dodgson's fictive representations of our ordinary language concerns serve as concrete examples of contextual verbal interactions; therefore, they serve as appropriate material for the teaching of rhetoric and language arts. Dodgson's ability to create language and illustrations of everyday language issues can be traced back to his personal quest for order and meaning. The logician and teacher has uncovered the accepted language and language practices that can result in verbal confusion and ineffective speech, as well as the accepted practices that can help us to avoid verbal confusion and social conflict—all of which reveals a theorist in his own right, one who aides our understanding of signification and pragmatic social skills.

Dodgson has given us lessons and illustrations in language creation, language arts, and rhetorical theory. Given that we can discern Dodgson's useful and humorous take language and given that the books are still ideological viable and culturally popular, it appears that we should take a cue from the theorists themselves and teach philosophy and theory and language with a porpoise; it's the key to the garden—the garden where we find a long-awaited designation of Dodgson as a theorist.

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APPENDIX A
THE EVIDENCE LESSON

The Evidence Lesson

Name: _____ Date: _____

During the trial, the proceeding was submitted as evidence by the White Rabbit. After reading the words answer the questions that follow.

They told me you had been to her,
And mentioned me to him:
She gave me a good character,
But said I could not swim.

My notion was that you had been
(Before she had this fit)
An obstacle that came between
Him and ourselves and it.

He sent them word I had not gone
(We know it to be true):
If she should push the matter on,
What would become of you?

Don't let them know she liked them best,
For this must ever be
A secret, kept from all the rest,
Between yourself and me.

If I or she should chance to be
Involved in this affair,
He trusts to you to set them free,
Exactly as we were.

1. Can you identify this group of words as an example of a literary genre? If so, which one?
2. The Queen claims this evidence proves the Knave's guilt; Alice says this evidence proves nothing. Which one is correct and why?
3. List the reflexive pronouns found within the "evidence":
4. Are the reflexive pronouns used properly? Explain your answer:
5. What was Carroll's purpose for creating this "evidence"?
6. Carroll did not give a title for the "evidence." Create a title that you feel will work for this piece:
7. Underline two correctly presented introductory clauses.
8. Circle the correct use of a comma with a coordinating conjunction.
9. Highlight an incorrect use of commas with coordinating conjunctions.

SPI 0801.1.1 Identify the correct use of nouns (i.e., common/proper, singular/plural, possessives, direct/indirect objects, predicate nouns) and pronouns (i.e., reflexive, interrogative, demonstrative) within context.

SPI 0801.1.7 Identify within context a variety of appropriate sentence-combining techniques (i.e., comma with coordinating conjunction, use of semicolon, introductory phrases or clauses).

SPI 0801.1.11 Illustrate the need for pronoun-antecedent agreement.

SPI 0801.3.10 Select an appropriate title that reflects the topic of a written selection.

SPI 0801.8.4 Distinguish among different genres (e.g., poetry, drama, biography, novel) using their distinguishing characteristics.

SPI 0801.8.14 Identify the author's purpose for writing.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF A CURRICULUM-BASED TEXT

Chapter I **Down the Rabbit Hole**

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank and of having nothing to do; once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, "and what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"

So she was considering, in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid) whether the pleasure of making a daisy chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

---- What happened to Alice? Why does she see the rabbit? ----

There was nothing so *very* remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" (when she thought it over afterwards it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but, when the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat pocket*, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and, burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit hole under the hedge.

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

---- Does Alice's reaction remind you of something you have seen, heard, or read? ----

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.

Think-Aloud
Rubric
Before class
reading of chapter
I, instruct students
to tally the number
of times each
strategy is used
during the first
class reading.

SPI 0801.6.3
Stupid:
to be stunned or
benumbed.

SPI 0801.5.9
Make inferences.

SPI 0801.1.15
Why are certain
words in this
paragraph
italicized?

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 labeled "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.

SPI 0801.6.3
Marmalade



---- Think about what you saw in your mind while you read about Alice's fall. ----

"Well!" thought Alice to herself, "after such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling downstairs! 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've 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 learned 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.)

Have students begin a Reading Journal. They will use the Journal to respond to their reading (some prompts have been provided), as well as to record the assignments completed from the prompts that address standards.

---- What is the lesson hidden inside this passage? ----

Presently she began again. "I wonder if I shall fall right *through* the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downward! The

SPI 0801.1.1
Re-read page 4 and make a list of all proper nouns that you find.

Antipathies, I think" (she was rather glad there *was* no one listening this time, as it didn't sound at all the right word); "but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, ma'am, is this New Zealand or Australia?" (and she tried to curtsy as she spoke—fancy *curtysying* as you're falling through the air! Do you think you could manage it?) "And what an ignorant little girl she'll think me for asking! No, it'll never do to ask; perhaps I shall see it written up somewhere."

SPI 0801.6.3
Antipathist:
a natural enemy

Would we say "I shall see it written up somewhere"?

-- Do you think Einstein would feel ignorant for asking a question? --

Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice soon began talking again. "Dinah'll miss me very much tonight, I should think!" (Dinah was the cat.) "I hope they'll remember her saucer of milk at teatime. 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.

If we move words around within the sentence does the meaning stay the same?

---- How could Alice feel like she was falling asleep if she was already dreaming? ----

SPI 0801.5.9
Draw conclusions.

Alice was not a bit hurt, and she jumped up on to her feet in a moment; she looked up, but it was all dark overhead; before her was another long passage, and the White Rabbit was still in sight, hurrying down it. There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind, and was just in time to hear it say, as it turned a corner, "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" She was close behind it when she turned the corner, but the Rabbit was no longer to be

SPI 0801.8.8
Can you find the simile in this paragraph?

"Oh" is an exclamation.

seen: she found herself in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof.

There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked, and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.

Suddenly she came upon a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass; there was nothing on it but a tiny golden key, and Alice's first idea was that this might belong to one of the doors of the hall; but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small, but at any rate it would not open any of them. However, on the second time round she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high; she tried the little golden key in the lock, and to her great delight it fitted!



Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat hole; she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains. But

she could not even get her head through the doorway. "And even if my head would go through," thought poor Alice, "it would be of very little use without my shoulders. Oh, how I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could, if I only knew how to begin." For, you see, so many out-of-the-way things had happened lately that Alice had begun to think that very few things indeed were really impossible.

Why are the words in "out-of-the-way" joined together with hyphens?

---- Why did Alice feel hopeful about getting into the garden even though she was too big to fit through the door? ----

There seemed to be no use in waiting by the little door, so she went back to the table, half hoping she might find another key on it, or at any rate a book of rules for shutting people up like telescopes: this time she found a little bottle on it, ("which certainly was not here before," said Alice), and tied round the neck of the bottle was a paper label with the words "DRINK ME" beautifully printed on it in large letters.

Where does Alice think she will find instructions on "shutting up like a telescope"?

It was all very well to say "Drink me," but the wise little Alice was not going to do *that* in a hurry. "No, I'll look first," she said, "and see whether it's marked '*poison*' or not," for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and other unpleasant things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them, such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that if you cut your finger *very* deeply with a knife it usually bleeds; and she had never forgotten that if you drink much from a bottle marked "poison," it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later.

This paragraph is didactic. Look up the definition for "didactic" and write it down.

---- What is the lesson hidden within this passage? ----

However, this bottle was *not* marked "poison," so Alice ventured to taste it, and finding it very nice (it had, in fact, a sort of mixed flavour of cherry tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffy, and hot buttered toast), she very soon finished it off.

"What a curious feeling!" said Alice. "I must be shutting up like a telescope."

And so it was indeed; she was now only ten inches high, and her face brightened up at the thought that she was now the right size for going through the little door into that lovely garden. First, however, she waited for a few minutes to see if she was going to shrink any further: she felt a little nervous about this, "for it might end, you know," said Alice to herself, "in my going out altogether, like a candle. I wonder what I should be like then?" And she tried to fancy what the flame

SPI 0801.1.16
Determine the meaning of "curious" from the context in which it is used. Write down the definition that you formulate before you look in a dictionary.

of a candle looks like after the candle is blown out, for she could not remember ever having seen such a thing.

---- Can you recall feeling nervous about change? ----

After a while, finding that nothing more happened, she decided on going into the garden at once; but, alas for poor Alice! when she got to the door, she found she had forgotten the little golden key, and when she went back to the table for it, she found she could not possibly reach it. She could see it quite plainly through the glass, and she tried her best to climb up one of the legs of the table, but it was too slippery, and when she had tired herself out with trying, the poor little thing sat down and cried.

---- How would you describe how Alice is feeling? ----

"Come, there's no use in crying like that!" said Alice to herself rather sharply; "I advise you to leave off this minute!" She generally gave herself very good advice (though she very seldom followed it), and sometimes she scolded herself so severely as to bring tears into her eyes, and once she remembered trying to box her own ears for having cheated herself in a game of croquet she was playing against herself; for this curious child was very fond of pretending to be two people. "But it's no use now," thought poor Alice, "to pretend to be two people! Why, there's hardly enough of me left to make *one* respectable person!"

---- Do you ever talk to yourself? ----

Soon her eye fell on a little glass box that was lying under the table: she opened it, and found in it a very small cake, on which the words "EAT ME" were beautifully marked in currants. "Well, I'll eat it," said Alice, "and if it makes me grow larger, I can reach the key; and if it makes me grow smaller, I can creep under the door; so either way I'll get into the garden, and I don't care which happens!"

---- What do you think is going to happen? ----

SPI 0801.1.1
Re-read this page
and make a list of
all the common
nouns that you
find.

She ate a little bit, and said anxiously to herself, "Which way? Which way?" holding her hand on the top of her head to feel which way it was growing, and she was quite surprised to find that she remained the same size; to be sure, this is what generally happens when one eats cake, but Alice had got so much into the way of expecting nothing but out-of-the-way things to happen that it seemed quite dull and stupid for life to go on in the common way.

So she set to work, and very soon finished off the cake.

Chapter II The Pool of Tears

"Curiouser and curiouser!" cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English); "now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was! Good-bye, feet!" (For when she looked down at her feet, they seemed to be almost out of sight, they were getting so far off.) "Oh, my poor little feet, I wonder who will put on your shoes and stockings for you now, dears? I'm sure *I* shan't be able! I shall be a great deal too far off to trouble myself about you: you must manage the best way you can—but I must be kind to them," thought Alice, "or perhaps they won't walk the way I want to go! Let me see: I'll give them a new pair of boots every Christmas."

And she went on planning to herself how she would manage it. "They must go by the carrier," she thought; "and how funny it'll seem, sending presents to one's own feet! And how odd the directions will look:

*Alice's Right Foot, Esq.,
Hearthrug,
near the Fender,
(with Alice's love).*

"Oh dear, what nonsense I'm talking!"

Chapter II may be assigned as self-sustained reading,

SPI 0801.6.3
The first recorded use of the phrase "Curiouser and Curiouser!" is found in this paragraph. It means "exceedingly strange."

Write about a time when you felt you were talking or thinking nonsense.

Just then her head struck against the roof of the hall: in fact she was now rather more than nine feet high, and she at once took up the little golden key and hurried off to the garden door.

Poor Alice! It was as much as she could do, lying down on one side, to look through into the garden with one eye; but to get through was more hopeless than ever: she sat down and began to cry again.

“You ought to be ashamed of yourself,” said Alice, “a great girl like you,” (she might well say this), “to go on crying in this way! Stop this moment, I tell you!” But she went on all



the same, shedding gallons of tears, until there was a large pool all around her, about four inches deep and reaching half down the hall.

After a time she heard a little pattering of feet in the distance, and she hastily dried her eyes to see what was coming. It was the White Rabbit returning, splendidly dressed, with a pair of white kid gloves in one hand and a large fan in the other: he came trotting along in a great hurry, muttering to himself as he came, “Oh! the Duchess, the Duchess! Oh! won't she be savage if I've kept her waiting!” Alice felt so desperate that she was ready to ask help of any one; so, when the Rabbit came near her, she began in a low timid voice, “If you please, sir—” The Rabbit started violently, dropped the white kid gloves and the fan, and scurried away into the darkness as hard as he could go.

Alice took up the fan and gloves, and, as the hall was very hot, she kept fanning herself all the time she went on talking: “Dear, dear! How queer everything is today! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I've been

SPI 0801.1.1
Find the reflexive pronoun in this paragraph.

SPI 0801.1.16
Determine the meaning of “queer” from the context in which it is used. Write down the definition that you formulate before you look in a dictionary.

SPI 0801.8.12
Recognize and identify words within context that reveal particular time periods and cultures.

changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? Ah, *that's* the great puzzle!" And she began thinking over all the children she knew that were of the same age as herself, to see if she could have been changed for any of them.

"I'm sure I'm not Ada," she said, "for her hair goes in such long ringlets, and mine doesn't go in ringlets at all; and I'm sure I can't be Mabel, for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh! she knows such a very little! Besides, *she's* she, and *I'm* I, and—oh, dear, how puzzling it all is! I'll try if I know all the things I used to know. Let me see: four times five is twelve, and four times six is thirteen, and four times seven is—oh dear! I shall never get to twenty at that rate! However, the Multiplication Table doesn't signify; let's try Geography. London is the capital of Paris, and Paris is the capital of Rome, and Rome—no, *that's* all wrong, I'm certain! I must have been changed for Mabel! I'll try and say '*How doth the little—*'" and she crossed her hands on her lap, as if she were saying lessons, and began to repeat it, but her voice sounded hoarse and strange, and the words did not come the same as they used to do:

*"How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,
How neatly spread his claws,
And welcome little fishes in
With gently smiling jaws!"*

"I'm sure those are not the right words," said poor Alice, and her eyes filled with tears again as she went on, "I must be Mabel after all, and I shall have to go and live in that poky

SPI 0801.6.3
signify:
represent, betoken,
mean

"How doth the Little Crocodile" is a parody of "How doth the Little Bee" by Isaac Watts (1715). Look up the word "parody" and write down its meaning.

SPI 0801.1.1
Re-read this page and find all the plural nouns that can be found.

little house, and have next to no toys to play with, and oh! ever so many lessons to learn! No, I've made up my mind about it: if I'm Mabel, I'll stay down here! It'll be no use their putting their heads down and saying 'Come up again, dear!' I shall only look up and say, 'Who am I then? Tell me that first, and then, if I like being that person, I'll come up; if not, I'll stay down here till I'm somebody else'—but, oh, dear!" cried Alice, with a sudden burst of tears, "I do wish they *would* put their heads down! I am so *very* tired of being all alone here!"

Who gets to decide who you are?

As she said this she looked down at her hands, and was surprised to see that she had put on one of the Rabbit's little white kid gloves while she was talking. "How can I have done that?" she thought. "I must be growing small again." She got up and went to the table to measure herself by it, and found that, as nearly as she could guess, she was now about two feet high, and was going on shrinking rapidly; she soon found out that the cause of this was the fan she was holding, and she dropped it hastily, just in time to avoid shrinking away altogether.

Have you ever felt invisible?

"That *was* a narrow escape!" said Alice, a good deal frightened at the sudden change, but very glad to find herself still in existence; "and now for the garden!" and she ran with all speed back to the little door; but, alas! the little door was shut again and the little golden key was lying on the glass table as before, "and things are worse than ever," thought the poor child, "for I never was so small as this before, never! And I declare it's too bad, that it is!"

As she said these words her foot slipped, and in another moment, splash! she was up to her chin in salt water. Her first idea was that she had somehow fallen into the sea, "and in that case I can go back by railway," she said to herself. (Alice had been to the seaside once in her life, and had come to the general conclusion that wherever you go to on the English coast you find a number of bathing-machines in the sea, some children digging in the sand with wooden spades, then a row of lodging houses, and behind them a railway

station.) However, she soon made out that she was in the pool of tears which she had wept when she was nine feet high.



“I wish I hadn't cried so much!” said Alice, as she swam about, trying to find her way out. “I shall be punished for it now, I suppose, by being drowned in my own tears! That *will* be a queer thing, to be sure! However, everything is queer today.”

Just then she heard something splashing about in the pool a little way off, and she swam nearer to make out what it was; at first she thought it must be a walrus or hippopotamus, but then she remembered how small she was now, and she soon made out that it was only a mouse, that had slipped in like herself.

“Would it be of any use, now,” thought Alice, “to speak to this mouse? Everything is so out-of-the-way down here that I should think very likely it can talk; at any rate, there's no harm in trying.” So she began: “O Mouse, do you know the way out of this pool? I am very tired of swimming about here, O Mouse!” (Alice thought this must be the right way of speaking to a mouse: she had never done such a thing before, but she remembered having seen in her brother's Latin Grammar, “A mouse—of a mouse—to a mouse—a mouse—O mouse!”) The Mouse looked at her rather inquisitively, and seemed to her to wink with one of its little eyes, but it said nothing.

“Perhaps it doesn't understand English,” thought Alice; “I daresay it's a French mouse, come over with William the Conqueror.” (For, with all her knowledge of history, Alice had

SPI 0801.1.1
Re-read this page
and find all of the
singular nouns
and make a list of
them.

no very clear notion how long ago anything had happened.) So she began again: “Ou est ma chatte?” which was the first sentence in her French lesson book. The Mouse gave a sudden leap out of the water, and seemed to quiver all over with fright. “Oh, I beg your pardon!” cried Alice hastily, afraid that she had hurt the poor animal's feelings. “I quite forgot you didn't like cats.”

“Not like cats!” cried the Mouse, in a shrill, passionate voice. “Would *you* like cats if you were me?”

“Well, perhaps not,” said Alice in a soothing tone; “don't be angry about it. And yet I wish I could show you our cat Dinah; I think you'd take a fancy to cats if you could only see her. She is such a dear quiet thing,” Alice went on, half to herself, as she swam lazily about in the pond, “and she sits purring so nicely by the fire, licking her paws and washing her face—and she is such a nice soft thing to nurse—and she's such a capital one for catching mice—Oh, I beg your pardon!” cried Alice again; for this time the Mouse was bristling all over, and she felt certain it must be really offended. “We won't talk about her any more if you'd rather not.”

“We indeed!” cried the Mouse, who was trembling down to the end of his tail. “As if I would talk on such a subject! Our family always *hated* cats—nasty, low, vulgar things! Don't let me hear the name again!”

William of Normandy conquered England in AD 1066; this book was published in AD 1865. Could this mouse have come over with William the Conqueror?

Speech that is right in one context may be wrong in another. Have you ever said something you shouldn't have?

SPI 0801.6.3
low:
of humble rank,
station, position, or
estimation

SPI 0801.6.3
vulgar:
lacking in
refinement or good
taste, uncultured

What does the Mouse reveal by using the terms “low” and “vulgar” when referring to cats?



“I won't indeed!” said Alice, in a great hurry to change the subject of conversation. “Are you— are you fond—of—of dogs?” The Mouse did not answer, so Alice went on eagerly: “There is such a nice little dog

near our house I should like to show you! A little bright-eyed terrier, you know, with oh! such long curly brown hair! And it'll fetch things when you throw them, and it'll sit up and beg for its dinner, and all sorts of things—I can't remember half of them—and it belongs to a farmer, you know, and he says it's so useful it's worth a hundred pounds! He says it kills all the rats and—oh dear!” cried Alice in a sorrowful tone, “I'm afraid I've offended it again!” For the Mouse was swimming away from her as hard as it could go, and making quite a commotion in the pool as it went.

So she called softly after it, “Mouse dear! Do come back again, and we won't talk about cats or dogs either, if you don't like them!” When the Mouse heard this, it turned and swam slowly back to her; its face was quite pale (with passion, Alice thought), and it said in a low, trembling voice, “Let us get to the shore, and then I'll tell you my history, and you'll understand why it is I hate cats and dogs.”

It was high time to go, for the pool was getting quite crowded with the birds and animals that had fallen into it. There was a Duck and a Dodo, a Lory and an Eaglet, and several other curious creatures. Alice led the way, and the whole party swam to the shore.

SPI 0801.6.3
dodo:
a bird from
Mauritius or an
old-fashioned or
stupid person

SPI 0801.1.1
Re-read this page
and find all of the
direct objects, then
make a list of
them.

Chapter III

A Caucus Race and a Long Tale

They were indeed a queer-looking party that assembled on the bank—the birds with draggled feathers, the animals with their fur clinging close to them, and all dripping wet, cross, and uncomfortable.

The first question of course was, how to get dry again; they had a consultation about this, and after a few minutes it seemed quite natural to Alice to find herself talking familiarly with them, as if she had known them all her life. Indeed, she had quite a long argument with the Lory, who at last turned sulky, and would only say, “I am older than you, and must know better”; and this Alice would not allow, without knowing how old it was, and as the Lory positively refused to tell its age, there was no more to be said.

At last the Mouse, who seemed to be a person of authority among them, called out, “Sit down, all of you, and listen to me! I’ll soon make you dry enough!” They all sat down at once, in a large ring, with the Mouse in the middle. Alice kept her eyes anxiously fixed on it, for she felt sure she would catch a bad cold if she did not get dry very soon.

“Ahem!” said the Mouse with an important air, “are you all ready? This is the driest thing I know. Silence all round, if you please! William the Conqueror, whose cause was favoured by the pope, was soon submitted to by the English, who wanted leaders, and had been of late much accustomed to usurpation and conquest. Edwin and Morcar, the earls of Mercia and Northumbria—”

“Ugh!” said the Lory, with a shiver.

“I beg your pardon!” said the Mouse, frowning, but very politely. “Did you speak?”

“Not I!” said the Lory hastily.

SPI 0801.3.13
Employ the Questioning Web to answer questions about chapter II before proceeding.

SPI 0801.6.3
lory:
a bird belonging to the Loriinae family, which is found in Southeast Asia, the Asiatic Archipelago, and Australia

SPI 0801.6.3
The word *dry* has several meanings. In this section, the Mouse is using *dry* to mean unattractive, distasteful, insipid; and Alice is using *dry* to mean the opposite of wet.

SPI 0801.1.1
Re-read this page, find all of the indirect objects, and make a list of them.

“I thought you did,” said the Mouse. “I proceed. ‘Edwin and Morcar, the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, declared for him; and even Stigand, the patriotic archbishop of Canterbury, found it advisable—”

“Found *what?*” said the Duck.

“Found *it,*” the Mouse replied rather crossly; “of course you know what ‘*it*’ means.”

“I know what ‘*it*’ means well enough, when I find a thing,” said the Duck; “it’s generally a frog or a worm. The question is, What did the archbishop find?”

The Mouse did not notice this question, but hurriedly went on: “—found it advisable to go with Edgar Atheling to meet William and offer him the crown. William’s conduct at first was moderate. But the insolence of his Normans—’ How are you getting on now, my dear?” it continued, turning to Alice as it spoke.

“As wet as ever,” said Alice in a melancholy tone; “it doesn’t seem to dry me at all.”

“In that case,” said the Dodo solemnly, rising to its feet, “I move that the meeting adjourn, for the immediate adoption of more energetic remedies—”

“Speak English!” said the Eaglet. “I don’t know the meaning of half those long words, and, what’s more, I don’t believe you do either!” And the Eaglet bent down its head to hide a smile; some of the other birds tittered audibly.

“What I was going to say,” said the Dodo in an offended tone, “was, that the best thing to get us dry would be a Caucus-race.”

“What *is* a Caucus-race?” said Alice; not that she wanted much to know, but the Dodo had paused as if it thought that *somebody* ought to speak, and no one else seemed inclined to say anything.

SPI 0801.1.1
Why is the Duck confused by the word *it*?

Would the Duck have been confused if he had not interrupted?

SPI 0801.6.3
The Eaglet is commenting on the words used by the Dodo that are not native to English; *energetic* comes from Greek; and *adjourn*, *adoption*, and *remedies* comes from French.

“Why,” said the Dodo, “the best way to explain it is to do it.” (And, as you might like to try the thing yourself, some winter day, I will tell you how the Dodo managed it.)

First it marked out a race course, in a sort of circle (“the exact shape doesn't matter,” it said), and then all the party were placed along the course, here and there. There was no “One, two, three, and away,” but they began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to know when the race was over. However, when they had been running half an hour or so, and were quite dry again, the Dodo suddenly called out “The race is over!” and they all crowded round it, panting, and asking, “But who has won?”

This question the Dodo could not answer without a great deal of thought, and it sat for a long time with one finger pressed upon its forehead (the position in which you usually see Shakespeare, in the pictures of him), while the rest waited in silence. At last the Dodo said, “*everybody* has won, and all must have prizes.”

“But who is to give the prizes?” quite a chorus of voices asked.

“Why, *she*, of course,” said the Dodo, pointing to Alice with one finger; and the whole party at once crowded round her, calling out in a confused way, “Prizes! Prizes!”

Alice had no idea what to do, and in despair she put her hand in her pocket, and pulled out a box of comfits, (luckily the salt water had not got into it), and handed them round as prizes. There was exactly one apiece all round.

“But she must have a prize herself, you know,” said the Mouse.

“Of course,” the Dodo replied very gravely. “What else have you got in your pocket?” he went on, turning to Alice.

“Only a thimble,” said Alice sadly.

What type of writing is found in this paragraph?

SPI 0801.6.3
Caucus Race:
the competitive process in which a political party selects their candidate (political term created in America)

From the Dodo's description of the race and what ensues, guess how the author felt about the American political system.

SPI 0801.6.3
comfits:
a treat made from fruit or root that has been preserved in sugar

“Hand it over here,” said the Dodo.



Then they all crowded round her once more, while the Dodo solemnly presented the thimble, saying, “We beg your acceptance of this elegant thimble”; and, when it had finished this short speech they all cheered.

What sort of speech is this?

Alice thought the whole thing very absurd, but they all looked so grave that she did not dare to laugh, and, as she could

Can you think of a time when you have had to refrain from laughing to spare someone’s feelings?

not think of anything to say, she simply bowed, and took the thimble, looking as solemn as she could.

The next thing was to eat the comfits; this caused some noise and confusion, as the large birds complained that they could not taste theirs, and the small ones choked and had to be patted on the back. However, it was over at last, and they sat down again in a ring and begged the Mouse to tell them something more.

“You promised to tell me your history, you know,” said Alice, “and why it is you hate—C and D,” she added in a whisper, half afraid that it would be offended again.



SPI 0801.7.3
What is the purpose of this illustration?

“Mine is a long and a sad tale!” said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing.

“It is a long tail, certainly,” said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse's tail; “but why do you call it sad?” And she kept on puzzling about it while the Mouse was speaking, so that her idea of the tale was something like this:

SPI 0801.8.8
Analyze a pun within context.

“Fury said to a
mouse, That he
met in the
house,
 ‘Let us
 both go to
law: I will
prosecute
you. Come,
I’ll take no
denial: We
must have a
trial; For
really this
morning I’ve
nothing
to do.’
Said the
mouse to the
cur, ‘Such
a trial,
dear Sir,
With
no jury
or judge,
would be
wasting
our breath.’
‘I’ll be
judge, I’ll
be jury,’
Said
cunning
old Fury:
‘I’ll try
the whole
cause,
and
condemn
you
to
death.’”

SPI 0801.2.1:
Identify the purpose of a speech (i.e. to inform, to describe, to explain, to persuade, to entertain).

SPI 0801.7.2
Why is this text shaped this way?

SPI 0801.1.5
Re-write this question so that it does not end with preposition.

“You are not attending!” said the Mouse to Alice severely. “What are you thinking of?”

“I beg your pardon,” said Alice very humbly, “you had got to the fifth bend, I think?”

“I had *not!*” cried the Mouse sharply and very angrily.

“A knot!” said Alice, always ready to make herself useful, and looking anxiously about her. “Oh, do let me help to undo it!”

“I shall do nothing of the sort,” said the Mouse, getting up and walking away. “You insult me by talking such nonsense!”

“I didn't mean it!” pleaded poor Alice. “But you're so easily offended, you know!”

The Mouse only growled in reply.

“Please come back and finish your story!” Alice called after it; and the others all joined in chorus, “Yes, please do!” but the Mouse only shook its head impatiently, and walked a little quicker.

“What a pity it wouldn't stay!” sighed the Lory, as soon as it was quite out of sight; and an old Crab took the opportunity of saying to her daughter “Ah, my dear! Let this be a lesson to you never to lose *your* temper!”

“Hold your tongue, Ma!” said the young Crab, a little snappishly. “You're enough to try the patience of an oyster!”

“I wish I had our Dinah here, I know I do!” said Alice aloud, addressing nobody in particular. “She'd soon fetch it back!”

“And who is Dinah, if I might venture to ask the question?” said the Lory.

Alice replied eagerly, for she was always ready to talk about her pet. “Dinah's our cat. And she's such a capital one for catching mice, you can't think! And, oh, I wish you could see her after the birds! Why, she'll eat a little bird as soon as look at it!”

What has caused the confusion and offense?

---- Predict what will happen next. ----

This speech caused a remarkable sensation among the party. Some of the birds hurried off at once; one old Magpie began wrapping itself up very carefully, remarking, "I really must be getting home; the night air doesn't suit my throat!" and a Canary called out in a trembling voice to its children, "Come away, my dears! It's high time you were all in bed!" On various pretexts they all moved off, and Alice was soon left alone.

"I wish I hadn't mentioned Dinah," she said to herself in a melancholy tone. "Nobody seems to like her down here, and I'm sure she's the best cat in the world! Oh, my dear Dinah! I wonder if I shall ever see you anymore!" And here poor Alice began to cry again, for she felt very lonely and low-spirited. In a little while, however, she again heard a little pattering of footsteps in the distance, and she looked up eagerly, half hoping that the Mouse had changed his mind, and was coming back to finish his story.

SPI 0801.3.12/
0801.8.6
Begin a Character
Analysis Chart
before proceeding.

APPENDIX C
GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Think Aloud Rubric

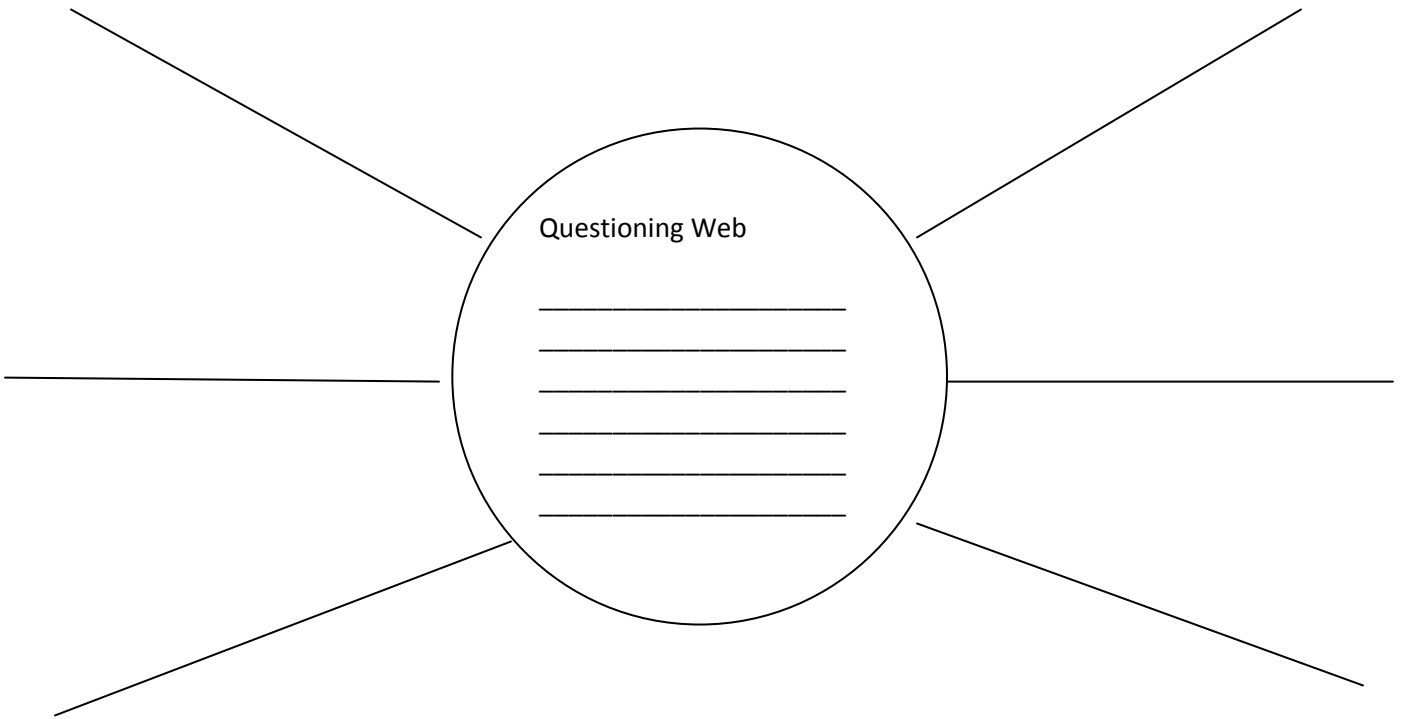
Name: _____ Date: _____

Strategies	# of times used
1. Makes connections : self, text, world	
2. Visualizes : makes pictures in head	
3. Recalls details: summarizes	
4. Questions as reads: makes predictions	
5. Self-monitors when confused: uses fix-up strategies	
6. Infers : reads between the lines	
7. Evaluates & synthesizes material	
8. Analyzes information in the text	

Questioning Web

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____



I'm thinking . . . _____

Character Analysis Chart

Character's Name	Appearance	Speech	Action

VITA

Madonna Fajardo Kemp holds an M.A. in English: Rhetoric and Writing and a B.S. in Middle Grades Education, both from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC). She is currently an adjunct instructor at UTC, a contracted technical writing instructor, and a certified middle grades and American/World History teacher. In 2005, Kemp helped create Sequatchie Valley Soccer League, for whom she serves as scheduler to this day, and Crossroads Youth Soccer Association, for whom she currently serves as president. Kemp specializes in fledgling writers and civic efficacy.