

# ***Seeing the Surreal Alice in Anthony Browne's Wonderland***

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## **ABSTRACT**

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) is a classic that has been continuously published for more than 150 years. During this time, it creates a wonderland for numerous illustrators, artists, writers, and movie makers. They keep adapting, re-writing, and re-illustrating the work owing to its potential for new comprehensions and interpretations. Among these efforts and devotions, the re-illustrations in different eras provide noteworthy images demonstrating diverse ways to read, visualize, and re-present Carroll's work. As one of the illustrators after Sir John Tenniel, Anthony Browne uses a distinct style in re-illustrating *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, published in 1988. He presents an accessible Alice with surreal techniques. Being not as abstract and obscure as the volume by Salvador Dali (1969), Browne's surreal Alice is marked by the vivid images and distinctive colors, and intriguingly transcends the recognizable signifiers. First of all, challenging Tenniel's iconic illustrations, Browne's work renders a different way to *see* Alice's story by re-interpreting and visualizing Carroll's text. Except for the surreal images of the heroine, Browne adds some imaginary but text-based images that are not present in Tenniel's version such as separate body parts, aloof facial expressions and even the image of a crying Alice. Moreover, Browne marks his individual style by alluding to well-known paintings and presenting alternative animal characters. Browne appropriates the noted paintings to bring forth the rich connotations and symbolic meanings deftly echoing the elusive language of Carroll's text. As for the animal characters, they preserve their animalistic opaqueness eliciting the reader's/viewer's different imagination instead of being anthropomorphic. Last but not least, Browne reconfigures Alice as a curious but lonely child corresponding to his consistent concern about contemporary children. Browne's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* makes a wonderland that presents a surreal Alice, sustains his distinct style, and further explores the ideas of animals and childhood as suggested in Carroll's text.

**Key Words:** Alice, Anthony Browne, Surreal, John Tenniel

# 看見安東尼·布朗恩的超寫實愛麗絲

張期敏

## 摘要

路易斯·卡羅的《愛麗絲夢遊仙境》從 1865 年出版，持續再版至今已超過 150 年，乃文學經典之作。在超過一個半世紀的時間中，由於卡羅的書寫保有相當詮釋解讀空間，吸引了無數的插畫家、藝術家、作家和電影製作人，重新插畫、改寫，甚至改編成電影。在各種作品中，不同時代的插畫呈現了許多不同的閱讀及再現卡羅作品的角度。安東尼·布朗恩在 1988 年出版他的《愛麗絲夢遊仙境》插畫版本，他雖採用超寫實繪畫技巧，卻呈現了一個形象鮮明的愛麗絲。不同於薩爾瓦多·達利在 1969 年所勾勒的抽象愛麗絲，布朗恩的超寫實愛麗絲，形象具體、色彩鮮明，卻又超越一般圖像的認知和指涉，更新閱/讀者在文本中的看見和感受。另外，為了突破坦尼爾的愛麗絲經典插畫框架，布朗恩藉由對卡羅文本的個人解讀，讓閱/讀者看見不同的《愛麗絲夢遊仙境》。為了凸顯愛麗絲的超寫實形象，布朗恩加入了許多以文本為主的視覺影像，如：凸顯的身體區塊、漠然的臉部表情和哭喪著臉的愛麗絲，這些都未在坦尼爾的插畫中出現。再者，布朗恩插畫也呈現他個人一貫的風格，一是借用許多名畫的構圖延展圖像的象徵意義，一是再現他個人作品常見的動物角色。不同的是，動物不再以擬人化的方式呈現，而是刻意強化動物的不可知性，引發閱/讀者的不同想像和解讀。另一特色是布朗恩的愛麗絲，這個好奇卻孤單的小女孩，巧妙地呼應布朗恩一直以來對當代兒童的關懷。布朗恩的《愛麗絲夢遊仙境》除了再現超寫實的愛麗絲外，也延伸他獨特的超寫實風格，用以詮釋卡羅文本中的動物角色和童年概念，增加文本閱/讀的豐富性。

**關鍵字：**愛麗絲；安東尼·布朗恩；超寫實；約翰·坦尼爾

## Introduction

Since Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* was published, a large number of illustrators or artists have re-illustrated the canonic work in children's literature. Critics observe that most of them fall under the impact of Tenniel's stamp. Richard Kelly contends that they are under "the pervasive influence of Tenniel" (73) and Will Brooker suggests that "twentieth-century depictions of Alice and her world owe far more to the original version than they have to" (142). Tenniel's illustrations are deep-rooted in the mind of the reader/viewer. Hence, though Carroll's text has been a great inspiration, its original illustrations have been the inevitable influence and the tremendous challenge to later illustrators. However, in facing the challenge, some illustrations of Alice's story still demonstrate their distinct ingenuity. Among the illustrators of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Anthony Browne, dexterously espousing the surrealistic techniques with Carroll's language, marks the seeing motif and reveals different reading and interpreting possibilities.

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) starts as a book with illustrations which make the reader also a viewer. The profundity of the book does not merely lie in how it is received by readers of different ages. The illustrations of the later ages also enrich the ways to *see* the book—to understand the story. For more than 150 years, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has inspired numerous writers, thinkers, artists, illustrators, and filmmakers to adapt, expound, collaborate, and appropriate the canonical work. How does the book yield such a diversity of interpretations and creations? Undoubtedly, it is owing to Carroll's rich but elusive text characterized by the persistent paradox inherent in the ambiguity of the thematic focus, literary genre, and readership. However, contributing to such ethical, aesthetical, and literary abundance, each of the works after Carroll's has its own vantages and features. Among the myriad interpretations and creations derived from the work, a review or examination of the various illustrations is of great importance. As Carroll's text remains the same, the following illustrations render much evidence of how the lineage of Alice's story develops and serves as an index to how the story is read/viewed in different ages. Significantly, *seeing* does not only mean how the reader literally comprehends the story but also visually conceives what is presented and implied in the illustrations.

The original version of Carroll's work published in 1865 features the abundant potential of Carroll's textual exegesis. Its popularity with both adult and child readers is demonstrated in the diverse illustrations in the following editions. The variations indicate their distinct efforts in facing Tenniel's influence. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass: A Publishing History*, Zoe Jaques and Eugene Giddens remark that "all modern illustrators felt a debt to Tenniel and thus offered up new illustrations stylized very much after his originals." However, they do not think that all modern illustrators fail to escape the visual stamp that Tenniel made in the 1860s. Some remarkable and innovative editions have their significance in the later life of Alice's story (154). Quite a few versions are marked by their cultural, social, and aesthetic connotations, enriching the reading potential of Alice's story.

The first revision was initiated by Carroll himself. It is called *The Nursery "Alice,"* published in 1869. He meant to make a more comprehensible story that appealed to child readers. This version also illustrated by John Tenniel is larger in physical size but shorter in length. The colored illustrations present Alice as a cute and plump little girl. Similar efforts made by Bessie Pease Gutmann (1907) feature an innocent four- or five-year-old Alice. She is accompanied by "friendly and innocuous looking creatures, focusing on the dreamlike rather than the nightmarish qualities of her environment" (Jaques and Giddens 164). Nevertheless, some illustrators like Ralph Steadman and Barry Moser have more radical versions. Alice in their books is far from being idyllic and naïve. Steadman's black-and-white version of Alice (1973) intensifies the repugnant visual effect with the protagonist portrayed as a peevish and conceited girl. Moser's work (1982) is even more horrifying in the black-and-white style. It features a ghostly atmosphere with a contrast between the dark-shadowed eyes of Alice and those of anthropomorphized animals. Alice's eyes are barely visible as they are shadowed in heavy darkness from her fringes. The horrifying ambience is intensified by Alice's arcane image and the animals' gloomy and dire looks. Editions like these apparently do not take children as their target readers/viewers. The change of the implied readership suggests a wider range of interpretations of Carroll's text.

Significantly, the change of the readership is closely related to the illustration. Perry Nodelman remarks that "pictures actually *change* the meanings of texts in the process of

supporting them” (197). With diverse intension and efforts of the artists and illustrators, the ways to read and interpret Alice’s story are profoundly increased. Reading is no longer textually based but pictorially hinged. Carroll’s elusive and nearly nonsensical words trigger different imagination and reading. Among the illustrators, Anthony Browne, is the one whose Alice provides a unique vision and deserves further exploration. This paper aims to take Anthony Browne’s version to illustrate how his Alice diverges from the previous illustrations<sup>1</sup> by applying a surreal style and his idiosyncratic interpretation of Carroll’s Alice’s adventure.

According to Christoph Benjamin Schulz, Carroll’s text is “an artistic predecessor and soulmate, whose literary worlds and characters seemed to prefigure many of their own anti-rationalist perspectives” (14). It has been found that “[i]n Wonderland she [Alice] experiences an intermingling and distortion of time and space, a theme that is perhaps most recognizably Surrealist due to Dali’s famous melting clock painting ‘The Persistence of Memory’” (“Alice in Wonderland”). This may be the reason for some illustrators to espouse the surrealistic techniques with Carroll’s work, as the blending between reality and a dream world in surrealistic arts well echoes Alice’s adventures. In addition to the questioned nature of reality, collage is another feature that accounts for what Carroll and the surrealists have in common. Collages “were a serious apparatus in the surrealists’ arsenal, Carroll invented the term *portmanteau*—combining words—and produced ‘Jabberwocky,’ the most famous example of pure neologistic nonsense in the English language” (Burstein VIII). In a sense, the techniques of surrealists correspond to Carroll’s text.

Anthony Browne uses the surrealistic skill in illustrating Alice’s story as it explores something beyond real life. Yet, he is not the first surrealist to illustrate Alice’s adventure. Salvador Dali impresses the reader/viewer with the first surreal Alice. Dali’s version triggers people’s association of Carroll’s wonderland with the dreamy scenes prevalent in

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<sup>1</sup> The previous illustrations mainly refer to John Tenniel’s and Salvador Dali’s. Tenniel is the prominent and inevitable influence as well as challenge to the later illustrators and artists. Anthony Browne is certainly among those who are influenced. In addition, Browne’s surrealistic style is easily associated with the other version which is done by Dali, one of the most famous surrealists in history. Both of them demonstrate the Surreal Alice but stand in sharp contrast to each other, indicating different concerns and reading perspectives.

surreal paintings. Published in 1969,<sup>2</sup> Dali's version foregrounds the dreaminess of the wonderland and mystifies Alice's experience. With curvy and unsettled sketches and bright and dynamic colors, the paintings look volatile and uncertain. It is an impressive attempt and opens a new path to interpret Carroll's story. However, the only consistent feature is the recurring image of Alice holding up a jump rope up over her head, as she is portrayed as a distant and barely-sketched figure without any revelation of what she really is—more an image than a character. Hence, although Dali's version does evoke much wonder at how it differs from the other illustrations, it paradoxically aligns with the elusiveness of Carroll's story. Dali's version corresponds to the nonsensical world of Carroll's words, having the meaning not merely suspended but unattainable. Dali's image of the rope-jumping Alice may represent the ungraspable idea or meaning in the story as the loop of the jump rope is always held up and cast forward for something unknown. Specifically speaking, Dali's version is highly inspiring but not easily understood, even by the adult readers/viewers.

Following the same vein but embracing a consistent concern for the child reader is Anthony Browne. Likewise, characterizing his works with a surreal style, Browne states that "*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is the story of a dream and the book was a great favourite of the Surrealists . . ." ("Anthony Browne: How I Re-imagined Alice in Wonderland"). He also presents a surreal version of Alice's journey in the wonderland. However, marking off his work from Dali's, Browne maintains his approachable but profound style. With the surreal take, Browne's illustrations convey a sense of tangibility with a concrete and reality-based style. Having worked on children's picture books for decades, Browne has his Alice story illustrated in a way that is ostensibly friendly to child readers and viewers but intriguingly appealing to readers/viewers of all ages owing to its rich interpretations and allusions. His works resemble what Sandra Beckett contends about crossover picturebooks. They are "multileveled works that are suitable for all ages because they invite different forms of reading, depending on the age and experience of the reader. These multilayered books can be read over and over, providing new meaning with each reading" (16). As a writer of the multilayered picturebooks,

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<sup>2</sup> The version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* illustrated by Dali Salvador was first published in 1969 by New York's Maecenas Press. It was republished in 2015 as the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition by Princeton University Press.

Browne is remarkable in having his Alice's story achieve great popularity among readers of different ages. Like his other books, Browne's Alice story is distinct and well received. Nonetheless, what exactly makes Browne's surreal Alice another popular crossover picture book and simultaneously distinct from other versions of Alice?

The following discussion will center on three aspects to probe into Browne's illustrations of Alice's adventures. First, I will explore how Browne uses his surreal techniques to make his illustrations distinct and reachable, despite the shadow of Tenniel's inevitable stamp and the surreal version of his predecessor, Dali. The focus of this section falls on the visual effect and the composition of the images, including the style and techniques. Secondly, Browne's appropriating or parodying other paintings in Alice's story paradoxically enhances his originality and profundity and activates abundant visual connotations and associations of Carroll's text. This section is meant to explore his persistent style—appropriating works of noted artists and painters. Browne's images usually make variations on the prototypes of the famous artists such as René Magritte, Vincent van Gogh, Johannes Vermeer, Edward Hopper, Jean-François Millet and so on.<sup>3</sup> The profundity of Browne's images does not merely lie in the visual amusement as the canonical images of those master artists are *re-placed* in the contexts of his works but in the potential connotations and symbolic meanings aroused in the intertextual/intervisual images. By referring to the master artistic works, he excavates more possibilities for artistic interpretations and expands a broader dialogue between the verbal and the visual, or even between one visual image and another. The abundant potentialities aroused by his artistic appropriation have a strong appeal to his reader and viewer, in a sense sustaining alternative readership.

The third aspect that is noteworthy for the *seeing* motif involves the inversion of the inside and the outside, and the real and fictional. It is particularly apparent in the images of the animals and the child character, Alice. Images of animals and children are the dominant presentations of Browne's concern for animal issues and childhood. Browne's animal characters are different from the anthropomorphized animals common in

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3 In "An Approximation to Intertextuality in Picturebooks: Anthony Browne and His Hypotexts," Maria José Lobato Suero and Beatriz Hoster Cabo explore how Browne's innovative use of visual codes constructs his individual visual rhetoric. They particularly call our attention to Browne's hypotexts, his adaptation of the well-known artists' works, to expound the significance of visual literacy and rich connotation of Browne's picturebooks.



children's literature—those human-like animals. The difference lies in two aspects. One is that Browne uses photographic techniques to maintain their animalistic nature that disengages the reader/viewer from the habitual recognition or interpretation. By featuring the animals in this way, the animal images have the meaning suspended at the threshold between the story and reality. Secondly, Browne marks the visual effect of their eyes that look right into the reader/viewer and assert their opaque animalistic nature. The animals unflinchingly claim their own sense of reality, similarly transcending the border between the real and the fictional. In addition, Browne's portrayal of Alice is much related to his concern with children presented in his works. In Browne's eyes, children are frequently posited in disorienting scenarios to probe for an identity of their own. They appear to be submissive to social regulations and parental commands but have a strong desire to know and be who they are. Children are obsessed with an ingrained and idealistic desire for parental love but find it is either insufficient or lost in reality. The surreal Alice, experiencing different encounters and learning of ridiculous ideas, appears lost in her self-identification. Hence, Browne's Alice story both intriguingly corresponds to the textual Alice who is rather puzzled about who and where she is and aligns with Browne's concern with children's disorientation in fitting themselves into society and establishing their sense of self. Browne's illustrations of the surreal Alice's adventures innovate animal characters by surfacing their unknown and latent nature and extending the sense of loss and helplessness commonly experienced by children.

### **Browne's Surrealistic style**

Browne is known for his surreal style, both in his own creations and allusions to surreal artists like René Magritte (1898-1967). It is necessary to trace back to the idea of surrealism to understand the feature of the surreal style in Browne's works. In André Breton's "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924), surrealism aims to challenge the general assumption of reality that refers to the conscious recognition and sensuous perception of reality. The challenge falls on the way people used to *see* and *know*. This artistic movement means to transcend the boundary between the visible and invisible, and the recognizable and the unrecognizable. Dreams became the felicitous terrain for the surrealist to explore what is under appearance or phenomenal reality. To break away from

the reign of social recognition and rationalism, Breton contends that the moments in dreams are not less *real* and believes in the “resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a *surreality*.” He further takes some literary works as examples and gives an exact definition of the term as “[p]sychi automatism in its pure state . . . . Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern” (“Manifesto of Surrealism”). In addition, it is “based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought.” Hence, surrealist works feature a dreamy reality and nonthematic composition by juxtaposing the real and unreal figures, objects, and scenes. Works like Dali’s *The Persistence of Memory* (1931) and René Magritte’s *The Son of Man* (1946) and *Man in a Bowler’s Hat* (1964)<sup>4</sup> are among the best-known pieces. Furthermore, the incongruous style demonstrates absurdity but divulges the inner state, enriching the profundity of painting and rendering different perceptions about realities. These incomprehensible, illogical, and preposterous images in a sense manifest different layers of reality. Surrealism tears down the visual assurance and stresses a new way to *see*.

*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* with a dream setting is in line with the basic tenets of surrealism. Carroll questions the logic, civility, and self-recognition by twisting the meaning with puns, illogical plots and characterization. Characters like the grinning Cheshire Cat and the alternatively enlarging and shrinking Alice are far from being “realistic.” Absurdity is prevalent in Carroll’s story. The surrealist style helps surface the complicated text and images in the wonderland. Yet, what surrealism would help illuminate Carroll’s story of Alice, since surreal artistic works are generally not easy to

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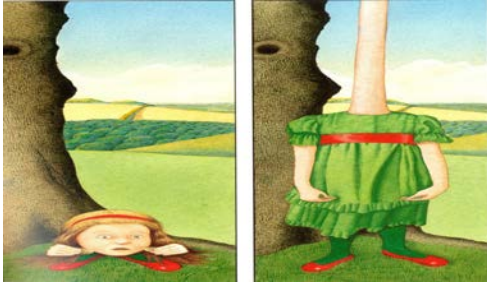
<sup>4</sup> Dali’s *The Persistence of Memory*, featuring the unrealistic images of the melting clock and ants placed on the seaside landscape, is an alternative and subtle way to *see* what time is and how systematic calculation of human existence can be perceived. Another forceful example of seeing in a new way is promoted by René Magritte. Both *The Son of Man* and *Man in a Bowler’s Hat* have the man’s face hidden either by an apple or a bird. Seeing and not seeing, the visible and the concealed are one of the prominent themes in Magritte’s works. Magritte maintains that “[t]o be a surrealist means barring from your mind all remembrance of what you have seen, and being always on the lookout for what has never been.” He once specifically talks about *The Son of Man*, saying “you have the apparent face, the apple, hiding the visible but hidden, the face of the person . . . . Everything we see hides another thing, we always want to see what is hidden by what we see. There is an interest in that which is hidden and which the visible does not show us . . . a sort of conflict . . . between the visible that is hidden and the visible that is present” (“René Magritte: Biography, Paintings, and Quotes”).

approach or comprehend? In terms of the content of Carroll's story, surrealism can be a highly plausible style to be adopted to illustrate Alice's story but its comprehensibility may be another thing to tackle for the viewer. Dali's version emerging as an innovative and inspiring illustration does fit Carroll's elusive text. However, the challenge it poses is explicit as mentioned above.

As a contrast to Dali's version, Anthony Browne's illustration of Carroll's Alice enjoys more popularity among readers/viewers. Being a remarkable and well-received illustrator and writer of children's picturebooks, he makes his Alice easy to be appreciated by child readers/viewers. It does not mean its profundity and abundance is reduced or removed; it is adeptly presented. As mentioned above, every artist or illustrator who wants to collaborate with Carroll's text has to face Tenniel's irreplaceable claim on the story. In "Anthony Browne: How I Re-imagined Alice in Wonderland," Browne admits "[o]ne of the main problems when illustrating Alice was how to avoid being too influenced by Sir John Tenniel's imagery." It corresponds to Catherine Nichols' comment--"[e]very artist who has illustrated *Alice in Wonderland* or *Through the Looking-Glass* owes an immense debt to John Tenniel" (20). The inevitable influence and challenge have prompted Browne to discreetly reselect the textual details for his illustrations and even take the inspirations from other artists to distinguish his interpretation. The paradoxically dreamlike but recognizable images are what he uses to help us visualize Carroll's irrational and ludicrous language.

First, Browne's reading of Carroll's story brings up the surreal images of Alice which are demonstrated in the changes of the body. It in a sense aligns with the connotations of the text and intriguingly demonstrates the temporal dimension of the illustrations. Different from Tenniel's making the body larger or smaller in a comprehensible way, Browne's surreal image of Alice renews the reader/viewer's conception of Alice's metamorphoses. In Chapter V, when Alice complains to the Blue Caterpillar about how she is annoyed by the frequent changes of her body and wishes to grow a little bigger, the Caterpillar gives Alice a mushroom and tells her, "One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make your grow shorter" (Browne 2015: 44). Though noting the difficulty of deciding the *two* sides of the mushroom since it is round, Alice nibbles a little of the right-hand side and starts to shrink rapidly. "Her chin

was pressed so closely against her foot, that there was hardly room to open her mouth.” Frightened by the sudden change, she takes another bite of the other side immediately. Then, Alice finds that “her shoulders were nowhere to be found: all she could see, when she looked down, was an immense length of neck, which seemed to rise like a stalk out of a sea of green leaves that lay far below her” (2015: 44). To faithfully present the textual description, Browne juxtaposes the images of the shrunk and enlarged bodies as an apparent contrast on the same page. The shrunk image is a body whose torso and legs disappeared. It is presented as a regular-sized head placed on the feet with wide-opened and staring eyes and two hands, each holding a leaf, beside the chin. More astounding is Alice’s ghastly-looking face placed on her feet which are in green socks and vermilion shoes. Next to the shrunk Alice is her enlarged image. It is featured by a long neck that soars into the sky without a head. As depicted in the text, the immense length of her neck is the only thing that comes to Alice’s eyes when she grows bigger and bigger. What makes the reader/viewer feel interested but somewhat daunted is the neck stretching upward. It keeps extending to the extent that the head can only be shown on another page. That creates a pun-like effect in the images. Textually, it depicts the shrunk or enlarged body; yet, visually, some interesting connotations and effects are insinuated. In one aspect, it resembles the beheaded body foreshadowing the Duchess’s order, as the head of the shrunk body is like the one which is chopped-off and falls onto the feet. The terrified look happens to match the terrifying head-chopping moment. In another, the head of the enlarged body is set against the blue sky with the white clouds presented in a globe-shaped form. Traversing two pages, the enlarged body deliberately incorporates the temporal idea—a temporal gap between now and then (Browne 2015: 45-46). The two-page illustration of the enlarging process implicates the temporal dimension. It echoes the textual narrative, indicating how the temporal is spatially/visually presented in the text.



Browne's illustration on Alice's enlarged and shrunk body (2015)

In addition, Alice's face is modeled on Magritte's picture<sup>5</sup> to imply that Alice fails to *see* what is happening to and around her. Alice is blind-folded visually and mentally. She does not understand what she is experiencing, facing an unknown future. Who she is and what she is going through attest to the incomprehensibility of what comes to her eyes. From the presentation of Alice's shrunk and enlarged body, Browne distinguishes his illustrations by demonstrating the faithfulness to the text and making deft correspondence to Carroll's caliber in elusive language. His version incorporates the multi-leveled meanings and the puns, teeming with spatially- and temporally-transcending images in the saturated and bright colors. Carroll uses language puns for the alternative scenarios in Alice's wonderland, while Browne is dexterous in making the image puns for the reader/viewer to *see* more than what they appear.

Another example to demonstrate Browne's surreal originality lies in the portrait of the Duchess. Browne derives the idea from Carroll's text and relates it to his propensity in painting. In Chapter IX, the Duchess is described as a very ugly woman with "an uncomfortably sharp chin." While playing croquet, the Duchess repeatedly digs "her sharp little chin into Alice's shoulder" (2015: 82). To present her hideous appearance, Tenniel derives the inspiration from Quintin Matsys's work, "A Grotesque Old Woman." And the grotesque old woman, according to some critics, is identified as the Duchess Margaret of Carinthia and Tyrol, who was reputed in the fourteenth century as the ugliest woman in history (Nichols, 21). However, to avoid modeling on Tenniel's Duchess, Browne makes a pig-like image of the Duchess. She is presented with porcine features—the pink bow representing a pig's ears with the snout-like nostrils. There are

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5. In this picture, Browne models on René Magritte's *Man in a Bowler Hat* in which the face of a man in a bowler hat is covered by a bird flying into the frame from the man's left to his right. A similar image is presented in Browne's picture. What is different is Browne's having a pigeon flying into Alice's face.

two explanations for Browne's Duchess to be pig-like. First, textually speaking, the Duchess has a baby who turned into a pig.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the pig-like image of the Duchess reflects Browne's inclination to incorporate animal features in his human portrayals. Traversing the boundary between humans and animals, if we reflect on Browne's oeuvre, has been a consistent feature of Browne's works.<sup>7</sup> Merging his interpretation of Carroll's portrayal of the Duchess with his individual style in image construction marks his difference from Tenniel's. However, neither of them gives an image of the Duchess with an uncomfortably sharp chin as depicted in the text. Tenniel's Duchess modeled on Matsys's work has a wrinkled chin, while the pig-like Duchess is a fat woman with a round face and a barely recognizable chin. Moreover, Browne's Duchess foregrounds the surreal effect foreshadowing the becoming-animal process of the baby in three juxtaposed pictures like those in comic strips. Browne's image of the Duchess indicates not merely his reacting to Tenniel's version but surfacing his originality in reading Carroll's story. Hence, the originality is above the faithfulness to the text. The convergence and divergence between the textual and the visual render the possibilities to see how the illustrator decides on the image of a given character and reveals the illustrator's distinct interpretation.

Similar situation is salient in the discrepancy among Carroll's text, Tenniel's and Browne's illustrations of the swimming scene. In Carroll's text, while Alice is wondering how small she becomes, Alice's foot slips and she finds herself falling into the pool of her tears. She then discovers there is a mouse in the pool, too, and wants to ask the Mouse how to get out of the pool. But, their talk ends up with an argument owing to Alice's insistence on how nice her favorite cat, Dinah, is. Then, they find it is time to leave the

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6 While the Duchess trusts the baby to Alice, it begins to turn into a pig, which is depicted as "[t]he baby grunted again, and Alice looked very anxiously into its face to see what was the matter with it. There could be no doubt that it had a *very* turn-up nose, much more like a snout than a real nose. . . she said to herself, 'it would have made a very dreadfully ugly child, but it makes a rather handsome pig'" (56, 1988). Browne has three images juxtaposed like a comic strip to illustrate the baby's process of becoming a pig.

7 The animal-like human characters are prevalent in many of Browne's works. Gorillas, pigs, and bears have the highest frequency of appearance in his books. They are the main characters of works like *Bear Hunt* (1979), *Gorilla* (1983), *Willy the Wimp* (1984), *Willy the Champ* (1985), *Piggybook* (1986), *The Little Bear Book* (1988), *Willy and Hugh* (1991), *Zoo* (1992), *Voices in the Park* (1998), *Me and You* (2011), *One Gorilla, a Counting Book* (2012), and *What If. . . ?* (2014), etc. Animal characters, more precisely animal-like human characters, are rather dominant in his works. They are indeed worth exploring, especially those in Browne's Alice story, since the animals in Browne's Alice's story differ from those in the rest of his works by having an impenetrable and unidentifiable nature. The discussion on animals in Browne's Alice story will be in the following section.

pool since it is crowded with other birds and animals that fall into it, including “a Duck and a Dodo, a Lory and an Eaglet, and several other creatures” (2015:16). In Tenniel’s illustration, only Alice and the Mouse are presented in the pool. Browne’s version is discrepant from Carroll’s text and Tenniel’s illustration. In Browne’s picture, there are a gorilla (a frequent character in his books), a duck, a fish tail, a bowler hat and a flower-holding hand in a white glove, as well as the rabbit’s fan in the pool. Browne deftly incorporates the images in his other books and at the same time adds the things that are essential to the story like the fan, the poker card and the white glove which do not appear in Tenniel’s illustration. The border-crossing feature also shows in how Browne’s illustration resonates with the rest of his works and sustains the visual rhetoric of his style.



*The Ugly Duchess*(1513)  
by Quentin Matsys



The illustration of  
the Duchess by John Tenniel in  
*Alice’s Adventures in  
Wonderland* (1865)



The illustration of the Duchess  
by Anthony Browne in *Alice’s Adventures in  
Wonderland* (2015)

Judging from the previous two examples, Browne’s originality lies in his individual surreal style. Greatly different from Salvador Dali, whose images are done in a rich but abstract manner, Browne presents the characters with concrete and substantial images. Jane Doonan observes,

Browne’s pictorial style is much concerned with the materiality of objects and figures, with giving the illusion of tangibility. Paradoxically, he assembles and composes them in such a way as to refute the possibility of

material reality. The effect is to reveal the interior as well as the exterior states of being of his protagonists. (1989: 9-10)

With the ostensibly material and tangible presentation, Browne shows something beyond realistic comprehension. It is the typical surrealistic style revealing both the exterior and interior states of the protagonists. It is also the point that Doonan foregrounds in differentiating Tenniel's illustrations from Browne's. Tenniel's interpretation was done in the Victorian age, influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite movement and "characterized by the presence and physicality of Alice, the marvelous creatures subtly anthropomorphized by expressions and hands, the noble grandeur of the heraldic beasts, and the dramatic elegance of the poses" (1989: 15). Though in a dreamland, the figures with recognizable and substantial features are placed amidst the realistic ambience. In contrast, Browne espouses the materiality of his illustrations with the surreal features, as Doonan contends that "Browne concentrates on the dream-like vision of Alice's adventures, and uses devices of twentieth-century surrealism as a visual language to reflect Alice's unconscious"(1989: 21). The dream-like vision is lucidly stressed but the reflection of Alice's unconscious is not easily read or confirmed. Browne's techniques in transcending realistic scenarios lie in the portrayals of the characters. These portrayals are special in the way they *look*. It seems they are both in and out of scenes like the images of Alice and the Duchess.

To find clues about how the characters reach beyond the setting of the story, it is necessary to examine how these characters *look* and interact with each other. The prominent feature is that Browne's characters are placed but not engaged in the scenes while being with each other. From Alice's gaze and expression, she is not intent on or even relevant to the other characters around. It is the same with the animals portrayed with photographic objectivity and surrealistic techniques. Take the scene of swimming in the pool of her tears for example. Alice wears a sneering and aloof look with her head tilted to the left and her eyes cast upward. Her look indicates her concern with something outside the frame of the picture. The image illuminates a surreal effect as Alice appears to be in and out of the picture. Her look seems to imply the coexistence of reality and the wonderland of her dream, showing her concern and bewilderment over where she is.



More interesting is the gaze of the animals who look as if they are minding something else much more than forming a conversing group. The gorilla which mostly plays the protective figure to children in Browne's books casts an empty gaze toward the front; the duck has a mild and steady manner in the way it looks; the Mouse looks straight at the reader and appears alert about its surroundings.

In addition to the characters' gaze reaching beyond the scene, Browne's surrealistic technique is exemplified by the image of the Mad Hatter, whose face shows the contradiction of the inner state. Browne suggests his madness by "splitting his face into one half happy and one side sad" ("Anthony Browne: How I Re-imagined Alice in Wonderland"). That means the Mad Hatter has two different ways to *see* the world. It insinuates that the perception of reality is never unitary or consistent. The contradiction reveals the complicated and twisted state of mind that is not seen in Tenniel's version. Nevertheless, along with the (dis)engaged Alice, the animals with the detached gaze, and the Hatter with the split look, Browne's surreal style also presents itself in the appropriation of other artistic works, surreal and otherwise.

### **The Surreal in Visual Intertextuality**

Browne's brand of the surreal has been known for its intertextuality,<sup>8</sup> as images from other artists are embedded in Browne's works. According to Jane Doonan, "[a]ll his picture-book texts require his audience to have knowledge of other texts and discourses—folk and fairy tales, classics, and his own works; fine art, cinema, comics, advertisements—the intertextual process is his whole business" (1999: 30). However, it arouses much controversy in critique. Critics like Zoe Jaques and Eugene Giddens think it essential to know about Browne's hypo-texts to appreciate the richness of his works. Yet, Erica Hateley contends that Browne's works featuring the intertextual play run the risk of blurring the political intentions embedded and making the fine art capital in the commercial world. She comments,

Browne's citation of surrealism produces a visual ontological surreal different from Magritte's visual epistemological surreal: Browne invites his readers to

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8 Jane Doonan regards intertextuality as what marks the second decade of the works of Anthony Browne. He is observed to either rewrite some folk-fairy tale genre or appropriate artistic works.

see new things where Magritte invited his viewers to see in new ways; Browne establishes a template for consuming approved culture, which . . . revises Magritte's agenda of social-political critique.<sup>9</sup> (332)

In a sense, Browne's appropriation of Magritte's work integrates fine art into commercial reproductions. Yet, specifically speaking, this is a parody of Magritte's work rather than a reproduction. It renders readers a chance to reflect on the gap or rupture in the interplay between the original and the adapted. Magritte is a prominent surreal artist who explores new ways to *see*. His innovation of "seeing" is implicated in the new things that Browne presents in his images. The visual intertextuality, more specifically intervisuality, is how Browne reveals his surreal style. Based on Carroll's text and appropriating Magritte's painting, Browne enriches Alice's story and renews the way the reader understands the story. In the story, while Alice tells the Blue Caterpillar, "I can't remember things as I used—and I don't keep the same size for ten minutes now," the Caterpillar asked Alice to repeat the poem, "You are Old, Father William," which Alice recited wrong from beginning to end (2015: 40-3). Implicating Magritte's ideas and images, Browne makes the pictures reality-transcending by having an old man in a suit doing the tumbling in the study room. In illustrating the nonsense poem, "You are Old, Father William," Browne appropriates the form and images of *Man with a Newspaper* (1928) by Magritte. According to Ronald Alley, Magritte's painting demonstrates a rare technique of Magritte's by repeating "the same image in four compartments (except for the presence of the seated man in the upper left section only) . . . . A. N. Girling, in an article in *The Stereoscopic Society Bulletin*, has pointed out that 'crossed-eyed' viewing of the two pairs of images, and especially the lower pair, produces a strongly three-dimensional stereoscopic effect." Applying Magritte's framework to his illustration, Browne in a sense incorporates Magritte's subtle undermining of the everyday vision, stressing an alternative way to *see* the reality. Browne's "new things" mentioned by Hateley are

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9 Based on Bourdieu's idea, Hateley contends "Browne's citations of Magritte are not Surrealist but are Art as capital . . . . Although any citation of Surrealism necessarily calls up its politics, Browne's ideology of art, its production and consumption, is not Surrealist but bourgeois and capitalist (in a Bourdieuan sense)" (325). Indeed, there is controversy about Browne's *reproducing* or *parodying* art. In a 2000 interview, Browne stated that "I've recently been sued by the Magritte estate for my fake reproduction of his work in *Willy the Dreamer* . . . . My French publisher got a letter demanding that all the books be taken off the shelves . . . . I thought that I was encouraging children to look at Magritte's images, but I had to take out all references to him for the new edition" (Eccleshare).

obviously presented but his new ways to see are also suggested in the absurd incongruity in his allusion to Magritte's painting.

Hence, although Browne's appropriation does not focus on the stereoscopic effect, the idea of seeing the reality anew implied in Magritte's painting aligns with the nonsensical changes in these four pictures. The absurdity is not merely revealed in Old William's deeds but in the decorations of the room. The ornaments include the flowers on the window sill which turns into a pumpkin, the duck-featured painting on the wall, and the lengthened leg of the table. The latter two items, the duck and the lengthened leg, again remind the readers of Browne's animal characters and Alice's physical metamorphoses in the story and simultaneously echo the nonsense poem<sup>10</sup> blended in Alice's adventures.

Another example of visual intertextuality/intervisuality is presented in the illustration of Alice's hand protruding through the window with the Rabbit staring at it in shock. After all the animals in the caucus race flee from Alice, she sees the White Rabbit looking for his gloves and the fan. She then follows the Rabbit to his house. But after drinking something from a bottle, she grows bigger and bigger so that she has to put one arm out of the window, which frightens the Rabbit. Browne's painting is somewhat similar to that of Tenniel's except for a giant creature, the grotesque bird-like creature. The creature carries a glove with its beak, flying in the middle of the right-hand side of the picture. It is a reference to Max Klinger's series titled "Abduction" (1881). Klinger, a German symbolic painter and sculptor, is known for his meticulous blending of the real and the imaginary. His painting "triggers a series of elaborate visions of longing and loss, conveyed through dreamlike distortion of scale and jarring juxtapositions" (Hess). Appropriating Klinger's work in the image suggests meanings on several levels. First, the idea of symbolic painting invites the reader to *see* beyond the ordinary or the everyday. Second, the glove, corresponding to the one that the rabbit lost in the hurry to get to the Duchess, accentuates one of Klinger's preoccupied themes—loss, in Alice's story. Textually speaking, it refers to the Rabbit's loss of the gloves; symbolically, it intimates

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<sup>10</sup> The nonsense poem is called "You are Old, Father William," which is about a young man's questioning his father about why he is able to stand on his head, finishes eating a goose with the bones and the beak, balances an ell on the end of the nose at such an old age. The nonsense does not only lie in the nonsensical conversation between the father and the young man but in designating Alice's loss of memory as well as the changeable size of her body.

the loss of spatial and temporal orientation and sense of self for Alice. Thirdly, Klinger’s interweaving of reality and dreams resembles the setting for Alice’s adventure, by stressing the vision of the fantastic, the imaginary, and enhancing a way to see and perceive the reality anew. The intertextuality/intervisuality of Browne’s illustration reinforces its surreal effect and enriches the possible connotations of the text itself. It is how Browne says of the image of the creature and the glove in his version of Alice’s story—“there is no mention of this creature in the book but throughout my version I wanted to echo Carroll’s puns, puzzles and metaphors with dreamlike visual puns of my own” (“Anthony Browne: How I Re-imagined Alice in Wonderland”).



The illustration on Alice’s protruding hand by Anthony Browne in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (2015)



*Abduction* (1893) by Max Klinger

Browne’s surreal style reveals itself in the setting, characterization, and the deliberate intertextuality/intervisuality. One typical illustration is a picture of a lively white rose being painted red by a hand holding a black brush, and, simultaneously, another brush is shown painting the hand that is painting a rose red. The layered illustrations manifest layered connotations. First of all, it is a textual illustration of three gardeners painting the white roses red at the entrance of the Queen’s garden. Secondly, it suggests the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485) in British history as the white roses and the red ones separately were used as the heraldic badges associated with the two royal houses—the White Rose of York and the Red Rose of Lancaster contending for the throne. The wars ended as Henry Tudor, representing the Lancastrian house, defeated the Yorkist king, Richard III, in the Battle of Bosworth Field and assumed the throne as Henry VII. Moreover, by the marriage to Edward IV’s daughter Elizabeth of York in 1486, Henry united the two contesting claims and the House of Tudor ruled England and Wales until 1603 (*Britannica Online Encyclopedia*). As the white rose is painted red in Carroll’s text, Browne alludes to the triumph of the Lancastrian house and the marriage

of Henry VII to Elizabeth of York. More significantly, while reality is endlessly suspended, the vision will be constantly questioned. Browne's surreal style and device of intertextuality/intervisuality triggers new ways to access or define reality. Again, his surrealistic style makes an intriguing correspondence to Carroll's literary traits in making puns, symbols, and the jarring gaps in the text.

From the foregoing sections of the surreal Alice and the pictorial intertextuality, the *seeing* motif characterizes Browne's surreal illustrations, highly questioning what the reader/viewer can see. It presents a visual punning as *to see* refers to the ability to look at something with one's eyes and the ability to understand someone or something. Furthermore, this visual punning indicates the paradox of seeing/non-seeing. To see does not necessarily mean viewing or understanding something, while the invisible may be something we can see or conceive. The *seeing* motif is further illustrated in three images in Browne's book referring to Magritte's work, *Man in a Bowler Hat* (1964), with an eagle flying into the man's face. The first one is an enlarged Alice whose neck stretches to the sky with a bird flying into her face as mentioned earlier. The other two are at the end of the novel depicting the moments before and after Alice woke up from the dream. While she argued against the Queen's absurd order to have the sentence first and the verdict afterwards, the whole pack of poker cards "rose up into the air and came flying down at her; she gave a little scream . . . [and] tried to beat them off and found herself lying her head in the lap of her sister, who was gently brushing away some dead leaves that had fluttered down from the trees upon her face" (2015:116). Browne put together the two images: one shows her face blocked by the cards, and the other by the falling leaves. Interestingly, the images simulate Alice's looking at herself in the mirror. However, in both situations, Alice is trying but is unable to see reality. Reality, in this sense, is never something obvious, since the limit for one's vision is clearly revealed, as indicated by Alice.<sup>11</sup> On the one hand, the three images of the blindfolded Alice

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11 The seeing motif has been foreshadowed in Alice's comparing herself as a telescope in experiencing the bodily shrinking or lengthening. The motif is again extended in the sequel of Alice's adventures, *Through the Looking Glass*, while the train guard runs his eyes over Alice "first through a telescope, then through a microscope, and then through an opera-glass" (150). Isobel Armstrong comments that the different forms of prosthetic optical instrument indicates "the manifold types of lens available at the time, the monocular lens of the microscope, telescope, kaleidoscope, the binocular lenses of the opera glass and stereoscope, all of which created different ways of seeing" (317). That is, with different technological aids, there are different ways to see and the things can be changed according to the way we *see* them. Hence, the multiple

suggest the impossibility of fully grasping reality; on the other, they designate the incipient possibilities on what we can *see* in the story.



The illustration of the enlarged Alice by Anthony Browne in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (2015)

The illustration of Alice's coming back to reality by Anthony Browne in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (2015)

### The Surreal Animals

While Carroll's Alice and the animals appear to have conversations in Tenniel's illustration, the animal characters in Browne's appear indifferent to the surroundings. Each of them looks in a different direction, far from being participants in a conversing or interacting scenario. Moreover, the animal characters are surreal rather than anthropomorphized. They preserve the surreal attributes in a way that they are more like the prototypical animal than the characters of the story. Interestingly, similar observations have been made in Tenniel's illustrations. Rose Lovell-Smith has the observations in reading Tenniel's interpretation. She comments that "the animal characters do not behave or talk much like animals in traditional fairy tales or fables." They render a visual angle that "evokes the life sciences, natural history, and Darwinian ideas . . ." (386, 385). First of all, the images of Tenniel's animals are similar to those depicted in such books like *The Illustrated Natural History* (1851) and *Gleanings of Natural History* (1758). Second, corresponding to Darwinism or the theory of evolution, "the Tenniel/Carroll *Alice in Wonderland* links forwards to ideas of predator and prey, eat or be eaten, and the 'animal' nature of humanity" (406). This can be seen in the Mouse's reluctance to talk about Alice's cat, Dinah, and Alice's being repositioned in the food chain owing to her changes in size. However, if Tenniel's animals resemble those in natural sciences, Browne takes a

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ways of seeing further echo the elusiveness of reality as well as Alice's character.

step further as the animals are surreal. More than being life-like, Browne's animal images feature both photographic effects and surrealistic skill and simultaneously preserve a sense of solid materiality. Another conspicuous example is the picture of the caucus race. Even though almost every animal is dressed in human attire, the animals, not showing human attributes or characteristics, mark the non-traversable border between animals and humans. While running in a circle to dry up after swimming in the pool of tears, Alice and the animals appear to be engaged in something other than the running race. They appear to be together but separate, indicating their separate individuality and intention. The animals intriguingly look beyond the frame of the picture. In altering the way the characters *look* and the way the readers/viewers *see*, the existence and emergence of another reality is insinuated.

The gorilla is a more specific and conspicuous example of Browne's surreal style. It is usually presented as a warm and gentle image of the father figure in Browne's books and this persistent father figure is not absent in his Alice book. However, the gorilla, like the other animals in Browne's version of Alice story, is far from a metaphorical substitute for human characters but one that seems detached from the story. Instead of acting as an engaged character in the illustration, the gorilla is an iconic figure to mark Browne's innovated idea of animals. As Browne is distinctive in presenting animal characters, he adds some noteworthy and significant changes to the animal characters in Alice's story as mentioned above. The changes can be illuminated by examining how the animals are treated in other works of Browne's. Take *Voices in the Park* (1998) for example. The four main characters are zoomorphic, "having ape heads on the human bodies . . . the gap between fantasy and reality is made explicit. Viewers will move beneath the masks, and according to their experience, weigh and balance the disturbing insights about their lives and personalities of Browne's characters." With a clear critique on the cripplingly restrictive mother and the inadequate father in *Voices in the Park*, Doonan thinks that zoomorphism—giving humans animal heads—is "a way of dealing with potentially painful issues in a form that will not alarm young children but still be able to provoke lively debate among adolescents" (1999, 48). The zoomorphic characters do have the propensity to blunt the sharp and critical issues in social and familial relationships; in another sense,

zoomorphism brings closer the reality that children are regarded as humans with animal instincts both metaphorically and physically.

In the illustration of Alice's story, Browne has a distinct breakthrough in presenting animal characters. Different from the animals in Browne's other works, those in his Alice story preserve a character of their own, resisting any simplistic reduction as the way we associate the animals with familiar human characteristics, such as the cunning wolf, the stupid pig, and the slick rabbit. Nor are they presented as the generally recognized zoomorphic characters which are animal-like human characters. Browne's animal characters with distinct configuration but unknowable nature echoes what the artist Wilma Cruise has done in her presentation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* as a series of exhibitions entitled *Alice Sequence* (2011-12). Without falling into the allegorical association, the animals exhibited are beyond social presuppositions. Her alternative presentation of the animal characters in Alice's story reveals the non-human-centered or posthuman approach, which accords with the confounded Alice whose logic is thwarted by the animals' questions and responses. Applying Derrida's idea in *The Animal That Therefore I Am* to her works, Cruise has her animals and Alice appear in a way that is radically different from the generally-held images. She maintains that "Derrida inverts the human-centered position. It is not what the human sees, when he or she looks, or acts, or decides upon, but what the animal sees, or does, or acts upon" (76).<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Derrida's argument does arouse awareness of how animals feel when faced with humans or on their own. More importantly, it triggers human insecurities and anxiety when faced with animals. The human/non-human distinction is all the more obviously uncertain. Hence, to mark the linguistic aporia and epistemological limit, Cruise hinges her works onto the

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12 In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida talks about his reflection on the personal experience about his inexplicably feeling ashamed when he was naked and looked at by a cat. From the feeling of being ashamed, to what the animal is while looking at him, to who he is as being looked at, Derrida shifted to the non-human-centered paradigm about the relation between human and animals. He comments that "[n]othing can ever rob me of the certainty that what we have here is an existence that refuses to be conceptualized. And a mortal existence, for from the moment that it has a name, its name survives it. It signs its potential disappearance." Demonstrating how the animals elude the linguistic or epistemological bondage, Derrida quotes what the Cheshire Cat tells Alice in Alice's story: "'We're all mad here, I'm mad. You're mad.' . . . It is a moment of a simulacrum of discussion, which comes to grief when they are unable to agree on the sense of the words, on what a *word* means, and in the end, no doubt, on what 'word,' what the term *word* could ever mean" (9).



pre-language or the pre-conscious modality. Ann-Marie Tully contends that “[t]his artistic dislodgement of certainty in the prerogative of language to enforce human superiority over non-human beings, places emphasis on the bodily presence of Cruise’s sculptural animal figures, in an artistic echo of pre-linguistic modes of communication” (4).

Browne is similar to Cruise in foregrounding the non-human-centered idea of animals but different in the way of presentation. For the animal illustrations in Alice’s story, Browne preserves some of his own features but makes intriguing innovations. Similarly, the colors are vivid and bright reds, greens, blacks and yellows, which make the setting and the impression similar to the previous books. Nonetheless, Browne disengages his animal characters from those of allegorical stories or his own zoomorphic types. Unlike the earlier works like *Through the Magic Mirror* (1976), *Bear Hunt* (1979), *Gorilla* (1983), *Willy the Wimp* (1984), *Willy the Champ* (1985), and *Piggybook* (1986), the animal characters in Alice’s story are not portrayed as human-like characters, expressing recognizable emotions and feelings. The animals in the caucus race look as opaque as they can be. The realistic images preserve an impenetrable attribute, emphasizing its incomprehensible or undefinable dimension. They are more animals than characters. In addition to their photographic appearance with vivid colors, the animals in the caucus race have the gaze staring straight at the viewers, marking their irreducibility and unknown character. Their image refers to what Derrida encounters while being looked at in the nude by his cat. It is a situation arousing the viewer’s anxiety over self-identity and uncertainty about what the cat is. Derrida wonders what the cat is looking at or thinking about, if animals do indeed think. Language is not sufficient to shed light on what there is in the scene. It is the gaze of the cat that reminds Derrida of the limit of language or social recognition of what animals can be. Similar is the gaze of the animals in Browne’s illustrations. Each gaze reveals a character of his own, such as that of the eagle, the parrot, the giraffe, the crocodile in the scene of the caucus race. Their distinct and non-transparent character of the animals is significantly enhanced in the way they *look*. Highlighting the eyes of the animals, Browne makes another corresponding anchor for the seeing motif he means to present in Alice’s story.

Unlike Cruise's stressing the pre-language or pre-conscious mode to present animals, another feature of Browne's innovation in the image of animals comes from his interestingly converging with and transcending Carroll's text. First of all, the image of the animals corresponds to Alice's wonderland in which Alice is confronted and baffled by their illogical arguments. They are not talking on the same premise of reason or senses. The dialogue between Alice and the Pigeon about her identity exemplifies this quite well. As the Pigeon identifies Alice as a serpent owing to her extremely long neck and experience of eating eggs, Alice denies this abruptly but is at a loss about who she really is.<sup>13</sup> In a sense, this is an indication of Carroll's ridiculing the so-called logic or sense. More importantly, the Pigeon has *his own sense* and cannot be compromised. In contrast, it is Alice, the human, who feels uncertain about who she is. That might further tell why the picture is presented as the Pigeon flying into her face, blocking her eyes with its eyes looking at the viewer. The picture shows the *seeing* animals but the *unseeing* Alice.

### **The Surreal Alice as a Child Character**

The surreal Alice makes an extension of Browne's consistent concern and idea of childhood as well as his style. Among the prominent features of Browne's images, the recurrent ones are highly conducive to helping the reader/viewer identify the distinct style—"his surrealistic and fantastic imagery which has symbolic function . . . . These all help to give the picturebooks a corporate identity" (Doonan: 1986, 160). Browne's images of Alice are respectively associated with the lonely and disoriented child in quite a few of his books. In *Willy the Wimp* (1984), Willy is weak, timid, and vulnerable to others' influence and even violence. Charles in *Voices in the Park* (1998) is another boy with low self-esteem, living under the shadow of a dominating and conceited mother. *Into the Forest* (2004) is an adaptation of the classic story, *Little Red Riding Hood*. It tells a story of a little boy who journeys through the creepy and barren woods

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<sup>13</sup> From the dialogue between the pigeon and Alice, Carroll demonstrates the arbitrariness and absurdity in identifying things with appearance or behavior. The pigeon's regarding Alice as a serpent is based on her long neck and egg-eating behavior. While Alice admits that "'I *have* tasted eggs, certainly . . . but little girls eat eggs quite as much as serpents do, you know,' the pigeon responds, "'I don't believe it . . . but if they do, why then they're a kind of serpent, that's all I can say'" (2015: 47-48). In the talk, the distinction between the pigeon and the girl is paradoxically blurred.

on his way to visit his grandmother and meets quite a few helpless children like Hansel and Gretel. Browne's image of Alice resonates with his portrayal of the child characters in the works like these. *Gorilla* (1983), portraying a lonely little girl yearning for her father's love, particularly corresponds to such image of the child character in Browne's works.

*Gorilla* talks about Hannah, whose father is preoccupied with his work. On her birthday, the father gives her a toy gorilla as a gift. Yet, the toy gorilla turns into an imaginary father who flies her to such places as a zoo where she sees quite a few apes, but most of them look sad or puzzled. These animal images in a sense reflect how Hannah feels toward herself and the detached relationship with her own father. And, at the end of the story, Hannah is sitting in the corner of a dark room and watching TV which is the only thing that gives off light and probably a slight sense of warmth to her. The rest of the room is dark and the wall is full of images of bat-like monsters along with a map of the Dark Continent, Africa, suggesting the helpless and hopeless state of the little girl. A similar image reoccurs in Browne's Alice when all the animals leave her after she mentions how capable her cat, Dinah, is in catching mice and birds. The deserted Alice appears lonely and depressed. Browne presents an image of a little girl sitting on the ground with a helpless and crying face resembling Hannah sitting in the dark corner in *Gorilla*. Browne projects the need for love and company onto the surreal Alice. Similar to the motif in *Gorilla*, the crying face and detesting look of the surreal Alice reveals Browne's observation on the state of being a child.

Nonetheless, while Carroll demonstrates a strong-willed and determinate Alice, Browne lays more stress on her unknowability as well as disorientation. In Carroll's text, even though the wonderland puzzles, terrifies, and even angers Alice, she sounds independent and courageous to confront herself with different situations. Carroll's *curiouser* Alice audaciously takes various adventures and even offends the Queen. Browne's Alice, though feeling disoriented, preserves her incomprehensibility symbolized by the hidden face. Maria José Lobato Suero and Beatriz Hoster consider Browne's motif of the hidden face "a discursive strategy to stress the topic of the interpersonal conflict in asymmetrical relationships . . . .The hidden face converts the character into being unattainable, incomprehensible, and untouchable" (177). Their

argument is convincing in expounding the incomprehensibility or unknown potential of the child characters.

Browne's surreal Alice serves as an adequate material to probe into his wonderland that reveals rich profundity in verbal/visual exchange and intertextuality/intervisuality. His surrealistic style serves as an intricate correspondence to Carroll's language puns, symbols, and metaphors, and marks the (un-)seeing motif, and advances his exploration of animals and children in the surreal images.

### **Conclusion**

Anthony Browne's surreal Alice is remarkably intriguing; it foregrounds the seeing motif by innovating a different way to *see* Alice's story. He questions what and how one sees by simultaneously interpreting Carroll's text and challenging Tenniel's world-famous illustrations. In addition to his interpretation of Carroll's text with the surrealistic techniques, his distinct images result from the appropriation of other artistic works, his unique animal images as well as the relation with his ideas of childhood. From the verbal to the visual, the work is a multi-layered and multi-lateral accomplishment. Under the irresistible impact from Tenniel's work, Browne demonstrates his alternative reading and reconfigures Alice and the animal characters. On the one hand, Browne actually marks his originality by impressing the reader/viewer with images like the shrunk or neck-stretching Alice, the contrast between the blind-folded Alice with the straight-staring gaze of the animals. The images demonstrate an intriguing paradox of *seeing*—the border-crossing between the dream and reality. The seeing paradox forges a different image of the surreal Alice, hinged onto an intertwining relationship between the visible and the invisible, the seeing and the non-seeing. On the other hand, Browne's Alice echoes the incomprehensible and disoriented childhood which has been his concern. Besides, Browne reconfigures the animal images in a surreal context by underscoring the enigmatic nature of the animals which is rarely presented in Browne's other works. Thus, by integrating the possible associations and allusions into Alice's story, Browne marks his surreal Alice, foregrounds the seeing motif, and enhances the wonderland of his creation. It is indeed a distinct contemporary illustration of this classic work.

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