

Virginie Iché

L'esthétique du jeu dans les Alice de Lewis Carroll

(*The Aesthetic of Game in the Alice Books by Lewis Carroll*)

Foreword by Jean-Jacques Lecercle

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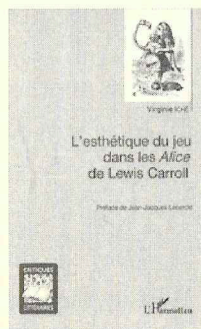
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In this book, Virginie Iché takes an interesting stand on the *Alice* books, arguing that they are playful environments in which readers are invited to participate in games along with the little girl. In Iché's view, games belong to the freedom paradigm in the sense that players are free to choose whether they want to play, the type of game in which they want to participate and when the game ends. Moreover, she describes the game as a 'free, extraordinary activity outside everyday life in which players can truly experience their own freedom' (p. 19). On the other hand, playing can only take place within the restrictions they are given, or in other words, games inherently obey the rules of which they are constituted. Consequently, games are made of seemingly contradictory tensions between freedom and limitations.

Quoting Elizabeth Sewall's *Field of Nonsense* (1952) extensively, Iché solves this tension between two poles by using the notion of contract – in the *Alice* books, nonsense is not imposed on the readers without giving them choice. On the contrary, they choose to accept the contract implied by the diegetic game.

Carefully avoiding any temptation of intentional fallacy, Iché focuses on the texts to develop her game theory within the *Alice* framework. She investigates each and every reference to games, toys and the activity of playing in a transversal approach. She touches on multiple fields, including narratology, aesthetics, semiotics and linguistics. Iché also quotes many examples and details every step of what ultimately becomes a complete theory of literature in which the readers are the true subject of the game. They are free and limited – and to some extent, they are free *because* they are limited by the rules of the game.

This book is beautifully written with meticulous research on *Alice* as a prototype of game literature. While there is no sign of it being



translated in to English at the moment, it will certainly be of interest to Carroll scholars who want to read a fully developed theory on the matter.

Iché is Assistant Professor at the Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier (France), where she teaches linguistics and English as a second language. *L'esthétique du jeu dans les Alice de Lewis Carroll* is her first book.

Justine Houyaux is a lecturer and researcher at the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation of Mons (Belgium), where she is currently completing her doctoral dissertation on transfer strategies of culture-bound items in the French translations of *Alice*. She took part in the mad yet magnificent project *Alice in a World of Wonderlands* (2015).

Lewis Carroll

Elucidating Alice: A Textual Commentary on Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Introduced and annotated by Selwyn Goodacre

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As someone who believes that Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is still, 151 years after its original publication, enjoyable for its intended audience of children, I was intrigued by Selwyn Goodacre's wish to look closely at the text as a children's novel. A former chairman of The Lewis Carroll Society, a longtime editor of *Jabberwocky*, the former journal of the Society, a renowned collector and possessed of a formidable knowledge of all things Carroll and Alice, Goodacre seemed well positioned to take on this intriguing task. At the same time, it was hard not to wonder what he could provide that had not already been done so masterfully by Martin Gardner in that seminal work of close reading, *The Annotated Alice*. Happily, his undertaking, a clear labour of love, offers a very specific and different consideration of the text.

The book opens with an excellent introduction. Goodacre describes the many years of note jotting, of thinking about doing such a book and of being encouraged and supported by many – most notably Gardner

