Chapter Five
Conclusion

At this the whole pack rose up into the air, and came flying down upon her [Alice]; she gave a little scream, half of fright and half of anger, and tried to beat them off, and found herself lying on the bank, with 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.

“Wake up, Alice dear!” said her sister. “Why, what a long sleep you’ve had!” (AIW 124)

A long sleep serves as one of the popular means for protagonists to travel to a fantastic land much more astonishing and extraordinary than theirs. Alice’s dreamland travel terminates when she wakes up, a sudden awakening that later leads to no perceivable change in Alice’s mind. Her waking up at the end of the story results from the fact that she overcomes her fantasy by eventually resisting those absurd cards in the court of justice, a resistance that further strengthens the law of the above world and demarcates herself more clearly from the underground world. Denying everything in Wonderland hysterically at the end, Alice not only fails to become a nomadic traveler, but also fails to digest many things worthy from her fantastic journey to enhance much mental developments.

Alice’s waking up at the end of the story does not gap her experience from the fantastic to the real world. That is because she does not change very much at all. It is easy for her to shift the trail back to the world above and to lead her life as it was. If
she really encounters the other and becomes a nomadic traveler, it would take her endeavors to get used to the original life. In brief, Alice only makes deficient progression in her adventure to the underground world, for she goes “home with the ‘old’ meanings confirmed . . .” (Kaplan 60); it also increases the degree of which a person believes in the old system.

Upon discussing a fantastic traveler’s transformation from the real world to the fairy land, Todorov in his *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* points out the structure of travel in children’s fantasy literature:

At the start of the narrative, there is always a stable situation; the characters form a configuration which can shift but which nonetheless keeps a certain number of fundamental features intact. Let us say for instance that a child lives with his family; he participates in a micro-society which has its own laws. Subsequently, something occurs which introduces a disequilibrium (or, one might say, a negative equilibrium); thus for one reason or another the child leaves his house. At the end of the story, after having overcome many obstacles, the child—who has grown up in the meantime—returns to the family house.

(163, italics mine)

This departure-adventure-return structure with a mature protagonist at the end of the story constitutes the excitingly exotic travel desired by children in fantasy literature. For Alice, she launches from the society dominated by sovereign law of the Queen, following the structural sequence of travel to embark on the journey in Wonderland and finally returning home after experiencing something unaccustomed and impedimental.
However, much to our surprise, Alice’s accomplishment to grow up after her travel seems inconspicuous. Carroll’s Alice disrupts the unwritten common rule in children’s travel literature that the protagonist would return with a mature mind.¹ The influence of Victorian morals to a child is testified to be tough and steadfast. With such an inveterately preconceived belief in mind, Alice always tries to identify herself and to decipher the codes of Wonderland by employing those signifying norms of Victorian society. Her attempts are usually of no valid. These efforts merely reveal that Alice seldom renders her colonial attitude up, and continually moves within the symbolic Victorian territory.

Alice’s interaction with the creatures always bares the fact that she egocentrically places herself higher than those local inhabitants of Wonderland. Carroll obliquely demonstrates the Victorians’ imperial tendencies towards the otherness. Even in a child the colonial seed sprouts, and this is why Daniel Bivona entitles Alice as a child-imperialist in his “Alice the Child-Imperialist and the Games of Wonderland” (143). Even though as imperial and proud as she is, Alice’s frequent retracing of memory discloses her anxious uncertainty about identity. Her pre-constructed identity gets more and more obscure when nothing around her secures any reason and explanation. During her journey, she detests those uncivil creatures in her dream world. Her disgust at them indirectly displays her antipathy toward some characteristics creep along her inner self—deep in Alice’s mind, thoughts of uncontrolled rebellion and rudeness lurk. These thoughts become uncannily

¹ Stories of fantasy literature under the framework of exotic adventures with child protagonists usually conclude with the return of the protagonists, coming back to their familiar living society with a grown-up mind. For example, Dorothy in Baum’s The Wonderful Wizard of Oz returns with a more sophisticated mind toward life, and Wendy in Barrie’s Peter Pan returns with a more maternal love and care toward others.
prominent in the features of Wonderland’s creatures, which crystallize the characteristics long repressed in Alice’s mind.

Wonderland’s creatures, therefore, in some ways stand for Alice’s innermost self. In Julia Kristeva’s words, the foreigners (e.g. creatures of Wonderland) live within us (e.g. Alice): they are “the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder” (1). Alice overtakes the hidden side within herself through violent disaffirmation of Wonderland’s creatures in the court of justice. However, what is important is that Alice has emancipated those long repressed parts inside her mind throughout her adventure in Wonderland. For the first time, she deals with these rebellious parts within her, but she still lacks courage to accept and to develop a common notion with them. This defect procures the failure of Alice to achieve becoming-other as a nomadic traveler.

As a whole, Alice’s journey to Wonderland is an adventure of fantasy; she travels to an other land through the medium of dream. Dream presents the unconsciousness out to the surface. Its content reveals the long repressed feelings and thoughts of the subject. We could thereafter interpret Alice’s role as a traveler from the analyses of her dream-scenario narratives. Under the prerequisite that fantasy has strong and interdependent connection with reality, a traveler’s becoming-other is thus possible, genuine, but not illusory in the world of fantasy. Likewise, if a traveler fails to becoming-other as a nomadic traveler, her/his role as a sedentary traveler is also conceivable in reality. Dissimilar to the clear distinction between Islam’s nomadic traveler and sedentary traveler, Carroll’s Alice blurs the obvious demarcation between them. Although there are multiple spatiotemporal surroundings in Wonderland, Alice does not push her boat along with this nomadic current. Her persistent recollection of
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the past memories and her mechanical rote of verses disturb the nomadic current of Wonderland as an unmeasured sea, marking a sedentary itinerary on this naturally rhizomatic land of wonder. However, it would be wrong to assert that Alice is completely a sedentary traveler, because her travel has many nomadic attributes as well, such as her unconscious crossing of boundary, her traveling on the smooth space in the time of Aion, and her unintentional influence by the nonsensical and illogical Wonderland. More or less, she has commenced advancing forward with a distinct manner, no longer behaving as cautiously and ceremoniously as the initial stage of her travel in Wonderland.

Neither a nomadic nor a sedentary traveler, Alice has a travel of her own—one that blends the features of nomadic and sedentary travels. She crushes the dualisms to go the in-between. Situating her travel in the disputable hinterland between the nomadic and the sedentary, Alice’s adventure in Wonderland is covered with mythically ambiguous characteristics, which instead popularize diverse and manifold readings of the story, constantly being renewed through successive novel discoveries. Carroll’s manipulations of sense and logic in the interaction between Alice and those exotic creatures further bring this seemingly lively and unsophisticated story into the realm of theoretical travel account—the issue of encountering the other is brought out. Carroll also offers a possibility of what Islam’s binary opposition neglects: the in-betweeness of a sedentary travel and a nomadic one, a betweenness that Deleuze and Guattari appreciate. This potentiality provides the groundwork not only for

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2 To be-between and to pass between, the intermezzo, is “the only way to get outside the dualisms” (Deleuze and Guattari 277). It is also what Deleuze and Guattari appreciate. In their theory of nomadology, the subjects vacillate between two molar entities to be immanently changed in the process of becoming. They go the middle way, the intermezzo, which is neither the beginning point nor the end point, for the “line of becoming has only a middle” (Deleuze and Guattari 293).
Alice’s promising nomadic travel through the mirror in Carroll’s following work, *Through the Looking-Glass*, but also for the inauguration of numerous children’s fantastic travel literature in ensuing centuries. Alice’s role as a traveler is always in the process of becoming—on the road of a sedentary traveler to a nomadic one, but never fully become one of them. After her adventure in Wonderland, she initiates her next journey behind the world of the mirror, in which Alice renews her experience and generates much more changes and adaptations than the previous journey. *Alice in Wonderland* is a story of Alice’s *becoming-traveler*, constantly passing between the points of sedentary travel and nomadic travel.