Re -Telling Architecture

AN ADVENTURE IN WONDERLAND

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of the requirements for the degree of **MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE**

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Abstract

Architecture is rooted in stories. Storytelling in architecture, therefore, offers the architect a way of instilling shared meaning in buildings, public buildings in particular. Part I of this thesis explores significant examples in the history and theory of storytelling as a design method in the making of meaningful inhabitation. Because this thesis culminates in a library design, concurrent research in library planning serves as a framework for the testing of these examples. In the search to elucidate an architecture guided by storytelling, Part II explores the concept of the “architectural quote” or the “citing” of architecture, and specifically, of Henri Labrouste’s Sainte-Geneviève Library in Paris, as a design strategy. Finally, this section aims to weave a curious story about an architectural adventure based on the re-telling of a classic children’s tale -- Lewis Carroll’s (Charles L. Dodgson) *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). This re-telling drives the design of a proposed new Library for Children and Storytelling in the city of Toronto.

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Introduction

IN CHAPTER TEN, "The Lobster Quadrille," of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the Gryphon tells Alice that explanations are a waste of time when he states "adventures first." On the other hand, Carroll's Red Queen (Chapter Nine, "Queen Alice" of *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*) fundamentally disagrees with the Gryphon, and advises Alice that "even a joke should have a meaning." These conflicting interpretations of meaning preoccupy Alice as she makes her way through Wonderland as well as the reader of these stories. One can argue that the reader can be categorized into one of these two positions: as either Gryphons or Queens. A Gryphon will resist the temptation to analyze or interpret *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and enjoy it at face value. A Queen, however, will argue that Alice's adventures are imbued with meaning and therefore all readings of the story are necessarily interpretative.¹

It is possible to say that the reading of architecture can be placed in either one of these two categories. For a Gryphon, the question of meaning in architecture is set aside, in favour of 'pure activity.' For instance, in the modern period, CIAM's apartment plans were meant as direct maps of the rational organization of the functions of a dwelling; no further meanings need be ascribed to it. On the other hand, a Queen will claim that all of architecture is meaningful. All architects have something to say. For the Queen, architects should convey a society's stories. Storytelling, as a design method, offers a way of addressing architecture's multifaceted meanings effectively (program, site, history

¹ Hugh Haughton, introduction, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass* (London: Penguin Press, 1998) xi.

of a place, urban, and social meanings, etc.). In this case, stories permeate the design of every project; every detail, for example, is generative in the creation of meaningful inhabitation. There is no escaping narrative: even the most functional of plans, a Queen would hold, is imbued with story.

Stories are unavoidable; they have been shared in every culture and in every land as a means of entertainment, education, preservation of culture and to instill knowledge, values and morals. If a storyteller is an 'encoder' who uses linguistic codes to formulate and transmit the message of the story, the architect is also an encoder. Architects are the authors of anticipated scenarios, or *mises en scène*, of acts of habitation. As opposed to the linguistic model, architects make use of architectural form and materials as symbols to tell their story. Storytelling offers, for architects, an alternative way of approaching the design of places. An architecture based in storytelling envisions buildings as complete stories that have been woven together as collections of distinct narrative events, and in which the act of habitation is one of discovery, through participation, of these narrative meanings.

The following thesis explores the second kind of architecture, that is, an architecture that is inextricably linked to stories. Following the structure of storytelling, this thesis weaves several thematic strands and protagonists together, with a view to telling an eloquent story, in this case, about architecture and the design process. The story told in the following pages is preoccupied with a book -- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* -- a building -- Henri Labrouste's Sainte-Geneviève Library in Paris -- and with a city --

Toronto (Ontario, Canada) -- and culminates with the speculative design of a Library for Children and Storytelling in that city.

The goal of this story is to consider the idea that storytelling is a necessary part of an architecture that will have resonance. This thesis is organized in two parts. PART I explores important examples in the history and theory of library planning and storytelling in architecture, including Vitruvius's narrative accounts of the classical orders, the Enlightenment idea of an *architecture parlante* and the work of architects such as Claude Nicolas Ledoux and Etienne-Louis Boullée, as well as some twentieth century examples of storytelling buildings by Le Corbusier and Carlos Scarpa. Next, a hinge point is examined at which architectural storytelling gave way to instrumental approaches to design, and in particular: the debate on architectural storytelling in nineteenth century France, with references to Victor Hugo's "Ceci Tuera Cela" and Henri Labrouste. Finally, the historical context and narrative structure of the story, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, is studied in preparation for the design of a building. PART II is focused on the testing of the theoretical ideas presented in PART I on the speculative design of a Library for Children and Storytelling. The concept of an "architectural quote," of "citing" another building as a storytelling tool in the design process, as well as the traditional topics of architectural design, such as programming, choice of site, room sequence, materiality and detail, are all discussed here, in this case, rooted in the theory of storytelling.

...

"Begin at the beginning," the King said gravely, "and go on till you come to the end: then stop."²

² Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass* (London: Penguin Press, 1998) 105.

FIGURE 1: ALICE FINDS A LITTLE DOOR WHICH LEADS TO THE LOVELIEST GARDEN YOU EVER SAW

PART I: ARCHITECTURE IS EMBEDDED IN STORIES

1.1 LIBRARY PLANNING

THE LIBRARY: A STORY AND THE CONTAINER OF STORIES

SIMPLY STATED, a library is the infrastructure that houses stories. However, it is also the crossroads for a multiplicity of human stories and everyday events. The library building itself is a symbol that represents the democratization of knowledge, the memory of humankind, and the spirit of personal exploration, and pursuit. As both collection and building, the library is a living thing, which is affected by culture, time, and place, and of which the content, the collections, are also in constant flux. A children's library should in addition be a stimulating, challenging, and supportive environment where storytelling, homework assistance, creative activities, and reading for pleasure are encouraged.³ Moreover, it is also a world of dreams, a possible escape or substitution from reality, and a chance for first encounters and fantastical adventures (real and imagined).

PRAGMATISM OF MODERN LIBRARY DESIGN

Prior to 1928, architects had almost completely neglected the fundamentals of good library planning, and thus, members of the American Library Association (ALA) drew up a list of guidelines regarding library buildings. The ideas were summarized in eleven

³ Library storytelling was first initiated at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburg in 1902 with the intention of introducing children to the joys of reading. Story hours were used to bring attention to the best kinds of books and to broaden the reading interests of children. The first library story hours were organized for children age nine and older. Nine year old children were expected to have mastered the mechanics of reading but were also beginning to loose interest. Library story hour became extremely popular by the 1920s. Attendance in 1920 at Carnegie Library, for instance, reached nearly 150,000 listeners per week. (August Baker and Ellin Greene, *Storytelling: Art & Technique* (New Jersey: R.R. Bowker, 1996) 22).

"Points of Agreement" (*see* appendix) and gave instructions on numerous planning matters including supervision, shelf height, future growth, circulation, and interior arrangements. Pragmatic in nature, these guidelines have generally remained valid and useful to this day. The only major modernization in library design is related to the widespread use of Integrated Library Systems (ILS) and global communications via the Internet. However, conspicuously absent from this checklist is any mention of the relationship between library design and the production of a stimulating environment for reading and research.

Emphasis on spatial planning continues to be the primary focus in contemporary library design. For example, before starting a new design for a public library, an inventory of the library's collection and spatial needs is suggested by the Canadian Library Association (CLA). The CLA defines six broad types of library space: (1) collection space, (2) reader seating space, (3) staff work space, (4) meeting space, (5) special use space, and (6) non-assignable space (including mechanical). Ideally, according to the CLA, the new building is simply one that meets the spatial needs of its collections.⁴ There is no reference to the relationship between the architecture itself and the library program. And yet, this very link between architecture and the storage of books is one that is replete with poetic potential. The question of a children's library would then be all the more interesting. The architecture of a children's library could, beyond providing appropriate layouts and shelving, become a participatory storytelling journey in and of itself.

⁴ The Canadian Library Association, June 2007, The Canadian Library Association, Ottawa, 14 June 2007 <www.cla.ca>.

1.2 STORYTELLING

*"The telling of a tale links you with everyone who has told it before. There are no new tales, only new tellers in their own story, and if you listen closely you can hear the voice of everyone who ever told the tale."*⁵

WHY DO WE TELL STORIES?

THE TERM STORYTELLING is defined differently by the institutional storyteller versus the theatrical storyteller, and equally differently by the folklorist, the ethnographer, and the linguistic scholar. The meaning of the words 'tell', 'teller', 'telling', and above all, the word 'story' has been the subject of a great deal of debate.⁶ For example, up until the mid-nineteenth century, the term storyteller was used to describe one who tells fibs or falsehoods. The more recent definition, one who tells or writes stories, was reserved for describing storytellers in non-English speaking areas of the world.⁷

Human beings have told stories in every age. The need to hear and tell stories is essential to human life and a common characteristic between humans of all cultures. The primal necessity for stories precedes love and shelter and is second only to nourishment.⁸ Everything we tell is a story; from the mundane events of our everyday lives -- today's events will be tomorrow's stories -- to the most fantastical tales found in fiction. Human experience is composed of a series of ongoing stories which contain conflicts, characters,

⁵ William J. Brooke, *A Telling of the Tales: Five Stories* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990) 117.

⁶ Anne Pellowski, *The World of Storytelling* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1990) 17.

⁷ Anne Pellowski, *The World of Storytelling* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1990) 3.

⁸ Rives Collins and Pamela J. Cooper, *The Power of Story* (Scottsdale: Gorsuch Scarisbrick Publishers, 1997) 2.

beginnings, middles, and ends. As such, all meaningful communication can be seen as an exchange of stories. And if communication is storytelling, all humans are storytellers.⁹

Storytelling is a method of conveying and preserving the morals and values of a culture from one generation to the next and a system for recording historical events. It is a way of discovering who we are and for making sense of our place in the world, as well as a way of relating people to one another. Because storytelling combines simplicity with the complexity and subtlety of an idea -- a simple story has the capacity to handle unexpected and innovative twists and turns and to draw attention to concepts or ideas in vivid ways -- storytelling is a useful technique for learning and teaching. It is a way to prompt questions or draw attention to something. A 'good' story pushes the listener to examine and understand its content on more than one level. Storytelling enhances imagination and visualization, but most importantly, it is a form of entertainment.¹⁰ Its potential to enchant buildings is therefore worth exploring.

STORYTELLING IN ARCHITECTURE

Storytelling is itself an artisan form of communication, as it were. It does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus the traces of the storytelling cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel.¹¹

⁹ This idea is present, for example, in the work of communication theorist Walter Fisher, Human Communication: Towards a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action.

¹⁰ Collins and Cooper, 5.

¹¹ Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," Illuminations: Essays and Reflections, trans. Harry Zohn ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) 87.

In his essay "The Storyteller," the philosopher, Walter Benjamin describes storytelling as having the capacity to leave a material imprint. This vivid description of communication that has "sunk into our lives" aptly invokes the relationship between storytelling and architecture. Architecture and the built world, after all, are the point of intersection of our lives and the world. While stories are a basic component of human life, they are also a fundamental material in the design of evocative architecture. More valuable than concrete and bricks, they are the foundation of any design idea and the only artifact that remains after a building no longer exists. In architecture, stories are a rich alternative to design criteria that are merely stylistic, and offer a way to answer and solve the more challenging questions involved in the making of meaningful spaces.

ARCHITECTURAL (HI)STORY IS A STORY ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

FIGURE 2: THE CORINTHIAN CAPITAL

The storytelling-architecture dyad is a very ancient one, dating back to Vitruvius, a Roman writer, architect, and engineer, active in the first century B.C., who believed that an architect must know and tell stories.¹² In "The Origins of the Three Orders and the Proportions of the Corinthian Capital," from *De Architectura*, known today as *The Ten Books On Architecture*, Vitruvius tells the story behind the form of the three orders. The form of the Corinthian capital, for instance, is connected to the

¹² Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Ingrid D. Rowland (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 6.

story of a young maiden of Corinth who became ill and passed away. After the burial, her nurse collected a few of her favourite things and placed them in a basket, which she brought to the tomb. The nurse covered the basket with a roof-tile so that the things might last longer in the open air. She happened to place the basket on top of an acanthus roof. When spring came, the acanthus root produced leaves and stalks, which grew through and around the sides of the basket, and pressed out by the corners of the tile, which due its weight, forced the stalks to bend into volutes at the outer edges. The Corinthian column itself borrowed its form from the slender outline of the maiden herself.¹³ The Corinthian column, for Vitruvius, was not merely a column of a certain 'style', but more importantly, it was a storytelling device.

FIGURE 3: LEDOUX'S IDEAL CITY OF CHAUX

FIGURE 3: LEDOUX'S RIVER INSPECTOR'S HOUSE

The relationship between architecture and stories is perhaps strongest in the eighteenth century, during the Enlightenment and the idea of an *architecture parlante* (speaking architecture). According to the Paris-trained architects Claude Nicolas Ledoux and Etienne-Louis Boullée, buildings that 'spoke' were able to clearly communicate their own

¹³ Vitruvius, 104.

function and identity as well as influence its inhabitants' values and behaviors in a positive way.¹⁴ Details, in this case, were seen much like words in a sentence, which if chosen purposely, give character to a sentence. Similarly, in architecture, details give character to a building.¹⁵ In his unbuilt proposal for the Ideal City of Chaux, Ledoux proposed that the Hoop-maker's house take on the shape of a barrel and the River Inspector's house straddle the river.

In the nineteenth century, literature and architecture were forced into competition with one another. A moment in history best encapsulated by Victor Hugo's powerful words from the theoretical chapter "Ceci Tuera Cela", first included in the 1832 second edition of the famous Gothic novel *Notre-Dame de Paris*, "This Will Kill That. The Book Will Kill The Building."¹⁶ Hugo asserts that since the beginning of time, up until the fifteenth century Christian era, architecture was the great book of humankind. In the beginning, the first people were so overwhelmed by memories and unable to record them due to their undeveloped language. Therefore, these early people transcribed each memory onto the ground and sealed it beneath a monument. Like writing, for Hugo, architecture began with an alphabet. Stones, instead of letters, formed symbols like words, with each symbol recording a story in the shape of a monument.¹⁷ Humankind believed, according to Hugo, in the capability of these symbols to communicate and record their history, so they continued to develop the complexity of this form of language through the

¹⁴ Caroline Dionne, *Running Out Of Place*, diss., McGill University, 2005 (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2005)11.

¹⁵ Marco Frascari, "Tell-The-Tale Detail," *Via 7*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press (1984) 500.

¹⁶ Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, trans. Isabel Florence Hapgood (Paris: Gallimard, 1974) 188.

¹⁷ Hugo, 189.

intersection of symbols. In order to contain their symbols, the early monuments expanded into buildings.¹⁸

While Daedalus, who is force, measured, and Orpheus, who is intelligence, sang, the pillar which is a letter, the arcade which is a syllable, the pyramid which is a word, simultaneously set in motion both by a law of geometry and a law of poetry, formed groups, they combined and amalgamated, they rose and fell, they were juxtaposed on the ground, and superimposed in the sky, until, at the dictate of the general idea of an epoch, they had written those marvelous books which were also marvelous buildings: the pagoda of Eklinga, the Ramesseum of Egypt, the Temple of Solomon.¹⁹

For Hugo, stories were the foundation of marvelous buildings and monumental form. The Temple of Solomon, for example, was not only the container of the sacred book, but was the sacred book itself. The words contained in the building could be read by navigating through the building's concentric ring-walls, from sanctuary to sanctuary, culminating in the ultimate tabernacle. The story was revealed not only in the form of the building but also in its site and position in the landscape. In Greece, a temple symbolizing honour was placed high-up on a mountain top like a crown to be displayed. Conversely, a monument recording an ominous tale in India is intricately carved deep within the pagodas.²⁰

However, according to Hugo's analysis, architecture had, by his own day, progressively lost its power to tell stories since the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth

¹⁸ Hugo, 190.

¹⁹ Hugo, 190.

²⁰ Hugo, 191.

century; architecture, the Bible of stone, had been destroyed, killed by the Bible of the printed word. A story is more easily and inexpensively captured and reproduced within the margins of a portable book.²¹ Hugo argued that architecture was no longer capable of effectively conveying meaning; only the novel was capable of communicating religious, social and political stories in the current world.²² In the age of architecture, literature took its cues from architecture. Poems resembled monuments. For example, poetry from the Egyptian East, for instance, had a grandeur and tranquility of line like their buildings, whereas the verses from Christian Europe mimicked the magnificence and dignity of their Catholic Cathedrals. Hugo proposed that, should architecture revive itself in the future, it would no longer be the dominant art. The function of these two art forms, architecture and printing, would henceforth be reversed. Architecture would be bound to imitate literature.²³

ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF STORY-DRIVEN ARCHITECTURE

SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE LIBRARY, PARIS (HENRI LABROUSTE)

Hugo's reflections on writing and architecture can be studied in reverse, in an unusual contemporaneous building, the Sainte-Geneviève Library.²⁴ Built from 1843-1850, twelve years prior to the conception of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (which will be discussed in a later part of this thesis), the Sainte-Geneviève Library,

²¹ Hugo, 199.

²² Hugo, 200.

²³ Hugo, 200.

²⁴ Hugo's novel had become immensely popular by 1940. Its content, particularly "Ceci Tuera Cela," was a familiar reference to all architects of the time and undoubtedly inspired the architecture of many of them. (Martin Bressani and Marc Grignon, "Henri Labrouste and the Lure of the Real: Romanticism, Rationalism and the Bibliothèque Sainte Genevieve, *Art History* Vol 28 No 5 (Nov. 2005) 716).

located in Paris's 5th *arrondissement*, was the first major commission for Parisian engineer/architect Pierre Francois Henri Labrouste. It has been suggested that the Sainte-Geneviève Library parallel's Victor Hugo's fictional novel *Notre-Dame de Paris*. According to the architectural historian Neil Levine, the Library provided an opportunity for Labrouste to develop a new kind of architecture appropriate for his time, based on Hugo's forecasting "Ceci Tuera Cela." Thus, the design of the Library proposed a linguistic reading of signs, as opposed to a bodily engagement with space. The list of 810 authors carved onto the façade is symbolic of this new form of architectural expression; the list quite literally serves as a catalogue but also a signal of the actual position of the books in the reading room.²⁵

FIGURE 5: SAINTE GENEVIEVE LIBRARY, PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE MAIN FAÇADE

²⁵ Bressani and Grignon, 716.

FIGURE 6: SAINTE GENEVIEVE LIBRARY, ARCHES IN READING ROOM

However, it is possible to argue that Labrouste intended the Library to be more than a straightforward adaptation of Hugo's notion that architecture, the storytelling tool of the Middle Ages, had been replaced by the printing press. According to the architectural

theoreticians Martin Bressani and Marc Grignon, the fictional dimension of Hugo's Novel is the narrative guide that organizes a series of architectural moments through the library, "like a trail that draws the beholder into a parallel universe dominated by learning, presented as a higher and truer universe than that left outside."²⁶

A traditional reading of the Library categorizes it as an example of functional and structural rationalism. Labrouste has reduced the exterior façade to a simple boxlike container. Likewise, the interior cast-iron structure has been exposed revealing an honest structural expression.²⁷ On the other hand, the structural system captures the non-fictional story of the moment in time. Caught between old and new technologies, the traditional masonry exterior façade combined with the light modern cast-iron interior support system, the Library tells a story of transition in nineteenth century France.

²⁶ Bressani and Grignon, 720.

²⁷ Bressani and Grignon, 715.

The exterior facade is the first moment in the sequence of events and the introduction to the story. The inhabitant is put into a specific mood and given clues to the rest of the story. In this case "from its exterior, the building announces a particular kind of universe, a fictional world, one might say, dominated by funerary connotations."²⁸ Similarly, Hugo's novel begins with the description of a universe, which begins to develop in unforeseeable and complex ways, the further it is penetrated.

FIGURE 7: SAINTE GENEVIEVE LIBRARY, READING ROOM

The connection between the Sainte-Geneviève Library and *Notre-Dame de Paris* is perhaps clearest in the reading room. In 'ANAI'KH', a significant chapter in Hugo's story, the character Jehan Frollo finds the door of his brother Claude's (the archdeacon of Notre-Dame) secret alchemist cell half open, and overhears his hopeless ramblings: "for

²⁸ Bressani and Grignon, 726.

some time past, I've failed in all my experiments!...I haven't even managed to rediscover the secret of Cassidorus, whose lamp burned without wick or oil. A simple enough matter, too!"²⁹ In the Library, the lighting is symbolic in the re-telling of the story. The Sainte-Geneviève Library was one of the first public buildings to incorporate a gas lighting system that would allow it to remain open at night. This system, which uses lamps without oil or wicks, would have been mystifying to the nineteenth century library visitor.

The Library reading room can also be read as a modern version of Claude's alchemist cell. Hugo compared Claude Frollo's cell to Rembrandt's famous etching of Dr Faustus: "[Dr Faustus] looks both curious and terrified as he contemplates a great circle of light, formed from magic letters, shining on the far wall like the solar spectrum in a camera *obscura*. This cabbalistic sun seems to tremble as you look at it and fills the pale cell with its mysterious radiance. It is horrible and beautiful."

FIGURE 8: REMBRANDT VAN RIJN, DR. FAUSTUS

The gas jets, located over the reading room tables, hover in a similar way, providing a series of artificial suns that offer bright rays of light onto the books below.³⁰

²⁹ Cassiodorus, consul under Theodoric the Great, is believed to be the sixteenth century inventor of the lamp that lit the scriptorium of his convent in Vivarium, Sicily. (Bressani and Grignon, 736).

³⁰ Bressani and Grignon, 736.

Finally, Labrouste's library is an important instance for the study of the use of story in the design of buildings quite simply because it is, itself, structured as fiction. In their article "Henri Labrouste and the Lure of the Real", Martin Bressani and Marc Grignon outline their position when they state, "our argument is not that Labrouste tried to create an architectural equivalent to a literary work, a building that could be experienced like a book; it is rather that Labrouste continued to conceive architecture on the general level of fiction, as in the classical tradition, yet with a specifically romantic ideal of achieving a contact with 'the true and the real'. This is the kind of preoccupation which, we consider, would be best explain the hybridity (stone/iron, classic/gothic) of the building can be resolved in a unified work of architecture."³¹

NOTRE-DAME DU HAUT, RONCHAMP (LE CORBUSIER)

FIGURE 9: RONCHAMP, VIEW FROM THE NORTHWEST

FIGURE 10: RONCHAMP, EAST ENTRANCE

The association between stories and architecture has been the subject of architectural discourse and has permeated the work of many architects since Hugo's and Labrouste's time, with the topic becoming a central one in the second half of the twentieth century.

³¹ Bressani and Grignon, 728.

In the essay "The Representation of Mary in the Architecture of Le Corbusier's Chapel at Ronchamp," Flora Samuel articulates a connection between the story of a woman, read as Virgin, mother, or lover, three different forms of the eternal feminine, and Le Corbusier's (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret) 1955 pilgrimage church Notre-Dame du Haut at Ronchamp.³² Rich in metaphor and paradoxical meaning, the walls of the chapel, for instance, are shaped like the curved contours of a pregnant woman; water cascades off the roof and through a pair of abstract breasts, down into a womblike cistern. The forms of its towers are strangely evocative of the heads of women whose hair is cloaked by material.³³ More specifically, Le Corbusier's design and detailing of the front door tells the story of Mary Magdalene and her discovery of the empty tomb while wandering in the gardens of Gethsemane. Formed of concrete, an impractical choice of material in this situation, and etched with lines which suggest the coursing of stone, this door recalls the stone that blocked the entry to the tomb at the time of Jesus' resurrection.³⁴ Through this, as well as numerous other details, Notre Dame du Haut is a vivid example of storytelling in architecture.

ABATELLIS PALACE, PALERMO (CARLOS SCARPA)

The work of another architect of the postmodern period, Carlo Scarpa, offers a second example of story-derived architecture. As affirmed by architect, architectural theorist, and educator, Marco Frascari, the architecture of Carlos Scarpa is often best understood via Raymond Roussel's essay "Comment J'ai Ecrit Certains De Mes Livres" and his novel

³² Flora Samuel, "The Representation of Mary in the Architecture of Le Corbusier's Chapel at Ronchamp," The American Society of Church History Vol 68 (1999) 402.

³³ Samuel, 408.

³⁴ Samuel, 410.

Locus Solus (English translation: *A Place Apart*). Scarpa's 1953-1954 transformation of the Abatellis Palace in Palermo, originally commissioned by Francesco Patella or Abatellis and built in 1495 by the architect Matteo Carnelivari, is a poignant example of an architectural design which is based on a kind of storytelling. For Scarpa, the story to be embodied by the Abatellis Palace (a museum which houses a collection of paintings and sculptures, by mainly Sicilian artists, dating from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century) is about technology, and, for him, Roussel's writings contain the keys to understanding the relationship between its original components: *techne* and *logos*.³⁵

FIGURE 11: ABATELLIS PALACE, ROOM I

As illuminated by Marco Frascari, Scarpa was inspired by the narrative framework set up by Roussel in *Locus Solus* -- a story about a visit to the surreal estate of Marital Canterel, a rich scientist, magician and inventor -- for the formal and conceptual design, as well as for the placement of objects and artifacts in the museum. For example, the iron gates at Cantarel's estate

³⁵ Marco Frascari, "Carlos Scarpa in Magna Graecia: The Abatellis Palace in Palermo," *The AA Files* No 9 (1985) 8.

have golden hinges; the glass doors at the Abatellis Palace have leather handles. As Frascari points out, the narrative that guides the design of the formal and cosmological connection between parts is based on "Comment J'ai Ecrit Certains De Mes Livres."³⁶ Roussel uses literary compositions, based on a chiasmic semantic structure to determine relationships, that is to say the arrangement of unified, recurring or repetitive elements, of a text for an example, in the form of mirror-like reflection. Scarpa employs a similar strategy of chiasmic semantic structure, in this case with objects, to resolve the relationships between parts in his architecture. The two crucifixes in the great hall are an example. One is a found object from a quarry; the other is flat and geometrical. The two are placed diagonally in a mirror-like configuration within the overall geometry of the room. The glass doors and pair of crucifixes found in the Abatellis Palace are only two of many details which have been woven together by Scarpa to tell his tale.³⁷

³⁶ Frascari, "Carlos Scarpa in Magna Graecia: The Abatellis Palace in Palermo," 3.

³⁷ Frascari, "Carlos Scarpa in Magna Graecia: The Abatellis Palace in Palermo," 9.

1.3 THE STORY IS IN THE TELLING

RE-TELLING

IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRADITIONAL STORYTELLING, the characteristics of a 'good' story for telling are: (1) a single, clearly defined theme, (2) a well developed plot, (3) style (vibrant word pictures, pleasurable word play and rhythm), (4) characterization (the believability of characters or their capabilities to represent qualities such as goodness, evil, beauty --typical of folktales), (5) dramatic appeal, (6) appropriate for the audience (a story's appeal is dependant on the age and interests of the listener).³⁸ A story is made up of a series of parts which come together to form a singular idea. It has been suggested, that after being broken down and analyzed, every story is fundamentally the same story, and in this sense, every story has been told before. It is this recurrent quality of story structure, in particular that of folktales, which so fascinated Ferdinand de Saussure, Vladimir Propp, Claude Levi-Strauss, and others who contributed to Structuralism, and the reason folktales were an important topic of study for them.

Storytelling is the art of repeating stories.³⁹ A storyteller can choose to tell a story in one sentence or as a sequence of highly descriptive details. The re-telling lies in their choices and interpretation. And, as Lili Chi suggests, "storytelling offers a mode of understanding through reliving, remembering through re-telling weaves the web of re engagement..."⁴⁰ Re-telling is essentially re-learning a familiar story and an act that connects tellers through time.

³⁸ Baker and Greene, 50.

³⁹ Benjamin, 87.

⁴⁰ Lily Chi, "The Problem with the Architect as Writer..." *Architecture, Ethics and Technology*, ed. Louise Pelletier and Alberto Perez-Gomez (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994) 214.

Every story has infinite re-telling possibilities. Similarly, in architecture, a story can manifest itself in many forms. It can become the overall gesture on a building's façade, a way to determine the sequence of spaces in plan and section, or the idea that determines how two materials come together in a detail. Yet again, it is the interpretation and design choices made by the teller, in this case, the architect, which determines how the story is told, and differentiates their story from one that has been told before.

In *Architecture and Disjunction*, the architect, Bernard Tschumi states, "whenever a program or 'plot' (the single family house, or 'Cinderella') is well known (as are most architectural programs), only the 're-telling' counts: the 'telling' has been done enough."⁴¹ If this is true, then the crafting of a 'good' story and architectural design is dependant on the connection between the building and the story, and the reinterpretation that particular union creates. The role of the architect is to organize the relationship between building and story in a meaningful and innovative way.

CHOOSING STORIES FOR TELLING

In traditional storytelling, the criteria of a 'good' story for telling can be further characterized depending on the age of the listener. For example, very young children are captivated by simple folk songs, lullabies and lilting poetry.⁴² In this case, the rhythm of the words is more important than the meaning of the words themselves. Whereas, according to the author and children's literature specialist, Andre Favat, children aged six

⁴¹ Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994) 164.

⁴² Baker and Greene, 51.

to eight become very interested in traditional folktales and fairy tales because their embodied themes (such as egocentrism, a belief in magic, animism, and retributive justice) resonate with the psychological characteristics of a six, seven, and eight year-old child. The boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred for children at this age. In the context of stories, children "work through their inner fantasies and come to terms with the real world." ⁴³

In architecture, storytelling has been linked to the design of all building types throughout the ages. In his essay "Spatial Narratives," the architect and educator Mark Rakatansky states "there is no mute architecture...all architects, all buildings 'tell stories' with varying degrees of consciousness." ⁴⁴ Although, storytelling is not limited to a particular type of building, it is the appropriate pairing of building and story that can lead to particularly poignant architecture. A 'good' story for telling in architecture is one that pushes the architect, as well as the inhabitant, to examine and understand the multi-dimensional characteristics of a building. The case of a Children's Library is an interesting one to consider here: it is a building devoted to housing stories, and in which storytelling takes place, and for whose inhabitants, children, stories occupy a central role. The question is, which would be the right story to base the design of a children's library upon?

⁴³ Baker and Greene, 51.

⁴⁴ Mark Rakatansky, "Spatial Narratives," The Harvard Architecture Review 8 (1992) 2.

1.4 ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

ALICE AS A CHILDREN'S BOOK

DRAWING FROM HUGO'S SUGGESTION, that architecture would be bound to imitate literature, Lewis Carroll's masterpiece, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, commonly known as *Alice in Wonderland*, is a familiar story, full of layered meanings, which make it a highly appropriate story for telling in the case of a Library for Children and Storytelling. Although this story eventually became a novel, it did originate as a traditional oral story, told by Carroll to four listeners.⁴⁵

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland includes elements of interest for children at a variety of ages. It contains elements of song, lullaby and poetry, therefore at one level anyway, it is clearly being offered to very young children. Alice witnesses the lullaby between the Duchess and her baby, is sung to by the Mock Turtle, and she herself recites a variety of poems, such as "How Doth The Little Crocodile" and "You Are Old, Father William", among others. Very young children will also be captivated by the rhythmic repetition of words. "Down, down, down" for example is repeated twice as Alice's falls down the rabbit-hole.

Although *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is neither a folktale nor a fairytale, it does contain many similar characteristics such as folkloric characters (Kings, Queens, talking

⁴⁵ The idea for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* first came to Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, an English mathematician, logician, Anglican clergyman, photographer on July 4, 1862. Dodgson and a friend, Robison Duckworth, were spending the afternoon with the three Liddell sisters, Alice, Lorina and Edith. Dodgson composed the story and narrated it to Alice and her companions. Alice insisted that he write it down for her and in November of 1864 he presented her with an illustrated manuscript version entitled *Alice's Adventures Underground*. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was first published in 1865 by Lewis Carroll (a pseudonym adopted by Dodgson (Houghton, xxxx-xxxvi)).

animals, and a series of far-fetched events) which, according to Favat, would be of interest to children aged six to eight. Carroll continuously plays with fantasy and reality. For example, when Alice first encounters the White-Rabbit, he is in a hurry, a seemingly normal situation, however, "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."⁴⁶ In this case, the situation is simple and reflects the condition of an everyday event. As a result, the child is not overly confused, and believes the unreal parts of the story because they closely resemble the real world with which they are familiar.⁴⁷ The storytelling device thus expands the child's capacity to imagine a world filled with wonder. Might this expansion of everyday experiences into realms of wonderment also be possible through architecture?

A NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland opens as "Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having not to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures of conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversations?'"⁴⁸ Judging by this opening line, it is clear that Carroll valued the relationship between text and image, especially in children's stories.

⁴⁶ Carroll, 10.

⁴⁷ Baker and Greene, 51.

⁴⁸ Carroll, 9.

Carroll's book tends towards architecture in several ways. Carroll attempted to combine 'pictures' with 'conversations' in the original version of the story, *Alice's Adventures under Ground*. However, in order to fully materialize the textual description in its first publication, Carroll commissioned the experienced illustrator John Tenniel, who was already one of the most influential illustrators of the Victorian period.^{49, 50} Carroll presented Tenniel with his own original illustrations as guidance and was continuously producing rough sketches and photographs of models as the text underwent numerous changes. One might argue that the story came to him as a series of images as much as through words. And, in this sense, the book, with its illustrations, was implicitly leaning toward an architectural translation, for images are already closer to architecture than words.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE NOVEL

Carroll's book relates to building in yet another way. Inspired from the time in which it was written, the second half of the nineteenth century, a midway point in the English Victorian era, Carroll's writing is embedded with explicit and subtle commentaries on the social values of the time concerning children. For example, children were generally discouraged from reading fantasies and fairy tales as the Victorians believed that literature should relate to realistic stories that advocated valuable life lessons on how to behave like responsible adults. Instead, children were asked to memorize the moral

⁴⁹ Haughton, xxv.

⁵⁰ A note on John Tenniel: Tenniel was already one of the most influential illustrators at the time; known for a style categorized as satirical which often highlighted social and political details of the Victorian period. In regards to Tenniel's drawings, author, editor, and specialist in the literature of Nonsense Hugh Haughton states, "in depicting the cards, chess-pieces and animals around which the narratives revolve, Tenniel always manages to be true to their double-nature -- as 'characters' and as non-humans, fantastical figures and social types" (Haughton, xxvi).

lessons of poems. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Carroll parodies the didacticism of these poems when he has Alice recite them incorrectly. In architecture, didacticism refers to a design that is overburdened with instructive, factual, or educational information, sometimes to the detriment of the inhabitant's pure enjoyment of a building. On the other hand, non-didactic architecture is more concerned with artistic qualities and techniques rather than with conveying a message. Storytelling, as a design method, is one that weaves the two together.

1.5 MAJOR THEMES IN ALICE

NUMEROUS THEMES in Carroll's text apply to architectural thought. Although Carroll created *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* for the purpose of entertainment, and not enlightenment or education, it has been subjected to numerous interpretations which are not limited to literature, but also include philosophy, psychology, sociology, and science. The heroine of this story does not emerge from her dream morally transformed; there are no obvious life lessons learned. However, rooted within this dream-like piece of children's fiction are challenging ideas about logic and fantasy, as well as space, time, and movement. These concepts have been significant in captivating the attention of children and adults and children, but have also inspired artists and architects to question and approach art and architecture with new eyes -- the eyes of a child.

In order to understand how a building might be inspired by Lewis Carroll's text, a systematic study of the story's structure is needed. The following pages will examine four major themes in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* due to their potential connection to the built environment: the position of the body in space, the experience of the passage of time, nonsense as a series of contradictions, and the crises of identity.⁵¹

1. THE POSITION OF THE BODY IN SPACE

Alice is usually too small or too big for many of the experiences she encounters; she is too small to fit through the tiny door in the great hall, but too big to attend the Knave's

⁵¹ Other important themes not studied in this thesis include: games, order, madness, death, education, dreams and nightmares.

trial. It is not long before Alice becomes aware of her circumstance, and concludes that in Wonderland she must combine space, scale, and time, in order for certain actions to take place. For example, upon meeting an enormous puppy in the woods, Alice says to herself, "I should have like teaching it tricks very much, if -- if I'd only been the right size to do it. Oh dear! I'd nearly forgotten that I've got to grow up again! Let me see -- how is it to be managed? I suppose I ought to eat or drink something or other; but the great question is 'What?'" ⁵² Much in this way, Alice is often searching for the tool that will make her grow or shrink.

FIGURE 12: ALICE FINDS A GLASS TABLE

Throughout the story, Carroll places Alice in unfamiliar situations which prompt her to take a closer look at her surroundings. Her scale, as well as the scale of the world around her, is never fixed. Often, Alice is able to determine her own scale relative to objects and animals. In one of the early shape-changing sequence, Alice is able to determine her size by measuring herself against a table, "I must be growing small again'...and found that, as nearly as she could guess, she was now about two feet high, and was going on shrinking rapidly..."⁵³

⁵² Carroll, 38.

⁵³ Carroll, 19.

Space, scale and time are Architecture's ultimate questions. In the last part of this thesis, these elements will be more directly tested in the design of a Library for Children and Storytelling. The journey through this speculative building will also imply an experience of negotiation with space, scale and time.

2. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME

FIGURE 13: ALICE TRAPPED IN THE GREAT HALL

The allegory of time is particularly important in Wonderland and is described in two forms. The first form, represented by the White Rabbit, is associated with instantaneity. Alice first encounters the White Rabbit on the river bank, where his momentary passing disrupts the slow passage of time in a typically boring afternoon. Starting from that moment, the Rabbit will appear and disappear as the story

progresses, establishing the impression of a series of fragmented moments in time. Alice follows the Rabbit whenever he appears, and thus it is appearance and disappearance that allows the story to progress from one instant to another through time, even though spatially the progression does not make sense.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Dionne, 74.

The second form is the character of Time itself, a symbol of continuity, as described by the Mad Hatter. At the tea-party, Alice is asked to solve a riddle. Angry when she is told that there is no answer, Alice says, "I think you might do something better with the time...than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers." In response, the Hatter replies, "If you knew Time as well as I do...you wouldn't talk about wasting it, It's him."⁵⁵ Alice is told that the March Hare had quarreled with Time, and since then, it is always six o'clock. Since it always Tea Time, the Hatter, the Hare, and the Dormouse, are forced to continue moving around and around the table. Alice asks: "But what happens when you come to the beginning again?"⁵⁶ The March Hare does not respond to the question but proposes a change in subject, meaning that in the absence of time, there is no beginning or end, life is one continuous circle.

The coexistence of dual times, whether understood as a series of discontinuous instants or one continuous circle, will necessarily influence one's experience and understanding of a space. Time, experienced as discontinuous instants, could be understood as framed views from one space into another, which may or may not be physically connected, within a building. On the other hand, understood as the fundamental structure of the universe, a phenomenon which can be measured, and a dimension in which events occur in a sequence, time as a continuous circle, in architectural terms, could push the structural, dimensional, and sequential design of a new building. The design of the Library for Children and Storytelling will reflect both concepts of time. An architectural element, symbolizing the White Rabbit, could be the thread that weaves throughout the building,

⁵⁵ Carroll, 63.

⁵⁶ Carroll, 64.

linking a series of unrelated spaces in a sequence. On the other hand, Time stands still in the grand reading room, with no windows to the outside; it is always story-time.

3. NONSENSE AS A SERIES OF CONTRADICTIONS

Many elements can contribute to the ability of language (written and spoken) to convey precise meaning. These elements include literary devices such as puns, homonyms, and antonyms. Carroll skillfully exploits all of these devices in his writing. While swimming in the Pool of Tears, Alice ponders the meaning of a word separated from the object and function it is intended to signify. To do so, she inverts the phrase: "Do cats eat bats?" to "Do bats eat cats?" In either case, the phrases are being considered without reference to their subjects, and are therefore meaningless.

In architecture, what is the meaning of a door or a stair if it leads to nowhere? Such a nonsensical door or stair could be interpreted as a critique of 'crude functionalism' and of the impoverishment of architectures subjected exclusively to criteria of objectivity or rationality. As the architect Aldo Rossi and numerous other critics of 'crude modernism' argue, pure objectivity in architecture, and pure functionalism, are never possible. The design portion of this thesis will explore the meaning of architectural elements separated from their function in the design of the proposed Library for Children and Storytelling.

Nonsense is often misinterpreted as meaninglessness. However, nonsense is not the lack of meaning, but rather the result of an excess of different or opposing meanings.⁵⁷ In the

⁵⁷ Dionne, 26.

case of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, nonsense is the result of a series of contradictions. In Wonderland, a seemingly meaningless poem is treated as proof of the Knave's guilt in stealing the Queen's tarts, which happen to be sitting uneaten on a table in the middle of the court, and a defendant is sentenced before the verdict is given.

FIGURE 14: ALICE ATTENDS THE KNAVE'S TRIAL

A 'Wonderlandesque' architecture is therefore necessarily open ended, ambiguous, and filled with contradiction. Twentieth century architect Robert Venturi called for "complexity and contradiction" in architecture as a way to counter what he perceived to be an impoverished architecture in his day. Venturi used the Vanna Venturi House, in Philadelphia, as a platform to test his position. The architect's mother's house is both complex and simple in design, open and closed, big and little. For example, inside, doors are 'too wide', the fireplace is 'too big' and the mantel is 'too high,' but the room itself is small. Complexity and contradiction is through the use of double functioning elements. In this case, a stair is also a bookshelf and the chimney stack is also a skylight. The design of the library will similarly set up a series of seemingly contradictory spatial configurations, creating layered readings of meaning, as opposed to meaninglessness.

FIGURE 15: VANNA VENTURI HOUSE, EXTERIOR

FIGURE 16: VANNA VENTURI HOUSE, STAIR, AND WINDOW

4. THE CRISES OF IDENTITY

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a story which asks many questions. While trapped in the great hall, and wondering if she had been changed in the night, Alice poses perhaps the most important question of all, and one that is the basis of the best novels and children's books, "Who in the world am I?"⁵⁸

Inherent in the process of becoming an adult is the discovery of one's own identity. Alice's conversations in Wonderland draw attention to this moment of discovery and the puzzling nature of identity. Alice's conversation with the Caterpillar is perhaps the most significant moment in relation to the theme of identity.⁵⁹ When the Caterpillar asks Alice, "Who Are You?" she mistakenly attempts to give him a statement

FIGURE 17: ALICE MEETS THE CATERPILLAR

⁵⁸ Carroll, 18.

⁵⁹ Dionne, 88.

of being, believing that she is unaware of her identity, due to her constantly changing body size. She tries to substantiate her position by relating it to an experience of physical change that the Caterpillar will soon undergo. However, the Caterpillar does not agree with her, as it is in his nature to undergo these changes. It is possible to argue, that like the Caterpillar, it is human nature to undergo physical and emotional changes in the process of growing older. However, in Wonderland, the process itself has been altered, in time, and sequence, causing Alice to feel more confused and disoriented than usual.

The question of transforming identity is one that is also of major importance in architecture. Historical architecture, for example was based on the idea of permanence of architectural meaning. For example, the meaning, or identity, of temple was stable, a constant. Meaning in the postmodern world, and correspondingly, in architecture, is constantly changing. One cannot build temples and cathedrals with unshakable meanings anymore. In this sense, Alice is a way of beginning to think about the question of identity in contemporary architecture.

Although each of these four themes -- the position of the body in space, the experience of the passage of time, nonsense as a series of contradictions, and the crises of identity -- is framed within the dream of a young child, they all have meaningful application in the architecture and our current condition. PART II of this thesis aims to combine these ideas in the design of one building, a Library for Children and Storytelling.

PART II: STORY BECOMES BUILDING

PART II MORE ACTIVELY ENGAGES STORYTELLING as "design method." This part of the thesis will examine how, precisely storytelling can guide the design of a building. First, the architectural quote, or the "citing" of architecture, will be examined with a view to proposing how the design of a building might find its roots in storytelling in general terms. Secondly, the thesis will specifically explore the design of a Library for Children and Storytelling on a Toronto site, working through each of the facets of architectural design, with storytelling as a guiding structure. Each of the traditional topics of new building design -- programming, choice of site, room sequence, materiality and details -- will be discussed according to the frame of narrative. The design project presented at the end of this thesis is offered as a counterexample to mere functionalist design methods, and as a counter-answer to the limiting design covenants outlined by the Canadian Library Association, alluded to at the beginning of this thesis.

2.1 HOW TO PREPARE A STORY

CITING ARCHITECTURE: THE ARCHITECTURAL QUOTE

STORYTELLING, by nature, relies on repetition, the act of passing a story on from generation to generation. In writing, to repeat is to quote, cite, or borrow, the words of another as an example or authority.⁶⁰ The Bible, Shakespeare and Carroll's two *Alice* books are reputed to be the most quoted texts in the English language.⁶¹ Carroll's famous words "down the rabbit-hole," for example, have become a common saying and universal metaphor denoting the passage into an unknown world.

We are continually being reminded of other stories while experiencing a new story.⁶² Carroll relies on a form of quotation, known in literature as the back-story, in his own storytelling. As Alice navigates her way through Wonderland, she stumbles upon a series of unusual characters. Despite the fact that each character is present for only a short period of time, they are complex and highly memorable. These figures are either characters from other works of well know literature (as is the case with Humpty-Dumpty from Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*), anthropomorphized everyday-objects (such as Queen of Hearts), or is the embodiment of a common saying ("mad as a March Hare").⁶³ By using characters with familiar back-stories, a story 'behind' or 'before' the events being portrayed in the story being told, Carroll engages the cultural memory and imagination of the reader, by encouraging them to recall the events, characteristics, or

⁶⁰ Citing in architecture is all the more interesting because buildings are also "sited" and the objects of "sight."

⁶¹ Haughton, xii.

⁶² Norma J. Livo and Sandra A. Rietz, *Storytelling: Folklore Sourcebooks* (Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, INC., 1991) xiii.

⁶³ Dionne, 70.

meaning associated with the alternate story. By integrating past events or background information, Carroll adds new layers to the story he is telling, enriching it with added meaning, and anchors it to other events, real or imagined.

Architecture, similarly, depends on quoting (of historical buildings, for example) in the design of a new building. In "Carlo Scarpa in Magna Graecia", Marco Frascari introduces the concept of fragmentary architecture or *architecturra di spoglio* (architecture of spoils), defined as an architecture made up of artifacts produced within a culture over time. These artifacts, taken either literary or conceptually, manifest themselves, either partly or wholly, in other times or cultures. In Frascari's words "buildings are texts which are generated by assembling three-dimensional mosaics of fragments, excerpts, citations, passages, and quotations and every building is an absorption and transformations of other buildings." ⁶⁴ This mode of building reached its peak in the Middle Ages. During this time, materials and elements were taken from the ruins of ancient buildings and were used all around the Mediterranean basin. Columns and capitals with varying proportions and orders would be collected, reassembled (a shaft of one column might be attached to a base of another) and reused (a capital might be reused as a base). The construction of the city of Venice itself, built of fragments from foreign countries which were brought to Venice by boat, was based upon the practice of an *architecturra di spoglio*.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Frascari, "Carlos Scarpa in Magna Graecia, The Abatellis Palace in Palermo," 3.

⁶⁵ Frascari, "Carlos Scarpa in Magna Graecia, The Abatellis Palace in Palermo," 3.

THE SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE LIBRARY AS AN ARCHITECTURAL QUOTE

THE SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE LIBRARY is an architectural model that coincides neatly with the program, period, site, and theoretical material presented in this thesis, and as such, serves as a spatial and narrative guide in the design of the proposed Toronto Library for Children and Storytelling.⁶⁶

Quite obviously, the Sainte-Geneviève Library and the proposed Children's Library are related by program. Although each building is designed with a specific user in mind, a university student and young child respectively, they mutually require several specific spaces particular to library buildings such as an entry/reception/lobby (the beginning of a circulation sequence and presumably the location of the circulation/information desk), stack/collection and reading rooms, multi-purpose areas (small spaces for private study and study groups, large spaces for lectures, workshops and meetings), administrative and facilitative areas (librarian offices, shipping/receiving area), public restrooms and individual circulation.

Additionally, Wonderland is a place of extreme interiority. Carroll offers little explanation regarding how one space relates to another, and provides even fewer details regarding the relationship between Wonderland and the outside world. The only access point, into what appears to be an autonomous and impenetrable environment, is through

⁶⁶ Henri Labrouste's Sainte-Genevieve Library is an architectural model that has been previously quoted by other architects. The Boston Public Library and the new Chicago Public Library, for instance, are two buildings that have adapted a similar narrative journey and iconographic program, such as an honorific 'role calls' of deceased authors.

the Rabbit-Hole.⁶⁷ The proportions and structural grid of the Sainte-Geneviève, designed in the Neo-Grec style, which was not only popular in France, but also in Carroll's Victorian England, serves as an appropriate 'shed' to house the story. The architectural historian Neil Levine has described this particular style as a 'readable' architecture and a reaction against the rigidity of Classicism.⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, the Neo-Grec style also appealed to Toronto's nineteenth century city fathers, and like their British and French counterparts, they considered it appropriate for important commercial and civic buildings.⁶⁹ Therefore, the quotation of this Library is all the more fitting on a site in Toronto.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a story made-up of nonsensical events about fitting and not fitting, could be called a trial of fitting. This thesis proposes to locate the Library for Children and Storytelling on a vacant site at Dundas Street East and Bond Street in Toronto. The proportions of this site are long and narrow. The Sainte-Geneviève Library is an appropriate source of quotation here as its footprint is similarly long and narrow, approximately proportionally identical to the proposed site. Here, the act of fitting, stretching, deforming the Sainte-Geneviève Library, a kind of Alice figure, and placing it into/onto (in/on) the site as a container, imitates a significant component of the story itself.

⁶⁷ Carroll describes a second access point in *Through the Looking-Glass*. Alice enters Wonderland through a mirror which is located above her family's drawing-room fireplace.

⁶⁸ Neil Levine, "The Book and the Building: Hugo's Theory of Architecture and Labrousse's Bibliothèque Ste-Genevieve," *The Beaux-Arts and 19th Century French Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982) 140.

⁶⁹ Patricia McHugh, *Toronto Architecture: A Description of Styles* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989) 6.

FIGURE 18: SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE LIBRARY, PLAN

Beyond programmatic requirements, libraries generally embody the idea of a new world and the spirit of personal pursuit and journey, both conceptually and formally. In a library, planned paths are often interrupted by distractions and unexpected discoveries, not unlike Alice's journey through Wonderland, in search of the Queen's garden, which is continuously being set off track by a series of surprising events and characters. The Sainte-Geneviève Library is a building which sets up a narrative journey owing to spatial sequence and the thoughtful placement of objects and art. This journey culminates in the elevated reading-room, where the entrance is designed to mark the departure from the world of conventional images, located in the vestibule and grand staircase, into the 'real' world of books and their authors, the reading-room.⁷⁰ The journey through the Library for Children and Storytelling also culminates in an elevated reading-room, in this case, for storytelling.

⁷⁰ The authors also point out that, architecturally, these two worlds (that of conventional images and that of the real world of books) are presented by a series of oppositions. The most telling being that between the masonry vaults in a Raphael painting located at the top of grand stair and Labrouste's (real) iron vaults which support the reading-room room (Bressani and Grignon, 732).

FIGURE 19: SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE LIBRARY, VESTIBULE

FIGURE 20: SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE LIBRARY, CROSS SECTION

The proposed library for Children and Storytelling in Toronto has the same footprint as the Sainte-Geneviève Library. However, the heavy stone walls, borrowed from Labrouste, have been scaled so as to fit within the new building. The inner wall of the new library mimics the Sainte-Geneviève Library, but in this case is built of Toronto sandstone, inscribed with the names of Canadian storytellers and authors of children's literature, with an interior cast-iron structure. Wonderland and the library are contained within these walls. They form an inward looking environment with only a few outward views of the city. Time and place no longer exist here. Uninterrupted dreams and adventures are able to be played out, protected by the walls from noise of the outside world.

The library's support spaces are located in an architectural sleeve along the exterior of the stone walls. Staff rooms, offices, book repair room, a book store, and a café on ground level, are nested inside this external wrapping. These spaces look out into the city with only a few views into the library within. Architecturally, this portion of the library

mimics the surrounding Yonge and Dundas urban fabric. The service sleeve is conceived like scaffold, with movable floors and partition, and with an exterior curtain wall cladding. Scrims, which display local artworks done by children or artists, would form an ephemeral and constantly changing final outer veil, giving the building a temporal quality. A complete photo documentation of a model can be found in Appendix B.

FIGURE 21: IMAGE FROM TIME LAPSE MONTAGE

FIGURE 22: IMAGE FROM TIME LAPSE MONTAGE

2.2 BUILDING A CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

ESTABLISHING A CHILDREN'S LIBRARY AT YONGE AND DUNDAS

THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY program is especially relevant in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA); Canada's largest metropolitan concentration, the landing pad of the lion's share of Canadian immigrants, and a Canadian city with one of the youngest average populations (median age in 2001 is 36.2 -- younger than Montreal, Vancouver, and Ottawa).⁷¹ Amalgamation in 1998 left the City of Toronto (which is composed of the former City of Toronto, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, East York, and York) without sufficient library facilities for a city of its size -- a city of 2.5 million people. The former North York Public Library is currently acting as the City of Toronto Central Library. Currently, there is no public library in Toronto specifically for children. A library dedicated to Children and Storytelling would provide an outstanding and much needed learning environment for children and researchers in downtown Toronto.

Due to the central location, the increasing number of existing and new condominium residents between Queen Street and Bloor Street, the existing population of people already frequenting the area for public events in Yonge-Dundas Square, shopping on Yonge Street and in the Eaton's Centre, there is a significant justification for a Children's Library at Yonge and Dundas with a demonstrated user and taxpayer base (see appendix). The downtown is felt to be under serviced by the Toronto Public Library. The nearest Public Library to the proposed location of the Library for Children and Storytelling is City Hall. However, this library offers only a very small collection, no children's

⁷¹ Statistics Canada, 19 December 2006, The Government of Canada, Ottawa, 14 July 2007 <www.statcan.ca/>.

programs and limited hours. St. Michael's Choir School, St. Michael's Cathedral, and Ryerson University are only three examples, among many, of definite existing user groups in the area. Both Yonge Street and Dundas Street are major vehicular arteries that pass through the City of Toronto. A library located in the Yonge-Dundas area would be easily accessible by the public transit (TTC) but also by vehicle for those coming in from the GTA. Finally, situating a library at Yonge and Dundas could also be the impetus for further and badly needed development of both Yonge-Dundas Square and the City of Toronto proposal for the resuscitation of Yonge Street from Queen to Bloor Streets.

FIGURE 23: ARIAL PHOTO OF YONGE-DUNDAS SHOWING SITE .

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE COLLECTION

This thesis proposes to relocate several collections of children's literature to the proposed City of Toronto Library for Children and Storytelling. The heart of the new collection would be the Lillian H. Smith Children's Resource Collection, currently housed in a small public library building at the corner of Spadina and College Streets (see appendix). This collection is comprised, among others, of rare and out of print children's books, illustrated manuscripts, and research material for children as well as children's literature students, researchers and scholars, authors, illustrators and publisher, teachers, storytellers, television and film producers, puppeteers, and actors.

The Toronto Public Library is very proud of the Lillian H. Smith Children's Resource Collection. Currently, the Lillian H. Smith branch library is overcrowded due to the amalgamation of its regular collection and the Children's Resource Collection, as well as the librarians and children's literature specialists it employs. Due to spatial limitations, events and activities that could potentially activate and promote this collection are not possible. And finally, because of the location at Spadina and College, a Toronto neighbourhood typically populated with university students, the collection and the specialists are underused by children and researchers. Therefore, owing to the nature of the collection itself and its poor location, the relocation of this rare collection to a more prominent and accessible site in the city and its placement inside a building which is programmatically designed to accommodate it seems appropriate.

2.3 A CITY AND IT'S (HI) STORY

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

THE TORONTO STORY

THE OFFICIAL STORY of the City of Toronto is: "a city built in the image of its own people -- fed by the many influences of its ever changing human fabric."⁷² In the 1960's, the City of Toronto began to look for ways to capture, reinforce and tell this story through architecture. A variety of large-scale major tourist attractions, such as the CN Tower, Ontario Place, and the Eaton's Centre were commissioned and built around the city in an attempt to distinguish this city's story from any other.

YONGE-DUNDAS

Historically, the Yonge-Dundas area consisted of a fine-grained, densely arranged fabric of mixed residential and commercial buildings. Yonge Street has always been, and continues to be, the main commercial thoroughfare moving northward from the waterfront through the City of Toronto. In 1955, the Toronto Transit Commission began to build a subway system that would connect the downtown core to the developing suburbs.⁷³ This subway system, in addition to the Dundas street-car that runs east/west along the northern edge of the proposed library site, has significantly affected the development of this area over the past 50 years. The Dundas subway station is situated at the corner of Yonge and Dundas Streets. Its location, at the intersection of these two

⁷² Toronto History, July 2007, The City of Toronto, Toronto, 14 July 2007 <www.toronto_history/index.htm.ca>.

⁷³ <www.toronto_history/index.htm.ca>.

major transportation systems, has been a driving force that has allowed this area to develop into the urban node that it is today.

Up until the late 1990s, the corner of Yonge-Dundas was occupied by a block of small retail stores. At this time, the neighbourhood was marked with unsafe areas used for drug dealing, gang activity, and prostitution. The land around the Yonge-Dundas area was purchased by the City of Toronto, and in 1998, as a part of its Yonge Street Regeneration Project, the Toronto City Council approved the demolition of the buildings on the site and the construction of Dundas Square, as well as several adjacent entertainment complexes, with the hope of breathing new life into the area.⁷⁴

FIGURE 24: SITE PHOTOGRAPH, DUNDAS STREET LOOKING WEST

FIGURE 25: SITE PHOTOGRAPH, DUNDAS STREET LOOKING EAST

⁷⁴ <www.toronto_history/index.htm.ca>.

CURRENT SITUATION

Arguably, some of the most noticeable destruction of Toronto's historic fine-grained fabric occurs in the Yonge-Dundas area, specifically on the west side of Yonge Street. However, the east side of Yonge Street still retains many older buildings which continue to personify stories of Toronto's past.

Yonge-Dundas Square, located at the South East corner of Yonge and Dundas, designed by Toronto's Brown + Storey Architects, is one of the city's newest civic spaces. Completed in 2002, it is arguably the busiest and most important public space in the City of Toronto. Programmatically, Yonge-Dundas Square was designed to accommodate large crowds for concerts, markets and promotional events.

The built environment at Yonge and Dundas is constantly changing. New architectural projects in the immediate area include the redevelopment of the Eaton Centre, the construction of a new cinema complex on the north east corner of Yonge and Dundas, known as the Metropolis, and the Olympic Spirit Toronto Building to the south east of Dundas Square (now closed).⁷⁵ Beginning at the intersection of Yonge and Dundas, and moving parasitically north, south and west, large-scale commercial images and screens have recently been erected on top of what is left of the small-scale surrounding infrastructure by means of steel scaffolding systems. As a result, the built environment has been divided into horizontal layers. A small-scaled commercial zone still exists at

⁷⁵ <www.toronto_history/index.htm.ca>.

street level. However, the upper portion of the existing buildings, as well as the air space above, has been converted into an over-scaled commercial advertising zone.

FIGURE 26: SITE PHOTOGRAPH, YONGE-DUNDAS SQUARE

FACTORS ACTING ON SITE

URBAN DWELLING

The revitalization and densification of Toronto's downtown core has prompted individuals and families to reconsider urban dwelling. According to a 2005 survey done by the City of Toronto, over 50% of Toronto families live in an apartment building which consists of five or more stories. The population of the City of Toronto is projected to rise by 8% in the next 25 years.⁷⁶ Due to this recent increased interest in urban housing, high-rise residential towers are currently being built all over the city, particularly along the Yonge Street corridor between Front and Bloor. However, the typical residential unit being built in downtown Toronto offers small living quarters and no private outdoor space. As this is the case, urban public spaces and public facilities for children will become increasingly important in the near future. A library offering programs and

⁷⁶ <www.statcan.ca/>.

services specifically designed to exercise the minds and bodies of children located in the downtown area, would be a most appropriate asset for families living in Toronto.

DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITION

Diversity of origins, traditions, faiths and languages is a crucial element in Toronto's story and defines the city as one of the most multicultural cities in the world. Toronto is home to virtually all of the world's cultural groups. Between 2001 and 2005, the City of Toronto attracted an average of 69,000 international immigrants each year. As a result, there are currently over 100 languages and dialects spoken in Toronto. According to a 2005 survey done by the City of Toronto, the five most common languages spoken in Toronto, not including English or French, are Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and Punjabi.⁷⁷

The proposed Library for Children and Storytelling would have the capacity to respond to the needs and support the reading interests of this multicultural population with collections, programs and services. Placed centrally in the storytelling section of the library, a large oblong room intended for storytelling sessions in a multiplicity of languages, provides a narrative anchor for the second floor. The library will provide reading material in a multiplicity of languages, English language learning materials and programs to help new Canadian children and their families to adapt and grow in Canadian society, as well as current information on their countries of origin.

⁷⁷ Toronto Demographics, July 2007, The City of Toronto, Toronto, 14 July 2007 <www.toronto.ca/demographics>.

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

In addition to its adjacency to Yonge-Dundas Square, this site was chosen for its proximity to Ryerson University -- specifically the undergraduate and graduate program in Early Childhood Studies. This innovative program, unique to Ryerson University, examines the forces that shape a child's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. The dynamics that influence teaching and parenting, such as human nature, sociology, literacy, family structures and roles, community support systems, and culture and socio-economic factors are closely studied and tested. As a part of their required field research, students learn to plan activities/programs and evaluate experiences that facilitate learning through storytelling and play.⁷⁸ The proposed Library for Children and Storytelling could provide the ideal setting for this research while simultaneously benefiting from the additional programs and services provided by the students of Ryerson University.

⁷⁸ Early Childhood Education, 1 April 2007, Ryerson University, Toronto, 15 May 2007 <www.ryerson.ca/ece/>.

2.4 BRINGING A STORY TO LIFE

PROCESS ONE: THE CONCEPTUAL COLLAGE

ALICE UNFOLDS AS A SERIES OF ENCOUNTERS; EACH ENCOUNTER, OR EVENT, IS A UNIQUE STORY IN ITSELF. A SERIES OF SIX BLACK & WHITE EXPLORATORY COLLAGES WERE PRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAWINGS OF JOHN TENNIEL BASED ON SIX CENTRAL EVENTS WITHIN THE STORY -- DOWN THE RABBIT-HOLE, POOL OF TEARS, RABBIT SENDS IN A LITTLE BILL, ADVICE FROM A CATERPILLAR, MAD TEA-PARTY, AND ALICE'S EVIDENCE. THESE COLLAGES REPRESENT AN EARLY TRANSLATION FROM TEXT TO IMAGE AND THE BEGINNING OF AN ARCHITECTURE GUIDED BY STORYTELLING.

1.2

1.1

1.4

1.3

THE CONCEPTUAL COLLAGE

PROCESS TWO: THE PINHOLE, THE OBJECT, THE BODY

SCALE IS A PREDOMINANT THEME IN ALICE. A CHILD IS ABLE TO RECOGNIZE A CHANGE IN SCALE WHEN THE CHANGE IS MADE TO A FAMILIAR OBJECT WITH A GIVEN SCALE. ALICE'S CHANGING SCALE IS MADE OBVIOUS IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTS AND ANIMALS SHE ENCOUNTERS IN WONDERLAND. IN ORDER TO EXPERIMENT WITH THE PERCEPTION OF SCALE IN RELATION TO OBJECTS AND THE HUMAN BODY, A SERIES OF PINHOLE PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN BASED ON SIX CENTRAL EVENTS WITHIN THE STORY -- DOWN THE RABBIT-HOLE, POOL OF TEARS, RABBIT SENDS IN A LITTLE BILL, ADVICE FROM A CATERPILLAR, MAD TEA-PARTY, AND ALICE'S EVIDENCE.

PINHOLE PHOTOGRAPHY WAS CHOSEN SPECIFICALLY FOR ITS DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS. IN THIS TYPE OF PHOTOGRAPHY, THE MINISCULE APERTURE (THE PINHOLE) IS FIXED, PRODUCING WIDE-ANGLE IMAGES WITH INFINITE DEPTH OF FIELD IN A SINGLE PHOTOGRAPH. IN OTHER WORDS, A PINHOLE CAMERA CAPTURES OBJECTS WITH EQUAL SHARPNESS WHETHER THEY ARE VERY CLOSE UP OR FAR AWAY, CREATING A SUBJECTIVE SENSE OF SPACE. IN ADDITION TO THE INFINITE DEPTH OF FIELD, THE PARTICULAR HAT BOX CAMERA USED IN THIS EXPERIMENT CONTAINED A CURVED IMAGE PLANE WHICH FURTHER DISTORTS THE IMAGE PRODUCED AND THEREFORE, THE SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENVIRONMENT BEING CAPTURED.

THREE OBJECTS (POCKET WATCH, BOTTLE, TEACUP AND SAUCER) WERE SELECTED AND APPEAR IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS. THE PARTICULAR OBJECTS WERE CHOSEN BASED ON THEIR CONNECTION TO THE STORY AND FAMILIAR SCALE. FINALLY, ACTING AS ALICE, I HAVE POSITIONED MYSELF IN THREE PHOTOGRAPHS IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE EFFECT THAT THE HUMAN BODY HAS ON OUR SPATIAL PERCEPTION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

THE PINHOLE, THE OBJECT, THE BODY

2.6

2.5

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2.3

PROCESS THREE: THE ARCHITECTURAL COLLAGE/LINE DRAWING

WITH *ALICE* IN MIND, A STUDY BASED ON THE ARCHITECTURAL QUOTE WAS INITIATED AS A SERIES OF ARCHITECTURAL COLLAGES PRODUCED FROM PHOTOCOPIED SECTIONS AND ELEVATIONS OF HENRI LABROUSTE'S SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE LIBRARY AT FOUR SCALES (1:50, 1:100, 1:200, AND 1:400). THE NATURE OF THE PHOTOCOPIED REPRODUCTIONS REVEALS THE SCALAR CHANGES THROUGH PIXILATION. THE END RESULT IS A SECTIONAL DRAWING WHICH PLAYS WITH IMAGINATION, REPETITION, AND SCALE. THE VARIOUS IMAGES ARE ALMOST SEAMLESSLY COMBINED WHICH CREATES A BELIEVABLE SECTION THROUGH A BUILDING. HOWEVER, UPON A SECOND GLANCE, SOMETHING SEEMS NOT QUITE RIGHT. THE PIXILATION, THE INDICATION OF A SCALAR OPERATION MADE ON AN OBJECT, PROVIDES THE SUBTLE INTRODUCTION THAT MAKES THE STORY APPARENT

A SECTIONAL LINE DRAWING WAS PRODUCED FROM THE IDEAS WHICH EMERGED FROM THE COLLAGE EXERCISE. IN DRAWING, PIXILATION IS NO LONGER A FACTOR. IT IS THE USE OF LINE WEIGHTS THAT AIDE IN THE NARRATIVE READING OF THIS DRAWING. THE DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN OLD AND NEW, BIG AND SMALL, REAL AND ILLUSION HAS BECOME BLURRED. THE OBSERVER BELIEVES THE DRAWING TO BE REAL AND THEREFORE ATTEMPTS TO MAKE SENSE OF IT SPATIALLY.

IN HIS ESSAY "STORY-TIME," ARCHITECT, AUTHOR, AND EDUCATOR, MARK WIGLEY STATES "'THE REAL CRAFTSMANSHIP IN ARCHITECTURE IS THE CREATING OF A GOOD STORY, WHICH DEPENDS ON A PRIOR STORY ABOUT THE WAY A CERTAIN KIND OF CRAFTSMANSHIP, A CERTAIN WAY OF ASSEMBLING BUILDING MATERIALS...THE PRECISION OF A BUILDING DETAIL IS THE PRECISION OF A POINT IN AN ARGUMENT.'" ⁷⁹ FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS COLLAGE EXERCISE, IN WHICH SPATIAL AND SCALAR ADJACENCIES ARE BEING EXPLORED BY JOINING IMAGES OF THE SAME BUILDING, MAINTAINING A SINGULAR STORY-LINE, THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN MATERIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS HAVE MAINTAINED THE ORIGINAL TECTONIC LANGUAGE BORROWED FROM LABROUSTE. HOWEVER, THE WEAVING OF A LABROUSTE ELEMENT WITH AN *ALICE* THREAD, FOR INSTANCE, IS THE JOINING OF TWO DIFFERENT STORIES. THIS JOINT IS NOT MERELY A COLLISION POINT BETWEEN THEM, BUT THE RE-TELLING OF THESE SEPARATE STORIES TO CREATE ONE NEW STORY, AND THE DESIGN OF A DETAIL THAT COMMUNICATES THIS.

⁷⁹ Mark Wigley. "Story-Time" *Assemblage* No. 27 (Aug. 1995) 82.

3.1

ARCHITECTURAL COLLAGE -- LONGITUDINAL SECTION

THE ARCHITECTURAL COLLAGE/LINE DRAWING

SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE LIBRARY -- ELEVATION

THE ARCHITECTURAL COLLAGE/LINE DRAWING

LINE DRAWING -- LONGITUDINAL SECTION

THE ARCHITECTURAL COLLAGE/LINE DRAWING

PROCESS FOUR: THE SITE STORYBOARD

THE YONGE-DUNDAS AREA OF TORONTO, WHERE AN ODD FUSION OF EXISTING SMALL SCALED COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND NEW OVER SCALED INFRASTRUCTURE COINCIDES, SEEMS THE IDEAL BACKGROUND FOR A 'WONDERLANDESQUE' ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN. AS AN INITIAL SITE EXPLORATION, A SERIES OF SIX BLACK AND WHITE COLLAGES OF THE SITE WERE CREATED FROM SITE PHOTOGRAPHS. THESE COLLAGES, FRAMED AS LANDSCAPES, ARE STORYBOARDS WHICH CAPTURE THE STRATIFIED NATURE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD, THE DIVERSITY OF BUILDINGS (FORMALLY AND PROGRAMMATICALLY), THE VARIETY OF MATERIAL, AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE EVERYDAY STORIES OF THE CITY'S INHABITANTS AS WELL AS THE 'OFFICIAL STORY' OF TORONTO.

THE SITE STORYBOARD

4.1

4.2

THE SITE STORYBOARD

PROCESS FIVE: THE PRELIMINARY MASSING MODEL

FOLLOWING THE SITE STORYBOARDS EXERCISE (PROCESS FOUR), A SERIES OF THREE MASSING MODELS (1:500) WERE PRODUCED AS ADDITIONAL SITE INVESTIGATION. THESE MODELS ARE PROPOSED MASSINGS WHICH ATTEMPTS TO WEAVE THE BUILDING INTO THE CITY FABRIC WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY CREATING A 'SHED' TO CONTAIN THE INTERIOR WORLD OF WONDERLAND.

THE PRELIMINARY MASSING MODEL

5.1

5.2

5.3

5.4

PROCESS SIX: THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

ALICE IS A WORK OF CHILDHOOD WHIMSY AND NONSENSE, A SATIRICAL STUDY INTO THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE, AND IN THIS CASE, MOST IMPORTANTLY, AN ALLEGORY OF SPATIAL EXPERIENCE.⁸⁰ IT IS THESE EXPERIENCES, WHICH FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS THESIS HAVE BEEN CATEGORIZED INTO SIX CENTRAL EVENTS -- DOWN THE RABBIT-HOLE, POOL OF TEARS, RABBIT SENDS IN A LITTLE BILL, ADVICE FROM A CATERPILLAR, MAD TEA-PARTY, AND ALICE'S EVIDENCE -- THAT WILL INFORM THE DESIGN OF THE PROPOSED LIBRARY FOR CHILDREN AND STORYTELLING. IN ADDITION TO THE CENTRAL EVENTS OF THE STORY, FOUR MAJOR THEMES -- THE POSITION OF THE BODY IN SPACE, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME, NONSENSE AS A SERIES OF CONTRADICTIONS, AND THE CRISES OF IDENTITY -- OCCUPY ALICE AS SHE MAKES HER WAY THROUGH WONDERLAND. FOLLOWING THE CONCEPTUAL COLLAGE EXERCISE (PROCESS ONE) AND THE ANALYSIS OF *ALICE*'S MAJOR THEMES, A SERIES OF SIX SCALE-LESS MODELS WERE CREATED AS A TRANSLATION FROM IDEA AND IMAGE TO ARCHITECTURE.

⁸⁰ Dionne, xii.

THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

6.1

POOL OF TEARS

6.3

RABBIT SENDS IN A LITTLE BILL

THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

6.4

MAD TEA-PARTY

6.5

ALICE'S EVIDENCE

6.6

2.5 A WORLD OF FANTASY AND NONSENSE

ROOM SEQUENCE

THE LIBRARY FOR CHILDREN AND STORYTELLING is designed to take the visitor on a surprising Alice like journey. On foot, one approaches a long and narrow glass building, with a curious stone structure, with arched windows, just visible through the exterior glass walls. No entry is immediately visible. However, a wood-clad wall, which appears distinct from the rest of the building, is skewed inward, and catches the eye. A curious, rotating, metal disk, which when examined closely, happens to be a time-keeping device and an automated book return, draws the eye towards a small, wooden, circular door hidden midway down the West façade. Wonderland is a backwards place where a verdict is given before the trial begins. In the Library for Children and Storytelling, one enters through a hidden, side door and exits from the ‘front door.’ A tunnel like stairway, filled with cupboards and bookshelves, maps and pictures hung upon pegs, leads to the Great Hall, a long, low room, lit by a row of lamps hanging from the ceiling, with doors of varying sizes all around.

If arriving by car, the rabbit-hole experience is not lost. The ramp, located on the South end of the Library which leads to the underground parking is designed in a similar way: it descends gradually one level below ground, into a space with overhead views directly into the Library above. From there, a tiny wood door opens up into the Great Hall. The oversized circulation desk made of solid glass, inspired by the three-legged table found by Alice in the Great Hall, punctuates the arrival space. From here, many routes are

visible, but only some are immediately accessible. The first glimpse of the roof-garden is visible through a light well which punctures the middle of the entire building. Using a library card, the visitor can attempt to open doors one by one. However, some doors lead to restricted staff areas and storage spaces and will therefore only open with a staff library card.

The journey from the Great Hall is guided by choice through a succession of 'rooms' conceived as a series of isolated instants. Although Alice makes her way through Wonderland in a specific sequence (the Rabbit-Hole, the Great Hall, the Pool of Tears, etc.), it is arguably arbitrary. In this adventure, visitors are free to choose their own paths; each focused on a particular event within the story and corresponding section of the library collection. The main storytelling space, for example, located on the second floor, is designed as an open-ended space. Just as in Wonderland it is always tea time, the storytelling space is always present. It is always story time.

One identifiable destination within the Library is the Queen's Garden, in this case, located on the roof. This garden is often visible but not always within reach. The midpoint of the Alice story, the arrival at the Queen's Garden, turns out to be a new beginning. In the library, the visitor, like Alice, is able to combine space, scale, and time, and passes through a narrow, tunnel like threshold reaching into the garden. In Wonderland, in the Queen's Garden, croquet is played with flamingoes and hedgehogs instead of mallets and balls. In the Library, over-sized games of chess played on abstracted Toronto city grid boards, is enjoyed on a rooftop garden with Toronto 'figures' (recognizable Toronto

buildings) as pieces. From here, a privileged view out into the city is possible, where many of the real Toronto 'figures' are visible.

After leaving the rooftop, space is not something that goes on, but is folded upon itself, as visitors make their way to the main Reading Room. Like the rotating disk which marked the entrance to the Library, a continuous conveyor, moves returned books through the library to their storage location. This curious element, like the White Rabbit, weaves in and out of every space, encouraging the visitor to follow it. Furthermore, this repetitive element powers the clocks in the Library, marking Time through the continuous circulation of books in and out of the Library.

In *Alice*, the journey culminates at the Knave's trial, in the courtroom of the King and Queen of Hearts., where Alice returns to her full size and realizes the reality of her experience. This idea is transposed to the Library design. Similar in proportion to the grand Reading Room of the Sainte-Geneviève Library, a courtroom-like space occupies the uppermost floor. The dimensions of Labrouste's reading room have here been stretched and shrunk, to fit the proportions of the Toronto site. They have also been reduced to correspond to the scale of a child. The skewing of the proportions of the Sainte-Geneviève Library has formed a cast-iron structural system with a heart shaped cross section. The Reading Room, like the courtroom, is the moment in the story when one becomes aware of their position, through strategic views, within the building and within the city.

In cross section, this building mimics the sequence of traditional oral storytelling. The story is first formed, represented by the lower-level entrance hall, it is then preformed, represented by the auditorium located directly above the entrance hall, and is then finally recorded, which is represented by the reading room, the location of the special collections of children's literature.

MATERIALITY AND DETAIL

According to Frascari, the architecture of Scarpa is reliant on materiality and details, where "each detail tells the story of it's making, of its placing, of its dimensioning."⁸¹ In this case, details are the generator of architectural sentences, which when put together, tell a story. Materiality and details, therefore, are as important, or perhaps more important, than room sequence in the telling of this story.

The relationship between the Wonderland and the outside world is very important. In *The Poet Logician*, literary critic Edmund Wilson states, "children and adults alike can discern that *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* displays the imagination's ability to distort reality while at the same time reinforcing it."⁸² And, it is the moment when the reader contrasts the real world, with the events and characters of Wonderland, that they become aware of their own reality. This idea is important in the connection detail between the exterior cladding and the structural grid, as well as the apertures, which reveal the outside world.

⁸¹ Frascari, "Tell-The-Tale Detail," 504.

⁸² Edmund Wilson, "C.L. Dodgson: The Poet Logician," *The Shores of Light: A Literary Chronicle of the Twenties and Thirties* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc., 1952) 545.

Wonderland is an introverted world. The detail that connects the interior cast-iron structural grid, borrowed from Labrouste, to the exterior Sandstone cladding of the 'shed' is crucial. The detail which connects these two systems together is light, as it reflects the dream-state which binds these two worlds together.

Natural light is desirable in many spaces within the Library. However, the openings in the façade are controlled and have been strategically placed within the Library in order to give views, for example, to the actual location of Toronto 'figures' in the distant city. This allows children to consider the question of things near and far, as Alice does. There is an especially clear view, for instance, of the CN Tower in the central window of the Southwest Reading Room wall. A scrim, therefore, and a flexible detail which clips onto the cast-iron structure, shows shadows and light on each side, hinting at the world on the other side, but impeding direct views.

There is no right way to tell a story. For architects, selecting details and materials is synonymous with the act of choosing appropriate words, prose (written stories), and tone (oral storytelling) for the storyteller, in order to communicate the story their own unique way. Although only two details have been described here, it is clear that the relationship between the detail, no matter how small, and the building is a significant moment in the telling of a memorable story.

Conclusion

THIS STORY BEGAN AS THE RE-TELLING OF AN ANCIENT TALE -- the (hi)story of architecture. Since the beginning of time, architecture, the great book of humankind written in stone, has been linked to storytelling. Among the oldest forms of communication, storytelling in architecture is a technique that inspires and instructs the architect, the keeper of history and weaver of fantasy. Numerous architects through time -- Vitruvius, Claude Nicolas Ledoux, Etienne-Louis Boullée, Henri Labrouste, Le Corbusier, and Carlos Scarpa, among them -- have explored the technique of storytelling as a way of making concrete the mythologies and collective aspirations of their culture and society.

Stories do not come out of nowhere: they are rooted in a society's mythologies, and thus possess the power to orient and give meaning to the human world, and to the built world in particular. If, as we have discussed, all stories have already been told, the real craftsmanship in architecture is comparable to the craft of a good storyteller: what matters is not the telling - but the re-telling of a story. As a design method, storytelling offers a way of weaving together the principal elements of architectural design, all of which have been told before -- building, program, and site -- to form a unique way of re-telling the same story. For architects, re-telling has encouraged the complexity and subtlety of their designs, which has resulted in surprising, innovative, and playful solutions.

In this case, the re-telling of this story -- about a library for Children in Toronto -- has been joined together with an architectural quote, Henri Labrouste's Sainte-Geneviève Library in Paris, and a fictional children's story, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, with the goal of creating a new Library for Children and Storytelling full of wonder, mystery, and excitement. For example, in the Library, the visitor, like Alice, is always inspired by curiosity. The 'White Rabbit', construed as an automated book conveyor, weaves throughout the building, spatially connecting the rooms of the library, while simultaneously guiding the visitor through a narrative journey.

Once built, architecture -- the artifact of the storytelling process -- will continue to softly tell its tale. Future inhabitants may partially or wholly recognize the story being told. However, it is not important that they recognize every detail of the story. Because much like a dream, the memory of the story, is enough to bring happiness.

...

"Oh, I've had such a curious dream!" said Alice. And she told her sister, as well as she could remember them, all these strange Adventures of hers that you have just been reading about; and, when she had finished, her sister kissed her, and said "It was a curious dream, dear, certainly; but now run in to your tea: it's getting late." So Alice got up and ran off, thinking while she ran, as well she might, what a wonderful dream it had been." ⁸³

⁸³ Carroll, 109.

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Appendix

"POINTS OF AGREEMENT" REGARDING LIBRARY BUILDINGS AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (ALA), 1928 ⁸⁴

1. Every library should be planned especially for the kind of work to be done and the community to be served.
2. Interior arrangements should be planned before the exterior is considered.
3. Plans should provide for future growth and development.
4. Public rooms should be planned for complete supervision by the fewest possible attendants.
6. No convenience of arrangement should be sacrificed to architectural effect.
7. There should be no decoration of reading or working rooms that will attract sight-seers to disturb readers and attendants.
8. There should be good natural light in all parts of the building. Windows should extend to the ceiling; in stacks, windows should be opposite aisles.
9. No shelf should be too high to be reached by a person of medium height, standing on the floor.
10. Stairs should be straight, not circular.
11. There should be communication by speaking tubes or telephones between working rooms.

⁸⁴ Jackson E. Towne, "Architecture Versus Librarianship," *Peabody Journal of Education* Vol 6 No 2 (1928) 73.

CHARACTER INDEX, *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*

CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING A NEW LIBRARY
TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY ⁸⁵

1. Underserved area
(no other nearby libraries, new developments, growing neighbourhoods, etc).
2. Population density of the surrounding neighbourhoods.
3. Population type
(high needs/immigrants, residential/business, seniors/adults/teens/kids, etc).
4. Number of schools/community centers in the area.
5. Accessibility
(public transit, parking, etc).
6. Number of other high traffic areas in the neighbourhood
(other activities: shopping, school, etc).

⁸⁵ Marion Scott (TPL Librarian), personal interview, 12 October 2006.

MAJOR COLLECTIONS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY⁸⁶

1. LILLIAN H. SMITH CHILDREN'S RESOURCE COLLECTION
CURRENT LOCATION: LILLIAN H. SMITH LIBRARY, SPADINA + COLLEGE

THE LILLIAN H. SMITH CHILDREN'S RESOURCE COLLECTION is made up of five rare collections: the Canadian Collection, the Children's Literature Resource Collection, the General Collection, the Marguerite G. Bagshaw Collection, and the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books. It is used by children's literature students, researchers, scholars, authors, illustrators, publishers, teachers, storytellers, television and film producers, puppeteers, and actors.

1.1 CANADIAN COLLECTION. The Canadian Collection is a reference collection of nineteenth and twentieth century English children's books written or illustrated by Canadian authors or pertaining to Canada. Important holdings include: the manuscript for the first Canadian picture book, An Illustrated Comic Alphabet (1959), an archive of current Canadian authors, a selection of popular Canadian material, and a small press publication.

1.2 CHILDREN'S LITERATURE RESOURCE COLLECTION. The Children's Literature Resource Collection is a reference collection that emphasis fairy tales but also includes material on children's literature and literary criticism, children's authors and illustrators,

⁸⁶ Children's Literature Collection, March 2007, The Toronto Public Library, Toronto, 13 June 2007
<www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/uni_lhs_resource.jsp>.

and storytelling. This collection is made up of: 3,250 books, 19 periodicals, information files, and card index to periodicals.

1.3 GENERAL COLLECTION. The General Collection is the only collection currently available for borrowing. The focus of the General Collection is on picture books, folk tales, myths, legends, poetry, and fiction. The non-fiction in the General Collection includes: books on children's literature, puppetry and drama, books on children's authors and illustrators, last copies of folk or fairy tales, myths, legends, and hero tales. Overall, the General Collection includes: 27,394 books, 28 periodicals, audio-visual material (video, kits, cassettes and CD's), French and Chinese language materials, Braille and large print books for children.

1.4 MARGUERITE G. BAGSHAW COLLECTION. The Marguerite G. Bagshaw Collection is dedicated to creative drama, puppetry, and theatre for children. This collection includes: 1000 books, 3 periodicals, 80 puppet shows and 220 display dolls and puppets.

1.5 OSBORNE COLLECTION OF EARLY CHILDREN'S BOOKS. The Osborne Collection is a reference collection of historic English children's books ranging from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century. This collection encompasses the development of English children's literature including: a fourteenth century manuscript of Aesop's fables, fifteenth century traditional tales, sixteenth century school texts and courtesy books,

eighteenth century chapbooks, and Victorian classics of fantasy, adventure, and schools stories up to the end of the Edwardian era.

2. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE REFERENCE COLLECTION⁸⁷
CURRENT LOCATION: NORTH YORK CENTRAL LIBRARY, YONGE + SHEPPARD

The Children's Literature Reference Collection includes: professional reference material about public library works for children, an index of book reviews, information dealing with issues such as sexism, racism and ageism in children's books, information about authors and illustrators, how-to information about writing and illustrating children's books, collections of award-winning children's books, out-of-print children's books, and information concerning children and reading.

⁸⁷ This collection will remain at the North York Central Library.

CITY-WIDE ARCHITECTURAL STORYTELLING EVENTS
TORONTO, CANADA

ALL PEOPLE AND PLACES HAVE FOLKLORE or *lore of the folk*. Thus, one of the best ways to understand our own culture is through its folklore and intimate stories. The details of a culture's story are often best preserved in architecture. Although this thesis proposes to enact stories architecturally, the following two projects confirm the existence of stories in architecture, in this case, as a living archive or museum.

DOORS OPEN TORONTO

Doors Open Toronto is a city-wide storytelling event since 2000 which allows visitors free access to buildings that are generally inaccessible to the public. In reference to Toronto's Doors Open, The Toronto Star architectural columnist, Christopher Hume states that "in just eight years, it has become one of a handful of events that help increase awareness of the city and its narrative."⁸⁸ Designed to enrich the visitor experience, most of the participating buildings, which currently include over 150 sites, offer organized guided tours, display information, and archives. It is an event designed to introduce Torontonians to the story of the city they live in. In architecture, heritage landmarks and modern structures alike, stories about a history of a place, time, and people are recorded and told as long as they exist to tell them. In this case, the City of Toronto takes advantage of the inherent capability of architecture to tell, and celebrates it as an event.

⁸⁸ Christopher Hume, "Doors Open: It's Easier Being Green," *The Toronto Star*, 17 May 2007, G7-G10.

[MURMUR]

[murmur], which was first established in Toronto's Kensington Market in 2003, is an audio collection of stories and memories about a specific place or building. In designated locations within a given city, a sign and corresponding telephone number have been posted which enables the passer-by to engage with the story of that place via a mobile phone. Recently, [murmur] has extended its boundaries to include other Toronto neighbourhoods such as Spadina, the Annex, Dundas Square, and Fort York, in addition to three other Canadian cities such as Vancouver, Montreal and Calgary, as well as San Jose (California), Leith (Scotland) and Dublin (Ireland).⁸⁹

Whether personal or historic, these stories are told from the point of view of the storyteller and often suggest that the listener participate in a physical experience of the story by walking around or following a certain path through a space. Creators Shawn Micallef, James Roussel, and Gabe Sawhney advocate that "the physical experience of hearing a story in its actual setting -- of hearing the walls talk -- brings uncommon knowledge to common space, and brings people closer to the real histories that make up their world."⁹⁰

[murmur] suggests that it should be the personal and unique stories that define a city. However, our cities are currently being overpowered by the loud voices of its skyscrapers, sports stadiums, and landmarks, which therefore mask its true identity.

⁸⁹ [murmur], Shawn Micallef, James Roussel and Gabe Sawhney, June 2007, CFC Media Lab, Toronto 5 June 2007 <www.murmurtoronto.ca/about.php>.

⁹⁰ <www.murmurtoronto.ca/about.php>.

Instead, [murmur] draws attention to the quieter voices and more intimate stories as told by the "smallest, greyest or most nondescript building." These day-to-day stories change the way one sees not only that place, but the city itself. Everyone in the community is encouraged to contribute, and as a result, [murmur] reflects the diversity of voices in a city, a characteristic that, for example, the official story of Toronto is based on.⁹¹

⁹¹ www.murmurtoronto.ca/about.php.

APPENDIX B

LIBRARY FOR CHILDREN AND STORYTELLING -- LONGITUDINAL SECTION

APPENDIX B

CONCEPTUAL FIGURE GROUND PLAN

APPENDIX B

TIME LAPSE MONTAGE

APPENDIX B

TIME LAPSE MONTAGE

APPENDIX B

TIME LAPSE MONTAGE

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