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Alice in a World of Wonderlands The Translations of Lewis Carroll's Masterpiece

edited by Jon A. Lindseth (general)
and Alan Tannenbaum (technical)

Alice in a World of Wonderlands is the most extensive analysis ever done of the translations of one English language novel in so many languages. That novel is *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, one of the most quoted books in the world. On October 4, 1866 Lewis Carroll wrote his publisher Macmillan stating "Friends here [in Oxford] seem to think that the book is untranslatable." But his friends were wrong, as this book shows with translations in 174 languages. The translations into nine different dialects of Scots language are, we believe, the most of any novel in any language.

Prof. Zongxin Feng of Tsinghua University in Beijing, who writes about the 463 Chinese editions, says "Of all Western literary masterpieces introduced into China in the twentieth century, no other work has enjoyed such popularity." The book is also published in Mongolia, Lao, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan. Editions exist in Maori of New Zealand and Pitjantjatjara, an Aboriginal language of Australia. Five Pacific Island languages are represented. There is even one in Brazilian Sign Language. The first translations were German and French in 1869, just a few years after the first English edition in 1865. Translations into virtually every European language followed including all six Celtic languages and six languages of Spain. The Indian sub-continent is represented by twelve languages and Africa by eight including Zulu, Seychelles Creole, and Swahili. There are translations in three Jewish languages and a number from the Middle East.

The book is in three volumes, the first with general essays and an essay about each language. In volume two, the same eight pages from Chapter VII, "A Mad Tea-Party" are translated back into English so one can read and compare how translators went about dealing with Lewis Carroll's nonsense, homophones, and twists of meaning. Volume three is the checklist of 174 languages and over 9,000 editions and reprints of *Alice* and the sequel *Through the Looking-Glass*. Compiled in celebration of the 150th anniversary of *Alice's* publication.



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- Examines translations in 174 languages in over 9,000 editions and reprints
- Includes 188 essays by scholars from around the world
- Provides a method for English-language readers to see how translations were rendered into so many other languages

