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Adapting Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: Nostalgia for a Childhood That Never Was

Helen M. Bendix
Bard College

Adapting *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

Nostalgia for a Childhood That Never Was

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Helen Bendix

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Introduction

> "He presented the green leather booklet containing the neatly handscripted text to Alice in 1864 as a Christmas gift, a year and a half after the break with the Liddells" (Cohen 126).

Morton Cohen, a leading biographer of Lewis Carroll, describes the first edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (then titled *Alice's Adventures Underground*) thus: a humble gift to the daughter of an estranged friend. More than that, a painstakingly handcrafted gift; a personal token. The sort of writing, in essence, which rarely achieves the level of commercial success *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* did. One would think its lasting cultural impact and maintained popularity would be equally unlikely for such a personal work, but considering other works of children's literature released after *Alice,* a trend is evident. *Peter Pan, Winnie the Pooh,* and even in a way C. S. Lewis's *Narnia* books all reveal direct connections between an adult author and a child subject who became a focal point in the books, the Llewelyn Davies boys for J. M. Barrie, his own son for A. A. Milne, and children who were evacuated to his house during World War II for C. S. Lewis.

The personal level these books are imbued with provides the impression of something readers long for – a direct link between author and audience, an intent on the author's part unrelated to commercial success, an authenticity to the textual object as an artifact created out of love and without agenda. *Alice* stands out as a forerunner among these, being the first, but also being the most frequently adapted. All four works were popularly adapted by the Walt Disney company, though the *Narnia* movies were live-action and released significantly later, while the other three were animated films released in the 1950s. And yet, only *Peter Pan* can boast anything approaching the wealth of adaptation *Alice* enjoys, and even then, most of these follow the formula of Disney's version.

What is it about these books in particular that has sparked such a response, lasting a century and a half? The obvious commonality lies with their authors – biographical work on both Lewis Carroll and J.M. Barrie has debated back and forth about the relationship of the authors with their child subjects for the last several decades. *Alice*'s popularity, then, is not only predicated by its humble origins, but also by questions surrounding it. This is exacerbated by two further facets of *Alice.* Firstly, the time in which it was created – the Victorian era, a time period rich in development in terms of the perspective on children and childhood, which has since been, ironically, romanticized and understood through literary works of the time, *Alice* foremost among them. Secondly, *Alice* is a text rich in images, first hand-drawn by Carroll himself in the edition he gave Alice Liddell for Christmas. Later, when the book was published commercially, John Tenniel provided illustrations. The images and the text are placed on equal footing, especially to child readers, who may form a stronger attachment to images if they cannot read yet. In later versions, the implications of *Alice* as an entirely visual medium in film or illustration will come to the fore.

In order to approach the question of why a book like *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* stays relevant and subject to frequent revision, a certain acknowledgement of the unbelievable scope of the question is necessary. I chose to approach the subject by first discussing how it stays relevant. The components, quotes and tropes of *Alice* are very distinct, iconic even, making a reference to *Alice* easy to spot and an adaptation of *Alice* guided by a set of standard, recognizable features. Tracing *Alice*'s influence as both a written and visual medium since its birth in 1865 reveals a rich history of literary works, scholarly analysis, film adaptation and transformative work released online. The basis of this influence is revealed in a number of ways – originally, in Carroll's own stated desire to counter the didactic trends of children's literature

and education at the time he was writing, giving *Alice* both a place in literary history and a status out of time as a book formed without the desire or intention for fame or a place within a canon, ironically given a place as a forming part of the canon of children's literature for exactly this reason.

A century and a half later, *Alice* fans globally still read, enjoy and respond to Carroll's original work, but more than that, they respond to a myriad of other works released in the interim, based on or inspired by Carroll's original work. Furthermore, they create their own works, they interact with scholarship on the subject, and they state, frequently and clearly, their own stakes in scholarly debates surrounding *Alice* and, more frequently, Carroll himself. The developments leading to this point can be traced in a number of different ways, through the list of film adaptations of *Alice,* the collected academic works on the subject, through the reactions fans have to these works. In my project, I will begin by describing the circumstances of *Alice*'s origins and discussing how the interpretation thereof has changed in recent years. I will discuss the adaptations of *Alice* which are most well-remembered and examine how the trends in portraying *Alice* have shifted over the years, and I will conclude by situating these trends among their modern audience with the help of a survey I conducted among *Alice* fans.

These adults looking back at *Alice,* though nowadays they first encountered it as a film, usually the Disney one, express a longing for the idyll they see *Alice* representing – a type of childhood that Alice has come to represent that existed neither in the Victorian period nor even within the book itself, but which has been collectively imagined by audiences for decades. Filmmakers recreate *Alice* in film over and over, searching for a version that captures the innocence they see in the original; bloggers claim Carroll's words for their own biographies and analyze his with a fine-toothed comb. *Alice* is a focal point of nostalgia both for a historical

period and for a collective notion of what childhood means, even when neither existed as they are imagined. The rumors surrounding Carroll's biography only exacerbate this – those who believe them cite this as a cause to dismantle the aura of purity surrounding *Alice,* to form darker and more adult adaptations. Those who believe in Carroll's innocence refute the claims and strengthen their ties to the understanding of an innocent childhood they pull from the text. *Alice* becomes a child text rather than a children's text, a space for competing claims on how nostalgia and childhood ought to be understood.

What is at stake in this analysis is not necessarily reaching a comprehensive answer as to how and why *Alice* became the phenomenon it is today. Rather, through the points of focus set in academic work discussing *Alice*, the trends within adaptation of *Alice* and the way fans speak about *Alice,* I hope to begin providing an overview of the how and a few indicators as to the why at least among *Alice* fans. In this process, my main goal is to establish how changing understandings of a text and the themes of said text, in this case childhood, change the way a text is understood. In a way, this then means that the interpretive community reading *Alice* defines the book, but they define it in such a way that to them, it also becomes a definition of childhood, especially female childhood in Victorian England. This definition might not be accurate either to Victorian England or to childhood as this community of readers experienced it themselves, but it is taken as true in order to not destabilize the emotional attachment to the book. *Alice* is redefined over and over by the context in which she is read, but she is presented by her readers as a pure, unchanging object of nostalgia in order to disguise the broader cultural changes 'childhood' and 'nostalgia' are undergoing.

1. "The Happy Hours of Childhood"[1]

1.1 Who is Alice, and Why Can't She Remember Her Lessons?

> "I must have been changed for Mabel! I'll try again and say '*How doth the little – ',*" and she crossed her hands on her lap, as if she were saying lessons, and began to repeat it, but her voice sounded hoarse and strange, and the words did not come the same as they used to do. (Carroll 23)

What child, when faced with an unfamiliar situation as Alice is here, immediately begins to question who she might have been turned into? Why would a child so unsure of herself and so fixated on her lessons capture the imagination of the world? What exactly is it about Alice that makes her so inescapably compelling? I do not claim to be able to answer any of these questions fully over the course of this chapter, but they lie at the core of the material I will examine. Alice emerges from the intersect of the education her author, Lewis Carroll, received, as well as the treatment of children he observed over the course of the 19th century. It is this context which I establish in order to understand Alice's focus on her lessons, and her inability to remember them.

This is only one side of the story, however – as much as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is influenced by the historical circumstances surrounding its inception, the way it is perceived now is influenced by current beliefs about that historical circumstance. Through both these layers of historical understanding, the role of the child at the time and the belief in who the child is at a fundamental level becomes intertwined, leaving the heavy weight of multiple contexts and multiple perceptions resting on *Alice*'s shoulders. Perhaps, then, it is lucky that Alice doesn't know who she herself is, that she confuses herself so easily with Mabel, that she doesn't recognize her own voice when she tries to speak. Her undefined self is exactly what allows her author and her readers to see in her what they need to.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a unique piece of writing. The trend

[1] Carroll describing Alice as a character in his article "*Alice* on the Stage" (qtd. in Gardner 12)

of children's literature, now ubiquitous, was only just beginning when *Alice* was released, and was at the time largely dominated by didactic work. *Alice*, written by Charles Dodgson, alias Lewis Carroll, and illustrated by John Tenniel, was published in 1865. While technically, the first edition, *Alice's Adventures Underground,* was a hand-bound, hand-written gift from Carroll to Alice Liddell in 1862, by the time the first copy was sold, the text had undergone a series of significant changes. It had been illustrated extensively by Tenniel, already a well-known artist in his own right, to Carroll's painstaking specifications (cf. Cohen 129); it had been retitled *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* and Carroll had significantly expanded the content, including new scenes, including the Mad Tea Party.

The second edition, the first having been recalled due to Tenniel's protest at the "disgraceful printing" (Cohen 130), sold far better than expected by both writer and publisher, and received "unconditional praise" (Cohen 131) from the press. Morton Cohen, a leading Carroll biographer, cites largely positive reviews, such as the *Reader* calling *Alice* an "artistic treasure" (qtd. in Cohen 131) or the *Guardian* declaring it "so graceful and full of humour that one can hardly help reading it through" (qtd. in Cohen 131). Jackie Wullschläger, meanwhile, reports that the books' critical reception was "luke-warm" (Wullschläger 54). Either way, the book sold astonishingly well, though its success was slower and conveyed more by word-of-mouth than would be the case with a modern bestseller. The success of the first book prompted Carroll to write its sequel, five years later – *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. Once again, the book was greeted with both critical and commercial success, and, if Cohen is to be believed, little controversy at the time of its release.

What about this book made it so successful not only as fantasy but also as a staple classic in children's books? The first place to examine this is to see what within the text has made it so

approachable for a child audience. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* begins with the act of reading, though it is not Alice who is doing it. Her sister, with whom she is sitting by the riverbank, is reading a book that Alice is disinterested in because "it had no pictures or conversations in it" (Carroll 11); she cannot see the point of such a book. Alice is, according to *Through the Looking-Glass*, seven and a half years old (cf. Carroll 209), so perhaps too young for a book without pictures or even a book as complex as *Alice's Adventures.* At any rate, this opening cements Alice as an ideal reader for her own story; it has both endless amounts of dialogue as well as memorable, unique (for the time) illustrations with an integral place in the text. It also contains some stylistic inventions of Carroll's to make the text more appealing, for example the mouse's tale. Here, a mouse Alice encounters tells a story that, on the page, takes the shape of a mouse-tail[2]. Additionally, the whole book is episodic, each chapter featuring a new selection of bizarre Wonderland characters unrelated to the previous ones. The lack of continuity and heavily visual orientation of the book could be seen as more child-friendly – depending, of course, on the child and the understanding of child-friendliness in both Carroll's society and that of the reader.

In the specific instance of the mouse's tale, Alice is shown to not be a good reader – the mouse reaches the end of his tail tale only to tell her she is "not attending" (Carroll 35). Alice apologizes profusely, but grows frustrated that the mouse is so "easily offended" (Carroll 36). Her poor reading is also evidenced by her muddling recollections of her lessons, perhaps to say Alice is not terribly good at paying attention to her sister's book, her own lessons, or the Mouse's lesson. She is concerned with what she perceives to be the proper way to behave, but in a parody of the manners central to the education of young ladies at the time, consistently offends

[2] See: Appendix A, Fig. 1 and Fig. 3

the creatures of Wonderland – after offending the Mouse, when she meets the Caterpillar she again wishes she could speak to him without causing offense so easily (cf. Carroll 54). Cohen sees her as "mirror[ing] her society" (Cohen 137) by showing the type of behavior she sees in adults to, making *Alice's Adventures* something of a learning treatise on the rudeness of adult behavior and the difficulties faced by the child in Victorian England.

Alice as a book is situated as a text children can enjoy by virtue of both textual traits and illustrations making it more accessible to children. Alice as a character is situated as a child who is not good at reading, placing her as a reactive element within the story. This reading disregards the dream facet of the story; at Carroll's time, Freudian dream analysis was not yet heard of at all. Alice's sister discounts the dream, and thus the entirety of Wonderland, as essentially ambient noise at the end of the book, saying that even if she were to have this dream herself, upon awaking "the rattling teacups would change to the tinkling sheep-bells, and the Queen's shrill cries to the voice of the shepherd boy" (Carroll 131). In the interim, psychoanalysis has informed many critics' reading of the text. In Nina Auerbach's reading, she treats the various elements of Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world as facets of Alice's own personality. Especially the animals reveal Alice's inner conflict – "While Dinah (Alice's cat in the real world) is always in a predatory attitude, most of the Wonderland animals are lugubrious victims; together, they encompass the two sides of animal nature that are in Alice as well" (Auerbach 36). One of the main ways in which Alice estranges the characters she meets, especially in the earlier parts of *Wonderland,* is by mentioning Dinah and her skills at chasing rats. If the Wonderland animals that are frightened of Dinah's mere mention as well as the undoubtedly threatening, murderous characters such as the Queen of Hearts are both read as parts of Alice's subconscious, Alice is granted much more subtlety and depth as a character than other women and children

represented in Victorian fiction. (cf. Auerbach 47). Whether or not Carroll intended her to be read as such is an entirely different matter.

On the other hand, Carroll was fairly clear about the role of didacticism in his own writing – namely, that it was not relevant at all, at least for children (this does not mean that adults couldn't learn from Alice's struggles). In fact, Carroll protested against critical attempts to bring a sense of order into *Alice* fairly vehemently, saying that "the "why" of this book cannot, and need not, be put into words. Those for whom a child's mind is a sealed book […] would read such words in vain" (qtd. in Cohen 135). Carroll objects to the need for learning to define the process of reading, allowing the pleasure of the text to supersede any discussion of long-term benefit. Beyond that, in this statement, Carroll also presents a parallel between a book and a child's mind, embodying the objectification of children that historian Marah Gubar considers central to the Victorian cult of the child. In context with viewing *Alice* as a pleasure artifact rather than an educational one, the same could be said of the child's mind, in that to Carroll it exists to enjoy and be enjoyed.

If Alice is supposed to be an object containing the essence of childhood, first to Carroll and now to the reader, rather than becoming a complex figure with motives and power within the narration understandable to adults, she becomes allergic to analysis. Perhaps this is why Alice's poor skills as a reader and difficulties in social situations are never painted as a bad characteristics on her part, rather as one she cannot control – she herself cannot analyze situations accurately because she, as a child, is not meant to. It could be said this is because Alice is more object than person, parroting lessons and manners she has learned, a sort of model of proper behavior gone awry. This would reflect back to James Kincaid's standpoint on the subject of the construction of the child; to him "any image, body, or being we can hollow out, purify,

exalt, abuse, and locate sneakily in a field of desire will do for us as a 'child'" (Kincaid 5). In this interpretation, Alice becomes less a person than an empty container of ideas – purity, innocence, education, behavior and misbehavior. Nonetheless, it remains important that she is a child, and a famous one at that. This role placed on her by her adult author makes her distinct from all other literary characters interpreted as having an agenda. In a more positive light, it could also simply be said that her (mis)adventures portray what Carroll saw as intrinsic "divinity" (qtd. in Cohen 135) of childhood, removed from the society that is attempting to mold it into something it isn't. Alice, crystallized out of Carroll's ideals of literature as well as the concept of childhood as it was perceived in Victorian times and the developments in that construct up until today, is a mirror image for what we want to read in her.

1.2 The Author and his Imagined Audience

Given its influence on the content of *Alice,* where exactly did Lewis Carroll's beliefs about childhood and literature emerge from? In many ways, the text was also a product of Charles Dodgson's own life as an academic in the Victorian era. Dodgson, hereafter referred to by his chosen pseudonym Carroll[3], began writing poetry and nonsense early on in his life (cf. Cohen 13). He was the eldest of many siblings and was often charged with caring for younger family members, leading to his lifelong affinity for children and interest in entertaining them. In terms of his academic interests, Carroll became a lecturer of mathematics in Oxford as well as a tutor for a variety of his child-friends; many of the math games and logic puzzles in *Alice* stem from this interest. *Alice,* then, is an educational text in some sense of the word. Especially the first two chapters of the book, when Alice first falls down the rabbit-hole and then undergoes a number of

[3] While some biographers, notably Morton Cohen, chose to refer to him as "Charles" or "Mr. Dodgson", I have decided to refer to him as "Carroll" as I am looking at him in his capacity as an author rather than at his personal life.

size changes, feature her struggles with remembering her lessons. She begins multiplying incorrectly, only to stop herself by saying "oh dear! I shall never get to twenty at that rate" (Carroll 23). Martin Gardner explains in the annotations to Carroll's text that this could be a reference to the standard multiplication tables, which "stops with the twelves" (Gardner 23). It could also be a reference to a more complex mathematical phenomenon in which multiplying the numbers Alice lists using "a number system with base 42" (Gardner 23), which would not function with 20. Not only does this serve as an inside joke for mathematicians, it also showcases Alice's concept of learning or, more generally, the Victorians' attitude towards education – it functions by rote and recitation, and impossibilities are swept aside rather than examined. Carroll, having both received a Victorian education as well as provided many, given that he worked as a private tutor for children and an Oxford don, had extensive experience with the process of education. Though he did have and state a number of problems with didacticism in literature, he also practiced it in life and was aware of its ramifications and the influence it had on children, a facet very central to *Alice.* That is to say, Alice as a character is very much influenced by Victorian standards of education even if *Alice* as a book is not meant to be educational.

Much of both *Alice in Wonderland* as well as *Through the Looking-Glass* center on recitation. Beyond the iconic passages in which Alice misremembers poetry, in these first two chapters she also contemplates geography, though she cannot remember what longitude and latitude mean (cf. Carroll 13) or which city is the capital of which country (cf. Carroll 23). In a way, the academic failure is central to Alice's experience of Wonderland. The confrontation of a child with a world in which the lessons from the schoolroom cannot be recalled and would not apply anyway in some ways mirrors the experience of a child in the adult world. In Morton

Cohen's biography of Lewis Carroll, his analysis of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is in part that "the child is at the heart of both stories, as are the child's observations of […] the adult world's insensitive, abusive treatment of the child" (Cohen 137). To Cohen, this style of writing – complex in language at times, but ultimately meant for children – showcases that Carroll "keenly appreciated what it was like to be a child in a grown-up society" (Cohen 144). In essence, in terms of the connection between Alice and the typical Victorian child, Cohen paints the treatment of children as a dark and gloomy trend of didacticism and Carroll as an illuminating savior whose insight into the whimsy and fantastical nature of a child's mind provided an "antidote" (Cohen 144) to their usual treatment by adults.

Whether or not Carroll was indeed as harsh a critic of child-rearing standards of the time as Cohen believes, he was not only interested in that aspect of Victorian culture. As an academic, he was deeply immersed in the political life of the university as well as wider political issues. Some of the political issues of Carroll's formative years included the Opium War, parliamentary reform and the abolition of slavery in the colonies (cf. Cohen 5). While it would be a stretch to discover any of these as themes in *Alice,* there exists a certain trend towards viewing single characters within the book as references to real political or university figures, i.e. Bill the Lizard[4] as Benjamin Disraeli. The presence of these stand-ins for political figures as well as the rhymes and poems Alice unintentionally satirizes especially in *Wonderland* and, to a lesser degree, in *Through the Looking-Glass,* are remnants of Victorian interests.

Gardner notes that "with few exceptions the originals have now been forgotten, their titles kept alive only by the fact that Carroll chose to poke fun at them" (Gardner 23) in reference

[4] Bill the Lizard appears in the fourth chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as one of the Rabbit's gardeners; he gets sent up the roof to slide down the chimney, and Alice kicks him back up.

to the poems satirized in *Alice*. For instance, the song the Duchess sings in chapter six, beginning with "speak roughly to your little boy" (Carroll 64) is cited as a reference to a "happily unremembered" (Gardner 64) poem presumably penned by David Bates entitled "Speak Gently". The fact that not even the author of this poem can be entirely verified at this point, though the version Carroll wrote is still known shows the lasting presence of Carroll's work in popular culture. "Speak Roughly" might not even be as well-known as "How Doth the Little Crocodile" or "You Are Old, Father William", other poems parodied in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and its source may be even obscurer, but it is still occasionally included in film adaptations. Its content, insisting that children must be treated roughly at all times and punished severely, speaks to a general idea of parody of Victorian treatment of children, almost making the books more palatable to modern readers who would reject standards of behavior involving corporal punishment which were acceptable in Carroll's times. The Victorian in-jokes and parodies are painstakingly explained in the *Annotated Alice,* but have become obscure for most children or casual readers of the book without annotation; the book has far eclipsed its context, but its context is remembered through it as a quaintly repressive era. The parody becomes a way to understand and accept what might otherwise be unacceptable about the time period.

Carroll's life experience in Victorian England thus provides a host of material now fairly foreign to readers not well-versed in it. In many other works, this could make it dated, but for Carroll, there was more at stake than only his context, there was also his imagined audience – children. Carroll was a friend to and champion for children. He was a great admirer of Tennyson (cf. Cohen 260), a romantic poet who had much to say on the subject of the innocence of

childhood, but succeeded in alienating him upon their meeting[5]. Carroll also possessed a number of views on appropriate material for children, advising an actress who was a former child friend to "improve [the] material" (Cohen 298) of Shakespeare to make it more appropriate, i.e. bowdlerize it. Carroll's child-friends – children of acquaintances or even children he met by chance and formed friendships with – included children from all walks of life, the Liddell children being higher-class and better educated than some, but by no means out of the norm of his social circle. In terms of his relationship to Alice herself, in his later article, "Alice on the Stage" (1887), Carroll indeed described Alice with all the hyperbole of his contemporaries, the romantic poets. According to Carroll, Alice was "with the eager enjoyment of Life that comes only in the happy hours of childhood, when all is new and fair, and when Sin and Sorrow are but names – empty words, signifying nothing!" (qtd. in Auerbach 32). Whether he was here referring to Alice Liddell or the fictional Alice remains unclear, especially given that over twenty years had passed since he wrote the book, and even more time had passed since he had been close with the Liddells. What *is* clear in this quote is that, to some extent, Alice the character embodied an idealization of childhood that, while wildly affectionate towards the child, somewhat diminished the belief in the child's capacity for emotion.

1.3 Context and Text in a State of Mutual Affectation

The final puzzle piece in looking at the context of *Alice*'s creation lies in looking beyond the world of her creator and her content at the broader world surrounding childhood and family at the time. In some ways, this context influenced *Alice*, in others, it influenced the reception of a book like *Alice.* The intense shifts occurring politically and socially regarding childhood made

[5] According to Cohen, Tennyson's wife accused Carroll of ungentlemanlike behavior when he received an unpublished copy of Tennysons's poetry and asked permission to read and disseminate it amongst his friends. This caused Carroll to become affronted and the two writers became estranged (cf. Cohen 261).

space for a work as unheard of as *Alice*. Likewise, the fondness with which the Victorian era is now remembered at least in the English-speaking world allows for a mutually affective relationship between how *Alice* is perceived and how Victorian times are perceived to decide the role the book takes in modernity. Thus, the question of what childhood and children's literature meant at the time arises in order to analyze the role this influence had both on how the text was formed and on how it is now perceived.

The difficulty in analyzing the role of the child in Victorian England is twofold (at least). Firstly, the Victorian period encompassed nearly a century, during which attitudes towards childhood and child-rearing changed dramatically. Secondly, this period was marked by dramatic differences along the lines of class stratification. Alice as a character is well-mannered, in the process of being educated, and well-dressed, judging by Tenniel's illustrations. She does not behave or speak in a way a working class or even lower-middle-class child would: she has an extensive vocabulary and keeps to a strict set of rules. She also exhibits a slightly spoiled, petulant manner, which ultimately shows her to be accustomed to a standard of interaction dictated by a codified set of rules. This indicates that she is at the very least from a wealthy middle-class family. Moreover, in Nina Auerbach's words, "Alice herself, prim and earnest in pinafore and pumps, confronting a world out of control by looking for the rules and murmuring her lessons, stands as one image of the Victorian middle-class child" (Auerbach 31) to a modern reader.

Ginger Frost's *Victorian Childhoods* shows that the notion of family at the time was characterized by an idealization of the family featuring a "glorification of parental roles, for men and for women" (Frost 3) and a strong emphasis on raising children. This is unsurprising, given that "in 1841, 36.1 percent of the population was younger than fifteen" (Frost 3). According to

law, children came of age at 21. While the actual definition of the boundary between childhood and adulthood was not as simple as the law suggested, this does show that a significant portion of the population was composed of children by most definitions. Working class children began working long before they came of age (though child labor laws were a topic of much debate and were instituted towards the end of the Victorian era), while middle-class children would finish school or occupational training in their mid to late teens, if, of course, they were male. Additionally, "childhood lengthened during the course of the nineteenth century, too, so late Victorian childhoods were different from early Victorian ones" (Frost 4). Alice, being presumably middle or upper class and seven years old in a book published in 1865, would thus have been deeply involved in schooling, which, as has already been established, forms an important part of her characterization.

Frost focuses on the differences between Victorian childhoods based on class, gender, and the progression of the concepts "family" and "childhood" throughout the 19th century. In terms of the structure enabling family lives, she shows that in working class families, surroundings were characterized in autobiographies of children growing up at the time as "tight spaces with minimal privacy" (Frost 13) and minimal hygiene, leading to the fact that despite careful attention to infants, child mortality was very high. In poor districts, "25 percent of children were gone by five years old" (Frost 12). By contrast, middle and upper class people had not only the space for a modicum of privacy and hygiene; they also had the "income and leisure to pursue family lives as they pleased" (Frost 21). Additionally, they tended towards having fewer children than the lower classes, given that the costs of educating an upper class child were significantly higher. In all walks of life, strong bonds between siblings were encouraged, in the lower classes

frequently by virtue of older children becoming caretakers for younger children (cf. Frost 13) and in the other classes simply as the most socially acceptable playmates.

Much of Frost's emphasis rests on the role of the parents, citing 19th century politician H.A.L. Fisher's description of his mother's life as "a perpetual surrender of ease and comfort to the service of others" (qtd. in Frost 24) a fairly standard portrayal of mothers as domestic goddesses. Fathers, on the other hand, were providers, "they were revered as the heads of the households, and their needs came first" (Frost 24). Though she mentions the presence of nannies as the main force in educating and raising small children in the middle and upper classes, Frost emphasizes the bond between parents and children, focusing more on the reverence children were expected to hold towards to their parents than vice versa. These traits are more elusive in *Alice,* as Alice's parents do not appear at all, nor are they mentioned. Alice's sister is mentioned in the opening and closing of the first book, but Alice doesn't think or speak of her whilst in Wonderland, a sign that in these books, the structure of Victorian society is being subverted somehow.

Another major feature in child-rearing which is far more noticeable in *Alice* is the role of discipline, which held a significantly different role in Victorian England than it does today. Frost acknowledges that the punishments doled out by parents "border[…] on negligence to modern eyes" (Frost 27), though at the time parents believed they were teaching the valuable skills of piety, self-discipline and outward stoicism in the face of discomfort to their children. While corporal punishment was a part of this, especially middle class parents preferred punishment "through love and guilt rather than blows" (Frost 26), as well as using "religious training and repentance to impress on children the need for virtue" (Frost 26). Essentially, Frost argues, parents used a combination of personal filial indebtedness and religious piety to encourage

certain behaviors and discourage others, and these forms of discipline formed a large part of the relationship towards children held for much of the 19th century. Alice certainly appears to have taken these lessons to heart. The importance she gives proper behavior is one of the major themes of the book, and her distress at being unable to act appropriately is perhaps the greatest source of emotional difficulty for her within the text. While neither her parents nor any particular religious affiliation are mentioned, a strong sense of crime and punishment are traceable throughout the books, culminating in a trial to the death over stolen tarts in the final chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* Alice views her own bad behavior as a punishable offense, frequently chastising herself. When the trial begins, however, she is quick to understand the punishment as disproportional to the crime and interrupts the proceedings. One interpretation of this could be Alice's rejection of unfair discipline, and thus a rejection of Victorian standards of parenting.

In terms of education received in school, the 19th century saw the beginning of widespread, available schooling and literacy, though "reforms began slowly" (Frost 37) even after working-class men gained the right to vote and petitioned for literacy. Among the lower classes, education was fairly rudimentary, while middle- and upper-class students might be in school from the age of seven until the age of twenty (cf. Frost 45). Here, gender was the main difference. "Girls learned first at home, so the quality of their early education depended on the skills and attention of nurses, nannies, and mothers" (Frost 49), as well as the contents of the family library. Even after childhood, girls only began attending similar boarding schools as their brothers did towards the end of the Victorian period. Their education was focused more on learning "accomplishments", e.g. "piano playing and French" (Frost 50). The difference between the sexes decided not only a child's education, but also leisure time – "girls had toys and games that

fitted them for their future in domesticity, most obviously dolls" (Frost 80). Ultimately, girls' education was geared towards securing a marriage as opposed to taking up a profession. Alice, being school-age, is more explicitly preoccupied with lessons from the classroom, such as maths and geography, but it is likely that if the protagonist were a little boy, there would be half as much agony over insulting Wonderland creatures with improper etiquette.

In sum, Victorian childhood can be seen in several ways in *Alice*. The most obvious of these is that the text itself interacts with the standards of education for young children, with which Lewis Carroll, as a clergyman's son and an eldest sibling himself, was intimately familiar. Alice frequently recalls her lessons, but always incorrectly and without much enthusiasm; Wonderland inhabitants seem to know the poetry she attempts to recite, and correct her. The proper manners Alice believes herself to be enacting correctly are not up to the standards of admittedly bizarre and themselves incredibly impolite denizens of Wonderland; nor are their mocking jabs at Victorian etiquette received well by Alice. Additionally, while Alice has a sister, the two barely interact, and only share dialogue in the first and last pages of the book; in the sequel, the sister is replaced by Alice's cat Dinah and her kittens (in some sense treated as dolls in that Alice mothers them). Alice's parents are not even mentioned. The absence of parental figures and familial relationships undermine or even reject much of what Ginger Frost sets up as the central features of Victorian family life; perhaps they also contribute to why Frost's emphasis on the parental figures is surprising to modern readers. On the other hand, one of the main features in *Alice* is the sense of estrangement Alice's surroundings give her. She is separated from her life of domesticity, and estranged from the lessons of her Victorian socialization, and encounters only unfriendly, authoritative adults whose interactions with her she experiences as unpleasant and

demanding. This alone makes the book something of a reaction to the educational and domestic standards of the Victorian era.

Alice was by no means the only work of literature in Victorian times to interact with the concept of childhood, and this cannot be discounted as another point of influence for the text. Frost described Victorian attitudes towards the family as having a "lack of a child-centered approach" (Frost 166). This is an interesting turn of phrase given that romantic poets of the time, e.g. Wordsworth and Tennyson, the former writing in the early 19th century and the latter in the mid-to late years of it, were known for their writing on the subject of children. They frequently portrayed them as "innocent creatures who should be shielded from the adult world and allowed to enjoy their childhood" (Gubar). Similarly, Henry James' *Turn of the Screw,* published in 1898 at the end of the Victorian era showed the progression of this literary trope to the point where two children under the care of the narrating governess are either innocents to be protected (as the governess believes) or themselves already corrupted by adult influences. A combination of the two is not a possibility presented by the narrator, nor is an innate lack of innocence or goodness in the children believed to be possible. Partially, these literary attitudes could be linked to the political movements towards prolonging childhood through mandatory education and "attempts to regulate child labor" (Frost 75).

Being published in 1865, *Alice* entered a literary world characterized by innocent children in books for adults and largely moralizing and religious sentiments in books for children. Alice herself straddles the line, poking fun at both tropes, the innocent child who can do no wrong unless an adult told her to, and the child that really ought to have learned her lessons. At the same time *Alice* embraces aspects of both tropes – revealing also that *Alice's Adventures* might have been a book for a child but that did not necessarily make it a children's book. In the very

first chapter, "Down the Rabbit-Hole", Alice stumbles upon a bottle labeled "Drink me" and, while relaying Alice's internal debating whether or not it is in fact safe to drink, the following lines reveal a very pointed reference to the state of children's books at the time.

> "No, I'll look first," she said, "and see whether it's marked '*poison'* or not; for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and other unpleasant things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them: such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that, if you drink much from a bottle marked "poison," it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later. (Carroll 17)

In this section, Alice herself does not mock the tropes and conventions of Victorian literature. Far from it – she seems to take the "nice little stories" at face value. The narrator, however, does not, using the turn of phrase "nice little stories" in reference to tales in which children die violent deaths for not doing as they're told makes the matter-of-fact presentation of the moral lessons seem fairly sarcastic[6]. More than that, this passage also reveals that while the narrator is perhaps a touch more dubious about actions and their consequences, relaying Alice's thought process in a semi-ironic tone, Alice herself views being "eaten up by wild animals" as perfectly just retribution for not listening to good advice. In a way, Carroll's writing here both satirizes the heavy morality which was part and parcel of Victorian children's literature and education, and simultaneously reifies its solidity in the child's mind, demonstrating the influence education holds while critiquing the forms it took at the time. This tension between the image of Alice as an integral part of a literary canon of little girls who "suggest […] the self-containment of innocence and eternity" (Auerbach 31) while also revealing the innate brutality that was part of

[6] The reference to "children who had got burnt" because they "would not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them" may be an allusion to the *Struwwelpeter* (1845), a German collection of stories by Heinrich Hoffman which was one of the earliest widely marketed (and translated) picture books. It is comprised of a series of stories in which disobedient children die fairly gruesomely after having been warned about their misbehavior and persisting in it nonetheless.

their education and thus personalities becomes the central psychological conflict of the text according to Nina Auerbach's "Alice and Wonderland: A Curious Child".

Finally, the historical developments taking place between Carroll's early life and his writing of *Alice's Adventures* in the early 1860s meant that the duration and concept of childhood had perhaps already lengthened and shifted. Alice Liddell, the daughter of an Oxford don who himself was descended from nobility, was from a wealthier background than Carroll; she had fewer siblings and was the third-eldest, relieving her of many of the responsibilities of the older siblings. She certainly received some form of education, as Carroll's immediate function to the Liddell children was as a tutor[7], but as a girl, she neither attended boarding school nor had any specific goals in her education beyond ultimately attracting a husband. She, unlike Carroll as a child, had a significant amount of leisure time to spend on puzzles and games, as well as boat rides on the Thames. This adds up to reveal that Alice, both in Wonderland and in the Liddell family, had a very different childhood and indeed came from a different understanding of the word "child" than Lewis Carroll did. In some ways, the child he was describing and the definition of childhood she embodied might have been as foreign to Carroll as they are to a modern reader, and thus equally fascinating to both.

Alice enters the world treading the uneasy ground as a book about children, for children, but written by someone who had not been a child for a long time, had no children of his own, and could have had a very different understanding of what childhood even meant than the child he was writing for. *Alice* formed part of the basis for the budding genre of children's literature, most of which was encompassed by works treating the child subject with similar complexity. In an as-

[7] He had met Henry Liddell, Alice's father, in a professional context as they were both dons, and the two had formed a friendship. Carroll expressed an interest in tutoring the Liddell children, which Lorina, their mother, didn't encourage. Carroll nonetheless persevered in tutoring them when their parents left Oxford for a few weeks.

yet relatively undefined literary genre, it proved a lasting influence; prior to Carroll, works for children were evaluated more in terms of functional value than as works of art. Jackie Wullschläger, in her 1995 book *Inventing Wonderland*, examines the five Victorian and Edwardian writers of children's fantasy she views as having created the genre. She situates in the nineteenth century "a growing sense […] of needs, desires, behavior and rights which were distinctive to children" (Wullschläger 13), leading to enlarged empathy with children and enabling the creation of the genre. At the very least, an enlarged empathy among adults was created for what they viewed as childhood. James Kincaid's *Child Loving* examines the manifold comparisons in child-rearing manuals from the time of children to wax or other moldable substances (cf. Kincaid 90), maintaining that children were to be both a mirror of the adults raising them as well as a fundamental other; "If children were not bad, it would be impossible to love them" (Kincaid 95). This means that children come with a manual of expected behaviors, but that following that manual makes them inherently unchildlike; misbehavior is expected, especially of boys, because the adult-child relationship depends on the schema of misbehavior being followed by punishment and good behavior being followed by reward. Childhood, according to Kincaid, is expected to be a process of shaping an adult product and if the process is not visible or enacted, if the child does not require shaping, the adult's role vanishes, leaving the an unloveable and unraiseable child. In a way, it seems Carroll realizes this – Alice tries so hard to fulfill every standard of behavior she has been taught, and all it does is alienate her further from the adults she encounters. Carroll and his creations emerged, in the end, from a very contradictory period in terms of the role of the child, in which childhood was highly valued but ultimately highly performative, more interested in adults reactions to children than the children themselves, and of these, only well-behave, clean, healthy, rich children. Alice herself often

showcases this, with her consistent desire to please whomever she encounters in Wonderland and frequent frustration at her own inability to recite the correct poems or use the correct mannerisms to do so.

Alice's origins are a central part of how she is perceived today. Nostalgia for and interest in previous times forms a significant part of popular culture, leading in part to the plethora of adapted material. *Alice* takes a special role in this, as the *Alice* books emerged simultaneously with the beginnings of the current understanding of childhood as well as the legal ramifications which surround it. Alice, both as a character and as a real child, becomes the epitome of the Victorian child, in part due to her iconic nature and in part due to her struggles to actually be a child. As one of the benchmarks of children's literature, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* are one of the earliest parts of this particular canon, and as such contributed in no small way to the parameters and contents of future children's literature. As such, they frequently take on a nostalgic role in people's lives – they remind not only of historicity and Victoriana, but also evoke personal childhood memories in an adult readership, both scholarly and otherwise. In a way, the term "Victorian childhood" comes to stand for a set of assumptions which might not have a bearing on reality, and readers of *Alice* expect to find these within the text. This shrouds the books in an almost folkloric light, connecting a deeply personal literary experience with an understanding of history and the cultural concept of childhood. It is no wonder that the many layers of meaning *Alice* is entangled in become a site for adaptation – the personal value the books hold to readers in contrast to the concreteness of their origins seem to inspire a desire to make them timeless by forming them into a mold relevant to the adapter's time over and over again. The act of adaptation enables the reclaiming or refuting of a lost time and a lost childhood, neither of which are real in any place but the reader's

mind – not that this in any way makes them less valuable. In order to further examine what about *Alice* enables this complex relationship of adaptation, personal significance and historical relevance, in chapter two I will be focusing on the mythologizing of the books' origin story and how this influenced the ease and frequency with which it has been adapted.

2. "I Must Have Changed Several Times Since Then"[8]

2.1 "All in the Golden Afternoon"[9]

Alice's origin lies in the story of the first time Carroll told *Alice* to Alice Liddell, informing the folktale aura surrounding not only the text but also subsequent adaptations and retellings. In the poem prefacing the book, Carroll refers to the "golden afternoon" on the Thames during which he told the story to the three eldest Liddell sisters, Lorina, Alice and Edith (Carroll 7). This turn of phrase, intentionally or not, "dominates almost all contemporary accounts of *Alice*'s origins" (Brooker 11). The date of the memorable afternoon, July 4th 1862, is verified, both in Carroll's diary as well as in the account of Reverend Duckworth, who was the final member of the party of the rowing expedition during which the story was told (Gardner 7f.). According to Duckworth's account, Carroll said, "I'm inventing as we go along" (qtd. in Gardner 9), thus providing a basis for the story's putative spontaneity and ingenuity. Carroll himself describes *Alice* as something akin to fairy tales. Twenty-five years after the first publication of *Alice,* Carroll writes that he invented the rabbit-hole story that afternoon "in a desperate attempt to strike out some new line of fairy-lore" with "the cloudless blue above, the watery mirror below" (qtd. in Gardner 8). Pointedly, Carroll does not claim that the entire story was told that afternoon; as we have already seen, the tale underwent heavy editing between its first edition as *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* and its second as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Many of the most iconic sequences were later additions. In fact, it is only Alice Hargreaves' statement, quoted by her son Caryl seventy years later which posits that "nearly all of *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* was told that blazing summer afternoon" (Brooker 15). The

[8] Alice to the Caterpillar, explaining she might have known who she was this morning, but she does not anymore (Carroll 49)
[9] The first line of the prefatory poem to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll 7)

adult Alice's claim was made after Carroll had passed away. Hargreaves herself was at this point an octogenarian recalling events from her early adolescence.

Meteorological reports from the day and time (July 4th, 1862) as well as Carroll's personal diaries, in which he kept record of the weather, note that the day was most likely not at all golden, but rather grey and overcast (cf. Gardner 9). This being known by most scholars who work on the subject has in no way impeded the popularity of the myth; Martin Gardner, in his annotations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* begins his paragraph on the subject of the poor weather with "it is with sadness that I add" (Gardner 9), indicating a preference even by a scholar for the image of the golden afternoon. In a certain sense, it doesn't matter whether or not the story was conceived spontaneously during a sunny or a cloudy boat ride on the Thames because the image of that origin is now so deeply ingrained in the story. Why else would Morton Cohen, as the first biographer to have full access to Carroll's diaries and to realize several pages had been cut out, begin his chapter on the *Alice* books by saying "it happened on that "golden afternoon"" (Cohen 123) despite knowing (and stating later on) that the afternoon was not golden and the story did not emerge in its entirety as we know it for a further three years? The word "golden" has been taken in the meteorological sense especially after Alice Liddell calling it a "blazing hot afternoon", but also in the metaphorical sense of the pastoral idyll it paints. "Golden" becomes in some sense a stand-in for untroubled and joyful memory, a shiny, untarnished, pure time.

The idea of the book's inception as an orally improvised tale with no further labor than the spark of Carroll's genius and the presence of Alice Liddell as his muse gives *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* at least a hint of the natural, the unstudied and the uncrafted. The status of the first, hand-written draft of *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, illustrated and bound

by Carroll himself and given to Alice Liddell for Christmas, provides a sense of the personal and intimate about the volume. The "authentic" first edition of *Alice* serves also as a point of origin for readers and fans of Carroll's invention. In as much as the books form a distinct break with didacticism in children's literature as well as serving, according to Helen Pilinovski's essay "Body as Wonderland", "the fledgling genre of fantasy well" (Pilinovsky 178), the personal dedication to a specific child lends the book much of its distinct flavor in popular culture.

"Authenticity" is a fraught word, especially when surrounded by words such as "folktale" and "origin"[10], but when one of the main interests in a book is unmediated access to a child audience, believing that the child in question is not only a chimerical universal child but could in fact be one specific real child focuses a collective nostalgia for childhood and origins on this one story. Especially in the post-film industry world, in which a certain mistrust towards movies and books as consumer products is taken for granted, a perhaps naïve view of the Victorian Era as one of innocence (or at least repression) and the *Alice* books as personal and heartfelt rather than mass-marketed is comforting.

While this is a very important factor, it is not only the notion of the book as emerging from a spontaneous, emotionally laden place that gives it a connection to narrative as rooted in the spoken form, connecting the personal encounter the story emerged from to the more community-oriented idea of folk and fairy tales. It is also ingrained in the style of the books themselves. Although Cohen's biography of Carroll states that "above all, these books have no moral" (Cohen 142), he contradicts himself on a number of levels here. Largely, this is due to the

[10] In Jack Zipes' *Breaking the Magic Spell,* he traces the origins of folktale themes from "Homer and the Greek dramatists" (Zipes 7) onwards. Additionally, he shows that many compilers of folktale collections, e.g. Giambattista Basile, Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, were working with similar source material, making the national claims to the individuality and authenticity of their folktale canon very difficult to verify to say the least.

fact that he doesn't establish what he means by "moral". If he means that *Alice's Adventures* didn't conclude with a didactic lesson on behavior, this is certainly accurate. If he means that the story doesn't come to a particularly satisfying conclusion wrapping up all of the confusing threads of the book and stating a general theme, as is often the case with modern novels, a case could be made for that[11]. If, however, Cohen means to say that nothing on the subject of self-betterment can be learned from the *Alice* books, he certainly contradicts himself. Prior to this, Cohen conducted a reading of the books as a coming of age narrative in which Alice "succeeds, but not through the formula of grand romance. Instead of honeyed happiness, she gains confidence" (Cohen 139). Cohen finds "meaning" in a way not dissimilar to didactic literature. The reading of *Alice's Adventures* as a coming of age story is by no means uncommon; particularly the sequence of events in *Through the Looking-Glass* which lead to Alice being crowned as queen on the chessboard lends itself to this interpretation.

The folktale connotation provided by the oral origin of *Alice* and Carroll's own statement calling it "fairy-lore" provide an odd juxtaposition with the intense rejection of moral teaching in the Alice books. This latter interpretation was the one Carroll himself favored, saying in the same letter in which he advised a child to not read a book containing a moral that because of the moral, the book was clearly "*not* by Lewis Carroll" (Letters to Child-Friends 34). Carroll's rejection of portraying his book as a learning experience points towards his break with the tropes of children's literature and the more heavy-handed aspects of child-rearing a the time. It also breaks from the trope in fairy tales of providing a clear moral (for instance, the Brothers Grimm tales often ending in rhyming couplets stating said moral). The presence of an undercurrent of

[11] *Alice's Adventures* ends with Alice waking up and realizing it was all a dream, telling her sister about it and then running off. The final paragraph consists of the sister picturing Alice as "a grown woman" (Carroll 132) telling her own children about Wonderland.

self-actualization and journey towards adulthood that can be read as a possible subtext of the *Alice* books is nonetheless reminiscent of certain tropes of fairy tales, though more frequently ones with male protagonists. The contradictory nature of both Carroll's own view of his writing and Cohen's interpretation of it seems to flounder a little at the cross-section between the joy in writing nonsense and creating a book meant for pleasure and the apparently diametrically opposed notion of writing for the sake of edification. This could be counted as a byproduct of Victorian education being significantly more draconian and less entertaining than schooling nowadays; it could also simply be an author not entirely prepared for the depth of speculation aimed at his work intended only to amuse one single child. It could also be that at the time, it seemed impossible for a children's book to be both enjoyable and educational. Equally, what now may seem as a moral – the importance of independence as seen by Alice's rejection of the house of cards – may have then, in a time of far more explicit morals at the end of texts, been too subtle to count as such.

The language of *Alice* is worth considering in this regard as it is the site for Cohen's interpretation of the books as a learning artifact. Cohen again brings in the concept of edification here, saying that the narrator of the books "uses big, polysyllabic words, sophisticated concepts, notions that a child cannot possibly be expected to grasp" (Cohen 142) but noting that the episodic structure of adventures is easy to follow and thus the true intention of the book is to educate in vocabulary and word games. This is certainly easily believed of Carroll, a tutor for many of his child-friends, whom he often introduced himself to by way of puzzles he had made himself (cf. Cohen 174). In conjunction with Alice's struggles to achieve adequate social behavior, the text could even be read as a children's codebook for social behaviour. In his chapter "Aspects of Alice", Michael Hancher notes that perhaps Alice was never intended for

children to read alone for this precise reason; "having an adult mediate the story for a child can resolve some aspects of the "readability" problem" (Hancher 200). Hancher also notes that the narrator himself often serves this purpose, offering "helpful comments" (Hancher 201) and glossing some of the more difficult words. However, being unresponsive to individual questions, he is not as helpful as "an adult reader-aloud who impersonates the narrator" (Hancher 201), thus not only bringing the story alive but, in fact, recalling Carroll's "first telling of the story" (Hancher 201). This brings the sequence of viewing the text as an oral artifact full circle, when the act of reading it aloud is seen as in a way more authentic to its origin than regarding it as simply text on a page.

2.2 "Some New Line of Fairy-Lore"[12]

As we have seen, *Alice's* relation to fairy tales is explicitly linked to a myth of origin. The notion of an oral story, one that changed significantly between telling and retelling as *Alice's Adventures Underground*, and then changed again before becoming *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, gives *Alice* a malleability, an innately transitive nature, that few works of literature possess. In addition, it fulfills a number of tropes of fairy tales; Carroll, as well as outright calling the book "some new line of fairy-lore" (qtd. in Gardner 8) admitted that he did not entirely know if he could classify *Alice* as an original work, though he claims he was "no *conscious* imitator in writing it" (qtd. In Sigler xviii). He says this against the backdrop of an enormous influx of *Alice*-related material published after his books, which "alternately angered and flattered" (Sigler xvii) him, well aware of both the influx of material he inspired and aware of some accusations he himself was borrowing from previous "literary fairy tales" (Sigler xvii). The temptation exists today to blame this interesting connection on the 1951 Disney movie,

[12] Carroll about the creation of *Alice* in the article "*Alice* on the Stage" (qtd. in Gardner 8)

released during the original Disney heyday of animated musicals based on Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen,* easily confusing *Alice* as one of them. However, even beyond Carroll's own connection of the books to "fairy lore", one of the first reviews of the book, published in the Guardian in 1865, said of *Alice* that "a more original fairy tale […] it has not lately been our good fortune to read" (qtd. in Cohen 131). Given that Grimm's fairy tales had been released nearly half a century earlier, the connection could and indeed was made at this time already[13].

In ethnographic writing on the subject of folklore, the definitions of what exactly comprises a folk or fairy tale are difficult to pin down. The word folklore itself originates from the German *Volkskunde,* used first by the Brothers Grimm and then introduced in the English language in 1846 by "an English antiquary, William John Thoms" (Dorson 1) as a replacement for "popular antiquities" (Dorson 1). The transition away from "antiquities", which implies a fossilized, unchangeable nature to folklore, emerges from the time of the beginnings of nationalism and a resurgence of medieval fairy tales for the modern bourgeoisie. This was pioneered in Germany by the Brothers Grimm in 1812, and over the course of the following century, folklore became a mutable cultural good which even had its own artistic merit beyond enjoyment for the masses.

In Richard Dorson's introduction to *Folklore and Folklife,* he describes the major subsets of folklore after his notes on the origins and common usage of the term[14]. Of these, the closest

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[13] Which type of fairy tale is reflected in Alice is another question, however - where the fantastic in Grimm's fairy tales appears largely in the form of inheritance, i.e. a gift given by a parent or elder, or curses and blessings by witches and good fairies, respectively, in Celtic mythology frequently a child or young adult is kidnapped into a fairy realm which is as beautiful as it is dangerous. The hero is often threatened by being forced to stay there by his own actions. This type of fairy tale has arguably more in common with *Alice* than most of the stories in the Grimms' collection.

[14] "To the layman, and to the academic man too, folklore suggests falsity, wrongness, fantasy, and distortion. Or it may conjure up pictures of granny women spinning traditional tales in

relation to the folktale is the subdivision "folk narrative, which in turn has its own manifold distinctions" (Dorson 2). Dorson speaks largely of folk narrative as an authorless, oral tradition, which can take any literary form and also "frequently does enter into written literature" (Dorson 2). In terms of the use of folklore around the early to mid 19th century, the time just prior to Carroll's writing of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, "scholars in one country of Europe after another searched for the soul of the people revealed in the native dialects, the folktales and folksongs carried in those dialects, the literature developing the themes of the folklore" (Dorson 20). Following the French Revolution in the late 18th century and the development of the nation as a concept based on a communal identity, folklore became a way of historicizing these alleged markers of nationality and creating a literal book of national values. The fact that many of these national treasures appeared cross-culturally, i.e. variations of the same tale in multiple allegedly national collections, seemed to matter little to the projects as a whole.

In Linda Dégh's chapter *Folk Narrative,* she quotes Jakob Grimm's statement "das Märchen is poetischer, die Sage historischer" (*Deutsche Sagen,* 1816. Qtd. in Dégh 59). This roughly translates to, "the fairy tale is more poetic, the legend historical", and these definitions have proved somewhat lasting. Dégh then proceeds to describe a series of tropes that typologize the fairy tale, i.e. the framing through standard openings and endings such as "once upon a time" (cf Dégh 60). To Dégh, the plot of the fairy tale features "an ordinary human being's encounter with the suprahuman world and his becoming endowed with qualities that enable him to perform supernatural acts" (Dégh 63). The fairy tale then becomes a sort of escapist fantasy in which the difficulties of the hero's real life are subordinated to the new supernatural difficulties, and once

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mountain cabins or gaily costumed peasants performing seasonal dances. In the present work, folklore will mean both a field of learning and the whole subject matter of that field" (Dorson 1f.)

the latter are conquered the former cease to exist. To a certain extent, this can be applied to *Alice,* at least the hero's supernatural journey in which the rules of the real world do not apply.

The overarching plot of the fairy tale does not entirely apply to the book, given that Alice does not begin the story with anything to overcome and doesn't really have much by way of stakes or character development. At least, this can be said of the original *Alice* – the *Alices* of the 20th century and onwards fulfill the hero's journey criteria for a fairy tale far better. In film adaptations, the chapter-by-chapter episodic nature of the story is replaced by some sort of goal for Alice herself, at least, if not for the other characters or Wonderland as a whole. Thus it could be said that while perhaps *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* does not stand on its own as a fairy tale, popular conception of it as one due to a few common elements has led to adaptation pushing it further and further into the narrative niche of fairy tales.

Another of Dégh's criteria for the fairy tale which is far easier to spot in *Alice* is the use of "the right formulas" (Dégh 61) to achieve the hero's goals. *Alice* is something of a subversion of this trope; she consistently misuses the formulas or cannot discover the correct ones. At the end of *Wonderland,* she grows frustrated and accuses the Queen of Hearts' court of being "nothing but a pack of cards" (Carroll 129) rather than attempt to comply with their court and by extension formulas. This is as close to a moment of self-actualization as *Wonderland* comes, closing Alice's hero's journey in most adaptations. In Kincaid's analysis, this is Alice gaining "power to resist play" (Kincaid 290); a power she really had all along, namely to always decline invitation and play by the strict rules of her upbringing, i.e. to be a child who always behaves. This he had previously described as an "impossible [child] to love" (Kincaid 95). Perhaps this somewhat unsatisfactory coming-of-age moment is so odd and out-of-place simply because *Alice* has become a prim, female Peter Pan – unable to grow up for fear of ruining the magic. Perhaps,

on the other hand, the reader is always slightly against Alice and her proper ways, rooting instead for the chaotic and ultimately more interesting Wonderland. At any rate, the themes align with a fairy tale ending, though reception makes it seem like a subversion. Alice as a character stands out from fairy tale characters, however, as being ultimately rewarded for misusing the formulas as opposed to punished.

Jack Zipes, primarily a Grimm scholar, concurs with the term "fairy tale" as more of an art than its antecedent the folk tale[15]. On the topic of the flood of folk-tale collection in the early 1800s, Zipes says that the collecting "was usually done by trained professionals who often stylized the tales, changed them, or were highly selective" (Zipes 15). This indicates on Zipes' part a certain presentation of the written fairy tales as inferior to their oral origins; he goes on to claim that "the contents and structure of these saccharine tales upheld the Victorian values of the *status quo*" (Zipes 15). The use of the word "saccharine" especially indicates that despite Zipes' focus being on precisely the practices that led to the wide dissemination of fairy tales, he maintains a certain disdain for their inauthenticity. He alleviates this tension by focusing on the change in type of fairy tale: "Though the term *Volksmärchen* was retained, the nineteenth century saw the creation of the *Kunstmärchen* and the relegation of the *Volksmärchen* to the lower classes and the domain of the household and children" (Zipes 26)[16]. Zipes differentiates fairy tales along not only historical lines but also by class lines, indicating that the Victorian era saw a rise in fairy tales created by and intended for the growing middle class. This is certainly applicable to *Alice* as a fairy tale; as shown previously, both the character Alice as well as

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[15] While Zipes establishes something of a difference between the two terms at the beginning of *Breaking the Magic Spell,* he proceeds to use the terms somewhat interchangeably for the rest of the book, making his notes on the subject of the difference between the two terms confusing.
[16] "Volksmärchen" could be translated as "folk fairy tale", while "Kunstmärchen" would be "art fairy tale".

Carroll himself were upper-middle-class and middle-class, respectively, and many of the struggles of the book are middle-class preoccupations, while some of the fantastical elements and themes hearken back to folk tale motifs. Thus, *Alice,* containing thematical elements related to fairy tales as well as the social markers of a *Kunstmärchen*, is drawn into the genre of fairy tale by virtue of association though the time it was published, a few striking commonalities, and most importantly, its origin.

What these definitions hint at is the aura of communal property surrounding folktale as a concept; folktales are authorless, belonging to both everyone who has heard or told them, and simultaneously no one in particular. With an author who has become almost as strong a presence as the book itself, this feat would seem almost unimaginable for *Alice.* However, adaptation of *Alice,* despite Carroll's fairly clear statements on whether or not this was a book that ought to be analyzed, has over time created more and more layers of distance from the original work, to the point of disassociating Carroll from the role of authorship and instead relegated him to becoming almost a further fictional character, whose life story must be told in a way that allows for the reading of his books that is presented either academically or in film to be acceptable. According to Roland Barthes's essay "The Death of the Author", in modernity, "the prestige of the individual" (Barthes 143) demands the presence of an author figure. Barthes criticizes this by pointing out that the author then serves as a decoder ring of sorts for the entire text, which serves only "to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified" (Barthes 147), subsuming the author into the text. Carroll's biography certainly has often been used as a catch-all method for explaining *Alice* in some ways, and is more and more assimilated into the text.

Morton Cohen calls the books "a record of Charles [Dodgson]'s childhood" (Cohen 139); meanwhile Brooker cites an early edition of the Annotated Alice in which Martin Gardner

commented that it could be said "that Carroll found an outlet for his repressions in the unrestrained, whimsically violent visions of his *Alice* books" (qtd. in Brooker 95). From the math games spotted by those in the know about Carroll's career as a mathematician to the rumors of pedophilia to the post-1960s connection frequently made between *Alice* and LSD or, as a more Victorian alternative, opium, following Jefferson Airplane's "drug anthem" (Brooker 81) "White Rabbit", any variety of aspects from Carroll's biography have become leading methods of explaining the books. Whether or not any of these things were actually a part of Carroll's life has become less and less relevant[17]. Instead, Carroll's life is rewritten to create the book the writer wants *Alice* to be, and to furnish their reading of *Alice* with an understandable logic. In doing so, they speak directly to the question of genre *Alice* evokes: it is not a fairy tale in so much as it was written by one man and published for his profit as a novel – it belonged solely to him for a number of years before entering the public domain. Thus it did not enter into being as communal property, and yet it is understood as such in a way, and in order to make this contradiction easier to parse, Carroll too is public property.

Perhaps this slow weaning of the interpretation from objective reality confirms Barthes' projected future of literary criticism. To Barthes, "the reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (Barthes 148). To some extent, then, the sum of parts a reader has received in reference to *Alice* is an individual experience dictated only by their own reactions; to some extent, *Alice* is lifted free of the reality of Carroll's life and placed in the reader's fictional imagination of the same. In this estimation, it does not matter whether *Alice* was intended to be a fairy tale or an entirely new type of writing, or that large parts of the text do

[17] As far as all the sources I have consulted are concerned, there was absolutely no connection between Carroll and drug use.

not necessarily fit that definition – it only matters that *Alice* is understood as such in the readers' minds and thus adapted to reflect a more fairy-tale-like aesthetic.

Understanding *Alice* as a text which has come to function as fairy tale within popular culture, though not necessarily by intention, "some new type of fairy-lore" being interpretable as an intention for diversion from the genre, explains many facets of the current understanding of the text. Both the fixation on the "golden afternoon" of its origins and on *Alice* as a spontaneous oral product fit within the notion of how fairy tales are created and conveyed. Understanding *Alice* as a fairy tale also gives it more of an archetypal quality, more of the weight fairy tales hold as national *urtexts,* explaining at least in part how *Alice* could come to hold such a signifying power of modern understanding of the Victorian period. This could also be one of the contributing factors to the transition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* to being known as *Alice in Wonderland,* eliminating *Through the Looking-Glass* from the title the works are known by. The melding associates them centrally with the first book, and by extension, with the origin of the first book. *Alice* becomes real in Alice Liddell and at the same time elevated to a timelessly folkloric status; even more, the act of telling the Alice story as opposed to reading it becomes the right way to tell it, becomes almost traditional. Individuality in interpretation and style of presenting the material is part of its essence. With the rise of new forms of media, interpretation of Alice in film and alternative media became possible. Illustration of *Alice* formed such a central part of the text, and was the most accessible part to child readers, that for readers the images were equal to the text in terms of generating nostalgic value.

3. "What is the Use of a Book Without Pictures?"[18]

3.1 Knowing by Seeing: Illustration as an Epistemological Tool

"What is the use of a book without pictures?" (Carroll 11) Alice asks, while watching her sister read, before she falls asleep and before she enters Wonderland. The answer, to her, apparently is none, and it is lucky that the book Alice herself is in has pictures aplenty. When thinking about Alice as a character, perhaps the first image that comes to mind is a little girl, sometimes blond, sometimes brunette, sometimes in a blue dress, and sometimes not. For some, she appears as an illustration from the books and for others as a character in a film. The association between Alice and image is very strong, and very easily called to mind, but it also diverse and has existed in many ways. *Peter Pan,* which was not originally illustrated, has by contrast appeared fairly uniformly on stage and on the screen over the years. Alice's image, and the images of other characters appearing in the books, have appeared so frequently over the years, and in so many guises, that the only point of agreement appears to be that they must appear as images.

In the previous chapters, I have discussed how the context in which *Alice* was created affected the text as well as how current views of that time have affected interpretations and adaptations of *Alice*, and how the act of retelling it purports to be more authentic to its origins than rereading it. This lays the groundwork for written retellings, but in fact the majority of retellings that are currently well-remembered are films. This is by no means surprising – as already mentioned, *Alice* was one of the earliest children's books to have a strong interplay between image and text. Carroll himself was an avid photographer (he was moderately well-known for his photography at the time, as the technology was very new and not many had the

[18] Alice expressing dissatisfaction with her sister's book (Carroll 11)

means or the skills). He illustrated *Alice's Adventures Underground*, the edition he gave directly to Alice Liddell. When *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was published by Macmillan three years later, they hired John Tenniel as a professional illustrator. Carroll worked closely with Tenniel and didn't allow him to veer far from the designs in *Alice's Adventures Underground.* The images provided by both Carroll and Tenniel have allowed *Alice* to wander far from the confines of a book. After Tenniel's illustration, the most influential image of *Alice* appears in Disney's 1951 film *Alice in Wonderland*. The conjunction of Tenniel's images, the lasting controversies sparked by Carroll's photography, and Disney's film form striking impressions of *Alice* as image that have lasted until today and informed all later adaptations. In fact, these three sources form three major points of origin for *Alice*'s representation in image, and depending on which impression is the strongest with the adapter, guide the way *Alice* is understood.

The interplay between text and image in *Alice* is far more intricate than in most Victorian works. While the picture book as a form of narrative for children was not entirely unheard of in 1865, when *Alice* was published, it was at its beginnings and significantly more rare than it is today. In the original edition given to Alice Liddell, Carroll illustrated the book himself; after signing a contract with MacMillan, John Tenniel, an already famous artist for newspapers and political satire at the time, was recommended to Carroll (cf. Cohen 127). Tenniel and Carroll appear to have clashed on a number of matters (cf. Cohen 129), though not severely enough to halt the production of the book. Carroll's standards for the illustration were very specific, largely following his original illustrations in the book he gave Alice Liddell. Tenniel, as an established artist, did not take some of Carroll's suggestions, such as that he use a model for his illustrations of Alice (cf. Gardner 11). Nonetheless, both author and illustrator appear to have been satisfied

with the final product, and either way, the illustrations have had at least as much of an influence on how *Alice* is remembered as the text has.

According to Mou-Lan Wong's essay "Generations of Re-Generation", this interplay of text and visual forms a part of *Alice's* lasting appeal. In her discussion of the text, the role of image within it is that it "plays on what Alice "sees" and what she "reads"" (Wong 142). Tenniel's illustrations, then, become a method of immersion into the world of the text, corresponding closely with it. This is even more pronounced in *Through the Looking Glass,* where "the whole of chapter 11 comprises a title and one fragment of a sentence that accompanies the illustration it faces. Here the text is reduced to the status of caption, a subtext, and Tenniel's drawings are "elevated to primary status" (Wong 148). Wong is referring to the chapter in which Alice awakes from her dream about the Looking-Glass world and realizes she is not shaking the Red Queen between her hands but instead a black kitten. This information is split between two chapters, both shorter than a page. At the end of chapter nine, Alice threatens the red queen, "I'll shake you into a kitten" (Carroll 280), and she does so in chapter ten, entitled "shaking" (Carroll 281)[19]. This is followed immediately by chapter eleven, "waking" (Carroll 282), in which the only sentence is "it really *was* a kitten after all" (Carroll 282)[20]. Both chapters feature illustrations of Alice's hands holding first the red queen and then the kitten she turns out to be when Alice wakes up. Splitting the moment of waking between two chapters and using the same image with different subjects recreates both the disorientation of waking from a dream by separating the visual moment of realization from the textual one, as well as indicating that both text and images are valid sources of understanding; nowhere in the actual text is it clearly stated in these chapters that Alice is waking up from a dream, except in the chapter titles. Focusing on

[19] See Appendix A, fig. 5
[20] See Appendix A, fig. 6

the intense interplay between text and image in *Alice* and showing that image occasionally overshadows text as a way of knowing what is happening in the story shows that to some degree, *Alice* has always been a visual medium. This allows for an easier understanding of *Alice* as film material for later interpreters.

Alice waking up from her dream is only revealed in full at the beginning of chapter twelve, but it can be guessed by the illustration and headings, possibly the only two features a child reader who cannot yet read would really perceive without adult help. Additionally, the image provided shows only Alice's hands holding the kitten, framing the page, thereby positioning the reader's hands in the same place as Alice's. According to Wong, this not only "foregrounds the cooperation of the reader's body and the physical artifact of the book" (Wong 149), but is also a form of tribute to the artist's hands, in this case both Tenniel and Carroll. The reader is placed in the position of both Alice and Alice's creators, meaning that in some way, the creators become part of the fiction, and the fiction becomes part of the reader. Alice, Carroll and Tenniel now exist both as presences in and manipulators of narrative and image, and the reader accesses them both from the same point of view. Especially child readers who have only this access to the narrative could easily form strong bonds with the visual that have little or no relationship to the actual textual content.

Image can thus define characters in perception, and be one mode of explaining why interpretation of a character may be divergent from textual description but still recognizably the same character. The prime example for this is Alice herself. Within the two books *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass,* the figure of Alice is the most frequently repeated one, and, in adaptation, often carries over many of her characteristics – the dress with the wide skirt and apron, as well as the length and shape of her hair and headband.

Auerbach argues that "the demure propriety" (Auerbach 35) of Tenniel's illustrations of Alice have "led readers to see her role in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as more passive than it is" (Auerbach 35). By contrast, the photograph of Alice Liddell Carroll appended to *Alice's Adventures under Ground* was "strikingly sensuous and otherworldly" (Auerbach 34), and Carroll's original illustrations "reproduce her eeriness perfectly" (Auerbach 34). This effect is produced by the changeable colors of her hair, at times blonde and at times brunette, though never straight and with bangs as Alice Liddell's was. Auerbach, unlike most scholars, does not attribute this to Carroll's lack of artistic skill, but rather to a desire to portray Alice herself as equally changeable, eerie and mildly threatening as her surroundings in Wonderland. Tenniel, meanwhile, was criticized by Carroll as being the "only artist, who has drawn for me, who has resolutely refused to use a model" (qtd. in Gardner 11) which led to a number of pictures in *Alice* being "entirely out of proportion – head decidedly too large and feet decidedly too small" (qtd. in Gardner 11). Auerbach calls Tenniel's drawings of Alice "clean" and "no-nonsense" (Auerbach 35), eliminating in the illustrations the kinship between Alice and Wonderland. This in turn affects the way Alice is read in the text, becoming more no-nonsense herself and hiding her role, in Auerbach's argument at least, as the creator of Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world.

Tenniel's original illustrations were without color and the only colored ones he provided were for the *Nursery Alice,* released some years later. In these, her dress is yellow or orange, but this color scheme is seen fairly seldom in adaptation. One of the few better-known adaptations to keep this coloring nowadays is Nick Willing's 1999 *Alice in Wonderland.* Instead, most frequently, *Alice* is portrayed in a blue dress. The blue dress is commonly believed to have originated in Walt Disney's 1951 film *Alice in Wonderland*. In fact, the blue dress has been an iconic feature in illustrations of the book in color since 1893, in an American edition published

by Thomas Crowell, and has since then appeared in many new editions of the books that chose to use different illustrations or color Tenniel's. In the Disney version, while the general outline of the characters and images are similar, these are heavily simplified and transformed to fit Disney's more comedic, cartoonish style; as such, the level of detail on Alice's dress is exchanged for a simple blue dress with a white apron in roughly the same shape as Tenniel drew them, and the girl herself appears to be a cross between Tenniel's Alice and Kathryn Beaumont, the voice actress and model on which the illustrations of Alice were based. It is this blue dress (be it Disney's or those predating Disney's) which became the iconic image of Alice, repeated in most movie adaptations – especially ones affiliated with Disney, which quite a few of the currently more well-known ones are, e.g. Tim Burton's 2010 *Alice in Wonderland,* or the TV series *Once Upon a Time in Wonderland*. Even American McGee's 2000 computer game[21] shows Alice in a blue dress, albeit as a young adult and with some modifications to the costume. Alice's appearance over the years remains true to these original themes, though the shape of characters surrounding her and the understanding of her story differ wildly – in fact, the closest tie maintained to the *urtext* is Alice's figure clad in Alice's dress. The maintenance of image is registered as a way to maintain content as well.

Another key character whose illustration by Tenniel has become synonymous with his portrayal in adaptation is the Mad Hatter[22]. This is a particularly interesting case, as the Mad Hatter often receives expansion as a character in adaptations, appearing more frequently and with greater relevance to the plot than he does in the book (arguably because adaptations, unlike the

[21] See Appendix C2, a computer game in which Alice has gone insane and must fight a variety of Wonderland characters to regain sanity.

[22] Carroll is not responsible for the turn of phrase "mad as a hatter" – the phrase was a common one in Britain prior to the *Alice* books and Carroll was presumably using a literal image of the somewhat baffling colloquialism (cf. Ryan)

original books, actually have plots). The Mad Hatter in particular stands out, however – Tenniel illustrated him six times, five times in *Wonderland* and once in *Through the Looking-Glass,* where the illustration remains the same but the character is referred to as "Hatta" or "the King's Messenger" (Carroll 206). He is the only character to receive this semblance of continuity between books, excluding Alice and Dinah, her cat. This makes the illustration of the Hatter the primary reason to believe the Looking-Glass world and Wonderland are the same place, which is stated nowhere in the text, though the two books are often conflated in adaptation. Again, illustration is thereby promoted to being a valid epistemological tool for the world of the text.

The Hatter has a diminutive stature and caricature-like proportions. While he is roughly the same height as Alice, who is seven, his head is enormous. It, as well as his large, for-sale hat have been adapted faithfully with great regularity. Particularly these comedic large features lend themselves well to Disney's animation style. While some live-action versions, especially *Alice (2009)* and *Once Upon A Time In Wonderland* feature the Mad Hatter not only as a real person but as a love interest, the hat and slight shabbiness of his clothing are maintained, indicating a working-class character. Again, the text does not state he is working class, or that his clothes are in any way in disrepair, but he is consistently adapted as such, the image once again overriding the text.

Perhaps even more important than the maintenance of character image over textual content is the role played by the scenery in adaptation. Tenniel's illustration focused mostly on characters, leaving the scenery of Wonderland as the only real new ground to be covered. The Caterpillar's mushroom perch[23] is one of the few constants, being one of Tenniel' illustrations, otherwise the depiction of Wonderland varies somewhat depending on producer. In Walt

[23] Appendix A fig. 7-22

Disney's 1951 movie, it was clear the animation was the main draw, "the sequence directors had started trying to outdo one another" (Gabler 487) to the point where most of the executives involved believed the movie's story suffered for it. To some extent the scenery of *Alice in Wonderland (1951)* is far more the star of the movie than Alice herself, as the sections between different sequences have no need to follow any specific logic and are in fact intended to be whimsical. In most adaptations since Disney, this has remained an important feature, especially in the wake of computer-generated images (CGI) and the potential to create this level of visual invention with a real-life cast. The only stand-out from this trend was 1999's *Alice in Wonderland,* where Nick Willing chose instead to portray Wonderland in a more pastoral, Victorian England type of tame, garden landscape. If the maintenance of Tenniel's images (or at least Disney's interpretation of Tenniel's images) proves the influence of the original on adaptations, scenery is where adaptations show their own character.

This is not to say that film adaptations using Tenniel's illustrations as a main inspiration ignore Carroll's writing; many passages are maintained verbatim in film dialogue and many quotes from the books have become just as iconic as the images. Tenniel's illustrations have become a significant epistemological tool for analyzing the text, providing information on the Hatter's socioeconomic status and presence in both Wonderland and the Looking-Glass World, as well as a guiding image of Alice's appearance which has in many ways shaped her perceived character. Furthermore, Carroll was just as involved in the production of the images as he was of the text, making them at least indirectly subject to his authorship. In fact, visual media could very well have been what Carroll would have wanted to produce himself, had he had access to our current tools of storytelling – he was, after all, an avid and decently well-known photographer in his own time.

3.2 Reimagining the Author Through His Images

Of the controversies surrounding Carroll, the greatest concerns his affinity for photography, specifically photography of nude children. This interest emerged out of a combination of his longstanding enjoyment of photography and his close relationships with a number of children, whom he called his "child-friends". After *Alice's Adventure's in Wonderland* made Carroll a minor celebrity[24], his new role as a children's author meant an influx in child-friends. Around 1871, he began documenting interactions with his child-friends in his diaries, along with their birthdays, likes and dislikes in order to write them letters and think of games suiting their interests (cf. Cohen 175). As for photographing them, he was careful to secure the mother's approval before taking any pictures, as well as "diligently destroy[ing] failures" (Cohen 165). Around his 50th birthday, records of photographing sessions cease to appear in Carroll's diaries, and before his death, "he destroyed most of the negatives and prints of his nude studies" (Cohen 165). Only six known copies of nude prints Carroll created survive, four of girls and two rarely mentioned ones of boys, and there is no evidence that he ever took any of the Liddell sisters. This facet of his personality was not particularly known at the time of the publication of the *Alice* books. Cohen speculates that one of his reasons for halting his photographic efforts in the 1880s was that rumors about his photography were beginning to spread.

When Karoline Leach mentions the "great chasm of cultural incomprehension" (qtd. in Brooker 37) between present scholarship and the Victorian era, she is speaking of the difference between a modern-day response to Carroll's photographic pursuits and a Victorian one. It is nigh

[24] Carroll was decently well-known as an academic and made a few contributions to the field of mathematics, as well as being a hobby photographer, but it was *Alice* that gave him national recognition.

impossible to convincingly argue whether Carroll's interest in children was innocent or not; certainly it would not be seen as such by modern standards. What Victorian commentators would have to say about it remains unknown, however, as Carroll's photography was not widely disseminated and he kept it very private. Leach, who argues that Carroll's romantic interests were in adult women and his fascination with childhood was innocent within the context of the times, claims that the elapsed time prevents understanding of Carroll's interests in a manner appropriate for their intention at the time. However, even the earliest biographies of Carroll, written at the beginning of the 20th century, portray him as "emotionally restrained, "innocent" in his lack of sexual activity, but obsessed with female children" (Brooker 1). In 1945, Florence Becker Lennon wrote the first biography suggesting "that Carroll could have been in love with Alice Liddell" (Brooker 2) and in fact have proposed to her when she was eleven years old, and since then, this idea haunts Carroll's biography.

Brooker describes the original idea of Carroll being in love with Alice Liddell as "tacked-on, speculative, without recourse to new evidence" (Brooker 3), saying that "it allowed Carroll to retain the Victorian chastity that was part of his nostalgic charm, yet incorporated the psychoanalytic complexity that the twentieth century demanded" (Brooker 3). That is to say, especially these early interpretations maintained Carroll's physical innocence, denying that he could have acted on any desires he had towards children or others. However, they also provide a depth to the innocence they portray, making it complex and threatening. Since it has already been established that Carroll, by the process of fictionalization of *Alice*'s origin story, becomes something of a fictional character himself, this twofaced innocence is transferred onto the text of *Alice* as well, influencing speculation about Carroll's life and informing speculation about *Alice.*

This speculation was already well established when Morton Cohen, one of today's leading Carroll biographers, began work on the diaries. These had been in storage for many years, so Cohen was the first to discover "six razored pages" (Brooker 5), i.e. six pages that had been carefully cut out of the diaries. According to Cohen, "something occurred during those three days that caused a break in the relationship [with the Liddells], something that exiled Charles [Carroll] and cut him off from the children" (Cohen 100), and whatever it was that happened had to have been scandalous enough for Carroll himself or one of his relatives to cut it from the diaries. Cohen's theory is that Carroll suggested a future marriage between himself and Alice Liddell during these three days missing from the diaries, and that the Liddells turned him down and broke off contact, fearing the connection between the children and Carroll was now inappropriate both in terms of the age difference and in terms of Carroll's relative lack of wealth and influence. Alice Liddell would have been eleven years old at the time. Of course, Cohen assumes that "Charles [Carroll] and his contemporaries did not, in fact, understand human sexuality, and what they thought about it they concealed and ignored" (Cohen 220), an opinion which maintains the image of Victorian-era repression and innocence but is by no means accurate. In Kincaid's words, "it is time we stopped imagining that the subject of sex tied the tongues of all Victorians" (Kincaid 134).

Biographer Karoline Leach's counter-argument, as portrayed by Brooker in his introductory chapter on the developments in Carroll biographies, appears at first to be less far-fetched: that it is more likely the missing diary pages refer to a relationship with an adult woman, most likely Mrs. Liddell or the children's nanny, and were cut from the books by a relative wishing to hide this, by Victorian standards, scandalous tidbit after Carroll's death. As for the nude pictures, which to Cohen are further evidence of Carroll's sexual interests lying in young

children, Brooker mediating Leach says, "if Carroll was a pervert […] then so was the rest of his surrounding culture" (Brooker 37). This is perhaps a bold claim about the interests of Victorians – acknowledging even the vast difference in understanding of childhood and the lack of any stated concept of pedophilia being widely known and feared at the time, neither nude photographs of children nor as many close relationships with children as Carroll enjoyed were common or normal. Then again, it is not any more or less bold than to claim all Victorians were repressed prudes. Leach substantiates her argument with the claim that she found one of the missing diary pages, from which she draws the conclusion that Carroll was accused of courting the Liddell's governess, but she goes on to say it is far more likely he was having an affair with Mrs. Liddell.[25] In Brooker's analysis of the cumulative work on Carroll's life, he states that this is "inevitably just as speculative as Cohen's theory" (Brooker 24). In essence, "Leach's key and most contentious argument is that Carroll had perfectly conventional sexual desires for adult women" (Leach 37), but this is no easier or more difficult to prove than the opposite.

Brooker's statements on 20th century fascination with the potential of a dark secret embedded in *Alice*'s creation form his explanation of the pedophilia rumor's popularity, and he is by no means the only one to believe in this fascination. Valerie Walkerdine's "Popular Culture and the Eroticization of Little Girls" discusses the tendency of 20th century popular culture to take the child as gender-neutral when "actually he is always figured as a boy" (Walkerdine 256). Girls, on the other hand, are "everything that the child is not supposed to be" (Walkerdine 256). If Kincaid claims a well-behaved child is unloveable (cf. Kincaid 95), then Walkerdine tells us

[25] She bases this on the note that he is supposedly paying court to the governess and to Ina – Ina being the nickname both for Lorina, the eldest Liddell daughter, and Lorina, the Liddell mother. To further her argument she notes the frequency of Mrs. Liddell's accompanying their outings and the friendship Carroll enjoyed with her even after the break from the Liddell family (cf. Brooker 24).

that girls are either unloveable or unchildlike, and she veers toward the latter. According to her understanding of the way female children are viewed nowadays. They are “to be protected yet to be constantly alluring” (Walkerdine 257), a hefty burden to place on girls. Walkerdine describes the entire concept as being “about massive fantasies carried in the culture” (Walkerdine 258), which place girls in this odd position of being both objects of desire, but not cognizant of this fact in order to maintain their status as innocents.

Thus, Carroll’s interest in children has remained a point of hot contention. What is certain is that he had a number of child friends, and that he invested a great deal of time and effort into maintaining his relationships with them. This is evident from his diaries, as is his friendship with the Liddells. Some of his photography has also been preserved, including a few shots of the Liddell sisters. There is no substantial proof, however, that his relationship with them was anything beyond friendly, nor is there any proof that the nude photography indicates further misbehavior of any sort. His diaries also reveal intense religious fervor; he was, after all, a Reverend. This has been taken as further evidence of some “dark secret”, that his occasional bouts of religious writing were a form of atonement for his “rigidly held in check” (Cohen 43) desires. Ultimately by now the ability to answer the question of who among these women and children, if any, Carroll was actually interested in has become unanswerable barring a major discovery of new primary sources. Carroll’s documents, his diaries, letters and effects, have been combed through at such great length and breadth that most new analyses thereof rehash the same question which none of the data can answer satisfactorily. Then again, the debate has in many ways become a self-nourishing cycle; the question of whether or not Carroll was a pedophile, despite the inability to provide a conclusive answer, is far more interesting to a world fascinated with “images of the erotic child” (Kincaid 275), of which Alice has become a leading figure.

Carroll's interest in image in the form of photography has, for better or for worse, become instrumental in shaping his own image and that of his works. This is true not only in the figurative sense of the word "image", but also in the literal, in that those who believe the "Carroll myth" (i.e. the pedophilia rumor) use it as grounds for creating darker, more adult images of *Alice*, while those who refute it seek out images "authentic" to the original work. If the presence of the folktale connection inspires adaptation, then the "Carroll myth" also significantly shapes the responses of different interpretive communities.

3.3 The Film Industry, the 20th Century Child, and Alice

The beginnings of the Carroll myth did not appear in a historical void. Carolyn Sigler, in the introduction to her anthology of Carroll-related literary work, argues that "the *Alice* books' appropriation as high literary culture in the early 1930s marked a significant decline in their appropriation and interpretation by popular authors" (Sigler xvi). She situates this in the growing tendency towards Freudian analyses in the 1930s, often to do with repression, making the *Alice* books "too complex for children" (Sigler xvi), i.e. the inception of the Carroll myth. Incidentally, Alice Hargreaves née Liddell passed away in 1934, removing the last living link to the books' origins, and according to Brooker, the first descriptions of Carroll as "a paedophile, his books [as] dark allegories, and Alice [as] his obsession" (Brooker xv) occurred in 1945. Both Brooker and Sigler show that literary adaptations did indeed continue, however, Sigler notes that post-1930 adaptations are "directed at a sophisticated adult audience" (Sigler xvi) and largely "unrelated to the books themselves" (Sigler xvi). Whether or not this is entirely accurate is a different question. Sigler does point out the same drive within *Alice*'s audiences towards inscribing adult themes onto the text and using these in adaptation, Brooker notes in his discussion on how the pedophilia myth gained footing. Additionally, her cut-off date for the

point at which she claims adaptive work no longer reacts to the same social circumstances Carroll was writing in and becomes more associated with "high art" roughly coincides with the date at which film versions became more and more popular, with three versions being released in the 1930s alone. Thus, the rise of the film industry and with it, an ever-increasing number of *Alice* adaptations in film, occurred almost simultaneously with the rise of the Carroll myth and the belief in a deeper relationship between author and addressee. This is unlikely to have been coincidental, especially because quite a few adaptations include an opening scene of the "golden afternoon", featuring a portrayal of Carroll himself within the film.

Aligning the beginnings of cinema history with the literary transition of Alice from an icon of popular culture to a high art object is a tricky undertaking. Thomas Elsaesser argues that "cinema has no origins"(Elsaesser 18), because the technology for the production of cinema predated the actual institution of cinema as a popular pastime by nearly fifty years. In fact, Victorian society, hungering for "instantaneity, for simultaneity, and interactivity" (Elsaesser 21) even rejected early cinema prototypes because they were not as advanced as the imaginations thereof. Additionally, media convergence means that what has occurred is nothing as simple as a substitution of one medium with another; rather both literature and film persist and carve out individual, but overlapping spaces for themselves. Thus, the first few movie adaptations of *Alice,* released in 1903, 1910 and 1915[26], do overlap with Sigler's timeframe. However, these were all silent adaptations; perhaps the true shift from literature to film as the primary medium for popular consumption, such as it was, occurred in 1927, with the Warner Brother's release of *The Jazz Singer,* the first feature-length talkie.

[26] Appendix B Fig. 1

While Sigler critiques the move away from literary children's media in the 1930s, the original golden age of the Disney corporation[27] begins exactly where Sigler leaves off. The Disney corporation begins with *Alice*: the first product released by the studio was *The Alice Comedies* (1923), a series of comedic shorts featuring "a little girl named Alice, like Alice in Wonderland, who entered a cartoon world and interacted with cartoon characters"(Gabler 70). Over the course of the late twenties and early thirties, the corporation released a series of animated short features, including the iconic beginnings of Mickey Mouse. The first feature film, *Snow White,* was released in 1937, to incredible success, which was the beginning of Disney's global commercial status. In the following years, Disney released a number of other feature films, all musical, all animated. As with most companies, Disney experienced a dip in profits during World War II, and reverted largely to short features for a brief period of time. The early postwar years saw a return to feature-length animated films, including *Cinderella* (1950)*, Alice in Wonderland* (1951)*, Peter Pan* (1953). This situates *Alice in Wonderland* firmly within the popular trend of family-friendly musical movies, which lasted though the 1960s. While the poetry within *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is frequently translated into musical form in film, it is possible, even likely, that musical movies being popular at the time the influential Disney movie was released are responsible for this trend.

[27] Depending on who is asked, the Disney company can be said to have multiple golden eras – in the mid to late thirties, at the company's beginning when their initial run of short films culminating in the feature film *Snow White*. The second "golden era" refers to the postwar period in which *Alice* was released, along with several other classics such as *The Jungle Book, Dumbo, Cinderella* etc. The third "golden era" is also called the Disney renaissance, taking place in the 90s and featuring a resurgence of the animated musical based on a fairy tale. Which age was truly "golden" seems to depend on the viewer, with "golden" meaning something along the lines of "most nostalgic to me personally" – similar, maybe, to the meaning of "golden" in Carroll's "golden afternoon".

These years, also noted for the surge in popularity for traditional gender roles and the American Dream, witnessed what amounted to a return to the idolization of the family structure of the 1860s and the era when *Alice's Adventures* was written. As such, they were fertile ground for movies idolizing childhood, family and naïveté. In fact, the tendency in Neal Gabler's autobiography of Walt Disney is to create such a story out of Disney's own life, emphasizing Disney's desire to "escape" (Gabler 42) his immigrant background and poverty through following his artistic passions. In creating this narrative, Gabler makes the successes of his films part of the success of America as a nation. Disney's early films also existed in an era in which going to the cinema and broadcast television were still relatively new and exciting, and the relationship to them was largely characterized by what Henry Jenkins called "passive media spectatorship" (Jenkins 3) – i.e., unlike today, media producers' main connection to their audience was through critical reviews, viewing figures and the amount of money a movie made. Nowadays, this is significantly different, with the internet and fan forums providing a ready source for producers to scope the demand and create an adequate supply. By this reckoning, *Alice* entered into a cinematic world in which the content and the producer thereof were attempting to reflect the family ideals of the time without having much actual input from its audience to define the direction this took.

Nicholas Sammond's *Babes in Tomorrowland* analyzes the beginnings of Disney's work in a more functional manner. Where Gabler, at least to some extent, embraces the notion of Walt Disney, the nation's paternal mogul, Sammond describes Disney as embodying Foucault's "author function" (cf. Sammond 364) in which his authority is determined by "a complex discursive matrix" (Sammond 364) formed by production, response, success and form of his products. Furthermore, Sammond makes a point of showing that both the figure of Disney and

the figure of the child for whom he was making movies are discursively created. This does not mean he is criticizing Disney or Disney's modes of production; it means he is interested in Disney largely in the role his corporation played both as a founding factor for the understanding of childhood in the 20th century and as a media producer responding to what he saw as the nature of the demand for childhood-related subjects. The notion of a creator being created by his audience relates Disney to Carroll in a fundamental way: the telling of his story always mirrors the telling of himself.

In order to facilitate this analysis, Sammond tracks the notion of childhood from the early 20th century manuals of child-rearing, in which the child had a developmental schedule on which it must be kept and it was the responsibility of its parents (especially mothers) to ensure it did so. Throughout the 20th century, these manuals became more focused on individuality, culminating in teaching parents to adapt their parenting techniques to their own child rather than keeping their child on track of the development of a single universal Child. Many of these textbooks also mentioned a need for "regulation of media consumption" (Sammond 111), however offered little advice of how exactly media was to be regulated. While it is the case that since the dawn of cinema, adults feared inappropriate materials, this became especially a factor in the 30s and 40s, when film became more available, profitable and wide-spread than it had been previously. In 1930, the Motion Picture Production Code (also known as the Hays code) was adopted for the purpose of restricting risqué content in films in order to protect children. What Sammond argues about child-rearing mentality of 20th century America makes a significant contrast to that of 19th century Britain. Where Frost portrays a nation focused on the role of the family and parenting, and Wullschläger and Cohen point towards a literary and artistic culture almost obsessed with purity and innocence, 20th century America appears more interested in the child as an

investment. To Sammond, "they are simultaneously the creatures of their parents and of the state, but not yet individuals unto themselves" (Sammond 4), meaning that children are a reflection of the parents raising them but simultaneously form the nation's future. The child becomes "embodied potential" (Sammond 4), having both no and potentially all identities represented by the nation as a whole. This coalition of interests supersedes the child itself as a person; a notion which parenting trends attempted to rectify by intense focus on the individual. This places the child portrayed in *Alice* in a different position in 1951 than in 1856. Her individuality becomes key, because it is what distinguishes the real child from the nation's imagined child. To Carroll's time, her mimicry of social forms in an attempt (and failure) is what makes her a child; her process of learning is childlike. To Disney's time, in order to be childlike, she would have to test boundaries and break rules.

3.4 A Very Unhappy Unbirthday[28] – Alice's Second Origin

Though Disney clearly had a personal connection to the project, having chosen the *Alice Comedies* as the first product for the Disney company to market, and though *Alice in Wonderland* is remembered fondly by many people today, at the time, the movie was regarded as something of a failure. It performed poorly at the box office and did not garner much critical support; it was rereleased on television a number of times, but was only released for home viewing many years later. The concept for the movie had been around already five years prior to the release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves;* Roy Disney, Walt's brother and business partner, had inquired about the rights to *Alice* "as early as June 1932" (Gabler 215), and had learned that Carroll's book was in the public domain. The actual adaptation was released twenty

[28] During the Mad Tea Party, the Mad Hatter wishes Alice a happy unbirthday; this becomes a musical number in the Disney version entitled "A Very Happy Unbirthday"

years later. It was Disney's eleventh purely animated feature film[29], and eighteenth feature film in total (cf. Gabler 635). It followed on the heels of a series of a series of mildly disappointing films. Disney had high hopes for *Alice*, saying in an interview that *Alice* would be the company's first "real post-war production" (qtd, in Gabler 477). However, Disney would not be satisfied with this film either.

In 1947, he had "hired English writer Alduous Huxley to do a screenplay" (Gabler 459); in meetings, Disney proceeded to dominate the discussion so thoroughly that Huxley "couldn't get in a word" (Gabler 486) and subsequently quit. Bob Carr, an early head of the story department, lamented that "there is no story in the book" (qtd. in Gabler 486). Moreover, he had concerns about Alice as a lead character. "She plays a straight man to a cast of screw-ball comics" (qtd. in Gabler 486), an "untenable position" (qtd. in Gabler 486) for a main character. It wasn't the animation that was in question, it was the lack of cohesive storyline and the role Alice as a character took which made for a problematic project. Disney shared these concerns, but had been urged many times over the years to complete the project by what Ben Sharpsteen, one of Disney's directors and producers, called "especially sophisticated people" (qtd. in Gabler 486) who were influential in the Hollywood scene. This interest was largely artistic and not necessarily commercially feasible. This mirrors Sigler's statements that *Alice* became an object of high art in the 1930s; film adaptations were sought after at this period in time. Disney changed his mind several times regarding the lead actress and much of the content, admitting that "he would have bumped it for *Peter Pan* had that film been ready" (Gabler 487), but ultimately the studio was forced to release the film. Following the film's release, Disney said both that he had been "trapped into making 'Alice in Wonderland' against [his] better judgment" (qtd. in Gabler

[29] Gabler differentiates between animated films, live-action films and combinations of the two

487) and that "it's terribly tough to transfer whimsy to the screen" (qtd. in Gabler 487). This indicates both that he was dissatisfied with the product as an artist and a producer, but also that the creators of the film found their problem to be in the source material. The fantastical, whimsical nature of the text was ideal for animation, but the Victorian manners presented by Alice herself and the episodic format were not fit for the 1950s style of moviemaking. The child created by Carroll is no longer the child as the world of 1951 sees it, and thus cannot carry the entire movie by herself. The result is too well-behaved to be interesting to Disney's audience, and too fanciful to be acceptable to Carroll's audience.

Alice, which was not as popular as *Snow White* or *Cinderella* upon release, but unlike these, benefitted from the drug culture of the 1960s, enjoyed renewed popularity in the latter quarter of the century[30]. The wealth of re-releases and re-formatting especially in the 1990s and 2000s after a dip in the production of animated movies throughout the latter half of the 20th century led to the movie's current popularity among the younger generation as a staple Disney classic despite its rocky beginnings. It also has significant fan following among adults, possibly precisely because *Alice* has become a text for adults within the context of the rumors about Carroll. The nostalgic value the film has becomes retroactive in this sense, as knowledge about

[30]One of Disney's most important marketing strategies is to re-release films not in terms of demand, but in a limited amount after a given number of years to drive up scarcity. Thus, *Alice* first appeared on VHS in 1981. Subsequently, every four or five years a new edition would be released, including the "Masterpiece edition" in 2004, which featured a variety of previously unseen production material. In 2010, to accompany the Tim Burton film, also a product of the Disney corporation, an "Un-Anniversary" edition was released. In 2011, only a year later, a 60th anniversary Blu-ray edition was released. Products the corporation is not as proud of as *Alice* do not enjoy such frequent re-releases. "Der Fuehrer's Face", now somewhat controversial, has only been re-released twice since 1943, both in the context of longer documentary features on the Disney corporation's history. *Song of the South,* the extremely controversial half-animated, half-live-action vehicle for Uncle Remus stories that the company has since then regarded as possibly its greatest failure, remains locked in "the Disney Vault" and is not likely to be re-released, though Splash Mountain, the ride in Disneyland based on *Song of the South,* remains popular.

the book and its author increase with age, allowing the film to become more nuanced when watched again as an adult.

This is not to say that children cannot enjoy Disney's *Alice.* Where Michael Hancher had argued that the original text of *Alice* might be too difficult for a child to handle alone, necessitating an adult reader-aloud, Disney's version is explicitly intended for a family audience. Disney's adaptation eliminates many of the more conceptually tricky aspects from both books while picking out scenes and moments from both books to adapt into *Alice in Wonderland* regardless of their original placement. For instance, the chess game set-up from *Through the Looking Glass* is gone, isolating several of the more iconic figures from the Looking-Glass world and placing them in Wonderland instead. Additionally, much of Alice's loss of agency and confusion, especially towards the beginning of the story, is displaced and only hinted at towards the denouement as a reason for Alice to leave Wonderland and return home. In fact, in the opening musical number she expresses a strong desire for a world where everything is nonsense, foreshadowing Wonderland.

Alice's alarming shifts in size do occur as in the book, confusing her sense of identity, but her concurrent loss of place in terms of her studies and her inability to correctly recite verse is transmitted to other characters. Tweedledum and Tweedledee, taken from *Through the Looking Glass* and placed in Wonderland between the Caucus Race and Frederick Rabbit's House, perform a musical rendition of "The Walrus and the Carpenter" and, as Alice is leaving, begin the parodied version of "You Are Old, Father William", which in the book Alice recited incorrectly to the Caterpillar (cf. Carroll 52). When actually talking to the Caterpillar, he tells her to recite, and she begins with "How Doth the Little Busy Bee" – the original version, which in the book, Alice misremembers as "How Doth the Little Crocodile" (Carroll 23). In Disney's

version, she remembers the correct poem and the Caterpillar impatiently stops her and recites the "improved" "How Doth the Little Crocodile". Alice is thereby far more in control of her faculties than in the books. It is the world she is in which is confusing, not she herself. This rewrite also speaks to the durability of Carroll's nonsense. It is his poetry that becomes the "right" version, lasting and iconic, not the original it was based on. This almost eradicates Wonderland's ties to the real world by not even allowing its characters to remember poems from there.

In fact, Alice as a character is treated far more kindly, or perhaps unrealistically by Disney than by Carroll. Where in the books, she as often insulted the creatures of Wonderland as they did her, became confused as to her identity, and had little to no idea of where she was going or what she was doing, in the movies, her behavior is impeccable. With the exception of not heeding her lessons at the beginning of the movie, she rarely causes offense; only once when referencing her cat in front of the Dormouse, for which she immediately apologizes. In the book, when she becomes too large to fit into Frederick Rabbit's house, Bill the Lizard is sent down the chimney to confront her; she kicks him back out, arguably one of the more brutal moments in the books. Disney's Alice sneezes involuntarily, expelling him from the house, for which she feels guilty afterwards. Similarly softening the difficulties in her character, though she complains that she "give[s herself] very good advice but [she] very seldom follow[s] it" (Disney) there is little evidence of bad-temperedness Caterpillar accuses her of in the book (cf. Carroll 51). It is also notable that Disney called her far too "cold" (Gabler 486) a character to carry a movie and yet erased her more humanizing character traits, such as her misremembering poetry, her petulance and her irritability. She becomes flawed by the flawlessness with which she is portrayed, while Wonderland takes on her flaws and becomes less welcoming.

In order to create something of a plot where in the book there was none, Alice's goal throughout the first two thirds or so of the movie is to find the white rabbit she was following when she fell down the rabbit-hole. Where the book rabbit vanishes fairly early on only to reappear at the croquet game, and Alice loses interest in him, the film Alice continues to search for him even after having been in his house. It is only after the Mad Tea Party, when she is lost in the Tulgey Wood (a visual adaptation from the "Jabberwocky", another borrowed Looking-Glass element), that Alice's priorities begin to shift towards finding her way home. In a musical sequence strikingly reminiscent of a moment in Disney's *Snow White,* when its heroine is also lost in the woods, alone and frightened, Alice reveals that at this point her main goal is to return home. This follows standard tropes of modern screenwriting; the main character begins wanting one thing, and through a series of events leading to character development realizes that really, they wanted something else, or should have appreciated what they had all along. However, after her realization, Alice must detour through the croquet sequence and subsequent trial (skipping her run-in with the Griffin and the Mock-Turtle). Notably, it is Alice who is on trial and not the Knave of Hearts; Alice is directly in danger in a way she never is in the books, perhaps making the film less adult in terms of vocabulary and conception but more so in terms of emotional upheaval.

Running from the trial, Alice passes through most of the backgrounds she crossed getting there in the first place, emphasizing that the true artistry of the film lies not so much in the adaptations made to the story but in the images and animation created based on it. Frequently, the film cuts classic lines from the book, including most of Alice's inner monologue as she falls down the rabbit hole to focus instead on the images set to music. With the use of bright colorings for the more fantastic scenes and darker ones for the more threatening moments, certain parts of

exposition become irrelevant. Showcasing the artistic talent involved leads to lingering in certain sequences that, in the books, took up less relative space. The musical numbers also take up a large portion of the film's time. These two feature coalesce most notably perhaps in the musical number sung by the flowers (another Looking-Glass feature) entitled "All in the Golden Afternoon", in which far more flowers than are mentioned in the book skip over most of their dialogue and instead sing as a chorus-cum-orchestra about a "golden afternoon". The title is a reference to the first line of the poem prefacing Carroll's *Alice's Adventures,* in which he talks about the afternoon on which he first told the Liddell sisters the first version of *Alice.*

Disney's *Alice* was not the first film adaptation, nor was it the last by far. It did, however, have a lasting influence on all late films, I would argue. In a way, Disney's *Alice* became a new point of origin for modernity; in a culture generally more inclined towards movie-going than Victorian literature, Disney's *Alice* being situated as a staple childhood classic provides a basis for Carroll's *Alice* to stay relevant. The original book becomes not the point of origin in discovering *Alice* but rather phase two, sought out by true devotees. Partially, this is due to corporate ownership – the Disney corporation is one of six corporations which own, control or produce 90% of film and television media in the world today (cf. "Media Consolidation: The Illusion"). Thus, Disney can both increase air time for its own movie on television as well as make sure that many of the following adaptations are slated as sequels to Disney's first adaptation, or use the Disney movie as their basis for understanding *Alice* in general. Still other movies base their artistic content on Tenniel's illustrations. Adaptations vary in format and length, though they are almost universally critically despised. Failure of *Alice* adaptations to perform well both critically and in almost all cases in the box office as well has in no way dampened the enthusiasm for making them; it appears *Alice* is a text that cries out to be adapted,

perhaps because no adaptation could satisfy the longing to capture a non-existent child. The next point of interest in examining how *Alice* appears in popular culture today is to view the wealth of film material post-Disney which is currently well-known and well-liked, to analyze the trends appearing within these adaptations and to see who Alice has become today. Over the course of the next chapter, I will do so using primarily adaptations released in the last two decades.

4. "Some of the Words Have Got Altered"[31]

4.1 Alice Adaptation: Commonalities and Inconsistencies

> Two writers may interpret the very same data in quite different fashion, and that is precisely the point. Any analysis of an item of folklore should begin where previous analyses have ended. (Dundes xvi)

Having established *Alice*'s multiple points of origins, the next question is, what becomes of her? Tracking the image of *Alice* through the years is a difficult proposition. If folklorist Alan Dundes says new analysis should begin where the old left off, it should perhaps be taken more as an acknowledgement of the fact that no one adaptation can be severed fully from the rich history surrounding *Alice,* no matter which point of origin might be the most present in the adaptation. This mingling of origins could include the historical, the literary, the folkloric, or the visual, but the references to these origins do not appear separate from each other. Rather, a mixture of them might be noticeable, or one might be the adapter's main focus, but invariably, a multitude of influences is present. It is this relation of adaptations to an idea of origins which I intend to track over the course of this chapter.

One of the guiding concepts through which I analyze adaptations in this chapter is that due to the intense interrelation between understanding of origins and understanding of the text itself, adaptations are in and of themselves interpretations of *Alice.* Concurrently, I will be treating film adaptations as a form of narrative fiction. I will accomplish this study of adaptions by examining similarities and differences between adaptations of *Alice.* Most of the adaptations I examine are film adaptations and other media adaptations released in America in roughly the last fifteen years, which I will analyze in terms of content as well as discussing how these relate back to the themes and trends of previous chapters. I chose this particular set of *Alice* adaptations based on their popularity among a group of fans I surveyed. This is because I am interested in establishing

[31] Alice to the Caterpillar, excusing her rendition of "You Are Old, Father William" (Carroll 54)

not only the views taken by the artists and producers who create *Alice* adaptations but also in those taken by the interpretative community of fans in their consumption of said material. The latter will be the focus of chapter five, while the former will be the discussed over the course of this chapter. Here, I hope to show how *Alice*'s current portrayal in popular media, for the most part film, is influenced both by understanding of the story's origins as well as by current moral beliefs regarding that origin and current artistic and narrative standards.[32]

Alice adaptations, like Alice herself, come in many shapes and sizes. There are many versions of illustration, usually based on the Tenniel drawings. That is to say, frequently the illustrations follow the Tenniel ones in their subjects and their placement within the text. The creation of new interpretations of each scene is done both by established artists for profit but also among fans. There are many literary adaptations, including transformative work (fanfiction, image editing in video format and as still images) by and for fans, as well adaptations as video games or comics. The vast majority of *Alice* adaptation, however, is film material. There are a number of basic trends within these films. In her essay "Body as Wonderland", critic Helen Pilinovsky sorts adaptations into "those that continue Alice's original adventures in their Victorian setting, those that update her still childish situation into more contemporary circumstances, and those that diverge from their surroundings to focus on *her* maturation" (Pilinovsky 176). Given that the actual sequel, "continuing Alice's original adventures", has become something of a rarity, and the occasional difficulty in distinguishing between the latter two categories, I have chosen to simplify the basic trends by which I analyze *Alice* films. The two categories I will examine are "straight" adaptations seeking only to create a film version of

[32] While there are also several surrealist *Alice* adaptations and adaptations with agendas in the context of trends in the art world, I have chosen not to discuss these here and focus instead on the popular films as my interest lies in reception as well as production.

the books, and "adult" adaptations, in which Alice as a character is made into an adult and the content of the film is darker and intended for an older audience. Pilinovsky's categories remain relevant, however, in thinking about adaptations, as the changes to Alice's character, either in terms of how she acts or in terms of how old she is, are central in analyzing adaptations. Most of these films share the same title, *Alice in Wonderland,* which is not in fact the original title of Carroll's books, but rather acknowledges their iconic status. This probably stems from the Disney movie, but the question is why the alteration happens in the first place – to indicate it is not the same content as the book? To remove the active part Alice takes in the title *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*? To remove the plurality of plots implied in "Adventures"? At any rate, the name becomes tied to the plethora of adapted material sharing it, providing this more generic title with a sense of malleability.

Most of the post-1951 versions of *Alice* are live-action, though there are a few more animated versions. Many newer adaptations also feature computer generated imaging (CGI) to portray Wonderland itself, which can become the central focus of the adaptation if, as mentioned in chapter three, a new portrayal of setting and scenery is where the adaptation shines. In Will Brooker's *Alice's Adventures: Lewis Carroll in Popular Media,* he analyzes five *Alice* film adaptations which stay fairly close to the source material and establishes certain commonalities.

> Why, then, do all these adaptations, despite their variation, feature the Tea Party, the White Rabbit, the Caterpillar, the croquet game and […] the "Drink Me" bottle and the "Eat Me" cake? The only reasonable explanation is that these are regarded as iconic elements without which the story would seem lacking, that each director sees them as necessary to and expected of *Alice in Wonderland,* whatever other changes are made to the plot and detail. (Brooker 205)

According to Brooker, there are a number of standard features in each adaptation. Without them, a film is not recognizable as an *Alice* adaptation. In lieu of adapting the plot or the major themes of the text, neither of which are apparent in *Alice,* Brooker suggests that directors adapt those

moments from the text which are the most iconic. There are a few other commonalities he cites, such as Alice entering Wonderland through "some form of tunnel or hole" (Brooker 203) and the fact that "we have to see Alice in the real world for Wonderland to figure as a dream" (Brooker 204). Brooker examines these sequences closely, establishing that none of them are truly necessary. For instance, the size changes Alice goes through are adapted fairly faithfully, though arguably they could be diminished in number[33], or eradicated entirely without losing much as they are often not mentioned again after they occur. However, Alice without her size changes would no longer be Alice. This is not to say that these particular traits are set in stone - which stations precisely occur is up to the interpreter, but a few of them appear fairly consistently as inalienable parts of the story. Why exactly it is these sequences which are iconic and not Humpty Dumpty or Alice meeting the Duchess remains an enigma; Brooker suggests that "the powerful and pervasive influence of Disney's retellings" (Brooker 205) is to blame. In a way, what is acknowledged by giving Disney credit for the trends in adaptation is that each adaptation influences the next, and the process of making certain scenes iconic more than others is a self-sustaining cycle. The act of viewing a scene as iconic enough to be included in an adaptation is what makes it iconic enough to be included in future adaptations.

The standard *Alice* adaptation in film exhibits a heavy focus on scenery; it features usually a cast of famous actors in minor roles with an ingénue in Alice's role. Frequently, the film is put together by mixing the sequences of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* to form one cohesive whole, usually referred to as "Wonderland". Film or stage

[33] In the book, Alice first changes size after falling into Wonderland through the rabbit hole, she drinks the "Drink Me" bottle and shrinks, and then eats the "Eat Me" cake and grows. Then, she cries, and as she cries, she shrinks again. In Frederick Rabbit's house, she drinks another bottle and becomes too large to fit in the house, and then eats another cake and slips out through the doorway, and finally, when she finds the Caterpillar, he tells her which parts of the mushroom to eat to effect which change, giving her control of her size.

adaptations also often use the poetry-heavy source text as an origin for musical adaptation. Generally, these songs are neither well-remembered nor well-reviewed. Notable examples of this type of movie include the 1973 *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, starring Fiona Fullerton and directed by William Sterling, *Alice in Wonderland* (1983), a filmed stage performance directed by Kirk Browning, and *Alice in Wonderland* (1999), directed by Nick Willing[34]. These are only three among a list containing over forty adaptations; they are simply some of the currently better-remembered "straight" adaptations. Here, the above tropes and sequences Brooker mention are easily spotted; by contrast, adaptations seeking to expand the material or provide an "adult" *Alice* use a number of different techniques.

More adult or contemporary films, TV shows and other forms of media based on *Alice* include Tim Burton's 2010 *Alice in Wonderland*[35] and Nick Willing's 2009 *Alice*[36]. Additionally, currently well-remembered adaptations of *Alice* not in film format which aspire towards a more adult aesthetic include Frank Beddor's young adult book trilogy *The Looking-Glass Wars*[37], American McGee's 2000 computer game *Alice*[38]. These adaptations do not necessarily exhibit Brooker's list of scenes that must occur in a recognizable fashion. Largely, this is because these adaptations assume familiarity with the source material. They assume that the viewer has seen these scenes before and subvert them rather than showing 'tired' or overly familiar material again. This is especially noticeable in Tim Burton's adaptation – here, an adult Alice who assumes her childhood experience in Wonderland was a fanciful dream wanders through the scenery of Wonderland and finds herself experiencing déjà vu, culminating in her confrontation

[34] see Appendix B, Fig. 1
[35] see Appendix B 3
[36] see Appendix B 2
[37] see Appendix C 1
[38] see Appendix C 2

by Wonderland's inhabitants. The movie functions as something of a sequel to the original Disney movie, being a product of the Disney corporation. It is one of only two well-remembered adaptations which is conceived as a sequel (the other being American McGee's *Alice*).

Changing in the character of Alice is what provides many of these adaptations with a plot and a forward drive. In all cases listed above, she is an adult, or at least an adolescent, and her presence in Wonderland can no longer be simply a dream. For Burton, she is the savior, returned as an adult to Wonderland to release its inhabitants from the rule of the Red Queen (a synthesis of both Red Queen and Queen of Hearts)[39]. For Frank Beddor, Alice is really Alice Liddell, but Alice Liddell is the orphaned princess of Wonderland whose parents sent her into the parallel dimension of Oxford, England, where her story was completely bowdlerized by Charles Dodgson[40]. The American McGee computer game adaptation has a troubled teenager battling her own psyche in a series of fights against Wonderland characters; the Willing version features an Alice entirely unrelated to Carroll's Alice who, again, must save Wonderland from the evil Queen's dominion[41]. In all cases, Alice's stature as a pawn (literally, in *Through the Looking-Glass*) must be called into question in order for her to be a leading, adult character. Whimsy and coincidence are no longer sufficient explanations for Wonderland and her role within it; Alice requires both an internal character arc and an external plot to become feasible on the screen.

As a case in point, Nick Willing's *Alice* forms part of a larger trajectory. Willing, having directed the live-action children's movie *Alice in Wonderland* in 1999, a fairly faithful rendition of the books, returns to *Alice* in 2009, with a made-for-TV two-part miniseries entitled simply *Alice*. Willing is neither an influential Hollywood director, nor were his films released in

[39] see Appendix B3
[40] see Appendix C1
[41] see Appendix C2

cinemas, they went straight to TV. However, given their recent release and the high video quality, his adaptations are well-remembered and well-preserved, available on Youtube and Netflix. Additionally, most *Alice* movies prior to Willing's received uniformly terrible reviews, making each new version which was not widely reported upon release potentially superior to its predecessors. This is not to say that Willing's versions received glowing praise – no *Alice* adaptation has had that honor – but they were relatively unknown at the time of release and have since garnered fan followings, as have most of the still well-known films. In analyzing popular films, this shows a gap between critical reception and actual popularity, given that if only critical and commercial success were measured, no *Alice* adaptation would stand out. In terms of popularity, however, Nick Willing's adaptations are still doing fairly well.

Willing's 2009 *Alice* followed his 2007 miniseries "Tin Man", a similar darker-and-grittier spin on L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz.* In a way, this makes *Alice* a part of a larger dialogue, one that includes *The Wizard of Oz* and J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan,* which merited its own spin-off in 2011 (*Neverland*), also directed by Willing. This dialogue is one of genre, all three belonging to the category of children's fantasy now being adapted for young adult to adult audiences. *The Wizard of Oz* and *Peter Pan* originated in the early 20th century, roughly forty years after *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* were published. However, all three were made into classic children's musical movies in the mid 20th century, first the live-action MGM film *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939 and then Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan,* in 1951 and 1953 respectively. It is partially this temporal association with each other as well as with Disney's *Snow White* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), all based on Grimm's fairy tales, which has maintained a connection of the three with the loose category of 20th century American notions of the updated "fairy tale". Carolyn Sigler tracks the *Alice*-type narrative through magazines and

books that, while popular at the time, are for the most part lost to the casual modern consumer. While she, she makes no explicit connection between *Alice* and J.M.Barrie's *Peter Pan* or L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz,* there are a few striking resemblances: all three feature young girls whisked away into fantastic magical lands; all three are episodic in one form or another, *Alice* and *Peter Pan* more so than *The Wizard of Oz,* which was released as a series. Baum even cited *Alice* as an inspiration for his work. A brief look at these parallel traditions helps us to understand how the coinciding timing of seminal musical adaptations for children have led all three works to a similar status in modern works adapting them. *Alice* being the first of them, this also demonstrates how *Alice*'s quasi-fairy tale role and contested past have influenced similar works.

Of the three authors, only Baum escaped accusations of pedophilia due to connections to young children; this is perhaps because both Barrie and Carroll are supposed to have based their most famous literary characters on real child acquaintances. Nonetheless, all three texts and characters are in a way iconic and "belong together" typologically. This association, creating the odd not-quite-fairy-tale aesthetic of the works and their adaptations, which are numerous in all cases, informs some of the choices in Willing's directorial work. The scenery especially in *Alice (2009)* is far removed from the pastoral imagery of Carroll's original and instead features untamed forests with no pathways, broad open rivers and lakes as well as dilapidated cityscapes; the sprawl of this world is perhaps more *Oz* than *Wonderland*, or more American than British. Additionally, the link between the three stories and the fairy tale genre is not limited to Willing's involvement: the Disney-owned ABC series *Once Upon A Time* features characters from all

three stories[42]. *Once Upon A Time* is another adaptation involving *Alice,* even having a spin-off entitled *Once Upon A Time in Wonderland,* focusing on *Alice* characters introduced in the original show. This series is an especially interesting case, as the source material referenced is largely from the Disney movies because both the show and the network producing it are owned by Disney, while more threatening aspects of older versions of fairy tales are drawn in to create higher stakes for a presumed adult viewing audience.

The association of these three texts with each other is enough to create a sub-genre, but their association with fairy tales is what ultimately causes the wealth of adapted material. *Alice*'s relation to fairy tales and visual media predates film versions, as discussed in chapters two and three, which explains why there are more versions of *Alice* than of either of the other two; *Peter Pan* was not illustrated and the original illustrations in Baum's book did not become quite as famous as Tenniel's *Alice* illustrations. Their origin stories, while famous, also did not become quite as pervasively popular as *Alice*'s. Likewise, Alice is never outshined by her surroundings in Carroll's books – she remains quite firmly the center of attention no matter how bizarre Wonderland becomes. The same cannot be said of *Peter Pan* or the *Wizard of Oz*[43], but then, both *Peter Pan* and the *Wizard of Oz* have stakes and a plot. On the whole, however, the connection among these texts provides *Alice* with a status to boast, as part of a subgenre of

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[42] While Disney owns the rights to their own film versions of *Alice* and *Peter Pan*, imagery from which heavily influences their representation in *Once Upon A Time*, they do not own the rights to the Warner Bros. film *The Wizard of Oz* – L. Frank Baum's books, however, are in the public domain. *Once Upon A Time* also takes place partially in the modern world and partially in the "enchanted forest" – the setting of all fairy tales. The separation of characters from setting allows for greater variability in their interpretation.

[43] Wendy and Peter Pan feature equally as protagonists in *Peter Pan* in addition to much time and focus of the book being spent on Captain Hook, the Lost Boys and other characters. While Dorothy may begin as the protagonist of *The Wizard of Oz,* the books became a successful franchise and especially in later parts other characters begin to eclipse her, including characters native to Oz.

fantasy or of children's literature, a place in a literary trajectory that marks it as something other than 'unique'. As for the association of all three narratives with fairy tales, partially the timing of the Disney adaptations is to blame and partially *Alice*'s longstanding association with fairy tales. Either way, the fairy tale connection provides a solid basis for adaptability in that fairy tales are frequently rewritten or turned into films updating their moral content for new readers or audiences. *Alice* may not purport to have moral content, but a new moral context for readers in the late 20th and early 21st century in fact does exist and demands an updating and re-envisioning of the material.

These more adult versions showcase a different understanding of Alice's role in Wonderland as their primary feature. She needs to have a purpose there, and frequently, the characters are not "mad", they are misunderstood or subjected, and it is her role to save them in some way. Wonderland frequently becomes a metaphor for sociopolitical injustice in these forms of adaptation, or else a metaphor for Alice's own process of self-actualization. Wonderland is the threat, Alice is the solution – very much unlike Carroll's text, in which Alice acts as creator and destroyer of world unto herself, as well as unwitting pawn and helpless child. It could be argued that taking Carroll's text at face value gives Alice's character greater depth than many of the adaptations of it do – then again, the adult adaptations especially focus heavily on fleshing out Wonderland and its inhabitants, making it a real space as opposed to an imagined one (after all, who doesn't have an image in their minds of what Wonderland looks like?). In context with Pilinovsky's argumentation that *Alice* adaptations tend to either focus on a modernization of *Alice*'s content or a maturation of Alice's character, the two trends of adaptation I examine reveal similar interests. In the "straight" adaptation, the focus is on Alice's maturation, while in the more adult retelling, Alice is lifted into more contemporary circumstances and taken as a

blank slate upon which to write. This deletion of Alice's complexity perhaps explains her frequently being acted by a young, unknown actress – she will not inspire the same level of recognition and of prejudice a known actress would. Alice, both in body and in spirit becomes unrecognizable in these retellings.

4.2 "Narrativizing" – Plot Conventions in Film Media

How, then, is Alice remade as a character to fit a modern film schema? One of the most important differences between books and film, especially in the latter part of the 20th century and early 21st century, is the plot conventions involved in the latter. Film is not, or at least has not been, popularly utilized as a medium for vignette, arguably the form closest to Carroll' s original text. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* as has been discussed previously, consists largely of vignettes. Thus, the primary challenge faced by directors in adapting *Alice* is creating a narrative arc familiar enough to a film audience so as not to alienate casual moviegoers, as well as an adaptation of the source material faithful enough to not alienate *Alice* fans. Alternatively, of course, some of the adaptors choose only to satisfy one of these two groups of viewers. Many of the adaptations feature a coming-of-age story for Alice. In Disney's version, her character arc in Wonderland is understanding that she wants to go home. This adaptation is not heavy on plot; the New York Times characterized it as having a "a somewhat slow, uneven pace" (Crowther). The only real plot thread is Alice's emotional state. The same is true for Nick Willing's 1999 adaptation, though it has a clearer progression in terms of Alice's development – she begins being scared of performing in front of her parents' tea party, and during her wanderings through Wonderland she becomes "confident". If Alice was too "cold" (Gabler 486) for Disney, the primary goal in adapting her for the screen later is to give her a purpose, a challenge to overcome, a form of personal growth to tie together her disparate adventures.

Willing makes a number of marked stylistic departures from the 1951 version in his 1999 film. Orienting himself more clearly to Tenniel's illustrations than other any previous film adaptation, he chooses to have Alice appear as a brunette in a yellow dress[44], following the original coloring of Tenniel's illustrations from *The Nursery Alice*[45]. Where the Disney Alice was always falling, being swept along by the hectic pace of animation – perhaps most memorably during her initial fall down the rabbit-hole, where her skirt becomes a parachute and she gently sways through a series of backgrounds, exposing her undergarments – Willing's Alice, portrayed by Tina Marjorino, is far more staid and dignified. The overarching theme of the adaptation is performance; Alice is supposed to perform at her parent's garden party and is afraid to, thus transforming her poetry mishaps into a sort of stage fright. Meanwhile, the poetry recited by the inhabitants of Wonderland is often transmogrified into musical form and is presents an opportunity for her to overcome her fear of performance. Willing's 1999 Alice has more of the book's negative characteristics than does her Disney counterpart. Even so, She does not insult the Wonderland residents; she does lose her temper frequently, with the Caterpillar and the Mad Hatter, and finally with the Queen of Hearts herself. Due to the contrivance of her performance anxiety, she is also far more shy and reticent than other Alices. Willing admits that he had "a rough time trying to translate" (Willing) Carroll's *Alice* into a movie due to the lack of a plot; by doing so, he implies that in the medium of film, stories cannot be told as a series of vignettes. Moreover, he implies that there must be a story that is told in a form readily understood by popular audiences.

The more adult adaptations go to greater lengths to connect the sequences within *Alice*; as mentioned above, these versions often have some form of social or political commentary

[44] Appendix A fig. 12
[45] Appendix A, fig. 9

involved. This serves in some way to demote Alice's quest for identity; the larger stakes of Wonderland's future as a whole often determine the denouement, and while Alice's self-actualization is part of creating this finale, they are only the set-up, not the pay-off. For instance, in Willing's 1999 adaptation of the book, intended for a family audience, the plot he invents to make the book a palatable film is essentially rooted in the frame narrative, in the real world, and the major developments are centered on Alice's internal state. By contrast, in Willing's 2009 *Alice,* the protagonist of the film is not the real Alice, which is made clear from the start. She is established as a savior, but her role has been predetermined by a set of events and the actions of characters prior to her arrival; she becomes once again a pawn, though she is masquerading as a knight.

This is evidenced in that most of the major dramatic moments of the adaptation are transmitted to male characters. Alice's emotional stakes are in finding her father and her relationships with Jack and Hatter, all of which are resolved by the men, not her. In the third act of the series (if a three-act structure is applicable, which is by no means certain), these threads are all tied up; the King of Hearts and the Knave of Hearts (both sympathetic characters) stand up to the Queen of Hearts, Charlie the White Knight at last is allowed to be heroic, the Carpenter remembers Alice is his daughter and allows himself to be killed to save her. Finally, Hatter wins over Alice. Alice's main contributions to emotional catharsis are to make peace with her lifelong quest to find her father, arguably accomplished by the Carpenter's death scene, and turning down Jack's proposal of marriage.

Ironically given the fact that it is titled "Alice", the 2009 miniseries is the adaptation that focuses the least on her; both Disney's 1951 version and Willing's 1999 version (both intended as movie versions of the book, not addressed to an adult audience) follow the structure of the

books, thus simply tailing Alice's wanderings through Wonderland with a camera and allowing her more of a stake in the story. Even Burton, who goes to greater lengths to create a Hollywood plot and an adult version of the story, rarely strays from Alice's story; if and when he does, it is only to show other characters talking about her. Willing's 2009 Alice on the other hand becomes one central part in a large ensemble cast. While she is unquestionably the lead character, her arc mainly establishes that her own interests are not as important as the fate of Wonderland as a whole.

Tim Burton's 2010 version also expands the role of the male cast members to be central and includes a romantic plot. In most adaptations featuring an adult Alice, this is fairly common, perhaps because Hollywood plot conventions demand this for a leading adult female in film. In this version, the Hatter and the Knave of Hearts both become love interests, Hatter for Alice, though it is never explicitly stated and she chooses to leave Wonderland in the end, and the Knave of Hearts for the Red Queen. The latter is particularly interesting as the Red Queen's attraction to and dependence on the Knave of Hearts is the only mitigating feature of her imperious personality, and it is portrayed as a misguided, one-sided feeling. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this film is the shift of focus from Alice's size changes to her costume changes. She wears a blue dress – unsurprising, given that this is a Disney production – but unlike in the other versions, when her size changes, her clothing does not. Thus after her initial sequence of falling and drinking from the "Drink Me" bottle, she ends up dressed in what were before her underclothes, and, going along with a few further size changes, has three more costume changes, all of which are given more attention than her actual size. For an adult Alice, the modesty of her changing body is seemingly more important than the body itself; or, for a 3D moviegoer, the rendering of fabrics is more visually interesting than allowing her to wear the

same dress throughout the movie. In conjunction with the focus on the romantic subplots, Wonderland loses some of its childish connotations; characters who were nonsensical in Disney's version claim to be mad still but portray an adult depth of emotion as well as entirely un-humorous stakes in a clearly deadly political standoff. One scene features Alice breaking into the Red Queen's palace by jumping over the moat on the heads of decapitated dissenters.

In any and all cases, the changes of adaptation are most visible in terms of Alice herself. She is changed from the prudish, confused, occasionally violent child in Carroll's tale to a tamer, more palatable version of herself. Wonderland and Alice are no longer one entity, they enter into opposition. Alice becomes the straight man Disney pushed her into being, and Wonderland and its inhabitants takes on all the chaotic, destructive elements originally found within the protagonist of the text. This is a more normative reading than Carroll perhaps indicated: in the original text, Alice has been told to be disciplined but she does not succeed at enacting discipline. In adaptation, she is a much clearer example of discipline for other children and women to emulate. She is certainly also a more self-aware version, at least by modern standards of self-awareness: Alice has a fear or a challenge to overcome, and so too she interacts with a cast of characters who are significantly less mad and significantly more capable of providing life wisdom as well as relevance to the story beyond their single chapter appearances in the original. Perhaps the key here is continuity – allowing characters more movement between scenes, where in *Alice's Adventures,* they were largely only present in their own particular chapter and perhaps the trial scene at the end of the book, and in *Through the Looking-Glass,* they were essentially limited to their one-chapter appearances. Thus, in new imaginings, Alice is not quite so alone; thus, Wonderland is more dynamic than a series of sets. In order to contain an appropriate narrative arc, the characteristic vignette style of the original books and the opacity both of

Alice's character and motivation as a little girl who cannot see beyond her schooling into understanding the nonsense she is confronted with must be altered; characters cannot simply be mad and Alice must be analyzable.

As I have demonstrated, commercial film adaptations of *Alice* abide by certain standards of plot convention and character development. In order to fit these standards, *Alice* has had to grow and change with the times, sometimes literally into being an adult character. Even when she is portrayed as a child, however, she is held to a standard of behavior Carroll did not endorse or represent. She is consistently good and unambiguous; there is nothing in her that would be capable of creating the Queen of Hearts, and yet, that is exactly what she does in dreams. At least partially, this can be explained by trends in understanding childhood. Valerie Walkerdine's analysis shows that "a playful and assertive girl may be understood as forward, uppity, over-mature, too precocious" (Walkerdine 256). Perhaps 'playful' would always have been the wrong word to describe Alice, but over-mature and precocious are certainly apt. If these traits are no longer desirable in a female child portrayed through mass media, it certainly explains why Alice must either become bland, grow up or both in later versions of Carroll's source text. Likewise, with the wealth of scholarship surrounding Carroll's relationship with Alice Liddell, the source material as well becomes interpreted as intrinsically adult. Jacqueline S. Rose argues out of the rumors of pedophilia surrounding both *Alice* and *Peter Pan* that the prospect of writing a children's story is a fundamental impossibility. "This is to describe children's fiction, quite deliberately, as something of a soliciting" (Rose 59) is how she begins her section on *Alice,* highlighting the notion that all children's literature, and by extension, film intended for children, is made by adults imagining what could appeal to a child enough for them to pay attention. In that case, it is not the child reading or watching *Alice* who has changed in the interim years,

necessarily, but rather it is the imagination adults have of that child, and it would appear that over the years, the imagining of that child has decreased in complexity, while the fear of the dangers she may face in an unfamiliar set of circumstance has increased exponentially.

While it can reasonably be stated that the larger network of cultural understanding of childhood remains on a subconscious level for most producers of *Alice* adaptations, it is not only the advancement of plot that drives adaptation. Ulterior motives of the adaptors are often part and parcel of the adaptation. Carolyn Sigler already notes this in her chapter on topical parodies of *Alice,* many of which featured sections of political 'whimsy' such as the Downing Street "ineptitude" (Sigler 332). As time progressed and different artistic and cultural trends took place, the faces Alice took also varied. The "satirical use of Alice continued far beyond the end of World War II" (Brooker 78), Dali painted an *Alice*-inspired series in 1969 (cf. Brooker 79), and psychoanalytic interpretation favored the pedophilic interpretation of Carroll's life and works. In the 1960s, "psychedelic" (Brooker 81) interpretations came to the fore, leading to the summarily rejected notion that Carroll was an opium addict. Currently, Alice is continually adapted and readapted by divergent interpreters as seen in the above examples of films, television shows and computer games, never appearing in quite the same guise but always claiming to be about the same character. In Michael Hancher's words, "the threatened disintegration of Alice's personal identity in Wonderland prefigures her actual dispersal, and renewal, among her audiences" (Hancher 202). The argument here is that because Alice's identity, or lack thereof, is what is at stake in her travails through Wonderland (her changing size, her constant confusion as to who she is, what she actually knows and what she misremembers), her identity becomes so unfocused to her audience that she can take on any guise.

Perhaps it is her very unmooredness which gives Alice flexibility as a text and as an icon. She has been interpreted as an adult, as a feminist, as a victim and as a destroyer of worlds, though all the source text claims to represent is an ordinary Victorian child. It is notable that when the interpreter is interested in Victorian times, Alice becomes the purest representation of all things Victorian; when he or she is interested in something else, Alice becomes simply a "universal" child. Even her femininity is occasionally eradicated in interpretation, when she stands in as this "universal" child. In other cases, when the focus of adaptations draws strongly on Carroll's perceived relationship with Alice Liddell, it becomes a focal point. When she is interpreted an adult woman, she must abide by the rules of adult women in modern society and be neither as spoiled nor as petulant as her 1865 self was. The success of an Alice adaptation hangs on how important or unimportant her origins are to both the creator of the adaptation and the audience for that adaptation. Characters, themes and quotes from *Alice* have a way of seeping into popular culture the way poetry and reference from Victorian times seep into *Alice*: such allusions may be read as intentional, harmless whimsy to casual readers who are not in the know and sly asides to a reader-in-the-know. This latter group, fans of *Alice* in original and adaptation, now form an important part in understanding who Alice has become today and why she is still relevant. Over the course of the next chapter, reader and viewer preferences about and opinions on the adaptations discussed in this section will be analyzed through the medium of fan cultures on the internet.

5. "She, Too, Began Dreaming After A Fashion"[46]

5.1 Alice Fans Describe Themselves

In the previous chapters, I have asked how. How did *Alice* come into being, what were the historical factors that influenced the kind of childhood described in the text? How did *Alice* and Lewis Carroll relate to that childhood? What about this text and its origin either in relation to folklore or fairy tale traditions has made it so susceptible to retelling, and how have those retellings been enacted? How has the transition into visual media affected retelling and what about *Alice* enables an easy step into visual as well as narrative realization in film? Some portions of this analysis point to more deep-seated questions – why is it that fairy tale is a genre more suited to retelling than others? Why does the connection between Carroll and pedophilia strike such a chord with biographers and adapters alike? In this chapter, it is the 'why' question I am interested in. Specifically, it is the question of why do people care so much about *Alice*, about whether or not Carroll was a pedophile, about which adaptation is a faithful one? In order to tackle this question, I conducted a survey with online fans of *Alice* whom I found through the blogging site Tumblr. I chose fans using this medium due to the high collaboration of fans on Tumblr, which is a very interactive site. These fans also engage with *Alice* as an adapted and adaptable source, unlike a book club or a purely Carroll-based fan group might; the *Alice* fans I surveyed interact with multiple versions of the story daily. In the survey, I ask them to describe both their media intake and relationship with that media, as well as why they personally are interested in *Alice.* While this survey may not fully answer why anyone should care about *Alice* to adapt or retell Carroll's story or even fully explain why those who care do, it does offer a

[46] After Alice wakes up from her dream about Wonderland, she describes it to her sister, who drifts into a daydream in which she imagines Alice maintaining her sense of whimsy as an adult (Carroll 131)

window into what makes *Alice* remain relevant to ordinary readers, and what fans today, looking back at the century and a half of material about, based on or referencing *Alice*, believe to be important. These fans provide the other side of the coin for the adapters of *Alice* in film. Where in chapter four, I argued that adapters are inevitably interpreters, these fans, who are primarily readers, all describe themselves as writers. This means that *Alice* fans on Tumblr are both interpreters and adapters, both of Carroll's book and of the subsequent adapted works based on it. Seeking out fans' own estimation of why they prefer one work over another and what the stakes in analyzing Alice's origins are may not provide conclusive answers, but it does provide a context for *Alice*'s continued popularity.

The survey I conducted with these fans was built around a set of questions with the intent of gathering a qualitative response to what motivates their readerly interest in *Alice.* In total, I gathered responses from 14 *Alice* fans, most of whom are Americans. Some questions were multiple choice, but most required written responses. The majority of my survey results were created by submitting the link to the a blog author going by the name "Phantomwise" on tumblr, who takes submissions from readers and posted a link to my survey publicly. I received ten responses from this alone. The other responses I gathered were derived from sending messages other Carrollian bloggers and, in a few cases, leaving reviews on transformative works based on various *Alice* material. In terms of demographics, my survey respondents were fairly conform to the general demographics of Tumblr. The majority of the participants are in their early twenties, with only three below the age of nineteen and three above the age of twenty-five. All except one identify themselves as female, and most (eight) are students. Only one lists their occupation as a "Lewis Carroll Scholar" (Respondent 9). All respondents but one view themselves as writers; all of them regularly read both books and online content as well as consume movies and TV.

Notably, many of them consume these media via the internet both in the form of online content and by streaming television and/or movies online; the computer they use to create output is thus also their main source of input.

In terms of which adaptations survey respondents are familiar with, a few trends are evident. For one, many of the responses were limited to more recent adaptations or adaptations created by major networks or production houses, indicating that these readers consume primarily popular media. When listing the versions with which they were familiar, eleven out of fourteen survey respondents included the 1951 Disney animated musical. Seven cite it as their first exposure to the Alice story; four more can't remember if it was the movie or the original books. Four cite it as one of their favorite (if not their only favorite) versions of the Alice story. By contrast, nine participants include the original books as the "original version" (Respondent 12) in the list of versions they are familiar with, while six claim it as one of their favorites. It is curious that a majority of participants would think of the original books only as a version of the *Alice* narrative, curiouser still, to quote Alice herself, that fewer of them recall the books as their first exposure but more of them list it as a favorite. Of those that list Disney's version as a favorite, two do so primarily because of "loyalty" to it as their first introduction to Carroll's tale. As for awareness of other adaptations, the most widely known by far are Willing's 1999 version, which seven out of fourteen respondents have seen; his 2009 version, which seven out of fourteen have seen; and Tim Burton's 2010 film, which twelve out of fourteen cite as important. Additionally, Frank Beddor's *The Looking Glass Wars* are mentioned by five respondents, while American McGee's *Alice in Wonderland,* is mentioned by six respondents. Finally, *Once Upon A Time in Wonderland* is mentioned by five respondents, though most of them add that they haven't seen it, only heard of it, and only one lists it as a favorite retelling. While further accounts of versions of

Alice provided by survey respondents are manifold, these were the only ones I found to achieve something approaching a consensus.

What these responses indicate is that an idea of two origins of *Alice* is maintained by many fans. Disney's *Alice* and the original books are in one way or another presented as important source texts by all respondents, and they both form an "originary" point of access. Despite the fairytale connection of the *Alice* text, making it appear more a part of public property than many books[47], most survey respondents describe their relationship to the original book as akin to viewing an art artifact rather than as the basis of a nostalgic childhood memory. Only four participants think it might have been the first version they were exposed to, though they are not positive, as it could have been the Disney movie as well. When explaining why it is nonetheless a favorite, most respondents praise Carroll's writing on a stylistic level, "the depth of storytelling, wit, prose" rather than on the level of personal relevance to their lives (Respondent 6).

By contrast, when describing why Disney's 1951 animated film is a favorite, respondents praise Disney's animation and the nostalgic childhood value of the film. For Disney's version, eleven participants are fairly certain it was the first version they saw; the affective connection to the film version is based more on factors such as it being "the first one I was introduced to so it still stayed with me the most" (Respondent 5). Nostalgia becomes a favorite explanation for enjoyment of the Disney movie more than an attempt at establishing the movie's objective quality. In essence, the factor of being introduced to *Alice* through Disney is what makes it a

[47] In terms of copyright law, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has been in the public domain since 1907, while *Through the Looking-Glass* has been since 1948. Tenniel's illustrations have been available since 1964. The real difference between the way any other book is perceived and *Alice* is authorship. With fairy tales, authorship is often ignored, with *Alice,* authorship is tantamount, but the wealth of retelling allows for a sense of public property

favorite. Thus, for this respondent, and others who state similar emotional attachments to the Disney movie, it is an origin which to them is the most compelling. Carroll's book may have been the precedent historically, but to these respondents, in terms of their own relation to *Alice,* it came later.

One respondent lists both the books and the movie as personal favorites. She is "particular" to the books and enjoys "the vernacular", but when speaking about the movie she says "her loyalty and preference" is to the Disney version because "it has literally shaped who I am today" (Respondent 8). The depth of connection to the movie is clearly much stronger for this individual, and while she values the books as sharing in her conception of the original, she remembers them more as an afterthought to her first encounter. In fact, she continues, "it's great fun to enjoy it as if you were a child" (Respondent 8), indicating that while the Disney movie has nostalgic value and a direct tie to her childhood, the original books she values on a less personal level and can only imagine what it would feel like to have such a formative connection with them. This layer of only being able to enjoy *Alice* by imagining oneself as a child when one is an adult reader is important. *Alice* is a book that children can't quite grasp yet but adults can appreciate because it reminds them of a childhood they might never have experienced – the idyllic, fanciful notion of Victorian childhood presented in modern adaptations of *Alice*. Furthermore, adult respondents demonstrate a grasp of the nuance embedded in *Alice* after years of interpretation and adaptation; perhaps this particular reader is really simply implying that to truly enjoy *Alice* one must let the nuance go, or read 'like a child' once more. Given that most of the respondents are in their early twenties and childhood is not as far behind for them as nostalgia would imply, it seems the fondness for *Alice* has to do more with a larger value being

given childhood and the memory thereof rather than the concrete childhoods experienced by these respondents.

Especially with "children's" stories – recall, there is a certain ambiguity to the propriety and indeed intention of any and all versions of such narratives for a child audience – nostalgic value seems to be key in their continued appeal to adults. On the level of marketing, this is certainly part of why "grown-up" Alices, e.g. SyFy's *Alice* (2009), Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), ABC's *Once Upon a Time in Wonderland* (2013)[48], inevitably feature stock references to the original text, ranging from costume design for the Alice character and cameo appearances of characters from the original. This tendency stretches to fragments of dialogue or poetry resituated within the text. Some references are obvious to even a casual viewer of Disney's film looking to spot such allusions in these adaptations, and some are obscure enough that only a true devotee could spot them. Nonetheless, all these references are spotted by someone, usually a fan, and meticulously recorded both on personal blogs and on shared platforms such as Wikipedia, allowing wider audiences to find and enjoy *Alice*'s influence. Nostalgic value is what inspires all these references and adaptations; the presence of the familiar seems to inspire a curiosity in fans to discover what has been changed even as they celebrate continuities.

Respondent 11 states, almost casually, that she feels that *Alice* has "visually influenced" (Respondent 11) her more than anything, a very odd thing to say of a written narrative, but a less odd thing to say when one observes which versions are actually known to the survey respondents. Only one of the stories within Carolyn Sigler's anthology of *Alice*-related writings produced between 1865 and 1933 (*Uncle Wiggly in Wonderland*) is remembered by a survey respondent, however twenty-five film versions are listed cumulatively in the survey, as well as a

[48] see Appendix B Fig. 1

number of other works using visual means over literary (e.g. webcomics, American McGee's computer game. Only five out of fourteen survey respondents even knew of the same literary adaptation, Frank Beddors *Looking Glass Wars*, a 2004 young adult trilogy. This is certainly closer to popular culture than some of the more "highbrow" literary adaptations Sigler mentions which were released after the 1930s; Beddor's work was also released six years after her book. However, it is also the only literary adaptation mentioned by more than one survey respondent; by contrast, all of them mention several film adaptations, and most of the films are mentioned by at least two survey respondents, often more. Film, specifically recent, commercially produced film, clearly dominates the imagined response of internet fan communities at least in terms of my own research.

Perhaps, to a young audience in the 21st century, the medium of film is more approachable than literature. Then again, fan culture may also reflect *Alice's* inherently visual nature, from the Tenniel drawings onward. It seems the works known by *Alice* fans reflect a broader trend towards visual culture. It is just not that they are uninterested in reading or literary material, it is that the material which engages with *Alice* on the level of entertainment is no longer released in print form. More recent books to do with *Alice* tend to be academic, still others veer toward the experimental side of adult literature, engaging more thoroughly with the pedophilia angle than with the representation of childhood[49]. Fans who come to *Alice* via the Disney movie, as most of these do, seem to be searching for works trying to recapture the whimsy and playfulness they see as intrinsic to *Alice*. Literature is no longer a medium in which 'recapturing' is a sought-after trait – literary retellings are deemed derivative rather than valuable in terms of nostalgia, while the same is not yet true in the world of film.

[49] For example, Katie Roiphe's *Still She Haunts Me,* a fictionalized Carroll biography

These respondents do not only react to *Alice* through the quantifiable lens of which adaptations they know and whether or not they like them. One of the questions I also chose to ask was what role *Alice* plays in their lives. The answers they gave here were strikingly varied. "It helped me discover myself, and it has proved to ground me when I find myself feeling lost in life" (Respondent 7) is perhaps the most intense of these declarations of personal connection with *Alice* in all her permutations, but it is a sentiment echoed both on the blogs and by the other survey respondents. Almost all of them state a connection between their personal lives and *Alice,* while also indicating a preference for at least two or more versions of it. *Alice,* to them, is not static. The title "Alice in Wonderland" automatically refers to a multitude of works. Most of the participants also create their own new content based on *Alice* in one way or another. When asked what draws them to retellings, survey respondents answered both as producers and consumers, indicating what qualities they like in a retelling as well as why they thought society as a whole would like these qualities. The answers were largely variations on a theme: "we like to use symbols and characters that are familiar and thus can be recognized and understood quickly by our audience" (Respondent 11). Particularly *Alice* retellings "often come up when people feel out of place" (Respondent 13), how Alice herself feels for a majority of the books. In some cases, the point of interest for the respondent was "see[ing] the different points stressed in different adaptation" (Respondent 5), or the simultaneous pleasure caused by nostalgic recognition of a theme and setting without the comfort and loss of tension provided by complete familiarity.

Naturally, this is not the only motivation. To some respondents, retelling is also a good way to "bring attention to the original" (Respondent 2) or even just "for profit" (Respondent 4) when referring to commercially produced adaptations. This shows that these respondents have a certain overview of market forces; they are all participants in online communities, and involved

at least in some way in the transmission of fan content or of retellings, both in image and word. Quite a few of the respondents who are deeply involved in bringing attention to the original and the "true" circumstances of its conception say they are important to them by virtue of their blogging community. However, even these more cynical responses evaluating the world outside the fan community eventually return to "the desire to see if we can make our favourite story into our own creation" (Respondent 4). As discussed above, most of the respondents do not limit themselves to mentioning only one adaptation; nor do they seem to believe there is a right or wrong way to adapt, artistically – "dark Alice"[50], meaning adaptations of *Alice* in which either she or Wonderland become overtly threatening and often psychologically as well as physically dangerous, is a preference some respondents do not personally enjoy, but do not ban entirely. It seems their main stake is not entirely in the way the material is adapted, it is in the heart of the matter. It is important to them that the drive to adapt *Alice* comes from a place of admiration and enjoyment of the source material. In a word, it is important to them that the people adapting *Alice* are to some extent fans themselves, or at least have an understanding of fandom to the point that they will include the correct symbols and tropes, even if it is a for-profit adaptation.

5.2 The "Carrollians": Consumers, Producers, and Interpretive Community

My main site of observing fans of *Alice* was on the interactive blogging site Tumblr. Here, users create their own blogs in which they can upload and post materials they have created themselves, i.e. still images or gifs (moving images) from various film and theater adaptations as well as illustrations, quotes and other material surrounding *Alice.* Furthermore, they can "reblog" from one another, meaning if one Tumblr user follows another, that user's posts will appear on the first user's newsfeed and they can post that users content on their own blog. Reblogs contain

[50] Especially American McGee's *Alice* (2000)

information both on the original source of the post and the person it has been reblogged from; it is widely considered extremely bad manners on Tumblr to erase the source notation. This contrasts to other blogging platforms (e.g. other blogging sites or an independently owned websites) in a number of ways. For one, creating a Tumblr is a quick and easy process, it takes perhaps a minute and requires only an email address and a username, where other sites might require more personal information. Creating a Tumblr automatically makes the user part of the community: the homescreen for a Tumblr blog is the dashboard, which records the activity of all other users being followed. Through tagging and Tumblr's search function, it is easy to find other users who run blogs with similar interests. In essence, Tumblr offers easy access and high community involvement to users. Other blogging sites do not always have these options, though some do[51]. Promoting one's own blog is one's own responsibility – searching for material is not as easy as it is on Tumblr. Likewise, many other sites require advertising. Alice enthusiasts who have their own websites must pay for hosting as well as design their own layout. Tumblr is the most accessible form of blogging as it requires less expertise and commitment, and immediately connects to other fans. There are limits, of course – unlike a forum website, on which conversations between users are presented in a thread, on Tumblr, conversations are private unless users choose to publish them. This means that the main ways I could observe this community was through what they posted, what they reblogged from each other and what they said about each other on public posts. Additionally, I have no way of verifying the information given to me by the bloggers I observed as I only interacted with them via Tumblr and via the survey.

[51] Alternatives include blogspot, livejournal or buying a webpage domain. The former two offer less networking abilities than tumblr, as they don't have the option to reblog other users' content. The latter involves both the financial investment and the technical knowhow of creating an individual site.

Discovering online communities is not necessarily a straightforward task. Samuel Wilson and Leighton Peterson discuss this in their article "The Anthropology of Online Communities" (2002), mentioning that community as a whole "seems to imply a false circumscription and coherence" (Wilson 455) as no individual belongs to only one community. This is compounded in internet communities, as "a debate has continued about whether online, virtual, or otherwise computer-mediated communities are real or imagined" (Wilson 456). The difficulty is that it is very hard to establish shared practices, beliefs or even contact between alleged members of a community when said community exists only virtually. On the other hand, these communities can be seen as "speech communities" (Wilson 459), sharing similar patterns of communication despite differing backgrounds. Myc Wiatrowski, in his article "The Dynamics of Fandom", picks this argument up a decade after Wilson and Peterson engage with the earlier formations of online communities to discuss the relationship between fans and producers as well as the relationship between fans and their *urtext.* Internet community formation, by virtue of its newness, is not a terribly well-documented phenomenon[52] in academic research. It is even more ill-defined than many other forms of community simply because there is no face-to-face component and knowledge about the participants beyond their self-stated interest in the community is not readily accessible. Additionally, as Stephen R. Thompson points out in "Ethnomethodology and the Study of Online Communities", "online communities present the researcher with nothing but text" (Thompson 11). Following the groundwork laid by these thinkers, over the course of this subchapter I will discuss the text provided by the blog authors I studied, as well as examine how exactly their community, such as it is, is documented.

[52] Except, that is, on the internet itself, where most pages can be tracked down even years after their deletion.

Two of the main blogs I followed throughout the duration of this project were "all-in-the-golden-afternoon96.tumblr.com" and "still-she-haunts-me-phantomwise.tumblr.com"[53]. Golden Afternoon is a fairly new blogger who has joined the group of Carroll enthusiasts started by Phantomwise. Golden Afternoon's blog is a personal one which focuses for the most part on *Alice,* with all non-Carroll-related posts being tagged "non Carroll post", and a lot of her Carroll material is reblogged from Phantomwise. This means that "all-in-the-golden-afternoon96@tumblr.com" is the only blog Golden Afternoon runs and it contains personal information and things of personal interest to her as well as Carroll material. Phantomwise's blog is not a personal one – it is a blog run by a user who has multiple blogs, and this one is dedicated specifically to Carroll material. Phantomwise is a well-established Carroll blogger, being one of the most-reblogged and easiest to find through Tumblr's search function (this being how I found these users in the first place). She is also the instigator of the group of Carroll enthusiasts I focused on in my research, which will be elaborated on later.

One of the main markers of the style of content creation among this group is that it is highly collaborative; users are in constant contact with one another indirectly via reblogging each others' posts and seeing who reblogs their own. They also communicate via submissions; Phantomwise accepts submissions and posts them, while all tumblr users have an askbox, in which followers can submit questions and comments. This can be done anonymously or from a different blog. These two blogs frequently make use of each others' material; additionally, Golden Afternoon lists other recommended blogs on her Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. A major characteristic of the blogs is that authorship becomes very fluid, as users share material and republish it, implying that they allow another users' words or content to talk

[53] These users will hereafter be referred to as "Golden Afternoon" and "Phantomwise". Both state their preference to not reveal their real names in the "about me" sections of their blogs.

through them, as well as releasing their own opinions and content to be shared, commented upon and altered by other users.

I observed these blogs by becoming a tumblr user myself and following them. I found them via the search function, and later, by tracking the tag "Carrollian". My actual interaction with them was limited; their posts appeared on my dashboard, enabling me to like or reblog them, and some of them chose to follow me in return, which gave them the same ability. This means that my observation of the blogs is limited to their public posts as well as their survey responses; their private messages with each other, which one can surmise exist based on some of their public posts about each other, remain a mystery.

Phantomwise's blog has a note on the front page saying that the blog proprietor is a supporter of Karoline Leach's biographical position on the vexed question of Carroll's interest in children. Leach portrays Carroll as having meaningful relationships with adult women and rejects the belief that Carroll was a pedophile. The author spends a good deal of time refuting people who believe the book has anything to do with an unhealthy interest on Carroll's part either in Alice Liddell or Alice of the books, posting scholarly work to "prove" the contrary, and showing excerpts from Carroll's other writings and work frequently, to demonstrate this thesis. The username "still she haunts me, phantomwise", however, stems from the closing poem at the end of *Through the Looking Glass*. The full stanza is,

> Still she haunts me, phantomwise
> Alice moving under skies
> Never seen by waking eyes
> (Carroll 287)

Not only is it unclear as to which Alice is being spoken of in this poem, referencing the "sunny sky" (Carroll 287) of the afternoon on which Carroll told the story, but also the role Alice takes is not exactly as unambiguous as the blog author frequently states it is. Rather, Alice is said to be

"haunting", the poem's speaker is unable to forget her. She is "never seen by waking eyes", and yet he is unable to let go of her image. This would seem to indicate that at least textually, Carroll's relationship with Alice was somewhat fraught, obsessive even. One could surmise that choosing this particular quote as a username, even when consistently believing in, even "championing" Carroll's innocence and the simplicity of his works, is an acknowledgment of the complexity of the issue. While the content of the blog denies the ambiguity, the blog itself is still nourished by the controversy surrounding Lewis Carroll's relationship with Alice Liddell.

Many of the blogs I am focusing on in this project openly distrust academia as they claim the text and its author is innocent of the underlying darkness attributed them, even as there is a countering aspiration towards academic inquiry. Blog users collect Alice material, photograph it and share their trophies amongst each other, celebrating each others' collections, as well as avidly collecting secondary material such as biographies. They also cite academic arguments and rephrase them into their own more personal emotional language. For instance, when discussing Morton Cohen's claim that Carroll had wanted to marry Alice Liddell, Phantomwise states that she is "shocked that he said such misleading things and no one corrected him" ("Then Guiliano upped…"). She goes on to discuss at great length the same primary sources Cohen is citing (the letters exchanged between Alice Liddell and Carroll), and offers a number of other interpretations, both citing other scholars and being clear in the matter that there may be a variety of valid interpretations of this material. Phantomwise is "shocked" by Cohen's conclusions, and because she is running a blog and not writing an academic rebuttal, can subtitle a section of her argument "Again, Cohen Reads What He Wants" ("Then, Guiliano upped…"). On the one hand, this reveals the strong emotional attachment of this particular blogger to Carroll's life and works, and no hesitation in expressing her thoughts on published works. On the other, the caustic,

cynical tone she takes towards Cohen's thesis is one major difference between the work Phantomwise does and that of a more traditional academic.

Such posts reveal a set of deeply personally held beliefs about academic work on Phantomwise's part. In a post in which the center of focus is not the veracity of the claims about Carroll, but rather the academic trends she has noted in her extensive research on the subject, Phantomwise announces her own "goal of educating people on Lewis Carroll" ("In my goal…"). This post is largely disparaging of laypeople's, but also academics', tendency to take secondary literature at face value as opposed to examining Carroll's letters and diaries themselves. Particularly Morton Cohen comes under fire frequently, as his autobiography of Carroll is "seen by the Old Guard Carrollians as the definite and the last word" ("In my goal…"). This is an attitude Phantomwise displays towards Cohen's biography frequently; as Leach's research accords with her point of view as a more accurate portrayal of Carroll's life by explaining the missing parts in early Carroll biographies as an attempt on the part of Victorian relatives to disguise his close relationships with adult women, none of whom he was married to. Cohen's method is not at issue in this particular post, as Phantomwise especially points out that the biographer takes all of his material from primary sources, all of which are available to other interested parties as well. Even those who oppose Cohen cite him rather than the primary sources, despite Cohen's "extraordinary habit of saying sources support his arguments when on closer examination, they don't" ("In my goal…"). It is this latter tendency which concerns Phantomwise – the fact that interested parties don't empower themselves by using the same research methods as Cohen, as Leach, as Phantomwise herself, and come to their own conclusions (ideally, the same conclusions Phantomwise came to).

As a part of this quasi-scholarly interest hiding its close relationship to the format of scholarly work, Phantomwise herself cites all her sources at the bottom of each post, as well as mentioning these sources in each case which demands it. As a matter of fact, Phantomwise has a post dedicated to showing users how to cite her blog in academic work. She offers citations in multiple styles and notes that she is always happy to contribute to research on *Alice.* She also notes that those interested in working on Carroll or Alice ought to use the material Phantomwise herself cites, as it is probably "more academically reliable than a tumblr blog" ("Can I Cite You?"). She adds that she is happy to contribute by explaining where she got her material.

Nonetheless, Phantomwise describes herself as merely a "really, really dedicated fan that did a lot of research and spouts out useless trivia" ("Who Are You?") as opposed to an expert. In a way, this rejection of expertise is typical of fan groups in general; in Myc Wiatrowski's "The Dynamics of Fandom", he outlines the frequent consumer-producer tension present in fan communities. According to him, "fans use the text to create new cultural production" (Wiatrowski) in "the battle for hegemonic control of the *urtext* in consumer-producer relationships" (Wiatrowski). Wiatrowski is speaking of a very different fandom: fans of the TV show *Firefly*, and its tie-in movie *Serenity*, whose *urtext* is more contained than *Alice*'s sprawling history, as well as being significantly more recent. The *Alice* fandom has a less fraught relationship with the market forces which created it, partially because the origin story of *Alice* is so mythologized and partially because Disney's family-friendly image has been maintained to a certain degree by most fans. Wiatrowski describes fandom as creating itself through its production of material within a community that is seen as "significantly different from the mainstream norm" (Wiatrowski). In Phantomwise's case, the rejection of such "mainstream norm" is aimed at academic material rather than popular culture; in both cases, however, the

rejection of the more profitable or "legitimate" form of production, either commercial or academic, serves to disguise the similarities between for-profit and fan producers.

Wiatrowski's definition of fandom foregrounds "being significantly different from the mainstream norm" (Wiatrowski). He clarifies that fans are fairly normalized in society at this point, but that fan communities still embrace this othering as a defining feature. For Phantomwise and Golden Afternoon, this is enacted by their self-descriptions as being "really, really dedicated" ("Who Are You?") or even "obsessive" ("Who in the World am I?") in the case of Golden Afternoon, but decidedly not experts. This method of constructing themselves as interested parties with no further professional expertise than that provided by their own interest masks the close relationship between the way they understand and research *Alice* and the academic work from which they distance themselves . This construction of the self has the side effect of hiding the large amounts of extremely specialized knowledge held by the *Alice* fan community as well as the effort they put into producing quality material. This can be seen in Phantomwise's posts about Cohen in that she invests significant amounts of time and research into finding original citations from Carroll's diaries and letters, as well as citing multiple biographers, in order to establish her opinion as valid. On an artistic level, some Carroll fans create their own illustrations of the books[54] or edit still or moving frames from various adaptations to show each adaptation to its best advantage. Fans maintain the pretense of a consumer-producer dialectic when they have become both themselves. This is compounded by the fact that for fans among the blogger community, laptops and computers are the site both for producing content and for consuming films and games, meaning that both activities become in a sense part of the experience of "being online" as an *Alice* fan.

[54] See Appendix A, Fig. 22

Golden Afternoon, who works most closely with Phantomwise (the two users frequently support each other's arguments and reblog each others' material, as well as refer to each other in posts, although Golden Afternoon defers to Phantomwise as an instigator of the group to which they belong), includes less academic citations, yet her FAQ is almost entirely dedicated to Carroll sources rather than information about *Alice.* She, too, includes a note in the blurb on the front page of her blog to indicate that she supports Karoline Leach's position as a biographer. "lewis-carroll.tumblr.com", another user supported as a "Carrollian" according to Golden Afternoon's FAQ, has a far more limited "Questions" section than either Phantomwise or Golden Afternoon, being a smaller blog; this user seems more interested in the mathematical aspect of *Alice* than anything else[55]. While he or she, too, rejects the notion that Carroll was a pedophile, "lewis-carroll.tumblr.com" states that Carroll "liked little girls at a level that was more than normal" ("Ask Me") – closer to an admission of abnormality in Carroll's life and behavior than any of the other users come. This blog is less focused on Carroll and more on *Alice* as a visual phenomenon; however, it too reveals an indexical, theoretical approach to adaptation – there is a complex tagging system which helps users navigate between every version of Alice. This catalogue includes Tim Burton's 2010 film and American McGee's computer game, versions which many of this particular group of users avoid as being too dark, too far from the source material, or lacking in appropriately respectful affection for the subject material.[56]

This group of tumblr users have created their own tag. On tumblr, tags serve to organize material in specific ways. Thus, a tag can be searched, in this case "Carrollian", revealing all

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[55] Carroll's work as a mathematician has also been taken as an interpretive basis for a variety of the jokes in *Alice*; I have chosen not to interact with this aspect of analysis as it rarely enters popular film or discussion of the books and is largely relegated to specialist knowledge.

[56] Phantomwise notes that Tim Burton "has said in interviews he never connected with the story" ("Why don't you post Tim Burton's Alice?"); this is a major ground for disliking the adaptation.

material posted with that tag. Users can also blacklist tags so they don't have to see them. Tags are not only a method of organizing content, however, they also are a place for blog authors to explain their feelings on a subject outside of the post itself. They may comment on images or citations here frequently without interfering with the integrity of the post – unless they feel the post needs a more visible commentary. The tag is a metatextual tool allowing users to organize their own material, search other users, and provide annotation without intruding on the content of a post. The "Carrollian" tag, when searched, reveals a fairly specific collection of Alice in Wonderland material.

Phantomwise, when explaining her reasons for creating the tag, says that the "Alice in Wonderland" tag was "a mess" ("The Carrollian Tag"), as it contained too broad a spectrum of material which frequently didn't represent *Alice* or Carroll the way Phantomwise feels they ought to be shown. The "Carrollian" tag is intended to mark material related specifically to *Alice* or Carroll. She makes sure to explain that simply because she herself does not post material from certain adaptations (notably Tim Burton and American McGee's computer game) does not mean that doing so is off limits, pointing to the fact that "lewis-carroll.tumblr.com" posts on both subjects frequently and can still use the "Carrollian" tag in doing so. In terms of usage, Phantomwise notes that the tag is not "some sort of elitist club" ("The Carrollian Tag"), indicating that any user interested in posting material can do so, and can use the tag. However, there is to be "no nonsense about drugs, pedophilia, or portraying Alice in a disrespectful way" ("The Carrollian Tag"). What constitutes a disrespectful way to treat Alice is left vague, perhaps intentionally. This set of priorities reveals is that the author views the *Alice* fandom as a community, stating an equality between all *Alice* enthusiasts by making sure to state that anyone can use the tag, "Carrollian". Of course, in order to use a tag, one must know it exists. Most

Tumblr users who were raised in an English-speaking country will have heard the phrase "Alice in Wonderland" and be able to tag accordingly, while few of them will have developed the specialized interest to find a blog author like Phantomwise and begin using the tag "Carrollian", limiting users of the tag. As one of the originators of the tag, Phantomwise also claims a sense of propriety (or even authorship) over it in that there is a code of conduct she wants to instill, namely an interpretation of Carroll and his works in line with her own and a lack of self-promotion (cf. "The Carrollian Tag") in favor of overall focus on spreading acceptable *Alice* material.

The specificity of these community rules defines the Carrollians far more clearly than the other (many) *Alice* bloggers on Tumblr. While Phantomwise's remark that the "Alice in Wonderland" tag is a mess is perhaps slightly caustic, it is not necessarily untrue: the "Alice in Wonderland" tag is used frequently, being available to anyone who has even a passing interest in the subject, used to reference media only barely related, such as the Jefferson Airplane song "Go Ask Alice", or signal personal experiences the user is relating to Alice. The top blogs listed as using this tag are often populated by "dark Alice" fans, largely using material from graphic novels and American McGee's computer game. However, using the Carrollian tag requires insider knowledge. This factored into my decision to analyze these bloggers in particular – their community stood out amongst other Tumblr blogs devoted to *Alice* as they made a specific effort as a group to distance themselves from the greater mass of *Alice*-related media. Phantomwise and Golden Afternoon and, in fact, many of the Carrollians, have customized blog themes[57] (unlike many *Alice* blogs not a part of the Carrollian group), leading to easier visibility and

[57] A blog layout designed by themselves or a third party, sometimes for money, rather than the standard ones provided by the site. This allows for customization of the blog's appearance more so than the standard, free options for tumblr users.

comprehension of the content of their blogs. Many of the users who blog about *Alice* who are not Carrollians employ standard layouts in dark colors and are harder to follow visually. The Carrollians are more interested in establishing indexical features, such as "Lewis-Carroll"'s tagging system explained above. Phantomwise has a tendency to post content most frequently on Wednesdays, leaving the other days of the week for answering questions, working on other blogs and, presumably, her life outside of *Alice* fandom. There is a professionalism to this organized, well-researched approach to blogging that sets these users apart, as well as their active efforts to reach out to other members within their community.

In a way, the subset of the *Alice* fandom I examined allows only "safe" Carroll media, and ostracizes "unsafe" users. There are certainly bloggers and fans who revel in the "dark Alice" adaptations, but "Carrollian" users only touch on them tangentially, instead focusing on them as a site of contradiction to what they view as the "real" meaning of the books. The form of the *Alice* narratives is not as important as the content: all forms are accepted, photographed, turned into gifs[58] and shared. While users may not like one iteration or another, they clearly argue their case as to why not, and allow that the relative quality of an adaptation is a question of individual taste and interpretation of the *Alice* books; for instance, Phantomwise refuses to post images from Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* because she feels it is "missing the point of the books: not to have a story" ("Why Don't You Post Tim Burton's Alice"); even so, she does not impose the same restriction on her Tumblr friends. As long as the rules of acceptable content are maintained – Carroll was not a pedophile, plot is not a necessity – any form of *Alice* adaptation or commentary is valid. Only when the purity of Carroll's original is undermined do arguments break out. In a way this blog displays a similar kind of purity dynamic towards Carroll the author

[58] "Gifs" are moving images, sometimes with captions, colored and uploaded by users. The name originates from the document suffix this type of data is saved as.

as it does toward Alice. Carroll becomes associated with an icon of childhood, and thus must remain undamaged. Alice, as we have seen, is rendered innocuous in most adaptations, which insist on her purity and simplicity. Little attention is paid to her subconscious as the source of Wonderland, while Wonderland itself is often foregrounded as a threat. In a way, this mirrors Stanley Fish's views on how interpretive communities are formed: "There is no single way of reading that is correct or natural, only "ways of reading" that are extensions of community perspectives" (Fish 16). This is very true of the way in which Carrollian bloggers assert the structure of their community: they acknowledge a multiplicity of readings, but are very clear to establish which of these are acceptable within the community.

As Wilson and Peterson state in "The Anthropology of Online Communities", "a debate has continued about whether online, virtual, or otherwise computer-mediated communities are real or imagined" (Wilson 456). A case can be made for the Carrollian's community to be accepted as real, in that they make conscious, active efforts to explain what they themselves view as the rules of their community. Especially as Wilson and Peterson go on to discuss the fact that most individuals reside between several communities they are a part of, forming online groups by means of "shared communicative competence and repertoires" (Wilson 459), the Carrollians set themselves apart as a group with a vested interest in all iterations of *Alice,* as well-informed, more-than-casual aficionados who often spend more time and energy on their research than some of the sources they cite[59]. Their interest runs deep, involving both community ideals as well as "correct" and "incorrect" ways to interpret the *urtext,* as well as deeply personal connections to the material. The demands of these users are to abandon interpretation when it leads to negativity, to maintain affection for the *urtext* of *Alice* and essentially to remain true to Carrolls'

[59] At least in their estimation.

desire for no didacticism to touch his text. Deep involvement with the text and with the norms they want to uphold around its interpretation make Carrollians not only bonded by the collective speech community formed through their specialization and interest, but also aligned with one another on an ethical or moral level.

As we have seen, in Victorian times, the focus of critical reception of the *Alice* books was on educating children and increasing the sense of whimsy in children's literature, adapting to a literary and artistic environment enamored with an ideal of innocent childhood, bloggers of the 21st century are reacting to an entirely new set of paradigms surrounding these ideas. Following Disney and the commodification of childhood, as well as the explosion of critical theory on the subject of child-rearing and psychoanalysis throughout both popular culture and academia, leading to the perhaps unhealthy focus on pedophilia that critic James Kincaid points out, the Carrollians seem to represent a form of cultural backlash. Over and over, they emphasize that the real crux of *Alice* is a girl having a strange dream. The main cause for its creation was that Carroll wanted to please a little girl he whom he had (platonically) befriended. In an almost structuralist plea, the Carrollians are asking Carroll's and his adaptors' modern audiences to take his work and his life as face value and not to become mired in the controversies (introduced later) now surrounding them.

The sense of protectiveness of fans towards their hobbyhorse is by no means unique to the *Alice* fan community. Already in 1992, Constance Penley noted this propensity in her article studying *Star Trek* fan communities, "Feminism, Psychoanalysis and Popular Culture". At the time when this article was written, fans interacted by selling transformative works to each other and mailing typewritten fanfiction to each other. Penley's research in this much larger community took place at *Star Trek* conventions and in person; she analyzed a phenomenon more

recognizable as 'popular culture' than *Alice*. By contrast, many modern Carroll fans are far more interested in academic discourse than the counterparts Penley discusses. They have been exposed to the original *Alice* books almost as an art object. Their approach to the *urtext* they are interested in is certainly reminiscent of Penley's analysis, however, as their readings are based in the detail-oriented knowledge of "the canon universe" (Penley 489); it is explicit in the *Alice* fandom that core participants are expected to have a certain expert's knowledge on Carroll's biography and writings, as well as a familiarity with the full breadth of merchandise and adaptations surrounding the books. While some fanfiction authors who write for multiple audiences have only a passing interest in one variation of *Alice,* the Carrollian bloggers, who create largely image-based content and consume image, film and text relating to *Alice* have an in-depth knowledge of all areas of *Alice* adaptation and interpretation.

Where Penley describes her informants as being proud of their accomplishments as writers and artists, as well as fearing misrepresentation (cf. Penley 485), a similar, but slightly different paradigm is true for *Alice* fans. They are proud of their own and each others' still images and gifs, as well as the collections of Alice materials they display through photography[60]. However, their fear of misrepresentation is not necessarily directed towards themselves as interpreters and producers. When I approached them and asked if they would take a survey, they were interested, even enthusiastic, about the idea of an analysis of transformative works in relation to the *Alice* fandom. Penley's informants, by contrast, were worried she could not portray their interest without intrinsically judging or othering them. Among Carrollians, the fear of misrepresentation most frequently shown is the fear that Carroll's life and works will be misinterpreted. Partially

[60] One user has their own website dedicated to their collection of *Alice* works (http://maayancd.wix.com/the-cheshire-cat) which has been reblogged by many of the Carrollians

this could be because Penley's informants were creating transformative works which radically subverted the canonical *urtext* of *Star Trek* and were fairly sexually explicit. Carrollians, as has been established, are very keen on maintaining the canon as they see it, unsubverted. The positioning of themselves as conservators and crusaders for a misunderstood text gives Carrollians more of a socially acceptable footing as fans, transferring the fear of misrepresentation from themselves onto their too often misunderstood *urtext.*

This is not to say that *Alice* fans are perceived, or think they are perceived, as residing entirely within the cultural mainstream. The intensity of their relationship with the text almost prohibits this. Henry Jenkins' description of the way fandom is perceived as "false worship" (cf. Jenkins, *Textual Poachers* 15) has some grounding in the mode in which fans discuss their *urtext*. For one, the collection of material comprising the *urtext* is commonly referred to as "the canon" (Penley 489). Carrollians don't necessarily use this term to describe anything beyond the actual text of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, yet I would contend that the *urtext* of their fandom comprises both the fictional texts and the rest of Carroll's writings, his diaries, letters and the primary source material documenting his life. All of these collected writings are treated similarly to a canon; they are the source of all knowledge on the topic of *Alice*, and more than that, only they are the source of authority on the topic. This is true for the case of Phantomwise and her repeated, impassioned pleas for Carroll enthusiasts to read the primary sources themselves so they will not only be convinced of her position but understand that it is the *only* position on Carroll's life and work. This is also true for the Carrollian Ravenwitch, who has a personal blog not dedicated to anything in particular, but heavily featuring Carrollian material – she posts images of the *Alice* narrative from film and drawing, but

the only secondary material on the subject to be found is analysis reblogged from her compatriots. This is an intentionally closed, self-referential world.

The relationship between "Carrollians" and the material they are interested in is essentially one of maintaining the text itself is the only valid source of invention and revision. At the same time, this text has only one correct factual interpretation (a little girl has a strange dream; Carroll was not a pedophile) though artistic reinterpretations can be formally varied as long as they maintain the "correct" content. In essence, these *Alice* fans adhere to a fundamentalist position: the original word of the author is the only authority acceptable. Where Roland Barthes reveled in the literary texts' "multiplicity" (Barthes 148) questioning the role of authorship in deciding what a text might "mean", "Carrollians" long for "a final signified, to close the writing" (Barthes 147); they long for a knowable intent and a knowable author, not an ill-defined space between the written and the read. Paradoxically, all of their energy and imagination as producers of transformative works is directed toward shoring up a canonical approach to both *Alice* and Lewis Carroll.

As I have shown, *Alice* comes into modernity in a number of ways. Strikingly, the book enters popular consciousness most forcefully in film format, with fans growing attached especially to the Disney version of the story before they reach for the original book. In doing so, a transition or dialogue is created between image and linguistic text. Film serves as an introductory medium, an artifact viewed for pleasure and while it is capable of being analyzed as such, the primary interaction for *Alice* fans with film is one of nostalgic longing for one's own childhood. Interacting later with the book, however, it is not only the fans' own childhood they become nostalgic for, but rather the one they have seen portrayed in film over the years. The book becomes more accessible the older the audience and the more the complex relationships

among author, child reader and adult reader are understood. Engaging with Carroll's text is immediately situated within these structures, arguably tainting the nostalgia tied to the films. Such tainting, I would argue, is what fans try to avoid through their repeated protestations of Carroll's innocence. *Alice* is defined by this particular interpretive community's desire to see mirrored its own concept of childhood. This is an imagined purity directly attributable to 20th century fantasies of Victorian childhood, but the interpretive community does not want to acknowledge that. Instead, the "Carrollians" create a self-sustaining cycle in which *Alice* mirrors childhood as they see it but is credited with defining childhood.

Conclusion

Over the course of this project, I have examined the following question: Why do we still care about *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*? By rights, a work containing so many references to its contemporary context ought to appear dated to us now. By rights, it ought to seem entirely unsuitable for children, who might not even understand the term "Victorian England", let alone oblique references to it in poetry. Nonetheless, here we are, a century and a half later, and *Alice* is alive and well in popular consciousness. Carroll's original book exists in literature, both in its original form and in literary works retelling the story. It exists in film, both as "straight" book-to-film adaptation and as transformation of the books into films intended for an adult audience. Finally, exists in the context of fan communities as a continually relevant, continually reread and reimagined phenomenon.

Alice achieves its mercurial status via a number of different avenues. Firstly, the circumstances in which Carroll wrote *Alice* mean that the books originated at the beginning of the tradition of children's literature. This gives them status both as a formative part of that genre as well as specificity to the historical circumstances of the Victorian era. Beyond the broad scope of context, *Alice* is also a personal story, written by Carroll for Alice Liddell, beginning as a fanciful story he told her off the top of his head. Both the time period and the circumstances of the story's first telling have become fictionalized in the interim 150 years, allowing *Alice* an origin myth of sorts. I argue that it is this fictionalization of the circumstances surrounding the text which mean it has become understood as an innately adaptable source, indeed, a source which is more authentic in adaptation than in original.

The origins for *Alice*'s adaptability are only one side to the history thereof – the other factor I have highlighted in causing the wealth of *Alice* material is the importance of visual

culture. While in Carroll's time, photography was a very new medium, one he himself was very interested in, the 20th century meant a movement of popular audiences away from literature and towards film. Given that *Alice* was, from the first handwritten edition Carroll gave Alice Liddell for Christmas, always imbued with illustrations, this book in particular has been a rich source for film adaptation. In my opinion, the most popularly influential of these film adaptations was Disney's 1951 *Alice in Wonderland*, and understanding how this film came into being helps to understand how those that followed it were conceived of.

Nowadays, *Alice* is possibly more on the radar of popular consciousness than ever. With more and more material based on *Alice* becoming available, and the internet providing a means of connection for fans of any and all versions, interest communities surrounding *Alice* are no longer confined to local Lewis Carroll book groups or academic circles. What these fans reveal about *Alice* and the role it has played in their lives is that they use it as a depository for their image of how childhood ought to be, and create a collective nostalgia for a phenomenon that does not exist in reality based on how they interpret the text. These normative impulses are visible in readings of the text conveyed by fan communities, and they are visible in the themes and tropes guiding popular film adaptations of *Alice* in recent years.

While I am still unconvinced I can fully offer an answer to the question of why *Alice* is still popular, given that some measure of the books' success must lie in the unknowable of the readers' emotional reaction to it, over the course of this project I have reached the following answer: *Alice* still matters, because by virtue of the unique circumstances surrounding the way the book was created and the way these circumstances have been interpreted since then, the book has become an icon for the idea of childhood to an adult audience. As the idea of childhood changes, so, too, does the idea of the book, and so, too, do the guiding tropes of adaptation.

Whether or not the book actually contains the notions of this (largely culturally constructed) concept of childhood has become more or less irrelevant, because interpretive communities believe they are seeing what is there rather than what they want to see. Similarly, the 'child' is figured as a constant, unchanging idea which is represented by the text. *Alice* becomes caught in the paradox in which the interpretation of the text is constantly changing precisely because no one believes the idea of childhood it has come to represent is changing.

Reading *Alice* and reading the way it appears in popular media becomes something of a gauge for how childhood is imagined and what values audiences (especially American audiences) feel nostalgia for. *Alice* is not necessarily a mirror in the traditional sense; it is a distorted mirror, bloating certain aspects of childhood and Victoriana in current estimation and diminishing others. *Alice*, I believe, is where film directors, fans, and even casual readers turn to see themselves through a looking-glass that shows them what they wish they looked like. But *Alice* is by no means the only text with a rich history of adaptation; it is by no means the only text with a striking and unique origin story. In fact, a variety of other texts with similar origins and similar trajectories have come after it, such as *Peter Pan* and *The Wizard of Oz.* Nor is *Alice* the only artifact of popular culture which is reformed in the readers' mind – in a sense, this could be said of all texts, and has been by thinkers such as Roland Barthes. In my opinion, especially in context with similar discussions about other texts, *Alice* remains an important text in understanding this phenomenon because of the dissonance surrounding what some readers want to see in *Alice* and what other readers want to see *Alice*'s origins. In order to counteract these inconsistencies, *Alice* fans become active agents in defining the content of their *urtext.* In examining reader response, *Alice* could be an invaluable tool.

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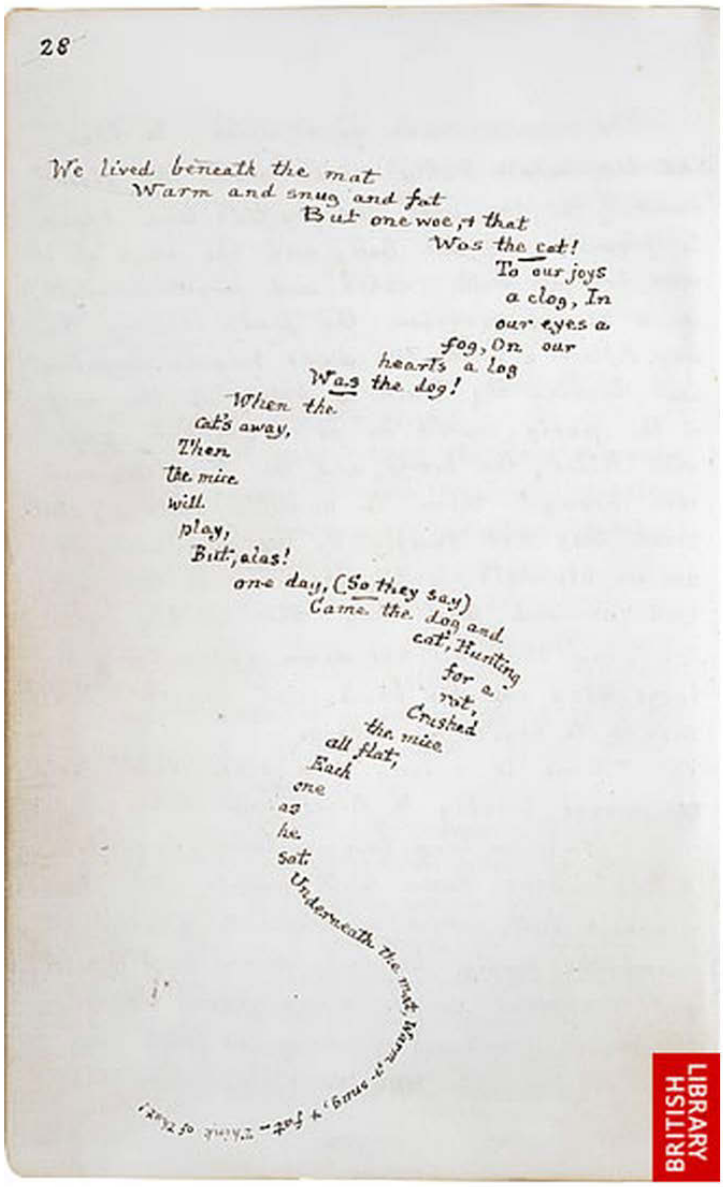
Appendix A

Illustrations and visual portrayals of *Alice*



Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures Under Ground, page 28

Fig. 1: Carroll's handwritten version of the mouse's tail/tale

Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures Under Ground, page 37

Fig. 2: Portrait of Alice in Frederick Rabbit's house, too large to fit either the house, textually, or the frame, visually. Her dark hair and serious expression are frequently noted as being different than subsequent portrayals.

"It *is* a long tail, certainly," said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse's tail; "but why do you call it sad?" And she kept on puzzling about it while the Mouse was speaking, so that her idea of the tale was something like this:– "Fury said to a

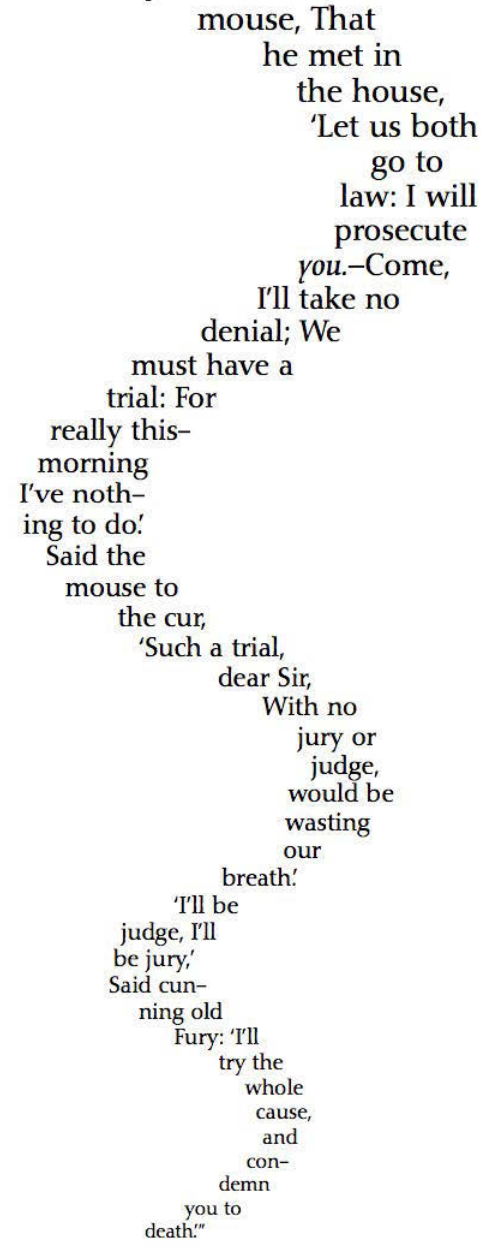


Fig. 3: Print version of the Mouse's tail/tale

"*That* you won't" thought Alice, and, after waiting till she fancied she heard the Rabbit just under the window, she suddenly spread out her hand, and made a snatch in the air. She did not get hold of anything, but she heard a little shriek and a fall, and a crash of broken glass, from which she concluded that it was just possible it had fallen into a cucumber-frame, or something of the sort.

Next came an angry voice–the Rabbit's–"Pat! Pat! Where are you?" And then a voice she had never heard before, "Sure then I'm here! Digging for apples, yer honour!"

"Digging for apples, indeed!" said the Rabbit angrily. "Here! Come and help me out of *this*!" (Sounds of more broken glass.)

Fig. 4: Tenniel's illustration style, more intricate and using more shading than Carroll's style. Integrated into the text in many spaces, and though some images have frames, many do not, allowing for a seamless transition between text and image.

CHAPTER X

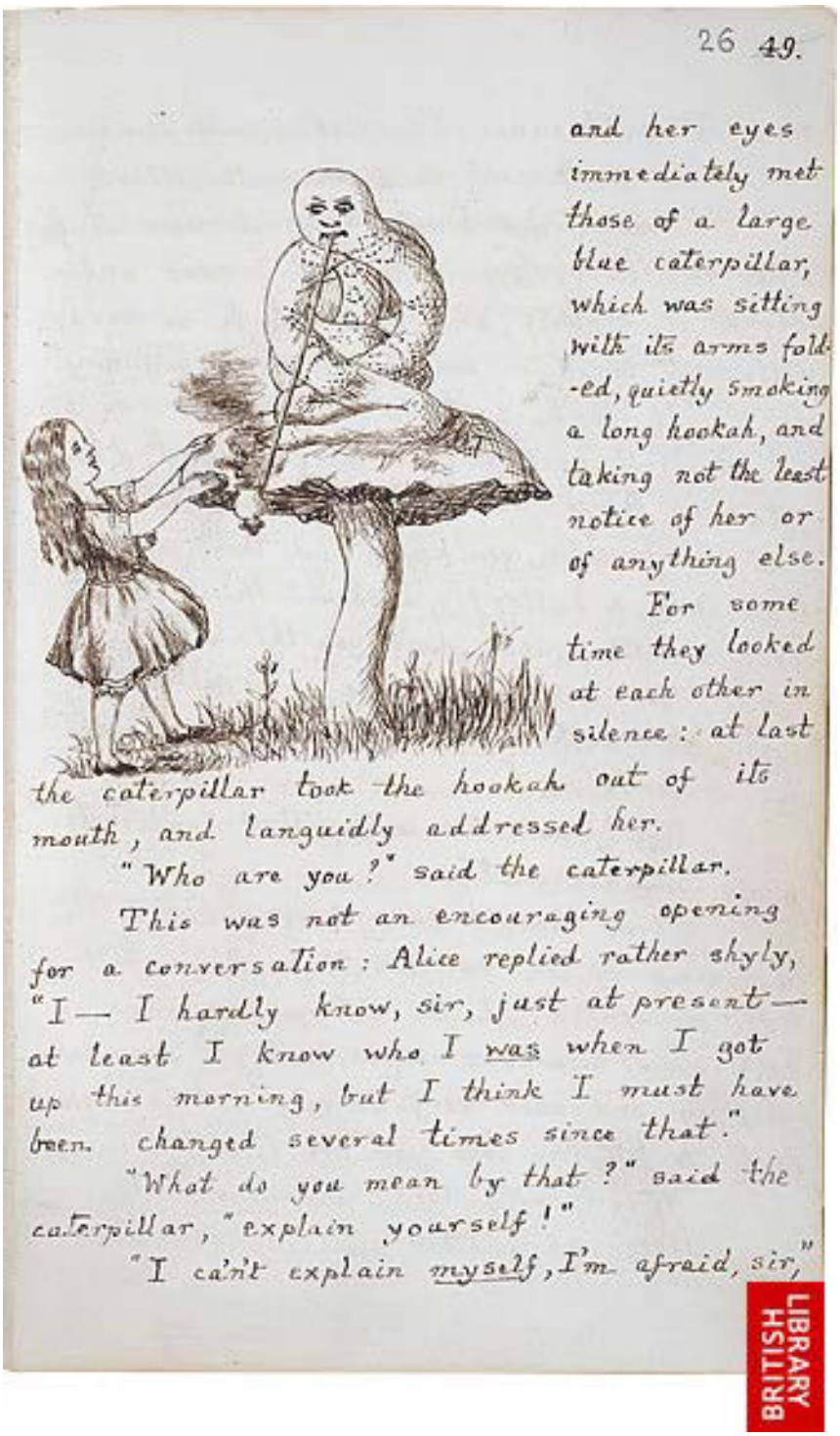
Shaking

She took her off the table as she spoke, and shook her backwards and forwards with all her might.

The Red Queen made no resistance whatever; only her face grew very small, and her eyes got large and green: and still, as Alice went on shaking her, she kept on growing shorter— and fatter— and softer— and rounder— and --

Fig. 5: The tenth chapter of *Through the Looking Glass* Nina Auerbach speaks about, more heavily image than content.

Fig. 6: The eleventh chapter of *Through the Looking-Glass*



26 49.

and her eyes immediately met those of a large blue caterpillar, which was sitting with its arms fold-ed, quietly smoking a long hookah, and taking not the least notice of her or of anything else.

For some time they looked at each other in silence: at last the caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth, and languidly addressed her.

"Who are you?" said the caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation: Alice replied rather shyly, "I— I hardly know, sir, just at present— at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since that."

"What do you mean by that?" said the caterpillar, "explain yourself!"

"I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, sir,"

Fig. 7: Carroll's original handwritten manuscript, with illustration of Alice meeting the caterpillar

Fig. 8: Tenniel’s Alice meeting the Caterpillar

Fig. 9: Tenniel's colored illustration of Alice meeting the caterpillar from *The Nursery Alice*

Fig. 10: Disney's 1951 Alice, voiced by and designed after Kathryn Beaumont, meeting the Caterpillar

Fig. 11: William Sterling's 1972 Alice, played by Fiona Fullerton, meeting the Caterpillar

Fig. 12: Nick Willing's 1999 Alice, played by Tina Majorino, meeting the Caterpillar

Fig. 13: American McGee's 2000 Alice meeting the Caterpillar (Videogame)

Fig. 15 (above) and 16 (below): Nick Willing's 2009 Alice, played by Caterina Scorsone, meets the Caterpillar

Fig. 17 (above) and 18 (below): Tim Burton's 2010 Alice, played by Mia Wasikowski meeting the Caterpillar

Fig. 19 (top), 20 (middle) and 21 (bottom), Once Upon A Time In Wonderland's Alice meets the Caterpillar

Fig. 22: Tumblr user Sedgewina's illustration of Alice meeting the Caterpillar

Appendix B

Fig. 1: List of *Alice* Adaptations in Film and on the Stage[61]; most frequently referenced in the survey adaptions appear in bold

Title	Year	Format	Description
Alice in Wonderland	1903	Silent film, black and white	Directed by Cecil Hepworth and Percy Stow; first film adaptation of *Alice.* Only one, incomplete copy still in existence
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland	1910	Silent film, black and white	Directed by Edwin S. Porter, 10 minutes long
Alice in Wonderland	1915	Silent film, black and white	Directed by W.W.Young
Alice Comedies	1923-1927	Animated cartoons	Directed and produced by Walt Disney before he owned his own company, now in the public domain – largely notable at the time for innovations in animation, now remembered for connection to Disney
Alice in Wonderland	1931	Black and white film	Directed by Bud Pollard, first talkie production of *Alice.* Released a year before the centenary of Lewis Carroll's birth; not very successful. Produced by Metropolitan Studios
Alice in Wonderland	1933	Black and white film	Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. The earliest *Alice* adaptation to still be in circulation, featuring an all-star cast, nonetheless a box office flop. Distributed by Paramount Pictures
Betty in Blunderland	1934	Black and white cartoon	Directed by Dave Fleischer; a seven-minute short forming part of the Betty Boop series. Distributed by Paramount Pictures.

[61] The decision which adaptations to include in this list stems from the adaptations listed by survey respondents as well as notable adaptations listed in secondary sources. The information on adaptations, i.e. year of release and director, is largely gained from tumblr user Phantomwise's entries on the subject the Wikipedia entry entitled "Films and television programmes based on *Alice in Wonderland*" as well as further articles on each of the films. While not necessarily a reliable source, Wikipedia does contain the most complete list of adaptations. Additionally, the fact that anyone can and does edit Wikipedia articles means that *Alice* fans are more likely to have had an impact in the creation of this list.

Alice au pays des merveilles	1949	Film with stop-motion animation sequenes	Directed by Dallas Bower and released in Europe; there was a British edition in English language but Disney sued to prevent it being released too closely in time to their own animated film. The films were released to U.S. audiences at the same time; neither did well.
Alice in Wonderland	**1951**	**Animated musical film**	**Directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske, produced by Walt Disney Productions. All-star cast of voice actors. A box office flop, but remained popular due to continued presence on broadcast television.**
The New Alice in Wonderland (or, What's a Nice Kid Like You Doing in a Place Like This?)	1966	Animated TV-movie	Directed by Alex Lovy, produced by Hanna-Barbara Productions. Rarely broadcast and not available in retail
Alice in Wonderland	1966	BBC television play	Directed by Jonathan Miller, a rarity in that it avoids adherence to Tenniel's illustrations. Included many famous stage actors and had music by Ravi Shankar; distributed by the BBC
Alice of Wonderland in Paris	1966	Film	Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. The earliest *Alice* adaptation to still be in circulation, nonetheless a box office flop. Distributed by Paramount Pictures
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland	1972	Musical film	Directed by William Sterling, produced in Great Britain. Won several BAFTAs and is still in circulation, though it has not been refurbished and is thus of lower technical quality; a favorite among the Carrollians, though not critically.
Alice in Wonderland, an X-rated Musical Comedy	1976	Adult film/musical	Directed by Bud Townsend and produced by Bill Osco, the first producer of mainstream adult movies. Eventually bought by 20th Century Fox and edited to obtain an R rating; still available in retail.
Alice ou la derniere fugue	1977	Film	Directed by Claude Chabrol, a loose adaptation tending more towards horror and an adult audience.

Jabberwocky	1977	Film	Directed by Terry Gilliam and produced by Python Studios, this fantasy film received mixed but mostly positive reviews and was based entirely on the poem "The Jabberwocky"
Alice in Wonderland	1981	Animated film	Original title *Alisa v Strane Chudes,* a USSR production, with 1982 follow-up *Alisa v Zazerkale*
Alice at the Palace	1982	Film of stage musical	Directed by Emile Ardolino, filmed version 1981 stage musical *Alice in Concert,* written by Elizabeth Swados*,* starring Meryl Streep
Alice in Wonderland	1983	Film of Broadway stage production	Directed by Kirk Browning and starring Kate and Richard Burton, the videotaping of this performance was conducted in a studio and formed a part of the PBS Great Perfomances series
Dreamchild	1985	Film	Directed by Gavin Miller and produced in the UK, a film focusing on Carroll's relationship with Alice Liddell with flashback sequences showing scenes from *Alice.*
Alice in Wonderland	1986	TV Miniseries	Four 30-minute episodes written and directed by Barry Letts, broadcasted by the BBC
Alice Through the Looking-Glass	1987	Animated film	Directed by Andrea Bresciani and Richard Slapczyniski, the only adaptation to focus solely on *Through the Looking-Glass.* Produced by Burbank Films Australia.
Alice in Wonderland	1988	Animated film	Directed by Rich Trueblood and produced by Burbank Films Australia, a tie-in to the previously released *Alice Through the Looking-Glass.*
Alice (Nêco z Alenky)	1988	Film with stop-motion animation sequences	Directed by Jan Swankmajer, a somewhat darker, more surrealist take on *Alice.* One of the few *Alice* adaptations received well by critics. Produced by Channel Four Films.
Adventures in Wonderland	1992-1995	Musical TV series	A Disney Channel original production based on the 1951 movie, now with live-action instead of

			animation. The original run was composed of 100 episodes.
Alice in Wonderland	1995	Japanese animated film	Directed by Toshiyuki Hiruma Takashi, direct-to-video short film musical adaptation of Alice.
Alice in Wonderland	**1999**	**Television film**	**Directed by Nick Willing, this two-part TV special featured an all-star cast and received four Emmys. Broadcast on NBC, a subsidiary of Comcast (in turn owned by GE). (Full description below)**
Phoebe in Wonderland	2008	Film	Directed by Daniel Barnz, independent film produced by Red Envelope Entertainment about a girl with Tourette's syndrome appearing in a school production of *Alice in Wonderland*
Alice	**2009**	**Television Miniseries**	**Directed by Nick Willing, released first in Canada and then on the SyFy channel (owned by NBC, see above). A darker and "more adult" adaptation of the source material, more closely related to science fiction. At the time it was the most-watched show on SyFy, though it received mediocre reviews critically. (Full description below)**
Malice in Wonderland	2009	Film	Directed by Simon Fellows and distributed by Sony, a dark version in which Wonderland is full of crime and corruption. Not widely known, those reviews it did receive were not good.
Wonderland	2009	Musical	Written by Frank Wildhorn and Jack Murphy, specifically for the Tampa Bay/Houston scene and only produced on Broadway in 2013. Received mixed critical reviews
Alice in Wonderland	**2010**	**Film with CGI animation**	**Directed by Tim Burton, this version has an adult Alice in an adult Wonderland as a savior; adapted to create more classic fantasy stakes and tropes. Won a number of awards including two**

			Oscars and did very well at the box office; critically received fairly mixed reviews. (full description below)
Alice in Murderland	2010	Film	Directed by Dennis Devine, a low budget horror film taking place at an Alice-themed costume party that received uniformly terrible reviews. Nonetheless has a fan following.
Once Upon a Time in Wonderland	2013-2014	TV series	A tie-in to another ABC (a subsidiary of Disney) series, *Once Upon a Time*, this show follows the same logic, which is that the characters and universes of multiple Disney movies connect to one another. Cancelled after one season – poor rating despite decent reviews.
Sherlock Through the Looking Glass	2013	Stage play	Written and directed by Gus Krieger, received poor reviews and has not been widely adapted.
Then She Fell	2014	Theater performance	Directed by Zach Morris, Tom Pearson, and Jennine Willet; and immersive performance piece taking place in New York until the end of 2014.
Red Kingdom Rising	2014	Film	Horror film centering on repressed child abuse with themes and characters from *Alice* as symbol thereof directed and produced by Navin Dev, received decent reviews but has yet to make an American debut.

Descriptions of relevant adaptations

1. *Alice in Wonderland* (1999) (Dir. Nick Willing)

Nick Willing's first foray into adapting Alice, this television movie is notable for its attention to detail and faithfulness to the books. As a consequence of this and the format it was produced in – a Hallmark entertainment product – the target becomes a family audience. This is evident perhaps most obviously in that the protagonists remains a child; the more adult-oriented 2009 and 2010 versions cast Alice as an adult. It also evident in that what effort is made to write in an overarching plot into Carroll's episodic tale is significantly less dramatic and overwhelming than it is in the more adult versions.

Alice appears at least several years older than the book's seven years, and, much like Disney's Alice, she is on a quest. It is not to find the White Rabbit though; rather she consistently claims to be searching for the beautiful garden she saw through the small door just after falling down the rabbit hole, but is unable to access at first. The search for this garden becomes her talking point with most of the characters she encounters, though it quickly becomes evident she is looking for it primarily as a place to hide. The driving "plot" of the movie is Alice overcoming her stage fright and being able to perform at her parents' garden party; translating Carroll's poetry into song and featuring most of Wonderland as performers of some sort. The movie culminates in her overcoming her anxieties and standing up in the trial of the Knave of Hearts, choosing to grow larger by eating the mushrooms she still had from the run-in with the Caterpillar, not involuntarily growing as she does in the book. When asked by the White Rabbit, she says "Yes, I am confident", to which the Rabbit replies, "Then you don't need us anymore", clearly stating the theme of the movie.

2. *Alice* (2009) (Dir. Nick Willing)

The basic idea of Wonderland Willing presents in this 2009 miniseries is that, much as in the real world, 150 years have passed and Wonderland has developed a market economy based literally on the opiate of the masses. The Queen of Hearts runs a casino in which the Walrus and the Carpenter, refigured as research scientists, drain the positive emotions inspired by winning from kidnapped humans from the real world they refer to as Oysters. These emotions are then bottled and sold. During an exposition sequence fairly early on, Hatter, who figures as both a guide and a love interest for Alice, explains that the Queen "controls people with a quick fix". In the same sequence, one of the many uses for the iconic poetry from the books is revealed; in order to gain access to the resistance headquarters, Hatter and the gatekeeper, presumably a stand-in for a figure from the library sequence in the book, recite lines from "How Doth the Little Crocodile". Coming hot on the heels of Hatter's revelation that the Alice of the books, who in this version was also real and brought "the whole house of cards tumbling down" during her visit, this showcasing of the changing function the verse has serves as a nod towards the adaptation of Carroll's source material; the once silly and frivolous poetry becomes a symbol for the resistance to oppression. With many of the book's most iconic lines and moments, the adaptation reappropriates them in far more sinister contexts. For example, the March Hare, known for readers of the book only in conjunction with Hatter, is now the Queen's assassin – whom she had executed, and is now brought back to life as a sort of cyborg. The connection between Hatter and March Hare remains largely unexplored, but towards the end of the third act, whilst being tortured by March Hare, Hatter spouts out a series of quotes from the Mad Tea Party, without context and relevant to nothing except the meta-text of *Alice* as a cultural institution. The subtle references continue throughout as a sort of easter egg for *Alice* veterans,

e.g. naming the kidnapped people "oysters" and the scientists the Walrus and the Carpenter, Alice's insistence that Jack (the Knave of Hearts, also a love interest) is innocent in an entirely different context than the book's trial (though there is a trial), and the Dormouse's tendency towards falling asleep in the cumulative minute and a half he is on screen. As with many adaptations, it is watchable without the background knowledge provided by familiarity with the source material, but it is assumed there will be background knowledge. The key characters and iconic lines must pop up, not necessarily because they serve a narrative purpose but because "these are regarded as iconic elements without which the story would seem lacking" (Brooker 205).

Willing's 2009 Alice herself is *not* the Alice of the books, a key departure. The question of identity is always central in an Alice adaptation as the caterpillar must always ask who she is; in the book, she "hardly know[s]" because she has "changed several times" (Carroll 49) that day, referring to her multiple changes in size. In the 1951 Disney movie and Willing's 1999 Hallmark movie, both simply adaptations of the books rather than continuations, this portion of dialogue is repeated almost verbatim. In Tim Burton's 2010 film, something of a sequel, Alice is also grown up, but she is the same Alice and must convince the denizens of Wonderland (here Underland) and, more importantly, herself that she had been there as a little girl. Willing's Alice on the other hand is a martial arts instructor from the present day. Her name often causes a reference to the "Alice of legend", but unlike Burton's Alice, this does not mean she is expected to fulfill a prophecy of any sort. Instead, as the plot slowly reveals, she was scouted out by Jack, part of a political resistance to his mother, the Queen of Hearts, because the Carpenter is her father who went missing ten years prior. He then gave her the ring which activates the Looking Glass portal between worlds, and hoped to start a coup. The shift away from Alice simply as the point-of-

view character introducing a new world to Alice as a pawn of sorts in a greater political game marks two major departures from most adaptations. For one, this version of the *Alice* story enters Wonderland through the Looking-Glass. Most other adaptations enters it through the Rabbit Hole; this posits that Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world are one and the same.

3. *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) (Dir. Tim Burton)

Alice escapes a proposal she is disinclined to accept, and follows the White Rabbit down the Rabbit-Hole and into Wonderland, following the standard sequence of events almost up until her third size change, at which point it is revealed she is being watched. She runs into a whole host of mixed Wonderland and Looking-Glass creatures in the forest, who claim she is destined to slay the Jabberwocky. Through a lengthy exposition, the audience learns the Red Queen took the throne from the White Queen and rules over Wonderland (apparently incorrectly titled by Alice, actually Underland) as a tyrant. The Red Queen is actually a melding of the Red Queen from the books and the Queen of Hearts, having mostly metallic card figures as her soldiers, while the White Queen, who rarely appears in adaptations, has chess pieces. The denouement of the film features Alice accepting that she is not dreaming up Wonderland – and didn't as a child – and accepting her fate of slaying the Jabberwocky. Afterwards, she returns to the real world, spurning Hatter as a love interest, and proceeds to confront all of her fears and take on a position in her Father's shipping industry, rejecting the role society gave her. A sequel is slated for 2016.

Appendix C

Non-Film Adaptations

1. *The Looking Glass Wars*

Frank Beddor's *Looking Glass Wars* "unabashedly challenges" (Looking Glass Wars) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* In this young adult trilogy, the first part of which was published in 2006, Alice Liddell is really Alyss Heart, who is pushed through the pool of tears from Wonderland into the real world, and is adopted by the Liddell family. She was sent there to escape the brutal civil war in Wonderland, and after telling Lewis Carroll, a family friend, about her troubles, she is disgusted to see them turned into a children's book. Eventually, she returns to Wonderland, and the remainder of the first book covers her return to Wonderland and ascent as queen. The further parts of the series show first an attack of the red queen on Alyss's monarchy and then a failure of imagination. Imagination is here the source of power, political and military – Alyss, having the strongest imagination, vanquishes her enemies. The characters are recast as figures within a military operation; "hatter" and "cat" both become codenames for assassins. The books spawned a series of graphic novels centered on the Mad Hatter, who is here Alyss's chief military advisor with a mysterious past. There are also a number of games, physical, online and for mobile devices; the franchise has proven fairly popular.

2. American McGee's *Alice*

American McGee's 2000 *Alice* is a video game with elements of horror published by Electronic Arts. The game is set up as a sequel to Lewis Carroll's books, in which Alice's house burned down with her family inside, and as a consequence she was put in an insane asylum. Here, she is brought back into Wonderland as a teenager to save it (though it is implied she is also saving herself from insanity). The game takes the form of a series of battles against the various characters from Wonderland, and by defeating them, Alice hopes to regain her sanity and freedom. Much like the books, the game follows a series of settings in which Alice battles a character, though they are all created in a much darker imagining of the worlds. There is a second part as well, with a third in production.

Date: November 11, 2013
To: Helen Bendix
Cc: Deirdre D'Albertis and Diana Brown
From: Michelle Murray
Re: Reshaping Alice in Wonderland

DECISION: APPROVED

Dear Helen,

The Bard Institutional Review Board reviewed your proposal at our November meeting. Your proposal is approved through November 11, 2014.

Please notify the IRB if your methodology changes, or unexpected events arise.

We wish you the best of luck with your research.

Michelle Murray
mkmurray@bard.edu
IRB Chair