A Load of Nonsense

Themes of Carroll's Alice Books
in Film Adaptations

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Abstract

Adaptation studies is a relatively new field that explores translations of texts into other media. Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books are influential, nineteenth-century novels and have inspired many adaptations. Because of this, and the lack of a deeper understanding of how the novels are translated into film adaptations, this study will look at the themes from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) and how they are interpreted and transposed to film.

By close reading of the novels and two selected film adaptations (Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) and Henderson's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998)), the themes of nonsense, logic and time will be analysed. These themes are the most important in both *Alice* novels and could not be omitted from an adaptation completely. Each adaptation has adjusted these themes differently to fit their own purposes, by reducing or increasing the amount of references, not only according to their own interpretations of the texts, but also to adjust the adaptation to their audience and kind of film adaptation.

Even though an adaptation is never the original, it is not necessarily "better or less good" than the source text. This study shows that the adaptation makes use of the source text to create a new text, with different views and ideas, but with the same core, adjusted to serve a different purpose. These texts, in their turn, can be used as new 'source texts' for other adaptations.

Keywords

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Introduction

Telling stories has been part of human nature since its very existence. From cave paintings, to the written word, to printed books, people have been telling stories in every age and every culture. It is a way of learning via play. Through the centuries, the way of telling stories has changed. Stories were spread orally. When these were eventually written down, there were countless different versions. On top of that, every scribe had a different idea of how to write them down. Therefore, every manuscript of a story is different. The printing press brought with it more standard versions of texts: every printed version contains the same information—though new editions are often published. Not too long ago, a new way of spreading stories came with the development of technology: film. After theatre, which made extensive use of stories spread via the written word, film also attempted to use written stories as a source for screen adaptations. But the way every scribe wrote a story differently, every director adapts a story to film in a different way. The study of a text and its adaptation or adaptations is called adaptation studies[1].

"Classic" children's books often inspire film adaptations. There seem to be films of *Alice in Wonderland* for every generation ("Adapting children's literature" 168). Lewis Carroll's books—*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871)—have been adapted many times, both together and separately. The story of Alice is known worldwide, and the novels have been adapted very often to all different kinds of media, "from stage Alices to Kafkaesque film versions to, *horresco referens*, pornographic novels based on Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (Lecercle 1). Because of the number of adaptations that have been made over the last century, the *Alice* stories told in the adaptations are sometimes better known than the original novels themselves. Lecercle mentions a game: "ask the woman in the street what the name 'Alice in Wonderland' suggests to her, and elicit the same sort of response as in the case of 'Frankenstein' —the account would be reasonably accurate, except that the name of Walt Disney would have pride of place, over and above Lewis Carroll, even as Boris Karloff tends to overshadow Mary Shelley" (1). This means that over time an adaptation can overshadow or become more well-known than the original story.

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[1] Boyd's *On the Origin of Stories* is a book on how mankind started to tell stories and why it is human nature to tell stories. This paragraph is a simple compilation of information gathered throughout this book.

There are so many adaptations, and films or series loosely based on these stories for any list to include all, therefore there is no list of *Alice* adaptations that is complete. Most adaptations make use of the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and add elements from *Through the Looking-Glass*. There are few adaptations only based on the Looking-Glass story, to be recognised by titles such as "Through the Looking Glass", as opposed to "Alice in Wonderland". Some important live-action film adaptations are Hepworth and Stow's *Alice in Wonderland* (1903), a twelve-minute (with that the longest British film then), silent movie and the first *Alice* adaptation on film; Disney's *Alice Comedies* (1923-27); Paramount's *Alice in Wonderland* (1933); Miller's BBC film *Alice in Wonderland* (1966); Millar's *Dreamchild* (1985); and Henderson's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998). Some known animated adaptations are Fleischer's *Betty in Blunderland* (1934); *Thru the Mirror* (1936) with Disney's Mickey Mouse; and Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951). Other loose adaptations include *Alice at the Palace* (1982), which is a film version of Swado's *Alice in Concert* (1981); *Malice in Wonderland* (2009); *Alice in Murderland* (2010); and Tim Burton's films *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) and *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (2016). Some of these adaptations are more popular or more well-known than others, and some may have influenced others. But the web of influence or intertextuality between all of the *Alice* versions is nearly untraceable, as Leitch notes: "each individual adaptation invokes many precursor texts besides the one whose title it usually borrows… no intertextual model, however careful, can be adequate to the study of adaptation if it limits each intertext to a single precursor" (qtd. in Fleming 184).

There are several reasons for the popularity of the *Alice* texts for adaptation purposes. Bonner and Jacobs state that "[a] visual adaptation of Alice does not start from the comparatively blank slate of a verbal description alone. This may have contributed to its adaptogenic quality" (40); this refers to Tenniel's drawings, which accompany the stories. Two other reasons for its popularity are the nonsense genre and the time the original texts are from. Adaptations of Victorian texts, such as the *Alice* novels, have been "a staple of twentieth-century entertainment" (Troost 75), meaning that especially Victorian novels have been attractive choices for film adaptations. Victorian novels have been favoured for adaptations because the Victorian era is "a period still almost within living memory in which culture we feel we have strong roots" (qtd. in "Adaptations" 12). Apart from their time, the nonsense genre of the *Alice* books is an interesting choice for filmmakers, as this genre provides a wide range of possibilities and approaches. Nonsense can be turned into comedy for a family audience (e.g. *Alice comedies*), into madness for thriller or horror (e.g. *Malice in Wonderland* and *Murder in Wonderland*), into adult films (e.g. *Alice in Wonderland* (1976)), or adventure series (e.g. *Once*

Upon a Time in Wonderland (2013-2014)). The possibilities are countless and have been used to the fullest. Every director has different ideas and interpretations of what a text means or what is important in a text, because "every reading of a literary text is a highly individual act of cognition and interpretation" (McFarlane 15). Therefore every adaptation takes different aspects from the novels to transpose to film and results in contrasting adaptations.

      Some research has been done on Carroll's books, for example on recurring themes, such as the nonsense genre, time, and logic. These last two are often brought into context with Carroll's life. Especially Beer delves into Carroll's relation with time, and how this is shown in his novels. Braithwaite expands on logic in this way. Lecercle, Flescher, and Pitcher explain the nonsense genre, mostly in relation to Carroll's novels, as these are prime examples of this genre. Since adaptation studies is a relatively new field, not much research has been done on adaptations of these books. The intended audience for several *Alice* adaptations is researched by Sawyer Fritz. Hidgon and Lehrman talk about the 1951 Disney adaptation, and the entire process of Walt Disney's view and how they came to the film as it was made in 1951. This same adaptation has been mentioned in a few other articles on other Disney adaptations, for example Beveridge, who talks about madness in Disney's films. But Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books in adaptation have not been researched much more than this. The *Alice* books have been adapted countless times, from full-feature films to single episodes TV shows. Since film has become a popular medium, many people have never read the original stories, but everyone knows the title "*Alice in Wonderland*". Not only have the books influenced literature today, it has also influenced and inspired the medium of film. The *Alice* stories were originally intended as children's literature, but have gained a much wider audience. Questions about certain adaptations were asked, for example what the influence of these adaptations is on their child audience, and whether children should not grow up to read the original version before watching a film adaptation (Sammond 2; Bonner and Jacobs 37). For these reasons, more research on adaptations of *Alice* books should be done, as there is a lot to be learned about adaptations, especially of children's books and the nonsense genre. Carroll's *Alice* stories are a good starting point, because they are so influential.

      As mentioned before, a director can adapt to the original story in many ways. Troost distinguishes three categories of adaptations: Hollywood style, Heritage style, and Fusion (75). The first is a complete change from the source text, the second is a close adaptation, and the third is in between these two, in between complete deviation from and close adaptation of the source text. Others use different terminologies, but most have similar meanings. To avoid confusion these will be the terms used in this dissertation. However close the adaptation stays

to the source text, the original author's voice is lost, as the new director or writer decides what they think the text means and what they want their own adaptation to say. An interesting view, therefore, is to see how the 'essence' of the story can be found in different adaptations. Since themes are the main subjects or ideas of a story, they are important to the 'essence'. In the *Alice* books, there are three main topics that can be identified as themes in the novels: the genre of nonsense, logic and time. Other topics might be identified, but for the scope of this study more themes would be impossible to discuss in detail. As mentioned before, the *Alice* books are main examples of the nonsense genre, and that is why nonsense is an important theme to discuss. Time and logic were important in Carroll's life, which is visible in his books. How these themes are influenced by Carroll's life in relation to the books will be discussed and elaborated on in chapter one.

The adaptations selected for this study are Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) and Henderson's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998). These specific adaptations are chosen because of their relevance in the development of *Alice* adaptations and their great difference in approach. Disney's animated adaptation has become an *Alice* version many children have grown up with, and has become the original to many people. "The chronology of encounter may establish a hierarchy that is individual, or socially and historically specific" (Bonner and Jacobs 39). It is the most influential adaptation and the oldest *Alice* adaptation still watched today (Sawyer Fritz 113). Henderson's live-action adaptation on the other hand, is less well-known. It is one of the few adaptations solely adapting the second novel: *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871). The great difference between the two adaptations is that, in Troost's definitions, Disney's adaptation can be classified as a Hollywood-style adaptation, while Henderson's can be classified as a Heritage-style adaptation. Disney in general is said to not simply adapt a story, but to steal it, and to make it '*his*' story, "much to the disparagement of those who seek to preserve and revere the literary original" ("Adapting children's literature" 171). The second part of this sentence—he who seeks to "preserve and revere"—describes Henderson's approach to Carroll's books. Disney's *Alice* adaptation, on the one hand, is said to employ "vibrant songs and a lush spectacle of colors rather than intelligent banter and wordplay to captivate its audiences from the opening credits" and to focus on the "culture of popcorn and bubblegum" (qtd. in Sawyer Fritz 113). Henderson's *Alice* adaptation, on the other hand, seems "less concerned with adapting the text to engage child viewers", and more with preserving Carroll's original dialogue. He follows the novel almost page by page (Sawyer Fritz 120). The choice for these specific adaptations, therefore, is their completely

opposite approach to the source texts and their different adaptation style, which will result in a different treatment of the themes of nonsense, time and logic.

Both these films have adapted the *Alice* novels with different views and purposes, and have adjusted parts of the stories—from adjusting the storyline to adding or omitting characters. Sawyer Fritz has researched the intended audience of different *Alice* adaptations, and has looked at aspects such as characters, dialogue, and adapted content to this purpose. Themes are hardly discussed, while these are important to stories. To fill this gap in knowledge, this study will look at the themes from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871), namely nonsense, logic and time, and how they are interpreted and transposed to Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) and Henderson's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998).

By close reading, the nonsense genre, logic, and time can be discovered and defined as themes in the novels. These will be analysed and discussed in relation to the two mentioned film adaptations. Chapter one is devoted to introducing the novels and analysing the themes. Chapter two and three, then, are dedicated to an analysis of the film adaptations, focussing on how the themes can be found in each film. In the discussion, a comparison is included between the film adaptations and the novels, and between the films themselves. To keep the structure clear, the themes will be discussed in the same order in each chapter, namely nonsense, logic, and time.

Chapter 1: the Novels and their Themes

> *"Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin," thought Alice, "but a grin without a*
> *cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life."*
>
> (*Alice's Adventures* 56)

The most curious thing Alice ever saw in her life. This was Lewis Carroll's talent: to make people read about the most curious things. This is quite surprising, since Lewis Carroll—the writer of the famous *Alice* books: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Alice through the Looking-Glass* (1871)—was a pseudonym for Charles L. Dodgson, a mathematician and a lecturer, who was described as "a puttering, fussy, fastidious, didactic bachelor, who was almost painfully humourless in his relations with the grown-up world around him" (Woollcott 5). It is 'surprising' because his books seem anything but fastidious or especially humourless. Actually, it was said that he "gave mathematics a holiday: he carried logic into the wild lands of illogicality" (Chesterton XX). Logic, in his books, was played with, joked with, and taken to its limits. Time, too, has its place in the novels. Sometimes it is combined with logic, used in puns or turned around for humorous effects. This will be discussed more in the section 'time'.

Carroll's novels both centre on a little girl named Alice. Her visit to Wonderland is filled with encounters with the strangest of characters. She follows a White Rabbit with a watch who keeps repeating that he is late; she nearly drowns in a pool of her own tears and joins a caucus race to get dry. Then there is the caterpillar, a mad tea party, she meets the Queen of Hearts and is later present at a trial for someone stealing the Queen's tarts. Her adventure through the looking-glass has a more coherent storyline, where Alice joins a game of chess as a pawn, with the goal of reaching the other side of the chess board to become a queen. On every new square she comes across new characters or challenges. Both novels are frame stories of Alice falling asleep and dreaming about the adventures in Wonderland or the mirror world. The genre of both stories is nonsense, and the themes of logic and time are present. These three recurring features are all used to the purpose of humour—as said, ironically written by a "humourless" author. To be able to analyse the adaptations in terms of themes and genre, their use and importance in the novels need to be defined first.

Nonsense

"There's no use trying," she said, *"one* ca'n't *believe impossible things."*

(*Through the Looking-Glass* 173)

Nonsense literature is a genre that was introduced in the Victorian Age, along with the rise of children's literature (Chesterton XX). Nonsense is a term that seems straightforward, but in literature it might entail more than simply the absence of sense. There are a few texts explaining nonsense, often including Carroll's name, because his texts were typical examples of nonsense. Lecercle explains nonsense texts such:

> "A nonsense text […] plays with the bounds of common sense in order to remain within view of them, even if it has crossed to the other side of the frontier; but it does not seek to limit the text's meaning to one single interpretation—on the contrary, its dissolution of sense multiplies meaning. This is because a nonsense text requires to be read on two levels at once— two incompatible levels: not 'x means A', but 'x is both A and, incoherently, B'. In other words, nonsense deals not in symbolism but in paradox." (20)

It is evident that the *Alice* books are nonsense literature; they could not possibly be placed in another genre. Flescher even seems to define nonsense by the standard of *Alice*. She explains nonsense literature in these terms: "Nonsense bears the stamp of paradox. Two terms of the paradox are order and disorder" (128). She explains that "the backbone of nonsense" is a strict pattern, which can be the "rhythmic structure of verse, the order of legal procedure, or the rules of a chess game" (128). These three examples of 'strict patterns' are clearly present in the *Alice* books. The distinction between sense and nonsense is that one follows the set patterns and the other departs from it—nonsense leaves the logical order of structured settings, though it is implicitly aware of the conventional order (Flescher 129). Evidently, nonsense can take several forms. These forms of nonsense can be summarised as this: nonsense deliberately departs from the structures expected in e.g. verse, legal procedures, or games; and paradox is often involved, giving double meanings to the text or the passage.

There are many examples of nonsense that overlap with logic, but there are some examples from Carroll's text that seem solely nonsense related. The poem "Jabberwocky" is the clearest example of nonsense, and perhaps also the best known (*Through the Looking-Glass* 130). That it has the structure of a poem is obvious—it looks and sounds like a poem—but the content is gibberish. The words used can be classified as verbs and nouns, subjects and objects, but it is impossible for the reader to interpret the meaning of the poem. Another plain example

of nonsense is the way of playing croquet with flamingos for mallets, hedgehogs for balls, and card-deck soldiers for arches (*Alice's Adventures* 71). Even without going through the mentioned elements of what nonsense is, this clearly is nonsense. Since this is not necessarily a logical problem, Flescher's idea of nonsense is the most relevant here, namely the rules of a game. The rules of the game of croquet might still be in place, but they are impossible to follow, since the essence of the game has been changed to play with living creatures, some of which are biased towards the players (i.e. the soldiers who do not wish to be beheaded). It is clear which game is being played, but it is impossible for Alice to play it, as her flamingo keeps bending its neck, and her hedgehog keeps crawling away (*Alice's Adventures* 71).

There are also a few instances when Alice herself refers to statements as nonsense. For instance in her conversation with the Red Queen in *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice says "A hill *ca'n't* be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense—" (*Through the Looking-Glass* 138). And she is right: for the Red Queen to call a hill a valley would be nonsense, because the definition of a hill makes it impossible for it to be a valley. Later in the same book when Tweedledum and Tweedledee tell her she is only part of the Red King's dream, Alice says "I know they're talking nonsense […] and it's foolish to cry about it" (*Through the Looking-Glass* 163). Alice says Tweedledum and Tweedledee are talking nonsense, as she knows she is real on accord of some of her own argument—if she was not real, she should not be able to cry—but despite that, their talk does scare her and makes her cry (*Through the Looking-Glass* 163).

Nonsense is most obviously present in these books in the form of rules of games, poems and songs—the "Jabberwocky" in particular, and Alice's statements throughout the novels.

Logic

"Which way? Which way?" holding her hand on the top of her head
to feel which way it was growing.

(*Alice's Adventures* 9)

The theme of logic especially is closely connected to the nonsense genre, since logic—or the lack or reversal thereof—is the basis of most nonsense. The link between logic and nonsense is described by Braithwaite: "logic has two closely related tasks—the analysis and criticism of inference, and the analysis of the propositions or judgments which are used in inference. This latter task might be called the analysis of sense, or 'contrariwise', the analysis of nonsense" (178). As a mathematician and logician, Carroll's nonsense relates mostly to logical problems and humour, either by using pure or applied logic, or by using language (Pitcher 594;

Braithwaite 176). Both tales are filled with puns and misunderstandings in the use of language. Therefore paradox, wordplay and puns are explicitly important in the *Alice* books. The dialogues are often meaningless, though they are usually about meaning (Flescher 137). This "incongruity"—which is key to the humour in *Alice*—is found in "the relationships between language and meaning, order and disorder, formal pattern and imagination of language" (Flescher 142-143).

As said, there are different forms of logic, and all can be found in the *Alice* books. One example is the one given at the start of this section: when Alice is changing size and puts her hand on her head to find out whether she is growing or shrinking (*Alice's Adventures* 9), which would not be helpful to her at all. Her hand would just go along with her head, so this will not help her find the answer to her question. This is an example of applied logic. An example of pure logic is when the Cheshire Cat explains he is mad, because a dog is not mad, and the Cat shows emotions the opposite way a dog does, so his logical conclusion is that he is mad (*Alice's Adventures* 55). The Cat's reasoning is, of course, flawed in many ways, which is one of the reasons it is humorous. The other reason is that some might see some sense in it, like Alice herself. An example of logic by use of language is the explanation that "lessons" are called such "because they lessen from day to day" (*Alice's Adventures* 84). Other examples are "finding it" and wondering what "it" might mean (*Alice's Adventures* 20), or confusing "time" as a concept with "Time" as a personal name (*Alice's Adventures* 60).

Of course there are countless examples from these novels, but since the goal of this chapter is simply to get an understanding of the theme of logic in the *Alice* books, only to discuss them in the film adaptations, more examples would be irrelevant at this point.

Time

> *"If you knew Time as well as I do,"* said the Hatter,
> *"you wouldn't talk about wasting* it. *It's* him.*"*
>
> (*Alice's Adventures* 60)

"Time" is a theme that is less obviously expressed in the novels, but, when reading closely, it plays a prominent part in Carroll's life and books. Before the 1830s, time was thought to be "a relatively stable continuum" based on information from the bible (Murphy 10). But later, after the discoveries that both earth and humankind were infinitely older than ever thought, "other scientific developments during the century intensified the fascination with time's passage that Lyell and Darwin had initiated" (Murphy 12). These findings created uncertainty of mankind's

place on earth and its temporal span (Murphy 12). On top of that, life became faster with the industrial revolution, which introduced trains, factories, and other types of technology.

Lewis Carroll, i.e. logician and mathematician Charles Dodgson, was preoccupied with the concept of time, because the Victorian Age brought new views on time, and "temporality is fundamental both to logic and to possible worlds" (Beer xxvii-xxviii). Apart from the obvious stress on the concept of time in the novels, he writes in his letters about time and memories of childhood. In a letter to Alice Liddell's mother, he writes about "that foolish time that seemed as if it would last for ever" (qtd. in Beer xxvii). Beer's explanation of this is that "time returns in memory as timelessness. […] But timelessness is delusive; Carroll continues the sentence 'and now I am an old man, already beginning to feel a little weary of life'" (Beer xxvii-xxviii).

Time references in *Alice's Adventures* are mostly related to being late (or impatient), and hurrying (or just the opposite). This is shown in the character of the White Rabbit ("Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" (*Alice's Adventures* 3-4)), the speed of Cheshire Cat's appearing and disappearing (e.g. *Alice's Adventures* 55), and most of the conversation at the Mad Tea-Party, including the quote opening this section (*Alice's Adventures* 57-65). *Through the Looking-Glass* deals with time a bit differently, especially since in the Looking-Glass world time runs backwards, but also because of the chess game Alice is playing in, in which some pieces more very fast or very slow. In *Through the Looking-Glass* time relates to age, being too slow or too fast, and also time passing strangely. This is shown in the conversation with Humpty Dumpty about e.g. un-birthdays (*Through the Looking-Glass* 184-185), how the Red Queen has to run as fast as she can just to stay in the same place and how the Red King is asleep the entire game, and how time passes with days at a time (*Through the Looking-Glass* 223).

Carroll seemed to have created a different sense of time even in his writing style. One way he does this is by using puns, which, as mentioned in the section 'logic', the *Alice* books make great use of. Puns "split the flow of events in time" (qtd. in Beer xxxiv), but they seem to "proliferate […] though they may lead to dead ends" (Beer xxxiv). An especially noteworthy quote in Beer's text explains the effect of puns: "Conversations […] are continually halted by puns, by a splitting of the discourse into two simultaneous and disparate paths, each followed by a respective member of the conversation" (xxxiv). When looking back at some of the conversations Alice has with other characters, this is exactly what happens. They do not understand each other at all and are talking about completely different topics. But nonetheless, puns change the pace and direction of dialogues. A second way Carroll seemed to create a different sense of writing style is by using a voice that seems to speak in the present, while in fact speaking in the past. Beer states that "[t]he tone is of a story being told or a conversation

taking place *now*, between writer and reader, though it is describing events that have already taken place—and that in the magic of narrative are taking place here, again" (xxxii). This is done mostly by use of dialogue as medium of discourse. But also Carroll's narrator seems to speak to the reader, which he manages for example by using italics (Beer xxxii).

      Time is present in the *Alice* books in content, in characters, in conversations, in humour, and even in writing style. It is not the most noticeable theme, but looking closely it has its roots in every aspect of both novels and it is difficult to find a passage that does not relate to time.

Chapter 2: Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951)

"I'm afraid can't explain myself, I'm afraid, sir, because I'm not myself, you know."
(*Alice in Wonderland* 31:32-31:37)

The name 'Alice' will bring to mind a little girl with yellow-blonde hair, a blue and white dress, white socks, and black shoes, who says things like "curiouser and curiouser". Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) is the source of this image. It has been one of the most, if not the most, influential adaptations of *Alice* as of yet ("Adapting children's literature" 172). Costumes of Alice always consist of the clothing just described, also in newer *Alice* adaptations. Many people do not know that there are in fact two *Alice* books, and only know Carroll's stories as *Alice in Wonderland*. Disney's adaptation has had a great influence on the image of *Alice*, and has a tendency to become the "first encounter". The "first encounter" often gains a higher place in the audience's hierarchy of, in this case, *Alice* versions than the original or any other version of the story (Bonner and Jacobs 38). Therefore, Disney's adaptation is a good choice for analysis to discover how it uses the themes of the original *Alice* novels.

The process to create the animated Disney adaptation of Carroll's works included many ideas, suggestions, and actual attempts, before this version finally came into being (Hidgon and Lehrman). Carroll's texts had been an inspiration for the Walt Disney Company long before the 1951 adaptation was made. In 1923-27 they made the *Alice Comedies*, a series inspired by the books; in 1936 the cartoon *Thru the Mirror* was made with Disney's Mickey Mouse; in 1950, they made "One Hour in Wonderland"; which was then followed a year later by the animated *Alice in Wonderland*. Even now Disney uses the stories: the new Tim Burton-directed films are loosely based on the stories (Telotte 331). The 1951 *Alice in Wonderland* is a Hollywood-style adaptation, meaning that the story and its features have been changed a lot. The film might not have been everyone's favourite—especially not those who love the books. Preference seemed to be given to the originals after the film's release: "Possibly nobody is going to create a visualization of "Alice in Wonderland" that won't do violence to the nostalgic imagery of the piece that remains in the mind's eye of those who grew up on Tenniel's illustrations" ("Alice Everywhere"). Despite negative opinions then and now, this film is much beloved by many, and it is "the oldest [*Alice* adaptation] still widely watched today" (Sawyer Fritz 113).

The Disney Corporation has been the most productive adaptor of classic children's fiction in the twentieth century, and is still dominant in marketing children's and family films

for an audience in the U.S. and the rest of the world ("Adapting children's literature" 169; "Doggy fairy tale" 215; Sawyer Fritz 113). The intended audience is debatable. Sawyer Fritz comes to the conclusion that Disney's audience solely consisted of children, a view shared by Bonner and Jacobs, who state that the 1951 Disney adaptation was "made with no gestures to the adult audience beyond the performance of the songs" (Sawyer Fritz 113-114; Bonner and Jacobs 38). Walt Disney himself seemed to disagree, saying that "he only made 'family entertainment'" (Sammond 5). In an interview, Walt Disney's daughter, Diane Disney Miller, says that he "never thinks of children as his primary audience, […] the situations in his cartoons are ones adults can enjoy too" (qtd. in Fleming 186). This is confirmed by Disney artist and historian Stacia Martin: "As it did when it was new, still today it spans all generations. It appeals to adults on the plain of logic, puzzles, and very intrepid wordplay" ("Reflections on Alice" 2:49-2:59).

Disregarding public opinions, Disney's films do not seem to receive serious recognition or critical attention. This is because "the Disney films are seen to be absorbed within a cultural identity focusing on theme parks and naked commercialism" (qtd. in "Doggy fairy tale" 215). It does, however, get a lot of criticism. Cartmell observes that in most of Disney's films "fidelity to the text is openly flaunted" and that it is "the ambition of a Disney adaptation […] to usurp its source" ("Adapting children's literature" 169). Later on in this essay, she states that "Disney doesn't merely adapt a narrative – he virtually steals it, making it *his* story" (171). Sayers criticizes it for "oversimplifying and sanitizing classics of children's literature", and worries that "Disney's films taint the stories on which they are based" (qtd. in Fleming 183). She mentions *Alice in Wonderland* specifically: "You will see for yourself how Disney has destroyed something which was delightful" (qtd. in Fleming 183). Fleming summarises problems academics have with Disney: "Sayers's lament that Disney versions are simpler and "sweeter" than the originals, Schickel's worries about homogenization, and Zipes's notion of a "Disney spell" that appropriates the fairy tale tradition all share a common assumption: each sees fidelity to an original as the marker of success, and deviations—whether saccharine, indistinguishable, or spellbinding—as failures" (184). These are all concerns about fidelity to the source text, which, according to Thomas Leitch, is a "hopelessly fallacious measure of a given adaptation's value" (qtd. in Fleming 184). In fact, Sergei Eisenstein called Disney's works "the greatest contribution of the American people to art" (qtd. in Fleming 184).

Interesting features to look at respecting this film specifically is for example the animation aspect. The form of animation brings qualities with it that define *Alice in Wonderland*. Adaptation in animation is not determined by "the fact that something happens,

but the *way* it happens" (Wells 210). Communication with the audience, also, works differently in animation; "[animation] offers the artist a means of communication that transcends linguistic barriers" (qtd. in Wells 200). In other words, animators can evoke feelings and meanings they read from the texts by means different from spoken language (Wells 200). Wells notes that "an animated film can condense material so that an image can operate simultaneously as a retrieval of image films, as a deployment of (sometimes highly personal) symbolism and metaphor, and can provide incidence of penetration, all the while effectively transposing the literary source" (201). Disney changed the way animation worked, as they felt that the narrative for a feature-length film needed a more conventional approach (Wells 206). This can be seen in *Alice in Wonderland* where the absence of an apparent storyline in *Alice's Adventures* is changed to have a clearer story on screen. This will be expanded on in the section of 'time'. Another addition Disney commonly makes is a moral to do with "solid and timeless social values" ("Doggy fairy tale" 216). Hastings, also, mentions that Disney tends to add "typical elements of Disneyfication and a happy ending that contravenes the moral intention of the original tale" (qtd. in Fleming 185). The Company does this to place its films "within a lineage of children's moral literature" (Sammond 2). The moral addressed in this specific adaptation is especially made clear when Alice has lost her way again, and sings about giving herself good advice, but she seldom follows it. Also, briefly, she tells herself that "curiosity often leads to trouble", which is the cause of her fall down the rabbit hole (*Alice in Wonderland* 05:36-05:38). So this is advice to the viewers not to be curious and to listen to advice. Another element of "Disneyfication" is the musical feature. Music "sets moods and tonalities in a film narrative" and does not need words to do so (Gorbman 183). Musical is different, as it uses words in song. "The strong sense of musical storytelling" as Sigman, a Disney historian, calls it, is added to the purpose of making the storyline more cohesive ("Reflections on Alice" 7:45-7:55). Musical numbers act as a transition from narrative fragment to narrative fragment (Allan 13). In this *Alice in Wonderland*, songs introduce and clarify new fragments to the audience. The songs also have the function of stressing important passages, such as the White Rabbit's "I'm late" song, and adding nonsense features of poems in the novels to this adaptation. Poems and songs are incorporated into the film in this way.

The 1951 Disney adaptation incorporates both *Alice* novels. It adapts the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and adds features and chapters from *Through the Looking-Glass*. Since both novels are nonsense stories, and the themes of logic and time occur equally in both, the incorporating of both books will make no difference to this study. After having described

this adaptation's background, this chapter will continue by analysing the themes of nonsense, logic and time in Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Nonsense

"Nothing would be what it is, because everything would be what it isn't. And, contrariwise, what it is, it wouldn't be. And what it wouldn't be, it would."

(*Alice in Wonderland* 02:55-03:06)

From the beginning of the film, nonsense is emphasised. From the moment Alice starts talking about 'her world' and her sister replies with "What nonsense", this term holds her interest. The quote above is how Alice herself explains it in the adaptation. In this quote, the paradox and double meanings are applied by Alice herself, as explained in chapter 1. There are several different ways in which nonsense can be identified in the film: nonsense being pointed out by Alice herself; nonsense turning into madness; and nonsense structures, in this adaptation the trial and games.

As just mentioned, the word 'nonsense' is used throughout the film. Alice creates her own world in her mind based on the word 'nonsense'. She says this in a positive way. "Nonsense? That's it Dinah! If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense" (*Alice in Wonderland* 02:47-02:55). This is followed by the quote opening this section. Later in the film, it is 'nonsense' that flowers would be able to talk, which is still a positive statement. Afterwards however, the flowers insult her, and are quite rude. Again, later on in the film, the mad tea party is 'silly nonsense', expressed in a negative way; and after that, she has had 'enough of nonsense'. Alice becomes more and more negative about nonsense, the more she experiences of it.

The positive attitude towards nonsense becomes negative when nonsense gradually turns into madness. Before the Mad Tea Party, everything is merely nonsense: silly, funny, or strange. Everything slowly changes from nonsense to madness from the moment the Cheshire Cat appears—who generally enters the scenes singing the lyrics of the poem "Jabberwocky", the defining poem of nonsense. Madness is first introduced by the Cheshire Cat himself, who explains to Alice that "most everyone's mad here. You may have noticed that I'm not all there myself," which is turned into a "visual pun" by the Cat gradually disappearing (Beveridge 619). Alice joins the Mad Hatter and March Hare's Tea Party, who the Cheshire Cat had just mentioned are both mad. Interestingly, Alice herself is accused of being 'mad' here. This is a

theme in Disney films: the subject is unjustly thought to be crazy, while the sanity of the other characters, who accuse the subject of madness, is more questionable (Beveridge 618). After Alice is accused of madness, the White Rabbit's watch also goes mad. After the tea party, Alice tells some strange creatures "Please, no more nonsense," and notes that "It would be so nice if something would make sense for a change." The nonsense starts to annoy and even frighten her, even though she wished for it herself. The Cheshire Cat appears again and tells Alice about the Queen of Hearts, who is also a good example of increasing madness in the film. The Cheshire Cat introduces this by saying: "She'll be mad about you, simply mad" (*Alice in Wonderland* 54:31-54:34). Here, he makes use of double meanings. He just mentioned before that everyone in Wonderland is mad, and then he says the Queen will be mad about Alice. Alice might interpret this as the Queen liking her—which is what this expression means figuratively—while the audience will certainly understand the double—literal—meaning that the Queen is mad. As mentioned, a third meaning could be that the Queen loses her temper quickly and turns angry, or mad, very easily. Double meanings, as Lecercle said, are a characteristic of nonsense: "x is both A and, incoherently, B" (20). The Queen of Hearts seems to like Alice, but she is also mad in her obsession with beheading people, which refers to both other meanings of 'mad'. All meanings of 'mad' are combined in the Queen of Hearts, the result of which is certainly terrifying, especially for the child audience. Beveridge adds to the topic of nonsense: "it is not the verbal dexterity of the mad characters that impresses; rather it is their anarchic and violent behaviour which makes most impact on the viewer" (619). The Mad Tea Party starts out mostly conversational, but ends indeed in more violent behaviour. The Queen of Hearts shows even more violent behaviour. The Queen even says "If I lose my temper, you lose your head!" (1:03:35-1:03:38). Alice's fear for the Queen is clear, as is her fear while being chased at the end of her dream. Alice wakes up when her chasers nearly catch up with her. She wakes from her dream of nonsense when it turned into a nightmare of madness.

Another feature of nonsense (not concerning language) also concerns the Queen of Hearts, namely the structure used in nonsense of games and in this case a trial. These scenes also include specifically nonsense-related phrases. The Queen of Hearts is the Queen in and of a deck of cards, so she herself is a reference to cards. Her soldiers are also, more literally, a deck of cards. On top of that, in the game of croquet, Alice is unable to control her flamingo and eventually the flamingo tries to use Alice to hit the hedgehog ball. Later, Alice is on trial for "teasing, tormenting and otherwise annoying" the Queen. This scene is filled with references to Carroll's other Queens, namely the chess pieces from *Through the Looking-Glass*. The

Queen of Hearts is a reference to the Red and White Queens, by making remarks these Queens make, for example:

Queen: "Sentence first, verdict afterwards."

Alice: "But that just isn't the way."

Queen: "All ways are—"

Alice: "—your ways, your majesty."

(*Alice in Wonderland* 1:05:10-1:05:18)

The Queen's first phrase here ("Sentence first, verdict afterwards") is used both by the White Queen, and by the Queen of Hearts in the novels, while the second ("All ways are my ways") is said by the Red Queen. This latter phrase is mentioned earlier in the film as well. The first time it was used literally—when Alice tells her she could not find her way—whereas here, the second time, it is used figuratively. As mentioned before, the double meaning is part of the nonsense genre. The phrase 'sentence first, verdict afterwards', is directly taken from the novel of *Alice's Adventures*, but it is also a reference to *Through the Looking-Glass* where this order of trial is retained on top of which "the crime comes last of all" (*Through the Looking Glass* 170). This relates to the reversing of strict structures, such as trials, which is what nonsense does.

One thing that would make *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* difficult to adapt, is that it does not have a specific storyline as such—Alice does not have a goal or purpose after she arrives in Wonderland. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Disney felt that animated movies, too, needed a "more conventional ethos of storytelling" (Wells 206), which is why the storyline has been adjusted to add a goal for Alice. A film without a point to work towards would be tedious; the audience can lose interest to watch because there is no indication of where this story is going. Therefore, Disney gave the White Rabbit a bigger part, and made him reappear multiple times in the story. Alice's goal, now, is to follow the White Rabbit, find out where he is going, and what he is late for—which she does find out in the end. The White Rabbit is used as a tool to make the storyline coherent. After Alice loses interest in the White Rabbit, her goal is to find her way home. This happens right after the Tea Party. Nonsense does not necessarily include storylines, its definition seems to prefer the chaos. A storyline in the form of subversion of a structure—such as a game of chess—is a preferred storyline, if any. A more coherent storyline in view of making it easier for the audience to follow does not necessarily add to or defy the nonsense genre, but it is slightly out of place nonetheless.

Logic

"I haven't had any yet, so I can't very well take more."
(*Alice in Wonderland* 43:30-43:33)

Logic is a theme that is mostly expressed through language, because, summarising Braithwaite's idea of logic, logic is analysis: analysis of inference, sense, or nonsense (178). Analysis, of course, needs language to be expressed. The amount of dialogue in this film is not great, as "'talk' is often seen as the enemy of film" (qtd. in McFarlane 25). Logic therefore has to be expressed in other ways, or otherwise not at all. Disney preferred a balance between communication through dialogue and communication by other means. As mentioned, animation does not need language to express meaning (Wells 200). As logic in the novels is mostly expressed through riddles, puns, or other humorous, logical or illogical statements, this theme has received a different approach. While every conversation in the novels is filled with puns or logic jokes, the film has shortened—or deleted—conversations, and *mise-en-scène* is used to add to the logic. Nearly all situations that imply use of logic are meant as jokes, either by use pure or applied logic, or by use of language. Puns on their own occur less often in the film.

As mentioned, *mise-en-scène* is used to increase humour by logic. An example of logic in the film is when Dodo, during the caucus race, acts illogically—he thinks logic is nonsense, and nonsense is logic:

Dodo: "Have you dry in no time, now."

Alice: "No one can ever get dry this way."

Dodo: "Nonsense. I'm as dry as a bone already."

(*Alice in Wonderland* 11:55-12:01)

Film still 1a *Alice in Wonderland* (11:56)   **1b** *Alice in Wonderland* (12:01)

Alice's logic—never getting dry if the waves keep getting them wet again—is called nonsense by the Dodo, who thinks it is working because he himself is getting dry. The words on their own are not necessarily funny, but what makes it funny is Dodo's position and his comments, as opposed to Alice's situation, as shown in film still 1. Other examples occur during the Mad Tea Party. The quote opening this chapter relates to Alice being asked if she wants more tea, she says: "I haven't had any yet, so I can't very well take more." The March Hare replies: "Ah, you mean you can't very well take less!" and the Mad Hatter adds: "Yes, you can always take more than nothing" (*Alice in Wonderland* 43:28-43:40). Both parties are correct. If she had not had tea, she cannot take more tea, in the sense that in this situation she should first have some before she can have more. But in a literal sense, it is easy to take more than nothing, but she cannot take less than nothing. So this sentence has a double meaning. The Mad Hatter's lisp adds to his humorous character. Everything that is happening during this conversation also makes this scene funnier (see for example film still 2). As mentioned, the film reduced the amount of dialogue, which is especially noticeable in this scene. However, the amount of humour has not been reduced. The number of language jokes have been reduced, but humour is still very much present, because animation has the advantage of having more than language only to create humour.

Film still 2a *Alice in Wonderland* (43:29)   **2b** *Alice in Wonderland* (43:36)

Logic is not only less present in the film because of the reduction in dialogue, but perhaps also because of the reduction in characters—the novels had too many characters for the film to include, even though the film still managed to include many of them. Still, Disney found ways to create puns on screen. The two characters who make the most language jokes are the doorknob, and the Cheshire Cat. After falling down the rabbit hole, Alice reaches a tiny door and encounters "a punning knob that takes three linguistic 'turns'" (Shenk 249), though some might count more than three. The puns all relate to the character being a doorknob. The Cheshire Cat makes use of double meanings. As mentioned before, when he uses the phrase "not all

there" he starts disappearing, and at the same time he implies that he is mad (*Alice in Wonderland* 39:34-39:47). When Alice says she can't find her way, he explains that she *has* no way, "all ways here, you see, are the Queen's ways" (*Alice in Wonderland* 54:17-54:23). This is a figurative meaning of the word 'way' (meaning 'route' or 'direction') interpreted literally by the Cheshire Cat ('path' or 'street'), as it is also in the trial scene by the Queen, but in that scene a third meaning of the word was used (namely the 'way' as in the 'method' or 'manner').

<div align="center">Time</div>

<div align="center">*"I'm late, I'm late, I'm late!"*</div>

<div align="right">(*Alice in Wonderland* 04:54)</div>

Throughout the film, the number of references to time is remarkable. This is especially so because of the large role of the White Rabbit: for the first part of the film, he is the centre of the storyline. He is the reason the theme of time is largely related to hurrying and being late in this adaptation. Characters or scenes that are most connected to the theme of time are the White Rabbit, the Mad Tea Party, and tea time itself. The White Rabbit and his watch represent time. When he appears at the Mad Tea party, his watch stands still and it is tea time until Alice wakes up at the end of the film.

The White Rabbit, as mentioned, is a character that keeps reappearing for Alice to follow him. This character is constantly saying or singing that he is late and in a hurry and usually takes out his watch while expressing this. When the White Rabbit is introduced in the film, Alice says to Dinah: "Oh Dinah, it's just a rabbit with a waistcoat, *and a watch!*" (*Alice in Wonderland* 04:47-04:52; own italics to indicate stress). The watch is enormous compared to the Rabbit holding it, which has a humorous effect, but also stresses the watch itself, and with that, time (see film still 3). The importance of the White Rabbit (and his watch) are stressed

Film still 3 *Alice in Wonderland* (04:52)

by the exclamations of his lateness that are turned into song. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, songs are used as transitions between fragments or explanations of fragments, to include poems in the film, but also to stress important passages:

> I'm late, I'm late for a very important date.
>
> No time to say hello, goodbye.
>
> I'm late, I'm late I'm late!
>
> […]
>
> No, no, no, no, no, no, no, I'm overdue.
>
> I'm really in a stew.
>
> No time to say goodbye, hello.
>
> I'm late, I'm late, I'm late.

<div align="right">(Alice in Wonderland 05:00-05:18)</div>

The song stresses time and the White Rabbit's lateness and hurry. The few times "I'm late" is not sung, it is always repeated several times, which again stresses these words. The last time the White Rabbit appears is at the mad tea party, where he enters on cue of the March Hare asking the time. He enters singing his "I'm late" song once again and takes out his watch. The Mad Hatter takes it and says it is two days slow. He adds all ingredients of tea time—tea, salt, butter, sugar, spoons, jam, no mustard, but lemon—to make it work again, which fails. This combines the emphasis on the time aspect with the White Rabbit's panic about being late. After all the ingredients are added, the watch 'goes mad' (see film still 4) after which the March Hare destroys it with his hammer. Time goes mad and after its destruction, time stands still: after adding the ingredients of tea time to the watch, there are constant references to it being tea time. The White Rabbit is literally thrown out of the tea party, and he does not appear anymore as reference to time. "Tea time" takes over his role as the main reference.

Film still 4 *Alice in Wonderland* (47:12)

During the tea party, the film makes more implied references to time. It starts with the "Unbirthday song". Un-birthdays are explained as celebrating every day that is not a birthday. It is a celebration of staying the same age, instead of celebrating aging. When Alice is asked to tell the rest what is troubling her, she is to "start at the beginning" and "when [she comes] to the end, stop" (43:49-43:57). This of course would be the logical sequence of telling a story, but they explain it to her nonetheless. Later, after having been interrupted several times, Alice is thought "raving mad" and Alice loses her temper saying: "I'm sorry, but I just haven't the time!" in which the whole scene with the White Rabbit and its watch starts, as explained in the previous paragraph.

Alice leaves the Tea Party right after, and this is when more references to tea time are made. Alice is trying to find her way home, but cannot find it. When she does find a path, she says "If I hurry, perhaps I might even be home in time for tea!" (51:12-51:16). This might be considered strange, as she just had a tea party, which implied that it was tea time then, so it should not be tea time now. Near the end of her dream, she is asked to 'join in a cup of tea,' though quite literally, as she is pulled in and needs to swim in it (1:09:39-1:09:43). And at last, when she finally wakes up, her sister says: "Come along, it's time for tea" (1:10:57). This completes the circle. She did not get to drink any tea at the tea party, but in the end, she wakes up in time for tea.

Summary

Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) is a Hollywood-style film adaptation of Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* which also makes use of aspects from *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. It is a quite early adaptation, but *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) is still the best-known, most widely watched *Alice* adaptation today. The film's intended audience is unclear: some academics find that it is solely made for children, while the makers claim that all their films are family entertainment, and therefore also aimed at adults. The use animation is interesting because it has an entirely different approach, it uses a different means of communication from other kinds of film, and its *mise-en-scène* can be used to the fullest.

Nonsense can be found in Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* in several ways. It can be seen in Alice's own statements, which are positive about nonsense at first, and turn negative later. This negativity correlates with nonsense gradually turning into madness. Since the structure of games is a characteristic of nonsense, this adds to the nonsense theme. Other references to nonsense are mostly language related, for instance double meanings and paradox.

Logic, a theme mostly connected to language, is present in this film, even though the amount of dialogue is limited. Disney managed this by creating humour, using *mise-en-scène* to add to or make puns and double meanings.

Hurrying and being late are important to the first part of the story, tea time is especially important to the later part. Characters and scenes most connected to the theme of time are the White Rabbit and the Mad Tea Party. The White Rabbit and his watch represent time, and when the watch breaks during the Tea Party, time is stands still at tea time. When Alice wakes up from her dream, she is still in time for tea.

Chapter 3: Henderson's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998)

"The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday—but never jam to-day."
(*Alice Through the Looking Glass* 32:36-32:41)

A less well-known adaptation is Henderson's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998). This Heritage-style adaptation solely makes use of Carroll's second *Alice* book, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, as source text. This film has not had a lot of critical attention, apart from criticism from viewers. These viewer reviews give clear indications that this film is difficult to understand without having read the original book. One viewer's opinion was that it was "[very] strange and confusing… didn't know what was going on half the time" ("Letterboxd reviews" Lita). Another's opinion, from someone who had clearly read and enjoyed the book, was also not too positive: "Brave to make a straight-ahead live-action version of such a wonky fantasia, but it just doesn't work, all in all: too tacky, too overdrawn" ("Letterboxd reviews" kylegarvey).

Because of this, it is unclear what the intended audience of this film is (Sawyer Fritz 120-121). Jaques and Giddens note that it is "a pleasant film aimed at children" (217). Sawyer Fritz agrees that it was marketed for children, but notes that, as it strictly keeps to Carroll's dialogue, it is very difficult for child viewers to follow (120). The film speaks most to "those who know the book and love it" and it is clear that those were the viewers aimed for, because of "its explicit goal of faithfully reproducing the book" (Sawyer Fritz 120-121). The idea that the intended viewers are indeed the *Alice* lovers seems to be confirmed further by the adult Alice, who is reading the story to her daughter, equally called 'Alice', and then relives the adventure in her dreams—this contributes to "the film's nostalgia for the past" (Sawyer Fritz 121).

Apart from a change in the protagonist's age, Henderson followed the book strictly and only left out two chapters from the book. He even added the "Wasp in a wig" scene, which was deleted from the original book (Sawyer Fritz 120). What comes to mind here is the approach to Shakespeare adaptations. The first less traditional Shakespeare adaptation was met with sharp criticism. This "disrespectful attitude towards Shakespeare" ended there, and in the 1990s film adaptations showed "an evangelical reverence for the words of Shakespeare" ("Shakespeare on screen" 30). This is exactly what Henderson seems to do with Lewis Carroll's words. The film aims to be the "definitive" film adaptation of this novel (Sawyer Fritz 120). However, he does

not seem to succeed. Robert Pardi opens his review by the statement "This opulent TV production proves once again that Lewis Carroll's children's books defy translation to the screen" (*TVguide.com*).

An interesting aspect to note is that Henderson, like Disney, used music to create coherence. The music throughout the film was played by the same orchestra, therefore usually the same instruments. The feelings the music brings to mind change from scene to scene, but the sound stays familiar.

Despite viewers' negative opinions of the quality of the film, it shows more good qualities than perhaps thought at first. The negative views seem to come from the film's low budget and confusing nature for those who have not read the book. However, the film has been thought through well, details have been paid attention to, and, most importantly for now, the themes seem well represented. After the Hollywood-style adaptation looked at in chapter 2, it is interesting to see how the themes are influenced in a Heritage-style adaptation.

Nonsense

> *'T was brillig, and the slithy toves*
> *Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;*
> *All mimsy were the borogroves,*
> *And the mome raths outgrabe.*
> (*Alice Through the Looking Glass* 41:23-41:33)

Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* provides a great source for nonsense in this film. The story takes place within the structure of the mirror-world chess game, which has been mentioned in chapter one as being crucial to nonsense: the deliberate departure from the expected structure. The poem "Jabberwocky" and the character of Humpty Dumpty are other typical examples of nonsense. On top of these, some aspects of the *mise-en-scène* are also important to this theme.

Structure is a basis of nonsense. Nonsense likes to subvert strict order and structure. The structure of a game of chess, therefore, is suitable. This film uses chess as the storyline. In addition, Alice moves through a mirror into a mirror world. This opens a door for strange encounters, a mirror to the normal ways of her own world. The chess game provides a way for new characters and entirely different scenes to be introduced on every square, which Henderson makes full use of. Every scene has different characters, but also different surroundings and costume changes. In Alice's first dialogue with the Red Queen, the latter explains to Alice

where she has to go and what will happen there. In this passage, the structure of the chess game, in which Alice has just become a pawn, is explained. Since this marks the beginning of the chess game, this passage can be seen as the official beginning of the nonsense genre. The Red Queen introduces the chess game to Alice, whereas, a little later, the mirror world is explained to her by the White Queen in terms of time and trial, and also how memory works both ways. The Queens, therefore, are key to the nonsense genre, as they are most linked to both the chess world and the mirror world.

Nonsense is the first of the themes that are prominent in Humpty Dumpty's chapter. Humpty Dumpty is important to the theme of nonsense, and is also closely linked to the poem "Jabberwocky". Alice only reads the first verse of "Jabberwocky" in the first scene in the looking-glass house, where the poem is shown in full at that point in the novel, and then the poem is read fully by Humpty Dumpty, before he explains it. Lecercle even uses Humpty Dumpty in his description of nonsense. He states that "nonsense texts, as is apparent in the emblematic figure of Humpty Dumpty, mimic the activities of literary critics and philosophers, only in an excessive and subversive way. In so doing they express intuitions that often escape more serious practitioners of the art. They also, of course, fail to produce the same result—a coherent interpretation of the text being read: excess always compensates for lack" (5-6). This means that Humpty Dumpty, in terms of nonsense, is a figure that mimics a literary critic in an excessive way, and fails to give a coherent interpretation of the poem in question: the "Jabberwocky". In the scene where Alice reads the poem for the first time, Alice says that the poem "fills her head with ideas" only she does not know exactly what they are (*Alice Through the Looking Glass* 06:58-07:04). This is not when the audience hears the full poem. The full poem is only recited when Alice meets Humpty Dumpty and asks for an explanation of what it means. In the film, while the poem is being recited, the actions read about in the poem are acted out on screen. This viewing does not necessarily help interpreting the poem, as it does not show much more than a forest, a young boy with a wooden sword and an interpretation what the "Jabberwocky" might look like. It is a way to make the reciting of the poem less tedious, though the sounds of thunder and growling nearly overshadow the reading. Humpty Dumpty's explanation later does not add meaning either, as the explanation itself has hardly any meaning still—as Lecercle mentioned: he fails to produce a coherent interpretation (6). It does seem more logical for film to add the poem where it is actually explained, instead of reciting the full poem at the beginning. If recited at the beginning of the film (as it is in the novel), the audience would likely have forgotten it long before it was mentioned again, as it cannot simply look back

a few chapters. Humpty Dumpty is a source of nonsense, and the film uses the poem the "Jabberwocky" and Humpty Dumpty's link to it as such.

The *mise-en-scène* stress nonsense as well, e.g. the costumes and anthropomorphism. As Saywer Fritz mentions it, this film has "plenty of whimsy—Alice's hair for example changes its style in each scene, sometimes with delightfully silly results" (120). Her hair style changes between let down, pony tails, or with decorative insects (see picture 1). In the scene with

Picture 1 Costume details *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, combined film stills

Tweedledum and Tweedledee it is pulled up with ribbons, which is the scene which the "silly results" refer to. Alice's hair is effectively combined with the other character's comical costumes in this scene, and the complete picture is obviously humorous (see film still 4). The colour and style of her dress, too, change throughout the film. It switches between an ankle-height, blue dress, to a long, violet dress, and a knee-height, lilac dress (see picture 1). The decorative insects on her dress change every time as well. There is no explanation for these changes other than their comical effects, and it can even be interpreted as to add to the nonsense of the story.

Film still 4a *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (20:52)   **4b** *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (21:13)

Film still 5a *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (16:25)   **5b** *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (16:29)

Anthropomorphism also adds to the theme of nonsense. An insect in a tree suddenly turns into a man. This can be seen as strange, or even nonsense, as he looks like a man, but in fact is a gnat, or a wasp (see film still 5). In Lecercle's terms, this can be considered nonsense. As stated in chapter 1, Lecercle explains that paradox is a characteristic of nonsense, and he defines paradox as "not 'x means A', but 'x is both A and, incoherently, B'" (20). In this case, the gnat is 'x'. The gnat ('x') is simply a gnat ('A'), an insect with (to our knowledge) no feelings or thoughts, and no ability to speak. Here, he is also a creature that looks, sounds, and reasons like a man, who can also have his feelings hurt ('B'). The gnat getting the appearance of a man added to all other features he has gained, only adds to the paradox. This is stressed in the Wasp in a Wig scene, where the Wasp confuses Alice for an insect, asking if she is a bee. This feature of anthropomorphism also applies to the flowers taking human shapes and also for the egg Humpty Dumpty who suddenly looks like a human, and changes back into an egg after his fall from the wall. These additions are comical, and also can be considered as nonsense.

Logic

> *"The other Messenger's called Hatta. I must have two, you know*
> *—to come and go. One to come, and one to go."*
>   (*Alice Through the Looking Glass* 47:50-47:56)

Logic is mostly related to dialogue, as also mentioned in the previous chapter, and since all the dialogue stems directly from the novel, it is difficult to analyse it with respect to other features. Logic can be found in the dialogue, and different forms of logic in dialogues relating to different characters. Henderson has made use of *mise-en-scène* in scenes with a lot of dialogue to make it more interesting to watch.

The quotes opening this chapter and this section—the White Queen's mention of jam every other day, but never today, and the King's messengers (one to come and one to go) are both good examples of references to logic in the novel. Every character Alice meets and has a conversation with has something to do with logic: pure, applied, or language related (puns), sometimes applied correctly and sometimes incorrectly. Pure logic can be found in conversations with the Queens. The White Queen is chaotic, and she talks about thinking six impossible things before breakfast, however illogical that might seem to Alice. The Red Queen gives Alice the instructions for the game of chess. Together, they test Alice before she is allowed to become a Queen. This scene especially is related to logic, when all the questions and expected answers are not quite logical. For example, when the White Queen asks "If you divide a loaf with a knife, what is the answer?" the Red Queen answers for Alice: "Bread and butter, of course" (*Alice Through the Looking Glass* 1:15:46-1:15:54). Humpty Dumpty is also related to pure logic; he considers all questions Alice asks to be riddles, and he thinks he knows everything—acting as the philosopher mentioned by Lecercle. He does not ask or answer questions the way that would be expected. For example, his answer to the question why he sits out there alone is "Because there is nobody with me, of course" (*Alice Through the Looking Glass* 39:39-39:44).

Applied logic can be found in the character of the White Knight. He believes his inventions are clever, but they do not quite work: e.g. hanging his box up-side down, so that the rain cannot get in, not realising that its contents would fall out (*Alice Through the Looking Glass* 53:12-53:32).

Other characters mostly make puns, either knowingly, like the gnat, or unknowingly, like the White King. The gnat continually makes bad jokes, and comments on them, or points them out when Alice does not laugh. In contrast, the White King keeps making jokes, but Alice tries to keep from laughing because the King does not realise that what he said was funny. So most characters that Alice encounters in this film are related to logic in some way.

Logic, as mentioned, is mostly related to speech, and so with dialogue. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, Henderson translates the dialogue as precisely as possible, which is also a near direct translation of the theme of logic. He does, however, seem to realise that the dialogues are not the most interesting scenes to look at for the audience, and tries to make them more interesting by playing around with other things, such as the actors' accents. Especially Humpty Dumpty's and Tweedledum and Tweedledee's accents are notable. The *mise-en-scène* is made more stimulating in the scenes containing a lot of dialogue, such as the Tweedledum and Tweedledee scenes and the scenes with the testing of Alice by the Queens (see film still 6).

In the latter she is suddenly placed on swings with the Queens, instead of the simple stool she would be on in the novel. Another example is the White Knight reciting the poem of "Sitting on a Gate", which has been made more interesting, or less long-winded, by adding visuals in silent film style (see film still 7).

Film still 6a *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (20:50)   **6b** *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1:13:43)

Film still 7 *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1:01:40)

<div align="center">Time</div>

"It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards."
(*Alice Through the Looking Glass* 33:10-33:15)

The theme of time in Henderson's *Alice* adaptation is expressed in a few different ways. Alice steps into a mirror world, and time passes in strange ways. Also, as has been mentioned, an adult Alice has been cast for this film, which changes the approach to age. Both this and the scene ending this film stress age and nostalgia as aspects of time.

Time passes differently in the mirror world Alice steps into. The White Queen explains this to her when they meet: in this world, they live backwards. This means that memory works backwords and trials work backwards too (punishment comes first, the crime comes last of all),

just like the screaming comes before the pricking of the finger. This conversation with the White Queen is significant when it comes to the theme of time. Firstly, because of the explanation of time running backwards. Secondly, because of other explicit time references made. According to the White Queen, one cannot do two things at once. To keep Alice from being sad, she is told to consider things, for example the time and her age. Alice's answer is that she is seven-and-a-half years old. The White Queen replies that she is more than one-hundred-and-one years old. Both time and age are also expressed in this scene.

Henderson greatly also stresses age in this film by having an adult actress play the seven-year-old heroin. Because of the adult Alice dreaming of being the seven-and-a-half year old Alice of the bedtime story she is reading her daughter, this film can be interpreted as "nostalgia for the past" (Sawyer Fritz 121). It is quite strange to hear the adult Alice telling the White Queen, and later Humpty Dumpty, that she is seven-and-a-half years old. Age is also stressed by remarks other characters make. For example, the flowers remark that Alice's petals are beginning to fade, meaning that she is growing old. This might be strange to tell a seven-year-old, but now that she is depicted as an adult, it is less strange (however, all the more insulting, though humorous). Humpty Dumpty tells her she should have "left off at seven, but it's too late now" (*Alice Through the Looking Glass* 40:54-40:58).

The closing scene confirms that nostalgia plays a part. After Alice wakes up and her daughter, also Alice, opens the book and reads the terminal poem of the story, written by Carroll (*Through the Looking-Glass* 240). This is a personal poem from Carroll, stating how time has passed, like his friendship with the Alice Liddell who inspired these stories, and memories of her haunt him. (Vallone 261). The poem talks about dreaming of Wonderland, and implies that life is nothing but a dream. The child Alice, in the film, starts reading this poem, but the adult Alice takes over. She takes over from this verse:

> Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
>
> Alice moving under skies
>
> Never seen by waking eyes.

> (*Through the Looking-Glass* 240)

The adult Alice reading this suggests that the Alice from this story haunts her; she is still dreaming of this story. This, too, suggests nostalgia.

Age and nostalgia being stressed is not surprising, because children's stories such as *Alice* "are increasingly being targeted for adaptation to capitalize on adult nostalgia for them" (Bonner and Jacobs 38). As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the audience for this film is

debatable. It may have been marketed for children, but otherwise it seems to be targeted at adults who grew up reading and loving this story, and who may long to go back to the time of reading this story as children.

Summary

Henderson's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998) is a Heritage-style adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871). He strictly followed Carroll's dialogue, and made very few changes. The result is a film that might sometimes be long-winded, and difficult for the audience to follow, especially if the audience is unfamiliar with the original text. It can be concluded from the choices Henderson made for this film, that he attempted to be the definitive adaptation of this novel.

Nonsense can be found in this film in many features. The structure itself provides a nonsense setting: the mirror world and the game of chess being played in it. Humpty Dumpty is a character who himself adds to the nonsense genre, and the inclusion of the poem the "Jabberwocky" is significant to nonsense as well. And the anthropomorphism of non-human characters can also be considered nonsense.

Logic is a theme that is mostly related to spoken language. The dialogue with the characters Alice encounters are therefore usually related to logic in some way, either by use of pure or applied logic, or by use of puns. Henderson did realise that all this dialogue could make the film quite monotonous, and therefore he has added more lively aspects to the *mise-en-scène* of these scenes.

Time in this film is mostly related to the mirror world and age or aging. The mirror time is explained by the White Queen. Age is most obvious in the presence of an adult protagonist playing a child in the story she is reading to her own daughter. This, some references made throughout the film, and the poem read in the final scene, all add to the nostalgia this film represents.

Discussion

"Oh, I've had such a curious dream!" said Alice.
(*Alice's Adventures* 107)

In chapter 1, 2, and 3, information has been gathered on the themes of Carroll's *Alice* novels themselves, and in Disney's and Henderson's film adaptations of these books. The question to answer now is how the themes from Carroll's books are interpreted and transposed to the analysed film adaptations. The two *Alice* adaptations this dissertation discussed, Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) and Henderson's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998), differ completely in adaptation style. Disney's adaptation uses the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and adds scenes or phrases from *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871). It is an animated, Hollywood-style film adaptation. Henderson only makes use of Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* and keeps strictly to it, therefore turning it into a Heritage-style, live-action film. As Cartmell explains, Disney films can be considered as "the diametrical opposite of the 'classic' or heritage film, narrowly defined as films that respect or revere the source text, producing what Andrew Hidson calls, 'a discourse of authenticity'" ("Adapting children's literature" 171). Therefore Disney's film can be labelled as a Hollywood-style adaptation, while the "classic" or heritage film describes Henderson's adaptation. So where Disney takes the novels and creates a completely new, yet familiar, story, Henderson follows the dialogue of Carroll's text nearly word for word.

The intended audience of the *Alice* books is a child audience, though of course they are enjoyable for adults all the same. Disney seems to aim either at a child audience, or a family audience, while Henderson aims at children, but his story is clearly meant for adults. Disney has reduced the amount of dialogue, because 'talk' is thought the enemy of film (McFarlane 25). However, Henderson does not seem to think so; he has included most of the dialogue. Fans of the original *Alice* stories usually dislike the Disney adaptation, because it diverges so much from the original. He is accused of not simply adapting a narrative but stealing it, "making it *his* story" (Cartmell 171). Henderson, on the other hand, tries to stick so closely to the source text, that the amount of dialogue is not quite suitable for film. It is not always easy to follow what is happening in the film, especially for those who have not read the book. Both adaptations, therefore, have been criticised for their approach to the source text. Despite this, Disney's adaptation is "the oldest still widely watched today" (Sawyer Fritz 113).

These differences in adaptation style and audience add to a difference in approach to the source text, and therefore a difference in approach to the themes. In the next sections, each theme will be discussed, looking at differences and similarities between film and novel, and film and film.

<div align="center">Nonsense</div>

Nonsense is expressed differently in Disney's and Henderson's adaptations, and differently again from the novels. Structure is important to nonsense, which is visible in both the books and the films. Other characteristics of nonsense present in the books are madness, anthropomorphism, and certain nonsense-filled dialogues. Use of costumes is important to Henderson's film as well. The film adaptations have made different use of these characteristics, both choosing which features to focus on.

Structure is important to nonsense. Both novels, and also both films, use dreams as frames for the stories. Henderson's Alice wakes up during her banquet, after she cannot stand the chaos any longer, and someone yells "mum" in her daughter's voice. In the novel, Alice wakes up after picking up the Red Queen (suddenly the size of a doll), and Alice shakes her until she changes into Alice's cat. Disney changes his ending a little as well. In *Alice's Adventures*, Alice wakes up during the trail, when all the cards fly down on her. In the film, this is stretched out: the cards flying down on her changes into the cards chasing her. The nonsense in the dream is built up and fluently turns into madness, which then continues until Alice's dream turns into a nightmare. She then sees herself sleeping under the tree, realises it is just a dream, and forces herself to wake up. As for the structure of the story in the frame, Henderson makes use of *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*'s subversion of the chess-game structure, which also provides a clear storyline. Disney, however, had to create a clear storyline for the story in Wonderland, since the original does not provide this. The White Rabbit is a tool to provide a more coherent storyline until the structure of the trial and games is used, which is only late in the story.

Madness is often associated with nonsense. Madness is not used to a great extend in Henderson's adaptation. Disney, however, makes great use of it. On the topic of madness in Carroll's novels and Disney's adaptation, Beveridge states that "Disney's representation of madness in this film is based on Lewis Carroll's original story and it is true that the book equates madness with all things nonsensical" (619). Even though Beveridge states that "it is true", it is not necessarily so. Madness and nonsense are certainly linked—otherwise all the characters that the Cheshire Cat introduces have no place in the novels, according to whom "we're all mad

here" (*Alice's Adventures* 54)—but saying that madness is linked to "all things nonsensical" is an overstatement. Nonsense, as explained in chapter one, consists of more characteristics, which are not all closely linked to madness. Paradox and structure are the basis of nonsense. Madness, however, is related to things either silly (in the figurative sense of the word) or dangerous (meaning insanity, a mental disease). Paradox could be linked to madness, though not explicitly. Paradox is when an object or a situation is both one thing and another. Disney makes use of this in conversations with 'mad' characters, but the definition of paradox itself is not directly linked to madness. Madness could relate to things silly to dangerous. The order of events in both versions of the story—Disney's film and the book—is so that madness builds up from silly to dangerous: first the Cheshire Cat, who realises that he and others there are mad and makes use of puns and double meanings; then the Mad Tea Party, where they do not seem to realise they are mad, who also make use of puns, but make use of a hammer too; and then the Queen of Hearts, who is dangerously mad. Disney followed the structure of the novel in this way, and seems to stress it by adding expressions and jokes about madness. Nonsense is present throughout the story, but slowly turns into madness and builds up to a climax.

The last topic discussed previously that is related to nonsense is anthropomorphism. This is a phenomenon found a lot in the *Alice* books; objects and especially animals in Carroll's novels are known to speak. In *Alice's Adventures* the White Rabbit, the March Hare, the Cheshire Cat, and many others have been attributed human characteristics. In *Through the Looking-Glass*, the chess pieces, insects, flowers, and even food dishes are human-like. Animation in Disney's film makes it easy to make animals speak, and also less strange than in live-action. Henderson, therefore, had more trouble with this. The speaking food in the banquet scene still resembles food, but others, such as the flowers, the gnat, Humpty Dumpty, and the wasp are all turned into human-shapes when introduced (see film still 8). The chess pieces were humans from the beginning. In Disney's animated world, animals who speak look more or less the same as humans who speak (e.g. wearing clothes), and therefore are less strange—even the speaking door-knob and the speaking flowers do not seem strange or out of place. In Henderson's film, however, anthropomorphism is very obvious, as the animals or objects do not only take over human language and character-treats, they also take on human form after their original form has been shown (as shown in film still 5 in the previous chapter). Though costumes are made to remind the audience of the animal or object they are, the only thing really distinguishing them from real humans is the topics they talk about, and some expressions they use which would be strange if they were actual humans. Such as the flowers answering Alice's question, whether there are any other people in the garden, with "there's one other flower in the

Film still 8a *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1:21:40)

8b *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (09:10)   **8c** *Alice in Wonderland* (26:23)

garden that can move about like you" (*Through the Looking-Glass* 136; *Alice Through the Looking Glass* 09:03-09:12). Because of the more literal anthropomorphism, this is more prominent in Henderson's *Alice* adaptation than it is in Disney's.

Costumes are important to Henderson's nonsense, as discussed in chapter 3. Alice's costume looks different in nearly every square of the chess board. It is interesting that the dress is blue: the original Alice's dress was supposed to be orange, as the coloured versions of Tenniel's drawings show (see picture 2). Some early adaptations did give Alice an orange dress, but later the dress permanently became blue. Clearly, even faithful Henderson has not escaped the blue dress.

Picture 2a *The Nursery Alice* 7; **2b** *Alice in Wonderland* 12:36, detail;
2c *Alice Through the Looking Glass* 32:50, detail

Logic

Logic in the novels can be divided into applied logic, pure logic, and puns. Because this is generally related to language, most occurrences of logic are expressed through dialogue.

Dialogue is important in Carroll's works, because "[dialogue] is the primary medium of discourse in both books" (Beer xxxii). Henderson nearly copied the dialogue word for word. Logic, with the dialogue, is translated almost literally from novel to film. Although the dialogue from the novel has not been changed in Henderson's adaptation, a few passages have been deleted, for example some of the White King's puns. Humpty Dumpty's chapter has also been shortened in the film, while most of the deleted parts of the conversation are related to logic. In this chapter, Humpty Dumpty compares controlling words to controlling dogs, explains how to stop aging, talks about how un-birthdays are more convenient to celebrate than birthdays, gives a lesson on the meaning of a poem, and makes many puns along the way. His chapter is related to all themes at once and has been shortened nonetheless. Disney's adaptation does not include Humpty Dumpty at all, but his topic of un-birthdays is used, though not in the serious way that the character discusses it. Unlike Henderson, Disney's adaptation considers dialogue less important, and thus the theme of logic has been changed. As mentioned, the phrase "'talk' is the enemy of film" applies to Disney's approach to the dialogue (McFarlane 25). Though the style and topics of the conversation can still be recognised, the text itself has been modernised. Some puns and humour relating to logic are present. However, the presence of logical references and humour in the novels is so overwhelming, that the lack of them in the film is noticeable. The reduction in dialogue was considered more important to the adaptation than the theme of logic to the story. An important example of dialogue and logic in Disney is the Mad

Tea Party. The conversation during the mad tea party in the novel contains an abundance of illogical statements, puns and jokes, even though this scene has been shortened in the film and jokes are reduced and adjusted. Another example of how Disney treats logic differently from the novel, is the scene where Alice falls down the rabbit hole. In both media, Alice thinks of falling right down to the other side of the world during her fall. Where the novel's Alice is thinking perfectly seriously of what would happen, the film's Alice stops thinking after "What if I should fall right through the centre of the earth and come out the other side where people walk upside down?" because she adds straight away: "Oh, but that's silly" (*Alice's Adventures* 5; *Alice in Wonderland* 06:35-06:45). Carroll's Alice would never have thought it silly, while Disney's Alice thinks otherwise. Therefore Carroll's Alice does not think logically, and adds to the silliness in the books, while Disney's Alice thinks more logically and stands apart from the silliness.

Pure and applied logic in Henderson's *Alice* can be found in dialogue as well, specific kinds of logic related to specific characters, as mentioned in chapter 3. Pure and applied logic in Disney's adaptation have been replaced by puns mostly. For example where in the book the Caucus Race works after running for half an hour, in the film it is turned into a joke, with the Dodo coordinating the race, while he is the only one getting dry.

<div align="center">Time</div>

Time is a theme that occurs in the novels in many different forms: from short references to time actually passing in different ways. Even Carroll's writing style is connected to time, as described in chapter 1. The analysed adaptations both treat time differently and are difficult to compare to one another, especially because both novels make different use of time, and the films are based on the two different novels. In this section, the films will be compared and contrasted especially with regard to the books, not to each other.

Because Disney used the White Rabbit to create a clearer storyline, he has got a much bigger part in this film adaptation than he had in the novel. But the White Rabbit also has a part as a time reference, and replaces other explicit time references in the novel that have been omitted. This is one method Disney used to stress time without having all the possibilities the novels had. Another time reference is tea time, as discussed in chapter 2. At the Mad Tea Party, where tea time takes over the White Rabbit's role of main feature of the theme of time, a time reference from Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* is used. The topic of un-birthdays, from a conversation Alice has with Humpty Dumpty, is included in Disney's *Alice*, while it is one of the few topics deleted from Henderson's *Alice*. Moreover, Disney turned it into a birthday song,

or *un*-birthday song, which stresses the topic. It reappears later in the film as well, during the trial, when the Queen says it is her un-birthday.

In *Through the Looking-Glass*, Humpty Dumpty's conversation is about more topics relating to time, e.g. age and aging. In addition to the un-birthdays, he also talks about how to stop aging. After her mentioning her age of seven and a half years, he considers:

> "Seven years and six months!" Humpty Dumpty repeated thoughtfully. "An uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you'd asked *my* advice, I'd have said 'Leave off at seven'——but it's too late now." "I never ask advice about growing," Alice said indignantly. […] "I mean," she said, "that one ca'n't help growing older." "*One* ca'n't, perhaps," said Humpty Dumpty, "but *two* can. With proper assistance, you might have left off at seven."
>
> (*Through the Looking-Glass* 183)

In Henderson's film, Humpty Dumpty simply says "If you'd asked my advice, I'd have said 'Leave off at seven'——but it's too late now" and ends at that. It is still a remark on aging, though its meaning is not explained. Henderson's adaptation reduces the emphasis on references to the 'aging' aspect of time. However, this is replaced by the adult Alice, placing a different kind of emphasis back on this aspect. That is a reason not to have included the rest of this quote: she is clearly already grown up. The audience might not always understand why there is an adult Alice in this film ("Letterboxd reviews"), and the exact reasons for choosing an adult Alice are not immediately clear. However, the effects it has are clear: on top of creating humour when the adult Alice says she is seven years old, it creates a feeling of nostalgia, after reading to her daughter.

Nostalgia here replaces some other important time aspects in Henderson's film. The story takes place in a Looking-Glass world, and in a chess game. The mirror time is still recognisable in the conversation Alice has with the White Queen about time running backwards. But Henderson's time does not run in sets of days, like it does in the novel. So the stress on the strange way time passes in the Looking-Glass world is greatly reduced. The time of the game of chess is also less present in the film. For instance, in the novel, the Red Queen takes Alice by the hand and runs so fast that Alice cannot keep up, but they stay in the same place.

> "[In] *our* country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you ran very fast for a long time, as we've been doing." "A slow sort of country!"

said the Queen. "Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

(*Through the Looking-Glass* 141)

Since this is a game of chess, the Queen is the piece that moves to places fastest. By omitting this scene from the film, Henderson removed a significant time reference, namely the one on the chess-game time. This means only references to time running backwards remain, referring to the mirror world, while the chess game time is mostly unreferenced. It is still implied by the introduction of the Red Queen, who comes into view crossing quite a distance in only two seconds. However, the actual conversation, which seems to be the most important aspect of chess time of the novel, is left out.

From the last paragraph, it can be deduced that the Queens are the ones in *Through the Looking-Glass* who make most of the time references. In Henderson's adaptation, the Red Queen represents chess time and the White Queen represents mirror time. Disney's Queen, the Queen of Hearts, is a combination of Carroll's Queen of Hearts and his Red and White Queens. She is named after the Queen of Hearts and takes on her characteristics, but she uses expressions used by the other Queens as well, e.g. that it saves time to "curtsy while you're thinking" spoken by the Queen of Hearts in this film, but by the Red Queen in *Through the Looking Glass*.

Summary

The most important features of and differences in nonsense in the films and novels are structure and storyline, madness in Disney's *Alice*, and anthropomorphism in Henderson's *Alice*. Changes are made for suitability of storyline in film, or the form of medium. The theme of nonsense is recognisable in both film adaptations of Carroll's *Alice* novels.

Logic is closely related to language, and in film it is therefore generally expressed through dialogue. This theme is therefore translated quite literally from novel to film in Henderson's adaptation. Disney's *Alice*, on the other hand, reduces the amount of dialogue at the cost of the theme of logic, adding puns using visuals as replacement for the loss of other kinds of logic.

Time is present in different ways in the novels and the films, because time is treated differently in the different sources from the adaptations. Disney increases the role of the White Rabbit to make a more coherent storyline, and therefore add to the theme of time. Tea time later takes over the role of main feature of the time theme. Though age and nostalgia are the main time features in Henderson's adaptation, for which the features of mirror time and chess time

had to make place, conversations about time and aging have been shortened. The adult Alice is the biggest change and time reference in Henderson's film.

Conclusion

Both adaptations have a completely different treatment of the themes, and in both their presence is sometimes obvious and sometimes more obscure. As explained in chapter 1, the themes of logic and time were present in Carroll's life, and have also found a place in his novels. These themes were most likely not personally important to the adaptors of the stories, but they realised their importance to the stories. The audience certainly played a part in the way the adaptations were made, though the intended audience is debatable for both adaptations.

By use of close analysis the themes of nonsense, logic, and time have been found in the Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) and Henderson's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (1998), though some differently from the novels. Nonsense, as the genre, can clearly be found in both film adaptations. Logic is present mostly in language, and Henderson has therefore incorporated it quite literally, however, in the Disney adaptation the theme is mostly found because of puns. Time has received the greatest changes, though the theme certainly has not been omitted from either film. In both film adaptations, the themes are clearly still present, which means that the core of the *Alice* stories is still there, whether the adaptation is faithful or not. Therefore the story of *Alice* lives on, in all kinds of forms, and everyone can decide for themselves which *Alice* is the *Alice* dearest to them.

What this study has shown is that it is irrelevant whether an adaptation is faithful to the source text or not; themes will be found in adaptations either way, because they are the core of the source text and whatever may be changed, the themes will be present. A Heritage-style adaptation may result in a new reading of the source text, while a Hollywood-style adaptation may lead to a new version of the source text or a new story altogether. However faithful an adaptation is to the source, the interpretation differs from person to person, and the themes might be interpreted differently, or adjusted to fit a different purpose.

To see if this conclusion is correct outside of these two adaptations or these novels, more research should be done on themes in adaptations of other novels. It is also important to look more closely at the differences between themes in animated and live-action adaptations of books.

> *"That's all," said Humpty Dumpty. "Good-bye."*
> (*Through the Looking-Glass* 191)

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