

Through the Looking-Glass: Contemporary Film Adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland*

by

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Abstract

Despite the myriad of interpretations offered by critics for the Alice stories, discussions of their film adaptations have been overlooked. This is surprising since the Alice books are one of the most adapted texts in history. In light of this void, this thesis explores the growth and changes of the character Alice in the different film adaptations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. This thesis discusses how the character Alice is seen in popular culture and analyzes how perceptions of who she is are reflected in the newer film adaptations.

In modern film adaptations, filmmakers have constructed a version of Alice who is older than Lewis Carroll's original heroine. From the time the story was created back in the Victorian era to the present, views of childhood and adulthood have changed. After thorough qualitative analysis this thesis argues that the portrayal of the character Alice in film adaptations has changed exponentially from a little girl to an adult, due to the cultural context in which the films were created. Since Carroll held a close relationship to Alice Liddell, for whom he created the story, modern adaptations reflect the discomfort popular culture may feel about that relationship. These adaptations say more about the times in which they were created and the cultural views of childhood than about the Alice which Carroll created.

Resumen

A pesar de la diversidad de interpretaciones ofrecidas por los críticos a los cuentos de Alice, la discusión de sus adaptaciones filmicas ha sido ignorada. Esto es sorprendente, ya que los libros de Alice son unos de los textos más adaptados en la historia. Debido a este vacío, esta tesis explora el crecimiento y los cambios del personaje Alice en las diferentes producciones cinematográficas de *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* y *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. Esta tesis discute cómo se percibe el personaje de Alice en la cultura popular y analiza cómo las percepciones de quién es ella se ven reflejadas en las adaptaciones filmicas más recientes.

En las representaciones modernas, los cineastas han construido una versión de Alice que es mayor que la heroína original creada por Lewis Carroll. Las percepciones sobre la niñez han cambiado desde la era victoriana, cuando la historia fue creada, hasta el presente. Luego de un cuidadoso análisis cualitativo, esta tesis argumenta que la proyección de Alice en las producciones filmicas ha cambiado exponencialmente de una niña a una adulta debido al contexto cultural en el que los filmes fueron creados. Ya que Carroll guardaba una relación cercana a Alice Liddell, para quien creó la historia, las adaptaciones modernas reflejan la incomodidad que la cultura popular pudiese sentir en torno a esa relación. Estas adaptaciones dicen más acerca de la época en que se crearon y las percepciones culturales sobre la niñez que sobre la Alice que Carroll creó.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Fernando and Carmen.

Thank you for being my support and my guide through everything. No words will suffice to express my gratitude, respect, appreciation, and most of all my love for you. You always led and taught by example, showing your children how important it is to have an education. I will always value your hard work, dedication to your four children, and your encouragement for us to study, because it has made me love education more than you will ever know. Thank you for always being proud of all of us and always being there for us. This thesis, which is a product of love and dedication, is for you *mami y papi*. ¡*Los amo!*

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List of Terms and Abbreviations

AAW– *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll’s first book)

Alice – character from the original Lewis Carroll books

Alice– used when referring to the stories in general

Alice Kingsley* – the character from the 2010 movie directed by Tim Burton (*Spelling taken from the first draft of the screenplay dated February 23, 2007. Other sources spell the name Kingsleigh)

Alice Hamilton – the character from the 2009 SyFy miniseries directed by Nick Willing

Alice Liddell– when referring to the real girl who was Dodgson’s (Carroll) child friend

TLG– Carroll’s second book *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*

SyFy’s *Alice*- when referring to the 2009 miniseries by director Nick Willing

Alice in Wonderland, how do you get to Wonderland?

Over the hill or underland, or just behind the tree?

When clouds go rolling by, they roll away and leave the sky.

Where is the land beyond the eye, that people cannot see, where can it be?

Where do stars go, where is the crescent moon?

They must be somewhere in the sunny afternoon.

Alice in Wonderland, where is the path to Wonderland?

Over the hill or here or there, I wonder where.

(from Disney's 1951 Alice in Wonderland)

CHAPTER I.

Born on a Golden Afternoon: An Introduction to *Alice in Wonderland*

“Who are *you*?” said the Caterpillar.
This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation.
Alice replied, rather shyly, “I—I hardly know, sir, just at present—
at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning,
but I think I must have been changed several times since then.”

--Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865

Who is Alice?

In March 2010 a new theatrical version of *Alice in Wonderland* was released in movie theaters all over the US. This film promised audiences they would see Wonderland as it had never been seen before, and although Alice would still be the girl audiences recognized from the stories of the very popular books by Lewis Carroll *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (AAW)* and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There (TLG)*, she was also going to be different. Indeed, this Alice had changed a great deal from the character presented in the original books. However, this film is not the first adaptation of the stories to present a different version of Alice, although it is the most recent one. Alice has been changing for quite some time in many aspects that are explored in this thesis. These physical alterations of the character seem to be foreshadowed by the character's inner transformations over the course of the two novels. Although her entry to both Wonderland and Looking-Glass worlds were accidental, the journeys Alice undertakes help her discover or at least question her identity.

On various occasions Alice is confronted with questions about her identity. Many of the characters she meets encourage her to remember who she is. Alice repeatedly redefines her identity and it is evident that throughout both of her adventures one of her main aspirations is to discover herself and learn who she is. For instance, at the end of Chapter II of *TLG* the White

Queen advises Alice to “Speak in French when you can’t think of the English for a thing— turn out your toes as you walk” but most importantly, to “remember who you are!” (Carroll, *Looking-Glass* 34). The Queen’s advice could be perceived as her way of letting Alice know she needs to understand her place. Alice is merely a child and has no place in important matters. In a monarchical society, she is far down in the hierarchy. Nevertheless, this piece of advice does not suggest so much that the Queen wants Alice to think about her social identity, but rather foreshadows what Alice goes through in the next chapter when she cannot remember who she is. When she wanders through the woods, Alice realizes she has forgotten her name: “... ‘who am I? I *will* remember, if I can! I’m determined to do it!’ But being determined didn’t help much, and all she could say, after a great deal of puzzling, was, ‘L, I *know* it begins with L!’” (Carroll *Looking-Glass* 46). Furthermore, when she meets the Fawn in the woods, Alice fails to provide a hint of who she is:

“What do you call yourself?” the Fawn said at last. Such a soft sweet voice it had!

“I wish I knew!” thought poor Alice. She answered, rather sadly, “Nothing, just now.”

“Think again,” it said: “that won’t do.”

Alice thought, but nothing came of it. (Carroll *Looking-Glass* 47)

Eventually, Alice was able to remember her name and swore she would never forget it again.

Although she had to explain herself several times again in Looking-Glass world, Alice overcame the difficulty of remembering her name and the initial challenges to her identity that this lapse of memory posed.

Perhaps the most memorable and challenging encounter Alice has is in Chapter V of the first book (*AAW*) when the seven-year-old heroine meets the Caterpillar and is faced with a

question that takes her by surprise: “Who are *you*?” (Carroll *Wonderland* 41). This question does not seem too complicated; Alice could have simply replied with “I am Alice.” Yet, it seems the caterpillar is not simply asking her name. His emphasis on the word *you* makes his question much more personal. This is about who Alice is and how she perceives herself. Based on Alice’s answer, as she ponders deeply who she is, it seems the question goes beyond her name, and the answer lies even deeper within her, or at least that is how Alice seems to perceive it. For Alice, the question seems to be about her existence, her purpose for being in the world and her identity, among other things. Indeed, these are very perplexing questions for anyone, and they are even harder for a seven-year old; thus, it is no wonder Alice felt so overwhelmed and confused when asked.

It is this confusion and raw honesty that makes Carroll’s character so complicated yet so endearing, awakening much fascination among readers since her “birth” in 1865. She is, on the one hand, innocent and to some extent clueless of the world around her, but on the other hand, she is a brave girl who embarks on a journey by herself to an unfamiliar place, and overcomes dangerous obstacles while learning and becoming stronger along the way. Despite finding herself surrounded by unfamiliar people and creatures, Alice is able to find her way in the new places and treats the experiences as adventures in which she can apply her knowledge, and learn about the places to which her journeys give her access. Alice is curious, eager to continue exploring these new worlds, and she takes on the journey despite any potential dangers that may arise. Moreover, although she follows the rules of Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world in order to continue her exploration, she also stands up in the face of adversity and questions authority on various occasions — traits which present her similar to an adult instead of a sweet and polite little girl who is expected to remain silent and passive. Her adult-like behavior seems to have

expanded in the new versions of Alice, and it is possible that modern adaptations have transferred this character's traits from a child to an adult. Thus, the character Alice has matured into a young woman in the new film reinterpretations.

Furthermore, Alice's assertiveness, her desire to question everything, and her confusion, among other things, are traits that allow the reader to identify with her character because she is able to challenge the idea of a passive childhood and is able to embrace her adventures with an admirable attitude. She seems to embody the characteristics of what childhood is supposed to be, or at least what Lewis Carroll thought it was. Alice is creative, adventurous, intelligent, brave, active, and most of all, she is curious. Yet, besides Alice's extraordinary journey, audiences' fascination for the character may also be due in part to the paradox her character represents. In other words, Alice represents the innocence of childhood combined with braveness, but the story behind her creation is believed by many to represent the exact opposite. As intriguing as Wonderland seems to Alice, it seems to interest popular culture mostly because the books are haunted by a story behind their creation and the man who created them.

How Alice Came to Be

Traditional and popular lore surrounding Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*¹ present July 4th of 1862 as the birth of Alice -the character- during a boat trip in the Isis River at Oxford ("The Lewis Carroll Society"). On that sunny afternoon, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson unknowingly created what many consider his masterpiece, and the story that would grant him immortality. As he made up the story of *Alice's Adventures Underground* (as he first called it), it is very unlikely he could ever have imagined how great an impact it would have, not only in

¹ This is the collective name usually used when referring to both Alice stories. It is also what the majority of movie adaptations are called. Often, an adaptation with the name *Alice in Wonderland* is a combination of both stories.

children's literature but in adults' literature as well. But even less would he have imagined the story would continue to grow exponentially, providing Alice a different background, slightly different stories, a different age, and even a different outcome in her adventures.

During the famous "golden afternoon" (a phrase which refers to the poem written by Carroll in which he narrates how the first book was created in 1862) Reverend Charles Dodgson embarked on a journey with his friend Reverend Robinson Duckworth and the three Liddell sisters – Lorina, Alice, and Edith – towards the village of Godstow. Dodgson had been a friend of the Liddell family since 1856, when Henry Liddell became the new Dean of Oxford while Dodgson worked there. Not long after, Dodgson met Alice and her sisters, and from then on the three girls would visit him regularly; and Dodgson formed a strong friendship with them. His trips with the Liddell children to the lake were regular, but the trip during the 4th of July in 1862 became one that would live through history. In his book *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll* published in 1898, Dodgson's nephew Stuart Dodgson Collingwood presents one of the memories Alice Liddell recorded:

Most of Mr. Dodgson's stories were told to us on river expeditions... My eldest sister was "Prima", I was "Secunda", and "Tertia" was my sister Edith².

I believe the beginning of Alice was told one summer afternoon when the sun was so burning that we had landed in the meadows down the river... Here from all three came the old petition of "Tell us a story," and so began the ever-delightful tale. [Original punctuation left] (Liddell qtd. in Collingwood 64)

Another recording of Liddell's recollection of the event, written by her son Caryl Hargreaves and which appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, states:

² These names are featured in the prefatory poem that appears in the book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The poem seems to allude to this specific occasion in which he told the story to the sisters.

I think the stories he told us that afternoon must have been better than usual, because I have such a distinct recollection of the expedition, and also, on the next day I started to pester him to write down the story for me, which I had never done before. (qtd. in Gardner 9)

It has been speculated that Liddell's request meant so much to Dodgson that he began writing the story as soon as she asked him to. Yet, Karoline Leach, in her biography of Dodgson states that his diaries contradict this. Leach explains that Dodgson delayed his writing of the story:

Even when Alice asked him to write the story down, he was half-hearted in his response. He was preoccupied with other things ... She asked him to write it down, he said he would, but in his usual manner he did not get round to it. Only a chance meeting with the Liddell girls in the quad, four months later on 13 November, rescued his promise, and his story, from oblivion. He started to work that evening, probably with a little shiver of guilt at the delay. (Leach 253)

According to The Lewis Carroll Society, he started writing on 13 November 1862, and the manuscript was completed on 10 February 1863 under the title *Alice's Adventures under Ground*. It wasn't until 1864 that he presented the manuscript as "A Christmas Gift to a dear child [Alice Liddell] in memory of a Summer day" (Carroll *Underground* 1). Henry Kingsley, who was a novelist, as well as the family of George MacDonald, a writer of children's books, encouraged Dodgson to consider publishing the manuscript, and consequently, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was published in 1865 with illustrations by John Tenniel. Since this book was so well received, Carroll decided to continue Alice's adventures, this time in

a Looking-Glass House. After many debacles and delays, the book *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* was published in December 1871.

Since the protagonist of the two books (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*) is a little girl whose name is Alice and because the creation of the first book was inspired in part by ten-year-old Alice Liddell, there has often been discussion, by both audiences and scholars, that the stories are about the real girl. Various elements suggest the girl of the story is in fact Liddell. To name a few, there are references made throughout the poems featured in both books, where Carroll's wordplay makes allusions to Alice's last name, and the dates in which both stories presumably take place. The references to Alice Liddell in the poems appear in various ways. For instance, in the prefatory poem to *TLG* when Carroll refers to *pleasure* he uses the word *pleasance*, which is an archaic form of the word, but is also Alice Liddell's middle name. Furthermore, the closing poem in *TLG* talks about that July afternoon and mentions Alice the character, yet the first letter of each line creates an acrostic that spells out "Alice Pleasance Liddell." Carroll also worked the names of the three Liddell sisters into the stories in different forms. For example, there is a reference made by the Dormouse in a story he told during the Mad Tea-Party: "'Once upon a time there were three little sisters,' the Dormouse began in a great hurry; 'and their names were Elsie, Lacie, and Tillie; and they lived at the bottom of a well'" (Carroll, *Wonderland*, 53). In *The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Edition*, Martin Gardner explains, "the three little sisters are the three Liddell sisters. Elsie is L.C. [Lorina Charlotte], Tillie refers to Edith's family nickname Matilda, and Lacie is an anagram of Alice" (75). In addition, Carroll plays with the word *little* as it sounds very similar to Liddell, once again providing a connection between the story and the real girl. Curiouser and

curiouser³, through various clues within the stories we learn that the dates when each one took place have a close connection with Alice Liddell's life. Chapter VI of *AAW* reveals the month in which the story takes place is May, while in Chapter VII when the Hatter asks what day of the month it is, Alice replies it is the fourth. Therefore, the day Alice spent in Wonderland was May 4th, which is Alice Liddell's birthday. Moreover, in Chapter I of the second book *TLG* it is suggested that the date is November 4th, while in Chapter V Alice reveals she is seven and a half years old exactly, making her *exactly* seven years old on May 4th. This piece of "evidence" can strongly support the claim that many believe to be the ultimate truth: that Alice and Alice Liddell are precisely the same person (Gardner 73, 75, 138). Yet, Dodgson himself stated on numerous occasions this was not the case; the Alice of the story was not Alice Liddell. This study, however, does not intend to answer the inquiry of who the Alice of the story is. What it aims to accomplish is explain the influence popular perceptions have on the adaptation and portrayal of Alice, the character.

Alice is a controversial story that has spurred many debates between admirers of the author's work and critics who find the origins of his writings appalling. The root of this polemical debate lies in Reverend Charles Dodgson's photography, which contained, among other things, nude girls. However, according to Woolf, "Of the approximately 3,000 photographs Dodgson made in his life, just over half are of children—30 of whom are depicted nude or semi-nude" ("Carroll's Shifting Reputation" par. 11). Even those in which the model was fully clothed – as the ones shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 – may be deemed scandalous when measured by current standards, but in the Victorian period they were conventional. According to Karoline Leach, "the fact of these small nude bodies, the fact that this grown man chose not simply to

³ Famous words uttered by Alice at the beginning of Chapter 2 of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

associate with girl-children but to admire and photograph their nakedness is seen, both in biography and in popular culture, to have only one interpretation” (143). These pictures in modern times have undergone scrutiny because they are believed to constitute evidence of pedophilia. This results because Dodgson’s photography of nude girls is taken out of context and somewhat blown out of proportion. As mentioned, only roughly one percent of all the photographs he took were of naked girls. Moreover, he photographed many of his colleagues and celebrities, such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Thomas Huxley, and even Crown Prince Frederick of Denmark. He also took pictures of places that were of his interest such as the scenery in Oxford and Yorkshire, and of his childhood home at Daresbury, Cheshire, and pictures of scientific specimens. Nevertheless, the images that remain in cultural consciousness are those of naked little girls. This practice, Leach argues, is perceived through the lens of our own culture:

“Biography assesses him as it would a man of the late twentieth century who kept a stack of such pictures underneath his bed. But this is an assumption that has its basis in a fundamental failure to understand nineteenth-century culture” (144). During the Victorian period, there was an affinity towards idealizing the beauty and innocence of little girls, who possessed virginal purity. This trend was usually reflected in the literature of the period, but also in the photography, once this form of art arose. Carroll’s biographers Jenny Woolf and Karoline Leach explain that the images of nude children sometimes appeared on postcards or birthday cards of the era, and that “Victorians saw childhood as a state of grace; even nude photographs of children were considered pictures of innocence itself” (Woolf “Carroll’s Shifting Reputation” par. 11).

Dodgson contemporaries, such as Julia Margaret Cameron took nude pictures of children as well; while painters such as Noel Paton, W.S. Coleman, Oscar Rejlander, and Pierre Louÿs depicted

“soft-limbed, curvy-cheeked cherubs pose in imitation of the adult classical world” (Leach 147).

Edward Guiliano further explains this subject:

We’re [...] dealing with an age where sexless girls as butterflies, and fairies in gardens, and illustrations of sexless children in all kinds of books were very acceptable. [...] Those photographs are perfectly acceptable in the history of photography and the history of the Victorian notion of what a little girl looks like undressed. (Guiliano 101)

Given that the story was originally told to entertain Alice Liddell and her sisters and it was through her request that Carroll wrote the story, scholars, analysts, and biographers alike have been querying the nature of his relationship with Liddell for a long time. As Daphne Marie Shafer acknowledges, “Carroll’s friendship with children, mainly girls, has caused much debate in the last century, particularly concerning his hobby of photographing them, sometimes in the nude (but always with their parents’ permission)” (4). This is not to say, however, that Carroll had any type of sexual interest or relation with the girls he photographed or Alice Liddell in particular. Alice Liddell is believed to have been Dodgson’s closest child friend, and although there are no pictures of her in the nude, there are several in which, to the modern eye, she may look provocative or adult-like. Her pictures are precisely why there is speculation about a relationship between Dodgson and Alice. Figures 1 and 2 show two pictures Dodgson took of Alice when she was ten years old. The two are part of a “set” in which Dodgson depicts two opposites: a rich girl and a beggar girl. However, the more famous of the two, and perhaps the one impregnated into our culture’s consciousness is the one shown in Figure 2. The picture has been looked at as a provocative depiction of a girl, while the other picture has been ignored, possibly because Alice’s look is less provocative. In her article “Lewis Carroll’s Shifting

Reputation,” Jenny Woolf states: “we see him [Carroll] through the prism of contemporary culture—one that sexualizes youth, especially female youth, even as it is repulsed by pedophilia” (par. 33).



Figure 1: Ten year-old Alice Pleasance Liddell dressed as a “rich girl” photographed by Dodgson



Figure 2: Ten year-old Alice Pleasance Liddell dressed as a “beggar girl” photographed by Dodgson

It was not until 1886 that the concept of pedophilia became known when it was first used by German sexologist and physician Richard Krafft-Ebing, who described it as a psycho-sexual disorder; thus it is highly possible that the perspective of children shifted once this idea was exposed, and the practices which were once common were later seen in a sexual context. An example of this shift can be taken from an occurrence during London's National Portrait Gallery 1998 exhibition of Dodgson's photographs called *Lewis Carroll: Through the View-finder*. Colin Ford, curator of the exhibition, compared the question of pedophilia between an exhibition from 1974 and the one in 1998. He stated: "This year, the question has overshadowed everything. So a quarter of a century has totally changed our views. We see pedophilia everywhere nowadays. The world has changed quite dramatically" (Ford qtd. in Rider par. 4). In other words, the innocence perceived from those Victorian photographs of children has disappeared and in turn, has become a sexual matter.

The views on the child and sex have transformed in a matter of years due to the shift that has occurred in the views of childhood from the Victorian era to the present. This could explain why Carroll's work has been read as a tale of a girl's sexual awakening. Nevertheless, this study will steer away from this and other interpretations (such as a drug-induced or drug-alluding tale) since, as Gardner observes, the Alice books "like Homer, the Bible, and all the other great works of fantasy [...] lend themselves readily to any type of symbolic interpretation..." (Introduction xiv). Gardner adds that the trend in recent years has been to interpret the Alice books through psychoanalysis. Unsurprisingly, with the rise of an idea, come numerous analyses, which is why there seems to have been a shift in the perspective of children and sexuality. Once the concept of pedophilia took hold, the relationship between Charles Dodgson (Carroll) and Alice Liddell became sexual in the eyes of audiences.

Scope of the Study

In lieu of psychoanalysis, this study provides a new perspective, which explores how the perceptions of audiences in popular culture influence the adaptations of the stories. This discussion will be done utilizing a varied theoretical framework that includes cultural and media studies, and theories of film adaptation, which will be explained in Chapter 2.

Naturally, the perspectives of the audience who reads the stories now play an important part in this debate, as the assumed “disturbing story” was seen very differently at the time when it was created in contrast to how it is seen in a modern context. Still, the speculation about Carroll’s private life and the possibility of a romantic interest in Alice Liddell has not died. As expected, a character with such a controversial background is bound to be rewritten, reconstructed, and interpreted from many different perspectives and in various manners. It was twelve times that Alice’s size changed during her adventures in Wonderland, thus, it is not surprising Alice has been growing and changing for more than one hundred years, especially in the film adaptations which began in 1903 and have continued since.

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries she has gone from a curious and strong seven-year-old girl to an innocent and rather naïve older girl; she has been a timid girl and a modern Lolita, even a protagonist of her own erotic adventures. As recent as 2010, Alice continues to be an object of interpretation and this time she has become an adult. The most recent films retell Alice’s adventures metamorphosing her into an Amazon, an adult woman who can slay monsters, and also a woman who rejects men.

In her article about influences in one of these new versions of Alice, Hayley Rushing observes that “modern subcultures have embraced her as a savior heroine of darkness, strangeness, and violence” (7). Most importantly, she is no longer the seven-year-old girl from

the books; she has now grown into a woman, and her change seems to develop parallel to the perspectives of popular culture. As Rushing asserts, the Wonderland of the Twenty-first century “is the Wonderland the modern world wants” (7). This suggests that the changes featured in these new film adaptations reflect not only the Alice that readers, writers, filmmakers, scholars, and such want, but also how the original Alice is perceived. Her adult-like traits have been reassigned to an adult. Seven-year-old Alice admits to the caterpillar that she “must have been changed several times since then” (Carroll, *Wonderland* 41), and this thought appears to foreshadow what would become Alice’s fate: change and reinvention of who she was and who she is thought to be. Based on this notion, this study delves deeper into this dilemma aiming to explain why the modern Alice is perceived and portrayed in such a different fashion.

Taking into account Alice’s continual metamorphoses, this thesis explores the growth and changes of the character in the different interpretations and adaptations of her story, both in print and film. However, the study focuses on analyzing two film adaptations from the twenty-first century, in which Alice has been presented as an adult. One of the films to be examined is SyFy’s *Alice*, a two-part miniseries produced by the SciFi Network (SyFy) in 2009, and written and directed by Nick Willing. In this adaptation, the story takes place one hundred and fifty years after Alice went to Wonderland, and Alice is thought to be “the Alice” from the story, although she is not. This Alice has to undertake the mission of saving the world she found through a Looking-Glass by overruling the Queen of Hearts. The second film to be studied is 2010’s Disney-produced *Alice in Wonderland*, written by Linda Woolverton and directed by Tim Burton. This film represents another occurrence in which Alice is referred to as “the Alice,” the only one who can save Wonderland, but it takes place when Alice is nineteen years old and visits Wonderland for the second time. Although both versions are set in two different times, they

share various characteristics; one of them being that Alice needs to go back to Wonderland to save the place from evil. The most important feature shared by both adaptations is that Alice is no longer a seven-year-old, but an adult instead. Due to these and many other features, which are explored in this study, these two Alice adaptations have become very different from the story narrated on that golden afternoon.

There are two major reasons for studying SyFy's *Alice* (2009) and Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010). The first is that these two adaptations present Alice as an adult and they are adaptations created in the twenty-first Century, which could potentially represent a reflection of our current popular perceptions. The second reason is because the amount of research done on Alice film adaptations is limited. Although Brooker and Israel have thoroughly explored a number of Alice adaptations, there is a need to delve further into this topic especially since none of the previous explorations of Alice adaptations include these two texts, given that they are the most recent adaptations of the stories. Furthermore, biographer Jenny Woolf recently inquired whether anyone knew of a book dealing with portrayals of Alice in film, which further justifies the selection of these two texts to be explored along with previous adaptations in order to study the portrayal of the main character.

The objective of this study is not to interpret or analyze the original stories through the use of Carroll's life, but to find out how the perceptions that have emerged in popular culture about his life have been translated into the numerous adaptations of Alice. The following inquiries guide the study in order to explain Alice's changes:

1. Has the controversy behind the stories' creation affected the way the character Alice is adapted in contemporary films?
2. Which elements in the character Alice have gone through changes?

3. What are the differences between the Alice of modern film adaptations and the Alice in Lewis Carroll's books? What do these differences suggest?
4. What has changed in the views of childhood and innocence from the Victorian era to contemporary times?
5. How have these perceptions in popular culture been translated into the adaptations in contemporary media?

In order to explore these questions, this study adapts and employs a methodology used by Will Brooker, which consists of carefully examining each film and identifying particular elements previously selected. Brooker looked for “narrative elements in each film and mapp[ed] them against each other to gain an understanding of what they share and how they differ” and thus understanding which functions filmmakers agree are essential to be successfully Alice (Brooker 202). As the focus of this research is not to compare which elements make up the stories but instead how the protagonist has been transformed, this study takes into consideration the following elements of the character: age, attitude towards men, attitude towards Wonderland (including how curiosity is portrayed), and Alice's battles. Appendix A illustrates how the films are explored. The first column provides the element which has been identified and which was explored; the second and third columns present an explanation of that element for each film; column four refers to critical sources in which these elements have been discussed; and finally, the fifth column offers a brief analysis of the element in both films, the relation to each other, and a possible explanation for the element's inclusion in the films. After identifying and analyzing the elements mentioned above, I explore how the story of Alice's creation and perceptions in popular culture have influenced the character's portrayal. Certainly, in order to fully study the metamorphosis of the character Alice from a girl into an adult, this study also

takes into consideration previous film and text adaptations, which are briefly explored in Chapter 3. Therefore, an aspect of this methodology is employed for these texts as well. However, it only focuses on identifying these elements without fully analyzing them. The purpose of identifying such elements in previous adaptations is to refer back to them in the analyses of the two film adaptations explored in Chapter 4, as they may indicate why Alice has been changed in the new films.

To provide an ample exploration of this intricate discussion, this thesis is organized in five chapters. The current chapter provided an introduction to the character Alice, the man who created her, how the stories were created, and more importantly, what this study explores. Chapter 2 reviews the theories and concepts explored in this research, and it offers an account of previous studies done on Alice, relevant to the study of their adaptations. Chapter 3 discusses and acknowledges various adaptations both in literature and in film and provides information about the character Alice in each. Through the application of the theories discussed in Chapter 2, Chapter 4 analyzes and explores the world of Wonderland in the new millennium in the film adaptation *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) directed by Tim Burton and the two-part miniseries *Alice* (2009) directed by Nick Willing. Chapter 5 presents a synthesis of the conclusions reached through the study of Burton's and Willing's adaptations and the context in which they were created, and it also discusses the possible implications this research will have for future studies related to Alice adaptations.

CHAPTER II.

Down the Rabbit Hole: Review of the Literature and Methodology

Down, down, down. Would the fall never come to an end!
'I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time?' she said aloud.
'I must be getting somewhere near the centre of the earth.
Let me see: that would be four thousand miles down, I think—'
(for, you see, Alice had learnt several things of this sort in her
lessons in the schoolroom, and though this was not a
VERY good opportunity for showing off her knowledge,
as there was no one to listen to her,
still it was good practice to say it over)...

--Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865

The Mysterious Lewis Carroll or Charles Dodgson

Lewis Carroll, which is the *nom de plume* for Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, is often depicted as an eccentric man with a life full of dark secrets. Many aspects of Carroll's life have undergone scrutiny due to different versions presented in numerous biographies about him. However most of these agree on certain facts of his more public life and his childhood. Although a great amount can be said about Carroll's life, this section provides a synopsis of his childhood and adulthood focusing on events relevant to the creation of the Alice stories.

Part of Rev. Dodgson's eccentricity was his double persona: the man (who was the teacher, mathematician, and photographer) and Lewis Carroll (the writer). The Carroll persona is oftentimes mistaken with the real man Charles Dodgson, but Dodgson himself always made distinction between his "real" self and who he was behind the artistic pen. For instance, Dodgson would never accept mail sent to Oxford addressed to Lewis Carroll since that was the name he used as a writer. Therefore, when talking about his personal life, he will be addressed using his real name.

Dodgson was the eldest son in a family of seven girls and four boys, and earned his own living while his father provided for all the children during his lifetime, but eventually Charles took care of his siblings, especially his sisters until they married, as was expected in his times. For Victorians, a woman was to marry and surrender her belongings or earnings to her husband, but before marrying she was under the care of her father or the eldest brother after the father had died (Woolf *Mystery of Lewis Carroll* 19). Before providing his family with economic support when he was an adult, Dodgson would usually offer entertainment for his family by inventing games, performing with puppets, and writing stories. When he was 12 years old, he created The “Rectory Magazines,” which consisted of contributions from his family, but most of them were his. In his youth, he continued writing and published some of his work by himself. Some of those which survived are *Useful and Instructive Poetry*, which he wrote in 1845 and eventually published in 1954, *The Rectory Magazine*, which began in 1850 but remained mostly unpublished, *The Rectory Umbrella* published from 1850 to 1853, and *Mischmasch*, which he wrote between 1853 and 1862 (Cohen *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*; Leach *In the Shadow of a Dreamchild: The Myth and Reality of Lewis Carroll*; Woolf *Mystery of Lewis Carroll*).

The adult picture of Dodgson painted by many biographers is that of a man who was uncomfortable in the presence of other adults, and who only had children as friends. Many biographers suggest that events of bullying in Dodgson’s early life precipitated his behavior as an awkward and even repressive adult who had a fixation on not growing-up. Nonetheless, adult Dodgson, while reserved, was also social, caring, and just as creative as he was in his childhood. As an adult, Dodgson has been described as a straightforward religious man, whose beliefs clashed with the logical approach to life that was important to him⁴. In addition, Dodgson was a mathematics professor at Oxford, and he wrote many books on logic and mathematics, but they

⁴ Dodgson was a minister of the Church of England, but only a deacon and he never became a fully ordained priest.

never gained the level of fame the Alice books attained. With the introduction and rise of photography, Dodgson took this new art form as his hobby, and although at some point he entertained the idea of pursuing photography as a career, photography remained only a diversion. As Woolf explains, Dodgson “had an excellent job at Christ Church which his father had taken great care to help him obtain. He could not lightly exchange this for the insecure life of an artist, especially since, as the eldest son, he would shoulder heavy financial responsibilities after his father died” (*Mystery of Lewis Carroll* 250). As a result, Dodgson continued working at Christ Church, which led him to meet the Liddell family and eventually write the first Alice book, which changed the course of his life forever.

The Man Behind the Pen: Separating the Author from the Don

After learning about the origins of the Alice books and the mysteriousness, which seemed to surround the life of Reverend Charles Dodgson/Lewis Carroll, numerous inquiries are raised. As previously mentioned, his has been very controversial because of his relationship with little girls, which some have labeled as pedophiliac while others have described as innocent. Although there is no concrete evidence of a sexual relation with his little girl friends, the mere fact that he was very close to the girls was controversial, mostly because he was an adult. In Chapter 1, I briefly discussed the different views about childhood during the Victorian era, the period in which the Alice stories were conceived. Despite the different opinions towards Carroll’s relation to the little girls he photographed, a great amount of literature on the subject explains that taking photographs of little girls was a normal practice. As noted by Jenny Woolf in *The Mystery of Lewis Carroll*, among other scholars, the idea was to capture the innocence of childhood in an everlasting image. However, as Kali Israel warns in her essay “Asking Alice: Victorian and Other Alices in Contemporary Culture,” “knowing about the photographs is both productive and

anxious” (256) since “a wide array of texts that evoke the Alice books are haunted by the ‘problem’ of those pictures, by possible stories about Charles Dodgson, Alice Liddell, and other little girls” (255). Reading the Alice books with those pictures in mind can result in attaching sexual meanings to the texts which may have not been present during their conception. This comes as a result of hindsight, defined in the dictionary as the “perception of the nature of an event after it has happened.” Historian Joseph J. Ellis in *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* addresses this issue and provides insight on how to clarify cultural perspectives towards an event which took place in a different cultural context:

Hindsight...too much of it and we obscure the all-pervasive sense of contingency as well as the problematic character of the choices facing the revolutionary generation...We need a historical perspective that frames the issues with one eye on the precarious contingencies felt at the time, while the other eye looks forward to the more expansive consequences perceived dimly, if at all, by those trapped in the moment. (6)

There is a tendency to interpret a text based on the author’s life while including our own perception, which are mostly exclusive to the time period and the culture at one specific moment. This then, transforms the understanding of a text such as *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, which was created to entertain child friends, into an almost autobiographical story. When the author of such texts is perceived by the audience or readers as “a heterosexual pedophile who ‘collected’ little girls like so many dolls and who lost his stammer in their presence,” which is how psychologist Clifton Snider refers to him, the number of possible ‘hidden meanings’ increases. This causes the interpretation and understanding of the text to be changed. Thus, the

separation between author and text can become more difficult since the author's intriguing life can provide a better and even controversial meaning.

Alice has been studied from various angles which have added to the already numerous meanings which the ambiguity of the books and their nonsensical nature yield to. In his book *Alice's Adventures: Lewis Carroll in Popular Culture* Will Brooker remarks there is a cultural understanding of Alice as “a dark fable, innocent children's fantasy, Freudian dreamwork, English heritage treasure, or drug hallucination- often incorporating more than one reading in the same film, despite the fact that some seem mutually exclusive” (202). This is a result of placing our own understandings of the world into past events; it is a result of hindsight. Even director Tim Burton recently described Dodgson's stories as “drugs for children” and Wonderland as a place where “everything is slightly off, even the good people” (qtd. in Woolf, “Shifting Reputation” par. 3). Furthermore, Alice's adventures have been often studied as symbols of sexuality. A.M.E. Goldschmidt's essay “Alice in Wonderland Psycho-Analysed” that Dodgson had a sexual desire towards Alice and that her fall down the rabbit hole signified the act of coitus. In 1938 professor Paul Schilder made a similar observation about little girls as suppressed sexual desires. According to him “We are reasonably sure that the little girls substitute for incestuous love objects” (qtd. in Woolf, “Shifting Reputation” par. 21), which would be the case for Alice according to psychoanalysis. For Schilder, there was not the slight possibility of an innocent interaction between a grown man and a little girl; instead, the girl exudes sexuality and this can turn into a sinful act.

The Alice books retain their author when they are interpreted and adapted mixing fiction with reality. This aspect will be explored in Chapter 3, for some of the adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland* have made Lewis Carroll (the man) one of the characters of the re-envisioned story.

They also present Alice Liddell as the fictional Alice or even mix characteristics of Liddell and Alice (the character) into one person. Whichever the case, it is clear that whenever Alice is adapted, real facts and created “facts” about Lewis Carroll’s private life play a role. Will Brooker presents an excerpt by David Robinson from the *Scotsman* which reflects the contemporary mindset that has most likely affected the way Alice has been adapted:

For such a chaste Victorian clergyman, tenderness towards children was only part of a Christ-like renunciation of the pleasures of the adult world. After his death, a radically different interpretation soon arose ... To the modern mind, Charles Dodgson – the man who was Lewis Carroll – looks like a pervert. [...]

After so much pedophile sex abuse in our own age, it is difficult for us to accept the reasons anybody gives for wanting to take pictures of naked children. All we really know about Dodgson’s sexuality is that if he was indeed a pedophile it was in thought rather than deed. Whether he was too emotionally immature or controlled, he never acted on those particular impulses. (qtd. in Brooker 60)

In his argument, Robinson, while assertive in pointing out how later worldviews, cultural knowledge and experience with pedophilia inform contemporary readers and its perceptions of Dodgson’s life, also presents certain aspects of Dodgson’s life as the truth. However, there is no evidence about these assumptions in order to clarify if they are truth or not. For instance, he assures Dodgson proposed marriage to an eleven year-old girl (referring to Alice Liddell), but this fact has never been confirmed, not even by Liddell herself during the various times she reminisced on her childhood and Dodgson.

What transpires is our culture’s twenty-first century perceptions imposed upon Victorian texts and sensibilities. This comes as a result from years of theories going from “measured

arguments from more scholarly discourse to bold statements of popular discussion” which create the image of Lewis Carroll impregnated in contemporary cultural consciousness (Brooker 59). Still, it is not enough to simply state that this persona of Dodgson suddenly emerged and remained in the perceptions of popular culture. A more complicated process occurred in order to place these ideas in our consciousness. Evidently a shift in perceptions took place, and with the aid of the media, this image has continued in popular culture.

From Innocent to Sexual: The Shift in Childhood Wonderland

From the mid-twentieth and early twenty-first century, there has been a rising attention given to child sexual abuse and pedophilia in the media. Much of this notoriety can be attributed to accusations made to famous works and personalities such as Nabokov’s *Lolita* to Michael Jackson, who openly admitted sharing his bed with children but firmly stated time after time that he did not sustain sexual relations with any of them. In her book review of James Kincaid’s *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*, Heather Munro Prescott explains that Kincaid tries to trace our culture’s perceptions and preoccupations with child abuse by trying to find a historical explanation (Prescott par. 1). According to Prescott, Kincaid argued that “the telling and re-telling of stories about sexual perverts and their child victims has turned us into a nation of ersatz [i.e. artificial or fake] pedophiles, who delight in the flurry of gossip on child sexual abuse in the mass media” (par. 4). This has resulted in our culture’s need to protect the child:

James Kincaid (1992) in his critique of childhood innocence argues that innocence is not a characteristic that pre-exists in the child, but rather is a cultural myth that is ‘inculcated’ and ‘enforced’ upon children and generally viewed by adults as in need of protection. (qtd. in Robinson and Davies 345)

Alice has gone through the change into adulthood in the different adaptations where she is presented in a sexual context. However, in the new film adaptations it seems she has become an adult precisely for the reason suggested by Kincaid: Alice needs to be protected. Despite not being presented in a sexual context, Alice's adulthood in the new films appears to reflect this incommmodity and the need to protect the original little girl from the erotic past she has had.

Prescott suggests that Kincaid's argument is that "the 'invention' of childhood centered around defining children as distinctly different and 'other' from adults" (par.5). When viewed from this perspective, the child becomes a different entity which cannot be viewed and treated different from an adult. Of course, this does not entail that this perception is either negative or positive; it simply reflects a change in perspectives. To exemplify this shift, author Chris Townsend describes in his article "A Picture of Innocence?":

A 50s baby, at a few months old I was photographed naked on the hearth-rug in our front room. Such images were a common-place in that decade: clichéd.

Thousands of such pictures must have been taken. Thousands of others record children and adolescents playing unclothed in suburban gardens. There is nothing out of the ordinary in such images. These pictures document visions of seemingly innocent, untroubled childhoods. (par. 1)

For Townsend and many others during the 50s, 60s, and previous decades, pictures of naked babies or children were "either amusing moments of naivete [*sic*] ... or else sublime representations of an ephemeral, unconscious, beauty" (par. 3). Without the idea of pornography constantly present, these pictures and paintings were admired or at least appreciated as artistic, as a form of parental odes to innocence and purity. However, during the late 1970s, Townsend recalls, there was a shift in perspectives, in which photographs of naked children were viewed as

representations of sexual abuse and predatory adult desire. Nevertheless, during the Victorian period, as the role and art of photography was evolving, so was the discourse that organized sex; thus, some practices were prohibited and repressed. Townsend explains that “police raids and confiscations of ‘indecent’ materials were not uncommon” (par. 8), yet there was a blur among what was considered pornography. It was clear, however, that child nudity was certainly not considered pornography because the child was perceived as pure and innocent, and these types of pictures served to preserve their innocence. He addresses two important differences between Victorian culture and the perspectives that arose in the twentieth century and continue in the twenty-first century:

...firstly that the family was excluded from intervention by the law - there were no problematic snap-shots, and the idea of abuse was unthinkable - and secondly that the ‘innocence’ which Victorian culture projected on to the child largely excluded possible correlations between nudity and sexuality. (par. 9)

For Townsend, however, this does not suggest that there was nothing abnormal with Lewis Carroll’s (as he refers to him) behavior. According to him, for Carroll and other men from the Victorian era, the photography of a nude child represented a repressed sexual desire, albeit, not necessarily pedophilic. Nina Auerbach also discusses this in the article “Alice and Wonderland: A Curious Child:”

Even Victorians who did not share Lewis Carroll's phobia about the ugliness and uncleanliness of little boys saw little girls as the purest members of a species of questionable origin, combining as they did the inherent spirituality of child and woman. (32)

Unlike the common opinion of scholars and critics who depicted Carroll as a perverse pedophile, Townsend states that Carroll “was clearly uncomfortable with his sexual identity and the gender role expected of a Victorian patriarch” (par. 11), and both Townsend and Auerbach suggest that Carroll not only had a preference towards little girls, but that he was disgusted by little boys. Still, this involves a rather large amount of speculation since none of the documents that survived Carroll/Dodgson discuss his sexuality, contrary to what has been suggested in the present. To say that Carroll was only comfortable with little girls, that he disliked little boys, and that he did not desire adult women, clearly reflects speculation by modern sensitivities. Townsend suggests that “As photography became a truly popular medium in the middle of the century it produced a fourth category of childhood - the unaesthetic, almost utilitarian, nude - a moment of time snatched for memory” (Par. 16). In other words, the child became something different; it stopped being the image of beauty, purity, and innocence it used to represent; it stopped being the “posed” aesthetic being which was depicted in paintings and post cards and began to be sexualized. He adds: “Representation of the child’s body, at once a source of intimate joy and humour, has become simultaneously a marker for fears of instability and corruption in the most fundamental institution of our society” (Par. 17).

To delve further into the shift in the views about childhood, it is important to discuss the concepts of “the child” explored by James Kincaid. In *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* Kincaid identifies three categories of “the child” often depicted in literature: the gentle child, the naughty child, and the Wonder child in Neverland. The first category, the gentle child, describes as the ideal child, pure and “delightfully willing to be surprised” (Kincaid 218). The gentle child is the good child, and in our present concern, Kincaid explains it “is more than just so-so good; it is angelic, holding out the promise of a happiness that is complete and

divine” (220). This gentle child then represents goodness and happiness, and as Kincaid continues to explain, there was an association of goodness with “happy nakedness” which was employed in different forms of art such as paintings, decorative illustrations, films, and literature (224). This is precisely what Woolf, Leach, and the newer literature on Charles Dodgson have presented. There was a moment when the types of pictures Dodgson took were considered appropriate because of what they represented. Nevertheless, as Kincaid acknowledges, views about child continued to shift into the perverse, which is where we find the “naughty child.” As he discusses, not all children are good, and for this reason our culture constructs the bad child. This child constructed “mirror-like in order to transport us into the land of true childhood, is then displaced and made to play the part of the false child, the naughty child” (246). Furthermore, this child does not conform to what is expected from a good child and behaves completely opposite to that. This created resentment towards the child often manifested in the spanking of them as a form of correction. Our culture, Kincaid explains, “does not want to mislay the tie between spanking and desire, just as it does not want to acknowledge it. Past generations were often more candid about the arousals of child-beating” (225). This could be seen as one of the starting points of viewing the child as more of a sexual being, while at the same time trying to maintain its innocence and goodness. Lastly, Kincaid considers the “Wonder child in Neverland,” and begins by suggesting that “the two most persistent and stimulating images of the erotic child we [popular culture] possess are inherited from the Victorians” (275), these being Alice and Peter Pan. Popular culture looks at these two children and finds a certain desire, hoping to “sneak a peek – at Alice resting fretfully on the bank and provocatively tossing her hair from her eyes; at Peter asleep and exposing his arched knee and his pearls [his teeth]” (Kincaid 275). Although not entirely sexual, and possibly not meant to carry any sexual undertone, the scenes described can

be perceived with sexual connotations when the child is thought of as able to be sexual as well. There is a level of adulthood given to the child which was not given to neither the “good child” nor the “naughty child.” Kincaid juxtaposes the two children and their role in the adult world, stating that both run along two different binary relationships: the child and the adult, and the world of play and the world of power. As he explains, “Peter, the child, is lodged in the world of play and the adult is stuck in the world of power; Alice, the apparent child (actually the adult) is firmly in the world of power and the apparent adult (actually the child) is in the world of play” (Kincaid 276). Alice is viewed as an adult; she is the child in the story, yet her traits are those of an adult. This suggests that, as I argue, the new Alice films have transported the traits Alice (the child) possesses to an adult, since this may be perceived as more appropriate for the character. About growing up Kincaid remarks, “As we are sliding down toward the child, the child is roaring past us in the opposite direction, growing up” (277). Alice went in this precise direction; her power as the knowledgeable child was given to the adult version of her.

In the article “She’s Kickin’ Ass, That’s What She’s Doing! Deconstructing Childhood ‘Innocence’ in Media Representations,” Kerry H. Robinson and Cristyn Davies discuss the relationship between the adult and the child and how in contemporary culture the child has been stripped from their power and knowledge and has been reduced to a powerless and harmless being:

Hegemonic discourses of childhood artificially construct mutually exclusive worlds – the world of the adult and the world of the child –in which adult-child relationships are defined and binarised [...] In this binary, children are socially constructed as innocent, immature, dependent, and the powerless ‘other’ in

relation to the independent, mature, powerful, critically thinking and ‘knowing’ adult. (Robinson and Davies 344)

The different shifts and views about the child are certainly evident in the various adaptations of Alice; most of the earlier adaptations (some of which are explored in Chapter 3) present an adult actress playing the role of a child. Some of these adaptations show the sexual nature of the child, while the new film adaptations presented in Chapter 4 present the result of culture’s protection of the child as a result. Moreover, the new adult Alice also reflects the binary relationship between adult and child in which the child needs to remain innocent while the adult is the one who can be independent, powerful, and allowed to gain knowledge. The shifts in the views about childhood – its sexuality and its goodness, among other things – are evident in the plethora of interpretations and readings which have been given to the original Alice books, and which at the same time have permeated into a variety of adaptations. It is important to acknowledge what are some of these interpretations and perceptions about the book that may have influenced the way Alice is adapted. The following section provides this discussion.

The Beginning of Alice’s Changes

Alice in Wonderland (as the two tales are collectively known) has arguably spawned a myriad of interpretations, by far more than any other work by Lewis Carroll, and undoubtedly, more than most of the children’s literature written in the Victorian period. The most notable interpretation is perhaps from a psychoanalytical perspective, which has been applied to the stories since approximately 1933 when A.M.E. Goldschmidt, in his essay “*Alice in Wonderland* Psychoanalyzed,” used a Freudian approach to interpret the meanings and symbolisms he suggested were found in the Alice books. After this, the understanding or interpretation of the text changed. Instead of being a story as presented in its pages about a little girl’s dream in which

she finds a world that was unknown to her, meeting peculiar creatures, trying to make sense out of nonsense, standing up to adversity, and understanding who she is, in his analysis, Alice became a story of sexual exploration and phallic references.

Goldschmidt detailed these references, stating that, “The symbolism begins almost at once. Alice runs down the rabbit-hole after the White Rabbit and suddenly finds herself falling down ‘what seemed to be a very deep well.’ Here we have what is perhaps the best-known symbol of coitus” (par. 2). He goes on to explain that the normal-size doors found at the beginning of *AAW* represent adult women, the small door represents a little girl, the curtain in front of it represents clothes, while the act of introducing a key into a door lock represents, once again, coitus. Of course, the element of the story that has received the most attention in terms of psychoanalysis has been the multiple changes in Alice’s size. On one of these changes in her size, Carroll describes her “immense length of neck, which seemed to rise like a stalk out of a sea of green leaves which lay far below her” (*Wonderland* 47). Woolf also reports that for psychoanalyst Martin Grotjahn, the illustration of a long-necked Alice had a meaning which was “almost too obvious for words” (Woolf, “Shifting Reputation” par. 21).

For many psychoanalysts, including Goldschmidt, this description and the drawing that depicts Alice’s elongated neck, have phallic significance. For Goldschmidt, “The whole course of the story is perhaps to be explained by the desire for complete virility, conflicting with the desire for abnormal satisfaction” (par. 6). In short, Alice’s dream journey is a manifestation of her own sexual desires, which can only be fulfilled through the different experiences she goes through while in Wonderland, which is nothing more than just the place where Alice is free from any repression.

Psychoanalysis was at some point the “norm” for approaching the Alice books, to the extent that, as Clifton Snider points out in the essay “‘Everything is Queer To-day’: Lewis Carroll's Alice Through the Jungian Looking-Glass,” one Freudian critic argues that “it is impossible to gain conscious understanding of the life of Lewis Carroll or of the meaning of his written fantasy unless a psychoanalytic approach is used” (Skinner 293 qtd. in Snider par. 2). It seems as if there cannot be a separation between Carroll’s stories and the idea that they present a sexual desire that was hidden in Alice’s subconscious. For Snider, however, psychoanalysis was a valid approach, but he admits that “at the same time, it leaves many psychological issues unexplored” (par. 2). Snider instead proposes to look at Alice from a Jungian approach since,

Jungian criticism attempts to account for the collective appeal of a classic like *Alice in Wonderland*. It asks, For what that is lacking in the contemporary collective psyche does the work compensate? An account for such appeal or compensation cannot be entirely provided by an examination of the author’s life, however provocative and interesting that life is--and Carroll’s life is certainly an interesting case study. (Snider par. 2)

As previously mentioned, there has been a difficulty separating the Alice books from the life of Lewis Carroll, which has resulted in reading the books in relation to experiences and events in Carroll’s (Dodgson’s) life. Much of the psychoanalytical approaches to the books have arisen as a result of examining Dodgson’s life and his relationship with children. Yet again, these interpretations arise because critics fail to separate the real man and the author, which could be even considered a character created by Dodgson. Susina explains that the author’s early works as a young man show his interest in pseudonyms and multiple personalities (16). Furthermore, he observes that just as the Alice books are filled with transformations and changes, Dodgson

himself experienced a transformation: “The stuttering, reserved, and awkward lecturer, Mr. Dodgson, became the clever and witty man of words, Lewis Carroll” (Susina 9). However it has been suggested that Alice’s dream in *Wonderland* symbolize a sexual desire, most likely Carroll’s desire towards the real Alice. Nina Auerbach argues that this interpretation has little basis as she further states:

Despite critical attempts to psychoanalyze Charles Dodgson through the writings of Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* was too precise a logician and too controlled an artist to confuse his own dream with that of his character. (Auerbach 32)

When finally viewing Lewis Carroll as a separate entity from Charles Dodgson, the basis of psychoanalysis fails, as it relies on the life of the creator to interpret the work of his other persona. Otherwise, texts written by authors who use different pen names for different works would have to be analyzed the same way. A similar argument is presented by Susina:

Contemporary critics and readers do not seem to bring the same moral concerns to contemporary children’s writers who work on multiple fields, such a Daniel Handler/Lemony Snicket or Shel Silverstein. Under the pen name Lemony Snicket, Handler is the author of the popular, thirteen-volume children’s series *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999-2006); but under his own name, Handler has published much more disturbing adult fare, such as his comic, incest novel *Watch Your Mouth* (2000) and the violent *The Basic Eight* (1998). The beloved children’s author...Silverstein was also a well-known contributing cartoonist for *Playboy*... (5)

Yet, it appears as if, while other authors can create alias in order to expand their reach, and their personas are kept separate, only the double persona of Dodgson/Carroll is studied as one. Hence, allowing the person's life to affect how the creation of his "other self" is perceived.

Still, as cultural studies suggest, there are many ways in which a text can be viewed. One uncommon interpretation of *Alice in Wonderland*, which deviates from the highly discussed psychoanalysis, is that of an imperialist story. Although Alice has been read as a religious and political allegory, these readings usually offer references of characters who could represent certain political and religious figures of the time. However, in his essay "Alice the Child-Imperialist and the Games of Wonderland" Daniel Bivona explores the Alice story from a different perspective. He asks whether Carroll was intrigued by the same political dilemmas that fired Swift's imagination: "what happens when one deposits a representative of English culture in a foreign land populated by beings who live by unfamiliar rules?" (Bivona 144). He adds that it is time to examine Alice's relationship to Imperialism because "the dilemma in which she finds herself seems designated to raise questions about her 'imperial assumptions'" (144). In Alice, Bivona says, "Carroll renders a world organized by gamelike [*sic*] social structures in which mastery of the game promises mastery of others" (144). Of course, by referring to Alice he is pluralizing the stories, and although he only refers to the first book *AAW*, it is the second book *TLG* the one constructed as a game: Alice plays a real life game of chess to become a Queen.

In his analysis, Bivona explores Alice's imperialist attitude towards Wonderland when she tries to place her own perceptions of how the world works into the new and unknown-to-her world of Wonderland. In both worlds (Wonderland and Looking-Glass) Alice has to follow rules, but she does not know which rules exactly. However, as Bivona observes, it appears as if

what is considered “normal” or “natural” in England is inappropriate in Wonderland, and I should add in Looking-Glass world as well. Bivona notes that Alice, despite having no knowledge of these rules, is clearly concerned with “correctly inferring rules from the strange behavior she sees around her, and this concern of hers extends even to herself: her own physical stature is determined by her following written rules” (146). Bivona illustrates Alice’s attempts to understand rules. To name a few, Alice attempts to identify rules when she witnesses the caucus-race, in which everyone is the winner; when she participates in the game of croquet, which is played very differently from what she is used to; and when she attends the Mad Tea Party, Alice tries to make sense of the riddles the Hatter asks her. In a similar manner it could be said that popular culture attempts to explain events and “rules” from the past employing their own knowledge of the present. In Alice’s case, according to Bivona, she fails in her attempt to master what he calls “the game of Wonderland” because “she will never achieve the kind of self-transcendence necessary to ‘comprehend’ (and dominate) the ‘creatures’” (158). Her frustration overwhelms her ability to understand and master the rules. He adds that Alice,

like any good imperialist...assumes that because she comes to play a role in the “creatures” drama by virtue of her undismissable presence, she can thereby dominate it, and successful domination must be the inevitable reward of “comprehension”. (Bivona 158)

He concludes that “because Alice fails to successfully frame the events of her adventure, she must flee what has become a nightmare” (Bivona 170). This nightmare is certainly more exciting than Alice’s pastoral life outside her dream. Then, since Alice could not grasp the nightmarish nature of her dream when describing it to her sister, Bivona argues, Alice’s sister recuperates the narrative of the dream “in a way that clearly falsifies it by sugarcoating it, by in

effect, practicing a bit of Alice's own high-handed imperial construction on us readers" (170).

Conversely, in her article "How wanderer Alice became warrior Alice, and why" Kristina Aikens suggests that Alice, despite her lack of control and her subjection to Wonderland, does not perceive her dream as a nightmare. Instead, she acknowledges her participation in a dream, stating: "There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought!" (Carroll *Wonderland* 32). To this, Aikens comments that after discovering she was part of an adventure, Alice "immediately leaps from claiming her status as a heroine to declaring that she will herself become the author that sets her story to paper" (29). Had Alice perceived her adventures as a nightmare, she certainly would have not stated her desire to, not only have her story written down, but to write it herself.

Clearly there have been a plethora of interpretations given to the Alice stories, yet the discussion of Alice film adaptations has been overlooked. This is surprising since the Alice books are one of the most adapted texts in history. According to a list prepared by David Schaefer – a renowned Carroll scholar –, which presents instances of "Alice on the screen," up until 1999 there had been thirty film adaptations, which include a newsreel, feature films, cartoons, and movies made for television, among others (Gardner 309-312). This list does not include the more recent adaptations and the appearances of Alice in other mediums such as songs, music videos, video games, and written texts, and references to Alice in other films (e.g. the Matrix), which add up to more than a hundred.

Adaptations can be understood to envelop not only novels and films, but also a wide range of additional mediums. As explained by Linda Hutcheon in *A Theory of Adaptation*, the Victorians adapted just about anything into every possible medium including poems, novels, plays, operas, paintings, songs, and dances (ix). As a true Victorian art form, the Alice books

have been adapted into most of the aforementioned mediums and into newer forms as well, which include films, video games, graphic novels, and even more recently in the era of technology, into an interactive book for the iPad®. Although adaptations in general serve as legitimate forms of literature, scholars argue that adaptations, no matter which form, are often viewed as copies with minor significance, and not good enough compared to the original (Hutcheon xii). Will Brooker agrees, stating when discussing adaptations that “in some chapters an old-fashioned hierarchy seemed to be at work, treating the film adaptations as inherently and inevitably second-rate next to their literary originals, and judging an adaptation as praiseworthy only inasmuch as it matched ‘faithfully’ up to the ideal of the novel- or rather, up to the commentator’s individual notion of what the novel was about” (200). Hutcheon adds that an adaptation is “a derivation that is not derivative- a work that is second without being secondary” (9). Nevertheless, adaptations in academic criticism are derogated, considered secondary, and even categorized as inferior in culture. Western cultures bestow negative views to adaptations, especially films, and naturally the written literature retains audiences’ respect because it is the older art form. While some value the adaptations’ proximity to the original work rather than their ability to stand on their own as a different entity, it is clear that adaptations can become highly praised. Hutcheon provides statistics from 1992, which show that 85 percent of all Oscar-winning films for Best Picture are adaptations. Yet, despite these films gaining respect from movie critics and popular culture in general, adaptations continue carrying the stigma of not being up to standards compared to the original. However, the aim of adaptations is not to replicate the original. Hutcheon defines adaptations as repetition, but “repetition without replication” (7). Thus, an adaptation cannot and should not be judge according to their faithfulness to the work they are repeating. Instead, she suggests adaptations should be judged

“in terms of lack of creativity and skill to make the text one’s own and thus autonomous” (Hutcheon 20). For the two films explored in this research this form of evaluation can be applied. Both the film directed by Tim Burton and the one directed by Nick Willing (2009) are reflective of the time when they were created, not necessarily in the period where the story is set but the contents reflect what the audience wants to see. In addition, each film has elements that characterize the film’s director and his own stylistic preferences, and although both films share similar themes and ideas that were not part of the original, there are enough elements that differentiate and which make each one a unique piece. What Hutcheon states then suggests that an adaptation becomes a completely new work which should be separated from the original. Yet, each adaptation creates a connection to the work which preceded it, thus they do not completely stand on their own.

The dictionary meaning of the term “to adapt” is to “adjust, to alter, to make suitable” (Hutcheon 7). Brooker refers to the versions of Alice subsequent to the books as a “third adventure;” i.e. the new Alice is “an adaptation and extension that borrows familiar elements from Carroll and introduces new ones” (230). We will see that some of the new film adaptations this research presents, more specifically the films directed by Tim Burton and Nick Willing (2009), could in fact be considered Alice’s third adventure, one she experienced many years later. In this case, because “to adapt” involves “making suitable,” it could be argued that new film adaptations of Alice attempt to make the stories more suitable to the intended audience. That is, not only the stories from the book may be considered unsuitable for children because of the supposed allusions to drug or sexual innuendos, but furthermore, the story of their creation may make the Alice stories unsuitable to popular culture. Therefore, because adaptations are entities

that do not require fidelity to the original, changes are made to the new adaptations so that it conforms to popular culture perspectives. As a result, Alice becomes an adult.

According to Hutcheon, there are three perspectives from which adaptations can be defined: formal entity or product, process of creation, and process of reception.

...[A]s a *formal entity or product*, an adaptation is an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work. This “transcoding” can involve a shift in medium (a poem to film) or genre (an epic to a novel), or a change of frame and therefore context: telling the same story from a different point of view... Transposition can also mean a shift in ontology from the real to the fictional, from historical account or biography to a fictionalized narrative or drama... Second, as a *process of creation*, the act of adaptation always involve both (re-)interpretation and then (re)creation... Third, seen from the perspective of its *process of reception*, adaptation is a form of intertextuality: we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation. (Hutcheon 7-8)

It is important to understand this particular process to trace what impulse the newer adaptations of Alice. Evidently, because the spectrum of adaptations of Alice is so wide, almost all adaptations fall under at least one of these perspectives. A very important part of Hutcheon’s definition of adaptation is that prequels and sequels are not included, and she explains that “there is a difference between never wanting a story to end” -which she states is believed to be the reason for prequels and sequels- “and wanting to retell the same story over and over in different ways” (9). For Julie Sanders, conversely, adaptations are created to expand on certain aspects of the text or to make it more suitable to the audience intended:

Adaptation is frequently involved in offering commentary on a source text. This is achieved most often by offering a revised point of view from the ‘original’, adding hypothetical motivation, or voicing the silenced and marginalized. Yet adaptation can also constitute a simpler attempt to make texts 'relevant' or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readers via the process of proximation and updating. (Sanders 18-19)

Adaptations of Alice reflect all of these ideas. On the one hand, there are many adaptations, some of which are discussed in Chapter 3, which aim to continue the legacy of the books by trying to tell the story as best as possible in film, which sometimes proves unsuccessful. The motivation behind these films seems to be “never wanting the story to end.” On the other hand, some of these films aim to highlight a particular character who was not very significant in the original but whose constant depiction in the adaptations has made him/her resonate in the audience’s mind. Furthermore, some of these adaptations create almost a completely new story, some using biographical facts and waving them with fiction, or creating a new story with elements of the original and utilizing the same characters. This last aspect is found in the new adaptations this study focuses on.

Several separate entities can be transcribed into adaptations: theme, characters, and separate units of the story. In addition the point of departure or conclusion can become translated into an adaptation. In order to understand what exactly has been materialized into the adaptations, it is important to pinpoint at least some of the most important elements and peruse through them. The following are some of the few works which discuss adaptations of Alice, from three different perspectives, and which focus on some of these entities.

Cathlena Martin's 2010 essay "'Wonderland's become quite strange': From Lewis Carroll's *Alice* to American McGee's *Alice*" is one of the most recent and one of the few discussions of Alice adaptations (at the time of this writing). She explains that the film version of many of the stories which belong to the called "Golden Age" of Children's literature have become as timeless as their textual counterpart, partially because they have been adapted to this medium. Martin adds that Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* along with Frank L. Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* form what she calls the "golden age triumvirate of books" (n.p.) which have had the most distinctive transformations from their original book forms into the media. In their case, they have been frequently adapted into film and video games, and the many versions (be them film, theater, games, and music) have helped place them into cultural consciousness. What Martin notes of importance by studying the different adaptations of Alice (along with other stories) into video games is that through this examination one can gain deeper appreciation of the original while analyzing additional features of the story. Although Martin's study focuses mainly on the video game adaptation called *American McGee's Alice*, this adaptation is an important one in terms of showing the direction in which Alice has been taken. *American McGee's Alice* features a more macabre incarnation of the character Alice, who appears to be seventeen years old. Part of the background story of this Alice is that her family died in a fire, when her home accidentally burned down. Alice is the only survivor and she attempted suicide, after which, she was institutionalized in a mental asylum, only to be brought back to a darker Wonderland which appears to have been twisted by her own mind. Martin argues the story in *American McGee's Alice* "revises the children's tale into a mature, dark and twisted journey which in many ways is closer to Lewis Carroll's original *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*" (n.p) than the earlier adaptations.

Although debatable, her perception might be very similar to that of many who consider Alice a dark story. Moreover, as mentioned before, this seems to be the direction in which both the character Alice and the Alice stories are going. The newer versions to be studied in this research follow this pattern of darkness, maturity, destruction, and the need for Alice to go back to Wonderland in order to save it. This pattern could possibly suggest that the character Alice has become an adult and at the same time her story has become darker as a result of how the relationship between Carroll and Liddell has been perceived throughout the years.

In his essay “Asking Alice: Victorian and Other Alices in Contemporary Culture,” Kali Israel explores a range of literary adaptations that show a connection between the Alice books and literary modernism, which can be described as “a commitment to experimentation in techniques, freedom in ideas, originality in perceptions, and self-examination in emotions...manifests a rejection of traditional techniques and ...expresses the plight of the individual in a world of machinery ” (“Literary Modernism”). For instance, she discusses Jeff Noon’s *Automated Alice*, which “plunges Carroll’s character into a dystopian fantastic 1998 Manchester of chaos theory, human/machine and human/animal hybrids, and blurrings [*sic*] between the real, virtual, and automated” (Israel 255). Still, this is only an example of how Carroll’s books contain elements compatible to a modern context, particularly the use of puns, word-play, logic and language games, hybrid creatures, and inversion, among other things. Israel also explores an assortment of written, film, and theater adaptations of Alice which have more connections with Vladimir Nabokov’s *Lolita* than with Lewis Carroll’s *AIW* and *TLG*.

Her essay is, perhaps, the one which better elucidates the obscure nature of Alice and how this perception has influenced an ample amount of its adaptations. According to Israel “a wide array of texts that evoke the Alice books are haunted by the ‘problem’ of those pictures

[referring to the pictures Rev. Dodgson took of little girls], by possible stories of Charles Dodgson, Alice Liddell, and other little girls” (255). That is, many adaptations of the Alice stories as well as texts, which make reference to them, use the “real” story of Dodgson and Liddell to create their own interpretations. Various books have been written using Liddell and Dodgson (or Carroll) as protagonists and mixing reality with a fiction created because of the pictures and the myth that surrounds Carroll, which depicts him as a lonely and sick pedophile. As an example of this popular perception of Carroll, and thus of Alice (the stories, the character, and the real girl), Israel discusses the lengths to which people take the idea of pedophilia and place it onto anything related to *Alice in Wonderland*. For instance, she mentions a child-pornography website and a pedophile magazine which have used the name *Wonderland* as the title (Israel 256). She also illustrates the controversy behind the *Alice* books: “in the register of panic – an Oklahoma ‘family values’ activist sought to have *Alice in Wonderland* itself banned from libraries not only because it allegedly promotes drug use but because it was written by a ‘suspected pedophile’” (Israel 256). In addition, Israel discusses David Slavitt’s 1984 novel *Alice at Eighty* where the author creates fictional situations using real people in Dodgson’s life (Alice Liddell, her husband and son, and Dodgson’s child friend Isa Bowman). In this novel “there is no ambiguity about the sexual dimensions of Carroll/Dodgson’s relations with children” (Israel 261). Carroll is referred to as a “‘paedophile’ and a ‘poor sad pervert’ who masturbates beneath his photographer’s drape while taking pictures and who holds little girls onto his erections” (Israel 261). Clearly, the author’s perception of who Carroll/Dodgson was played an important role in his interpretation of the story. In this case, the story is not *Alice in Wonderland*, but because the story presents the real people who were involved in the creation of Alice, it could be

said that this story, along with other adaptations and interpretations, set the precedent to Alice's growth in the newer adaptations.

Such are examples of the role popular perceptions play in the interpretation of the Alice stories. If they are believed to carry such obscure meanings, and if her story is believed to have been a product of pedophilia, then it must be natural the character Alice needs to become an adult, so that audiences in popular culture can become comfortable with her story. In her essay, Israel raises this very important point, one that serves as the basis for this study. As Israel remarks, "The aging of Alice into adolescence or young adulthood can both mark and deny the ways in which Alice texts are haunted by those photographs and the possible stories about them" (271). She further explains that if the pictures makes audiences question whether they should wonder about the sexualization of little girls, Alice's transformation into an older girl opens exploration of something more erotic since "stories about not-little girls can freely be stories about sex" (Israel 271). This idea is presented in many adaptations, both written and in film, of the Alice stories, some of which will be briefly explored in Chapter 3. These adaptations present Alice in a sexualized context and they distort fantasy and reality to present a new story. The film adaptations to be explored in this study differ from those because they present an Alice who is already an adult, but she is not placed in a sexualized or erotic context. However, the fact that she is an adult could have been influenced by her previous sexualization. This will be further explored in this study.

In terms of film adaptations of Alice one of the most recent and possibly most extensive studies was conducted by cultural studies expert Will Brooker, who compared various Alice films and analyzed what aspects of the stories seemed to be the most important based on how much they were depicted on the films. Brooker acknowledges, first of all, the lack of studies

about film adaptations of Alice, the first of which was done 1903, just five years after Carroll's death. Through most of his book *Alice's Adventures: Lewis Carroll in Popular Culture*, Brooker studies closely Alice in popular culture during the 1990s, but in his analysis of the Alice adaptations he expands back to 1951, when the Disney animated film was created. The other four films he includes are Jonathan Miller's 1966 TV film, Harry Harris' 1985 CBS-produced film, the Czech animation from 1989 directed by Jan Svankmajer, and the 1999 adaptation directed by Nick Willing, who went on to write and direct Alice again in 2010, and whose new adaptation will be studied in this thesis (Brooker 200). Will Brooker's study consisted of identifying which characteristics the five aforementioned films shared since, despite differences between each other and with the original book, "they all share a skeletal narrative structure, a core key of scenes that also involves a shared bank of dialogue and basic templates of character and setting" (Brooker 202).

An essential aspect of Brooker's research is the methodology employed, which involved looking for key elements in each film's narrative. He then compared the films to establish their similarities and differences, in order to obtain an idea of which elements filmmakers agree are necessary for the story to work as Alice. The elements he considered for each film were: setting, costume, lighting, music, and performance style. Studying these elements provides a clearer idea of what each film depicts as what Alice is about and how this may affect how the stories (and their adaptations) are read (Brooker 202). Brooker's methodology informs this study as it provides a systematic procedure for studying various texts, and he points out which elements of the stories should be emphasized. In addition, Brooker's study serves as a basis for this research because his findings will be a point for comparison against this study's findings. Brooker summarizes the basic premise shared by these five films as follows:

We are introduced to Alice in the real world, with either an older sister or other adult characters. She follows a White Rabbit into some form of tunnel or hole, and entering Wonderland finds a small door she wishes to get through. She drinks a magic potion that shrinks her, and then eats a magic cake. Animals swim in a pool of tears. The Rabbit mistakes her for his maid, Mary Ann, and sends her to his house, where she makes herself big again, then small again as the animals try to evict her from the house. She leaves the house and encounters a Caterpillar who asks “Who are you?” She joins a Mad Tea Party, and meets the Queen of Hearts with her court; they play croquet. There is a trial culminating in her waking from the dream. (Brooker 203)

Despite the similarities in the basic story presented in each film, Brooker points out the distinct approaches each filmmaker takes. For instance, Disney’s animated film presents Wonderland as fantasy, where the rudeness found in the characters in the original story is replaced with foolishness and magic. This version, according to Brooker, censors and cleans up the text to provide “innocent family fun” in lieu of the more gore and even violent aspects which are present in the original (207). However, any attempt at providing innocent fun is tainted by the possibility of a drug reading due to the psychedelic visuals featured in the 1951 film and, as Brooker explains, the seemingly deliberate use of pot-smoking and hallucinatory fungi connotations. In his book *Portrait*, when referring to the Disney animated feature, Donald Thomas notes: “For the first time, the self-confidence of Alice was touched by the vulgar assertiveness” (qtd. in Brooker 206). Brooker, on the other hand, finds this statement surprising since Disney is known for sanitizing stories and “reducing classic tales to tweeness” (206) or over-sentimentality. Even so, he acknowledges the complexity and duality of Disney’s *Alice in*

Wonderland, which is “still sold as healthy stuff for kids, [but] it nevertheless carries less innocent meanings for knowing adults” (Brooker 208) in relationship to drug connotations. Still, the image of the character Alice is presented as an innocent and naïve child who is so scared of Wonderland she wants to find her way back home. Audiences, however, have an image of Alice who is overtly sexual, and it is blatantly present in fan fiction and art; for example, online archives which show Disney’s heroine naked and engaging in sexual acts with other characters from the movie. It is this type of representation of the character which suggests that in popular culture, Alice is given a sexual role that could have driven filmmakers to portray her as an adult in the new adaptations to be studied.

Besides having found differences in the depictions presented in each film, Brooker’s study also presents several similarities in the themes featured in them. For instance, in Harris’ film adaptation as well as Disney’s and Willing’s, Alice wants to leave Wonderland as she realizes how much she misses her own home. Contrary to Carroll’s story, in which Alice’s motivation to follow the White Rabbit is out of curiosity, in Harris’ version Alice is motivated by the idea of getting out of Wonderland. This idea is to be further explored in this thesis, for the desire to go home is a recurring theme in many adaptations of Alice, both written and film versions. In Willing’s 1999 adaptation, Alice not only wants to leave Wonderland instead of exploring it, but she also desires to be part of the adult world. This idea is materialized in Willing’s second Alice adaptation, which is one of the two main films to be explored in this study, as she has become an adult. The Alice of Willing’s 1999 adaptation wants to be an adult, yet she is portrayed as an innocent child but with a tone that is “more grown-up than usual” (Brooker 209). However, some of the other adaptations, despite showing an Alice who is still a child, seem to convey more sexual undertones. Harris’ for instance, presents an Alice portrayed

by a young girl whose performance was praised as “innocent,” yet, Brooker notes that “there are aspects of this *Alice* that feel a little unnerving” (214). There is an encounter between Alice and a cat (depicted by Telly Savalas in a cat suit) that creeps up on to Alice to tell her that there is no way home. According to Brooker, the manner in which the cat leers to the little girl and tells her “miaow, baby!” is “fairly creepy” even if we disregard “any overtones of the sexual predator as entirely unintentional” (214). He then suggests that there is a question of whether or not audiences enjoyed the film as a fun ride or if they were troubled and attracted by this sexual undertone. Svankmajer’s 1989 film presents even sexual undertones starting with the selection of the actress who portrayed Alice. In this case the actress was young, yet her playfulness and her sensual features in addition to intimated close-ups shots of the character are potentially uncomfortable for popular culture, one who “veers away from childhood sexuality” (Brooker 215). Furthermore, the character becomes even more uncomfortable and conveys an even greater sexual connotation because Svankmajer stated that he chose the actress because “the whole crew, including the director, was in love with her as Professor Dodgson had been” (Svankmajer qtd. in Brooker 215). It is clear that not only did Svankmajer want his Alice to be sensual but he believed Carroll (Prof. Dodgson, as he refers to him) was in love with Alice Liddell, which is the perception of many others in popular culture; *popular culture* referring to audiences of the texts and films from the 1950’s forth, for the purpose of this research.

In light of the aforementioned discussions, the objective of this research is to investigate why the representations of Alice have changed so much since the character’s conception more than a century ago and how these changes are reflected in the newer film adaptations. It is important to establish that this work does not intend to defend or justify pedophilia, nor does it accuse anyone of such actions. It does not answer the riddle about whether Carroll (Dodgson)

was a pedophile or not (it does not answer any riddles, which Carroll was famous for creating, for that matter). This study is done with the sole purpose of providing a plausible explanation for the new trend in the adaptations of the character Alice in the two film versions of Carroll's stories *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* mentioned before. Since it is in the media that these new adaptations are presented and because it is through media that these images have propelled, this thesis explores the new Alice adaptations from a media culture standpoint.

The Theory Quadrille: Exploring Popular Culture

The mere act of changing a text from one medium to another, or tweaking the story so that it becomes somewhat different from the original in order to present the story differently or for the entertainment of the masses is not the only requirement to produce an adaptation. There is a relationship that needs to exist for both the process and the product of adaptation to occur. Hans Robert Jauss in his essay "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" identifies the audience, hence the culture, as an integral part of the adaptation process: "In the triangle of author, work, and public the last part is no passive part, no chain of mere reactions..." (1551). As I argue in this study, the adaptations of Alice reflect the culture in which they were created. The perspectives of who the real Alice was and what the story means have motivated the changes the original story and character has undergone changes in each adaptation. As Jauss suggests:

The perspective of the aesthetics of reception mediates between passive reception and active understanding, experience formative of norms, and new production. If the history of literature is viewed in this way within the horizon of a dialogue between its aesthetics and its historical aspects is also continually mediated. Thus

the thread from the past appearance to the present experience of literature, which historicism had cut out is tied back together. (1551)

The disciplines of Cultural Studies, which explore what political and historical events have shaped contemporary or popular culture, addresses these issues. A relatively new field, cultural studies is comprised by a range of fields which include feminist theory, history, philosophy, literary theory, and media studies, among others, to study cultural events in a particular society and how these events have influenced or shaped the nature and values of that culture. According to John Storey, the field of cultural studies suggests that texts which make up a culture “can be made to mean in many different ways” (3), and thus, there is a constant conflict over giving the world ‘the right meaning.’ These premises could serve as an explanation for the constant change in the depiction of the character Alice and the recent trend of portraying her as an adult, as there is no definitive meaning in the Alice stories, therefore, popular culture (audiences) shape their own meanings, which in turn are reflected in the adaptations.

When addressing media culture and its effects, Douglas Kellner discusses the origins of cultural studies and the influence mass media (e.g. television, radio, film, music, etc.) has in shaping the perceptions and political views of a specific society at a specific time. One of the aspects Kellner discusses is how media affects ideologies, which are defined by John Storey as “a range of ways of looking at the world” (10). In other words, ideologies guide our understanding of the world and events in our lives. Ideologies frame our mindset and our perceptions to the extent that each individual may possess their own. Kellner explains that “many texts try to go both ways [conservative and liberal] to maximize their audiences, while others advance specific ideological positions...” (93). In an attempt to include as wide an audience as possible and to provide something for everyone, Kellner observes:

...the texts of media culture incorporate a variety of discourses, ideological positions, narrative strategies, image construction, and effects (i.e. cinematic, televisual, musical, and so on) which rarely coalesce [or unite] into a pure and coherent ideological position. (93)

It is evident that media texts of Alice discussed in this study incorporate these strategies in order to expand their viewing audience, and to fit these adaptations into the mindset of the culture or audience it aims to attract. As will be observed in the following chapters, the story of Alice has been changed over and over again, mostly parallel to cultural changes and transformations of perceptions in society. Not only have the narrative strategies changed (i.e. her story has been transposed from written text to film, song, comic strips, and video games), but also the image of Alice herself has changed. In turn, the new construction of Alice bares much resemblance to the ideologies that are explicit in popular culture for which the adaptation was created. The incorporation of these elements rarely gives result to a coherent ideological position, as Kellner has argued

certain media cultural texts advance specific ideological positions which can be ascertained by relating the texts to the political discourses and debates of their era, to other artifacts concerned with similar themes, and to ideological motifs in the culture that are active in a given text. (93)

In Alice's case, we can argue that since the rise of psychoanalysis, the ideology that has prevailed is that of Alice as a sexual child. In addition, because of the shift in ideologies regarding the sexualized child, which went from considering it innocent and pure to a sexual being, each of these adaptations reflects the culture and the point in time in which they were conceived. As Kellner explains, cultural studies should be "multiperspectival." This means that

because cultural studies avoids being one-sided and biased, “a multiperspectival cultural studies draws on a wide range of textual and critical strategies to interpret, criticize, and deconstruct the artifact under scrutiny” (Kellner 98). However, the problem the adaptations of Alice represent is that they appear to portray only one type of interpretation, one single perspective: that of discomfort towards a sexualized little girl who is the muse of an older man. Furthermore, Kellner refers to the media culture as a medium in which sounds and images provide the materials “out of which people forge their very identities” (1). As Kellner suggests, people identify with the characters, situations, places, and emotions presented in the media. If we take into consideration the mediums of film and television, with which audiences are more in contact, people’s identification with them may affect how films are created, as they cater to the intended audience’s needs. If audiences in popular culture identify with the little girl from the books, it presents an even more uncomfortable situation when this girl has been speculated to have been inspired by a real girl, one to whom an adult man was supposedly attracted to. Based on this, I suggest that in order to dissipate any discomfort from audiences while continuing to present the story of *Alice in Wonderland*, adaptations needed to offer Alice a transformation, and as a result, she grew up.

Additionally, when an audience has established an opinion towards a particular work, character, or author, and this work is adapted into film, it is possible that the audience’s perceptions are taken into consideration during the creation of the film. In addition, the meanings and interpretations that popular culture bestows on a particular work can be influential in how the work is adapted. However, media has become a great influence in shaping not only individual ideologies but cultural as well. For instance, television may shape the idea of what being a woman entails, or what makes a man a “real man.” The media feeds us ideas and

constructs we are supposed to adopt; therefore, the way it usually works is that society is a reflection of what the media features. This research attempts to study, in addition to this relationship, the reverse relationship; i.e. how society's perceptions influence the media and what is featured in it. Of course, the media and what it has presented about Dodgson's life first influenced these perceptions. Yet, it appears that the new adaptations of Alice have been influenced by the perceptions of Lewis Carroll that have remained in popular culture. In addition, one tradition of popular culture sets popular culture as emerging from a subculture, from the people's voice. Thus, it is possible that the people's voice influences how films become adapted.

Therefore, through works by Will Brooker, Jenny Woolf, Martin Gardner, and others who have documented the perceptions of Alice (the character, the real girl, and the stories) among audiences in popular culture, this study explores how these views may have influenced how the previous Alice texts have propelled the character to become an adult in the new film adaptations. Moreover, because this thesis explores perceptions in popular culture and their relation to media, it relies on additional sources that may be considered unconventional and even unreliable in academia. However, these sources – blogs, fan pages, published interviews, and message forums, among others – provide current perspectives on the movies and other Alice-related variations which would otherwise be unknown to the public.

CHAPTER III.

Good Alice, Naughty Alice, and Fantasizing about Her

“I—I’m a little girl,” said Alice, rather doubtfully,
as she remembered the number of changes she had gone through that day.

--Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865

Alice is Beginning to Change

As noted in the previous chapters, the character Alice has undergone multiple interpretations, which consequently have propelled her constant change in the myriad film adaptations that surfaced as early as 1903, which was five years after Dodgson’s death, and as recent as 2010. Alice has gone through many changes in the textual adaptations of her story, which have presented her from little girl to an old woman who reminisces about her sexual adventures. Although this thesis focuses on exploring the two newest films, it is important to understand how the character Alice has evolved into the adult she is now in the newest film adaptations. Therefore, this chapter discusses a selection of adaptations of Alice in film and literature. In the earlier film adaptations, Alice has mostly remained a girl but her portrayal has varied greatly from one adaptation to another. Because there are numerous adaptations, this chapter only provides a selection of adaptations where different versions of the character Alice are presented. The reasoning behind choosing this sample is because there are hundreds of adaptations (including films, made for TV movies, books, graphic novels, comics, and video games); thus, it would be unfeasible to discuss every single one of them. In addition, I have excluded adaptations that have already been discussed by scholars cited in Chapter 2 (Brooker, Israel, and Martin), and I have selected the most notable adaptations. The inclusion of these adaptations will serve as a point for comparison and contrast to newer adaptations in which Alice is an adult.

One type of adaptation is when Alice is portrayed as the seven-year-old girl, but she looks like an adult as a result of being portrayed by an adult actress. This occurs in many films, but the ones to be discussed in this chapter are film versions by directors Cecil Hepworth (1903), Dallas Bower (1949), and Kirk Browning (1983). Another type of adaptation are works of fiction in which a new story of Alice is created and the characters presented are real people (i.e. Alice Liddell, Charles Dodgson), some of which present the idea of a romantic/sexual relationship between Alice Liddell and Dodgson. Such literary works include Katie Roiphe's *Still She Hunts Me* (2002) and *Alice I have Been* (2010) by Melanie Benjamin, which will be discussed with a brief comparison to the film *Dreamchild* (1985) written by Dennis Potter and directed by Gavin Millar. A third type of adaptation presents Alice as a fully-grown adult who experiences or reminisces about her sexual adventures. This discussion includes Alice in popular culture and erotica in the graphic novel *Lost Girls* by Alan Moore and a brief overview of the pornographic film *Alice in Wonderland: An X-Rated Musical Fantasy*, from 1976 and directed by Bud Townsend. In addition, Disney's 1951 animated feature film *Alice in Wonderland* is discussed because it is perhaps the best-known film adaptation of the story, to the point where many would think of this film as the original *Alice in Wonderland* instead of the books.

However, the first film adaptation of Alice came almost fifty years before the famous animated picture. It was a ten-minute silent film produced and directed by Cecil Hepworth in 1903. In this production, the story of Alice remains basically faithful to the first book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, although it only presents certain parts of the story due to time restrictions. Although some of these scenes are present in this short film, it is interesting to note that one of the most significant scenes, where Alice questions and defines herself before the Caterpillar, was not included. Instead, a less-acknowledged one was featured, Alice's interaction

with the Duchess and the baby who turns into a pig. For Aikens this episode in *AAW* is important as it presents Alice rejecting the domestic expectations for Victorian women. According to Aikens this scene is “one of the most obvious ways Carroll’s Alice differs from the multitude of Disney princesses who followed” because unlike the princesses who dream of finding a prince, marrying, and living ‘happily ever-after,’ “marriage is never her concern, and certainly not a goal” (28). This rejection of marriage and domesticity has been expanded in the newer adaptations of Alice and are further discussed in Chapter 4. Whatever the reason behind including this scene instead of the more notorious ones that have been included in the adaptations which have followed, Hepworth’s 1903 short film set the precedent to one of the most notorious features of Alice adaptations: an older actress playing the role of a girl. May Clark, who played the role of Alice in this silent film was fourteen years old— double the age of the story’s protagonist – when she embodied the young heroine. After this, it became almost customary to depict Alice in a more mature light, not only in her age, but also in her reactions, her almost darkness, and her interaction to Wonderland; as a result, the little girl is almost unrecognizable.

But “I—I’m a little girl”: The Seven-year-old Girl Trapped in a Woman’s Body

After growing as tall as a tree, Alice is asked once again who or rather *what* she was. This time it was a pigeon, who flew over her and confused Alice with a serpent. Alice responded uncertain, “ ‘I—I’m a little girl,’ said Alice, rather doubtfully, as she remembered the number of changes she had gone through that day” (Carroll *Wonderland* 49). Indeed, she was a little girl, but all those changes had driven poor Alice into questioning the truthfulness of her assertion, especially since she was over ten feet tall, and very much unlike a little girl. Similarly, Alice’s entrapment in a woman’s body is a phenomenon that filmmakers gave birth to, and which began

to showcase Alice in a darker light. In his review of different Alice film adaptations, Daniel Singer identifies one problematic characteristic common in most of these works: “Alice is a seven-year-old child. Most filmmakers cast an older actress, expecting the audience to accept post-pubescent woman in the role of a child. It’s confusing and inappropriate” (10). The reason why it is confusing is because in many of these adaptations the actress playing Alice is not believable as a child; instead, she looks mature and not as innocent as a seven-year-old girl. Even in the 1903 film, in which the actress was still a teenager, there was a vast difference between the age Alice was supposed to be and how she looked.

In 1949 yet another adult actress played *Alice in Wonderland* in a musical film which combined live action and puppetry directed by Dallas Bower. This adaptation featured 23-year-old Carol Marsh in the role of Alice – both the fictional Alice and Alice Liddell. This adds to the confusion of who Alice was, since, much like the intertwining of Dodgson and Carroll, this suggests that Alice and Alice Liddell were the same person. The opening captions suggest that Lewis Carroll created each character with a real person in mind. It has been said that the characters of the Dodo bird in *AAW* and the White Knight in *TLG* are actually personifications of Dodgson himself (Susina 9; Gardner 236). Yet, when the name Carol Marsh comes to the screen, the only name mentioned is Alice. There is no clarification that she is also playing Alice Liddell, which might suggest to the audience that there is in fact no distinction between one and the other; the fictional Alice *is* Alice Liddell. The film breaks away from the usual story line in order to present the combination between the “real events” and the story, but keeping the two Alices as one. The last scene in Wonderland is the trial, which is followed by a pack of cards running after Alice to which she wakes up. Moreover, Bower adds a twist at the end of the story: as the real world is presented again, Dodgson tells the little girls that the adventures were Alice’s (the

character) dream. Of course, since the film alludes to the idea that fictional Alice and Alice Liddell were the same, when Alice wakes up from her dream, the person shown is Alice Liddell waking up and asking Dodgson: “What happened to Alice?” To which Dodgson responds:

Well, Alice found herself lying on the bank, her head on the lap of her sister, while gently brushing away dead leaves that had floated down from the trees upon her face. “Oh I’ve had such a curious dream!” said Alice. (Bower *Alice in Wonderland* 1949)

To this, Alice Liddell suddenly yells “A dream? No, no. It was real! It was real!” Finally, looking at Dodgson with sad eyes, she says: “But Mr. Dodgson, it wasn’t real. Wasn’t it?” She never receives an answer, but the camera moves towards Alice’s right and we find the White Rabbit coming out of the hole. This scene specifically invites the audience to believe, not only that Wonderland was real but also that Alice Liddell was the one who fell into the rabbit hole and experienced the adventures Carroll narrated. It clearly combines reality and fiction into a sequence that, while providing a more intriguing twist to the plot, allows viewership to confuse reality with fiction. This version of Alice presents “historical” facts that were clearly not historical and presents an older Alice. Yet, despite Alice’s adult façade, it is possible to perceive her as a little girl because she maintains the sweet and innocent, yet assertive, tone the fictional Alice is supposed to have. Nevertheless, there are other adaptations in which Alice does not look so sweet and innocent.

In 1982, Alice was brought to the stage in a production titled *Alice in Wonderland*. The play featured then 26 year-old Kate Burton playing the title role. This production, directed by Kirk Browning, begins with a sort of prologue in which the cast is seen backstage. More surprisingly, and certainly unnecessary for the plot’s development, the audience finds Kate

Burton, dressed in her Alice attire, smoking a cigarette in her dressing room. Unlike the more faithful version directed by Bower, Browning's amalgamates creatures from Wonderland and Looking-Glass world. Some of these creatures, however, do not look as innocent and friendly as the puppets from Bower's production.

The interaction between the Cheshire Cat (or Cheshire Puss, as Alice calls him) and Alice is perhaps the most disturbing, simply because of the way he looks at her. The scene begins with Alice walking towards the tree where the Cheshire Cat is and asking him where she should go. At this moment the cat is in fact animated, a cartoon version of a cat, whose face suddenly takes human form. After a few seconds, the cat disappears and a tall figure begins walking towards Alice; the walk seems more like a dance, as the Cheshire Cat – played by Geoffrey Holder – swings his hips from side to side while an almost seductive music plays in the background. When Alice replies that she does not want to go among mad people, the Cheshire Cat tells her she cannot help it since they are all mad there. As he is about to tell her that she is mad as well, he looks at her from head to toes with a somewhat conniving grin, as if he was hiding a secret. For audiences it could potentially be rather disturbing to watch his look when realizing that this is supposed to be the seven-year-old girl from the story. As a matter of fact, video excerpts of this film are posted on the popular website *YouTube* a user, named *megadork456* writes, “If I didn’t know better, I’d swear they were coming on to each other,” while user *NeraFX* remarks, “‘MEEEOOWWWWWWW!’ LMAO this is absolutely terrifying. And yes to thinking this was going to lead to porn. What an odd scene...” Mark Bourne observes in “Alice in Wonderland: Broadway Theatre Archive” that the actress who portrays Alice does not act like a child at all:

With her long blonde hair and pinafore she certainly looks the part, but she's bland and unconvincing, unable to make us forget that at 26 she's too

old/mature/womanly to be telling us that she's just seven and a half. Especially after we've just seen her sucking on a Marlboro. (par. 3)

Throughout the film, Alice acts and talks too much like an adult. Despite the original Alice being assertive, mature, and certainly not too childish, she had an air of innocence and ingenuity that was lacking in this depiction. Moreover, by the end of the film it is even more difficult to perceive this Alice as a little girl. During the closing scene, Alice recites the poem featured in *TLG*, "Jabberwocky." In this section the atmosphere feels frightening; the room is dark, and only Alice can be seen, sitting on a big red armchair and looking directly at the camera. Her eyes look dead; there is no feeling in them, she does not blink but simply stares at a fixed point in front of her. Her face does not transmit any expression. For the audience, this may feel as if something bad was about to happen. In the *YouTube* comment section for this scene, viewers have remarked how daunting Alice looks. One viewer for instance comments, "I honestly thought that this would have ended with a scary shit at the end, therefore prepared my self and turned it down all the way." Alice is definitely not a seven-year-old. The idea might have been for the actress to play the role of the heroine from the books, but for an audience who expects a little girl, this portrayal seems far too adult, even for a mature character such as Alice.

Contrariwise, not all depictions of Alice follow this concept. As discussed in Chapter 2, Brooker observed that Disney's 1951 adaptation follows the usual Disney format of over-sentimentality. This adaptation presents a version of Alice that is excessively sweet and meek. Compared against the mature portrayals in the films by Bower and Browning, the sweetness of this Alice is further highlighted. Even worse, she is scared of Wonderland.

“Let’s Don’t be Silly”⁵: The Alice Who Fears Madness

Disney’s 1951 animated musical feature film *Alice in Wonderland*, directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske, despite having similarities to other adaptations does not utilize an older actress. Naturally, since it is an animated film the actress’ age has little importance, but the cartoon version of Alice was designed to look like a little girl. She looks approximately ten years old, which is still older than the Alice from the original stories, yet there are certain characteristics which make her more child-like than the original. Contrasting with Carroll’s creation, this Alice is not as insightful.

Carroll’s Alice is a curious child; there is no doubt about that. It is not completely by choice that she enters two different worlds in two different occasions: she both follows a rabbit because she is curious about it and she walks through a mirror because she was wondering what it would be like to live in Looking-Glass House. Her adventures are led by curiosity. Despite Disney’s Alice not being as inquisitive as Carroll’s, curiosity still plays an important role in this film adaptation. Alice is always curious about her surroundings and the characters, but especially about the rabbit. When Alice meets Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum (which appear in *TLG*, but were mixed into *Alice in Wonderland* in this adaptation) she tells them that she is following a white rabbit and they ask her why. The interaction continues:

Alice: Well, I- I’m curious to know where he is going!

Dum: Ohhhh, she’s curious! Tsk! ts! ts! ts!...

Dee: The oysters were curious too, weren’t they?

Dum: Aye, and you remember what happened to them...

Dee & Dum: Poor things!

⁵ Words uttered by the Mad Hatter in Disney’s 1951 *Alice in Wonderland*

Alice: Why? What did happen to the oysters?

Dee: Oh, you wouldn't be interested. (Disney *Alice in Wonderland* 1951)

Here, the Tweedles proceed to tell Alice the story of "The Curious Oysters" who followed the Walrus and the Carpenter against their mother's advice because they were curious, only to encounter a tragic ending: the Walrus ate all of them. Naturally in this adaptation, which is directed to children, there is always a moral to a story or to something that happens. In this case, the brothers told the story because they wanted Alice to learn a lesson: she should not be curious. When discussing the Alice books Aikens points out that scholars have noted how female curiosity is always depicted as something terrifying. Yet, for Aikens, Alice's curiosity is what makes her such a strong character and such an empowerment to females:

This terrifying power derives from the fear of a woman acquiring knowledge, particularly as a threat to patriarchy... The Alice books, by contrast, reimagine these mythical actions, and though the heroine does end up in some awkward and uncomfortable situations she is never truly punished for her curiosity. In fact, her fearless spirit of adventure, her willingness to go anywhere and try anything, no matter how strange or absurd or even potentially dangerous, is the character's most appealing and beloved attribute. (Aikens 29)

In Disney's version, although not punished, Alice is told that she should not be curious, or else she could end up like the oysters. Contrary to Carroll's Alice where curiosity is what drives Alice's adventures, in the Disney adaptation curiosity is depicted as something negative.

Furthermore, curiosity is the root of most of Alice's "problems." She is there because she was curious, and now she has to be among mad people. However, for Disney's Alice this is not fun, this is not an adventure. She wants to get out of Wonderland.

Brooker mentions this aspect as he discusses Harris' adaptation: "Alice's motivation is not to get into the beautiful garden or to follow the White Rabbit out of curiosity – as it is in Svankmayer and to some extent in Disney and Willing – but to get out of Wonderland" (213). Although he is right in describing Harris' adaptation, Brooker only attributes this "to some extent" to Disney's, but in reality, this aspect is very explicit in this adaptation as well. In Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* Alice is trying to go back home because she is not only frustrated with Wonderland, she is scared of it. Moreover, from the very beginning she wants to escape; when she cries in front of the door while she tries to get the key which opens it, she cries because she cannot get home, while in the original story she simply cries because she wants to go out and explore the new world. This sense of adventure, which was so characteristic of the original Alice, was taken away almost entirely in this meek version of the heroine. Disney's film presents a Wonderland that does not seem so exciting to Alice. Although in the beginning she is amazed with what she sees, she becomes tired and rather afraid of the madness and the nonsense around her. Similarly, as will be presented in Chapter 4, Alice's desire to get out of Wonderland and finding her way back home is a recurring theme in both film adaptations which are explored in Chapter 4. Yet, there is an undeniable contrast in the ages of the Alices being depicted, all of which represent the fictional heroine, but which may as well have been influenced by the perception that she is the real Alice, and thus she is afraid of Wonderland or what it represents.

Which Dreamed It?⁶: Alice Liddell as the Fictional Alice

As I have discussed at various points, there is an impression among popular culture that the fictional Alice is the real girl Alice Liddell. Popular culture believes the two Alices are one,

⁶ Title of Chapter XII of *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1872)

as a result of speculation, which assures there was a special interest in Alice Liddell from Carroll's part. Karoline Leach considers this notion:

The history of Charles Dodgson's involvement with the Liddell family has traditionally been told as if it was almost exclusively the history of his involvement with the second daughter, Alice. The impression is given that he favoured her massively over her sisters, worshipped her, courted her. With our modern love of literalism we have interpreted his 'Alice' to as the real-life Alice he knew when he wrote the story. We confuse their separate identities in Jungian, suggestive ways. (248)

I made the observation that Bower's 1949 movie suggests the fictional Alice and Alice Liddell are one person as he utilizes the same actress to portray both Alices, and does not make a distinction between the two during the film's credits. Similarly, Melanie Benjamin in *Alice I Have Been* further explores this confusion between fictional Alice and Alice Liddell by having the real Alice question which one she really is: "So yes, I do get tired; tired of *pretending* to be Alice in Wonderland still, always. Although it has not been easier being Alice Pleasance Hargreaves⁷. Truly, I wonder; I have always wondered – Which is the real Alice, and which the pretend?" (10). Bower's film presented this combination for the first time and, as is evident in Benjamin's work, it prompted following adaptations to intertwine reality with fantasy. Thus, newer adaptations of Alice, if based on the notion that Alice Liddell is the Alice of the story, may have changed her into an adult to diminish the uneasiness her story may cause. In addition, because there is a combination of the real and the fictional, new adaptations have borrowed from this format, and thus, have created stories based on the lives of Lewis Carroll and Alice Liddell,

⁷ Hargreaves is Alice's married name.

appearing to be autobiographical, but relying greatly on fiction. Such stories even go as far as to creating a romantic story between Alice Liddell and Lewis Carroll or Charles Dodgson.

One of the techniques used in the film *Dreamchild* is the combination of the reality old Alice is experiencing and her imagination, which allows the characters Carroll created to be part of her life. For instance, at one point when she is left alone in her room, Alice Liddell Hargreaves hallucinates and sees Dodgson there. At another moment, she opens the door of her room, only to find that the Mad Hatter and the March Hare are there, and she joins them at the Mad Tea Party, which once again, places Alice Liddell as the fictional Alice. Through Alice's flashbacks and hallucinations the movie suggests that Dodgson was obsessed or at least had feelings for Alice Liddell when she was a little girl.

Both the film *Dreamchild* and the novel *Still She Haunts Me* present the speculated relationship between Dodgson and Alice Liddell and explore Victorian sexuality. The film *Dreamchild*, differently from Roiphe's *Still She Haunts Me*, situates the narrative in a context where Alice is already an adult, reminiscing about her past and trying to figure out what her relationship to Dodgson was. In a similar manner, Benjamin's *Alice I Have Been* features an 80-year-old Alice Liddell Hargreaves reminiscing about her visit to Columbia University and about her childhood. The narrative begins with Alice Liddell – eighty years of age – writing a letter to her son Caryl⁸ about their visit to New York where Alice received an honorary degree from Columbia University. While she writes the letter, she begins to think and reminisce, and she expresses how little the idea of going to New York appealed to her: "I would have to admit my son was much more excited about the prospect of escorting Alice in Wonderland across the ocean than Alice herself was in going" (Benjamin 3). She remembers the words of her son, who

⁸ Caryl Hargreaves is the name of Alice Liddell's son in real life. It has been speculated that she named him after Dodgson's pen name, Carroll, but she never admitted to this.

was indeed very enthusiastic about their journey: “We – you – owe it to the public. All this interest in Lewis Carroll, simply because it’s the centennial of his birth, and everyone wants to meet the real Alice” (Benjamin 3). Caryl’s remarks, and the way Alice Liddell refers to herself as Alice in Wonderland, are examples once again of the entwining between the two Alices. One was real, one was a creation, yet there is a bond that is almost impossible to break between the two, and as a result the two are perceived as one.

In Benjamin’s novel, Alice mentions several times a certain secret, something that only she and Mr. Dodgson knew about. Alice, as the narrator in the novel, tells about an outing one day with Dodgson and her sisters. They were sitting on the floor and the heat was making Alice feel uneasy and almost laying on the grass, “He made me sit up straight, once, with just a look, a sudden, intense look, almost as if he were afraid I might disappear and he wanted to remember me. When I felt myself blush, wondering why I felt so strangely, he blinked and I relaxed. With a smile, he put a finger to his lips, and I knew he was referring to our secret” (Benjamin 35). This secret can be perceived as a romance between the two of them. There is much speculation about this, and even though Alice Liddell and Charles Dodgson have been dead for a long time, literature allows their stories to be written again and again, most of them building on the much questioned romantic relationship between the don and his muse.

Reality vs. Fiction: The Romance between Lewis Carroll and Alice

Roiphe’s *Still She Haunts Me* (2002) presents Lewis Carroll narrating his experiences – including his life as a mathematician, his speech problems, and his outings for tea – yet, the most resonant aspect of the book is possibly his narration about his feelings for Alice Liddell. Although the novel “is an exploration of Carroll’s relationship with Alice Liddell, set in a fairly faithfully recreated period environment and based largely on the available documents of their

lives during the 1860s” (Brooker 158), it is also based on the writer’s ideas about what took place during that time. It is known (Brooker, Cohen, Leach, Woolf, and many other biographers have discussed this) that Dodgson’s life is full of gaps – there are pages of his diary that have never been found, he was very private about his life, and there was a rupture between Dodgson and the Liddell family. In fact, the novel begins with Dodgson opening a letter that read: “It is no longer desirable for you to spend time with our family” (Roiphe 1). Roiphe tries to fill those gaps with assumptions of how the relationship between Dodgson and Liddell was. She is not alone in assuming that it was a romantic one. In the novel *Alice I Have Been* (2010), Melanie Benjamin also alludes to the idea that the rupture between the family and Dodgson was caused by his interest in Alice. In the novel adult Alice is reading a letter her sister had written to her but she was never able to answer; the letter read:

*I suppose you don’t remember when Mr. Dodgson ceased coming to the Deanery?
How old were you? I said his manner became too affectionate toward you as you
grew older and that Mother spoke to him about it, and that offended him so that
he ceased coming to see us again, as one had to give some reason for all
intercourse ceasing – (Benjamin 7)*

This suggests that there was a romantic interest from Dodgson and he stopped visiting the family as Mrs. Liddell’s request. This of course is founded purely on speculation, since there is no mention of this in what survived from Dodgson’s diaries. Nevertheless, Woolf points out that the rupture could have been caused because he was interested in the Liddell family’s governess. However, the theory that there was a romance between Alice and Dodgson prevails in literary form, especially among popular culture. When reviewing *Still She Haunts Me*, writer Anneli Rufus comments about the truth behind this relationship, suggesting that it was in fact real:

This is not a passion Roiphe had to dream up on her own. In this her first novel, she reimagines the very real relationship between shy, stuttering Oxford mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a.k.a. Lewis Carroll, and the daughter of his college dean. (1)

This is most likely the perception that has endured through popular culture, and one both Benjamin and Roiphe propel in their novels by having Dodgson fantasize about the child. Roiphe depicts Dodgson's infatuation with Alice as a perverted interest, as can be perceived in the following excerpt, which is supposed to be part of an entry from Dodgson's diary (The entire entry can be found in Appendix B):

Feb. 24, 1862

[...] I felt close to her – the steam rising up & enveloping me in heat. Her hair sticky damp & plastered to her face – her skin hot – beaded with droplets – her palms pruny & prickled from soaking. The bath gave her to me more vividly than I could have conjured her myself. [...]

A room abruptly caught – how ridiculous I am – simply an accidentally glimpsed sliver of bath basin through half-open door – & yet it keeps returning.

(Roiphe 64)

This is certainly a very vivid description of a simple scene which happened for a few seconds. Yet, Roiphe uses these descriptions to show the level of obsession Dodgson felt towards Alice. He can look at the bath and perceive every detail, smell it, feel it. When he feels Alice, he can describe every second of it. Moreover, the fact that he acknowledges his infatuation with this moment suggests that he suspected his own feelings. He knew it was ridiculous to remember so much, to go back to that moment, but he knew that meant something. Roiphe's novel is filled

with moments in which the reader is hinted at a possible unusual and eerie sexual interest from Dodgson towards Alice.

Rufus acknowledges that “In spinning fiction from truth, Roiphe goes where lots of novelists have lately gone... they subtly alter history, blurring facts for readers who might not know and in many cases do not mind” (1). There have recently been numerous works in which writers have become celebrities, and their lives have been re-written; in an ironic twist, the author has become the protagonist of their own novel, and they have no control over its outcome. Much of this literature is based on re-writing an author’s life based on scarce historical facts and much more on speculation. Kerry Kemp points to this when reviewing various literary works which use the lives of Emily Dickinson and Louisa May Alcott and focus on providing each one with a love interest. According to Kemp these works “combine fact and fiction to imagine each writer in the throes of passion – with men, not literature (57). Kemp proposes different questions about the reasoning behind these types of adaptations and their influence on the author’s work:

What’s the significance of contemporary authors creating fictional worlds focused on the love interests of literary spinsters? [Or in this case, a bachelor] Does it suggest that we all *must* be sexual and lovelorn in some way – that any spinster’s soul has a lost love lurking within? (Kemp 58)

The same can be said about the life of Lewis Carroll, the author, the celebrity. His work has long been associated with the gift he made to a muse, to his unrealized love. The movie *Dreamchild* (1985) begins with Alice Liddell Hargreaves’ visit to Columbia University in 1932 to receive an honorary degree. This event happened in real life; hence the film makes use of facts and creates fiction around them as well. According to Israel, “the film is about possible stories around those photographs [the infamous photographs Dodgson took of Alice], possible relations between men

and little girls, and about the nineteenth century” (263). In this film Alice feels affection towards Dodgson, but it can be seen as an admiration from a child to an adult; and her affections is not on the same level as Dodgson’s love for her. Israel observes that Potter’s screenplay for *Dreamchild* explores the problem of Dodgson’s photographs with “the simultaneous existence of playful and deeply scary possible meanings – and they give real scariness to the scary possibilities, even while they offer a generous resolution for their Alice” (264).

The pictures were also daunting in Roiphe’s literary work, for she presented them as a possible source for Dodgson’s ruptured relationship with the Liddells and the source of Mrs. Liddell’s uneasiness. The description of the moment when Dodgson took the photograph of Alice dressed as a beggar-girl and her mother’s reaction to it suggests a level of promiscuity from the picture, Dodgson, and Alice, which could reflect only the perceptions of popular culture. The narrator in *Still She Haunts Me* tells:

[...] there was something wrong, something almost womanly and seductive about Alice’s leaning back like that, and she couldn’t tell if it was coming from Alice or from the unseen camera. (Roiphe 40)

As Woolf, Israel, Brooker, and Leach have pointed out, authors are placing contemporary perceptions into their work and how Alice is depicted. This example depicts discomfort from Mrs. Liddell, but it has been documented that she allowed this picture to be taken and she kept it for a long time, which is why the picture has survived. Nevertheless, it is possible that Roiphe is projecting her own – and popular culture’s as well – discomfort towards such pictures, especially since she only mentions the one picture. Whilst in reality, as I presented in Chapter 1, that picture was part of a duo, which depicted two ends of a spectrum: wealth and poverty. By omitting one of the pictures, Roiphe appears to be propelling even further the idea that Dodgson took those

pictures out of perversion. She is not the only one who does this. In *Alice I Have Been*, there is a day which is referred to as The Perfect Day. According to adult Alice Liddell, who is narrating the story, when she was about ten years old Dodgson had promised her a perfect day. They did not know when it would happen, but finally that day came. Dodgson had brought gypsy clothes, but he first asked Alice to take a picture of her dressed as she was, and then change into the gypsy clothes. When she is about to change her clothes Alice realizes that she has never changed her own clothes. This is where Benjamin presents hints of sexual tension between the child and the adult. As Alice describes, Dodgson offered to help:

“Here, allow me to help,” a kind, soft voice said. I didn’t turn around [...] Then I felt hands – Mr. Dodgson’s hands – upon my back. First one button. Then the next. He carefully – awkwardly – undid all my buttons from the top down, and as the bodice of my dress fell away, I felt the cool breeze tickle my shoulder [...] Mr. Dodgson steadied me, his hand upon my shoulders; his hands felt warm and cold at the same time. They felt different. They felt – Bare. He had removed his gloves.

My mouth was dry, for some reason [...] (Benjamin 61-62).

Further ahead it is explained that when Alice was taking off her chemise, Dodgson looked away. Yet, the clarity and precision in her description allow the reader to suggest, to speculate if this was simply an innocent offering from Dodgson to help Alice or if there was another intention; but furthermore, it is allowing the reader to mix real events with fictionalized “history” and thus perceive him as a pervert, as a pedophile. In this scene Dodgson also tells Alice that he dreams of her, as she is, as she would like to be, as he would like her to be (Benjamin 66). Benjamin is clearly presenting a man who is obsessed and infatuated with a little girl, a girl he cannot stop

thinking about. She romanticizes the relationship between the two of them, a little girl and an adult; a relationship, which for popular culture is unacceptable, but even more, a relationship which evidence supports did not exist.

Moreover, the scene that Benjamin is presenting is when Dodgson photographed Alice Liddell dressed as a rich girl and then as a beggar-girl. She presents this as a secret escapade the two of them had by themselves, like a romantic getaway. However, as was previously explained, Dodgson always took the photographs in the presence of the girls' parents, and this picture was not the exception. Once again, as Israel stated, the story of Alice – be it the real or the fictional – is haunted by the photographs, especially this one, where she is dressed in rags. Incidentally, this is the only picture of Alice that Benjamin presents in the book.

When Alice is presented as an adult, she is always looking back on her relationship with Dodgson, not knowing what it was exactly, not wanting to explore it either at the moment. She seems haunted by those memories, as if something unexplainable happened, but she somehow cannot identify. It gives the idea that she wanted to forget her past, and she was able to. A similar situation is presented in the graphic novel *Lost Girls*, to be discussed in the following section, in which Alice along with other famous childhood sweethearts are haunted by their past. A past, which, instead of being filled with beautiful memories of innocent childhood, is conformed of sexual adventures. The little girl is no longer little; she is now an icon of eroticism.

Alice Goes Erotica: The Sexual Adventures of Alice

Two of the previously discussed works have presented an older Alice, and in their case the character is Alice Liddell, but with the idea that she is the Alice from Wonderland. The fact that in both texts Alice is eighty years old is not a mere coincidence. As I discussed, both the film *Dreamchild* and the novel *Alice I Have Been* are set in 1932, when Alice Liddell Hargreaves

was 80 years old, and when she visited Columbia University. The narrative of these texts explores different stages of Alice Liddell's life in the form of flashbacks. Moreover, not only does she think about those moments in her life, but she also questions and analyzes them.

When discussing Jonathan Miller's 1966 TV film, Will Brooker observes the melancholic tone of the story, as if Alice was finally growing up. He notes that the adaptation is being indicated as something more grown-up and mature than usual. According to Brooker, "Miller's film seems quite clearly to be exploring the reading of Alice as a fable of growing up, with Alice passing through and engaging with the customs of the adult world on her route to maturity" (209). The *Alice* stories have often been read as bildungsroman⁹ since it is natural for a little girl to grow up and find out who she is. Yet, at some point Alice grew up too old, too quickly, and her road to maturity led her someplace very different from Wonderland.

In 1976 Alice took another step on her Wonderful adventures: she became a porn star. The film *Alice in Wonderland: An X-Rated Musical Fantasy* directed by Bud Townsend presents once again a more adult Alice. She is a librarian who could be in her late teens, but who is very innocent. Alice is being pressured by a man to explore her sexuality, to be a woman, and to embrace her growing body. He tells her, "your body is all grown-up, but your mind is still a little girl's" (Townsend *X Rated Musical* 1976). He adds that she does not know how to live life and that she does not know what she is missing. She immediately falls asleep and encounters the White Rabbit inside the library, and after walking through a looking-glass, her journey through a different type of Wonderland begins.

If Alice thought she had grown up too fast, her dream confirms it. Throughout her dream journey in Wonderland, Alice goes from an innocent young woman who has not experienced much, to an erotic goddess, who explores her own sexuality. This Alice, as no one had seen her

⁹ The dictionary defines bildungsroman as "a novel about the moral and psychological growth of the main character."

before, experiments with masturbation, bisexuality, and oral sex, among other things.

Nevertheless, she maintains a certain air of innocence, despite the erotic nature of her adventure, which is not found in the previously mentioned adaptations where an adult actress portrays Alice. After her dream is over, she finally has a sexual relationship with the man from the beginning of the film.

The central idea of this erotic film, besides presenting what is expected from a pornographic movie, is that Alice needs to discover herself and grow up sexually. Her adventures in Wonderland are a dream, which was a product of her confusion; she did not think she should explore her sexuality but she was curious about it as well. Her adventures are also a journey of learning, for Alice had never seen or experienced what took place in that Wonderland. The sexual exploration and Alice's journey of growing up presented in this film opened the path to another Alice erotica.

Similarly *Lost Girls* explores the theme of growing up. *Lost Girls* is a graphic novel written by Alan Moore and illustrated by Melinda Gebbie which tells the story of three beloved literary heroines: Alice from *Alice in Wonderland* (1865 and 1872), Dorothy from L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), and Wendy from J.M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy*, also known as *Peter Pan* (1911). In this novel the three characters are no longer little girls, instead they are adults, Alice being the oldest one. According to Kenneth Kidd, the author and illustrator "rework key elements and themes to clever, often poignant effect, especially the shared preoccupation with innocence, desire and the problem of growing up" (par. 2). One important difference between this work of erotica and the pornographic film is that in the former Alice is the character from Carroll's story. However, in the latter, the character's name is Alice, she is dressed similarly to Alice, she interacts with the creatures from Wonderland, but she

cannot be the girl from the books since she looks at a copy of *AAW*; therefore, it means that the story had already been created. Moore's protagonist is indeed the Alice from Carroll's creation, and in the company of Dorothy and Wendy, she thinks about all the adventures she experienced when she was younger.

The first page presents a mirror, and through the mirror the reader sees the image of a naked woman touching herself, but her face cannot be seen. This woman is Alice, or Lady Fairchild as she is called in the beginning of the story. She is an older woman, about sixty years old, and she is seducing a younger girl who is asking Alice to tell her a story; and the conversation continues:

-Oh, I don't know any stories. Your little white breasts, they're so lovely. They'll never be as beautiful once you're grown. Will you touch them for me?

-Most certainly not. First you really ought to tell me a story. That's manners.

-Well, at least let me see you properly. Open your legs just a little, and I'll do the same. Yes, there. Like that.

-May I have my story now?

-Goodness, child, were you always this impatient? I haven't forgotten your story.

It's just that I want to touch myself... (Moore Chapter 1 Page 1)

Brooker makes the observation that "the scene is shown through reflections, with only part of the room visible, but the speech balloons are unambiguous" in the sense that the reader can identify two voices – one demanding the story and one wanting to admire the girl's naked body.

However, it is important to point out that the interaction itself is ambiguous because it is not clear who the other girl is. Since the chapter is titled "The Mirror," it could be inferred that either Alice is talking to herself, or maybe even to her younger self. Still, it could also be that she is

seducing a young girl who is never mentioned or shown. Alice recalls the story had something to do with a mirror, but she does not remember well. Later on, Alice is indeed performing in front of the mirror, as if her reflection were her lover. Brooker points to a reference to Carroll made in this scene where Alice says, “I know, the barrier between doesn’t melt anymore doe’s it [*sic*], like silvery mist? It doesn’t break” (Moore Chapter 1 Page 2). Brooker explains that “in *Looking-Glass*, the barrier into the dreamworld melts away, ‘just like a bright silvery mist’” (157). Alice acknowledges that this barrier cannot be broken now, perhaps because she is not a child, perhaps because she is no longer innocent, but whatever the reason, she can no longer transport herself to that other world through the mirror.

This older Alice is very promiscuous, unlike the Alice presented in the pornographic film; she is secure of her sexual desires and she is not afraid to follow them. What had once traumatized her has now empowered her, as she has become a sexual beast herself. For instance, when she meets Dorothy “Dotti” Gale, Alice is attracted to her and ends up seducing her. They have many sexual encounters, including one outside at a pond, where Alice, Dorothy, and Wendy share the stories of their childhood that had haunted them for so long. All of the stories told are about each girl’s first encounter with sex. Alice’s traumatizing story happened when she was fourteen years of age. It was a man, “my father’s oldest friend, the white hair ringed about his bald, pink crown... We called him ‘Bunny,’ though his actual name escapes me now” (Moore Chapter 9 Page 2). The description – the man being a friend of Alice’s father – could suggest that this man was Charles Dodgson, in fact, Kidd refers to him as Dodgson, stating that “*Lost Girls* embraces bad Carroll but leaves behind the discourse of repression, showing Carroll actually molesting Alice (so much for the shy voyeur)” (Kidd par. 4); however, the description and the picture of the man show him looking very similar to the White Rabbit, not similar to

Dodgson at all. As Alice recounted, the man took her to a room, she sat on a sofa, and he told her she looked very grown up; “he told me I should sit more as a lady sat, proceeding to arrange my legs by way of demonstration” (Moore Chapter 9 Page 2). He then gave her wine, and Alice suddenly felt as if her body grew large and small, repeatedly. She continues telling her story: “The room, upon a tide of wine, would rush away from me and then come flooding back, so that it was some little while before I understood the warmth and movement there between my legs to be his hands” (Moore Chapter 9 Page 4). Alice’s sudden encounter with sex definitely left a mark on her, but, as traumatizing as it may have been for her, as an adult she is very sexually aggressive and adventurous. She is the one who makes the moves on Dorothy and Wendy, sometimes even against their will, as she did with Wendy, ripping off her clothes and touching her until Wendy becomes submissive again. Although considerably an act of rape from Alice, the scene is depicted as an act of pleasure for both women, while also being juxtaposed to images of the seven deadly sins. Yet, the fact that some of the girls’ encounters with sex involved rape is portrayed as part of the natural process of sexual exploration; there is nothing wrong with it. As noted by Chris Eklund,

childhood sexuality also becomes necessarily permissible, so long as one admits that sexual desire does not wait for a legal coming-of-age. All masturbatory fantasies, even those of rape, are necessarily permissible, as with Wendy's fantasizing about being captured by Hook and his crew, while actual rape is equally intolerable, as when Wendy is actually threatened by the hook-handed pedophile. (par. 18)

Moreover, it is Alice the one whose sexual adventures involve adults, both a man and a woman, further alluding to the idea that Alice's story –whether the real or the fictional – is surrounded by the dark shadow of pedophilia and perversion.

This adult Alice, the fictional former child of Wonderland, has definitely come a long way from the seven-year-old version of herself. Still, this is supposed to be the girl from Carroll's stories, not the real Alice Liddell. Brooker points out: "Although the character in *Lost Girls* has parallels with Alice Liddell, Moore... is imagining the future of the book-Alice, not the real daughter of the Dean" (156). Alice is described as "on the verge of sixty" in the year 1913. Brooker explains that "if we work from the fictional Alice being seven years old in 1865 [which is when the first story takes place, the year] would actually point to 1917" (156). However, he overlooks the real Alice's age; by 1913 Alice Liddell was sixty years old. Therefore, contrary to what Brooker suggests, it could be implied that Moore kept in mind the mesh between fictional Alice and Alice Liddell when developing this character, creating parallelisms between them, but keeping the character as the fictional Alice. Whether the separation is there or not, the reality of Moore's novel is that it places perversion upon the three original stories of the three girls, adding the element of darkness and promiscuity that strip the innocence from the stories. Furthermore, in the case of Alice, the level of perversion is increased and placed solely on her character. She has grown up; this fact is clear.

Alice's metamorphosis has been slow and steady, but it has covered a range of personas. As I have presented in this chapter, Alice has been a meek and innocent little girl, she has been a scary little girl who looks very adult-like, she has been two people at the same time, and also very young a lover of an adult man, yet an adult seductress who ventures into lesbian encounters. In short, Alice has been everything, almost every type of woman – a child, a real girl, an adult, a

sex symbol, a drug addict, and a battler, among others – but she has been what others have wanted her to be. They have been the gentle child, the naughty child, and the fantasy child, the product of Wonderland. Alice has changed parallel to how society has changed. As the child was considered innocent, so was she, but when the child was viewed as a sexual entity, Alice changed to fit that profile. She has been the product of what very different minds have conjured and constructed. Yet, even with the real one, Alice Liddell, the Alices have not had a voice. They have been presented the way that others perceive them, informed by the ideas that are present in society, which are proper of a culture. This, inherently, has set the foundations for the Alices constructed in the twenty-first century, those which are explored next.

CHAPTER IV.

Appearing Otherwise: Alice's Further Changes

“...and the moral of that is—‘Be what you would seem to be’—
or if you’d like it put more simply—
‘Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise
than what it might appear to others that what you were
or might have been was not otherwise than
what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise’.

--Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865

Who Has Alice Become?

In Chapter IX of *AAW* Alice receives yet another piece of advice, this time from The Duchess, who tells her “be what you would seem to be” to others (Carroll *Wonderland* 90). Being what others want you to be does not sound like the best advice a person can receive, yet the truth is that The Duchess is not so far from Alice's reality. It is evident from the previous adaptations of the books that the character Alice has been changed numerous times and transformed into different persons, each one of them reflecting what the person who envisioned her thinks she is. She is not Alice, the girl from the books; she is now Alice, Alice Liddell, Alice Fairchild, Alice the scared little girl, and in the two new films, she is Alice Kingsley and Alice Hamilton. She is what she seems to be to others, just as The Duchess predicted, the result of the image created by audiences, filmmakers, interpreters of Carroll's work, biographers, and anyone who has constructed their own version of the character and her background story. As a result, Alice is not who she was anymore, but popular culture's idea of who she is.

What is evident in some of the adaptations that preceded the 2009 and 2010 films to be discussed is that Alice's adulthood does not come from the same place as it comes in the books. Her adulthood is depicted through the sexualization of Alice and by placing Alice in situations that seem uncomfortable to audiences, especially audiences not familiar with pedophilia. As

Israel acknowledges, some of these previous stories “are not about little girls, but they are definitely about sex” (270), as is the highly sexual graphic novel *Lost Girls*. The new films, then, have reconceptualized Alice’s adulthood into something that is more appropriate. As a result, in the adaptations discussed in this chapter, Alice has developed into an adult woman.

As shown in Chapter 3 Alice has found herself in literary works and film adaptations that place Alice in situations, places, and among people who she would consider foreign. Furthermore, Alice is very different, almost foreign as well. In her thorough exploration of Alice adaptations, Kali Israel found “a constellation of Alices, most of whom have been moved from the Victorian era and only some of whom are ‘little girls’” (255). In some of the texts explored in this research Alice has gone through the two aforementioned changes. Firstly, she has been set in new places and new time periods. For instance, the graphic novel *Lost Girls* places Alice in 1913 just before the First World War. One of the new adaptations explored in this chapter – Nick Willing’s Syfy’s *Alice* – places her in the year 2009, almost one hundred and fifty years after the creation of the original Alice. Secondly, in both film adaptations, as well as some of the ones explored in Chapter 3, Alice has left her child-self behind to give way to the woman in Wonderland.

Alice’s age is perhaps the most notable change in the character throughout many adaptations of Carroll’s books. In Carroll’s stories about Alice the question of Alice’s age is presented in various occasions, sometimes explicitly and other times as an undertone. In *TLG*, for instance, Alice discusses her age with Humpty Dumpty, who advises her to stop growing up:

“So here’s a question for you. How old did you say you were?”

Alice made a short calculation, and said “Seven years and six months.” [...]

“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.” (Carroll, *Looking-Glass* 79)

Although growing up is a theme that is featured in the stories, modern societies have assigned a more important role to it than its role in the stories. It has been discussed that Carroll’s second book reflects the drift between him and Alice Liddell when she started growing up. Many have interpreted this as Carroll’s refusal to accept the fact that Alice Liddell was growing up and was not as fond of listening to his stories and playing games as she used to be. As Susina explains, “Some critics, directors of films and plays, and readers seem to think that Carroll wanted to fix Alice forever as a young girl” (6-7). This is evident, for example, in the work of Katie Roiphe, where she combines reality with fiction, and depicts Carroll as a man who does not want Alice to grow up: “Even the rituals surrounding birthdays were alarming and unfestive, he thought, like the extinguishing of flame. Afterward he had taken her aside and told her he would give her an ‘un-birthday’ present on a different day so as not to encourage her to get any older” (33).

However, this idea does not parallel with the stories, for in the ending of *AAW* Alice has matured (see Chapter 5 of this thesis). Yet, whether or not Carroll was trying to keep Alice a little girl, the newer adaptations seem to follow the idea that Alice did in fact grow up, and that she is not a little girl anymore. Burton’s Alice has grown up to be nineteen years old, while Willing’s Alice is twenty years old, but she is not the girl who had previously gone to Wonderland since this adventure takes place one hundred and fifty years later.

In the new film adaptations this change in Alice’s age is important because it serves as a catalyst to other major changes in the character and her behavior towards her surroundings. Alice is no longer the seven-year-old girl from the books; she has now grown into a woman, and, more

importantly, her change seems to develop parallel and according to the perspectives of popular culture. Of course, from a cultural standpoint “the child” has changed extensively since one hundred and fifty years ago, when the first Alice book was conceived, and this has given way to the changes in Alice the character. In *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture*, James R. Kincaid explains the shift from the Victorian era to the twentieth century in terms of views about childhood. As also proposed by Woolf, Brooker, Gardner, and Townsend (presented in Chapter 2), Kincaid informs that throughout the 19th century, the image of the child was that of a symbol of purity, asexuality, and most of all innocence. There was nothing erotic about the child; yet Kincaid adds that at the same time, the child could be a representation of a suppressed desire. The Victorians, Kincaid argues, viewed children in ways that seem complex and prove difficult for popular culture to understand. Brooker points to this misunderstanding when talking about contemporary perceptions towards Carroll:

Social sins have traded places in the last one hundred years: the child-love that served as a badge of respectability in the mid to late 1800s is now Carroll’s curse, providing his detractors with evidence to twist into an “unnatural obsession with little girls”. (57)

These perceptions influence the outcome of the adaptations, for the audience is of utmost importance in the process. Usually, when adapting known books into films, directors carefully consider what audiences know about the books, what they expect, and what their reaction to the film will be. In the majority of cases audiences want film adaptations to be fairly faithful to the original source and can become disappointed when this does not happen. In Linda Hutcheon’s words, “the more rabid the fans, the more disappointed they can potentially be” (123). As a result, usually (albeit not always) directors attempt to remain faithful to the source, while making

the necessary changes to the story. This is not case for the two newest Alice film adaptations; the directors have strayed away from the original source, only leaving some elements of the books, but turning the stories into new ones. However, the audience has influenced these adaptations in terms of the perceptions. The two new films, it could be said, reflect popular culture's perceptions of Alice and their discomfort with the sexualization of a little girl. The protagonist cannot remain a little girl if she carries such an erotic past, and if popular culture perceives her as an erotic being.

One way in which sexuality was displaced from the child was with the "creation" of the adolescent or puberty. According to Kincaid, "The creation of puberty seems to have solved a good many problems [because] it provided a means for preserving childhood innocence" (124) while also allowing the child to grow. It was a new way of looking at the child where "one simply posited that puberty marked the moment of metamorphosis, where the child was recast as an adult" (Kincaid 124). With this change, then, the child was able to explore and carry the sexuality that was considered not appropriate for the child, but which was more acceptable if the child had metamorphosed. This is potentially a strong indicator of precisely what Alice has experienced in the various adaptations, but more specifically in Burton's and Willing's adaptation. However, she has already surpassed the phase of puberty and has already entered into adulthood. With this passage, there are many different events, actions, and experiences that Alice can now go through which she could not have gone through before. She has finally metamorphosed into the woman of Wonderland, who has left behind the childish games and who has to endure new adventures.

The Woman in Wonderland

The adaptations presented and discussed by Brooker, as well as some of those explored by Israel, presented an Alice who is growing up. However, in the newer adaptations of Alice this process is already complete: Alice has grown up. As noted by Brooker, Willing's 1999 version of Alice parallels with Miller's version as they portray "a child dealing with adult conventions" (218), but in Willing's case specifically, the director explains Alice's changes based on what contemporary audiences expect:

The main thing I insisted on is that Alice is asked to sing a song and is scared.

The reason I did that is I felt [...] our modern movie sensibility has to have an emotional pull for us to stay with a character. [...] Singing the song becomes a metaphor for growing up. (Willing qtd. in Brooker 218)

Willing's 1999 adaptation, in addition to others previously presented, depicts Alice dealing with issues of growing up, and can be read as a story of reaching the stage of puberty. His perception of who Alice is and what her story is about is made clear through his emphasis on growing up, which materialized in his 2009 adaptation for the SyFy network. As explained by writer and director of the film, the new Alice is very different from Carroll's since "Obviously, she's not a little girl [...] She's a woman with all the kind of female problems that come from falling in and out of love. So that's one very different character" (qtd. in Topel par. 4). The idea of falling in love and the fact that Alice is not a naïve child anymore are played in both films on several occasions. Love plays an integral role to the development of the plot in Willing's adaptation because Alice Hamilton's adventures continue thanks to her interest in saving Jack, the man whom she refused to marry but was in love with. Whenever Alice has the opportunity to save herself, she risks her life in an attempt to find Jack and bring him back to the real world.

Nevertheless, throughout the film Alice seems to be falling in love with someone else – the Hatter – and in the end he goes back to the real world and they end up together. Naturally, this aspect of the story and the character would not have been possible with a younger Alice, for it would not make sense to give a seven-year-old or even a ten-year-old a romantic interest. For Alice Kingsley in Burton's adaptation there was never a romantic interest, albeit she was asked her hand in marriage, but she refused it. This aspect is discussed in the next section, in relation to popular perceptions.

Although for Alice Hamilton love played a more important role in her life than for Alice Kingsley, for both of them being adults in these depictions allows them to be portrayed very differently from the original Alice. As presented in Chapter 3, Alice has been sexualized many times, and this portrayal is not limited to literature or pornographic films. In popular culture Alice is portrayed as a sex symbol as is evident in many images using the character. The modern image of Alice is usually more mature and darker than the original; moreover, her clothing, which is supposed to be that of a little girl, is now targeted at adult women as costumes that involve a very short skirt, low cleavage, knee-high tights, and high heels. The Alice in *American McGee's Alice*, who is seventeen years old, sports a similar attire comprised of knee-high tights, boots, and the white pinafore over the blue dress. This Alice is still young but mature looking, creating a mixture of adulthood and childhood that has transcended to the new Alices. This combination of little girl and adult creates an image of Alice that is innocent yet highly sexualized which has been used in the newer films. In Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* Alice's clothes are not as revealing as modern Halloween costumes, but they do hint at sexuality, showing a little of Alice's skin and making her look sexier. In addition, during an interaction between Alice and the Knave, her sexuality is used, making it clear that this is not a little girl

anymore – had she been a little girl, this interaction either would not have happened or it would have been very disturbing for the modern viewer. While Alice, who everyone in the Queen’s palace believes is named Um, walks down the palace’s hall, the Knave pushes her against a wall, stands very closely to her says, “I like you Um. I like largeness” (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010). Even though Alice does not respond to the Knave’s approach, by telling him to stay away from her, it is clear Alice is not only an adult, but she also exudes a subtle sexuality that is attractive to adult men. In a similar manner Willing’s film adaptation takes a step towards the sexual Alice, providing little remarks that hint at the fact that she is an attractive young woman. For instance, when Alice and the Hatter meet she is soaking wet as a result of having fallen into a lake. As he offers her a coat, Alice asks him why he would help her, to which he responds, “Do I need a reason to help a pretty girl in a very wet dress?” (Willing *Alice* 2009). This remark is an obvious allusion to the fact that Alice is all grown up, attractive, and sexy, even more so because she is drenched and her dress showcases her figure. The Hatter could not have made this remark had Alice remained a little girl, for the concerns about pedophilia and childhood sexuality would have been raised by such an interaction.

There is a slight difference between Alice Hamilton and Alice Kingsley in terms of their physical appearance: while SyFy’s Alice is an adult and also looks like an adult, Burton’s Alice has a child-like look. This becomes problematic because her sexuality was used in the film because she is an adult, but her innocent look reminds the audience of a younger girl. This aspect, however, is not the most problematic when it comes to Alice’s age.

As described in Chapter 1, Carroll’s Alice was assertive, curious, inquisitive, and adventures, and more importantly, she took the reins of her adventures. These characteristics, which are often associated to adults, have been greatly changed now that Alice has become one.

In the article “Tim Burton is Wrong to Make Alice in Wonderland a Woman,” Stuart Walton identifies this significant change in the character:

So the impulse to make her look mature on film is understandable, but misguided.

It matters that this wisdom comes from a child, because she thereby gives her young readers and viewers the first thrilled intimation that they, too, will one day cease to be treated as children. (Walton par. 4)

In the films Alice has lost some of that inquisitive nature Carroll’s Alice showed, and it was even more important that she showed it because she was a little girl. In the stories little Alice takes control of her adventures instead of allowing Wonderland to lead them. In Burton’s film, for instance, Alice is told she needs a sword called the Vorpall Sword to kill a monster, and there is something special about the sword: “The Vorpall Sword knows what it wants, you just have to hold on to it” (*Alice in Wonderland* 2010). What this means, then, is that Alice would use the sword, but she would not be actively killing the beast because the sword would do all the work for her, it just needed Alice to hold it. Alice is portrayed as an entity that is at mercy of her surroundings, instead of being Alice the one who takes control of them.

The fact that Alice grew up brings along other changes in the character’s portrayal in these two new film adaptations. Not only has the character matured into a woman whose sexuality and appearance can be depicted with more ease, but she has also turned into a stranger to Wonderland, scared of what she may find there and scared of getting close to people. The three elements that follow represent three major changes fixed upon the new Alice, all of which are possible due to her change in age.

All the King's Men: The Male Figure in Alice and Her Attitude Towards Them

In Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* Alice Kingsley's life takes place in Victorian England. In this period women were expected to fulfill their womanly duties by marrying. The beginning of the film transports the audience to a celebration Alice must attend, which she finds out later on is her engagement party. From the very beginning, Alice's discomfort and rejection to her situation are evident, especially to the idea of formal celebrations for the higher social classes. Alice Kingsley is not a conventional Victorian woman; she, for example, refuses to wear the proper feminine attires – she is against stockings and bodices, stating “Who’s to say what is proper?” (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010). Yet, when Alice arrives to the celebration, the parents of Hamish Ascot – the young Lord proposes to Alice – immediately demand her to dance with him, and she has no other choice but to acquiesce.

According to Michelle Hoppe in “Courting the Victorian Woman,” from a very early age females were being prepared for the married life, to become faithful wives and caring mothers. This was expected from Alice as well. She dances the waltz with Hamish, and he asks her to meet her under a gazebo in ten minutes. It is before going there to meet him that Alice finds out through her cousins that Hamish will ask for her hand in marriage. Alice's interaction with her older sister Margaret prior to going to the gazebo, demonstrates her reluctance to marry, especially against her will:

Margaret: “Hamish will ask you under the gazebo. When you say yes--”

Alice: “But I don’t know if I want to marry Hamish.”

Margaret: “Who then? You won’t do better than a lord. You’ll soon be twenty

Alice. That pretty face won’t last forever [...] You don’t want to be a burden on mother, do you?”

Alice: “No.”

Margaret: “So, you’ll marry Hamish. You’ll be as happy as I am with Lowell, and life will be perfect. It’s already decided!” (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010)

Alice’s face shows her inconformity and disappointment towards her situation. Alice Kingsley, breaking away from the expectations for Victorian women, stands up to her mother and everyone else by rejecting domesticity and firmly stating she would not marry anyone, especially against her own will. Alice runs away from the proposal, which impulses her to follow the White Rabbit ultimately leading her to fall down the rabbit hole. It is in this precise moment that Alice demonstrates her rejection to men, or at least, to the idea of believing marriage was her ultimate goal in life. However, it not until the end of the film, after Alice has come back to the real world, that she verbally expresses her rejection:

I’m sorry Hamish, I can’t marry you. You’re not the right man for me, and there’s that trouble with your digestion. I love you Margaret, but this is my life. I’ll decide what to do with it. [...] Don’t worry mother. I’ll find something useful to do with my life. (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010)

It is at this moment that Alice becomes more confident about who she is, but more importantly, about what she wants. What she wants is for her life not to be controlled and decided for her, rejecting the marriage that was orchestrated for her, and deciding she should be the one to choose whom she would marry, *if* she ever did.

Alice Hamilton’s case in SyFy’s *Alice* is slightly different, yet it bares some resemblance to Alice Kingsley’s situation. At twenty years of age, Alice is in a relationship with a man named Jack, but when the relationship appears to become more serious, Alice rejects it. The film, which takes place in Wonderland 150 years after the original Alice’s visit, presents Alice Hamilton as a

young woman who is afraid of commitment. When Jack asks Alice if she wants to meet his family that same night, she is reluctant because she does not feel prepared. Jack explains to her that his family will approve of her especially if they see her with the ring he gives her. This ring has belonged to his family for many years, and Alice is worthy of it,

Alice: "Are you giving me this?"

Jack: "Like to try it on?"

Alice: "Jack, a ring means something. This is too fast. It is way too fast."

Jack: "Okay. I'm sorry I got the wrong idea. Maybe after you've seen my home, met my friends--"

Alice: "No I can't come with you Jack. Not tonight. Maybe we should just take it easy for a while. We'll see how we feel in a few days."

Jack: "Alice I--"

Alice: "Just, give me some time. Goodbye Jack." (Willing *Alice* 2009)

After this conversation, where Alice clearly shows her fear of commitment and her rejection to marriage, she discovers Jack had slipped the ring in her pocket and proceeded to look for him. It is in this moment when Alice "falls" to Wonderland, entering through a looking-glass.

It is evident that both Alices feel strongly about remaining independent and rejecting marriage, either out of fear or because it was forced upon. Yet this rejection seems too coincidental if we consider that the topic of marriage was never presented in the original Alice books, yet it does play an important role in the two newest films. As discussed in the previous section, Alice's age is one of the most notable changes when it comes to these two films. She is an adult in both of them, and thus, it allows the topic of marriage to present in a way that in the

original books it would not have made sense, for Alice was just a little girl. Although Lewis Carroll did not present marriage in the books, Alice has not been able to escape it all the time.

Marriage is not a new topic when talking about Alice, the real girl. Alice Liddell has found herself amidst talk about the possibility that her childhood friend Charles Dodgson had a particular interest in marrying her. In relation to the suggestions of this interest Brooker observes that “the idea that Carroll wanted a physical union is tossed from hand to hand” (21), propagating it among popular culture and allowing it to remain in popular consciousness to this day. Furthermore, the changes in Alice’s size in *AAW* have been suggested to represent the author’s desire for Alice Liddell. According to Martin Gardner, “Richard Ellmann has suggested that Carroll may have been unconsciously symbolizing the great disparity between the small Alice whom he loved but could not marry and the large Alice she would become” (17). Similarly, biographer Morton Cohen suggests there was an understandable romantic interest from Dodgson towards Liddell as she was his “ideal child friend.” According to Cohen:

[...] that she sparked his creative energy, that he devoted so much of his time to her and fashioned his two remarkable fantasies with her as a heroine is proof enough of a deep attachment, certain affection, even a kind of love. That he might desire a holy union with her is understandable. (91)

Undoubtedly the Alice stories have been read as symbols of Lewis Carroll’s most intimate desires and frustrations, including the speculation about whether or not he and Alice Liddell did in fact have a romantic involvement. It is this notion the one that mostly permeates in the representations of Alice in numerous adaptations. Karoline Leach, however, argues that contrary to popular belief

There is no evidence that he was in love with her, no evidence that her family worried about his attachment to her, no evidence that they banned him from her presence ... There is no evidence, either prima-facie or secondary, cryptic or elliptic, to suggest he proposed to the eleven-year-old girl or even considered doing so. (qtd. in Brooker 24)

Yet, if the “Carroll Myth”¹⁰ still remains in popular consciousness, then the belief that Dodgson wanted to marry Liddell may greatly influence how the character Alice is viewed. Imagining for a moment that Charles Dodgson did actually propose to Alice Liddell when she was about eleven years old, it would not have been an act of perversion from his part. In fact, during the Victorian era “until 1823, the legal age in England for marriage was 21 years – for men and women. After 1823, a male could marry as young as fourteen without parental consent, and a girl at 12” (Hoppe par. 11). Therefore, it was not uncommon for older men to legally marry younger girls. Therefore, had it been the case with Dodgson, it would mean he was not necessarily a pedophile. Yet, in hindsight, for popular culture this behavior brings discomfort and uneasiness because it is not practiced anymore and because it carries legal issues not present during Victorian times. When looking at this from this perspective, it is possible to view Alice’s growth and her rejection to marriage as a direct result of popular culture’s rejection to the possibility of a man proposing to a little girl. Moreover, popular culture continuously links Alice Liddell to the fictional Alice, as was presented in Chapter 3, sometimes even combining the two as one person. Thus, the lack of a separation between the fictional and the real person makes it even more difficult to have Alice accept marriage, as it may represent for popular culture Alice Liddell’s acceptance to the

¹⁰ “Carroll Myth” is a term coined by Leach to refer to the public image of Lewis Carroll, which popular culture has constructed as a pedophile, shy, and odd man.

supposed proposal by Dodgson. This results in Alice – both Kingsley and Hamilton, who are already adults – declining a union with a man.

Nevertheless, the male figure in both films was not completely rejected, which makes it even more interesting since it seems solely the idea of marriage was discarded, but not men in general. In Burton's adaptation, Alice Kingsley is evidently close to her father as a little girl; in the opening scene Alice has had the nightmare, once again, of being in Wonderland and living among strange creatures. The person she runs to is her father, who calms her down and tells her that everything will be all right. Even as an adult, when her father had already passed away, Alice remembered him with fondness. For instance, on her way to her engagement party, Alice makes a remark about the dressing code and how ridiculous it is, to which her mother responds: "Please, not today" (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010). Alice replies to her mom saying that her father would have laughed at her comment, showing her undying love for her father and the strong bond they shared. In this aspect of Alice's relationship to men, the life of Charles Dodgson may have had some influence. There is an obvious connection between the author's real name and the name of Alice's father: Charles Kingsley. This closeness between Charles and Alice could be another indication of popular culture's acknowledgment of the relationship between Dodgson and Liddell, which for some was just a friendship while for others was romantic. Whichever the case, it is evident the depictions of Alice and her interaction with men reflect the different perceptions popular culture has about her. Moreover, Alice's relationship to her father and the absence of this figure is presented not only in Burton's adaptation but in Willing's as well.

In her article "Alice in SyFy Land" Lisa Fary discusses her frustration with not being able to ask Nick Willing about Alice's relationship with her father:

[...] Alice's father left when she was ten years old, leaving her with daddy issues and an inability to commit to a relationship with a man. I wanted to know why it was important to include those things in her character and why it was important to the story. We see those characteristics in television women fairly often, and nearly just as often, it's a shortcut used in place of writing a truly dynamic, complex character. (par. 6)

For Alice Hamilton, finding her father was her main goal. She spent most of her time searching for her father on the Internet, all around the world, in an attempt to reconnect with him. Even when her mother tries to discourage her, she continues, but her enthusiasm for finding her father sometimes gets in the way of her good judgment. Alice sometimes does not think rationally because she is lead by her desire to see her father, turning her weak only when she thinks about her father. This becomes more evident in two occasions. The first is when Alice finds a door that opens up to reveal Alice's house and the ten-year-old version of herself is looking for and calling for her father. However, it is only a memory, a figment of her imagination. Yet, later on, this recurring memory weakens Alice even more. When she encounters Dr. Dee and Dr. Dum (the Tweedles), they ask her to close her eyes, and she appears in the house again. This time, unlike the first time, she remains her older self, but they ask her age she states she is ten years old.

Clearly, having her father leave when she was that age has been traumatizing for her:

Dr. Dee: [After having asked her age] "But you're alone in the house. Why have you been left alone?"

Alice: "Dad's left. Mom's asking the neighbor to take care of me so she can look for him."

Dr. Dee: "Did he say goodbye?"

Alice: “No.”

Dr. Dee: “Why don’t you go see if he’s left you something in his study?”

Alice: “No.”

Dr. Dee: “Why not?”

Alice: “I’m scared to go in there.” (Willing *Alice* 2009)

Alice’s father issues have left a tremendous scar, to the point where she is not sure who she can trust and who will remain by her side when she needs them. This plays with her mind and feelings many times, even endangering her life. This suggests that her rejection to marriage and her inability to commit come from her issues of abandonment. However, even though there was a rejection of marriage, she ends up falling in love with the Hatter. The inclusion of a love interest, much like the inclusion of marriage in both films, make it necessary for Alice to be an adult and not the seven-year-old girl she was in the Alice books.

Alice Kingsley and Alice Hamilton do not reject the male figure, only marriage. This difference can suggest that there is a level of discomfort in the idea that Alice may consent to marriage, as this may represent Alice Liddell’s acceptance to Dodgson’s supposed proposal. Brooker further acknowledges this problem when he discusses Cohen’s aforementioned remarks about Charles Dodgson and marriage. As he indicates, “Cohen leads us [...] to a suggestion that his feelings coalesced into the wish for a sacred intimacy. That the theory is so tentatively expressed shows, I think, how sensitive this area is for modern readers” (Brooker 21). That this theme, which was never presented in the original Alice books has appeared in these two reinventions suggests that the repulsion to the idea of this marriage proposal is still present in popular culture. However, despite rejecting a legal union to men both Alices love their fathers, even after their absence in their adult lives, and moreover, both Alice become close to a male

figure: the Mad Hatter. For Alice Kingsley the relationship with the Hatter is similar to a sibling relationship, while for Alice Hamilton it is a friendship that develops into a romance. Whilst in Wonderland the memories of their past and their fathers may make them weak and blur their judgment, but even though they overcome their struggles with the male characters, both Alices face other battles in Wonderland.

Battlefield Underland: Alice's Battles

As a seven-year-old girl Alice was already a heroine, being able to succeed in her ventures in a new world by herself and demonstrating her independence. The new Alice is a heroine in a different way; she can stand in comparison with modern epic heroes such as Percy Jackson, Harry Potter, and Frodo Baggins, all male characters who have fought and come out victorious in their battles. Similarly, the new Alice has turned into a fighter of Wonderland, destined to destroy evil.

Willing's adaptation presents a new Alice who is seemingly strong from the very beginning. She is a judo sensei, who can easily overpower a man and does not allow herself to be defeated. At the same time, her refusal to commit to a relationship shows she is independent and believes herself capable of taking care of herself, on her own. However, upon entering what is a destroyed version of Wonderland, Alice becomes scared and less confident about herself. Likewise, Alice Kingsley starts off as an apparently confident woman who occasionally doubts herself when influenced by others' opinions, as was the case with her older sister, who made her feel guilty for not wanting to marry Hamish. Yet, when she is in Underland, her confidence diminishes. Once in Wonderland and Underland, both Alices must face and fight a battle to restore the places, but these are not the only battles they fight. Both characters also face battles

with themselves, internal struggles that at various points threaten their ability to continue their fights.

Monster slayer

Alice Kingsley's destiny in Underland is to become a monster slayer. When she enters the new world, she is told about *The Oracleum*, a compendium which "tells of each and every day since the beginning" (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010). On the "Frabjous Day" Alice is supposed to slay the terrible monster called the Jabberwocky, but she says she is not the person who appears in *The Oracleum*. At first, the creatures debate whether or not this is "the Alice" they have been waiting for, for it cannot be just any Alice the one who kills the monster.

Although partly against her will, Alice continues the journey towards that "Frabjous Day" and while at it, she becomes very slick in her tactics. For instance, when Alice needs to retrieve the Vorpal Sword, which is the only weapon that can kill the Jabberwocky, she learns that another monster is guarding it. Since this monster, the Bandersnatch, had attacked her earlier and the Dormouse had taken off one of its eyes, Alice decides to bribe it. She offers the Bandersnatch its eye in exchange of allowing her to retrieve the sword. The creature is so grateful to her that it helps her escape the Queen's grounds. Alice uses her wit to get out of possible trouble during her journey towards her ultimate goal of slaying the Jabberwocky. In this sense, Alice Kingsley is similar to the little girl from 1865, whose wits help her win the game of chess to become Queen. Yet, the new Alice uses her wit and knowledge for a purpose, as it is her destiny to become the savior of Underland. Furthermore, this Alice, unlike Carroll's version, wins the battle through the use of force and violence instead of her intelligence. The new Alice is very similar to the other recent version of Alice in the videogame *American McGee's Alice*, whom Cathlena Martin describes as "mature and darker, and she is provided with a purpose and

weapons with which to traverse Wonderland in search of the Queen” (Martin n.p.). In both Burton’s and Willing’s film adaptations this is Alice’s main battle; she must battle the Queen in order to become the savior.

The creatures of Underland acknowledge that Alice Kingsley is the only one who can kill the Jabberwocky: “No other slayer, no how. If it ain’t Alice, it ain’t dead” (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010). Alice, although hesitant at first, is inspired by the caterpillar Absalom to fulfill her destiny by slaying the Jabberwocky. She summons the courage to face the monster by remembering her father’s advice: to always believe in at least six impossible things before breakfast. Alice puts up a good fight against the monster, being hit several times, blocking his rays with a shield, and jumping over several obstacles. Finally, by stating the sixth impossible thing, “I can slay the Jabberwocky” Alice jumps on top of it and yells “Off with your head,” finally beheading the monster. This way, Alice fulfills the prophecy and becomes the savior of Underland.

Savior

Alice Hamilton remains the heroine of the story and the savior of Wonderland as well, although the situation is slightly different. In her case, she is not a monster slayer, for she does not kill anyone or anything in order to bring peace, but she does have to endure a physical fight against evil, for it is her duty as “the Alice of legend.” In order to fight her battles, Alice endures a series of obstacles and situations where she needs to use her wits and her physical strength to succeed. Although her main task is not to kill anything, she still needs to fight certain creatures for her own safety. As she is a strong woman, Alice is able to fight against strong men, not requiring the White Knight or anyone else to defend her.

When it is time to fight against the Queen and her soldiers, Alice stands up and uses her intelligence to come up with a plan, standing up to everyone else and successfully turning a lot of people against the Queen. Moreover, Alice in the end is so committed to save the people from the Queen that she turns against her own father, who had worked for the Queen for ten years but did not remember his past before going to Wonderland.

Both Alices, at the time of battle, are successful in turning the Queens' armies against them. However, one of them, Kingsley, is able to do so by first slaying the Jabberwocky, which dethrones the Queen and frees her servants from her reign. The other one, Hamilton, uses words – "Take a good look at your Queen first. Make sure she's really worth fighting for" (Willing *Alice* 2009) – to appeal to their feelings and open the eyes of the Queen's army to notice how they had been controlled by her. They realize they did not need to serve her at all. In the end, Alice is able to destroy the Queen, not by killing her or one of her creatures, but by having turned everyone in Wonderland against her. It is this way that Alice becomes the savior of Wonderland.

Internal Battles

Even though Alice in both films is able to fight external battles against evil, internally she has to fight her own battles as well, beginning with her refusal to kill, among other conflicts. In the real world, both Alices decide whom they want to be with and when they want to be with that person. They do not allow the rules established by society or their mothers' opinions to influence their decisions. Yet, despite this, when they are not in the real world, something makes them weaker and it seems their actions are controlled by the new environment and what the creatures of Wonderland tell them to do. Alice's battles, both Kingsley's and Hamilton's, become Wonderland's.

Alice Hamilton faces the issue of killing another being, even if it is an evil one. When she is fighting one of the members of the Queen's army on top of a building, Alice kicks him so hard that he falls into abyss, and she screams "No!" and tries to reach for him so that he does not fall. Evidently, Alice does not want to physically harm anyone, even if it means she will be saving herself and Wonderland. In a similar manner, for Alice Kingsley this struggle is evident when she converses with the blue caterpillar as she tells him: "I'm Alice, but not *that* Alice [referring to the Alice of the prophecy]... I couldn't slay the Jabberwocky if my life depended on it" (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010). Alice knows she is the only one who can destroy it, yet she is not confident that she will be able to do so, firstly because she must do it alone, and secondly because it is not in her nature to kill.

In relation to Alice's struggles, director Tim Burton discusses the character's personality and what he wanted to accomplish with her creation. According to him, "She's a very annoying, odd little girl. I wanted to make her into a character I could identify with: quiet, internal, not comfortable in her own skin, not quite knowing how to deal with things, being both young and having an old soul" (Burton qtd. in Raphael par. 7). Furthermore, as he explains, his story wanted to depict different struggles and conflicts the character faces as a young woman; the film is "a simple internal story about somebody finding their own strength. She's been battered around by real life, has never quite fitted in" (Raphael par. 7). In this aspect, this Alice as well as Willing's version is similar to Carroll's, for she was always a little odd and did not always fit in. These internal battles, however, are expanded much more now that Alice is an adult, whilst the little girl did not show them at all. Something about the time when Alice became an adult has influenced the way she is presented in relation to her battles, both internally and externally. Robinson and Davies explain that, according to different studies (Robinson 2002; Gittins 1998),

when considering the binary of the child and the adult “children are socially constructed as innocent, immature, dependent, and the powerless ‘other’ in relation to the independent, mature, powerful, critically thinking and ‘knowing’ adult,” and this differentiation results in the exclusion of children from the “adult’s world” (344). In addition, Kincaid presents different categories of the child, one of which is the “gentle child.” He explains, “Gentleness is that which the adult finds in the child or hopes to find in the child or attributes to the child or crams into the child by force” (Kincaid 217). Thus, it could be said that the transformation of Alice into an adult resulted in part from the need to take the child away from the battles, which are perceived to be experienced only by adults because it takes away the child’s gentleness. This Alice needed to face these battles, both the internal and the external, which would not be accepted as appropriate battles for a seven-year-old. Nevertheless, even as an adult, Alice is scared and even resistant towards facing them.

For both Alices, there is constant battle between what they are supposed to do and what they think is right; sometimes what is needed is not necessarily what they want. Just like the story has transformed from an innocent adventure into an unknown world to an epic battle between good and evil, Alice’s character has metamorphosed. Instead of the explorer who curiously wanders around asking questions, the new Alices have become conquerors of Wonderland. They have been given a quest, a specific reason for being there, which is not to simply explore. This aspect, Aikens notes, is what can distance Alice from the audience, for the audience “can no longer become Alice because she is ‘*the* Alice,’ the only one who can fulfill her particular destiny” (31); Alice Kingsley is *the* Alice from *The Oraculum* while Alice Hamilton is the “Alice of Legend.” Alice, both Kingsley and Hamilton, must fulfill these prophecies and complete their missions in order to become the legend carried in their name.

However, the fulfillment of these quests does not come easily for neither of them since, as discussed, they brought along internal conflicts for the Alices. Furthermore, the questing nature of their adventures and the uncertainty of Wonderland make both Alices apprehensive towards the new place and thus, take away the element of curiosity, which was so important for the original Alice. They only carry on with their exploration in Wonderland (or Underland) because they need to be there, not because they are curious to explore the place more. For Caterina Scorsone, who played Alice in SyFy's film, the perception of Alice's is rather different. Scorsone perceives the original Alice as a rather bland and uninteresting person, whilst the new one has transformed into an adventurous woman. According to her:

Alice in this story has a real emotional journey of her own whereas in the book she's kind of this, you know, wide-eyed young girl who's walking through this fascinating land. But she, herself, isn't terribly fascinating. And in this version, you know, the fascinations of the land, you know, in some ways almost act as a metaphor for the fascinations inside her personality. (Scorsone qtd. in Gallagher par. 10)

Yet, despite the new Alice battling evil, slaying monsters, and saving Wonderland, there was something about Carroll's heroine that was quite adventurous, independent, intelligent, and interesting. Those characteristics may have been more fitting for an adult, but when given to one, they seem to dissipate. The new Alice has lost her curiosity.

Not So Curious Anymore: Alice's Attitude Towards Wonderland

When Carroll's seven-year-old Alice arrives to Wonderland and Looking-Glass, she is amazed by the different creatures and places she finds. She is guided by curiosity and remains curious throughout her journeys. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, some adaptations about her

story have depicted her as the complete opposite. Especially in the two new film adaptations, Alice's strong traits have become weaker because they have been transferred onto an adult. In the article "Tim Burton is Wrong to Make Alice in Wonderland a Woman," Stuart Walton argues that the changes in Alice's age have taken away the character's original strength:

The quality in her that directors (and actors) have missed most frequently is her worldliness [...] Alice is of course only six years old [she is actually seven and seven and a half in the books], but she doesn't sound like any six-year-old of today. Under repeated personal attack [...] she stands up unbowed, often deflecting the barbs by deconstructing them, but never crassly turning them back against their sources, as a real child might. (Walton par. 3)

Even more, most adaptations, including the new ones, have portrayed her curiosity as something negative, taking away part of the character's independence and strength as a female. In the new adaptations directed by Tim Burton and Nick Willing, Alice not only loses her curiosity at times, but her attitude towards Wonderland in general has become more negative now that she is an adult. This aspect of Alice is very similar to Disney's animated film where Alice is, although curious, not eager to explore Wonderland in depth. Her curiosity in this film was depicted negatively, as if a little girl is not supposed to be curious about the world. In Willing's adaptation curiosity is also depicted negatively from the very beginning when Alice looks at the bottle with the potion but instead of being labeled "Drink Me" it says "Curiosity" on one side and "Killed the cat!" on the other. From this moment it is clear that being curious will only lead to problems. One would think that by making Alice an adult this aspect of her character would be showcased more positively because it could show that she is an independent woman ready to learn about the world. However, interestingly as an adult Alice's curiosity did not grow up with her and instead

she is apprehensive about being in Wonderland, even scared of it. For instance, Alice Kingsley, when in the real world, is as insightful and curious as the Alice from the books. She wonders what it would feel like to fly, how women would look in trouser, and she observes everything around her. However, it is when she arrives to Underland where her curious nature banishes. This is where the original Alice becomes a stronger female.

Carroll's Alice entered Wonderland because she saw the White Rabbit and was curious as to why a rabbit could talk and wear a coat. She decided to follow him and find out where he is headed, which eventually leads her to Wonderland. On the contrary, both adult Alices enter the place called Wonderland (or Underland) for two different reasons: Alice Hamilton entered because she wanted to give Jack the ring back, thus she followed him, and Alice Kingsley followed the rabbit only because she wanted to escape the reality of the marriage proposal. Their uncurious attitude is made obvious since their first step in Wonderland, especially for Alice Kingsley, who had always perceived her memories of Wonderland as nightmares, and she is very scared of them.

Alice Kingsley's nightmares about Wonderland began since she was a little girl and continued on to her adult life; when she is on her way to the engagement party Alice tells her mother about the recurring nightmare, which has occurred every single night of her life. Therefore, when she enters Underland as a nineteen-year-old, she believes it to be the same nightmare. The moment she meets the creatures of Underland she begins to pinch her arm in an attempt to wake up from the bad dream. She continues with this attitude towards the new world throughout her journey, even though she interacts with the creatures that live there. Even towards the end of the film, Alice makes continues to view her adventure as a dream, "Sometimes I forget this is all a dream. Wish I'd wake up" (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010), in an attempt to

take control of what is happening and escape her reality. It is only after her last conversation with Absalom, the caterpillar, that Alice realizes Underland is a real place, not a dream, and she needs to face her fears and fight for it. For Alice Hamilton, although not a nightmare, Wonderland also felt unreal and scary. When the Hatter tells her she is in Wonderland, she immediately says it is a place in a “kid’s book” not a real place. Yet, because she is experiencing the place she believes it is real almost immediately, but she knows it is a dangerous place, not the fun and whimsical Wonderland she knows from the stories. For this Alice, the only memory of Wonderland she has is from the books, for she had never been to Wonderland before. As the Hatter remarks, “the last time a girl called Alice came here from your world she brought down the whole house of cards” (Willing *Alice* 2009) and it had been a hundred and fifty years before. Now that she is in Wonderland she realizes how different it is and more importantly, she is aware of the dangers she may face.

Throughout most of their journeys both Alices, although being adults, display an attitude of uncertainty, fear, and rejection of Wonderland, which would mostly be associated to a child. Their attitudes are further manifested in their desire to leave Wonderland and return back home. Brooker pointed this out when discussing Willing’s first Alice adaptation from 1999, in which Alice was still a little girl, but one who was incessantly trying to find her way back home: “Where Harris’ Alice wanted to go home and Carroll’s wanted, for the most part, to penetrate Wonderland more deeply, Willing’s is trying to escape” (Brooker 217). As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, Disney’s first Alice adaptation also focuses on the idea of escaping Wonderland and returning home. Following this same concept, the new Alices go through their journeys in Wonderland only because they know at the end they will be able to back home. This is an aspect that has been greatly changed in numerous adaptations of Alice, and of course, it continues to be

changed in the new ones; yet, it is strange that Alice continues being depicted as wanting to get out of Wonderland now that she is an adult, and supposedly more independent than the little girls depicted in previous adaptations. For Aikens this change takes away part of the essence of being a strong female character:

Exploration so interests Carroll's Alice that, though she does admit when stuck in the White Rabbit's house that her own home is "pleasanter" than Wonderland, she's not on a quest to return there. [...] Alice must complete the tasks (retrieve the Vorpal Sword, find the White Queen, slay the Jabberwocky, and, um, drink its blood) that will allow her to return home and face her responsibilities. (Aikens 31)

In Burton's adaptation, Alice continues viewing Underland as a dream, a figment of her imagination; as she says, "This has all come from my own mind" (*Alice in Wonderland* 2010), yet she is not able to control anything, especially the fact that she cannot escape it. For this reason, Alice completes all her tasks, knowing that in the end, she might return home. It is no surprise then, that once Alice kills the Jabberwocky and the White Queen takes his blood and gives it to Alice, the first question she asks is, "Will this take me home?" to which the White Queen replies, "If that is what you choose" (Burton *Alice in Wonderland* 2010). Alice has the power to choose where the potion will take her, and she chooses to leave Wonderland. In Willing's adaptation Alice has the same attitude towards Wonderland; despite knowing that her boyfriend Jack might not be trustworthy, Alice trusts him because he promises to help her go back home. This, of course, is what Alice wants more than anything, and it becomes even more evident when she finally defeats the Queen, she decides to go home. In this case, however, Alice has mixed feelings about leaving. On the one hand, she has changed and, after being asked by Jack once again to marry him – now becoming Queen of Wonderland – Alice feels she has other

things to do outside of Wonderland. On the other hand, when the Hatter says goodbye she is surprised, as if she wanted him to go with her, but he tells her she should go home. Here Alice, bitter-sweetly says, “Yeah, I’ve had enough of Wonderland for a lifetime” (Willing *Alice* 2009), for she had gone through many tribulations in this place. If Alice considered, even for a moment, staying in Wonderland, it would have been to stay with the Hatter and not for Wonderland itself. Nevertheless, she returns home, to her reality, and chose not to remain in Wonderland.

It is interesting to see how different Alice has become, not only in her age but also in her general attitude towards Wonderland and everything it represents. The seven-year-old Alice from Carroll’s books only left Wonderland and Looking-Glass world because she was dreaming up those places. She did not willingly and knowingly leave them, and during her journeys, she barely missed being home. Yet, as she grew up, her adventurous side disappeared, and Alice became homesick and fearful of Wonderland. She wanted to wake up – although the places were real –, she chose to return to the real world and leave everything in Wonderland behind. In these two new versions, Alice has not simply grown-up, she has also grown distant to Wonderland. Her rejection to Wonderland, the battles, marriage, and adventure carry something deeper, something that reflects perhaps the culture in which the adaptations were created and the perceptions inherent in them.

The Looking-Glass Reversed: Popular Culture Looking into Alice’s World

As I have discussed throughout this thesis, popular culture has played an important role in the portrayal of Alice, for it has been through popular culture that the perceptions about Alice and Lewis Carroll have dispersed. The process began with the media, which was mostly comprised by written text, and which published aspects of Charles Dodgson’s life that were in part speculative. Yet, being the main medium of communication among the culture of that time,

that was the information which audiences received. During these times the ideas about how Lewis Carroll was began changing similar to a myth, where one person's construction of a "celebrity" became the norm. The media aids the propagation of these perceptions "when theories pass from the measured argument of more scholarly discourse to the bold statements of popular discussion, [and] we find crudely drawn caricatures forming in the public consciousness. Most readers will come to associate these cartoonish but powerful images, rather than the cautiously indecisive portraits we gain from recent biographies, with the name Lewis Carroll" (Brooker 59). Currently, it seems, audience's perception about Lewis Carroll and his work continue being similar to those from years, in which he is described as a pedophile. Brooker, for instance, notes that a magazine named *Alice Club* – featured in an article about Japanese childhood pornography – specializes in pictures of teenagers; however, reporter Jonathan Watts distinctively identifies that the magazine "derives its title from the work of Lewis Carroll" (qtd. in Brooker 53). Brooker observes that "we have to guess that these publishers, like the paedophile ring, sense an affinity with Lewis Carroll on the basis of his association with and photographs of young girls" (53). Similar to some of the filmmakers who adapt the Alice stories, publishers, who are key members of the media, continue perceiving Lewis Carroll as a pedophile, perhaps because of the sensitivity towards pedophilia and sexual offenses towards children that are present in popular culture. Moreover, it is now the audience who has kept this image of Lewis Carroll and his relationship to Alice Liddell fresh in their consciousness, and as a result, it is very possible that this is affecting the way in which the character Alice is presented in film adaptations which are made for this very same audience.

Consequently, audiences have created their own ideas of who Alice is, and it is clear that a vast majority of these views propose Lewis Carroll as a sexual predator and a very unusual

man. Note that in popular consciousness Lewis Carroll is the person, not the created persona. Therefore, even when people discuss his life and not his work, they will usually refer to him by his pen name instead of his real name, which makes the idea of a “sick” author of a children’s book even more latent. Will Self, in his review of Martin Gardner’s *Annotated Alice: The Definitive Edition*, repeatedly establishes his argument that Lewis Carroll was “indisputably a pedophile – just not an active one” (qtd. in Brooker 55), and leaves no room for counterarguments. He presents as evidence previous biographies of Charles Dodgson which focus on “Carroll’s obsession with pre-pubescent girls, his photographing and sketching of them in the nude, his delight in kissing them, his revulsion from boys at a similar age, [and] his apparent revulsion from adult sexuality in all forms” (qtd. in Brooker 56). To contrast Self’s strong assertions and assumptions about Dodgson’s private life, Brooker presents another side to the story in which he presents popular culture perceptions as responsible for these assumptions:

That Carroll enjoyed kissing little girls carries no significance on its own, and only speaks of “paedophilia” if our minds are already made up that the man is a pervert. (56)

The suppositions presented by Self may reflect the mindset of popular culture, where the views on childhood are different from those in the Victorian era. Having the knowledge pedophilia, sexual predators, and the notion that one’s sexual desire equals acting upon it, change the way in which Victorian behaviors and one particular man’s life are perceived. Woolf expands on this acknowledging how modern perceptions influence the outlook towards Lewis Carroll’s actions:

Perhaps with modern psychological knowledge, one may conjecture that it was in his need for the company of children over the next 20 years that he channeled intense yearnings for romantic love that were denied other outlets; that their

feminine company helped him to suppress an insistent, despised sexuality of his own. (*Mystery of Lewis Carroll* 119)

In popular culture the notion that Lewis Carroll was a pedophile or a pervert is only one of various perceptions that have arisen. There are additional perceptions about the stories and their nonsensical nature. In an article from his blog titled “Lewis Carroll,” Hanne Christiansen comments that “...there is no doubt a guy who wrote a story about an 11-year old girl who falls into a rabbit hole, eats mushrooms that make her shrink and attend mad tea parties with rabbits and evil witches, must have been something of a special case” (par. 9). Christiansen assumes something must be wrong with the author of such a strange story because there are many nonsensical elements. He also acknowledges Tim Burton’s commentary about the story, which he considers a drug for children precisely because of its nonsense. In Burton’s film, as discussed, Alice has become a nineteen year old woman, far from the heroine Carroll created. Christiansen observes this major difference and points to the story behind the man who created the books in order to explain this transformation:

The director has received a bit of stick for casting a 20-year old Australian to play the role of 11-year old Alice...However, look at the story behind the original book and it might not be such a bad idea to keep the actors ... of legal age.

Charles Dodgson, or Lewis Carroll as he was more famously known, was in fact a raging kiddy tickler... (Christiansen par. 2)

Christiansen is expressing his own perceptions about Lewis Carroll and his relationship to Alice Liddell. It is clear that he believes, as does a large part of popular culture that they were, in some form, romantically and sexually involved. In his case, he is once again making uninformed claims about the movie; the Alice of Burton’s film is nineteen years old, not eleven. In other

words, the film does not follow the pattern of earlier Alice film adaptations in which an adult actress plays the role of a little girl but depicts a version of the character that has reached adulthood. Regardless of his misinformation, his perception about Lewis Carroll is clear: he liked little girls. Furthermore, it was not even the idea that Carroll (Dodgson) was interested only in Alice Liddell, Christiansen is generalizing the idea and it has placed Dodgson as a child-lover, any child, but more specifically any little girl not just Alice Liddell. Yet, this goes back to my suggestion that one of the reasons why Alice has grown-up in the newer film adaptations is because the books may represent the story of a child-lover, but by transforming Alice into an adult popular culture can be more comfortable with the story.

What transpires in some of these perceptions is popular culture's attempt to explain events based on their own notions about childhood and sexuality to events from a different period, the Victorian era, where views were unlike to those in the twenty-first century. In the stories Alice employs a similar process. She tries to infer certain rules of Wonderland and attempts to follow them, but she usually involves her own knowledge and preconceived notions of how the world is supposed to work in order to "understand" the rules. Bivona describes Alice's experience with a number of games in Wonderland for which she tries to apply the rules from her own world, resulting in her confusion and frustration. He explains, for instance, that when Alice enters the Queen's "Croquet Ground" she affirms that she will "manage better this time" (Carroll *Wonderland* 104). Nevertheless, what Alice "manages" to do is "assimilate the game of Wonderland 'croquet' into her own English version croquet, [and] judge the Wonderland version to be an impossible version of the English one..." (Bivona 148). In this situation Alice can only use her previous knowledge of the game, the version from her own world and she tries to understand the new version from that standpoint. Similarly, popular culture

looks at Lewis Carroll's life through a twenty-first century looking-glass and tries to understand his experiences by applying its views of the world one hundred and fifty years later. Trying to understand his life through our own perceptions of the world has undoubtedly affected how Alice's story has been adapted.

There is, however, a part of popular culture which perceives Dodgson differently, and which does not follow Alice's lead in employing her own knowledge to judge a completely different place. For example, answering a question from a user on the website *Yahoo Answers* who was asking if Lewis Carroll was a pedophile, the user Blue Skies responds:

During that era young women often walked together with arms linked or holding hands as that was simply part of their friendship. Today in our culture would people consider that an act of simple friendship or would they read something sexual into it? (par. 2)

In the answer to the original inquiry, this user moves away from the twenty-first century mindset to acknowledge the traditions and practices particular of the Victorian era in order to explain the differences between Carroll's behavior and how it is perceived in modern times. The user proposes a very good question to help the audience understand those differences. Yet, instead of asking if people *would* read something sexual into the mentioned scenario, I think a better question is "*Do* people read something sexual into it?" The argument presented and explored in this research is that audiences indeed read something sexual in some aspects of Alice's life, her creation, her creator, and the real girl.

As proposed in Chapter 2, the relationship between the media and its audience, according to Kellner and to Storey, travels one way. In other words, the media provides tools to feed and shape a culture's ideologies resulting in a society which reflects whatever is featured in the

media. Yet, the fact that through many adaptations Alice has changed so much compared to the original, it is clear that audiences greatly influence what is presented in the media. The relationship between audience and media then becomes twofold. As exposed in this chapter, a part of popular culture strongly believes Lewis Carroll to be a pedophile. With this in mind, the perceptions about Alice become that of a sexual girl, a belief which is reinforced by the various adaptations in which her character is sexualized. As a result, society's views about Alice have become influential in her newer depictions, which have transformed her into an adult.

CHAPTER V.

Alice's Evidence: Conclusions and Implications

“Give your evidence,” said the King; “and don’t be nervous, or I’ll have you executed on the spot.”

--Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865

Understanding Alice's Changes

The Alice of the new millennium, or the twenty-first century, has undergone multiple drastic changes when compared to her first appearance in literature in 1865. Throughout this research the new depictions of Alice have been presented in order to understand two important aspects of these changes: how and why Alice has changed. These major changes – which I identified as Alice's rejection of men, Alice's attitude towards Wonderland (including Alice's curiosity), Alice's battles, and her transformation into a woman – are all governed by the change in her age. Thus, these characteristics the new Alice possesses would not have been possible had her age remained the same. Still, what exactly are the differences between the Alice in Burton (2010) and Willing (2009) and the Alice of previous adaptations?

In the adaptations presented in Chapter 3 there were many different Alices. In some of the stories she was the fictional Alice, and the story was in essence the one Carroll narrated and wrote about almost one hundred and fifty years ago. In some of the film adaptations she might have looked like an adult, yet she was seven years old, and looked older only because the actress who portrayed her was an adult. In the other adaptations, however, Alice is moved from the story and is given a different context. In some she is combined with the real girl, while in the others she is still Alice but older. In these cases, the story is not the same as the books. Alice is an old lady looking back on her erotic adventures. Still, in these two films Alice is the Alice from

Wonderland or a descendent, but she is the “one,” meaning that it was her destiny to be there in order to complete a task. However she is an adult who comes back. But, why did she not come back from another adventure when she was twelve or even fifteen years old? Why did she come back as an adult? At the beginning of this research I originally considered that Alice had changed only because of how the character, the stories, and the author were perceived. Yet, I did not expect to find other possible explanations for these changes in the character presented in the film adaptations, and this research made me aware of these other explanations. Based on the analyses of the films, there are three possible motivations that could account for Alice’s changes.

First, the way in which the perception through the modern eye of the background story for Alice’s creation has propelled the character to change in many different aspects, especially her age, as was mentioned before. These perceptions are also reflected in the character’s rejection to marriage but her love for the father figure. Throughout this thesis I have explored the perceptions about Lewis Carroll (Charles L. Dodgson) present among popular culture, of which the most resonant is being associated to pedophilia. Despite there being a small part of culture that makes reference to the differences between Victorian time and current time, there is still a vast part of society that perceives the author of Alice as a child-loving pervert.

As a result of these perceptions, the portrayal of the character Alice in modern times has changed exponentially from a little girl to an adult due to the cultural context in which they were created, i.e. popular culture in the twenty-first century, for the views about childhood and adulthood have changed and because of the controversial story involving the real girl. Since Carroll held a close relationship to Alice Liddell, for whom he created the story, modern adaptations reflect the discomfort our culture may feel towards that relationship. In the need to create a story that is more suiting for an almost sexualized Alice, which is how popular culture

perceives her, Alice is constructed as an adult. The analysis conducted in this study suggests that since in popular culture both Alices are often perceived as the same person, these adaptations reflect current society's views and opinion towards her. Carroll's Alice embodies the idea of a sexualized little girl while Carroll is perceived as a pedophile, both being ideas rejected by popular culture; thus, by creating an adult Alice the assumed relationship, and hence the idea, becomes acceptable.

A second explanation could be identified as the sexualization of the character. In this sense, neither the story behind the creation of the Alice books nor the real-life aspects influence the character's changes. Instead, it is the previous representations of the character what motivates her changes. The character has been sexualized so much in different adaptations that it does not allow Alice to be a little girl again. Alan Moore's *Lost Girls* depicts an adult Alice whose past was mainly comprised of sexual adventures. As a result, this Alice was sexually powerful and had an appetite for the erotic, which naturally, was not found in the seven-year-old version of herself. To further elucidate Alice's sexualization, it should be noted that there are at least more than a dozen pornographic movies either based on the Alice stories or that at least use the image of Alice as the protagonist. Erotic films such as *Alice in Acidland* (1969), the animated *Malice in Wonderland* (1982), and the video *Malice in Lalaland* (2010) all utilize Alice's image to depict sexual fantasies. Similarly, the book series by Adriana Arden *The Obedient Alice* (2003), *Alice in Chains* (2004), and *Abandoned Alice* (2005), place the main character in various erotic scenarios, most of which involve male domination and rough sexual encounters. Moreover, even Disney's animated Alice has been sexualized as fan's drawings, comics, and videos show her involved in sexual interactions with the rest of the characters from the films.

Clearly Alice's image has been progressively turned into a symbol of sexual fantasy which was not innate in the original heroine. Furthermore, this depiction can only be placed on an adult version of the character, since based on contemporary views about childhood the child can be sexual. In the article "She's Kickin' Ass, That's What She's Doing! Deconstructing Childhood 'Innocence' in Media Representations" Kerry Robinson and Cristyn Davies discuss the perspectives about childhood when considered a sexual entity:

The moral panic around the potential loss of childhood innocence, or more specifically childhood itself, reaches its extremities when considered within the realm of sexuality (Robinson 2008). Sexuality is an area of identity that is often represented as 'adults only', one from which children are perceived to be in need of protection (Robinson 2005a). (qtd. in Robinson and Davies 343)

Of course, in these cases the nudity depicted is intended to be erogenous and evoke sexual pleasure; therefore, after having been constantly portrayed erotically in recent texts, it is hard for audiences to perceive Alice as a little girl, and thus, she becomes an adult when the stories of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* are retold. Even Nick Willing, writer and director for SyFy's *Alice*, acknowledges his intent behind Alice's sudden growth, describing this new version of the story as "not the *Alice in Wonderland* that you would've seen adapted many times before. This is a much racier, tougher, sexier, more driven [show] with a classical story, more like a kind of thriller with twists and turns and surprises" (qtd. in Topel par. 7). Note that Willing purposely designed the character with the idea that she is sexier, a quality which naturally was not part of the seven-year-old. It is evident that Alice's previous and constant sexualization generated the woman of *Wonderland* who is portrayed in the recent film adaptations.

The third possible explanation is that Alice's changes could also be attributed to the views of childhood in modern times. In this possibility, the views do not refer to the sexualization of the child, but to the role of the child. The traits little Alice shows in the original books can be perceived as traits an adult should have. As explained in Chapter 1, the seven-year-old Alice is able to venture into new places and welcomes her new experiences with an adventurous attitude. Alice is full of curiosity and becomes even more curious as she delves further into the new worlds by herself. The modern adaptations, however, present some of the adult traits Carroll's Alice possessed now embodied in an adult character.

Besides being extremely curious, the original Alice is assertive, questions everything and everyone around her, talks to strangers, and is very brave even when at times she felt lost or a little scared, yet she was able to stand up to the Queen of Hearts, the highest power in Wonderland. She journeys through Looking-Glass by successfully playing a game of chess, in which she was a pawn, ultimately becoming Queen. Through these actions Alice is able to challenge the idea of a passive childhood and be closer to society's idea of what an adult is. This may suggest that even though the Alice who Carroll created seems to be ahead of her times, in modern contexts, these traits are seen more fit for an adult, resulting in the transference of these traits into the adult presented in Burton's and Willing's adaptations.

Moreover, some of the actions and characteristics given to the new Alice may not be considered "appropriate" for a little girl. For instance, marriage plays an important role in both new adaptations, as the adventures are ignited by Alice's rejection of marriage. Naturally, in contemporary society it would not be appropriate for a little girl to get married, especially a seven-year-old, as Alice was. Therefore, in order to fit this element to the story it is imperative

for Alice to become an adult. Additionally, there are other elements from these adaptations which may not fit popular culture's concept of childhood. As presented by Robinson and Davies

Adulthood and childhood become mutually exclusive polarised worlds with the child becoming the powerless "other" in the world of adults, a world in which adults become the "gate-keepers" of knowledge and experience in an effort to preserve the perceived essence of childhood; that is, "innocence". (343)

As previously described, Tim Burton's Alice Kingsley falls into Wonderland and finds out she is the chosen one to slay the Jabberwocky in order to restore the peace. Her journey through this place is motivated by the fact that she has to fulfill this prophecy and she must defeat the monster. Similarly, Nick Willing's Alice Hamilton endures a series of battles in order to rescue her original love interest and defeat the Queen of Hearts. This Alice rides horses, escapes bullets, flies machine flamingos, and ultimately confronts the Queen. According to Robinson and Davies, "Henry Jenkins points out that 'childhood innocence presumes that children exist in a space beyond, above, outside the political; we imagine them to be noncombatants whom we protect from the harsh realities of the adult world'" (345). With popular culture's perception of childhood, in which the child is an innocent being who should be protected from evil and harm, Lewis Carroll's Alice could be considered too exposed to these harms. Furthermore, because the tasks and battles Alice has to confront in the new versions are too dangerous, based on these notions of childhood, Alice must be an adult in order to fulfill them. All of these features have transformed Alice into a battler rather than an explorer; thus the new Alices have turned into adult figures, and with this change, came other changes: marriage, battling, and loss of childhood wonder.

As mentioned before, without Alice's growth the concept of marriage would not have been introduced into her story. The same would have happened to Alice's quest to overpower the Queen; her battle would not have been so violent and dangerous if she had "left-off" at seven. Finally, if she had remained the same child envisioned by Carroll, the Alice of the new films would have been more fascinated by Wonderland instead of having lost her curiosity and willingness to explore it even further. Alice has grown up, and if the perceptions in popular culture towards the story remain the same, she will undoubtedly continue growing up, or she will at least remain an adult. Whichever the case, the reality is that Alice will continue transforming according to the views present in the culture, and audiences will continue being a great influence in the way she is portrayed.

Additional Findings

Although I was not originally looking into this, some of the literature about Alice as an adult pointed to the fact that she may have been depicted as a weaker female compared to Carroll's original, despite an attempt to make her a more empowering female. The original Alice is curious, eager to continue exploring the new worlds she has gotten into; she takes on the journey despite any potential dangers which may arise. Moreover, although she follows the rules of Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world in order to continue her exploration, she also stands up in the face of adversity and she questions authority in various occasions, traits which allow her to behave like an adult instead of the usual sweet and polite little girl who is expected to remain silent and passive instead of venturing into the unknown. The new Alice, although tough and sometimes physically strong, lacks those characteristics that made the original Alice such a powerful female.

This significant topic, however, was not fully discussed in this thesis, and so it is important for these films to be further explored using feminist theory since, as Aikens pointed out, the new femme fatale Alice is less feminist than the original. Despite her physical strength and determination, the representation of Alice in these films may not necessarily reflect feminist beliefs. In light of this, I propose as a suggestion for additional research to explore the new Alice films from a feminist standpoint. In addition to this, there is still much more research that can and should be done about Alice and its adaptations. The following section addresses some of these gaps in this area of research.

The Confines of Wonderland: Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The multidisciplinary nature of this research appeals to a diverse audience, and it also contributes to expanding research in these different areas: film adaptations, cultural studies, popular culture, and children's literature. Still, there are many more aspects of Alice adaptations that warrant discussion and, could not be fully explored in this study due to different limitations.

The major limitations I encountered throughout this study were time constraints and the type of project this was. Time constraints did not allow me to explore more in depth the stories and the different adaptations which could have taken me more than a year to do since there are hundreds of them. In addition, this project is not a dissertation or a book; it would have been unfeasible to study every single adaptation of Alice. There are too many, and although I plan to continue this study by adding more adaptations and primary sources, for the purpose of this thesis I have provided just a sample. Thus I have focused on the two film adaptations which have not been studied before. As I encountered each limitation, I was prompted to think how a certain aspect could have been studied had these limitations not been present.

Many scholars have made Alice and the study of Lewis Carroll a life-long research (Cohen, Guiliano, Woolf, Gardner, among others), and this study attempts to bring a new perspective to a phenomenon which has been recently discussed, while it also fills the gaps of what has not been said about it yet. Since the central figure of this research is Alice, many Alice fans and admirers of Carrollian literature might look into the outcome of this research and the findings obtained from it will contribute to the development and growth of two main areas of research: cultural studies and media studies (particularly film adaptations). Therefore, this research might be of interest to scholars in these fields because it explores a converse relationship between media and audience. Instead of focusing solely on how media shapes audiences' perspectives, and thus popular culture perceptions, this study goes a step further by exploring how the perceptions about Alice, which are evident in popular culture, have influenced the stories' adaptations. That said, there is room for more research to be done in relation to Alice, the characters, the adaptations, and many other aspects which could not be explored in this study.

The focus of this thesis can be expanded by studying more adaptations of the Alice books. As previously acknowledged, there are hundreds of Alice adaptations which include, but are not limited to, films, songs, music videos, video games, graphic novels, historical fiction, and even pictures. With sufficient time and funding there can be a study which thoroughly explores, categorizes, and analyzes each adaptation to find out, among other things, what motivated the changes in them. It would also be interesting to study the sexualization of other female characters, in addition to Alice, in modern adaptations; e.g. Red Riding Hood, Wendy, Dorothy, and Beauty, among others. Another possible research could aim to study the phenomenon of characters who grow up and who revisit their childhood in order to restore order or to have closure from their childhood. As previously mentioned this is a recurring theme in both Alice

films (Willing 2009 and Burton 2010) and in the film *Hook* (Spielberg 1991).

Although in Appendix C I provide suggestions for how to incorporate the findings of this research or certain aspects of it into the classroom, there is a great need for pedagogically focused studies using film adaptations. The field of film adaptations is relatively new, which means that scholars will be interested in it, but also that the research is still limited albeit expanding. One area which needs further exploration is the incorporation of film adaptation studies in an educational setting and how they can be used to either teach different skills, or to teach adaptations on their own. Moreover, there is yet to presented pedagogical research on film adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland*. Hopefully, my research can serve as a stepping-stone to build upon and move future research in that direction.

Shaking and Waking: Closing Remarks about Alice

The last chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* tells about Alice's realization that her adventures were a dream. Excitedly, Alice tells her sister as much as she can remember from her very curious dream and the fun she had in Wonderland. After Alice having ran off to have some tea, her sister remains still as she quietly gazes into the sunset and begins dreaming as well. In her dream she sees Alice going through all the adventures she had just heard from her sister. Alice's sister, however, was part of that dream too, and she was aware of that; she knew that if she opened her eyes she would go back to her dull reality. Alice's sister was older than her, thus this dream seemed like her own desire to be as childish as her younger sister and how she wished to be as curious as she once was. Carroll ends the story by describing how Alice's sister imagined Alice's future to be like:

Lastly, she pictured to herself how this same little sister of hers would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman; and how she would keep, through all her

riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood: and how she would gather about her other little children, and make THEIR eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale, perhaps even with the dream of Wonderland of long ago: and how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days.

(Carroll, *Wonderland* 130)

How *does* Alice remember herself, her child-life, and who she was during her adventures? It is difficult to pinpoint how a fictional character perceives herself and her past since she is only a product of a person's imagination. Sadly, Alice's creator did not continue her story after her second adventure, thus the audience is left to wonder, *What if?* What if she had gone back to Wonderland? What if she grows up and does not remember her adventures? What if she needs to become Wonderland's savior? What if there was something perverse in her past which troubles fictional Alice as an adult? There are many questions which could only be answered if Alice's story is continued. Perhaps the various adaptations presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 have attempted to answer these questions and have given Alice the opportunity to look back on her child-life and to remember who she used to be. They have perhaps built on Carroll's closing paragraph about how Alice would be as an adult. In Burton's adaptation she has gone back to Wonderland, as an adult, but does not remember the place since she has believed for many years that her adventures were only a dream. Albeit in Carroll's books the adventures are indeed dreams, Burton presents Wonderland as a real place, and through many trials and tribulations Alice is finally able to remember it. Both Burton's and Willing's adaptations present Alice as the person chosen to restore the peace in Wonderland, either because a prophecy needs to be fulfilled or because she is a descendent of the original Alice. Meanwhile *Lost Girls* depicts

Alice's troublesome past which is filled with sexual accounts that leave a painful mark in Alice through her life. These past events turn the adult Alice into a sort of sexual monster. These changes have occurred in order to continue Alice's story, but each one of them carries the adaptor's perception based on popular beliefs. They have allowed Alice to revisit her past.

However, the multiple interpretations and adaptations of the Alice books have also given way to a growing difference between what the stories were meant to be and how they are perceived in popular culture. They have also, as Woolf points out, given way to a void between how "modern readers perceive the author and how they receive his work" ("Carroll's Shifting Reputation" par. 4), for the assumption is that there is something sexual about the character Alice based on the notions the audience has about Carroll. As a result these perceptions seem to be affecting how his work is adapted as well, and consequently, Alice has been transformed into someone so different from the seven-year-old from 1865, that she is almost unrecognizable. After so many changes to her story, questions about her character, insinuations about her creator, and of course her twelve changes in size and two visits to other worlds, it is no *Wonder* the original Alice is a confused little girl. If it was puzzling for Alice to come up with an answer to the caterpillar's inquiry "Who are *you*?" back when she was in Wonderland, it can be assumed it would be even more difficult if she were asked now, since she has been reinvented in so many ways.

Appendix A

Elements Identified and My Observations

Identified elements	SyFy's <i>Alice</i> 2009	Tim Burton's <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> 2010	Reference that discusses element	Comments
Age/Growing up/Adulthood	Alice is 20 years old.	<p>Alice Kingsley is 19 years old.</p> <p>Even in Victorian times she does not conform to the idea of what everyone expects from her as an adult woman.</p> <p>She remarks to the Queen that she has been growing up a lot lately.</p> <p>Her "sexuality" is used when the Knave accuses her of having seduced him. This would not have been done if the character had been younger (if so, it would have raised many red flags).</p>	<p>Aikens Brooker (in previous films, talking about adulthood)</p>	<p>Perhaps the most notable change in the character Alice throughout many adaptations of Carroll's books is her age. Although growing up is a theme that is mentioned in the stories, modern societies have assigned a more important role to it than its role in the stories. It has been discussed that Carroll's second book reflects the drift between Alice Liddell and him when she started growing up.</p> <p>Many have interpreted this as Carroll's refusal to accept the fact that Alice Liddell was growing up and was not as fond to listening to his stories and playing games as she used to be. (Refer to the final</p>

				poem in TLG).
Attitude towards men/marriage	<p>Rejection of marriage and is afraid of commitment.</p> <p>Daddy issues. Her father left when she was 10 years old and that has traumatized her.</p> <p>Falls in love with the Hatter</p>	<p>She has a close relationship to her father (not so much with her mother).</p> <p>Even when she is told that marrying a lord is the best she can do Alice does not acquiesce to this.</p> <p>The only other male figure she is close to is the Mad Hatter. She became close to him, and even tells him she will miss him when she wakes up.</p>	<p>Lisa Fary</p> <p>Brooker</p>	
Attitude towards Wonderland	<p>Does not believe Wonderland is a real place.</p> <p>She fulfills her destiny only because it will take her back to the “real world” again.</p>	<p>She does not want to kill or fulfill her destiny.</p> <p>She drinks the “potion” because it will bring her home.</p>	Aikens	<p>I need to talk about Alice’s curiosity here too. In both of these adaptations Alice is not as curious as Carroll’s. She certainly does not want to explore Wonderland and even less perform her task. She is not willing to take risks, at least in the beginning. Part of what makes Carroll’s Alice so appealing is that she is very much like a child: she does not think about risks and dangers, but she dives into anything that</p>

				comes her way. These Alices are not like that. They are afraid of Wonderland they perceive the place as a bad dream, not as a new adventure.
Alice's battles: <i>1) Defining who she is</i> <i>2) Overcoming her fears</i>	She is the Alice of Legend Becomes the savior. Does not have to kill anything.	She is the Alice of the Oraculum. Monster slayer: she MUST kill the Jabberwocky to bring peace to Underland.	Robinson and Davies	Her battles and struggles blur her judgment and make her weak.

Appendix B

Fictional Diary Entry from Katie Roiphe's *Still She Haunts Me*

Feb. 24, 1862

This morning I brought a drawing of the walking oysters for Alice, & Mrs. Liddell told me to take it directly to the nursery. On my way back through the hallway, I saw a half-open door. The bath was still drawn – a large oval bath –

I stopped. The floor was damp & the air heavy from steam. Alice must have that moment emerged – running wet and soap-smelling through her room – and there was the bath still filled – the bathwater cloudy with dirt – likely she brought half the garden along with her. The water that had swirled around her legs – splashed her neck – a bar of lavender soap cast carelessly aside – a cloth draped over the side. And I couldn't take my eyes from it – the porcelain curve that had cradled her. Reverberating like an echo: her recently vanished presence.

I felt close to her – the steam rising up & enveloping me in heat. Her hair sticky damp & plastered to her face – her skin hot – beaded with droplets – her palms pruny & prickled from soaking. The bath gave her to me more vividly than I could have conjured her myself.

So strange. A room caught in a state of longing.

A room abruptly caught – how ridiculous I am – simply an accidentally glimpsed sliver of bath basin through half-open door – & yet it keeps returning.

Appendix C

Suggestions for Pedagogical Application

As a student of a graduate program in education it had always been my interest to focus on pedagogical issues and to carry-out research which could serve to help improve education in Puerto Rico. However, after having begun research on a different topic I realized there was something else I wanted to study: the different representations of Alice. When finally choosing this subject I knowingly chose not to do a pedagogical study because my sole interest was that of studying the character and how its representation may have been a reflection of popular culture. However, this was a subject that interested me both as a student and as a teacher, and despite not being designed as a pedagogical study, the educator in me would always think about possible ways in which some aspects of this study could be incorporated in a classroom. Furthermore, even little Alice acknowledged there was a lesson in everything; i.e. in the poems she recited, the stories the creatures told her, and the new things she was exploring Alice seemed to find a lesson or at least perceive them as such. Pondering upon how this study could serve educational purposes, I thought about the courses I have taken, the courses I have taught, and the different themes and strategies I have applied to them. Based on this, I have singled out various educational strategies and themes for which this thesis could serve pedagogically.

Firstly, what emerges from the research could make pedagogical contributions as the context of the study itself may serve useful for educators especially in terms of teaching film adaptations. Hutcheon affirms that “adaptations of books ... are often considered educationally important for children” (118), and they can also serve in a higher educational context. For instance, a university-level course about film adaptations could be designed based on this research. In such course there are many aspects and elements from the various Alice adaptations

on which to focus. As an alternative, the course could explore a number of adaptations in addition to the Alice ones. In fact, the specific aspect of adaptations for this research originated after having designed a course in literature as part of a project for one of my graduate courses. This particular course involved the discussion and exploration of various Disney movie adaptations of a number of children's books, including the Alice books. However, there are many other films besides the Disney versions which have adapted notorious works of children's literature. There is, for instance, the famous 1939 musical film *The Wizard of Oz* (Vidor et al.) and the French film *La Belle et la Bête* directed by Jean Cocteau (1946); there are also more recent adaptations of children's literature which could be used such as *Beastly* directed by Daniel Barnz and *Red Riding Hood* directed by Catherine Hardwicke, both from 2011. To be even more specific, a course about film adaptations could focus solely on the idea of going back to a childhood place many years later. In such case, the Alice films explored in this study as well as the film *Hook* (Spielberg 1991), among others, could be utilized.

Additionally, studying the different representations of a character or even a complete story using film and textual adaptations is a strategy that can be brought into the classroom and could help enhance students' interest in reading. In my experience, whenever I talk to people about *Alice in Wonderland*, they usually refer to the 1951 Disney film instead of the books, thinking that this is the original "Alice." This, however, does not have to be perceived as something negative, but rather as an aid to teach the works of literature. During my last semester as a graduate instructor for Intermediate English at the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez campus I created a unit titled "Tales Retold" in which I discussed a small number of versions and adaptations of various fairy tales such as "Little Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella," and "Alice in Wonderland." The same can be done by focusing on teaching the different versions of Alice,

emphasizing maybe on the different representations of the main character or other characters from the stories. These discussions can be complemented by the integration of songs, music videos, and video games inspired by Alice into the classroom. These elements can enhance the teaching of certain skills such as writing.

Finally, although they stand on their own, the two film adaptations discussed in Chapter 4 could also be thought of as continuations of the Alice stories; they each depict a third adventure, one which took place many years later. Following this idea, the adaptations explored in this study can serve as guides for teachers to help students engage in creative writing. One very innovative literary genre to which Alice has been adapted is fan fiction, which the dictionary defines as “a fictional account written by a fan of a show, movie, book, or video game to explore themes and ideas that will not or cannot be explored via the originating medium;” these works are rarely professionally published, but most of them are posted by the authors on the Internet. Students can create stories based on the Alice stories, and they could choose to begin their stories as a continuation from where the original left off, similar to what Burton’s film depicts or they could also follow Willing’s lead into re-writing the story in a new context, which in SyFy’s *Alice* is the twenty-first century. Furthermore, because a great amount of fan fiction can be found on the Internet, teachers can motivate their students to write stories or even create a comic which can be published online. This can encourage students to be as creative as they can and to also produce something they can be proud of, for their work can be read all around the world.

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