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Disneyfication of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

and How this Process Has Developed over the Years

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Introduction

In 1865, the English mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson published the stories of Alice and her own little Wonderland under the pseudonym of Lewis Carroll. The first novel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), was soon to be followed by its sequel: *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). Both novels are accompanied by illustrations of John Tenniel. The two works of literary nonsense are compelling, breath-taking and mostly insanely implausible (Auerbach 31). The reader travels alongside Alice through the mysterious world that her innocent Victorian mind has created (Auerbach 33). A world in which one can shrink and grow in tremendous proportions by eating and drinking. A world in which animals can talk and a world in which logic is negligible. The following excerpt is an example of how Carroll manages to make the unlikely plausible in her story:

“What sort of things do you remember best?” Alice ventures to ask.

“Oh, things that happened the week after next,” the Queen replied in a careless tone. “For instance, now,” she went on, sticking a large piece of plaster on her finger as she spoke, “there’s the King’s Messenger. He’s in prison now, being punished: and the trial doesn’t even begin till next Wednesday: and of course the crime comes last of all.”

“Suppose he never commits the crime?” said Alice.

“That would be all the better, wouldn’t it?” the Queen said, as she bound the plaster round her finger with a bit of ribbon. (172)

Any reader of Alice’s adventures is just as confused about the world and Wonderland as the protagonist herself is (Haughton x).

Whereas some scholars appreciate the meaninglessness of the stories, others advocate for the expressive meaning of all the nonsense (Haughton xi). The stories are about growing up and

the loss of childhood innocence that comes with it (Kincaid 93). Alice is constantly wondering about who and where she is. The physical changes that she faces only intensify her feeling of being lost. Above all, it scares her to death that none of the adventures she faces make any sort of sense. Even though Carroll presents the events as solvable riddles, Alice's expectations are not met when she cannot get a grip on the different situations. Alice is, for instance, desperately trying to understand the rules of the Caucus-Race in chapter 3, since she believes that every race must have a purpose and a winner. It turns out that the only purpose of this race is to get dry. "Everybody has won, and *all* must have prizes," the Dodo says (Carroll 26). Whereas Alice is longing for an escape to a fantasy world in the first chapters, she starts to realise that logic and reason are very valuable in the last few chapters.

The Walt Disney Studios are famous for their distinct method of adapting children's literature. This method, often referred to as "Disneyfication," is a central topic of this thesis and will be discussed more elaborately in the first chapter. Disney produced two adaptations of Carroll's novels. The 1951 Disney animation film, directed by Clyde Geronimi, is one of the first adaptations. Disney has, however, recently produced a live action adaptation of the novel directed by Tim Burton (2010)¹. Even though both films are directed by different people, Disney served as umbrella organisation for both adaptations. It is unclear to what extent the individual directors were free in their productions. In this thesis, Disney is therefore considered responsible for the decisions made. The research question that will be answered in this thesis goes as follows: In what ways are the two films Disneyfied versions of their original novel and how do they differ? By studying this case a pattern in the development of the Disneyfication-process will be suggested.

¹ In 2016, Disney released a sequel to this adaptation. Even though the title, *Through the Looking Glass*, suggests otherwise, this film is not considered an actual adaptation of Carroll's work. The plot of this film is nothing like the novels, which is why the film will not be discussed thoroughly in this thesis.

Chapter 1

Disneyfication

1.1 Adaptation Theory

A change of medium automatically results in a change of meaning. Firstly, because simplifications are necessary when creating a film out of a 400-page novel. Directors only have very little time to tell the story, which is why adaptations tend to focus on one or more aspects of a novel while leaving others out. Secondly, because films are obliged to convey visual images. Whereas novels can make smart use of the concept of mental images, films have to be a lot more explicit (Hutcheon XIV).

However, audiences seem to accept these mutations, as novel adaptations have proven to be very popular (Bluestone 5). Statistics from 1992 show that novel adaptations win more than eighty percent of all Oscars (Hutcheon 4). Even though there are no exact records, scholars claim that 17 to 50 percent of all studio productions are in fact based on novels (Bluestone 3). Hutcheon argues this has to do with the fact that “recognition and resemblance are part of the pleasure” (4). The feeling of affection and affinity with characters is bigger when an audience is already familiar with them. Adaptations are therefore easy to relate to and due to media change not exact copies of the original works. The success of adaptations thus lies in the right amount of repetition without it becoming replication (7).

It is important to realise that adaptations are not produced in a vacuum (Hutcheon XIII). The choices that directors make when creating an adaptation are a result of the prevailing norms in society. The study on adaptation has shown that these norms are changing. Whereas directors of adaptations tried to stay as close to the original novel as possible in the past, fidelity is no longer a relevant criterium when it comes to the success of an adaptation (XXVI). The

“conventions of storytelling are changing,” and this is visible in modern adaptations (XXI).

Nowadays, a film adaptation is more than a simple change of medium. Influential companies, like the Disney Studios, are digitalising novels through trans mediation. Modern film adaptations are accompanied by extra dimensions such as video games, apps and second screens. The simultaneous use of different media makes it possible to expend the original storyline.

Adaptations become more personalised as each component of digitalisation speaks to a different audience. The way of storytelling has changed over the years, and so have the conventions of adapting novels. Original stories are turned into completely new story worlds. The success of an adaptation can therefore no longer be measured by its faithfulness to the original. Instead, Hutcheon argues, adaptations are now valued through their “popularity, persistence and diversity” (XXVI). Today, the relationship with the original story is of less importance now than the recognition of the adaptation on its own.

1.2 Walt Disney

The Walt Disney studios have been creating successful and influential novel adaptations for many years now. Walter Elias Disney, mostly known for his cartoons, animations and theme parks, was born in 1901 and died 65 years later. Disney was brought up in a lower-class American environment and was highly prejudiced about minorities. His successful works reflect his own ideology, which must have been influenced by the Great Depression and the second World War (Hastings 90). The opinions of scholars about Walt Disney have been extremely polarised (Watts 84). Disney used to be praised as a proud nationalist and a great artist, partly because of his use of innovative techniques (Langer). During the years after his death, however, scholars were starting to see Disney as an American imperialist who advocated intolerance of the outnumbered groups in society (Langer).

1.3 Disneyfication

Even though Walt Disney himself died in 1966, his successors have managed to step into his footsteps and follow the pattern of “Disneyfication” he created (Hastings 84). Klugman defines the concept of Disneyfication as follows: “The application of simplified aesthetic, intellectual, or moral standards to a [film adaptation] that has the potential for more complex and thought-provoking expression” (103). The following paragraphs go into the three main concepts of this definition in more detail, as well as the origin of Disneyfication.

Firstly, the concept of aesthetic is far too complex to discuss thoroughly in this thesis. The focus will therefore be on the definition as provided by the Oxford Dictionary: “[Aesthetics are] a set of principles underling the work of a particular artist or artistic movement.” These principles can refer, among others, to the structure of a story, as well as the look and feel of it. Since Disney adapts stories to suit a middle-class American audience, its taste of aesthetics is very often different from the taste of the original authors. This results in adaptations that are far from true to the original novel. Secondly, A story is considered “intellectual” when it triggers or shows objective reasoning and understanding (Oxford Dictionaries). The representation of social minorities is an interesting topic when it comes to the level of intellect a film conveys. Disney has, more than once, been accused of using racial stereotypes (Giroux 66). Thirdly, morality in literature mostly refers to the hidden message or lesson that a story conveys. Disney is known to adapt stories to a form of moral simplicity (Hastings 84).

Disney and his studio seem to be capable of turning every piece of children’s literature into a brilliant family film which is enjoyable for both a young and old audience. The films can be recognised by their upbeat songs, slapstick humour and moral simplicity (Hastings 83; May 464). They are also known for their adorable talking animals and the generational conflicts that

are magically solved in the end. Furthermore, Disney films are a combination of intriguing drama, quick action and villainy (May 463).

The above-mentioned characteristics of Disney films are recognisable, but nevertheless despised by many critics (May 463). Disney turns out to have little respect for the original novels and the intentions of authors (Hasting 83). This can be explained by the fact that Disney's only goal is to entertain the American audience. By seeking simple plots and settings, which he then simplifies even further, Disney turns children's literature into mainstream films (May 464). Apart from the titles, which serve as a recognisable factor for the intended audiences, the films can sometimes hardly be called "adaptations" of the original.

It is very relevant to look at the process of Disneyfication, since Disney influences children's culture significantly. Films are not only a form of amusement, they also actively shape the individual and collective identities of youth (Giroux 65). Whether intended or not, Disney serves as a persuasive "teaching machine" due to its status as icon of American culture (66). The Americanised versions of mostly European pieces of literature have usurped the originals. Children are no longer familiar with the classic works, because the Disney versions have become the originals for them. The corporate giant is filling the heads of the younger generation with "falsified" versions of American culture (Hastings 83; May 464). In this morally simplified version of reality, all bad events can be traced back to bad people. By showing that goodwill always wins from badness, the films portray a world in which compassion and kindness dominate (Hastings 85). Nothing happens without good reason and desires are always fulfilled (90). Moreover, Disney has received a lot of critique concerning the construction of gender roles in its films. Especially in earlier films all female characters are dependent on male characters (Giroux 71). Furthermore, Disney has been accused of racial stereotyping. In some of the Disney films, cultural groups are represented through simple and offending songs and characters (72). The

opening song of *Aladdin*, for instance, introduces the Arab culture with the following lines: “Oh I come from a land, from a faraway place, where the caravan camels roam, where they cut off your ear if they don’t like your face. It’s barbaric, but hey, it’s home” (Aladdin).

1.4 Alterations Instead of Simplifications

It becomes clear from the synthesis above that the process of Disneyfication has received a lot of critique during the past years. It is therefore very interesting to know whether Disney has done anything with the critique received. According to May, this is not the case. Disney’s intended audiences, middle class Americans, probably have no knowledge of the original works and have therefore never stopped watching his family films. Since his formula has proven to be successful, there was no need to improve it (64). However, the above information is retrieved from an article that was published in 1981. Disney must have ignored most of the critics up to then. According to more recent sources, the process of Disneyfication has actually changed during the past years, as Disney has become more aware of its function as a “teaching machine” (Ross). In 2009, for instance, the first black princess appeared in *The Princess and the Frog*. More interestingly, the above-mentioned lyrics from Aladdin have been changed, in more recent publications, to: “Oh I come from a land, from a faraway place. Where the caravan camels roam. Where it’s flat and immense and the heat is intense. It’s barbaric, but hey, it’s home” (Aladdin).

Disney has modernised in another significant way as well: The Studios have recently started producing live action films. This cinematographic style features real people and animals instead of animated characters. Due to developments like these, the earlier-mentioned definition of Disneyfication by Klugman is somewhat outdated. The definition might be too exclusive for modern adaptations, as it focusses on simplifications only. This thesis will therefore use the three

concepts that Klugman mentions in her definition, while focussing on alterations in general instead of simplifications.

Chapter 2

1951 Adaptation

2.1 Introduction

The 1951 film adaptation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was not the first but definitely a very successful adaptation with a box office of \$5,232,000 (IMDb). Even though not all critics appreciated the film at first, as Disney was for instance accused of Americanising a great piece of British literature, Disney's technology proved to be ahead of its time (Thomas 220). Disney's cooperation with Technicolor reassured a new level of high-quality animation (Haines 19). Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson and Hamilton Luske all worked as directors on this adaptation. Since it would be quite complex to name all directors every single time, only Geronimi's name will be used throughout this thesis.

This chapter discusses some of the Disneyfied characteristics of the 1951 film adaptation. To do this structurally, the three main concepts of the earlier mentioned definition; aesthetic, intellectual and moral alterations, will be examined individually. Each category will be discussed through specific examples. It is important to realise that the specific examples mentioned in the following two chapters are part of a larger pattern.

2.2 Aesthetic Alterations

The first example of an aesthetic alteration in the 1951 film has to do with the structure of the story. A key characteristic of the nonsense genre is a disordered plot. This is very visible in the novel, as the adventures follow each other randomly and seem to have nothing to do with each other (Kincaid 92). Alice's journey is a complete chaos: her dream is unpredictable and impossible to control. It becomes clear from the title of an article published by Disney himself in

1951: “How I Cartooned ‘Alice’ – Its Logical Nonsense Needed a Logical Sequence,” that Disney experienced some problems when translating this novel into a family film. Geronimi felt the need to unify the different episodes of the story, and managed to do so by changing the role of White Rabbit. Whereas the Rabbit only appears in three chapters of the novel, Geronimi turned him into the character who unites all the individual adventures. The Rabbit appears every few minutes in the film and guides Alice and her audience through Wonderland. Geronimi thus turned the nonsense plot into a more logical sequence by extending the chase of the Rabbit through the whole story. The Rabbit serves as an identifiable element in all the chaos, as the viewer will experience a feeling of recognition every time the character appears. This alteration therefore results in a story that is easier and more fun to follow for a young audience.

The second example on this topic has to do with Disney’s preference for quick action and drama in its plots (May 463). The 1951 film could be considered a combination of the most interesting and quick adventures of the two novels. Firstly, Geronimi combined some events and characters. The Mad Tea-Party, for instance, is no longer centred around Hatters quarrel with time (Carroll 64). Geronimi might have considered this detail to be too complex for his audience and replaced it with the celebration of an “unbirthday” party (00:43:15 – 00:44:43). The latter being an idea introduced by the “too talky” character of Humpty-Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass* (Disney; Carroll 185). A year counts 365 days, of which only one can be called your birthday. Humpty-Dumpty argues it would be way more fun to celebrate the remaining 364 days of the year being your “unbirthdays.” Secondly, many characters and episodes are completely left out. The Mock-Turtle’s story probably was, for instance, too sad and satirical for Geronimi’s taste (Carroll 78-86). Thirdly, Disney invented elements like the personified Doorknob to give Alice someone to share her thoughts with (00:07:36 – 00:10:23). Carroll’s theme of the inner struggle is thereby reduced to minimal proportions, as Alice is having less discussions with

herself. All of the above changes result in a condensed version of the original story. Some characters, like the Mock-Turtle, add a satirical touch to the story. By leaving them out or changing them, the story loses some of its depth and becomes rather superficial.

When it comes to the style and tone of the adaptation, it is clear that Geronimi has done his best to stay close to the original. The illustrations by Tenniel have been used as a guiding inspiration throughout the production, which becomes clear from Alice's familiar looks (Disney 10). Geronimi's Wonderland is, however, a slightly less frightening place as Carroll's Wonderland is. The film mostly captured the weird and positive tone of the original story.

2.3 Intellectual Alterations

The character of the Caterpillar in the 1951 film is an accurate example of racial stereotyping. Carroll describes the Caterpillar to be lazy, useless and a little rude. The only reference to the Middle East in the original story is his Hookah (Towbin et al. 32; Carroll 40-49). Geronimi has magnified the Middle Eastern characteristic of the Caterpillar enormously. The scene is for instance accompanied with music that is very different from the songs in the rest of the film. Also, the Caterpillar seems to have problems with the English language, as he ironically pronounces "correctly" wrong. Moreover, the Caterpillar is wearing the type of pointed shoe that is stereotypically Middle Eastern (0:31:55 – 00:36:35). His mysterious and rude characteristics are unnecessarily linked to a Middle Eastern identity, more so than in the original story. The younger audience could start to associate characteristics like arrogance and stupidity with the Middle East in general. Some viewers could therefore consider the film to be insulting or offensive.

2.4 Moral Alterations

It has been mentioned before that most Disney films include a terrible villain who is magically defeated by kindness and goodwill in the end (Hastings 85). A moral fight of such kind is not really present in the original story by Carroll. In the novel, Alice is witness to a trial that quickly escalates due to a lack of reason. All the nonsense around her has finally made her value the logic of the real world. The hysterical Queen of Hearts, who cannot stop screaming “off with her head,” is the biggest threat that Alice faces (Carroll 108). Geronimi has magnified the evilness of the Queen by making Alice the convicted of a ridiculous “crime” (01:06:45 – 01:08:08). The Disney film portrays the Queen as a true enemy, for instance by turning the pack of cards in something that looks like an army (Image 1). Contrary to the original story, in which the line between good and bad is very thin, the two are now explicitly positioned opposite each other.



Image 1 (00:58:58)

The moral of the story has been changed in another significant way as well. The introduction of the film, and thereby the whole context and overall moral of the story, is very different from the introduction of the novel. In the film, Alice is very explicitly daydreaming. “If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense,” she says (00:02:58). She is bored of the history lesson and all her manners so she wishes to escape to Wonderland. While singing about it, she actually goes there. The novel is far more ambiguous about Wonderland being a dream. While being bored by her sister, she suddenly sees the talking White Rabbit (Carroll 9-10). The story is introduced as being reality, which changes the meaning of Wonderland significantly. Alice is completely confused and lost because she is no longer sure about her own identity. Her wish to escape the Victorian society makes her doubt herself. This theme has lost depth in the film adaptation, since Alice is more conscious about the fact that she is dreaming. Geronimi left out some of the nuances that make Carroll’s novels so very interesting. Disney’s Wonderland is therefore far more black and white than Carroll’s Wonderland is.

2.5 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the 1951 adaptation of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* is a smoothed over and polished version of the original story. Geronimi used the most action-based parts of the novel to create a logical sequence. Moreover, the adaptation is a lot more explicit about issues like stereotypes, the opposition of good versus bad and the fact that Alice is actually dreaming. Contrary to readers of Carroll’s work, the audience does not have time to re-read or overthink certain passages of the story (Disney 10). The explicitness of this adaptation makes the story easier to follow and understand than the original novels. Many of the artistic and indefinite characteristics of the story have been alternated to make the adaptation suitable for a mass

audience: white middle-class America. Disney does, however, portray a simplified version of reality through this adaptation. The world is more nuanced than Disney suggests.

Chapter 3

2010 Adaptation

3.1 Introduction

Whereas the 1951 adaptation is considered to be quite true to the original novels, Tim Burton's live action adaptation is only roughly based on Carroll's work. Some critics even claim this film should rather be called a sequel than an adaptation, as the differences between the original and this adaptation are countless (Elliot 2). It is still relevant, however, to examine the most prominent alterations that Burton has made. This chapter will therefore, using the concepts set out by Klungman, discuss some of the characteristics that make the 2010 film a Disneyfied version of the original stories.

3.2 Aesthetic Alterations

It has been mentioned before that Carroll's novels are basically a collection of "random" adventures in Wonderland, as the stories do not have a clearly structured plot. Burton put together some of the most recognisable elements and characters of the two novels to create the 2010 film adaptation. The story world that Burton has created features the nineteen-year-old Alice who returns to Underland, a world she misheard to be "Wonderland" when she visited as a child. Contrary to all the characters in Underland, Alice does not remember anything of her earlier visits. It turns out that Alice has returned with a purpose: she is to defeat the villainous Red Queen by slaying her evil pet the Jabberwocky. Alice becomes aware of her purpose in this fictional world when caterpillar Absalom shows her the prophetic Oraculum (00:21:33). Now that Alice has a goal to complete, events in the film are no longer a random sequence. Nothing in this film happens without a reason. The story has gained an actual structure, since all events lead up

to the final battle. This alteration results in a build-up of suspense that is not present in the novels. Viewers are therefore constantly wondering how the story will proceed. Burton smartly changed the aesthetics of the story to keep the attention of his audience.

Burton has also significantly changed the aesthetics of the novels when it comes to the look, feel and tone of the story. The innocent and colourful Wonderland has been replaced by a live action fantasy world that has a dark undertone. Underland contains less of the childish nonsense and is therefore frighteningly realistic. The adaptation is clearly an adult version of the Carroll's work, which makes the film more compelling and powerful than the original.

3.3 Intellectual Alterations

Carroll does not spend words on explaining why characters are the way they are. The hatter is simply mad, the Red Queen is just evil and no one knows whether Alice has always been the outsider that she is. Burton's adaptation, and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* (2016), go into the psychology of some characters a lot more thoroughly. In Burton's sequel the audience learns, for instance, why there is so much friction between Iracabeth (Red Queen) and Mirana (White Queen). In their younger days, Mirana stole a tart from her mother. Afraid to face the consequences, she lied about it and made sure Iracabeth got the blame. Confused and aggrieved the latter ran out of the castle straight into a massive clock, severely damaging her head and brain (01:04:30- 01:06:09). Ever since, the two have been hateful enemies. Burton therefore not only added a clear contrast between good and evil to the story, he also explains the origin of this divide. Contrary to the original novel, almost nothing in the adaptations happens without a reason. Apparently, Disney believes that the middle class American audience seeks clarifications and therefore explains characters and events extensively. Burton makes it easier for his audience to sympathise with characters, as viewers get the chance to understand characters better. By

adapting to an audience that is not satisfied with random quarrels and adventures, the story becomes more intellectual but no longer belongs to the literary nonsense genre.

3.4 Moral Alterations

The 2010 adaptation uses an extended version of the frame story that Carroll used in her novels. Carroll's Alice is mostly tired and bored by the prevailing rules and norms that accompany growing up in a Victorian world. Burton's significantly older Alice has more explicit struggles, as she is for instance disgusted by her arranged marriage (00:07:30 – 00:08:07). The introductory scenes make a viewer sympathise with Alice. Since the girl is clearly smarter and more independent than the silly personalities around her, she is expected to adjust her manners in order to fit in. The audience realises, through the perspective of the film, that the destined fate of the innocent girl seems to be unfair. Alice (and the audience with her) is understandably longing for some sort of an escape and she consequently finds herself in Underland. The fictional world that she is now a part of turns out to be not so very different from the world she comes from. Things are expected of her here as well. Alice is very much trying to comply to these expectations until the White Queen tells her: "Alice, you cannot live your life to please others. The choice must be yours" (01:19:36). She follows this advice and refuses to marry Hamish. "This is my life, and I'll decide what to do with it," she says (01:37:30). The girl takes matters into her own hands and decides to follow her father's footsteps on the sea.

This frame story changes the moral of the story-as-a-whole completely. Whereas Carroll's Wonderland makes Alice appreciate the logic and norms of Victorian life, Burton's Alice has agency and turns into a rebellious feminist due to her adventures in Underland. This feminist take on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* probably fits modern society better than the original novel does. The film encourages a viewer to sympathise with Alice, and thereby makes it easy to

compare oneself with the main character. Introspection is therefore encouraged. Consequently, viewers are likely to find themselves in some sort of analogous situation and might be inspired to act in a similar way. Burton therefore encourages his audience to follow their own dreams as well.

3.5 Conclusion

It can be concluded that Burtons adaptation is a lot more structured and explanatory than the original novels. Alice has an actual purpose in Underland and viewers are guided through her adventures in a logical manner. Moreover, all events happen for a reason and characters are explained more thoroughly. Disney therefore describes a world in which the concept “random” does not exist. As long as one acts wisely, nothing bad will ever happen according to Disney. The middle-class American audience is comforted with a morally simplistic notion by means of this adaptation.

Chapter 4

Changing Disneyfication

It follows from the above chapters that Disney has changed its ways. The following questions however remain: What exactly has changed on a general level? And how can these changes be explained? This final chapter will elaborate on these questions by comparing the two Disney adaptations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

4.1 New Way of Storytelling

Hutcheon already stated that “the conventions of storytelling are changing” (XXI). The two Disney films of *Alice in Wonderland* prove this statement to be true. Compared to the original novels, both directors have tried to improve the coherence of the story. Geronimi did so by giving the White Rabbit a guiding role throughout the film. Burton went a few steps further by giving Alice guiding goals in Underland. In order to defeat the Red Queen, Alice has to defeat the Jabberwocky, for which she has to find the vorpal sword, which is being guarded by a wolf-like creature called the Bandersnatch. The narrative structure of the 2010 film is almost like a video game: The girl constantly faces different tasks, problems and battles (Elliot 5). Over the years, the story has therefore developed from a nonsensical chaos into a coherent plot. This new, more coherent way of storytelling might be a result of a changing media landscape. During the past few years, there has been a significant up rise of different media and platforms (Hutcheon XXI). Disney realises that its intended audience is constantly surrounded with interactive media and lets this phenomenon guide its productions. Viewers are no longer satisfied and entertained with simple plots as they seek active engagement through more complex stories. Disney's modern adaptations therefore make sure to challenge to viewer enough with quick action and interaction.

4.2 Live Action Remakes

Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* is the first live action adaptation of earlier produced animations by Disney. The live action version of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) called *Maleficent* followed in 2014. Only a year later *Cinderella* was released, which was succeeded by *The Jungle Book* (2016) and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017). Disney is working on at least six more remakes in the near future (Wood). The adaptations of adaptations have proven to be very successful. This is not very surprising, since they combine the right amount of innovation with a recognisable story (Hutcheon 4). It is very interesting to note, however, that the remakes offer very often, as Burton's version of *Alice in Wonderland* does, a more adult version of the original story. The use of actors for instance results in films that are more realistic than their animated predecessors. Moreover, the remakes often show a darker interpretation of the novels. Image 2 and 3 are stills of the same scene in the two films and illustrate this point perfectly. Image 2 shows the bright and colourful Mad-Tea Party in Geronimi's adaptation. Alice approaches the table with a curious but confident feeling. Image 3, on the other hand, shows Burton's darker interpretation of the same scene. Alice is only a tiny puppet in this still and must feel terrified by the horrific scenery.

All of the above developments ensure that Disney reaches a larger audience. On the one hand, Disney is still speaking to his family-oriented audience. Even though the younger generation might not be familiar with the original or animated story, the films are still enjoyable for them. On the other hand, Disney reaches out to the adult generation which used to watch the childish animations.



Image 2 (00:42:04)



Image 3 (00:30:45)

Conclusion

As predicted in the first chapter of this thesis, Klugman's definition of Disneyfication turns out to be outdated. The aesthetic, intellectual and moral simplifications are very much visible in the 1951 adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*. Geronimi removed some of the nonsense characteristics, uses racial stereotypes and presents a morally simplified version of the original story. A brilliant piece of children's literature is turned into a "simple" family film, in which most psychological and depressing elements have been left out. It is, however, a lot harder to apply Klugman's definition to the 2010 adaptation by Burton. The story world that Burton created is not so much a simplified but rather an alternated version of the original. The story is more complicated and action based than the novel. Burton is also a lot more explanatory than Carroll is.

The process of Disneyfication therefore seeks a clear but inclusive redefinition. It can be concluded that the aesthetic and intellectual aspects of Disney's adaptations are not by definition simplified versions of the original works. The morals that Disney offers, on the other hand, are definitely simplified. Disney takes a literary classic and turns it into a story world in which everything happens for a reason. Main characters of Disney's adaptations are actors of their own fate. Anything is possible, as long as one works hard for it. If a character does not reach the goals he/she is aiming for, Disney always offers a good reason why. It can therefore be concluded that Disney's moral, for a substantial part, agrees with the notion of the American Dream. The Oxford Dictionary defines this concept as follows: "The ideal that every US citizen should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative." The view of life that Disney advocates for in its adaptations is very positive but somewhat unrealistic. Reality can actually be as unexpected and uncontrollable as Alice's chaotic dream in the original novel.

This thesis focusses on only two instances of Disneyfication. On the one hand, this could be considered a strength of the thesis. The scope of this research was very small due to limited time, but nonetheless very detailed and specific. On the other hand, the small scope is a significant weakness, as it does not allow for more general claims. *Alice in Wonderland* is only a single case of Disneyfication. Further research could look into this topic on a larger scale and a more general level. It follows from the two adaptations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* that Disney's method of adapting novels has changed. Can the same conclusion be drawn when other adaptations or remakes are analysed? Further research could also go into the adaptations of other studios such as Dreamworks or Blue Sky. These studios might have their own distinct methods as well. It would be interesting to compare their methods do Disney's and see whether they have developed in similar ways.

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PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

Fraud and Plagiarism

Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism



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entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.
Name:
Student number:
Date and signature:

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.