

**“I don’t see what good a book is without pictures or conversations”: imaginary worlds and intertextuality in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice in Sunderland***

We all have taken trips in our minds through make-believe lands, where all the queer things we can imagine take place.

Here is the story of the adventures of a girl named Alice in her wonderland.

-- *Alice In Wonderland*, Classics Illustrated 49

The confluence of a study of “literature based comic books,” which are commonly dismissed as failing to faithfully reproduce their source material (Pointner and Boschenhoff 88), and Lewis Carroll’s Alice books, which tend not to be read as highly politicized, represents an especially apt site from which to reassert the political bite of intertextuality, a staple concept within Adaptation Studies, and to explore the wider applicability that the idea of the heterocosm or “other world” has for conceiving of the relationship between fantasy and history. While a theoretically informed reading of Bryan Talbot’s *Alice in Sunderland* recalls the radical implications once associated with the claim that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations” (Kristeva 66), a nuanced reading of the early *Classics Illustrated* adaptation of *Wonderland* allows for an appreciation of the value placed on imaginary worlds.

The opening caption of the *Classics Illustrated* adaptation of Carroll’s classic tale clearly announces its status as a work of fantasy concerned with the “wonderland” of one particular little girl. Notably, the ethos of the series is educational, revolving around the capacity of comics to introduce young readers to canonical literature. Thus, the adaptations own pedagogical pedigree becomes bound up with that of the earlier work and so, before speaking of Alice or her dreamworld, the editorial voice makes an implicit claim for the value of the fantasy genre based on the universality of imaginative experience. Moreover, while this voice appears at first glance pedantic, if not downright patronizing, things are not quite what they seem. Though the artificiality of such “make-believe” worlds is asserted overtly, these

opening two sentences actually begin to blur the line dividing reverie from reality. Imaginary events become substantives, "queer things" coordinated spatially: they "take place."

Moreover, even as the existence of a plethora of individualized dreamworlds is announced, the distinction between self-and-other begins to dissolve. The non-sense lands of imagination begin to bleed into the commonsensical world of consensual reality. And the place where this dissolution occurs is precisely at the level of the subject for the caption equates the minds of those reading the text with that of its fictional protagonist: Alice's wonderland becomes a synecdoche standing in for the mental worlds of individual readers. The caption itself, reprinted in all subsequent editions, appears in the first *Classics Illustrated* edition from July 1948, but significantly it replaces an earlier caption from the first page of a preceding edition, serialized in newspaper supplements the previous year under the *Illustrated Classic* title.<sup>1</sup> The *Illustrated Classic* caption asserts the canonical status of *Wonderland* directly and implies that this is the result of a sympathetic rendering of Alice's fantasy world:

"Alice in Wonderland" has been a perennial favorite among youngsters and oldsters alike for over eight decades. It is a merry story that shows so sympathetically the fancy of a child's imagination. (1)

The later caption thus reverses the implicature in this earlier introduction, directly asserting the universality of imaginary worlds while leaving readers to infer for themselves that it will be of interest because it addresses an extraordinary yet not uncommon imaginary experience. The focus has shifted such that the 1948 caption begins not, as the 1947 one does, with an assertion about the text but with a rather bolder claim about the inner lives of its readers. We are no longer asked to sympathize with the non-sensical world of the fictional Alice, but rather to identify with her and to accept fantasy as a constituent part of our daily experience.

The fact that the heroine is herself based on a real person -- Alice Liddell -- in no way alleviates the complexities involved in effacing the distinction between the text's fictional protagonist and its non-fictional readers. Indeed, if wonderland belongs to the historical Alice at all, it is not because she dreamed it into being but because it was bequeathed to her -- first as an oral tale, then as an illustrated and bound manuscript -- by Charles Dodson, the

historical figure behind the Lewis Carroll pseudonym.<sup>2</sup> Though not explicit in the story itself, this context is outlined briefly in the biographical notes appended to the main text, in both the *Illustrated Classic* and *Classics Illustrated* editions:

It was his delightful nonsense told to a child that won the world for Charles Lutwidge Dodson ... known and loved wherever fairy tales are told as LEWIS CARROLL.

...

Lewis Carroll loved all children, but it was his affection for one child that inspired *Alice in Wonderland*. The little girl's name was Alice Liddell, and she used to visit Carroll at his home. It was on these visits, to the child's delight, that the Oxford professor shed his dignity and spoke of the pompous Walrus, the dour duchess, and the funny mock turtle.

...

Not for the world but for the smile — the laughter of this friend's child — did Lewis Carroll labor on the whimsy and satire contained in his "Alice." (*Classics* 45)

Despite its implicit promise to give us the truth behind the fantasy, the appendix destabilizes the division between fantasy and reality to an extent not actually realized in the narrative itself. The act of unveiling the historical figure behind the nom de plume is accompanied by a similar impetus to reveal the real events behind the fictional story. Initially, this reference to the real is limited to Liddell's role as the inspiration behind Alice before a more sophisticated, though still vague, mapping of the fantastic onto the real appears: "grown-ups read in Carroll's nonsensical verse an amusing indictment of Victorian manners" (45).

Framed in this way, the world beyond the text becomes the source and target of Dodgson's satire. The make-believe world is from the outset populated by figures translated from the pages of history; sense contaminates non-sense from the start, exposing as false the promise of escape offered by the world of reverie. It is precisely Alice's inability to escape the adult world with its contradictions, uncertainties, and lethal arbitrariness that lends her story its dark tincture. But of course the imposition runs both ways for the imaginary world generates a number of real world effects. Not only does satire represent an interventionist

genre, seeking both to occasion delight and to reform manners or social practice, but the plethora of adaptations occasioned by the Alice books (which for our purposes include Dodgson's original manuscript *Alice's Adventure Underground*, sent to Alice Liddell, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and its sequel, *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There*) testify to the extent that Alice's world has entered the popular imagination of the West.

Visually, Alex Blum's artwork in the *Classics* adaptations directly references the artwork of John Tenniel (Jones, *Cultural History* 77), the nineteenth-century illustrator of *Alice in Wonderland*. Less immediately striking, but perhaps even more significant, is the way in which the textual framing outlined above remains faithful to the spirit of the Alice books. Knowingly polyvocal, the published texts deliberately deceive us about their origins through a poetic ascription of their genesis to a boat trip taken by Dodgson and the Liddell sisters:

Ah, cruel Three! In such an hour,  
Beneath such dreamy weather,  
To beg a tale of breath too weak  
To stir the tiniest feather!  
Yet what can one poor voice avail  
Against three tongues together? (*Wonderland* 5)

That *Underground*, and much less *Wonderland*, did not fly fully formed from Dodgson's lips on that sunny afternoon is a fact well-known to Carroll scholars (Round 183-4); but in an uncanny parallel, the fictitiousness of the *Wonderland's* prefatory poem is mirrored in the historicity of the nonsensical tale that follows, which includes ample references to famous (and not so famous) historical figures, as well as parodies of contemporary attitudes and stereotypes.

*Underground*, *Wonderland*, and the *Classics'* adaptations dramatize the relationship between fantasy and history in terms of dreaming and wakefulness. All three versions of the story begin with Alice falling asleep and end with her waking up to the sound of her sister

calling her name. The *Classics*' Alice responds to her sister's call with a simple 'Oh! I've been dreaming!' (*Classics* 44.ii), clearly demarcating the boundary between dream and reality. *Wonderland* and *Underground*, however, end with Alice departing and her sister descending into reverie in a manner that effaces the boundary between the fantasy world and the reader's world. In *Underground*, Alice heads home for tea without communicating her dream to her sister, and the latter dreams not of Wonderland, but of Oxford, "an ancient city, and a quiet river," and of Alice Liddell:

... another little Alice, who sat listening with bright eager eyes to a tale that was being told, and she listened for the words of the tale, and lo! it was the dream of her own little sister....

Then she thought, (in a dream within the dream, as it were) how this same little Alice would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman: and how she would keep, through her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood: and how she would gather around her other little children, and make their eyes bright and eager with many a wonderful tale, perhaps even with these very adventures of the little Alice of long-ago. (89-90; emphasis in original)

*Wonderland* retains this image of Alice growing older, but in place of the dream-within-a-dream, it introduces the notion that one person's fantasy can come to infect another's. Here Alice recounts her dream before running home and her sister comes to dream first of "little Alice herself," but then of the White Rabbit, the Queen, the Duchess and other characters, before history again intrudes on fantasy and *Wonderland*'s sister, like that of *Underground*, dreams of an older Alice who "would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman" (110).

In showing the permeability of the boundary between the real and the dream, *Underground* and *Wonderland* call attention to two inter-related aspects of intertextuality, the exchange between text and world and the relationship between texts, both of which are explored by Kristeva in her discussion of "ambivalence." Significantly for the present discussion, Kristeva conceptualizes ambivalence spatially; it "pertains to the permutation of the two spaces observed in novelistic structure: dialogical space and monological space," and

temporally, as “the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history” (Kristeva 72, 69). Whereas intertextuality understood as an incorporation of one text within another has become a foundational concept for Adaptation Studies — and indeed is the primary way in which intertextuality has come to be understood — its more radical dimensions, as Worton and Still noted over two decades ago, have tended to be neutralized by subsequent scholars (2). Specifically, the text’s ability to intervene in the very historical situation that constrains it, as “writing reads another writing, reads itself and constructs itself through a process of destructive genesis” (Kristeva 77), has tended to be overlooked. A clear example of this neutralization is Gérard Genette’s more restrictive definition of intertextuality as “the actual presence of one text within another” in the form of quotation, plagiarism, and allusion (2), which has been generally preferred within Adaptation Studies (Sanders 2; Allen 182).

### **Carnavalesque Topographics: *Alice in Sunderland***

That the Alice books themselves stage some of the more radical aspects of intertextuality makes a good deal of sense given that they represent pre-eminent examples of Menippean satire. The incorporation of the carnivalesque within Menippean discourse links it directly to the concept of intertextuality as developed by Kristeva in her development of Mikhael Bakhtin’s exploration of the dialogic dimension of language (Kristeva 79). Describing the process by which “any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva 66), intertextuality in this context relates to the iterability of language that makes adaptation possible. In order to speak coherently about adaptations as such, however, the recognition of intertextuality as affecting all texts needs to be qualified with “the added proviso that they are also acknowledged as adaptations *of specific texts*” (Hutcheon 21; see also Allen 180-1). Significantly, as adaptations forsake claims to originality in favor of avowing, with varying degrees of openness, an indebtedness to an earlier text or texts, they have the potential to develop our understanding of intertextuality in creative ways.

Rigorously researched and meticulously executed, Talbot's re-consideration of the Alice books and their legacy amplifies the carnivalesque spirit of his source material to create an alternative social history of Britain. In placing the carnivalesque in the service of a sustained social-commentary, Talbot develops the subversive potential of Dodgson's nonsensical fantasy in a manner that deliberately exceeds the carefully circumscribed satire of the Alice books. As Kristeva notes, "carnavalesque discourse breaks through the laws of a language censored by grammar and semantics and, at the same time, is a social and political protest" (65). That the Alice books clearly draw on Dodgson's expertise as a logician to reprogram the dominant codes (such as causality and non-contradiction) used to structure commonsensical reality is uncontroversial; less obvious, however, is the way in which these books thereby enact a counter-hegemonic position at odds with Dodgson's position in middle-class Victorian society. On a theoretical plane, "there is no equivalence, but rather, identity between challenging official linguistic codes and challenging official law" (Kristeva 65). But what *Sunderland* demonstrates -- in its own beautiful exuberance and in the cultural history that it charts -- is that the Alice books have proved a longstanding resource across popular culture in general and within counter-cultural productions in particular (257-9, 282, 307).

*Sunderland* presents a visual and verbal collection of palimpsests in which multiple layers occupy the same frame, a structure that emphasizes its own polyvocality and that of the Alice books. This layering foregrounds an overlapping of fictional and historical worlds that calls into question simplistic distinctions between fantasy and the real. As Round notes, "rather than creating and sustaining a single alternate world on the comics page, Talbot provides us with a range of levels of reality, dreams and imagination, and refuses to validate any one of these levels more than another" (Round 198). Talbot's work enhances our understanding of what Hutcheon describes as a "'palimpsestuous' intertextuality" (21) by fostering a new recognition of the important role the concept of the heterocosm can play in approaching adaptation. An often overlooked mode of adaptation, a heterocosm represents "an 'other world' or cosmos, complete ... with the stuff of a story" and adaptations of a heterocosm transpose "the '*res extensa*' ... of that world, its material, physical dimension"

(Hutcheon 14). The most obvious examples of this sort of transposition occur in interactive adaptations like videogames and theme park rides or in franchises like *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, but it also represents a succinct, and hitherto unacknowledged account of the relationship between the worlds of fantasy and of history.

Talbot describes the history of Sunderland as “a little like the history of Britain in microcosm” (Whitson 15) and his rendition of *Alice* explicitly overlays various histories, myths and, significantly, places. As their shared etymological root implies, there exists a strong connection between the representation of a microcosm and the creation of a heterocosm. Talbot reports, “I like to tell stories of parallel worlds where history has taken a different course and can draw from real history for verisimilitude” and he describes *Sunderland* as “an entertainment themed around storytelling, myth and history” (Whitson 13-15). Heterocosmic adaptations have figured widely across Talbot’s corpus, ranging from *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright* and its sequel *Heart of Empire*, set across a multitude of parallel universes each including a different history of Britain, to *The Tale of One Bad Rat*, in which elements from the fictional world created by Beatrice Potter overlap with the real world of London and the Lake District. These earlier texts anticipate the deployment of heterocosms in *Sunderland* in various ways. Like the Arkwright books, *Sunderland* celebrates the multiplicity and heterogeneity of history and culture in the face of monologic discourses that work to promote the imperial aims of established interests; *One Bad Rat*, meanwhile, utilizes the overlapping of different worlds to communicate the way post-traumatic stress calls into question the notion of a unified subject, a notion further interrogated through the representations of identity construction and performance that recur throughout *Sunderland*.

*Sunderland* takes the notion of the imaginary worlds alluded to in the *Classics* adaptations and realizes it visually on the page. Thus pages 115-22 have few panel borders and include overlapping images of scenes from the Alice books, from nineteenth-century Oxford and Sunderland, as well as from contemporary Sunderland. Similarly, page 174 makes the links between fictional and historical topographies still more explicit by



superimposing a number of Tenniel's illustrations across a map of County Durham (see fig. 1).

Nevertheless, pages 68-9 (fig. 2) best exemplify the way in which the combination of multiple worlds facilitates a reconsideration of the official pre-history of the Alice books. Here we see various fictional and historical environments and figures associated with the Alice books juxtaposed with a composite image of our narrator, "Pilgrim," walking across Wearmouth Bridge. As Round details, Talbot undermines the myth of Carroll's composition of *Underground* on one golden afternoon, challenging Oxford's monopoly of the Alice origin story and received representations of Carroll's own sexuality (Round 183-8). Accordingly, the captions on page 68 present a combined narration of the Carroll myth ("according to the myth, the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is created spontaneously by Carroll on the 'golden afternoon' of July 4th 1862,"), and historical reassessments of his relationship with the Liddell sisters: "There's a popular but unfounded biographical 'fact' that his stutter disappears in their company." Visually, this page combines Carroll's photographs of the Liddell girls, facsimile segments from the *Underground* manuscript, a photograph of the *Underground* title page, a wash-drawing of Carroll performing card tricks and one of the celebrated boat trip, Tenniel's illustration of the Dodo from *Wonderland*, and a black-and-white line-drawing of Alice by Talbot that mimics the style of Tenniel's illustrations and Carroll's sketches. This combination of materials foregrounds the dialogic dimension of each of the different literary, historical, and mythic traces that Talbot interweaves, and demonstrates the propensity of texts to exceed their contexts.

Each visual element manifests a different world, and their arrangement makes it clear that they each address themselves to multiple – and very different – audiences. The meanings generated by the presentation of the *Underground* manuscript to Alice Liddell must necessarily have been significantly different from those generated by the inclusion of the facsimile image within *Sunderland*, meanings which vastly exceed the original context of the work. Likewise the photographs of the girls, which as Talbot notes register considerably

differently to a post-Freudian audience than it would have to Dodgson's contemporaries (*Sunderland* 115), are here transformed into aesthetic objects that invite additional interpretation. Talbot further emphasizes the polyvalence of images in the top half of the page, digitally altering the photographs of some of the girls to look like paintings. However, while this upper half presents us with an overlapping of different worlds, the bottom half of the page uses the combination of text and image to interrogate notions of authenticity that supposedly underpin these worlds.

The final caption on the page notes that Dodgson "pastes a photograph of Alice Liddell on to the last page [of *Underground*]," a comment that leads into what appears to be the page's only speech bubble, the line-drawn Alice's reiteration of a famous interrogative from the opening of *Underground* and *Wonderland* – "What is the use of a book without pictures?" *Sunderland's* incorporation of this question not only offers a playful nod to the comics medium, but also raises the very serious question of the use to which pictures are put in the creative production or reproduction of various realities within different contexts. The interplay of the photographic portrait pasted into *Underground*, the line-drawings (both Dodgson's and Talbot's), and the photographic facsimile of the *Underground* manuscript, invite a meditation on the authenticity of different visual media. Thus, the simple black-and-white line drawing of Alice announces itself as an artistic (super)imposition, by virtue of its positioning above the other layers, its tonal difference from the wash drawings and photographs, and also because it is a "fake" Tenniel, drawn in his style but in a posture not found in any of the Alice books' illustrations. In contrast, the other line drawings on the bottom half of the page are taken from *Underground*.

This combination of images invites us to draw a hierarchy of authenticity, whereby the photograph takes us closest to Dodgson's source of inspiration; his drawings represent a further abstraction, though still relatively close to the source as they are in the author's hand; and Talbot's image of Alice a further two steps removed, based as it is on Tenniel's adaptation of Dodgson's drawings of the girl. However, the matter is not so straightforward for the photographic portrait was pasted over "the only known sketch Dodgson ever made of

the real Alice” (Gardner 132n), an act of obfuscation that necessitated an amendment to the text as it also obscured the final word of the text. Ought we to treat Carroll’s photograph of Alice Liddell taken at the same age as his heroine as a more authentic representation of the girl to whom the manuscript was dedicated, or is the drawing in his own hand more in accordance with the original intent and spirit of the piece? While this question is unanswerable, it draws attention to the way in which the various visual elements combine to create an illusion of authenticity that *Sunderland* itself repeatedly exposes as just another stage trick.

This returns us to considerations of intertextual relations rather than a unidirectional relationship between source and adaptation. Specifically, the overt intertextuality of *Sunderland* coincides with a nuanced account of the way in which texts are used, and indeed modified, in order to construct historical realities. Thus, Talbot notes that speculations about Dodgson’s sexuality stem from diary and epistolary evidence excised by his family as part of a refashioning of his posthumous reputation (Talbot 115-6). Returning to pages 68 and 69, the page breakdown immediately establishes the search for origins as problematic, with the narrator’s voice set in direct opposition to various vignettes depicting a series of historical scenes that the words declare to be fictions. But the visual presentation of this voice draws attention to its own fictionality. Not only is the narrator himself presented as a line drawing, but the background for his panel on the left half of page 69 has clearly been manipulated (it is a digital photograph that has had an artistic filter applied and has been elongated to create an exaggerated perspective). Moreover, while on page 69 the captions clearly lead into, and closely resemble, the narrator’s speech balloon, a comparable visual affinity links the captions on page 68 with Alice’s speech balloon.

The visual equivalence accorded to narratorial and character speech here develops another of the text’s recurrent themes, the presentation of various authorial personas, of various versions of “Bryan Talbot,” in different roles throughout. Further, it blurs the boundaries between the domains of thought and speech during the process of transposing Alice’s words from Dodgson’s manuscript text: “once or twice she had peeped into the book

her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, and where is the use of a book, thought Alice, without pictures or conversations” (*Underground 2*). *Wonderland* too has Alice thinking rather than speaking, though minor differences in lexis, punctuation and formatting indicate that, in keeping with the visual references on the page, Talbot is here working from the earlier text.<sup>3</sup> Talbot’s reworking, then, transforms the way in which these words are presented to the reader – no longer is the audience in the position of overhearing Alice’s thoughts, but instead these sentiments are addressed overtly to us as the contents of spoken discourse that is visually accorded the same status as that of the author-narrator.

In overriding the distinction between the private, mental world of thought and the public, social world of speech, *Sunderland* shows itself to be compatible with poststructuralist models of identity construction (and it is worth noting that elsewhere in the text, Talbot has considerable fun playing with the concept of performativity); however, this blurring of the boundary between thought and speech also relates to the intercourse between the dream world and the historical, a prominent feature of the carnivalesque and a framing device for *Sunderland* as it is for the Alice books. The text ends with a photorealistic depiction of Bryan awakening in a theatre beside his wife Mary. Again we see a direct overlaying of worlds as Talbot’s sleeping body occupies the same geographical and architectural space as the opening frame narrative, the Empire theatre. And once more we are invited to have a laugh at our author’s expense as we witness Mary’s bemused chastisement of him, “*Really!* I can’t believe you slept through *Swan Lake!*” (317). But *Sunderland* is also about the serious effects that dreams and myths can have for those inhabiting the worlds they delineate. The humor of the closing scene arises in part from the suggestion that the author finds himself bored to sleep by high-culture, dreaming instead of various forms of popular entertainment: children’s literature, comic books, variety shows, fantasy stories, ballads and dirty jokes. However, just as the airy-nothing of the dreamworld has a direct bearing on historical realities, so too Talbot’s project makes it clear that the various ephemera of popular culture have real work to do in defining the sociopolitical landscape.

In fact, *Sunderland* recoups the political force embodied in the Menippean tradition, an impulse seriously attenuated in the Alice books, by seeking to wrest British history and the Union Jack from the allegedly populist discourse of the far right. Full of truly delectable satire, *Sunderland* concludes its performance on page 298 with a clarion call to its audience:

The extreme right appropriate this flag as an emblem for a small-minded tribal concept of a mythological Britain that has never, nor will ever exist...

...except in their dreams.

This flag is special. It represents our land, our people, our history and our culture.

All our culture.

All our people.

It's the symbol of a story rich in tragedy and heroism. (298)

Against the dreams of the far right, based on an exclusionary reading of history, Talbot presents a palimpsestic arrangement of images that visually recall the revisionist history outlined in the previous pages, one which includes battles and monks as well as our erstwhile heroine, Alice (see fig. 3). But even at its most politically sincere, *Sunderland* resists the twin temptations of monologism and univocalism. The historical scenes here depicted evoke a rich cultural fabric and recall preceding instances in which the text has entered into dialogue — often oppositional — with its social contexts. Likewise, the top inset reasserts the artifice that supports this concluding monologue. The player, drawn in black-and-white line art, stands in front of three frames drawn in the same style but presented as draft manuscript artefacts. These frames are themselves repeated from the bottom row of the previous page where they form the conclusion of a four page section in which the panel borders and backgrounds (designed to look like pages torn from a lined notepad), along with the rough draftsmanship, suggest that the historical narrative being conveyed is a work in progress. This visual device returns us to the opening scene, comprised of three full-page panels, in which Talbot the audience member approaches the Empire theatre progressing not through diegetic space or time but rather through various stages of artistic completion. As Round notes these pages “triplicate his opening scene in various states of completion” and thus seem “to expose the

processes apparent in creating comics grammar” (192). Read together, the beginning and end of *Sunderland* thus draw attention to the status of history as a constructed narrative with the production of comics panels serving as a metonym for the imaginative labor involved in any act of storytelling, irrespective of labels such as “fiction” and “non-fiction,” “realism” and “fantasy.”

Véronique Bragard suggests that “comics have become, to use Bakhtin’s words, a ‘developing genre’ whose intrinsic quality is its capacity to create multifarious dialogical forms” (46), while Frank Pointner and Sandra Boschenhoff note that in studying comics adaptations, scholars need to be alert to those “aspects of the act of storytelling that comics are better equipped for than prose” (89). Talbot’s focalization of British history through *Sunderland/Sunderland* draws together multiple heterocosms into a palimpsest that both visually and verbally foregrounds a set of dialogical relationships, the traces of which are evident over half a century earlier in the first *Classics* editions. Each of these adaptations in its own way testifies to the propensity of the comics medium to not only depict alternative worlds, but also to bring them into visible juxtaposition with places that are more recognizably “real.” Not only is *Sunderland* a work that can only be accomplished in the comics medium, it also demonstrates that adaptations can indeed be understood as “intertextual” in the extended and more radical sense of the word, for it is both polyvocal and dialogical. Kristeva argues, “the poetic word, polyvalent and multi-determined, adheres to a logic exceeding that of the codified discourse and fully comes into being only in the margins of recognized culture” (65). Talbot takes the marginal and repositions it centerstage. In the process, *Sunderland* manages to transport the *Alice* books from the mainstream canonicity proclaimed by the *Illustrated Classic* adaptation back to the margins, reasserting the capacity of fantasy, humor, and other popular genres to unwind and rewind the weave and woof of a broader social tapestry.

## Endnotes

1 Both titles were owned by the same company (Gilberton) and featured almost identical content, though the stand-alone *Classics Illustrated* titles were shortened from 64 to 48 pages. On the pages that were retained in the 1948 *Wonderland*, the only substantive alterations include changes to the opening caption, as noted, and the addition of a small number of explanatory notes. All illustrations are by Alex Blum, but the scriptwriter is unnamed, though it is likely “the writer would have been one of Jerry Iger's Fiction House regulars, most likely George D. Lipscomb, Harry G. Miller, or John O’Rourke” (Jones, personal communication). For a complete publication history see Jones, “Introduction” loc. 1005

2 Hereafter, in keeping with accepted scholarly practice, all references outside of quotations will be to Dodgson rather than Carroll.

3 The 1897 edition of the novel, revised by Carroll and considered definitive amongst scholars, reproduces this text almost exactly, though it includes quotation marks around Alice’s thoughts, replaces “where” with “what” and italicizes “is.”

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