

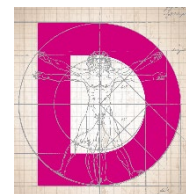
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BOOK REVIEW: *SIGUE SIENDO LA HORA DEL TÉ: EL PAÍS DE LAS MARAVILLAS EN LA CULTURA POPULAR*

RESEÑA DE LIBRO: *SIGUE SIENDO LA HORA DEL TÉ: EL PAÍS DE LAS MARAVILLAS EN LA CULTURA POPULAR*

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Andrea Valeiras' *Sigue siendo la hora del té: El País de las Maravillas en la cultura popular*, published in 2024 by the Universitat de València, provides a detailed account of the immense variety of representations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its characters spanning across the publication of Lewis Carroll's novel up to the present day. The monograph presents a thorough study of almost every reinterpretation of the timeless classic, from cinema to fan-art.

Structured into ten chapters, Valeiras' work begins with a metatextual and historical introduction to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Chapters 1-4, pp. 17-67) followed by the analyses of its adaptations to theatre and opera (Chapter 5, pp. 69-78), cinema (Chapter 6, pp. 79-124), other audiovisual models (Chapter 7, pp. 125-140) and merchandising (Chapter 8, pp. 141-154). It also provides the reader with the cultural reception of the oeuvre (Chapter 9, pp. 155-186) as well as with a final reflection on its endurance in literary history (Chapter 10, pp. 187-192).

The focal point of this review lies in how Valeiras examines Alice's identity and presence across a range of diverse media formats. Furthermore, aspects regarding the cultural translation (Chapter 2.2, pp. 24-33) and reception (Chapter 9, pp. 155-186) of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* will be commented on.

The second chapter, entitled "Los muchos mundos de Alicia" (Chapter 2, pp. 21-40) is particularly noteworthy in elucidating the reasons for the work's long-standing popularity. In the second section of the chapter, "Después de la edición original adaptaciones y domesticaciones" (Chapter 2.2, pp. 24-33), Valeiras comprises a series of cultural translations and adaptations of specific aspects and elements of Carroll's novel, including weights and measures, flora and fauna, and even the language of the protagonist. For instance, Alice attempts to speak French in the original work, whereas in the French translation, she uses a different language to address the mouse. Translating the work into more than 170 languages, including minority languages, reflects the cultural purposes of these adjustments, which are primarily to facilitate the reader's immersion in Wonderland, but also to align Alice's identity more closely with that of her audience. In the case of languages that coexist with English in the same territory, the translations have undergone minimal changes, as it is assumed that readers understand the original language. In contrast, other translations, such as those into Swahili, or Pitjantjatjara, exhibit more substantial alterations. These include the subversion of the characters' ethnicity to make a reference to colonialism, the assimilation of their attire to the geographical context in which they find themselves and the transformation of the species of the characters accompanying Alice, such as the white rabbit becoming a turtle or a kangaroo.

In the context of educational adaptations, the playful element inherent in the narrative of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is employed to enhance learning. Examples of such works include *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Retold in Words of One Syllable* (J.C Gorham, 1905), *Gladys in Grammarland* (Audrey Mayhew, 1897), and *Alice Through the Needle's Eye: A Third Adventure for Lewis Carroll's Alice* (Gilbert Adair, 1984), which are reinterpretations of the original work intended for children with the aim of teaching reading comprehension as well as proper grammar

usage. However, it should be noted that not all works that follow a didactic narrative thread are targeted towards children as there are others, such as *Alice in Quantumland: An Allegory of Quantum Physics* (Robert Gilmore, 1994), that are, in comparison, much more complex and aimed at an audience of mature readers. These derivative works maintain a symbiotic relationship with the original narrative, of Alice, since *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* serves as the progenitor for these didactic retellings while, the adaptations in turn, contribute to the perpetuation of the 1865 work within the literary canon by utilizing Carroll's storyline.

The chapter devoted to stage adaptations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, "Alicia en el escenario: adaptaciones al teatro y la ópera" (Chapter 5, pp. 69-78), analyzes how the dramatized style of Carroll's narrative allows for its reconstruction into live performances. The reason for this phenomenon is that "Alicia proceeds through Wonderland as if she were a child actress wandering from set to set encountering various groups of elaborately costumed characters as she travels (qtd. in Valeiras). This quasi-performative conception of the main character contributes to the explanation of the intricate relationship between the work as a literary piece and as a theatrical performance. Moreover, Valeiras deciphers how silent interpretations, as ballet, were able to convey the novel's message through a common thread based on movement and musicality that compensates for the loss of verbal language.

The author examines Alice's identity in great depth in the most extensive chapter of this volume, "Alice in Cinema" (Chapter 6, pp. 79-124). This chapter traces the evolution of Alice's transition to the screen from the earliest adaptations to later reinterpretations in which both Wonderland and its protagonist are reshaped in response to the evolving aesthetic and cultural context. Valeiras highlights how, in Hollywood productions, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* gradually shifts away from a child-oriented audience towards an adult one, while Walt Disney's adaptations seek to merge the illusory and the real through cartoon animation. Disney's Wonderland universe further expands by incorporating his iconic characters such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck in parodic reinterpretations as *Thru the Mirror* (1936) and *Donald in Mathmagic Land* (1959).

The section additionally explores how Alice's identity develops from that of a Victorian-era young girl at the time of her conception to a teenager navigating a dark world, as depicted in Tim Burton's film *Through the Looking Glass* (2016). The author posits that Alice's adaptability is evident in her ever-evolving appearances in the wide range of her cinematic interpretations.

In the second-to-last chapter of this work "Influencia en la cultura popular" (Chapter 9, pp. 155-186), Andrea Valeiras focuses essentially on documenting the impact of Lewis Carroll's work on popular culture. To this end, she disseminates a series of theories derived from the narrative, including the notion that certain characters embody mental disorders. This idea, despite being contested, underscores the novel's contribution to the conceptualization of a perception distortion syndrome. Additionally, the author explores the argument regarding the association that many perceive between *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and drugs, as illustrated in songs and films, a supposition that became intensified with the psychedelic aesthetic of Disney's 1951 adaptation. Moreover,

she alludes to the mathematical background, as, since Carroll was a mathematician, his work is at times analyzed from a scientific lens due to its parallels with the mathematical discoveries of the time.

Ultimately, the chapter concludes with an analysis of the impact the original book has had on other elements of popular culture. Valeiras cites a plethora of works that are considered to be retellings of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, either because they continue the narrative of Alice' or because they reimagine Wonderland in their own terms. Furthermore, the author focuses on the impact of the novel's aesthetic elements on fashion and music, highlighting their role in reinterpreting and modernizing Alice and Wonderland through music videos and haute couture garments.

In conclusion, through her monograph, Andrea Valeiras not only broadens our knowledge and interest in Alice and her oniric world, but also successfully manages to express why the ever-evolving identity of Alice is the key feature for Carroll's enduring legacy in the literary canon. Moreover, it promotes the idea that stories belonging to the collective imaginary belong to the community and their reinterpretations.