

Book Reviews

The Annotated Alice: 150th Anniversary Deluxe Edition. Ed. Martin Gardner. Expanded and updated by Mark Burstein. New York: W. W. Norton, 2015.

Undiluted Hocus-Pocus: The Autobiography of Martin Gardner. By Martin Gardner. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: 150th Anniversary Edition. By Lewis Carroll. Illustrated by Salvador Dalí. Introduction by Mark Burstein. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Reviewed by Jan Susina

In recognition that 2015 marked the 150th anniversary of the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, publishers have issued an abundance of illustrated editions of *Wonderland* as well as a number of scholarly and general interest books on Carroll himself. Of the many Alice-related books that were published in conjunction with this anniversary, my favorite is *The Annotated Alice: 150th Anniversary Deluxe Edition*. This may come as a surprise, since Martin Gardner's influential *Annotated Alice* was first published in 1960, followed by two major revised editions: *More Annotated Alice* in 1990 and *The Definitive Edition of The Annotated Alice* in 1999. Gardner continued to add to his *Alice* annotations. He published a two-part "A Supplement to Anno-

tated Alice" in the *Knight Letter*, the journal of the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, in 2005 and 2006 and continued to update his annotations based on ongoing Carroll scholarship until his death in 2010. Mark Burstein, a past president of the LCSNA, has combined annotations from the previous editions of the *Annotated Alice* as well as those published in the *Knight Letter* and included a few of his own. The *Deluxe Edition* has more than one hundred new or updated annotations as well as an excellent bibliography of critical works and of *Alice* screen adaptations.

Since *Wonderland* is a text that skillfully combines words and images and that has attracted numerous illustrators, Burstein has added a hundred new illustrations in addition to John Tenniel's iconic artwork. The volume includes a selection of Carroll's *Under Ground* drawings, and an impressive array of *Alice* images by Arthur Rackham, Beatrix Potter, Peter Newell, Walt Kelly, Salvador Dalí, and Barry Moser. I found the set of *Wonderland* illustrations by Harry Furniss for *The Children's Encyclopedia* of special interest. Furniss, the illustrator for Carroll's two-volume *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889, 1893), originated the allegation that Carroll and Tenniel had a difficult working relationship. Furniss reported that Tenniel had told him that he would quickly find collabo-

rating with Carroll impossible. But Carroll's reprinting of the first edition of *Wonderland* at his own expense after Tenniel's disappointment with the quality of the illustrations, and his subsequent removal of the "Wasp in the Wig" episode from *Through the Looking-Glass* at Tenniel's recommendation (reprinted in the *Deluxe Edition*), suggests that far from being "impossible," Carroll was rather deferential to Tenniel. Furniss's *Wonderland* illustrations hint at his disappointment with being given much less inspired material to illustrate and at his jealousy of the opportunity given to Tenniel.

Gardner astutely observes in his introduction to *More Annotated Alice* that "no other books written for children are more in need of explication than the *Alice* books" (*Deluxe* xxii). Over the years his annotations have guided modern readers through an increasingly unfamiliar Victorian world of references and allusions. Burstein quotes Edward Guiliano, who argued that Gardner deserves much credit for the popularity and acceptance of Carroll and the *Alice* books in literary studies. Gardner clearly notes in his introduction to the *Annotated Alice* that he has little interest in allegorical or psychoanalytic interpretations, leaving others to pursue them. The success of Gardner's *Annotated Alice* also opened the door for many more annotated editions of children's books, including *The Wizard of Oz*, *Peter Pan*, *Little Women*, *The Cat in the Hat*, and *The Phantom Tollbooth*. I suspect that Gardner's *Annotated Alice* is one of the first texts that introduced

many readers to the pleasures and complexities of critical reading.

Just as *Wonderland* has always been a successful combination of Carroll's prose and Tenniel's illustrations, Adam Gopnik, in his appreciation of Gardner's *Annotated Alice* published on the *New Yorker* Web site, has rightly called *The Annotated Alice* "one of the best literary *pas de deux* in English" (2). Even if you already own an earlier edition of *The Annotated Alice*, this significant revised edition is worth buying. It is fascinating to read Gardner's introductions to his various sets of annotations and to see how attitudes toward the *Alice* books and Carroll evolved in the light of new scholarship. Burstein has skillfully edited and combined the sets of annotations and had provided an outstanding selection of *Alice* illustrations. Like *Wonderland* itself, *The Annotated Alice: 150th Anniversary Deluxe Edition* is a wonderful book full of pictures and conversations.

Shortly before his death, Gardner wrote *Undiluted Hocus-Pocus*, which he considered to be a "rambling autobiography" (xiii); it frequently lives up to his self-description as "disheveled memoir" (195). Gardner was a remarkable man: a polymath who wrote more than one hundred books on an astonishing range of subjects, a nineteenth-century man of letters living in the twentieth-century world. While Gardner is perhaps best known in children's literature circles for his *Annotated Alice*, he always preferred L. Frank Baum over Carroll. Gardner introduced Baum's *Oz* series to a generation of readers with his short but thoughtful prefaces to the reprints

published by Dover. Gardner had intended to edit *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* after the success of *The Annotated Alice* until he met the twenty-year-old Michael Patrick Hearne, who he felt was better suited for the task.

The son of a petroleum geologist from Tulsa, Oklahoma, Gardner attended the University of Chicago during the early days of Robert Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler's "Great Books" program, which he detested. As his autobiographical novel, *The Flight of Peter Fromm* (1973), suggests, it was as a student that Gardner lost his religious faith, developed a healthy sense of skepticism, and honed his skills as a writer. Moving to New York City, he worked for eight years as the contributing editor for the children's magazine *Humpty Dumpty*, writing stories and producing the activity page. Gardner drew his inspiration from the work of George Carlson, the art director of the influential children's publication *John Martin's Book* (1912–33). Gardner then edited the Mathematical Games column in *Scientific American* for twenty-five years, since he, like Carroll, delighted in and promoted recreational mathematics. Gardner became an outspoken critic and debunker of pseudo-science through books such as *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science* (1952) and helped to found the journal *Skeptical Inquirer*. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of his memoir is that after the death of his wife and shortly before his own death, Gardner developed a belief in God and came to consider himself a philosophical theist. While this brief memoir does not do full justice to his rich and diverse intellectual life,

readers of his many books will enjoy his pithy observations on major events in his life.

One of the strangest illustrated editions of Carroll's *Wonderland* is that done by Salvador Dalí as a limited edition in 1969. This portfolio edition, which includes thirteen illustrations, had been accessible only to wealthy collectors and rare books departments until Princeton University Press reprinted it in a smaller but elegantly designed edition. Burstein and mathematics professor Thomas Banchoff, a personal friend of Dalí, provide short essays for the volume on a series of related topics: for example, André Breton claimed Carroll as a fellow surrealist in 1934; Louis Aragon translated Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*; and Max Ernst illustrated both *Snark* and Carroll's *Symbolic Logic*. Carroll's *Alice* books have been the inspiration for other artists, including René Magritte and Balthus. Burstein shows how the image that Dalí uses for Alice in his illustrations has links to his earlier *Landscape with Girl Skipping Rope* (1936), which was itself influenced by Giorgio de Chirico's *Melancholy and Mystery of a Street* (1914).

While Carroll's academic background and publications in mathematics are well known, perhaps less familiar is Dalí's own fascination with and knowledge of this field. Burstein and Banchoff argue that even more than surrealism—despite the latter's interest in the unconscious, the irrational, and the imaginary—it is a fascination with mathematics that unites Dalí with Carroll. Many of Dalí's paintings were inspired by ideas

borrowed from mathematics and science. Gardner was an important influence on the artist, who was a great fan of his recreational mathematics columns in *Scientific American*. They met several times prior to Dalí creating his *Alice* illustrations. In *Undiluted Hocus-Pocus*, Gardner mentions that Dalí's *The Sacrament of the Last Supper* (1955) "swarms with proportions in golden ratio" (166). He also realized that many of Dalí's landscapes became faces when rotated ninety degrees. Banchoff shows how Dalí's *Crucifixion (Corpus Hypercubus)* (1954) was influenced by the theoretical work of the medieval mystic and polymath Raymond Lull and his follower Juan de Herrera, who were both interested in developing two-dimensional ideas into a third dimension. While initially Dalí's striking illustrations seem more Dalí than Carroll, after reading Burstein and Banchoff on the artist's math obsessions one begins to see more Carrollian influence in his illustrations.

Work Cited

Gopnik, Adam. "Who Can Be Finished with Alice?" *New Yorker.com*. Condé Nast, 11 Oct. 2015.

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