


Reflecting a Society: Disney's Alice in Wonderland

Release date: July 26, 1951 (World premiere-London)

July 28, 1951 (United States)

What was the "Baby boom"?



1945 – The War Ends!	1951 – Alice in Wonderland Released	1968 – Yellow Submarine Released
		How old are they now?

What do you think might have been some of the differences between the baby boomers and their parents?

Parents (Veterans of Second World War Era)	Baby Boomers (born after 1945)

Information about Disney's *Alice and Wonderland*:

- ♥ Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* was based on the writings of England's Lewis Carroll (1832-1898), especially his works *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its sequel *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871).
- ♥ Alice was Walt Disney's third leading lady (Snow White in 1937 and Cinderella in 1950), and the first who didn't become a princess by story's end. She was also the toughest one to root for, even for Walt. After the film's release, Walt felt that Alice was a little too spoiled, and more specifically, lacked heart. "The picture was filled with weird characters you couldn't get with," Walt stated.
- ♥ To Walt's first point in the above quote, this also marked the first time the film's star was provided with so many co-stars. Dozens upon dozens of ancillary characters make Alice's acquaintance at some point in the film, with some meetings briefer than others. Even after omitting several main characters (such as the White Knight and the Jabberwock) and combining multiple characters into one (the Queen of Hearts in Disney's version is an amalgam of all four Queens and the Duchess from Carroll's version), the film was viewed by many as a little on the crowded side. Additionally, Alice never had any true villains to contend with. The Cheshire Cat was more of a nuisance, and the Queen of Hearts didn't appear until the film's third act. Even then, she was little more than a big bully.
- ♥ When it was released, Disney was criticized by British film and literary critics who accused Disney of "Americanizing" a great work of English literature.
- ♥ The film was never re-released theatrically in Disney's lifetime, airing instead every so often on network television.
- ♥ It wasn't until two decades later that George Dunning's animated film *Yellow Submarine* (1968) highlighted that Disney's version of *Alice in Wonderland* suddenly "fit the times."

The question becomes: What happened between the generations?

Observations (Alice and Wonderland since the Second World War)

Media	Observations
Clip: Alice Falls Down the Rabbit Hole (1951)	
Clip: Alice at the Tea Party (1951)	
Clip: Alice and the Caterpillar (1951)	
Clip: The Beatles' <i>Yellow Submarine</i> (1968)	
Clip: Jefferson Airplane's <i>White Rabbit</i> (1967)	
Clip: <i>The Matrix</i> : Follow the White Rabbit (1999)	
Clip: <i>The Matrix</i> : Red Pill or Blue Pill (1999)	