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The Journey of Two Heroines

A Comparison between Lewis Carroll and Yuu Watase's Alice

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Introduction: Into the Rabbit Hole

The idea of working with Alice's magical "Wunderland" had enchanted me long before my time at university. I had owned the German version of the novel for quite some time, its presence on my shelf seemingly urging me to pick it up and explore its wonders.

As our lectures delved into the realm of 19th-century literature, the idea to analyze Lewis Carroll's novel took root in my mind. I used the Campbellian theory of the Hero's Journey to examine it. After finishing an initial version of this paper for the students' conference in 2023, I took the opportunity to expand upon it by comparing Carroll's work to the Japanese manga by Yuu Watase, *Alice 19th*. Thus, my aim is to focus on the heroes', in our case, heroines' paths, mainly relying on Joseph Campbell's theory. I shall use the comparative method to illustrate correlations between the two Alice tales. I shall demonstrate how the Campbellian stations manifest in the journeys of both heroines.

The theoretical background of my paper consists of the presentation of the key stations of the Hero's Journey by Campbell in comparison with Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner's theories referring to the subcategories of Departure/Separation, Initiation, and Return. Additionally, my study features brief descriptions of fantasy and the subgenre of children's fantasy that play an important role in understanding the environment of Carroll's Wonderland. The genre of literary nonsense and its relationship to fantasy will also be discussed. Furthermore, I will present the genre of manga, i.e., shoujo manga specific of Watase's work.

Lastly, I shall conclude with a comparison between the heroines' paths and the use of language related to their journeys. Envisioning the hero's path in the case of two Alices from different cultures and familiarizing myself with the work of Joseph Campbell will enable me to illustrate how mythical archetypes are woven into the fabric of human existence.

I. Theoretical Background

I.1. The Hero/ine's Path

As our journey continues, we reach the Hero's Path, known as the monomyth, which is a storytelling pattern studied by several people, including Vladimir Propp, Lord Raglan or Christopher Vogler. However, studies on life as a journey and its different stages have been the subject of ethnography and anthropology as well. Thus, a multidisciplinary approach can facilitate a better understanding of the phenomenon.

Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner differentiated three main stages in people's lives: separation, transition, and incorporation. Van Gennep coined the term *rites of passage* while observing preliterate and literate societies, social structures, and hierarchy. The concept refers to modes that help the individual through the difficulties of transition from one social status to another without social disruption. The rites relate to some crisis in life; the journey is symbolic. (van Gennep 1960) Turner built on van Gennep's stages elaborating on the second phase. Liminality, as defined by Turner, is a state of in-between-ness, and is often related to death, womb-like states, to invisibility and darkness. (1969, 95)

These stages are similar to Campbell's monomyth that focuses on mythical heroes. The three fundamental phases remain consistent in their characteristics. Yet, Campbell's framework tends to be more intricate, particularly in the liminal phase, which encompasses numerous steps and trials. This complexity renders his model more suitable for analyzing literary characters compared to those of van Gennep and Turner. According to László Pál Galuska, the works of Campbell provided "great visualization of the aspects of the hero's journey in terms of character development and plot structure." (2017, 55) Campbell's influence even extends to the film industry, e.g., George Lucas' iconic *Star Wars* series, and the Wachowski brothers' *Matrix*. Since mythical figures are believed to embody universal archetypes, they must be relevant to some extent to every individual on and off the screen.

Nevertheless, not every myth includes all seventeen stations of the monomyth, which may interact in a slightly different sequence, but this does not influence the hero's journey as such. The seventeen Campbellian stations are organized into three larger parts, known as *Departure/Separation*, *Initiation* and *Return*, resembling both van Gennep and Turner's terminology. The second phase bears a different name but equals the stage of transition or liminality, while incorporation is referred to as return.

I.1.1. Departure/Separation

The first station, *The Call to Adventure*, is the site of “destiny,” where the hero meets the unknown: “destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown.” (Campbell 2004, 53) The initial phase of separation constitutes a “symbolic behavior,” signifying detachment from a set of cultural conditions or, in Turner’s terms, from a “state.” (1969, 94)

This dangerous, crucial region can be represented as “a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, a lofty mountain top, or a profound dream state.” It is a place of “strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight.” (Campbell 2004, 53)

A notable Campbellian example is from a fairy tale: a frog comes to the surface to help the young princess who has lost her golden ball at the spring. She promises to take the frog, the herald of the ‘deep unconscious,’ as a companion by her side; in fact, she encounters the forces of adolescence. With the herald’s arrival, the hero’s ordinary life changes: “the familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand.” (2004, 47)

The second station, *Refusal of the Call*, occurs as a “dull case” in some myths and popular tales. The hero may “turn the ear to other interests,” converting the adventure “into its negative.” As Campbell explains, “the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved.” (2004, 54)

In the myth of Daedalus, King Minos retained the power of the deity and the mercy of Poseidon in the form of a sacred bull, and as he stole the animal for his personal advantage, he rejected submission to the god of his civilization. King Minos’ failure “to advance into the liferole that he had assumed,” ends in divinity itself becoming his “terror.” (2004, 55)

The third station, called *Supernatural Aid*, is a “meeting point” for the heroes who have not refused the call. The hero encounters a “protective figure,” who provides the adventurer with “amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass.” (Campbell 2004, 63) In European fairy lore, the assistance might take the form of a helpful crone or a fairy godmother. The mentors’ guiding influence can be seen in a variety of literary works. Examples range from Ariadne, as she brought Theseus safely through the adventure of the labyrinth, to Beatrice in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, as well as Gretchen and Helen of Troy in Goethe’s *Faust*. (Campbell 2004, 65)

According to Campbell, “one has only to know and trust, and the ageless guardians will appear.” These supernatural helpers can take on masculine forms as well. They adopt the character of “the great figure of the guide”; they are “the teacher, the ferryman, the conductor of souls to the afterworld.” A classical representative of the male guides is Hermes, in Egyptian mythology, Thoth, and lastly, a Christian example, the Holy Ghost. (2004, 66-67)

The fourth station, *The Crossing of the First Threshold*, is where the hero, after meeting with his aiders and guides, continues his adventure and gets closer to “the threshold guardian,” which is “an entrance to the zone of magnified power.” (Campbell 2004, 71) The hero arrives at the edge of his present sphere of influence, the “life horizon” of one’s own shadow. Beyond this line languishes the darkness, the unknown, and every danger that one can confront outside the parental watch of familiarity. The Arcadian god Pan is a classic example of the threshold guardian. His dangerous presence dwells just beyond the protected zone of a village boundary, where if one accidentally were to enter, they would be struck down with sudden, groundless fright and panic. (Campbell 2004, 74)

Thus, this is “the first step into the sacred zone of the universal source.” It is a nest that one should not stir, and yet “it is only by advancing beyond those bounds, provoking the destructive other aspect of the same power, that the individual passes, either alive or in death, into a new zone of experience.” (Campbell 2004, 75) The hero must leave his ego behind “stuck to the wall of the first threshold,” since this is the part where one must let go of their fears and continue in search of the truth.

Crossing these frontiers often involves passing natural landmarks, such as “sacred rocks, trees, rivers, or lakes.” (van Gennep 1960, 11) These milestones carry supernatural consequences if trespassed; they are marked by certain objects and are ritually consecrated. Turner refers to these individuals as “liminal personae” or “threshold people,” who are inherently ambiguous, defying conventional classifications of cultural space. They exist in a “betwixt and between” realm. (1969, 95)

The fifth station, *The Belly of the Whale*, is a variant of the aforementioned crossing of the first threshold. The hero, “instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown and would appear to have died.” This station plays with the idea of “the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale.” (Campbell 2004, 83) The Irish hero, Finn MacCool was swallowed by a monster of indefinite form. Little Red Riding Hood was swallowed by a wolf. The entire Greek pantheon, with the sole exception of Zeus, was swallowed by Kronos. (Campbell 2004, 84)

The motif of this stage emphasizes the lesson that “the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation,” therefore, the hero “instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, goes inward to be born again.” (Campbell 2004, 84) According to Campbell, “the hero-dive through the jaws of the whale” and “the passage into the temple” are identical adventures, both denoting, in picture language, a “life-centering” and “life-renewing act.” (2004, 85)

I.1.2. Initiation

The sixth station, *The Road of Trials*, opens the second stage of the journey, where the hero finds himself in “an ambiguous landscape of dreams,” where he must survive a succession of trials. According to Campbell, this section is the favorite phase of “the myth-adventure” that created “a world literature of miraculous tests and ordeals.” (2004, 89) This region of dreams is a “test of supernatural endeavors” for the hero, a place for the “purification of the self.” The hero is “aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper,” and here one may discover that everything in this realm of magic is connected to a “benign power” that is secretly supporting him. (2004, 89)

An example is Psyche’s quest for her lost lover, Cupid. This is a story where the principal roles are “reversed.” Instead of the lover trying to win his bride, it is the bride trying to win her lover. Thus, as Venus, Cupid’s jealous mother, is cruelly withholding the love of Psyche, she has to complete certain tasks to win back her lover. (Campbell 2004, 89)

An intriguing concept closely linked to this station is the notion of imposing order on a disordered world. Challenges and obstacles disrupt the established order, reflecting Thomassen’s observation that “the world itself is essentially unordered, and that human beings impose their order upon it via their (rational or not) choices, ideas and acts” (2012, 30). Our heroes face the challenges of the chaotic world and have to restore order to it.

The seventh station, *The Meeting with the Goddess*, occurs after the hero has triumphed over the challenges of the dreamscape. This moment of his journey is frequently prolonged and described as “a mystical marriage of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen Goddess of the World.” According to Campbell, this stage may be represented as “the crisis at the nadir, the zenith, or at the uttermost edge of the earth, at the central point of the cosmos, in the tabernacle of the temple, or within the darkness of the deepest chamber of the heart.” (2004, 100)

In the Irish story “of the Prince of the Lonesome Isle and the Lady of Tubber Tintye,” the Lady embodies “The Lady of the House of Sleep,” a well-known figure from folklore. She can

also be regarded as “the incarnation of the promise of perfection,” the embodiment of comfort and nourishment, and the good mother figure that the hero once knew. (Campbell 2004, 101) Meeting the goddess, who is “incarnate in every woman,” is the final test of the hero’s talent “to win the boon of love,” which is “life itself enjoyed as the encasement of eternity.” (Campbell 2004, 109)

Other goddess figures can resemble “evil.” They are opposing figures to the hero, for example, in the Greek myth of Actaeon and Diana, the goddess can be considered a representation of the “bad mother.” (Campbell 2004, 103)

The eighth station, *Woman as the Temptress*, is the step where the hero experiences “the moment of revulsion.” Given that the hero successfully concluded the mystical marriage with the queen goddess of the world, the initiate often indulges in the temptations of the flesh; therefore, one may stray from the path or abandon their quest. The hero must confront the physical or material temptations of life, which do not have to be represented by a woman. As human beings, this generally means deceiving ourselves. One day “it suddenly dawns on us or is forced to our attention that everything we think or do is necessarily tainted with the odor of the flesh,” thus, “the acts of life, the organs of life, woman in particular as the great symbol of life, become intolerable to the pure, the pure, pure soul.” (Campbell 2004, 112)

The Christian parables of Saint Bernard provide an example of how to resist the temptress. Campbell tells Saint Bernard’s tale of having been visited by a naked young girl, but as she climbed into bed, he turned to the other side and went back to sleep. After a while, “having stroked and caressed him for some time, the unhappy creature presently was so taken with shame, in spite of her shamelessness, that she got up and fled, full of horror at herself and of admiration for the young man.” (2004, 114)

The ninth station, *Atonement with the Father*, is the level where the hero must encounter and confront “the ogre aspect of the father.” This is the ultimate challenge, where the hero has to cross “the umbilical point,” a vulnerable spot, the point of “the Achilles tendon which the finger of mother life has touched.” As Campbell describes, “the problem of the hero is to pierce himself (and therewith his world) precisely through that point; to shatter and annihilate that key knot of his limited existence.” (2004, 135)

The hero’s challenge coming in touch with his father is “to open his soul beyond terror to such a degree that he will be ripe to understand how the sickening and insane tragedies of this vast and ruthless cosmos are completely validated in the majesty of Being.” Thus, the hero “transcends life with its peculiar blind spot and for a moment rises to a glimpse of the source. He beholds the face of the father, understands, and the two are atoned.” (Campbell 2004, 135)

Moreover, during the ordeal with the father, the hero might find hope and assurance from a helping female character, who is typically a mother figure; as Campbell writes, “if it is impossible to trust the terrifying father-face, then one’s faith must be centered elsewhere (Spider Woman, Blessed Mother).” Therefore, with their power of “intercession,” they can protect the hero from “the frightening experiences of the father’s ego-shattering initiation.” In the end, the hero may also realize that “the father and mother reflect each other and are in essence the same.” (2004, 120)

For example, in the biblical story of Job, we can see how the Lord does not attempt to justify his “work in ethical terms,” but asks Job to “do likewise on earth in human emulation of the way of heaven.” As God punished the wicked, he explained to Job in a “thunder-and-lightning demonstration of the fact of facts [...] that man cannot measure the will of God.” To Job, this revelation “appears to have made soul-satisfying sense.” He was a hero who, through his courage and his unreadiness to break down and accept common beliefs about the character of the “All Highest,” proved himself capable “of facing a greater revelation than the one that satisfied his friends.” (Campbell 2004, 136)

The tenth station, *Apotheosis*, is the step where the hero achieves “godhood.” One reaches the state of epiphany, and attains deeper comprehension. According to Campbell, the hero here is someone “who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance.” (2004, 138)

One of the most powerful and revered Bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism is the ‘Lotus Bearer’ or Avalokiteshvara. During his final life on Earth as a human being, a world-savior, and an embodiment of the universal principle of Enlightenment, he “shattered for himself the bounds of the last threshold.” He realized “the timelessness of the void” and the mysteries of the cosmos and vowed to “bring all creatures without exception to enlightenment.” (Campbell 2004, 138) Thus, this step is the “beginning of the cosmogonic cycle” and the equal conclusion of the hero-task, the moment when “the wall of Paradise is dissolved, the divine form found and recollected, and wisdom regained.” (Campbell 2004, 142)

The eleventh station, *The Ultimate Boon*, is the accomplishment of the hero’s quest. It is the stage where the desired power, the magical elixir of immortality, the Holy Grail is attained. Gilgamesh, the legendary king of the Sumerian city of Erech went on a quest in pursuit of a herb called ‘Never Grow Old.’ When the king had finally overcome all of his obstacles and received the prize for his efforts, a serpent stole the magical plant while he was sleeping. Thus, as Campbell states, the possibility “of physical immortality charms the heart of man,” from times of old till to this very day. (2004, 174)

The trials of the second stage, comprised under the name of *initiation*, are similar to those described by van Gennep as transitory, or liminal according to Turner. The situations the hero faces resemble the highs and lows Turner mentions: “[...] he who is high must experience what it is like to be low.” (1969, 97) The hero can resurface only after having overcome all the obstacles and having embraced all possibilities of development.

I.1.3. Return

The twelfth station, *Refusal of the Return*, is a step when the hero, having experienced happiness and enlightenment in the other world, may not desire to return to the ordinary world of his fellow men to bestow the boon of civilization. As Campbell explains, in order to complete the whole circle and fulfill the norm of the monomyth, the hero must return “the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess” to a place where the boon “may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds.” (2004, 179) However, frequently, this duty is rejected. For example, after his triumph, the Buddha “doubted whether the message of realization could be communicated.” (2004, 179)

The thirteenth station, *The Magic Flight*, is the one where the hero has attained the magical trophy, but “against the opposition of its guardians.” Thus, one must flee because he is resented and hunted by the keepers of the well. This is “a favorite episode of the folk tale, where it is developed under many lively forms.” It can be complicated “by marvels of magical obstruction and evasion.” (Campbell 2004, 182) In order to escape from gods and demons, the hero may employ magical objects by tossing them behind him.

An example of the obstacle flights is that of the Greek hero, Jason. He set forth to discover the Golden Fleece, and with the assistance of the king’s daughter, he quickly accomplished his goal. However, as Jason had the prize and ran away with Medea, King Aeëtes was soon in pursuit. In order not to get caught, Medea persuaded Jason to kill Apsyrtos, her younger brother, and toss the pieces of the dismembered body into the sea, which would force their father to rescue the remains and go ashore to give them a proper burial.

The fourteenth station, *Rescue from Without*, is the step where the hero may need assistance to get out of the realm that he entered before. The hero may need the world to come and rescue him: “society is jealous of those who remain away from it and will come knocking at the door.” (Campbell 2004, 192)

One of the most important myths of the Japanese Shinto tradition is that of the sun goddess Amaterasu. The myth presents how one can be “reluctant” to be rescued. One day,

Amaterasu became so enraged by his brother's terrible misbehavior that she withdrew to a heavenly cave. Eight million gods gathered from afar and organized a loud celebration in an effort to save the world from darkness. This was successful and lured the sun goddess out of her hiding spot. When she reappeared, a powerful god pulled her out of the cave, and another one put an august rope of straws by the entrance so that she would not go in again. According to Campbell, the shimenawa is "one of the most conspicuous, important, and silently eloquent of the traditional symbols of the folk religion of Japan," which denotes "the renovation of the world at the threshold of the return." It is "the simplest sign of the resurrection." (2004, 196)

The fifteenth station, *The Crossing of the Return Threshold*, is the step where the returning hero "must survive the impact of the world." One must find the reason within himself to re-enter the place where he came from. Therefore, the hero may share "the experience of transcendental bliss" with the community.

The tale of Rip van Winkle is an example of the returning hero. One night Rip fell asleep and moved into the realm of adventure unconsciously; as he woke up several decades later, he found himself in a new environment, where the village and the people he thought he knew were no longer there. According to Campbell, all of us enter into this realm of dreams, into a place where the self is "unified and blissful." However, like Rip, we can learn that everyone will arise "with nothing to show for the experience but our whiskers." (2004, 204)

The sixteenth station, *Master of the Two Worlds*, is when the hero achieves the "freedom to pass back and forth across the world division." Here one is 'The Cosmic Dancer,' perfectly attuned with the inner and outer worlds of the cosmos. According to Campbell, myths "do not often display in a single image the mystery of the ready transit," but where they do, "the moment is a precious symbol, full of import, to be treasured and contemplated." For instance, Christ's Transfiguration may come to mind, in which Jesus represents "the guide, the way, the vision, and the companion of the return." The disciples are his initiates, "not themselves masters of the mystery," and only just yet "introduced to the full experience of the paradox of the two worlds in one." The reaction of Peter can also be witnessed; he was so frightened that he even babbled. (2004, 213)

The seventeenth and last station is *Freedom to Live*; here the hero achieves mastery over his life, and is "the champion of things becoming, not of things become." (Campbell 2004, 225) This is the step where one must rest their deeds and "their fruits on the knees of the Living God" in order to be freed from "the bondages of the sea of death." Therefore, this moment can be considered the point in the hero's journey when he or she is living in the now and at peace, neither having regrets for the past nor expectations for the future. (Campbell 2004, 221)

Similarly to Turner's description, upon reaching the third phase of the journey, known as *reincorporation*, the passage is finalized. (1969, 94–95) The liminal individuals attain a more stable social state, where they are expected to behave in accordance with customary norms and ethical standards. If they succeed, the limbo of statuslessness is over. (1969, 97)

To sum up, the Hero's Journey contains the path of "the world's symbolic carriers of the destiny of Everyman." In the universal tales of heroes, e.g., Buddha, Moses, Prometheus, or Aeneas, one shall only have to follow their heroic figures until one can see what has always been revealed to us. As Campbell writes, by studying the classic stages of the universal adventure, one can better understand "not only the meaning of those images for contemporary life, but also the singleness of the human spirit in its aspirations, powers, vicissitudes, and wisdom." (2004, 33)

II. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* through the Lens of Joseph Campbell's Theory

II.1. A Glance at the Realms of Fantasy

The genre of speculative fiction called fantasy encompasses works in which magical elements and fictional universes blossom. However, major theoreticians in the field of fantasy literature, like Tzvetan Todorov, or Rosemary Jackson find the term hard to define, because “two people’s understanding of the fantastic can be sufficiently different.” (cf. Nikolajeva 2012, n. p.) Yet, they agree that fantasy literature is about “the construction of the impossible.” (Nikolajeva 2012, n. p.) The seemingly “impossible” fantasy is conjured by human minds, crafting realms and scenarios that exist beyond our tangible reality. As Tolkien states, our “imagination” serves as the driving force behind such creations. (1947, 15) It is also acknowledged that these narratives are largely influenced by mythology and folklore. Let us only think of the presence of mythical creatures in these texts. That alone would suffice.

Throughout the years, fantasy has entered a variety of different media, i.e., film, television, graphic novels, animations, manga and video games. In some of these fields, it builds separate genres. One of the texts subjected to analysis in the present paper is Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), which is part of children’s fantasy. According to Maria Nikolajeva, this subgenre “provides moral and spiritual guidance for young people” (2012, n. p.). It appeals to an audience that has not yet established a clear boundary between reality and imagination, and does not immediately reject magical realms and events as “implausible.” Nevertheless, the idea of the shadow looms over the protagonists of many novels. For example, in the work of Lewis Carroll, Alice is a young heroine who loses control over the forces that influence her “mental capacity and control of her body,” and she is threatened by an “unlimited power from creatures that would normally be inferior to her.” (Nikolajeva 2012, n. p.) Thus, in children’s fantasy, the heroes can be “humiliated.” For instance, in the closure of the plot, the child’s incompetence is highlighted, as the hero is unable to get over the limitations and consistency of magic. As Nikolajeva states, the magical agents “make mock of the children and demonstrate their inferiority” as “they prove incapable of controlling magic.” (2012, n. p.)

In these narratives, the hierarchy of power comes into play between the adult author and the child protagonist and reader. For example, in George MacDonald’s *Princess* books (*The Princess and the Goblin*, 1872, and *The Princess and Curdie*, 1883), the child protagonists are

“inevitably brought back into dependency upon the adults” at the end of the novels. (Nikolajeva 2012, n. p.) This correlation suggests a clear division between the world of adults and children who are not yet self-sufficient to prosper in the real world, even after their magical adventures or with a reborn spirit.

A key feature of children’s fantasy is the existence of anthropomorphic animals, animated toys and dolls, miniature people, or other mythical creatures. They can act as a hindrance or lend a helping hand in the protagonist’s development. As Nikolajeva points out, this was a popular theme in children’s fantasy, which hardly ever appeared in the canon. Moreover, these intelligent animals and other beings offer vast possibilities for “allegory and satire; such stories juxtapose human and animal traits in a fascinating manner.” Therefore, numerous texts “should be rightfully included among fantasy for children” (2012, n. p.), as they are no less intricate or complex than novels.

II.2. Literary Nonsense in Carroll’s *Alice*

Published in 1865 by Lewis Carroll, the pseudonym of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* follows the journey of a young heroine, Alice as she navigates the realm of Wonderland. Carroll intertwines elements of fantasy and nonsense as he creates a rich narrative tapestry that defies conventional storytelling norms.

Thus, the narrative structure of *Alice* is unique. It involves the use of literary nonsense, a genre that “never intended to make formal sense,” but which still has some kind of “internal lunatic logic of its own.” (Cuddon 2013, 475) Carroll’s work embodies this nonsensical way of writing, which created an unusual adventure of fantasy where “time and space fail to conform to ordinary expectations.” (Ede 1975, 73)

The story embraces the ideas of the paradox, in which there are two terms in interplay with each other: order and disorder. Alice’s story, as Kinoshita states, can “connect reality with fantasy and transform fantasy back to reality.” (2017, 41) To elaborate on this idea, it is worth noting that through the interplay of imagination and language, a constant “framework” is established, which serves as a foundation for a wide range of “possibilities.” (Flescher 1969, 128)

Carroll’s nonsense employs language in various ways, which can usually upset the “order of behavior.” For example, there are playful references to well-known poems or sayings. This displays Carroll’s unique humor and social criticism. This unadulterated fun is “intimately linked to the world of fantasy.” (Flescher 1969, 144) Carroll’s nonsense “achieves its force

mainly through its relentless examination of the weak intellectual barriers man sets up between himself and reality.” (Ede 1975, 73)

As Flescher quoted a twelve-year-old child, “the words are silly but not stupid; they are ridiculous in a way that I like.” (cf. Flescher 1969, 144) This illustrates how the genres of nonsense and children’s fantasy can be appreciated on multiple levels of understanding. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* is not simply for children; it can be read by anyone, “with the freshness of a child or the critical mind of an adult.” (1969, 144)

II.3. Alice’s Campbellian Path¹ in Wonderland

Alice follows a peculiar White Rabbit into the stage of *initiation*. She is prompted to seek meaning with curiosity, out of the boredom of everyday life. *The Call to Adventure* denotes her separation from the ordinary world, where the White Rabbit lures Carroll’s “sun-goddess” out of her boredom-infested cave. Alice swiftly dove after the busy rabbit, “never once considering how in the world she was to get out again” (Carroll 1998, 3). The Rabbit Hole can be associated with the waters of the deep abyss, where individual life is on the point of “dissolving into undifferentiated energy.” (Campbell 2004, 160)

As Alice’s journey continues, she can be seen falling down the ruins of a well, where she does not become the “dull case” of refusing the call. She is brave and quirky while time shifts to suit her babblings; “the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly” (Carroll 1998, 3). Thus, while falling into the center of existence itself, her present life outside of Wonderland is brought back to reality; there is something that she has not left behind and that mostly contains her curious cat, Dinah.

The step of *Supernatural Aid* does not exist in the context of Wonderland in the traditional sense; there are no guides or “protective figures,” who the young Alice may meet at the start of her adventure. However, the comforting thought and the act of speaking about Dinah are of great help to Alice.

The fourth step of the adventure leads us to *The Crossing of the First Threshold*, where one may encounter the edge of their known boundaries. For Alice, this moment emerges as she finds herself out of the well and in a hallway with locked doors. She crosses the threshold by

¹ Alice’s journey through the lens of Campbell’s theory was examined by Nurdiana N., a student from the Indonesian University of Putera Batam (2019) and by Monteiro M. from the Santa Catarina Federal University of Brazil as well. (2021)

using a bottle “with the words ‘DRINK ME’ beautifully printed on it in large letters” (Carroll 1998, 9) to transform herself magically into the appropriate size. This section presents the setting of Wonderland as a place where “very few things indeed were really impossible” (1998, 9) and where people are just “murdering the time.” (Carroll 1998, 104)

Another step of the first threshold follows, as Alice fights with her growth problems and stumbles upon “a very small cake, on which the words “EAT ME” were beautifully marked in currants.” (1998, 13) We can observe that Alice, by drinking and eating magical concoctions in a realm that she cannot yet fully understand, crosses the first and even a second imaginary threshold that she could never go back on.

The fifth station approaches as Alice’s state reaches her lowest, critical point, *The Belly of the Whale*. After the constant challenges of change, chaos ensues in the form of “gallons of tears” (Carroll 1998, 17), which facilitate a “life-centering” and “life-renewing act” (Campbell 2004, 85) of a defense mechanism called crying against the disorder of nonsense.

Later, when Alice reflects on her adventure, she remarks, “How queer everything is today! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I’ve been changed in the night?” (Carroll 1998, 19). Thus, the topic of self-image and its discovery play an important part in Alice’s journey.

Loss of identity is also a recurrent theme in Carroll’s work. According to Flescher, the matter of losing one’s identity “is closely connected with the idea of estrangement from language.” (1969, 134) Alice struggles to find the right words, as these “did not come the same as they used to do,” and then she swiftly assumes that she is no longer herself but rather someone far less competent: “I must have been changed for Mabel!” (Carroll 1998, 20) Alice is a heroine who, throughout the adventure, remains conscious of her choice of words and of language itself. She has control over her own mind; however, when the words “betray” her, the safety of her world is threatened. (Flescher 1969)

The Road of Trials represents the beginning of the second stage in Alice’s journey. The heroine has “somehow fallen into the sea,” and she is up to her chin “in salt water” (1998, 22), captured by her own existence. Swimming in her own creation, she is acquainted with the local fauna, where “there was a Duck and a Dodo, a Lory and an Eaglet, and several other curious creatures.” (1998, 28) As Alice becomes part of the environment and talks with the entities there, she reaches the first stage of the larger station of *Initiation*.

When the trials begin, everyone is troubled by the challenge of getting dry, but as Alice gets to know them, “after a few minutes it seemed quite natural to [her] to find herself talking familiarly with them, as if she had known them all her life.” (1998, 29-30) These circumstances

lead to the “Caucus-race.” After the race, Dodo declares, “[e]verybody has won, and all must have prizes.” Thus, Alice has to give prizes. The passing of this trial lies in her pockets; “in despair she put her hand in her pocket, and pulled out a box of comfits.” (1998, 34)

Later, Alice inquires about the history of the Mouse, and we can see how words create the so-called “tale” of the Mouse. The existence of this typography, which is a literal tail of the Mouse, signifies a playful connection between the reader and the story.

A different connection also happens between the ordinary world of the past and the world of Wonderland, as Alice unconsciously mentions Dinah in the conversation, which in effect disperses the crowd. Thus, in the realm of Wonderland, the act of speech—the controlled use of language—is a weapon that cuts deeper than any sword. It can also be noted that, when Alice navigates through Wonderland, she encounters others with vastly different discourses, which she has no prior knowledge of. According to Johannessen, she must “establish a new relation to the elements within Wonderland’s discourse,” thereby reshaping her identity. This relationship with the elements of Wonderland occurs through language primarily. (2011, 78)

The adventure continues as Alice is mistaken for Mary Ann, the housemaid of the White Rabbit. When the White Rabbit demands she fetch a fan and a pair of gloves, Alice quickly goes to his house and finds what she has been looking for. However, on entering the house of the White Rabbit, she is pulled into the next trial by her own curiosity, which involves the consumption of another curious bottle. As she drinks the contents of the unlabeled bottle, she wishes to be large again, thus looking for her lost identity by confronting the Genie in the bottle: “I do hope it’ll make me grow large again, for really I’m quite tired of being such a tiny little thing!” (1998, 44)

With Alice growing larger than ever and getting stuck in the house, in a room that she cannot yet escape, the universal trial of Wonderland is formed. This embodies the trial of navigating through rooms of different dimensions by becoming, in essence, the right size.

The trial of the White Rabbit’s house is passed successfully by mere chance of circumstance. As the curious creatures tried to get into the house, they threw a barrowful of small pebbles at the windows that turned into small cakes. Alice could eat these and shrink in size again.

After escaping, Alice encounters the Cerberus of Wonderland, which is “an enormous puppy” that tries to play with her. The solution to neutralize the threat of being crushed and to pass the trial is to let the dog tire itself out while it charges at the stick that Alice has picked up. After moving on, Alice finds herself gaining an understanding of her situation. As she remarks,

she must drink or eat something to be the right size again, “but the great question is, what?” (1998, 57) Thus, naming the problem is the first step in conquering it.

The hero next meets with a strange creature that is “quietly smoking a long hookah.” (1998, 58) This is the pre-state of the seventh station, *The Meeting with the Goddess*. The caterpillar offers valuable information to the young heroine and solves her problem of finding the right size through mushrooms. Meeting this sage of Wonderland provides Alice with insight into the key question of the realm: “What size do you want to be?” (1998, 67) Thus, Alice must be conscious of her decisions; she must be able to answer the question of what she wants and who she is. (1998, 60)

With Alice’s adventure continuing, she finally reaches her goal of entering a beautiful garden, where she gets to the next station, *The Meeting with the Goddess*. After the young heroine is initiated and learns the customs of being the right size for things, she meets the mother figure of her existence, the Duchess. As Alice meets the higher forces that rule the land, she receives the first glimpse of “afterlife,” of the deepest parts of Wonderland, which is the nest of the Duchess, “a large kitchen, [...] was full of smoke from one end to the other.” (1998, 81)

In this realm, another meeting with a sage is foreshadowed. When Alice asks the Duchess, “why your cat grins like that?” the Duchess adds that all cats can and that she does not know much, “and that’s a fact.” (1998, 82-83) As Alice is confronted with the evil mother figure of her past, the nonsense of Carroll plays with words but does not follow up with action: “‘You see the earth takes twenty-four hours to turn round on its axis—‘Talking of axes,’ said the Duchess, ‘chop off her head!’” (1998, 84) In this way, over the course of her adventures, Alice’s worldview will be shaken multiple times because of the frightening remarks that, however, carry no harsh consequences. This is for the better because she attains faith in herself and self-confidence, which will be her true strength.

As she figures out how to hold the Duchess’ abused child in her arms and takes pity on him, a mother’s instinct awakens in her to save an innocent life. This moment can also be seen as saving one’s self from “self-annihilation,” for she was also a child in need of protection from forces she could not control.

The foreshadowed meeting occurs; the sage of peculiar powers is the Cheshire cat. As Alice asks for directions, she comes to the realization with the help of her master that if she does not know where she wants to get to, then “it doesn’t matter which way” she goes, because eventually she will end up somewhere. (1998, 89) Moreover, as the Cheshire cat plays in a spiral of nonsense by vanishing and reappearing again, the noteworthy remark can be

understood as “we’re all mad here.” (1998, 90) Thus, with the sudden ideas of the unconscious, Alice comprehends that Wonderland embodies the true essence of what madness really means.

Prior to Alice having to face her biggest challenge, she stops at the Mad Tea Party, where the use of language can be observed in an unregulated and nonsensical way: “that begins with an M, such as mousetraps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness—you know you say things are ‘much of a muchness’.” (1998, 109) The eighth station, *Woman as the Temptress*, does not exist within this adventure. Instead, Alice is rather tempted by the environment as she attempts to consume various items to adjust her size.

When Alice finds a tree with a door leading into it, she reaches the next stage on the hero’s journey, *Atonement with the Father*. Alice encounters the “father figure” of her existence, the one who rules over the whole realm of Wonderland, the Queen of Hearts. Thus, the Queen of Hearts is a character who embodies “the ogre aspect of the father” and possesses a quality of evil, the dominating aspect of tyranny.

In contrast to Campbell’s depiction of an evil father figure, the heroine encounters an evil mother figure. This difference may come from the fact that this novel presents a heroine’s journey rather than that of a hero. Thus, it is more fitting for the antagonist to be played by an evil mother figure.

When Alice is approached by the cards, she knows her proper standing, she is respectful. She is also courageous enough to think, “they’re only a pack of cards, after all. I needn’t be afraid of them!” (1998, 116). Pushed to her limits of endurance by the Queen’s loud temper, she becomes strong enough to stand up for the creatures of Wonderland, thus passing the threshold of this confrontation. ““Off with her head! Off—‘Nonsense!’ said Alice very loudly and decidedly, and the Queen was silent.” (1998, 117-118)

Alice’s adventure continues with the Croquet game and another nonsensical meeting with the Duchess and the Cheshire cat. She meets a mythical creature called the Gryphon. Alice is once again acquainted with the native fauna, but this time she is interacting with mythological creatures, putting her above the animals of the common realm. The effect of fantasy can be felt, as the young heroine is subjected to the control of other creatures beneath her level of intelligence, like the Mock Turtle or even the Gryphon. This could mean that the heroine is still weak-minded and not yet truly powerful.

Alice’s journey reaches the *Apotheosis*. She is called to be a witness at the court of justice. This is the stage when the hero achieves “godhood,” and as Campbell states, the hero is someone “who has gone beyond the last terrors of ignorance.” (2004, 138) In this case, the heroine encounters incompetent judges, whom she also remarks with an indignant voice that

they are stupid people. The whole situation and the mock trial of tarts make Alice angry to the point that she starts to become magically bigger again. The last confrontation comes as she is called out of the crowd to answer the King's questions. Alice shows off her wit by confronting the King's made-up rules, and soon, the scene reaches its climax as Alice is bigger, taller, and smarter than anybody else is in the courtroom, becoming a force to be reckoned with, a metaphorical "god."

The Ultimate Boon is technically missing from Alice's journey; there is no real evidence that she receives an item or a prize for her efforts. However, she does become more mature through the experiences she undergoes in Wonderland.

The section of *Return* lacks the *Refusal of the Return*, *The Magic Flight*, and *Rescue from Without*. Alice is not conscious of her return to the ordinary world, nor is she chased away or rescued from Wonderland.

The heroine's adventure continues with *The Crossing of the Return Threshold*, as she defies the commands of the Queen of Hearts. The exclamation "You're nothing but a pack of cards!" (1998, 187) is the final sentence of Wonderland. Alice is ejected from the realm of dreams and wakes up in her common-day world.

The sixteenth station, *Master of the Two Worlds*, occurs when the heroine achieves the "freedom to pass back and forth across the world division." Alice recollects her wondrous adventures to her sister, "as well as she could remember them, all these strange Adventures of hers that you have just been reading about." (1998, 189) Thus, for a while, in her mind, she exists in both realms at the same time.

During the last station, *Freedom to Live*, the heroine achieves mastery over her life. In Alice's case, this lies in the enjoyment of small things and in the teaching of the life lessons, she has learned. As she "got up and ran off, thinking while she ran, as well she might, what a wonderful dream it had been" (1998, 189), she entertained the idea that the dream, though stressful, was fun all the way.

III. Entering the Lotus Worlds, Alice in Japan

III.1. The Role of Manga in Japanese Society

Manga is comic art submerged in a particular social environment, which in turn reflects “the reality of Japanese society, along with the myths, beliefs, rituals, tradition, fantasies, and Japanese way of life.” (Ito 2005, 456) Thus, it contains elements of fantasy and can be related to this literary genre.

Japanese manga has a long history, dating from ancient times (600 CE) when the Horyuji Temple was built. It included caricatures of “exaggerated phalli” on the backs of planks in the ceiling of the temple. In the Middle Ages, towards the middle of the twelfth century, Bishop Toba (1053–1140) painted “the Animal Scrolls,” which were humorous pictures of birds and animals and could also be considered manga. In the era of the Tokugawa Period (1603–1867), Tobae books—a type of witty and comical caricature of Japanese everyday life—were published, which marked the start of “the commercialization of manga” at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In the Meiji period (1868–1922), the manga of modern Japan made ties to politics, and their long history now had a sense of “satire of authority.” Manga journalism began to rise, satirizing the period and Meiji politics as a part of the civil rights and political reform movements of the time. (Ito 2005, 458–462)

In the technologically advanced twentieth century, through various factors of innovation, as well as the development of infrastructure, the phenomenon was further enhanced: “Manga truly became a medium of the masses.” (2005, 463–466) Later, in the early 1950s, children’s manga began to gain popularity. It was popularized for boys (*Shonen*) and girls (*Shoujo*) separately. *Shonen Magajin* (“Magazine”) and *Shonen Jampu* (“Jump”) were weekly comics aimed at boys and young adults. Publishers created weekly comics for girls too, e.g., *Shoujo Furendo* (“Girls’ Friend”) and *Maagaretto* (“Margaret”), which became very popular among girls who started to recognize that they were not just children but “girls.” These “girl magazines” came with additional supplements such as “cards, stickers, and paper dolls,” which created the time when girls “started hating ugly stuff, boys, and dirty, violent things” and collected “cute color pens, erasers, writing boards, folders, pencil cases, notebooks, etc.” (Ito 2005, 467–470)

Since the 1900s, Carroll’s *Alice* has been part of Japanese culture. According to Koharu Ogawa, Alice’s tale has been booming ever since, and there are more than one hundred fifty translations and adaptations in Japanese. (2021, n. p.) Both the translation and adaptation of

Alice's story have been shaped by the changing reality in Japan. Manga culture has redefined *Alice* in Japanese culture.

Alice first appeared in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century, when Hasegawa Tenkei published *Kagami Sekai* ("Mirror World"), a serialized version of Lewis Carroll's work, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. (Hedlund 2022, n. p.) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was first translated by Shizu Nagayo as "Alice's Story or Tale," and as Ogawa explains, the work "consisted of translations from chapter 1 to chapter 3 and adaptations of the contents in other chapters." (2021, n. p.) Thus, Nagayo created a similar story to that of Carroll's; due to the hardships of translating English into Japanese, the intricacies of the language were lost, and Nagayo's tale merely described a girl who was curiously traveling in Wonderland.

The translations and adaptations of Alice's tale have been a constant phenomenon over the years. Japanese people have found some sort of an "escape-and-return" state in the story of Alice. They can find a safe place and relax from the hardships and stress of real life; on the other hand, they can also explore a new world. Thus, as Alice passed through the Rabbit Hole and entered a New World, Japanese literature implemented the form of storytelling where characters go from "their real world to a Fantasy or Parallel world, and then return to a reality." (Ogawa 2021, n. p.) This writing technique has been very popular, even among other types of media, e.g., the animated films of *Studio Ghibli*, in which characters often go through tunnels or long corridors and appear in different worlds.

Carroll's narrative features a young girl interacting with playful, personified animals, engaging in tea parties, containing only vague references to violence. This creates a half-believable world. Thus, Carroll's narrative is "uniquely suited to a shoujo manga adaptation due to its very young protagonist, whose age closely matches that of the intended readership." (Johnson 2017, 39) The temporal complexity of Wonderland allows mangaka artists to use the page layouts effectively to create intricate relationships between characters. Alice and her representations in manga have become a global phenomenon.

III.2. The Enigmatic *Alice 19th* by Yuu Watase

The work of Yuu Watase² entitled *ありて19th* (*Alice 19th*³) is a Japanese shoujo manga that has been inspired by the work of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The manga appeared in serial publication in the magazine *Shoujo Comic* from 2001 to 2003. There are several possible ways to analyze and compare the relationship between the original and Watase's adaptation, such as the intertextual or intermedial approach; however, the present study focuses on exploring the similarities and differences in terms of the heroines' journeys.

III.2.1. Alice Seno's Campbellian Path in the Lotis Worlds

Jumping headfirst into another Rabbit Hole, *The Call to Adventure* in Alice Seno's case, consists of her crossing paths with the unknown as she rescues a white rabbit from the oncoming traffic. Before saving the little bunny, she is assaulted by a whirlpool of thoughts or emotions that she hears, as it turns out, from the bystanders' inner hearts. This section already hints at her close connection to the Lotis Worlds and the power she bears inside. When the bunny is about to get hit by a car, these voices prompt Alice to move and save the animal. Alice herself is later rescued by her senpai, Kyou Wakamiya, whom she has a crush on. This represents the romantic layer of the shoujo manga of *Alice 19th*.

As Alice is thinking about keeping the rabbit, the animal escapes with a carrot in its mouth. After this encounter, Alice finds a bracelet on the street; it has a stone in it as red as the bunny's eyes. Alice thinks, "[m]aybe if I wear this, I'll meet that bunny again." (Watase 2003, vol. 1, ch. 1, n. p.) Thus, the rabbit appears to have acted as a stroke of destiny, guiding Alice's life.

At school lunch, Alice is mocked and bullied by other girls, until Kyou-senpai comes to her aid and defends her. He is shocked though as he thinks, "[u]nbelievable, why does she continue smiling and not complain?" (Watase 2003, vol. 1, ch. 1, n. p.) Alice is reluctant to heed the call to adventure; thus, *The Refusal of the Call* is present. Nevertheless, I would argue that this station manifests unconsciously; her drama is related to her inability to express her feelings to Senpai at this stage. Thus, in my opinion, she cannot begin her path until she has

² For additional information, please consult *Appendix 1*.

³ In *Appendix 2*, a short overview of the manga is provided.

met her aid, whom she actually wished for with the bracelet of courage. In this manner, the powers of the Lotis, the unknown factor, step into her life and rescue her.

The story progresses and Alice is defeated in love by her sister, who confesses to Kyou. Yet, the new-found bracelet of courage comes in clutch, as it symbolizes a connection to the unknown; it foreshadows the *Supernatural Aid* that will come to save Alice. She feels really down and thinks, “I love you... it’s only three words” (Watase 2003, vol. 1, ch. 1, n. p.), which she could not say. She wishes for the courage to do so. Her outcry is answered, and the *Supernatural Aid* manifests. This is the magical “meeting point” in the story, where Alice reunites with the lost bunny once more. The rabbit, Nyozeke, becomes her supernatural guide and mentor.

The bunny regards her as a soon-to-be “Lotis Master”, while Alice also recognizes her as the ‘carrot-eat-and-run bunny from the other day’. It also becomes clear this tiny animal had left the bracelet for Alice because of her bravery. Engraved in the stone is ‘rangu,’ meaning courage in English, which is the 19th Lotis word at the same time. Thus, this is the title-giving quality of Alice that she keeps developing throughout the narrative.

The helping bunny is an anthropomorphic being who can change into different forms, which is useful as she follows Alice to school in a cute plush form. At school, Alice meets Tatsuya Matsujo, a boy who Mayura arranged for her to date. As they meet, Alice wonders why she has not seen him before. Here, the manga contains a small panel that characterizes Alice’s personality: “Looks at Kyou only.” (Watase 2003, vol. 1, ch. 3, n. p.) Such panels⁴ provide a lot more detail and information, which is an advantage of the genre.

Yet, when Kyou notices them talking, Alice quickly accepts Matsujo’s advances. However, she only uses it as a means of escape from the struggles of unrequited love by essentially becoming unrequited love herself, to quote Alice: “[i]t’s the right thing to do... I can forget about Kyou-senpai this way.” (Watase 2003, vol. 1, ch. 3, n. p.)

The next day, when Matsujo meets Alice by chance at the archery club, he tries to flirt with her, but is rejected. Frustrated, he gets aggressive when Kyou steps in and defends Alice. Mayura separates the two boys and later does not want to talk to Alice because she is mad at her for not refusing Matsujo in the first place. Mayura vented her frustration at Alice, saying, “[y]ou’re always like this! You can’t understand simple words! and then you hurt people around you... don’t you understand?” (Watase 2003, vol. 1, ch. 3, n. p.) The true meaning of Mayura’s

⁴ For a visual depiction, refer to *Appendix 3*.

words would be that if words are left unexpressed, they can also hurt others, which again foreshadows that Alice's emotional explosion will result in tragedy.

Mayura aggravates the situation stating that Alice has caused a lot of trouble to Kyou and that she has exploited his kindness. Alice is pushed over the edge becoming emotional. This turmoil will mark her initial step on her journey as a Lotis Master. When the childish quarrel gets out of hand, Alice makes her sister disappear: "I hate you! I wish you would just disappear!" (Watase 2003, vol. 1, ch. 3, n. p.) The wish comes true, scaring even her mentor. This represents *The Crossing of the First Threshold*, after which Alice can never return to her normal life. She is tasked with rescuing her sister from the darkness of the heart. She must mature and develop as a heroine to discover the healing powers of the Lotis and to make things right. Nyozeke explains to Alice, the chosen one, "[t]here are powers in the words. With this you can save lives, but also it's something that can kill." (Watase 2003, vol. 1, ch. 4, n. p.)

At school, Matsujo regards Mayura's disappearance as a coincidence that provides an opportunity for Alice to be with Kyou. However, this chapter quickly becomes marked by the appearance of dark speech bubbles that signify the gossip and negativity directed towards Alice by her schoolmates. Amidst this whirlwind of emotions, the final stage of *Departure* is encountered. In *the Belly of the Whale* Alice must mend Matsujo's unrequited feelings. This is a pivotal moment in the narrative, where Alice embarks on a life-centering and life-renewing path.

Guided by Nyozeke, Alice uses the incantation of the magical words of Lotis, "Na Sadaru Lotis Raan," that will transport her into the innermost depths of Matsujo's heart. The separate world Alice finds herself in is the one Matsujo sees. A real labyrinth of barbed wires, where Alice must succeed by expressing her repressed feelings towards him and ultimately liberating his Inner Heart from darkness. By honest words, Alice apologizes to Matsujo, expressing her inability to reciprocate his feelings because she already has someone she likes, Kyou-senpai. As these words bring resolution, the bunny congratulates Alice: "Saying what you feel is the road to success!" (Watase 2003, vol. 1, ch. 5, n. p.) Within this realm, a notable narrative development unfolds as Nyozeke discovers the second Neo-master within Kyou's person.

Mayura's spirit can be seen walking towards the darkness. She represents Alice's antagonist in love, her romantic rival. She sides with the dark powers, becoming an adversary in the battle between the Lotis and Maram forces. Both concepts draw inspiration from Buddhism, where the former symbolizes purity, spiritual enlightenment, and loyalty, while the latter signifies darkness and is associated with the demon Māra, who challenged the Buddha

during his enlightenment process beneath the Bodhi tree. Māra embodies evil and the negative aspects of human existence that hinder the journey of spiritual fulfillment.

Next up is the *Initiation* stage with *The Road of Trials*. Accompanied by her Neo-master partner, Kyou Wakamiya, her senpai, and the one she is in love with, Alice explores and liberates Inner Hearts discovering new Lotis words along the way. The Neo-Masters also find another mentor, Frey Weilhausen, who has studied under the guidance of the great Lotis priesthood. They find out more about the Lotis words, as Frey explains that there are a total of twenty-four words of Lotis they must learn to become more powerful.

As the romantic drama unfolds, Frey approaches Kyou one day and asks him whether Mayura is the person, he truly likes. Kyou is uncertain about his feelings. In the following chapter, he realizes that he may not be the best fit for Mayura, stating, “I think... I... better break up with Mayura...” (Watase 2003, vol. 2, ch. 10, n. p.) This development in the romantic dynamics forces Mayura to appear.

Still under Maram influence, Mayura unexpectedly appears in front of Alice. This event can be interpreted as the seventh station. In *The Meeting with the Goddess*, Mayura assumes an antagonistic role rather than serving as a benefactor to Alice. This leads to a confrontation between the two sisters, during which Alice is overpowered and captured. Mayura questions Alice’s feelings for Kyou, remarking, “You are in love with Kyou, right? His photo is in your room. Shocking, isn’t it? We are sisters, yet we fall in love with the same guy.” Her tone carries a hint of irony, then she continues, “Will you give up on Kyou?” Nyozeke advises Alice not to make any deals with dark forces. When she heeds this advice, she acts bravely and apologizes to her sister: “I never wanted to steal Kyou... because I love Nee-chan [Mayura] very much... but I am also in love with Senpai! I am really sorry!” (Watase 2004, vol. 3, ch. 15, n. p.)

Alice’s sincere apology almost prevails, but as reality cracks, an ominous presence descends, holding Mayura as a puppet. This congealed darkness represents the ultimate evil on Alice’s journey. In this chapter, another significant revelation is shared with the reader: to defeat the monster of darkness, the New-Masters must find the lost Lotis words that can dispel the ancient darkness and fulfill the prophecy. It becomes clear that the dark master controlling Mayura is Darubya, who poses a real threat to the world.

Subsequently, the dark master lets Mayura fall into a huge abyss. Kyou and Alice jump after her, summoning magical Icarus-like wings to save her. Upon returning to the ordinary world, the two sisters are still in conflict, and this is when the eighth station, *Woman as the Temptress*, is accomplished. Mayura places a Mudore curse upon Kyou’s heart; because of this, Alice cannot say anything loving to him, or else the flames of hatred will burn him. This

highlights the persistent temptations of love that continue to haunt Alice until the curse is eventually lifted in later chapters.

As the tensions between the two sisters rise, Mayura is covered with a dense array of Maram symbols. Nyozeke suspects that Mayura has become a highly skilled Maram master due to Darubya's influence, who has enveloped her heart in darkness. As Mayura exclaims, "I can never forgive you for what you did to Kyou! I will never forgive you!" (Watase 2004, vol. 4, ch. 19, n. p.), the stage for the next step is set.

In later chapters, the New Masters make preparations as they acquire the "mirrors of truth," amulets symbolizing their alliance with the Order of Lotis masters. Meanwhile, Mayura also arranges for an all-out war between Lotis and Maram, as she gathers Maram disciples for herself. In a later volume, the conquest of the Maram masters commences as they form a seal, a "barrier of evil," around the Tokyo government building. This becomes the ultimate battleground in the manga, where Alice confronts the "father" and vanquishes the darkness threatening the world.

Upon accepting the "mirrors of truth," these amulets conjure new magical attire for the New Masters as they set out with the helpers and mentors to try and stop the evil influence of darkness. Upon reaching the building shrouded in darkness, the masters use the words 'Na Saradu Lotis Ra-in!' to enter battle. Their objective is to locate Mayura and defeat her, to stop the manifestation of Darubya. However, following battles against various Maram masters, they ultimately encounter Mayura too late, as they discover that Darubya has already regained his true form.

This constitutes the ninth station, *Atonement with the Father*, where the heroine must confront the "ogre aspect" of the father. This is the climax of the narrative. In this dire situation, Nyozeke recalls Lotsan's final words: "My very essence will continue to live and fight on in Lotis Masters with courage!" Nyozeke reveals that Alice is the person she has been searching for, destined to fulfill the prophecy: "I'm sure I found you right... because we were fated to meet! You are that one important person I have searched for thousands and thousands of years for." (Watase 2004, vol. 7, ch. 38, n. p.) Nyozeke then sacrifices herself to shield Alice from Darubya's attack. Kyou is alongside her, and runs in to fight the monster and rescue the captured Mayura from the darkness. Meanwhile, Alice escapes death as the monster launches another attack. She ultimately finds refuge within the inner heart using the magical words.

This marks the final stage of the Inner Heart within the narrative, where Alice experiences a moment of epiphany and rediscovers the lost words of Lotis. The *Apotheosis* represents Alice's comprehension of Lotsan's teachings. Within this inner world, she encounters her last

mentor: Lotsan's spirit, the creator of the Lotis words. Lotsan praises her, acknowledging that despite the initial influence of darkness, she grew stronger through her courage. Alice reunites with the spirit of Nyozeke, who has fulfilled her mission and, as Lotsan says, will soon be reincarnated at Alice's side.

During her stay in this realm, Alice acquires the lost words of Lotis, which marks the eleventh station, *The Ultimate Boon*, and the accomplishment of the hero's quest. This stage signifies the attainment of the desired object of power, or even "reconciliation with a loved one." (Candice 2020, 16) Lotsan imparts the lost word to Alice, describing it as "everything that's born knows it and forgets." (Watase 2004, vol. 7, ch. 39, n. p.) This suggests a fundamental aspect of human nature, one that is instinctively known to every individual from birth. However, the phrase "and forget" implies that this knowledge is often overlooked or forgotten as individuals grow and face the challenges of life. This could potentially refer to an innate quality such as the courage needed to undertake daring endeavors, like saving the world.

In the final chapter of this series, Volume Seven, Chapter Forty, Alice and Kyou rescue the world by invoking the lost words of Lotis: "Naamasu Sadarumaara Lootisu Sotiraan!" (Watase 2004, vol. 7, ch. 40, n. p.) The incantation means: 'by using that' (Lootisu Sotiraan), restore the wrapped-up Light (Raje) and Darkness (Naamasu) to the Source of Life (Sadarumaara). This chapter concludes the story, as the world is saved and evil darkness is extinguished.

There are a few Campbellian stations missing in the manga, the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth. Alice and her companions swiftly return to the ordinary world once the evil is dispelled. No one chases them, as they are heroes worth praising, and no one needs rescuing from that evil space, for it just crumbles to pieces. *The Crossing of the Return Threshold* is fulfilled when Alice and her companions find themselves back at the Tokyo government building.

The sixteenth station, *Master of the Two Worlds*, is accomplished as Alice and Kyou become the legendary Lotis masters. They also provide the lost words to the Lotis priesthood, thereby benefiting the community. Despite this newfound role, they continue their civil, ordinary lives as high school students. Consequently, the seventeenth and final station, *Freedom to Live*, depicts the heroine achieving mastery over her life. Alice resumes her normal life; she even attends archery practice. One day, Nyozeke's spirit encourages her to use her own "lost words." Thus, the story ends with Alice finally confessing her true love for Kyou.

IV. Through the Looking Glass of Language

IV.1. Similarities and Differences in the Journeys of the Two *Alice* works

Comparing the Campbellian stages in the two works, it becomes apparent that most of them line up. There are clear parallels. For example, at the first station, both heroines encounter a white rabbit, which is not only an intertextual link but is essential from the perspective of the journeys too. The white rabbit opens up the way to a different world in both cases. At the second station, Carroll's Alice does not refuse the call to adventure, she jumps into a hole without considering the consequences. Meanwhile, Alice Seno is repressed and meek, blind to the possibilities of the adventure. She fails to utilize language to her advantage or communicate her desires effectively; thus, at first, she unconsciously declines the adventure. However, when she wishes to improve and express her feelings to Kyou without hesitation, the amulet of courage guides her to her mentor, the White Rabbit.

In Carroll's work, the White Rabbit is more of a side character, whereas in the manga, Nyozeke, who possesses a name in the manga, is Seno's mentor. She is well-versed in the path of Lotis, which adds depth to her character. Additionally, Seno receives a charm from her, a bracelet of courage. In Carroll's narrative, Alice lacks a consistent helper throughout her journey. Dinah is a cat, trapped in Alice's original world. She cannot be compared to Nyozeke, as she does not partake in Alice's struggles throughout her journey. While both are animals, Nyozeke has secret knowledge of the worlds, Alice Seno enters, and she is on a mission. Dinah remains on the sidelines, a passive presence in Alice's original world who, can be interpreted as a charm for Alice, but only through language.

The Crossing of the First Threshold is unique in both cases. Carroll's Alice experiments with bottles and cakes as her curiosity drives her. On the other hand, Alice Seno crosses the threshold of no return accidentally when she makes her sister disappear. The sister is one of Seno's antagonists in the manga, whereas Alice's sister at Carroll is a positive figure who gently wakes Alice up and listens to her dream about Wonderland.

In terms of the structure of Wonderland, there is a constant size fluctuation between large and small objects, which forms a challenge in Carroll's story. Reaching *the Belly of the Whale*, Alice grows too big or shrinks too small to achieve what she wants. Similarly, in the manga, Alice Seno grapples with her emotions and doubts herself; thus, through linguistic barriers, at times she feels insignificant, i.e., little, struggling to save her sister or express her feelings to

Kyou. She also experiences moments of empowerment: she is big, when she is capable of saving others and becomes worthy of the role of a legendary Lotis master alongside Kyou.

The Road of Trials deals with an ambiguous landscape of dreams. In both works, dreams and nightmares present challenges for the heroines to overcome. In Carroll's narrative, the entire adventure unfolds like a dream, existing within the realm of Alice's mind. The manga, however, plays with time and space when it uses dreams/nightmares as a means to illustrate that Alice Seno's psyche is troubled by the events happening around her, e.g., Seno wakes up from a nightmare after Kyou decides to break up with Mayura. Carroll's narrative is more effectively structured around this station, as it presents tangible solutions to her challenges, such as organizing the Caucus-race and distributing the prizes to the animals. Meanwhile, Seno's trials revolve around the discovery of Lotis words and the liberation of inner hearts, which are situations that are more elusive.

The Meeting with the Goddess is challenging to define in both narratives. For Carroll's Alice, the Duchess is neither really a helper nor a big hindrance on her journey. Instead, she offers an opportunity for Alice to recognize that she must toughen up and stop fearing the outbursts of the adults. In Wonderland, their intimidating remarks have no real consequences. Thus, Alice learns how to face her obstacles with courage. In contrast, on Seno's journey, her sister Mayura assumes an antagonistic role. She is a puppet of darkness who helps the manifestation of the true form of Darubya. Mayura also serves as the motivation and reason for Alice's journey, as she strives to become a powerful Lotis master to save her and the world.

The station of the *Temptress* is similarly challenging to decipher. In Seno's case, the temptation to reciprocate the feelings of her senpai is the challenge. As for Carroll's Alice, the temptation arises from the environment rather than the individuals. Alice wants to fit into the world of Wonderland; thus, she consumes various items to adjust her size.

The Atonement with the Father presents an intriguing scenario, as Carroll's Alice encounters the tyrant of Wonderland while Alice Seno confronts the destroyer of the world. Both forces pose a threat to the heroine's journey, which they must overcome. At the *Apotheosis*, both heroines come to an understanding of how things work. Carroll's Alice comprehends the incompetence of the people at the courthouse as she effortlessly outsmarts the King's made-up rules. Similarly, Alice Seno gains insight into the truths of Lotis as she encounters Lotsan.

The Ultimate Boon is technically absent from Alice's journey in Wonderland, whereas Alice Seno obtains the desired power of the lost Lotis words. At the third stage of the heroines' journey, many steps – *Refusal of the Return*, *The Magic Flight*, and *Rescue from Without* – are

missing. The absence of the same stages in both narratives can be significant. It could refer to a predetermined trajectory of the heroines' journeys, marked by separation, initiation, and return. Whether Alice were to be confined in Wonderland or Alice Seno in the inner hearts, their eventual escape implies a parallel resolution despite the differing contexts of their adventures.

The Crossing of the Return Threshold is fulfilled as both Alices find themselves back at the place where their journeys began. The last two stations are represented by their dual identities. Alice Seno is depicted as a Lotus master and a high school student, while Carroll's Alice is portrayed as someone well-versed in the state of Wonderland as she recounts her adventures to her sister. The title of the last station, *Freedom to Live*, encompasses the same idea, where both heroines continue their lives in peace. Both narratives complete a cycle of the hero's journey, traversing through the stages of *departure*, *initiation*, and *return*. They undergo various trials, overcome obstacles, and achieve personal transformations in this liminal landscape of dreams. Drawing from van Gennep, Victor Turner, and Joseph Campbell, it becomes apparent that despite differences in time and space, the stages of the hero's journey persist in a similar manner in both narratives because they are archetypal.

IV.2. The Role of Language throughout the Hero/ines' Journeys

The use of language assumes a pivotal role in both works. In the novel, due to the genre of literary nonsense, language is deconstructed, and later, through the use of fantasy elements, from this deconstructed state something understandable is produced, for example, whimsical poems or sayings. The term *nonsense fantasy* forms an oxymoron. It combines the genre of literary nonsense, which is illogical, and the genre of fantasy, which, though considered impossible, has some inner logic. Despite this apparent contradiction, imagination serves as the cohesive force that binds these genres together. Carroll's work embodies elements of both literary nonsense and children's fantasy due to the way it uses, misuses, deconstructs, and reconstructs language. Moreover, it stands as one of the prime examples of "portal fantasy" (Mendlesohn 2008, 1), introducing us into a completely new world through the rabbit hole. Thus, as we could see through the heroine's journey, the narrative maintains logical coherence even if connected to the genre of nonsense.

Carroll's work approaches language seemingly by focusing on its deconstruction. However, Alice's ability to retell her story at the end of her journey can be interpreted as a triumph over this deconstructive nonsense. Through the narration to her sister, Alice

reconstructs the nonsensical journey of Wonderland. This demonstrates her resilience and intellect but also proves the power of language as a tool of meaning making and self-expression. Alice's retelling serves as a means of asserting her agency and autonomy, as she takes control of her own narrative and reshapes it according to her own experiences and interpretations. In this way, Alice transforms the chaotic and unpredictable world of Wonderland into a coherent and meaningful story, reclaiming her own identity in the process. This aligns with the last station on the hero/ine's journey as well; she is a winner.

Upon exploring the unique characteristics of the genre of manga, it becomes evident that there are more diverse narrative options for expression. These provide richer information. When Alice Seno encounters Kyou, the depiction of "DOKI DOKI DOKI"⁵ around the character mimics the quickened pace of the beating heart and indicates that a character has fallen in love. In terms of romantic themes, this is another notable distinction between the two works: Carroll's Alice does not experience romantic feelings or have any love interests, whereas the manga fills chapters upon chapters full of romantic drama.

Watase's work offers more interpretative possibilities through its use of panels, allowing readers to engage with the story visually. Another aspect worth exploring in the manga are character names. Seno consists of the characters for "swift current, rapids" and "field, wilderness" in Japanese, while her given name, Alice (Arisu), is inspired by Carroll's work. Kyou Wakamiya's name includes Kyou, meaning "fulfill, grant, satisfy," and Wakamiya, i.e., "young, immature" (waka), and "temple, shrine, palace" (miya). Lastly, Mayura means "real, genuine" (ma), "reason, cause" (yu), and "good, virtuous, respectable" (ra). The choice of these names adds depth to the manga's characters and reflects the nuances of Japanese; a Kanji character that has multiple layers of meaning forms each name. This suggests that Yuu Watase made a deliberate choice when naming her characters, considering their personalities. This conscious use of names adds layers of symbolism to the narrative. This aspect can be likened to Carroll's approach to language, where he constructs riddles and employs nonsensical wordplay to enrich the texture of his storytelling.

Language plays the role of a conduit for navigating the realms the heroines encounter. These realms are creations of language, products of imagination, and thus shaped by the manipulation of language. Thus, both works can be considered metatextual.

The heroines undergo transformations facilitated by their interactions with language and myth, the latter especially in the case of the manga. Through her encounters in Wonderland,

⁵ Go to *Appendix 4* to see a visual representation.

Alice gains insight into the nature of language through wordplays, puns, and nonsensical dialogue. Carroll creates a unique linguistic landscape that can be considered unusual and otherworldly. Watase's use of language and symbolism adds a mythopoetic (Tolkien 2001) nature to the manga. The concept of Lotis and Maram words represents a form of linguistic myth-making, and highlights the importance of the conscious use of language. Although considered literary nonsense, Carroll's work has a similar effect, but reaches it from the opposite direction.

The journey of self-discovery plays an important role in both narratives, in which both heroines succeed, and which is closely connected to language. They mature emotionally and linguistically throughout their journeys, gaining courage along the way to face the troubles of their normal lives. The preoccupation with the loss of identity is a recurrent theme in both works. Carroll's Alice is constantly worried about her mind whenever she struggles with language. As the words betray her, the safety of her ideal world is threatened. This theme is similarly explored in Watase's work, where language plays an even more significant role. Language is a weapon that can both heal and destroy using the 24 Lotis and 18 Maram words that form a symbolic contrast between positive and negative forces, i.e., light and darkness, virtue and vice, and hope versus despair. Language has a role in shaping individuals' perceptions, actions, and destinies. The inclusion of elemental concepts in words such as water (3rd Lotis word: Dana), fire (4th Lotis word: Iru), wisdom (5th Lotis word: Sakua), and courage (19th Lotis word, Rangu) suggests a deep connection to natural and universal principles. The juxtaposition of these words also prompts us to reflect on the complexities of human nature and the eternal struggle between good and evil.

The 19th word, Rangu, symbolizes courage and the will to take action, which aligns with Alice's primary attribute. For Kyou, the 16th Lotis word, Kara, holds particular relevance, denoting protection, coverage, and clothing. In contrast, the Maram Words encompass terms associated with negativity and darkness. For Mayura, the most fitting Maram word could be Desuri, which signifies hatred.

In essence, the realms of Lotis and Wonderland utilize the act of speech in a controlled way. The use of language is the force that propels both. It serves as a means of development for the heroines; the better they express themselves, the more they progress. Both works teach their heroines that saying what is inside takes courage but is worthwhile.

Conclusions

My research paper began fueled by a very specific curiosity, namely to find out whether the work of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll does or does not have the recognizable stations of the Monomyth. Since I was also eager to learn about Japanese culture, I turned to manga adaptations featuring the tale of Alice as comparison material to the original work. I found a shoujo manga entitled *Alice 19th* by Yuu Watase. The manga proved intriguing due to its innovative use of language, which is palpable in the English translation too. Essentially, my goal was to compare these two works through the lens of Campbell's theory, the Hero's Journey.

Upon analyzing both works, I noticed that the dreamscapes of Wonderland and the Lotus worlds do include many of the stations outlined in Campbell's work. Although the stages were incomplete, both the novel and the manga can still be considered hero's journey narratives.

In the theoretical part of my paper, I presented the fundamental pattern of the Monomyth, providing examples for each stage. I looked for examples in the body of Carroll's text too. Thus, I found that Alice's journey covers eleven stations out of the seventeen proposed by Joseph Campbell. Meanwhile, in the manga, I identified fourteen out of the seventeen stations, which indicates that the path of Alice Seno does conform more to the mythological heroine archetype.

In Carroll's narrative, the first major stage is Alice's *Departure*, where four out of the five stations are present. I do include the station of *Supernatural Aid*, considering that it is a core aspect of language utilization and a pseudo-charm for Alice. It is also interesting to add that her journey is atypical and deviates from the mythical norm due to the blending of literary nonsense and children's fantasy. This fusion creates a framework of both order and disorder that plays with the protagonist of Wonderland. Sometimes the hero's stations shift, and are difficult to separate.

In the manga, the stations of *Departure* are all present, although *The Refusal of the Call* is slightly more difficult to recognize. The manga has some advantages as compared to the novel, such as visually engaging panels that immerse readers in the narrative and descriptive texts that enhance characterization.

In Carroll's narrative, the stage of *Initiation* unfolds as the young heroine gets accustomed to the local environment; there are four out of six stages present here. As Alice embarks on quests, such as getting into the beautiful garden or being the right size for things, she is engaged

in a meaningful interplay between her surroundings and her conscious use of language. Consequently, language assumes an important role in her development during this stage.

In Watase's narrative, the stage of *Initiation* contains each station. Alice Seno spends more time in the liminal phase as compared to Carroll's Alice. In this ambiguous landscape of dreams, she expresses herself quite well and undergoes numerous trials as she battles with the forces of darkness. The focus on language is relevant in the manga as well, as Alice liberates Inner Hearts and discovers new Lotis words, which contribute to her ongoing journey of growth and development.

In the stage of *Return* only three out of the six stations are present in both works. Despite this, the hero's journeys are still complete. While the original Alice finds herself back home from the realm of dreams, the other girl returns victoriously, having conquered the challenges of the Inner Heart. As Carroll's Alice arrives home, she imparts the boon of life—the experience of her adventures—with her sister, thus, with her environment. Meanwhile, Alice Seno becomes a helper to her community by sharing the lost words of Lotis with her comrades.

The two heroines have embarked on a journey of self-discovery and have learned valuable lessons in courage along the way. Thus, the Hero's Journey has proven to be a useful guiding thread to follow that leads out of the labyrinth of one's own boredom towards the real self. It has become evident that the passage of the mythical hero is a fundamentally inward happening towards a place within each of us, which we ourselves have to learn to shape.

For further research, I would suggest a comparison of the works based on adaptation theories and intermediality, as well as an analysis of other adaptations of Carroll's work, e.g., the 2020 Netflix series *Alice in Borderland*. One could compare the Hero's Journey with Murdock's heroine's path, which would lead to a more gender-oriented research. However, as this paper has proven, the Hero's Journey is universal regardless of gender, space and time.

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